Pre-departure orientation was held from 4-8 p.m. on Friday, March 28 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 Spring 2014 pre-departure orientation was held for students studying abroad in Fall 2014 on all programs, including Loyola exchange and study abroad, ISEP exchange and direct, and non-Loyola programs. 48/54 students attended the orientation. 12 students (6 of which notified me of their absence and 4 who were added after the deadline) attended a make-up orientation session. 42/48 evaluations were received this session as compared to the 33/40 evaluations received in the Fall 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.
42/48 evaluations received

- The opening activity/ice breaker while simple, seems to work best. Students were asked for one thing they're most excited about one they're most nervous about.
  - It’s a good transition into introducing what we talk about in preparing to go abroad and the cultural adjustment process since many students bring up similar topics or concerns.
- Evaluations indicate 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
  - 93% "strongly agree" or "agree" that this session helped prepare them for their experience.
- 36/42 students "strongly agree" or "agree" that the "Cultural Adjustment" Session helped prepare them for the experience.
- Students were generally satisfied with the content of the various sessions
- The session on journaling had a much higher rating than in the previous 2 sessions. 76% "strongly agree" or "agree" that this session helped them prepare. (in comparison to 58% the previous semester.) 10 students were "neutral" but none "disagreed" that the session was helpful.
- As usual, the students enjoyed the food and company of returnees and current international students.
  - Because we had all of the rooms reserved, we were able to separate the students into smaller, more country/region specific rooms.
  - This allowed for the students speak more intimately with the returnees and current exchange students.
- When asked what they found most valuable or helpful in preparing to go abroad:
  - 10/39 respondents cited that the panel discussion was most valuable
  - 9/39 cited that the culture discussion was helpful, one student specifically enjoyed the U-Curve
  - 13/39 cited that the general preparing to go abroad session was most helpful (including academics and packing)
- When asked whether their feelings or attitudes/goals about study abroad have changed as a result of orientation:
  - 7/38 mentioned they would begin or continue planning and preparing more actively for their time abroad
  - The changes in attitude were varied but these responses stood out:
    - "Most definitely, changing my perspective and actually realizing how different it'll be for the next four months that I'll be abroad. Challenging myself but also to accept differences and new adventures. To be fully acceptable of what the country has to offer."
    - "The orientation made me aware of the information that I don’t know and NEED to find out. Yes, this orientation also influenced my attitude for study abroad. I was nervous about the process but now I feel much more aware/informed and excited."
    - "I think this session was very helpful and did make me want to rethink and establish more goals for studying abroad. I’m glad they discussed cultural adjustments.”
- When asked whether their feelings have been affected by orientation:
  - 14/41 students stated that they are more excited with one stating that he is "really stoked".
  - 6 students responded that they felt more confident and comfortable with going abroad now.
  - 2 students stated that they feel a bit more nervous.
- Many students had suggestions for material to be added or deleted:
  - 3 students commented that the journaling was not necessary for them or was a "given"
  - 3 students wanted more specific info coming from the panel discussion, including longer time.
  - 4 students wanted more country specific information
    - "Interactive portion- e.g. role play by country a problem may have to deal with and how you would deal with it."
    - "Maybe more time to talk between people travelling to the same countries to integrate goals and expectations.”
- In comparison to last semester, this session seemed more regionally focused. Notable comments included:
  - "Obviously y’all can’t cover every country, but the focus seemed to be more on Europe and Latin America. Most students tend to travel to those areas. Because countries in Asia or Africa are so unique from Western countries, it would be nice to hear more about those specific differences.”
  - "It’s kind of Western European &Latin American- centric.”
- 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.
- The students generally agreed that the day and time was convenient:
  - 7/39 students stated that the day was not convenient
  - 5/39 students said that although the time was convenient, they would like it split into 2 shorter meetings.
  - "This day and time was good for me. They should maybe send out the initial notice further in advance.”
  - "Was convenient. Great that we were notified weeks in advance!”
- 15 returnees and exchange students committed to attending the dinner. Many cancelled or did not show. Additionally, more students showed up and contributed to the discussions with students in attendance.
  - All of the students were solicited by e-mail as well as in facebook groups.
  - More may have showed but there was inclement weather as well as many different viruses going around so some students, including those going abroad, were sick.

