CIE ASSESSMENT REPORT/PLAN

Report: Semester and Academic Year 2012/2013 Study Abroad Evaluations
Date: August 15, 2013

SUMMARY:
Evaluations were collected for 71 out of the 86 students on programs abroad during 2012/2013 by August 15, 2013. Of the students completing the evaluation, 16 students participated on a Loyola bilateral exchange or a Loyola-sponsored study abroad program. 14 participated on an ISEP exchange or direct program, and 41 studied abroad on a “non-Loyola” program offered through a third party provider. Overall, students reported a high level of satisfaction with their specific study abroad programs (94% felt that their program was the right program for them) and CIE provision of services (basically, all the students were satisfied with CIE services). Overall, Loyola exchange programs tend to be very highly rated. Evaluation of the services and academics of ISEP programs are highly variable and as we learn more about the programs, we can better advise students. Where we have a number of students looking for programs in a specific country, we will try and identify exchanges in those locations. The benefits of careful selection of universities abroad and the personal relationships that we build with these institutions cannot be overstated.

EVALUATION METHODS:
Students are required to complete the semester evaluation upon completion of their study abroad program. The questionnaire is available to students in their online study abroad accounts. Students are asked to comment on the following: the quality of their study abroad program, pre-departure preparation, on-site orientation, quality of academics abroad, foreign language learning, opportunities for connecting with host country nationals, culture-learning, housing, experiential learning, computers, communications, budgeting, packing, diversity issues, CIE services, staff abroad and recommendations for future students. A complete set of question items follows this summary.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS:
• When students were asked if their study abroad program was the right one for them, 94% of the students said “yes.” 2 students felt that it was not the right program for them because of cost, location or lack of services. Of those, one student felt that the location was perfect but the program cost itself was too expensive. Another student stated that if they could go back in time, they would select a different country.

• 96% (68/71) of students said that they would recommend their study abroad program to other students.
  ▪ All 29 students who participated in Loyola exchanges said they would recommend the program to other students.
  ▪ Three of the students who said “no” studied on non-Loyola programs and complained about the additional cost of going through a provider. One said that her program was affordable but the cost of living (in Norway) was too high. The other student said that the cost of the program was too high in relation to the cost of living and outside excursions that could have been cheaper.
  ▪ The other student had specific issues that would make them not recommend their program, citing issues with housing and that the staff chose “favorites.”

• 96% of students were satisfied with CIE services. The students who said “no” went on non-Loyola programs.
  ▪ One student felt alone in the selection process and wanted more options although she admits that she found the program last minute.
  ▪ One student felt that there could have been more follow-up by the CIE in regards to putting her contact with other students studying in her country.
  ▪ One student felt that the staff was not very knowledgeable of the options and said she “actually heard a staff member tell a group of students once they do not encourage students to choose Australia.”

• 97% of students were satisfied with the pre-departure orientation. Twelve students felt like the orientation was too long. Five students cited interacting with returnees as a high light in preparing to go abroad. Two students felt that they did not need the orientation. Students suggested the following improvements:
  ▪ More site-specific information. 3 commented that the information seemed to cater to European locations.
  ▪ 1 student would have liked more information on transcripts and grade transfer.
87% of students reported satisfaction with on-site orientation. 2 students arrived on-site after orientation. 87% were satisfied with the provision of services abroad.

- Quality of orientation was poor on the ISEP program at Nice University in France. The students did not feel that it adequately prepared her for the semester.
- The negative remarks of ICADE’s orientation had to do more with lack of opportunities for integration rather than material covered.
- Keele students in the Spring semester were not satisfied because many orientation activities were canceled due to a snow storm.
- Other complaints were general and often were contradicted by other students on the same program. One student complained that the NUIMaynooth orientation only showed him where to go around campus but the other students were satisfied with the orientation.

86% of students were satisfied with academic quality of their study abroad programs. Of the students who were not satisfied with the academic program, two were at the ISEP program in India. These students said that the world load was lighter and courses were “easy to blow off.” The other negative comments dealt with academic quality or specific issues and often it was in reference to one class. Numerous students commented that they enjoyed taking courses presenting a different perspective. Four students commented that they did not feel courses were challenging enough. Students at Loyola exchanged were generally satisfied and challenged by their courses abroad. One student commented “The pressure from my courses really made me feel like this was my home and not some sort of semester long vacation, which I find other students experience. Although it was hard work I felt as though I was really a part of the school and got to know my Dutch professors. I would love to study at the UvA again some day. Not only were the course strategies different, but they offered several classes that Loyola does not...I was happy to get this opportunity to learn more and decide where I want to go with my career in psychology.”

100% of students reported that studying abroad helped them to understand another culture.

2 students on exchange programs had problems with housing. CIE was aware of these prior to the evaluation.

Few students felt they were the direct targets of discrimination, but there were issues for women and street harassment and gender roles and for LGBT students. Some students did experience anti-Americanism or attention because they were foreigners. Students also observed racism within their host country against specific populations, e.g., many immigrant populations in European countries, and against Afro Irish and Jews in Ireland. The continuing issues of racism in South Africa were noted by 2/3 students.

Students offered some very insightful tips for future study abroad participants encouraging them to be open minded, do their research and learn as much of the language as they can. The comments below are typical.

