SUMMARY OF PROGRAM:

Evaluations were collected for 87 out of the 91 students on programs abroad during 2013/2014 by January 30, 2015. Of the students completing the evaluation, 28 students participated on a Loyola bilateral exchange or a Loyola-sponsored study abroad program. 24 participated on an ISEP exchange or direct program, and 33 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 (95% 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.

OBJECTIVES/GOALS:

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: 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 recommendations for future students. A complete set of question items follows this summary.

SUMMARY OF CHANGES IMPLEMENTED FOR THIS PROGRAM:

- France—students continue to apply to ISEP locations but MICEFA has been added as an additional option as a result of the 2012-13 evaluation
- The CIE has updated most partner pages with clearer info on grade transfer, including credit equivalencies and grading scales
- Orientation information on academic differences have been expanded, especially to include the varying grading scales and how they possibly translate back to Loyola.
- The CIE continued to provide visa information at the pre-departure orientation but also has provided information on each brochure page. Additionally, a visa question was added to the initial study abroad application so that students would begin to identify the requirements and timeline of applying for visas.
- Additional e-mails have been scheduled to improve communication with students while abroad as well as with re-entry programming and general information.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS:

- When students were asked if their study abroad program was the right one for them, 95% of the students said “yes.” The 2 students on the program in Italy felt that it was not the right program because of a lack of language training and because the people were too fashion oriented. 1 student felt that the location was too isolated for traveling. 1 student cited courses and housing specifically. 1 student said no because of university strikes and the inability to be fully immersed in Chilean course work. 2 students on non-Loyola specifically cited academics not being a good fit for them.
  - 85% (74/87) of students said that they would recommend their study abroad program to other students
  - 5 students who said no on Loyola exchange programs cited problems with the location. 3 said they would have preferred to be either in the city center or generally in a larger city. 2 would have selected a different city in the same country.
  - 5 students would not recommend their ISEP programs. 2 specifically cited the university and city. 3 students would not recommend ISEP because it created more bureaucracy or was more expensive.
  - 3 students on non-Loyola programs would not recommend their programs because of dissatisfaction with professors and not having the freedom to travel as much as they wanted.
- 92% (82/87) of students were satisfied with CIE services.
  - 1 student on a non-Loyola program felt that she needed help selecting a program that would have fit her dietary needs better.
  - 1 student specifically did not feel he had enough help with the application process
  - 1 student was disappointed in not receiving a response to her issues with the Loyola exchange (this was sent later in the semester at which point there was very little CIE could do to fix it. Additionally an in person meeting was scheduled upon her return).
  - 2 students felt they had questions that weren’t answered by the CIE and one added that the interview process was “harsh”
• 96% (84/87) were satisfied with the pre-departure orientation.
  o 2 students found the information uninteresting or felt they didn’t need it having lived abroad before
  o 1 student marked “not applicable” but commented that the returnee she spoke with made comments afterwards to other people about how unprepared she was
  o The highlights for many students were the handbooks (6), talking to other students (5), and receiving the journals (3).
  o One notable comment: “Loyola CIE staff, collectively, is the Bomb. Debbie was always extremely attentive and overcame challenges promptly.”
• 80% of students reported satisfaction with on-site orientation. 90% were satisfied with host staff support.
  o 9 students did not attend the on-site orientation. 7 students did not feel that the on-site orientation was long enough and did not feel prepared for getting into classes or being oriented to the city and culture.
  o The 2 at PUC-Rio felt the staff was overstretched and unresponsive.
  o 2 students for UEL were dissatisfied with staff support although 1 was quite satisfied, specifically mentioning Dovile.
  o 2 students at the ISEP location in Johannesburg were especially dissatisfied with the support services abroad. 1 commented that she had to solve her own issues.