**CHANGES FOR NEXT SEMESTER:**
Based on student comments and assessment by CIE staff
- 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.
- Prepare emails on the following topics:
  - LGBT
  - Women abroad
  - Sexual assault
  - Alcohol and drugs
  - Learning about your country
  - Include all areas covered in orientation in case they need these.
- Prepare learning content and assessments in Studio Abroad on the following topics:
  - Grades and credit transfer
  - Financial aid and budgeting
  - Visas and immigration info
- The "Preparing to Go Abroad" session went over time again although quite a bit of information was cut.
  - More time does not need to be dedicated to this session although it may be a good idea to give the introductions and welcome 5 more minutes.
- The "Cultural Adjustment and Resources for Preparing" took approximately one hour but the culture talk was 40 minutes so this section could possibly be expanded to include more activities with students.
  - Involving the peer advisors in the adjustment presentation seemed to be a good addition. The students were engaged and more attentive.
  - For the culture session, an activity should be added to connect the students more with the information.
    - A "Curious/Obvious" activity could be added with pictures that could possibly introduce many concepts such as gender and sexuality and other issues to demonstrate the importance of changing perspective.
- The handbook needs to be digitized.
  - This could be a web document or other material in Studio Abroad. 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.
- While the Mercy classrooms are convenient, the room was packed to capacity. Luckily, 10 students did not come but if everyone had showed up, we would not have had the space. This will have to be considered next year if we have over 50 students. We will either:
  - Have 2 separate sessions on 2 different dates dividing students either by region or program type.
  - Have concurrent sessions on the same night but divide students into similar groupings and have smaller rotating sessions (as done in Spring 2012).
- The redundancy of information was reduced from last year's presentations.
- The peer advisor team was an excellent asset to the entire session. They were involved and prepared for each session and took the task very seriously.
  - This semester Lizzie took on more responsibility with the power points.
- Although the office was short staffed and Alisa had lost her voice, students still seemed to enjoy and understand the pre-departure session.
- Adjustments to food order (see below).

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>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preparing to Go Abroad</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Adjustment and Resources for Preparing</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journaling</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Returning Home, Closing Remarks, Final Q&amp;A</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10 (NR)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

- It has definitely made me think of practical ways to prepare.
- I feel very excited.
- Yes, it has made me realize I need to plan what I will do in my country to get the most out of my experience.
- I think that it was more of reinforcement from what’s online and had been touched on but in more depth. I liked the "Preparing to Go Abroad" portion the most.
- It made everything more real.
- It has helped me realize how life in Turkey might be different, and in what ways Turkish culture differs from American culture.
- Yes, I feel reassured in my attitudes toward being okay with immersing myself in a totally different culture.
- Yes, I want to throw myself into the language practice.
2. Have your feelings about study abroad been affected by pre-departure orientation? If yes, in what way?

