CIE ASSESSMENT REPORT

Event: Pre-Departure Orientation Fall 2013
Date: November 8, 2013

SUMMARY OF EVENT:

Pre-departure orientation was held from 4-8 p.m. on Friday, November 8 in Mercy. The purpose of the pre-departure orientation is to prepare students for their study abroad experience. This orientation is an important way for CIE staff to convey information that will be relevant to students' time abroad. It also affords an opportunity for students to ask pressing questions and meet with past participants and current international students.

The Fall 2013 pre-departure orientation was held for students studying abroad in Spring 2014 on all programs, including Loyola exchange and study abroad, ISEP exchange and direct, and non-Loyola programs. 40/45 students attended the orientation. Five students (3 of which notified me of their absence) that did not attend attended a make-up orientation session. 33/40 evaluations were received this session as compared to the 35/42 evaluations received in the Spring 2013 Session.

OBJECTIVES/GOALS:

• Clarify policies and procedures
• Make students aware of the preparation that they need to do both on logistics and practical information as well as learning about their host country.
• Provide students with practical and logistical information
  • Travel documents
  • Travel arrangements
  • Money matters
  • Computers and communications
  • Health and safety
  • Academics
  • Travel documents
  • Registration and transfer of credits
  • Academics abroad
  • Resources for preparing
• Help students develop realistic expectations
• Help ease pre-departure anxiety
• Provide intercultural training
• Provide opportunities for students to meet other future study abroad participants, past study abroad participants, and current international students
• Enhance relationships between students and CIE staff

EVALUATION METHODS:

All participants are asked to complete an evaluation at the end of the pre-departure orientation presentations by CIE. The evaluation questionnaire asks students to comment on the following: day and time of orientation, topics of orientation, helpfulness of orientation, highlights of orientation, and suggestions for improvement. CIE staff reviews the event and the student evaluations, conducts an overall assessment, and proposes changes for future orientations.

SUMMARY OF CHANGES IMPLEMENTED FOR THIS PROGRAM IN PREVIOUS ASSESSMENT:

Based on student comments and assessment by CIE staff
• Pre-Departure Orientation was moved back to a Friday evening from 4-8, which concluded with dinner with returned and current exchange students.
• In the "Preparing to Go Abroad" session, slides were added after every section for questions to ensure that students are not confused.
• Journaling should be after Cultural Adjustment session, not done last and should allow time for students to write in their journals or have some type of exercise such as goals. This was done because of scheduling concerns but in a Friday night session, the "Preparing..." would not be split into 2 separate times.
• A different, more engaging, ice breaker activity was needed to be done at the beginning instead of just the map.
• Student worker involvement and input would also help to connect students with the info. Possibly assigning slides for Peer Advisors or bringing them to the forefront more. Also adding more student testimonials to the slides to reiterate certain points.
• Make sure to refer to handbook pages throughout the presentation.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS OF EVALUATION:

Student Evaluation – 33/40 evaluations received (83%)
Overall, the evaluations indicated that students were very satisfied with the pre-departure orientation
• Students found the "Preparing to Go Abroad" session most helpful in preparing for the study abroad experience. 30/33 (91%) "strongly agree" or "agree" that this session helped prepare them for their experience.
• 24/33 students (73%) "strongly agree" or "agree" that the "Cultural Adjustment" Session helped prepare them for the experience.
Students were generally satisfied with the content of the other sessions. The session on journaling had the lowest average rating. Only 19/33 (58%) "strongly agree" or "agree" that this session helped them prepare.

- When asked what they found most valuable or helpful in preparing to go abroad:
  - 7/24 (29% of those answering) respondents cited that the visa info was most helpful.
  - 5/24 (21% of those answering) cited that the money matters section was helpful.
- When asked whether their feelings or attitudes about study abroad had changed as a result of orientation:
  - 7/28 stated that they were more excited.
  - 6/28 mentioned they would begin or continue planning and preparing more actively for their time abroad.
  - 5/28 stated that their feelings had not changed although 3 of these stated that they became more excited.
- The students generally agreed that the day and time was convenient. 3/23 stated:
  - "Middle of the week 7pm or broken into two sessions.
  - "No please not a Friday for FIVE HOURS"
  - "A Saturday afternoon would be most helpful"
- 7 students complained that the session was too long and should be condensed.
- 17 returnees and exchange students committed to attending the dinner. Only about 4 cancelled or did not show. Additionally, more international exchange students showed up uninvited but contributed to the discussions with students in attendance. This is in comparison to the April orientation in which less than 10 students came to the Saturday lunch.