• 83% of students were satisfied with academic quality of their study abroad programs. 2 students on non-Loyola programs were specifically dissatisfied with the academics and attendance policies. 7 students on ISEP programs stated they were dissatisfied but primarily gave reasons concerning different structures and support than they were used to at Loyola. Students at Loyola were generally satisfied and challenged with their courses abroad. 2 students at PUC-Rio felt that the World Cup negatively affected their time abroad and felt the courses weren’t challenging. One student commented “The class discussions in all (!) my courses were some of the best I’ve taken in my college career. I could on another site orientation. 7 students did not feel that the on-site orientation was long enough and did not feel prepared for getting into classes or being oriented to the city and culture.
  o The 2 at PUC-Rio felt the staff was overstretched and unresponsive.
  o 2 students for UEL were dissatisfied with staff support although 1 was quite satisfied, specifically mentioning Dovile.
  o 2 students at the ISEP location in Johannesburg were especially dissatisfied with the support services abroad. 1 commented that she had to solve her own issues.
• 99% of students reported that studying abroad helped them to understand another culture. The 1 student who disagreed had an overall bad experience on a non-Loyola program.
• Students on exchange programs lived in a variety of housing options. 13 lived on campus with international students. 8 lived off campus with international students. 2 lived off campus with other Americans. 4 lived with host families. While students were generally satisfied, the 2 students at PUC-Rio had issues with their host, which involved being charged more money and generally being uncomfortable in the situation. The CIE was not aware of such an issue at the time.
• Few students felt they were the direct targets of discrimination although some commented on what they witnessed or heard. There were issues for women and streets harassment and gender roles as well as for LGBT students. 9 students commented on street harassment and women generally being treated differently (this was primarily, Latin America, Italy, and African countries). 5 students commented on anti-Americanism or attention because they were foreigners. 3 students going to Latin American countries cited extra attention because of their blonde hair and height.
• 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
  o The only thing I would suggest is that they should prepare to experience a lot of new things and be open anything that may be new or scary. I think the best thing you can do is have an open mind. Also, bring a journal and some comfort food. It helps with the first few weeks.
  o Leaving to a different culture can be a little overwhelming, but you need to try your best to engage with the locals and adapt to the local culture.
  o That the next few months will go by so fast, and just to say "yes" to every opportunity, let yourself change, and get ready for the best time! Also, it takes a while to get adjusted, it won't automatically be amazing. Give it time because it will be worth it.
  o I think they need to know that it goes quicker than you can believe, so never take it for granted. To be happy to leave for a while.
  o It will change your life, if you let it.
  o Be open. The fact that you’ve decided to study abroad and taken the steps to do so already shows a dedication to stepping out of your comfort zone, but it is only that—the first step. That advice ('Get out of your comfort zone!') is so hackneyed that it barely means anything anymore. Live outside of your comfort zone. Don't just accept that you will feel lost and confused and alienated sometimes, get excited about it! Those moments of fear before talking to a stranger or signing up for a class or just buying groceries is not bad fear. It's growing fear. While you're there, you will feel like you're constantly changing but also not making any progress at all. It won't be until much later until you realized just how much you have altered. In other words, embrace the discomfort. Own it.
  o American students should drop all preconceived notions of what "Africa" is and be prepared to shift from judgment to an observational perspective on the continent especially pertaining to non-Western ideals.
  o Students need know that they will most likely never look at the world quite the same way the next time they are home, and that they are about to embark on an incredible adventure.
• Specific recommendations:
  o Make sure to look into what you can and cannot bring into the country. I had to file a special form to bring in medication because a lot of the medicine that we use here in the US is illegal in Japan and if caught with it you can go to jail.
  o Let your body adjust to the time change. Start by drinking only bottled water and switch to sachet a couple weeks later. Make sure you are eating hot prepared foods and to wash and sterilize your fruits and veggies.
  o Make sure you have the phone numbers of the school with you at ALL times. I ended up missing my flight twice due to bad weather. Therefore, my arrival date was postponed a day. I am so glad I contacted the Study
Abroad office of my institution abroad to let them know what times my planes would depart and arrive. That way, they could tell the people who were going to pick me up when to pick me up.