- It has eased my mind a lot about all the apprehension that comes from such a radical change but to be told that it'll be okay.
- Yes, at first I was very nervous about going abroad because I didn’t really know anyone that would be going with me. But now I’m more comfortable knowing that another student from my class will be with me! Now I will definitely explore everything I can while abroad.
- Not really, but it helped me realize the things I have yet to do before going abroad.
- Yes, I was nervous to go study abroad before I got to orientation, but now I’m a bit more nervous than before.
- Yes, just in the sense that it has made me think to address more practical matters such as eating out but also good ideas like journaling my experience.
- I feel a little more prepared to go abroad, and what to expect when going. Yes, I want to go a lot more than I did before.
- Not really my attitudes, but I do now have a goal that makes connections with locals.
- The orientation made me more excited for my upcoming trip. It also shifted my goals a bit by wearing what other people were excited or concerned about.
- Definitely. I don’t feel as nervous anymore. I realize now that many people will be going through the same things as me. I’m more excited than I’ve ever been to go abroad.
- Yes. It has opened my mind to other things to consider for studying abroad. It has just generally made me even more excited.
- Yes. My mind has been eased.
- Yes, I am more concerned with learning the political background of my country.
- Yes, it has made me more excited and more serious about my trip.
- Yes, it has made the idea of studying abroad a reality and made me think realistically about how I need to prepare myself.
- I want to do MORE than what I’ve planned.
- Most definitely, changing my perspective and actually realizing how different it’ll be for the next four months that I’ll be abroad. Challenging myself but also to accept differences and new adventures. To be fully acceptable of what the country has to offer.
- The orientation made me aware of the information that I don’t know and NEED to find out. Yes, this orientation also influenced my attitude for study abroad. I was nervous about the process but now I feel much more aware/informed and excited.
- Yes. No.
- I think this session was very helpful and did make me want to rethink and establish more goals for studying abroad. I’m glad they discussed cultural adjustments.
- It is becoming more real, but other than that there isn’t much change. I am a bit more intent on keeping a journal.
- Yes, it made me realize how much I still need to do and what exactly I have in store for me in the near future.
- Yes, I am excited to pack only one bag.
- Listening to the peer advisors has made me want to travel around my country more.
- Yes, it has brought my attention to a lot of cultural things I may run into that I should prepare for. I’ll also be a lot more cautious knowing what to expect.
- The orientation taught me to get more prepared with visa and financial information. The Indian culture gram gave me a general picture of what the basic ways of Indian life are.
- Yes and no. I didn’t have any worries before, but I became more aware of certain things (hand signs, hair dryers) that I needed to know about.
- Yes, I’m more excited to document my experience for future study abroad participants.

Yes, at first I was very nervous about going abroad because I didn’t really know anyone that would be going with me. But now I’m more comfortable knowing that another student from my class will be with me! Now I will definitely explore everything I can while abroad. 

I feel a little more prepared to go abroad, and what to expect when going. Yes, I want to go a lot more than I did before. 

Not really, but it helped me realize the things I have yet to do before going abroad. 

Yes, I was nervous to go study abroad before I got to orientation, but now I’m a bit more nervous than before. 

Yes, just in the sense that it has made me think to address more practical matters such as eating out but also good ideas like journaling my experience. 

I feel a little more prepared to go abroad, and what to expect when going. Yes, I want to go a lot more than I did before.

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Yes. My mind has been eased.

Yes, I am more concerned with learning the political background of my country.

Yes, it has made me more excited and more serious about my trip.

Yes, it has made the idea of studying abroad a reality and made me think realistically about how I need to prepare myself.

I want to do MORE than what I’ve planned.

Most definitely, changing my perspective and actually realizing how different it’ll be for the next four months that I’ll be abroad. Challenging myself but also to accept differences and new adventures. To be fully acceptable of what the country has to offer.

The orientation made me aware of the information that I don’t know and NEED to find out. Yes, this orientation also influenced my attitude for study abroad. I was nervous about the process but now I feel much more aware/informed and excited.

Yes. No.

I think this session was very helpful and did make me want to rethink and establish more goals for studying abroad. I’m glad they discussed cultural adjustments.

It is becoming more real, but other than that there isn’t much change. I am a bit more intent on keeping a journal.

Yes, it made me realize how much I still need to do and what exactly I have in store for me in the near future.

Yes, I am excited to pack only one bag.

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Yes and no. I didn’t have any worries before, but I became more aware of certain things (hand signs, hair dryers) that I needed to know about.

Yes, I’m more excited to document my experience for future study abroad participants.
3. Is there anything that should be added or deleted from the orientation? What?