**CIE Staff Evaluation**

- The opening activity/ice breaker was changed: Students were asked for one thing they’re most excited about one they’re most nervous about. This worked better than the map and we should continue this or some similar icebreaker.
- In order to insure the collection of more responses, the dinner was omitted from the evaluation. As always, the students enjoyed the food and the interaction with both exchange students and the returned study abroad students. Splitting the dinner into smaller groups in separate rooms was a success. This seemed to be less overwhelming and allowed for the students speak more intimately with the returnees and current exchange students. Many of the students stayed for a long time talking to other students. Because we had all of the rooms reserved, we were able to separate the students into smaller, more country/region specific rooms.
- Pre-Departure Orientation should be kept to a Friday evening from 4-8, which would conclude with dinner with returned and current exchange students. This is more convenient for staff and student workers as well as returnees and exchange students. Although the location in Multimedia Room 1 in the library proved to be a more conducive environment, the library is not open after 6 on Fridays so the layout of the classroom and organization of students may need to be revised. The classrooms are easily cramped but students sat with other students going to their location or region.
- In comparison to previous orientations, this one was much less “Eurocentric.” Notable comments included:
  - "I wanted to travel a lot while I am in Europe, but since listening to the students, I think it may be a good idea to learn more about the country that I am visiting."
  - "Unfortunately, I feel as though the orientation was geared mostly to people going to non-English speaking countries, so I don’t think I got as much as I should have out of the orientation."
  - "A representative from Europe should be added to the panel (she asked questions, but didn’t really go into her European trip)."
    - This could be that due to the fact that the panel members and moderator all went to non-traditional locations. (Lizzie moderated but did not discuss her time in Norway). The European rep did not show up for the panel. Additionally, this group had more students going to Australia and New Zealand than we’ve previously had so this could possibly be eliminated for the next orientation since these students will be asked to come as returnees.
- The Peer Advisors were great. Beth and Kristi were assigned multiple slides of the "Preparing" session. Lizzie moderated the panel and would be good taking on more tasks. The students seemed to pay attention and respect the information they were giving.
- Although the Journaling session was not immediately after the culture session it seemed to work well. In the future we should allow time for students to write in their journals or have some type of exercise such as goals.
  - More time should be dedicated to reviewing the goals work sheet and giving students time to write in their journals. This should be at least 30 minutes rather than 15.
- Although the office was short staffed and Debbie had to do complete culture and adjustment session in very limited time due to the overrun of the preparing section, students still seemed to enjoy and understand it. 5 students cited it as the most valuable. Perhaps in the next session, more examples and photos can be shown rather than the full theories. This is especially true for the adjusting part. More examples, possibly from students.
CHANGES FOR NEXT SEMESTER BASED ON STUDENT COMMENTS AND ASSESSMENT BY CIE STAFF:

• Prepare emails or set up learning content and assessments in StudioAbroad on the following topics:
  o LGBT – update web information
  o Women abroad can be expanded
  o Sexual assault
  o Alcohol and drugs
  o Grades and credit transfer
  o Learning about your country
  o Include all areas covered in orientation in case they need these.

• The "Preparing to Go Abroad" session went over time once again. Rather than dedicating more time to this, e-mails should be prepared before the orientation for the most basic info such as flights, packing, and possibly jet lag and green travel. These are easily found online and most students seem to know the resources available.

• The handbook needs to be revised.
  ▪ Either it will need to be expanded to provide more information or it will be reduced to provide a more comprehensive handbook on the website. This would allow students to read the handbook and directly click links to outside websites such as those dedicated to diversity or even just flight finders.
  ▪ Alternatively, it could be created as a pdf and then uploaded to a USB and given to each student. This would make it more portable and accessible and students would likely use the usb for class materials abroad as well.

• The redundancy of information was reduced from last year’s presentations. For next year, efforts should be made more concise.

• Adjustments to food order (see below).

• Invite all of the exchange students; they seem to all show up at once anyway and only added to the conversations with students.

Pre-Departure Orientation Evaluation: Spring 2014

Evaluation Responses
Likert scale evaluation of sessions
1- Strongly Disagree, 2- Disagree, 3 – Neutral, 4 – Agree, 5 Strongly Agree,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>This session helped me prepare for my study abroad experience</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>Ave.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Preparing to Go Abroad</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Adjustment and Resources for Preparing</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journaling</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Returning Home, Closing Remarks, Final Q&amp;A</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Has the orientation influenced your attitudes/goals for studying abroad? If yes, in what way?