- Pack light, bring a hiking/travel backpack, and be smart. Make sure you know the social and cultural norms, and respect them.
- Students generally listed numerous benefits from study abroad and not just one. The most common benefits listed were:
  - Making new friends from the host and other countries and learning how to interact effectively with people from other cultures (21 students)
  - Learning about and appreciating a new culture (21 students)
  - Gaining facility in the language (14 students)
  - Learning about oneself/becoming independent, self confident or more mature (26 students)
  - Clarified future goals (4 students)
  - Travel (11 students)
  - One student specifically said the greatest benefit was “global political awareness”
- Experiential Learning/Internships/Service Learning
  - 17 students reported Service Learning or community service while abroad. Placements ranged from working with children, English tutoring, or other community engaged projects
  - 7 students reported doing internships with one additionally doing an internship after the semester was over. 1 student cited her internship as a result of connections made as a Gilman recipient.
  - 3 students reported doing independent study

**CHANGES PROPOSED BASED ON EVALUATIONS:**

- Orientation information on academic differences needs to be expanded. Although this was a change we made, it would be even more helpful to provide more information to students especially those going on exchanges.
- Provide more information on gender roles and women abroad in online information
- A large amount of students missed the onsite orientation so the CIE needs to reinforce the importance of these mandatory sessions. This can be done via e-mail reminders as well as pre-departure orientation.
- As a result of the student evaluations as well as the difficulty in getting transcripts or information, we will no longer suggest the University of Johannesburg through ISEP. Students wanting to go to South Africa will be encouraged to apply for non-Loyola programs in Cape Town.
- The students going to PUC-Rio may need more pre-departure support especially pertaining to housing.
- Popular web applications for communications should be given to students during pre-departure. In addition to Skype, students are using Viber, WhatsApp, MagicJack, and iMessage and Facetime (apple products). The handbook also needs to be updated accordingly.

**Evaluation Questions:**

1. Why did you choose this specific study abroad program and country? (*)
2. Was this the right program for you? Why or why not? (*)
3. Pre-departure orientation Rating (*)
   The Center for International Education pre-departure orientation prepared me for my study abroad experience.
4. Pre-departure orientation (*)
   Please comment on the Loyola pre-departure orientation program and materials.
5. On-site orientation (*)
   The on-site (arrival) orientation I received prepared me for life in the host culture.
6. On-site orientation (*)
   Please comment on the on-site (arrival) orientation.
7. I was satisfied with the quality of the academic program. (*)
8. Academic Program (*)
   Please comment on the courses and the academic program.
9. I was satisfied with the quality of the foreign language instruction. (*)
10. Please comment on the foreign language instruction.
11. Please select the housing that most closely resembles your housing abroad. (*)
12. Housing satisfaction (*)
   Were you satisfied with your housing? If no, please explain.
13. How did your housing help/hinder you from interacting with the host culture? (*)
14. The program provided adequate opportunities for interaction with host country nationals. (*)
15. Please comment on your interaction with host country nationals. (*)
16. Experiential Learning/Internships/Service Learning (*)
   Did you do any of the following: internship, volunteer, service learning, or independent study? If yes, please describe.
17. Did your program have field trips? (*)
   If yes, please comment on the field trips/excursions.
18. The staff abroad provided adequate support with any problems or concerns I had. (*)
19. Please comment on the support of the host country staff.
20. Program changes (*)
If it were under your control, how would you change the program you attended overseas.
21. Would you recommend this program to other students? (*)
Please answer yes or no with an explanation for choosing "No".
22. Were you satisfied with the services provided by Center for International Education? (*)
23. What do you wish CIE and Loyola had done to assist you in studying abroad? (*)
24. Studying abroad helped me to understand the host country culture. (*)
25. Overall, what was the greatest benefit you gained from your study abroad experience? (*)
26. What was the most difficult thing you encountered abroad? (*)
27. Discrimination
Did you observe any form of discrimination (racial, religious, gender, sexual orientation, etc.)? What would you recommend to students considering this destination should be aware of?
28. Advice on packing (*)
What items did you pack and not need while abroad? What items did you not bring that would have been useful?
29. Advice on preparing (*)
What should students do to prepare themselves before departure for their program overseas? What did you do that was helpful? What did you Not do that you should have?
30. Advice to students before they leave (*)
What would be the first and most important thing students need to know BEFORE they leave?
31. Advice to students on arrival (*)
What is the most important thing students need to know AFTER they arrive abroad?
32. Communications (*)
What types of computer or phone apps or websites did you use for communication while abroad (e.g. skype)?
33. Is there anything else you would like CIE to know about your study abroad experience?