- It was well done.
- PowerPoints do not have to be so long. Some things could be said quicker.
- The beginning of the orientation could be more brief. Some information was very basic and most students already knew the info.
- Interactive portion- e.g. role play by country a problem may have to deal with and how you would deal with it.
- I would add more info about overcoming language barriers. A lot of students were concerned about that.
- Maybe remove the recording your experience (already known for most people).
- Nope.
- Keep it the same.
- More clear on how to go about planning.
- None.
- The orientation was VERY long.
- A few things should be deleted because it’s too long!
- Shorten the orientation. It’s way too long.
- Maybe more time to talk between people travelling to the same countries to integrate goals and expectations.
- Thought it was all helpful in its own way. Some was redundant, but was good all in all. Maybe have some males on the panel.
- I think that the "Preparing to Go Abroad" was extremely helpful, but was gone over very quickly. Maybe it should get its own orientation.
- The cultural adjustment/preparing was a bit long.
- The whole thing could be shortened. Each segment that is. If I had to pick one specific thing it would be to shorten the phases of integration.
- No.
- I wish there was more info on how to do the research. The speakers kept talking about doing research (in regards of obtaining a visa, etc.), but I wish they would’ve given more details on how (e.g. websites).
- No, I like the panel discussion. Good to hear various experiences and opinions.
- No.
- Longer Q&A period with past study abroad participants.
- More details about the countries the students are actually going to.
- No.
- Nope.
- I think we should add a more in-depth section about applying for visas. When do we need to have it done? Adding a section about flights- when to purchase tickets.
- Maybe a little too much on adapting to the culture.
- I think that the reflecting on the experience was not too helpful for me, maybe shorter.
- Maybe appropriate clothing?
- It’s very beneficial, but 5 hours is a long time. It will all be worth it because food is provided!!
- I feel like journaling is a given and doesn’t need a lecture.
- I think a section committed to explaining common issues experienced within the countries each student is going to will help. They could be short but this introduction would be nice and make it feel it’s somewhat individualized.
- Obviously y’all can’t cover every country, but the focus seemed to be more on Europe and Latin America. Most students tend to travel to those areas. Because countries in Asia or Africa are so unique from Western countries, it would be nice to hear more about those specific differences.
- Panel is useful but too broad to be very helpful.
- No.

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

- That we need to get New Zealand medical insurance before going.
- The student experiences and also tips how to look a new country.
- The panel info.
- Specifics about what to bring, public transit, how to handle specific emergencies/issues.
- Budgeting, student panel.
- The information on practical things like visas and the panel discussion.
- Don’t over pack, bring one suitcase.
- I got a free Moleskin journal! Woohoo!!
- The adjustment information.
- Cultural discussions.
- Cultural adjustments was really good. Packing info and visa info. The panel was the best/most helpful.
- I found the discussion panel with study abroad peer advisors to be the most helpful. It was both interesting and informative to hear about each peer’s story and situations.
- Budgeting my expenses. Packing only one luggage.
- The student panel and the sharing of a variety of experiences.
- The panel.
- Small details to remember.
- Sources for health/$$ info. Items to take from U.S. to host country.
- The panel.
- The presentation on cultural differences- very interesting. I thoroughly enjoyed it.
- Talking one-on-one with previous participants.
- Everything – specifically the panel discussion.
- Visa & housing.
- The whole first section about preparing to go abroad. The panel was also helpful.
- The info on how to prepare.
- How to deal with cultural shock.
- The panel info on actual issues one might encounter but didn’t think to consider (e.g. peanut butter).
- Student panel.
- What to pack. Handbooks that were given to us.
- The validation of abroad credits to Loyola credits.
- The "Preparing to Go Abroad" section.
- What to pack. What to expect.
- What to expect with cultural differences.
- The U curve.
- The differences in communication (verbal & non-verbal) among cultures (e.g. eye contact, perception of time, personal space).
- The insurance stuff and the cultural nuances (e.g. eye contact differences) were very helpful.
- Packing info (e.g. medical supplies, no flat irons, etc.).
- The Preparing to Go Abroad slideshow.
- Nothing specific to my country. Great info.