- They need to know any and all important facts about their country- this could be currency, language, president, climate, time difference, political status, social and cultural atmosphere, etc.
- Understand that the experience will be so rewarding but there will be a 'down' time within the experience and do not let that get to you too much because it will pass and it is all part of the experience. They need to know any and all important facts about their country- this could be currency, language, president, climate, time difference, political status, social and cultural atmosphere, etc.
- Have little expectations and it will make their experience much more spontaneous and fun. As well as culture shock. At first you are so thrilled to be there, then the peak lowers and you find yourself in culture shock. Be prepared for that.
- Bring clothes for all different types of temperatures, pack light, bring layering clothes, lots of insect repellant, pepto bismol tablets, and cosmetics and hair products that you use regularly (because they are 2-3 times more expensive there. Also bring some local money before getting there. Research etiquette rules for your country as well as brush up on basics in the language (or as much as you have studied).
- Keep an open mind, meaning, be willing to have knew and different experiences, its okay if you dislike some of them, but always be respectful of different cultures. Also, just have fun!
- It’s a challenge in everyday. Everyday will be a physical and mental challenge. Your body will be tired, your mind will be exhausted. Take pictures of everything, journal frequently and rest when you can. It is
the only way to keep it all straight, but never miss an opportunity to try something new.

- Before you leave for your host country, don’t have any expectations about what you think your experience will be. Just go with an open mind and take everything in. Make sure you have a nice camera to take pictures and remember to WRITE in your journal. Sometimes you get so preoccupied with your life that you write one day and three months later you realize you haven't written anything since. You always want the memories, good or bad. Writing also helps if you go through a depression stage. You can cope more easily and when you get over it, you can see that things are pretty good in your new country.

- Students need to know why they’re leaving to study abroad. That is to say that students should set clear and achievable, yet ambitious goals for their study abroad experience. It’s important to keep these goals in mind while abroad, reevaluate and evolve them, and do your best to achieve them despite unpredictable circumstances. Then when you get home, you can say, "Hey look at all of the amazing things I have achieved!" Even if not all the original goals are accomplished, maybe others are that you hadn’t originally thought of. Life lessons arise from the twists and turns of our journey.

- Learn about the culture of your country including how the sexes are treated, the government and the turmoil they may have been in recently, daily expenses, and relations with other countries.

- Understand the city you are moving to. Know about the temperament of the people, know about the neighborhoods, about traditions, about transportation, everything! Just do as much research as possible.

- Research the country you are going to be living in- politics, religions, social norms and conflicts, as well as the must-see sites.

- go not for comfort or luxury but for adventures and new experiences, great food and easy traveling, and a period of great personal growth.

- Specific recommendations
  - Bring important documents, including a copy of your birth certificate
  - Don’t pack too much
  - Research the weather and pack appropriate clothes
  - Buy a pay-as-you-go cell phone on site
  - All students suggested that future study abroad students bring their own computers
  - Budget carefully and find out about the currency and the cost of living in advance.

- Students generally listed numerous benefits from study abroad and not just one. The most common benefits listed were:
  - Making new friends from the host country and other countries and learning how to interact effectively with people from other cultures (17 students)
  - Learning about and appreciating a new culture (19 students)
  - Gaining facility in the language (5 students)
  - Learning about oneself/becoming independent and self confident (17 students)
  - Clarified future academic goals (2 students)
  - Many students cited travel as the best experience

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<th>CHANGES PROPOSED BASED ON EVALUATIONS:</th>
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<td>• France – Continue to look carefully at the ISEP institutions in France and the evaluations to advise students on the sites with more appropriate services. Loyola will begin offering MICEFA programs in Paris as an option beginning in the spring as they offer a one week orientation.</td>
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<td>• Although only one student requested more information on grade transfer, this information needs to be clarified on the home pages for each exchange partner. ISEP grading information should continue to be included in all orientation packets.</td>
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<td>• Orientation information on academic differences needs to be expanded. While the majority of students are satisfied with their academic programs, it would be helpful to have more information online as well as to supplement the orientation.</td>
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<td>• Provide more information on gender roles abroad in online information.</td>
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<td>• While there seemed to be fewer issues with visas, CIE should continue to provide information on the visa at pre-departure orientation and include more detailed information on the Loyola exchange program home pages and in the application process. CIE will encourage students to start the visa application process themselves and make individual appointments with CIE staff if they encounter any difficulties.</td>
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<td>• Better communication with students throughout programs and provide more info on re-entry and reverse culture shock.</td>
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• 2 students had serious issues with housing in Loyola exchange programs. The office was aware of these before students left and worked directly with our partner. In one case, the program was canceled because the institution could not provide our students with housing assistance, Conservatory of Amsterdam. In the second case, UEL, the school said that this would not be an issue in the future and that housing either on or off campus would be available as long as students applied by the deadline. The changes were not based on the evaluation but on our individual work with the students.

“Keep doing what y’all are doing--changing student’s lives for the better!”

**EVALUATION QUESTIONS:**

How did you find out about this program?

Why did you choose this specific study abroad program and country?

Was this the right program for you? Why or why not?

Pre-departure orientation

On-site orientation

I was satisfied with the quality of the academic program.

Academic Program

I was satisfied with the quality of the foreign language instruction.

Please comment on the foreign language instruction.

Studying abroad helped me to understand the host country culture.

Facilities

The field trips/excursions that were part of the program academically enriched the program.

Please comment on the field trips/excursions.

The program provided adequate opportunities for interaction with host country nationals.

Please comment on your interaction with host country nationals.

The staff abroad provided adequate support with any problems or concerns I had.

Would you recommend this program to other students?

Please comment on the support of the host country staff.

Housing

Experiential learning

Program changes

Overall, what was the greatest benefit you gained from your study abroad experience?

What was the most difficult thing you encountered abroad?

Did you use the Loyola Center for International Education (CIE) as a resource?

Were you satisfied with the services provided by CIE?

What do you wish CIE and Loyola had done to assist you in studying abroad?

Is there anything else you would like CIE to know about your study abroad experience?

Advice on Computers

Advice on Communications

Advice on Budgeting
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**EVALUATIONS:**
Available in StudioAbroad