CIE ASSESSMENT REPORT/PLAN

Report: Academic Year 2012-13 Exchange Student Evaluations
Date: September 5, 2013

SUMMARY:

Semester evaluations were collected from 32 out of 36 exchange students that studied abroad at Loyola during the 2012/2013 school year. 5 of those students were at Loyola for one year, 20 students were at Loyola for just the fall semester, 11 studied at Loyola during the spring semester only and one student is at Loyola for the Spring 2013 and Fall 2013 semester. He will complete his evaluation during the Fall 2013 semester.

EVALUATION METHODS:

Students are required to complete the semester evaluation upon completion of their exchange program. The questionnaire is available to students in their online study abroad accounts. Students are asked to comment on the following: overall experience, expectations, difficulties, rewards, housing, meal plans, cell phones, inBUS, academics, whether they would recommend Loyola to other students, the exchange student experience, orientation, extracurricular activities, and how they have benefitted from the experience. A complete set of question items follows this summary.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS:

Overall, students reported a very high level of satisfaction with Loyola and CIE provision of services. A majority of students rated their overall experience as excellent (28/32 students) and the rest rated it as good. All students said that the program met or exceeded their expectations.

As expected, some of the most challenging aspects of their time here involved Residential Life, including sharing a room/bathroom, kitchen access, wanting a single room and cost. Another issue that came up with Residential Life was that 32% of students were not paired with a U.S. American. Academics was one of the other areas of concern for students. In fact, the difference in education systems was cited more than anything else as being the most difficult (7 students). Aside from the concern about the difference in academic systems, students reported high levels of satisfaction with the actual courses they took except for a few exceptions. Less than half of the students chose to participate in inBUS and those who did were disappointed with it in terms of the number of events, the level of engagement of their buddies and other factors.

When asked what was most rewarding, a large number of students (14) said getting to know new people (U.S. American and international students). Other rewards cited by multiple students included getting to know a new culture/lifestyle (8 students), classes (4 students), the Loyola community/professors (4 students), and self development – understanding own country, English skills, confidence, independence (5 students). When asked about the exchange student experience at Loyola, all students responded very positively. However, 3 students said that they would recommend the experience, but that the academic level of the business classes was lower than their respective universities. Students responded very positively and with a wide variety of answers when asked how they have benefitted from their exchange experience at Loyola.

Most students are happy with the $500 wolfbucks (17 students) and most of the rest had around $700 wolfbucks (8 students). A majority of students (18/32) got a plan at AT&T for $25 that offers unlimited texting and 250 minutes – students were happy with this plan in terms of price and the AT&T signal. T Mobile has a bad signal at Loyola apparently.

Below is a detailed summary of results.

36/36 students reported that the program met or exceeded their expectations. Student comments for this question:

- It did. People were nice, teachers also and there were a lot of possibilities and events one could take part.
- It did. My classes were very interesting and I learned a lot. The campus is very pretty and the international office does a lot to help students adjust to the new culture.
- Yes, the program met my expectations generally. However, the level of the courses compared to my home university was low, and I would have appreciated if the requirements of the subjects would have been higher. Also, I think that there is not a big group of exchange students. In the university, everybody knows each other so for students like us is not that easy to meet people from the country. It would be better if more students from other parts of the world would come, to create a bigger group and make it easier.
- It exceeded the expectations. Everything was perfect: the courses, the teachers, the people, the place, the initiatives...
- All of them, everything was just perfect!
- The program exceeded my expectations. The campus is great, it offers all sorts of activities and ways to get involved. Classes are interesting and challenging. Also, there is a lot to do and see in the city.
- The program exceeded my expectations. I really enjoyed courses’ content and professors’ skills and passion.
- Yes, I am totally satisfied with my experience at Loyola. I met so many nice people and I got to know an
When students were asked what was the most rewarding part of their time abroad, they said:

- Adjustment (3 students)
- Meeting U.S. Americans (7 students)
- Not education systems (3 students)
- Beginning of time at Loyola (3 students)
- Homesickness (2 students)
- Cultural room/bathroom (6 students)

When students were asked what was the most difficult part of their time abroad, they said:

- Getting physically drained (3 students)
- Experiencing the city (14 students)
- Getting good grades (14 students)
- Difficult to understand and get used to (3 students)

Therefore, whilst the different systems were somewhat difficult to understand and get used to, they did provide opportunities for broader learning.