5. Was this day and time convenient for you? If not, what day and time would be best for future orientations?
- It was fine.
- I like that it was on a Friday, but maybe break it up into two sessions since there is so much information.
- It wasn’t convenient because I’m taking a Tulane class that was supposed to be from 4-4:50. But if it weren’t for that, generally the time would be good (if it’s going to be 4-5 hours).
- It is very convenient, actually.
- Yes.
- Very convenient, except I missed a free Weezer concert.
- Yes.
- Yes.
- Friday isn’t too convenient. Maybe during the week after classes.
- Yes, couldn’t have done it any other day.
- Wednesday night. Fridays are torture when we have to stay back after class.
- Yes.
- Friday until 8 pm was not ideal. Maybe Saturday or Sunday earlier in the day.
- No, earlier in the week would have been better.
- I supposed a Friday is better than most, but I wish it was several shorter orientations over a couple days instead of one long one.
- Yes, it was convenient for me.
- Yes!
- This was fine.
- No, another weekday night.
- This day and time was good for me. They should maybe send out the initial notice further in advance.
- No, earlier in the week.
- Yes.
- Perfect timing.
- No, because I had to take off work and got in trouble.
- It was great.
- Was convenient. Great that we were notified weeks in advance!
- Yes, this day and time was convenient for me.
- Yes.
- Yes, this was good for me but it’s very long.
- Yes, but it would have been a tad bit better if it was split into two sections.
- It was fine with me.
- Mid-week would be better.
- Yes, but maybe next time it could be split into two meetings.
- I had to work today so I had to miss but I work 40 hours a week so no time is really great for students like me. We
want to go badly enough that missing work wasn’t a massive ordeal.

- Day & time worked.
- Yes, day and time were relatively convenient. Maybe two shorter sessions? Not bad though.
- This date was perfect mostly due to the inclement weather. If I wasn’t here chances are I’d be in my bed.
- This was.
- This actually was probably as convenient as it could have been.

6. Any additional comments you have regarding the orientation?

- Not really. It’s kind of Western European & Latin American-centric.
- Very helpful, thank you!
- Thanks!
- Thank you for having an orientation! It’s nice to know Loyola cares about preparing you.
- **drawing of a llama**
- Eh.
- Thanks for the handouts and help.
- The time went by fast. It was nice to meet my group.
- Ayo let’s go.
- It was helpful, but a lot of info to take in at once.
- I really liked that you gave us the journals.
- Thanks for dinner!
- Cheese cubes?
- More grapes! :D
- Water bottles.
- You guys rock!
- I thought it was extremely informative.
- A small section about where I can find more information about my host country, specifically. Especially where I can find out more about cultural customary differences.
- Maybe break the orientation up into at least two parts so it’s not all 4-5 hours at once as to actually be able to focus. Love the journals—so cute!
- Maybe break it up somehow.
Pre-departure for Fall 2014
Event on March 28, 2014

50 students expected for orientation + 3 Peer Advisors
10-15 additional confirmed for dinner

**COSTCO purchase – all sizes are large - $94.86**
- 1 veggie tray
- Trail mix with chocolate (not fruit)
- Asian snack mix
- Grapes – 2 large containers
- Satsumas – 1 large bag
- Water – 2 gallon jug - had this from last event
- Lemonade – 1 large bottle
- Organic Apple juice – 2 large bottles
- Plates and cups

**Lebanons – food for 70 - $601.59 – this includes gratuity**
- Chicken – 3 trays
- Lamb – 2 trays
- Note: Each tray comes with 2 sides – this would be 10 sides total
- Rice – 4 trays
- Hummus – 4 trays
- Salad – 2 trays
- Falafel – 7 dozen – MUST order more, went through these in a minute.

**2 Peer Advisors - $10 per hour x 6 hours = $120.**

**Journals - $10 per journal x 60 = $600.**

**65 Handbooks – 226.90**

**Total expense - $1,643.35**