   ➢ By hearing the past study abroad people speak, I realize that it’s very important to get involved. That is why I want to interact with other Japanese people as much as possible and see many parts of the city/country.
   ➢ Yes, it has made me think of cultural differences that I had not thought of before and travel arrangements that I wasn’t aware of. I enjoyed hearing from other study abroad students during the session too.
   ➢ The orientation has proved to be very helpful and insightful, as I had some pending questions regarding my final decision to study abroad that were answered.
   ➢ Yes I know now I need to research Brazil a lot more.
   ➢ Yes, it made me even more excited to go. Helped me think about my goals.
   ➢ It has made me think of certain things that I would not have (such as making sure I learn about where I am staying, not just travel). It has made me more excited/anxious to go 😄
   ➢ It has made me realize that although I am not leaving for a number of months, there is a lot I need to do before I leave!
   ➢ It has influenced my attitude towards studying abroad. I am now more aware of my need to prepare for extenuating and unexpected circumstances.
   ➢ Yes, I am more concerned with setting specific goals for my experience. I am more excited about leaving and less about coming back.
   ➢ I am very excited to go! This session made it more real and I feel like I know what I have to do to prepare and get the most out of my experience.
   ➢ Yes, because it has reminded me that I need to go in prepared and almost meticulously study my host location, its people, etc. In addition, that a balance has to be formed.
   ➢ I want to be more organized with the kind of goals I want to meet while abroad.
   ➢ No, my goals have stayed the same.
   ➢ Yes it has—it was very helpful to have things put in perspective.
   ➢ Yes, it has stressed the importance of getting my pre-study abroad work done as soon as possible.
Yes. I didn’t realize that journaling can be a big deal and can give me reference in the future. I think I should start doing that for my study abroad.

I’ve studied abroad so I’m a little more aware of what to expect but y’all went over all the things I wish I’d been conscious of when I traveled.

Not really. I was excited before and I still am.

Yes, all the information is interesting and practical.

Makes me feel more excited. I want to do more, and I will definitely plan some more.

Yes, it has made me more aware of what I need to do in terms of research, packing, etc.

Has made me more excited. Yes, classes will not be pass/fail. Need to be a student more than a butterfly.

It’s definitely gotten me excited.

Yes, I feel more prepared and have better peace of mind.

Yes, I feel ready to make more concrete goals. I also feel like I’ve been pointed in the right direction to better prepare for my time abroad.

Not really.

Yes. I want to do a lot of research now before I get there.

Yes, made me more aware of how significant it is.

Yes, it made me think about goals I need to set before I leave.

Made me realize I will figure out a lot when I get there and that if I’m independent and adventurous it will be so great. My attitude is more positive now.

Yes, got me way more excited to go!!!

2. Have your feelings about studying abroad been affected by pre-departure orientation? If yes, in what way?

I feel better because I am more aware of the risks, preparation steps for study abroad. It has definitely helped with my planning.

I wanted to travel a lot while I am in Europe, but since listening to the students, I think it may be a good idea to learn more about the country that I am visiting.

It encouraged me even more to follow through with study abroad plans and goals, so now I am even more excited to go abroad.

No, my feelings are unchanged.

Yes, I’m ready to go! I’m excited!

Unfortunately, I feel as though the orientation was geared mostly to people going to non-English speaking countries, so I don’t think I got as much as I should have out of the orientation.

A little more nervous.

Yes, I feel that I need to being preparing NOW regardless of how much time I have. Better to be over-prepared than underprepared.

Just made me feel more excited and equipped.

No. Actually, I am more excited.

Not really, I want to go just as bad.

Yes! I am even more excited!

Yes—it made me realize how much I need to get done in a short amount of time.

Yes. People don’t usually realize how big of a role color lenses (cultural) play to understand a foreign culture. I think Debbie explained the concept in an appropriate manner.

SO MUCH MORE EXCITED.

No, but I’m just more excited.

Yes. It is a little scary, but that’s ok.

It just made me realize I need to start preparing now.

Very excited to go.

It’s becoming more realistic so I am becoming nervous.

Yes, it feels more real now!

Not really.

No, not really. But if anything changed it was that I realize more that I will need to meet locals.

I learned a lot of great tips.

Yes, it made me want to do more research to be better prepared.

Be more prepared. Last part was good. I want to take time to do a good job when I journal.

Yes, made me feel calmer since I realized everyone has the same concerns and fears as me!

Made me more ready to experience a new culture.

3. Is there anything that should be added to or deleted from the orientation? What?

Nothing added or deleted. It’s perfect.

It was a little long, but I felt like a lot of the information was really important and good to know. I enjoyed it.