The education system is totally different from the European one. The structure of the courses looked very different to my home institution. I would do it again and would recommend it to everyone. Thank you very much.

- Expectations were met very well. The quality of the school was good, and the support wonderful.
- Yes I gained a lot in confidence and experienced a lot great of things. But I think I would have like it better if I have had my own room. And of course a kitchen.
- My expectations were very low since I didn't know what to expect, despite the info material that I got. I just have not been to the US - not to mention studied there - before. That is why my expectations were exceeded by far. The ISEP program helped a lot by reducing time and effort during the application process, and was of course especially monetary very helpful compared to other options.
- Yes, I had an excellent experience, I learned a lot; was very happy with the program.
- It did because I had a really wonderful time. CIE took good care of us and I truly enjoyed my classes.
- Yes and no, I expected more from the buddy program but as I could get along well with the international group I didn't really need my buddy.
- It did. It gave me enough academic challenges and support if needed.
- Yes, absolutely. The program has helped me to find more motivation throughout the excellent professors that I had in my courses.
- yes it did because i meet new people from place i never thought about, i had i a better views about american culture my classes were great and my social network is now world wide spread
- Yes. I really enjoyed staying in US and studying at Loyola university.
- Yes, I could take classes which I cannot take at my home institution. I thought classes here were more practical.
- Yes, classes were at a good level.
- Yes, it has been a wonderful semester.
- The program was fantastic. I've been able to be enrolled in a big diversity of subjects and been able to choose the subjects according to my interests.
- Yes! Because I could find courses that adapted to my needs, and the experience in general in Loyola has been great!
- The program absolutely met my expectations. From the very get-go, CIE staff were organized and enthusiastic about welcoming us onboard and ensuring we were happy with our classes. They always made themselves available to us and were more than happy to answer all questions that we had. They also were wonderful in facilitating meet and greet events to ensure that we met and were able to keep in touch with other international students.
- It was so much better than I expected! I was quite nervous before coming here, I did not really know what to expect and I was afraid of being home sick. But it turned out there was nothing to worry about: because the orientation started right after we arrived I quickly got to know the other international students and it made me feel at home immediately! Even though I personally did not run into any problems, I felt that Kristy, Debbie and Susan were always there and willing to help in case there would be something I wanted to talk about.
- Yes, I learned a lot about everything, in an academic, cultural, personal way.

- When students were asked what was the most difficult part of their time abroad, they said sharing a room/bathroom (6 students), hurricane evacuation, pre-planning/visa, course selection (3 students), difference in education systems (7 students), beginning of time at Loyola (3 students), homesickness (2 students), cultural adjustment (3 students), meeting U.S. American students. Nothing (3 students), being only person from their country, language issues, transportation, leaving Loyola, being sick away from home, u. Illustrative student comments:
  - The education system is totally different from the European one. The structure of the courses looked more suitable to high school (assignments every day) I think would be rewarding for an American student learn to manage its own time instead of being forced to follow schedules.
  - To live with someone who wasn't really interested in to get to know you. I think the americans who are living with international students should say no to this if they don't like this because it's such a big part of our experience. For them it's just one semester of four years.
  - The most difficult was to get to know all the systems at Loyola, where you got stuff, where to go shop. it would've been nice to have someone who showed us around the city during the orientation. CIE was not that helpful because they never talked to us or showed themselves. actually the orientation was not that good either because when it was done it felt like we were left alone (both days). I, for example, didn't know were to go eat the first days because the campus dining were closed so i ended up at the vending machines.
  - I did not find anything really difficult. I had a really good support from CIE.
  - The most difficult part of my experience at Loyola was adapting to the different schooling and grading systems. Despite there being some similarities, the differences did take a little while to adapt to. Having been educated at a foreign university for five (5) years before coming to Loyola, I worked hard to shake autopilot habits and make the most a new academic learning experience. I was unable to take some subjects that I had hoped (due to differences in degree requirements), but thoroughly enjoyed and learned a lot from those I did take. My exchange at Loyola also gave me the chance to take subjects that I wouldn't have otherwise been able to take. Therefore, whilst the different systems were somewhat difficult to understand and get used to, they did provide opportunities for broader learning.

- When students were asked what was the most rewarding part of their time abroad, they said:
  - Getting good grades
  - Experiencing the city
  - Getting physically fit
  - Getting to know new people – U.S. Americans and internationals (14 students)
Two students got two minutes and unlimited texting for $25 per month. The students were very happy with this plan.

A majority of students (18/30) got a plan at AT&T (either via sim card or phone purchased) that offers 250

30/32 students purchased some sort of cell phone plan.

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EXCHANGE STUDENT EXPERIENCE AT LOYOLA

CLASSES

Students were asked which classes they took and whether they would recommend the classes to future exchange students. Students responded with very detailed notes about which classes they took, which they would/would not recommend. Overall, most students thoroughly enjoyed their classes with a few exceptions. Complete responses are available in Studio Abroad.

EVENTS

Favorite events of students who had buddies: Thanksgiving (2), Swamp Tour (3), Country Fair (2), Laura Plantation, Did Not Attend Events (4).

Favorite events of students who did not have buddies: Swamp Tour (3), Thanksgiving, King Cake Fridays, ALL.

Events students wished we had done: Plantation Tour, International Dinner, More meetings, Ghost Tour, Voodoo Museum, Swamp Tour (2).

Responses to the question "I felt that my buddy and I got along (1 = not at all, 5 = perfectly)"

- Five 1s, one 2, four 3s, two 4s, three 5s. Average rating is 2.8.

Suggestions for pairing from students:
- Pair with same taste in music
- Instruct/select buddies more carefully
- Make sure the buddy really has time and is serious (3)

Outside of official inBUS events, 8 students got together 0 time with their buddies, 5 students got together 1-2 times, 1 student got together 3-5 times, and 1 student got together 5 or more times.

EXCHANGE STUDENT EXPERIENCE AT LOYOLA

When asked whether they would recommend Loyola to other students, all students responded positively. Three students said they would recommend the experience, but that the academic level of business classes was lower than their respective universities. One student did not like public relations. A few comments that stood out:

- Yes. I like that fact that Loyola is a small university which makes it easier to feel at home and close to people. And also because New Orleans is a wonderful city!
- Yes, I would recommend Loyola. I liked the small class sizes and the small campus. It was easy to find the way around campus and to classes. The facilities are nice and the teachers and staff as well.
- Yes. Loyola provides students with a fantastic opportunity to pursue their academic interests whilst making the most of living in a truly unique city, Loyola is well-renowned for its academia and prestige whilst providing the perfect introduction to New Orleans and the South. It gives students a valuable global perspective and enables them to simultaneously pursue academic, social and personal goals.
- I would because the professors are motivated, the city is beautiful and there is lots to do both on and off campus.
- Yes, absolutely. It was the best experience I ever had in my life. I found people very helpful and kind.
- I would recommend Loyola because it is a great university. It is small and therefore you can get a more personal experience with colleagues and professors which makes you feel welcomed and helps you learn more. It is in a great city and is an all round great experience because of the school, the people and the city combined.
- I would, because people are nice there, International Students are very welcome and can participate in everything that a "normal" student also could participate in and the city itself is great
- Definitely. The teachers and classes are great, there really is a feeling of community on campus which makes you quickly feel at home. And next to that, New Orleans is probably the best city in the US! :)
- Definitely!! The best 4 months of my life have been in Loyola. Teachers, staff and students are simply great.