A little more insight into financial matters and how to transport other belongings than just clothes and
No, my feelings are unchanged.
Yes, I’m ready to go! I’m excited!
A representative from Europe should be added to the panel (she asked questions, but didn’t really go into her European trip).
A lot of people were concerned with personal problems that I feel shouldn’t have been addressed in these sessions. It was a big waste of time.
I think there should be more of an effort to focus on communication/manners as opposed to flight/money information. We can look up money and flight questions on Google, but it is hard to learn how to communicate unless we have examples.
The journaling part seemed a little unnecessary. I think it was fine to go over, but maybe less thoroughly. Other than that I found each session helpful, thorough, and well thought out. Thanks!
Brief photo class would have been cool! Perhaps optional?
I believe everything said was necessary. Maybe a little more about coming back, and more specific examples.
No.
The PowerPoint from the main presentation should be available online.
It was a little long, maybe condense some sections. Also a male panelist.
If we can break the session into two sessions, it might not be so overwhelming.
Nope, it was covered very well.
I thought it was a little tedious and drawn out. As college students, we should know a lot of this already.
This is very practical information, but for someone who has already studied abroad and traveled, it was redundant.
Intros of all in room. Panel was a little long.
Specific info about consulates would be nice.
It’s too long! I think it would be much more effective if it was two shorter sessions.
I think Cultural Adjustment was really interesting and I’d like for the full time to be used for this. I’d also like for questions to be saved to the end.
The returning home issue should be stressed more. For me, returning home after being abroad is much harder to deal with than it is initially going abroad.
It needs to be shorter. This was brutal. There was a lot of common sense stuff.
Cultural adjustment section should be streamlined/improved.
Make it shorter. I lost interest.
Nope! Loved the food! Delicious!
Yeah, the section about health and safety, could be more brief because everyone handles jet lag differently (The section on medication was good). It was just way too long for me to pay attention to. I just feel like most of the stuff (other than the part of the presentation talking about the documents and stuff) we could find out on our own. The thing is it’s so long I just tune out. I paid attention to all the things about documents, packing, medicine, and visas. But all the stuff about culture and native cultures we can find out! Honestly, it was sooo boring because it is so long and vague.

4. What information did you find most valuable of helpful in preparing to go abroad?

- Baggage/packing. Money
- The panel was very beneficial
- Money info
- Visa info. Staying in contact with Loyola
- Visa info.
- The course credit info.
- The panel
- Electronic and visa info
- Country-specific visa info
- Preparing to go abroad: what to pack, money matters, safety
- Academic/visa
- Culture shock and dealing with it.
- Experience sharing—hearing what it was like in different cultures helps make you more aware that you’ll run into a lot of strange things
- Pre-departure
- I thought it was great that past study abroad students shared their experiences and discussed how hard it was to return to Loyola.
- Knowledge about visas, communication
- The culture shock, mannerism, etc.
- The panel discussion
- Cultural differences. Visa info
- I found the packing and financial part most helpful!
- Culture presentation and packing information
- The technology
- The budget presentation was very helpful
5. Was this day and time convenient for you? If not, what day and time would be best for future orientations?

- Convenient
- Yes!
- Yes
- Yes
- Friday is fine.
- Fine time
- Middle of the week 7 PM or broken into two sessions
- **No** please not a Friday for FIVE HOURS
- Yes. It worked well.
- Yes
- Yes and yes.
- Yes, perfect
- It was fine
- Yes
- Yes
- Yes, a little too long though
- Yes
- Yes! Perfect timing
- It should be shorter and not so late
- Yes it was convenient
- Yes
- Yes Friday is great
- A Saturday afternoon would be most helpful.

6. Any additional comments you have regarding the orientation?

- It was general, but useful in helping students plan for travel.
- Make it shorter
- Way too long
- Thank you for the journal. I always <3 writing.
- Lebanon’s!!!
- Nope ☺
- Awesome time!

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4:00-4:30   Welcome, and Student Introductions (ME 311)
            Debbie Danna, Director, Center for International Education
            Alisa Townes, Study Abroad Advisor
            Susan Dempsey, Office Manager
            Beth Cook, Lizzie McCollom, Samantha Shepherd, Kristi Marie Weston, Peer Advisors

4:30-5:45   Preparing to Go Abroad
            Alisa Townes, Peer Advisors

5:50-6:50   Cultural Adjustment and Resources for Preparing
            Debbie Danna

6:50-7:20   Panel with Past Study Abroad Participants and Current Exchange Students

7:20-7:40   Journaling
            Debbie Danna

7:40-7:50   Returning Home, Closing Remarks, Final Q&A
            Debbie Danna and Alisa Townes
Dinner with Regional Representatives

Pre-Departure Expenses
Event November 8, 2013

Lebanons
6 dozen falafel
2 trays lula kebab dinners with rice
2 trays chicken kebabs with salad
2 pints hummus with pita

$493.47

Students Helpers
2 x $10 per hour x 6 hours
(there were also 2 work study students present)

$120.00

COSTCO
2 large containers of chocolate truffles
3 large bags of trail mix
2 vegetable trays
2 bags grapes
Don’t have the cost on this

NOTE: Don’t shop at COSTCO for the food items

What you need is:
2 large bags of Winn Dixie pretzels
2 large bags of Planters or name brand Trail Mix
5 or 6 plastic containers of cookies – Winn Dixie has THE best oatmeal raisin and chocolate chip for after the meal
2 bags of seedless grapes
5 Gallon jugs of water
Some sort of other drink – we’re staying away from soda as much as possible