Responses from students when asked what Loyola could do to improve the exchange student experience:
- Let them stay in the residence halls a bit longer after school has finished/let them arrive earlier
- Create website or send messages about all on campus events
- Pre-departure information was confusing and repetitive
- Build a dorm with single rooms
- Make syllabuses available when choosing classes
- Improve inBUS and try to integrate exchange students more with U.S. Americans (4)
- Housing (4)
- Textbooks are expensive – warn students
- None (5)
- Organize New Orleans/Louisiana field trips
- Loyola does an excellent job (7)
- Integrate exchange students with international students
- Increase the number of exchange students
- Have someone who can help the internationals the first week
• Improve the airport pickup for students (2) – two students who were picked up at the airport felt they were just “dropped off” at Loyola and not really welcomed. As one student wrote “I remember I arrived 10 pm ish. 3 dudes came pick me up, brought me at Loyola...and wished me good luck. Probably one of the worst nights of my life, no blankets in the room, no pillow. No food. AC ridiculously low.”
• When asked “How have you benefitted from your exchange experience at Loyola?” Students responded very positively:
  • It totally changed the way I see things, now the world seems smaller to me and now it’s easier for me to meet new people, I’m less afraid of speaking in English.
  • I am more confident in speaking English and also more confident in my personality. Thank you for everything!
  • I gained knowledge in class, made new friends and saw a different culture.
  • In every way I imagined I would and more.
  • I improved my English skills. I explored myself through the classes that my home institution doesn’t offer. Experiencing different culture and social structure was the best benefit.
  • I am more mature responsible and i built new dreams and professional goal.
  • Yes, yes and yes. I am very proud and very grateful to have studied as an exchange student at Loyola.
  • It has been one of the best experiences of my life. I’ve been able to learn about another culture, improve my english and live unforgettable experiences.
  • I am more open minded, I have improved as a person, I have a new network of awesome friends and I probably experienced the best 4 months in my life.
  • It has made me very familiar with the region and its people, and the American college life. A great change in worldview and an urge to see even more.
  • I have benefitted from a different perspective of education from studying abroad. I met lots of new and interesting people. I experienced every part of the city.
  • I learned about the American culture as well as about other European Ones. I also learned a lot of things about myself and found new friends, plus I gained helpfull skills in my classes
  • I became more open to people, i proved my english, i made friends for live, i learned a lot in my classes and i grew because of the experience of adjusting to a new culture.
  • I think i’ve grown a bit as a person, and learned about american culture and the life in louisiana. i will definitley be back soon!!!
  • Many ways. I feel more comfortable with English language, I had the chance to meet local people and enjoy the maravelous company of international students. Music business is way more clear now.
  • Got more self-confident, improved the language, found friends for life.
  • I made a lot of friends, got to experience American college life, and I feel that moving to the US for half a year, all by myself, made me more independent and confident!
  • I have a greater understanding of America and New Orleans, the culture and the people that live here. Also understanding people from other countries, and the differences in language.

ORIENTATION
All students responded very positively when asked “Did the orientation at the beginning of the semester help you in your adjustment to Loyola and New Orleans? If so, in what ways? Is there anything we should add or delete?” The information about Loyola and New Orleans and the shopping trip stood out as being very helpful to students. One student suggested a guided tour of campus. One student commented that it was too long while another said that it felt like a “quick welcome.”

A few comments that stood out:
• Yes, first of all because you get to know the rest of the exchange students and second because it helped me to understand some cultural things about people here.
• Yes. It gave a broad, helpful introduction to all that Loyola and New Orleans has to offer. This was wonderful in giving students a flavor for the university and the city.
• Yes, it was a good way of getting to know the other exchange students so that you’re not alone. The booklet with information about the city was also very useful.
• Very much. I liked that orientation was immediately after we all arrived, getting to know the other international students quickly really helped in adjusting to the new experience and feeling at home.

EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES
One student commented that they did not know they could participate in extra-curricular activities. Students listed the following extra-curricular activities in which they were involved:
• None (17)
• Professional business fraternity Delta Sigma Pi (3)
• InBus
• AKA sorority
• Black Student Union
• Iggy Vision
• LUCAP (2)
• Criminal Justice Honor Society
• ISA (3)
• Intramurals
• Habitat for Humanity
• Contemporary Ensemble music group
• Swing Club

CHANGES PROPOSED BASED ON EVALUATIONS:
It is clear from the evaluations that exchange students at Loyola have an overwhelmingly positive experience and very little needs to be done to change their experience.
• The difference in education systems was cited the most (7 students) as a difficulty for students. We already discuss these differences in our orientation. However, perhaps they would have an easier time adjusting to the
U.S. academic system if they had more preparation and strategies for success.

- Ask a faculty member or Debbie Danna to speak at the exchange student orientation about this topic.

- The other difficulties cited by students: beginning of the semester adjustment (3 students), homesickness (2 students), cultural adjustment (3 students) confirm that we should continue to emphasize cultural adjustment in our orientation program and make sure that students know about resources available to them (Counseling, etc.).

- As expected, the most rewarding parts of their time abroad were “getting to know new people - U.S. Americans and internationals” (14 students) and “getting to know a new culture” (8 students). Again, this confirms that we should continue our programs that help them to meet people (welcome reception, inBUS, ISA, CIE events, etc.) and also continue to talk about culture at the orientation.

- Residential Life

  - 68% of students were satisfied with their experience in the residence halls. This will always be an issue because where students live is so important and it is difficult to please everyone. However, we have taken and can continue to take measures to improve the international student experience in the residence halls.

  - 30% of respondents said that they had lived with another international student in the residence halls. We have worked with residential life over the years to try to ensure that this does not happen because international students’ successful adjustment and ability to understand U.S. culture is contingent upon living with U.S. Americans.

  - We should continue meeting at least once a semester with Residential Life to build relationships between our offices, meet any new staff, reiterate the needs of international students and discuss any issues/concerns. Possible topics of discussion include:
    - Continue reiterating our philosophy of international student placement - ensuring that international students are placed with U.S. American students.
    - Following up on steps that have been implemented (i.e. ensuring that students are placed based on questions from application that include "Do you want to live with an international student?" or "Do you want to practice a foreign language?")
      - Continue reserving ___ # of spots for exchange students each semester.
    - Particular cases or issues that have come up.
    - Streamlining communication/applications – a lot of students write to us asking about their housing application. How can we get the information to students before they start asking?
    - Send summary of student feedback to Residential Life.

- Meal Plans – we should continue to automatically enroll all students in the $500 wolfbucks because this seems to be the right amount for exchange students and the majority of them were happy with this amount.

- Cell Phones – recommend the $25 plan from AT&T since this was the most popular and students were happy with it.

- inBUS

  - It is clear from the evaluations that students were very disappointed with inBUS. We decided to change the structure of inBUS based on CIE assessment meeting discussions and these exchange student evaluations. Some of the main areas of disappointment for the exchange students included how often they met with their buddies and the inBUS activities (quantity and type of activity). It became clear over the course of the year that the old model of pairing two students was not working well because it is very difficult to figure out which two students will be a good match.

  - We have decided for 2013/2014 instead to create small groups of students so that they have multiple opportunities for connection. Each small group will have one representative that will serve on the inBUS advisory board so that we ensure inBUS is planning enough activities and activities that its participants want to do.

  - Finally, given that U.S. students sometimes drop out of inBUS or don’t understand their responsibilities/roles, we will work this year to better prepare the U.S. American students for their role in helping the international students. We will host a lunch training during the second week of class before the first inBUS meeting so that the U.S. Americans can learn what is expected of them, what the international experience is like including cultural adjustment, and how the U.S. students can help the new international students in their adjustment process.

- Classes – Students were satisfied with their classes except for a few exceptions. Debbie Danna will continue to review the detailed feedback regarding classes.

- Evaluation Method

  - Almost all of the questions are open response questions, which makes it hard to analyze the data. In the future, some of the evaluation questions should be converted to selections so that it is easier to evaluate the results.
EVALUATION QUESTIONS:

Please rate your overall experience as an exchange student at Loyola. (please select one)
Did the program meet your expectations? Why or why not?
What was the most difficult part of your experience at Loyola?
What was the most rewarding part of your experience at Loyola?
Were you satisfied with the housing arrangements? (please select one)
In which Residence Hall did you live? (please select one)
If you didn't live with a U.S. American Student, would you have liked to? (please select one)
What other changes would have suited your housing needs/wants better?
Did you have a meal plan or wolf bucks? If yes, how many meals per week were on your meal plan? How many wolf bucks?
Were you satisfied with your meal plan/wolf bucks? If no, please explain.
Did you purchase a cell phone or SIM card? If yes, where did you purchase, how much did it cost, how much did you pay per month for service and did you have any issues with communications to people in the U.S. or abroad?
Did you participate in inBUS (Buddy) Program? (please select one)
Did the inBUS program help you adjust to your time at Loyola? Did you find it useful? Any recommendations?
What was your favorite inBUS event of the semester?
I wish that we had done the following inBUS activity:
I felt that my buddy and I got along (1 = not at all, 5 = perfectly) (please select one)
If you didn't get along very well, what suggestions do you have for pairing people better?
I did things with my buddy outside of "official" inBUS events (please select one)
Which classes did you take? Would you recommend the classes that you took to future exchange students? If not, please explain.
Would you recommend Loyola to other students at your university? Please explain.
What could Loyola do to improve the exchange student experience at Loyola?
Did the orientation at the beginning of the semester help you in your adjustment to Loyola and New Orleans? If so, in what ways? Is there anything we should add or delete from the orientation?
In what other student groups or extracurricular activities were you involved?
How have you benefitted from your exchange experience at Loyola?

EVALUATIONS:
Accessible through Studio Abroad.