IDEAS Workshop:
Faculty-led Study Abroad Best Practices:
Addressing Grand Challenges in Faculty-led Study Abroad

The White Paper

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University of Georgia
Friday, February 28, 2020
# Table of Contents

Introduction ................................................................. 3
Workshop Agenda .......................................................... 3

Session 1: Panel on Successful Models in Faculty-led Study Abroad Programs .............................. 4
Summary........................................................................... 4
Lessons Learned............................................................... 5
Best Practices................................................................... 6

Session 2: Sharing Best Practices in Launching New Faculty-led Study Abroad Programs .................. 6
Summary........................................................................... 6
Lessons Learned............................................................... 7
Best Practices................................................................... 7
Resources......................................................................... 7

Session 3: Key Pillars of Operating a Faculty-Led Study Abroad ....................................................... 8
Summary........................................................................... 8
Lessons Learned............................................................... 8
Best Practices................................................................... 8
Resources......................................................................... 9

Session 4: Collaborations to Strengthen Faculty-led Study Abroad Programs .................................... 9
Summary........................................................................... 9
Lessons Learned............................................................... 9
Best Practices................................................................... 10
Resources......................................................................... 10

Networking........................................................................ 11

Conclusion........................................................................ 12
Introduction
The Capacity Building Program for U.S. Study Abroad is a program of the U.S. Department of State with funding provided by the U.S. Government and supported in its implementation by World Learning. The University of Georgia (UGA) hosted a one-day workshop for study abroad administrators focused on Faculty-led Study Abroad Best Practices to address key challenges in expanding access to global experiences. Forty-three participants attended the workshop. Participants represented 35 different institutions from the following states: Alabama, Arkansas, California, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, West Virginia, Wisconsin.

The workshop gave attendees successful models for faculty-led study abroad programming from various vantage points, offered attendees examples of successful collaborations with on-campus and off-campus partners to overcome capacity building challenges, and created structured networking opportunities throughout the event’s sessions and breaks to expand attendees’ professional networks. Through case studies and knowledge sharing, participants found ways to enhance their existing practices in study abroad program management to expand their institutional capacity.

Workshop Agenda
Friday, February 28, 2020
Center for Continuing Education & Hotel - “Georgia Center”
1197 S Lumpkin St, Athens, GA 30602

7:45-8:00: Registration
Concourse outside of Mahler Hall

8:00-8:45: Networking Breakfast

8:50-9:30: Opening Remarks
Dr. Noel Fallows, Office of Global Engagement, Associate Provost, University of Georgia
Rebecca Gailey, U.S. Department of State
Dr. Marisa Pagnattaro, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, University of Georgia

9:30-10:45: Session One
Session One: Panel on Successful Models in Faculty-Led Study Abroad Programs
Description: Speakers briefly described examples of established models for study abroad programs: traditional, consortia, embedded, hybrid internships, and overseas campus-based.
Coryn Shiflet, USG; Emily Caskey, GSU; Sarah Quinn, UGA; Melanie Smith, SSU

10:45-11:00: Morning Break

11:00-12:00: Session Two
Session Two: Sharing Best Practices in Launching New Faculty-Led Study Abroad Programs
Description: The knowledge sharing session among participants around case studies (groups facilitated by individuals above) discussed best practices in developing and operating faculty-led study abroad programs: (1) recruitment, selection, and training of faculty; (2) program proposal process; (3) annual program review process; and (4) program evaluation.
Laura Thomason, MGSU; Emily Caskey, GSU; Melanie Smith, SSU; Sarah Quinn, UGA

12:00-12:45: Networking Lunch

12:45-1:45: Visit UGA Office of Global Engagement (1324 South Lumpkin Street, Athens, GA)
Brian Watkins, International Initiatives Director, University of Georgia
Leigh Knapp, Admin Financial Director, University of Georgia
Victor Camargo-Fouche, Global Education Database Manager Prin., University of Georgia
Brooke Savage, Assistant General Counsel, Office of Legal Affairs, University of Georgia

1:45-3:00: Session Three
Session Three: Key Pillars of Operating Faculty-Led Study Abroad Programs
Description: Panelists briefly shared their HEI best practices in the key areas of operating faculty-led study abroad programs: 1) Academic (annual review, college/department involvement), 2) Risk Management (review, training, policies, incident reporting, insurance), 3) Financial (annual budget review, program planning, sound policies), and 4) Technological tools to support programming.
Melanie Smith, SSU; Laura Thomason, MGSU; Sarah Quinn, UGA; Emily Caskey, GSU; Coryn Shiflet, USG

3:00-3:15: Afternoon Break

3:15-4:15: Session Four
Session Four: Collaboration to Strengthen Faculty-Led Study Abroad Programs
Description: Panelists offered examples of successful collaborations and challenges working with on-campus and off-campus partners (internal partners such as: departments/colleges, advising, legal, registrar, financial aid, student accounts, health center, provost’s office, IT, committees, faculty affairs, & development; external partners such as: trusted organizations for logistical support, consulates/embassies, NGOs, etc.).
Emily Caskey, GSU; Coryn Shiflet, USG; Laura Thomason, MGSU; Melanie Smith, SSU

4:15-4:45: Closing Remarks and Action Plan Development
Dr. Yana Cornish, Global Education Director, University of Georgia
Dr. Noel Fallows, Office of Global Engagement, Associate Provost, University of Georgia

Session 1: Panel on Successful Models in Faculty-led Study Abroad Programs

Summary
Facilitator: Coryn Shiflet (University System of Georgia)
Panelists: Emily Caskey (Georgia State University), Sarah Quinn (University of Georgia), Melanie Smith (Savannah State University)

This session focused on the four main study abroad models: short-term faculty-led, embedded faculty-led, alternative spring break, and multi-institution consortium.

Lessons Learned

The main takeaway from Session 1 that participants received was that there is no ‘one size fits all’ approach. The panel’s introduction to 4 different models underlined the importance of considering the specificity of the participants’ institution and what might work best for them.

During the introduction, participants were shown a visual representation of each of the 4 models and in small groups were asked to guess the type of model and discuss each of his/her familiarity with the models. As this was the first formal session of the day, this activity helped participants get comfortable and get to know each other a bit more. The activity also demonstrated that while ‘Faculty-Led’ is one type of Education Abroad program, there are many different types and models underneath the ‘Faculty-Led’ umbrella. This time was also an opportunity for participants to share their personal and campus experiences with the models.

During the pro con portion, participants formed several small groups, and each group created pro and con lists of each discussed model, highlighting their ideas back out to the large group. This activity demonstrated to participants that all models have inherent advantages and disadvantages. Participants were encouraged to think about pros and cons of each model from multiple angles, such as along themes of financial, risk management, recruitment, etc. Key takeaways from this portion include:

- Financial aid in the summer is not always available if students do not plan for its use in advance
- Unless recruitment is targeted and clear, faculty and students may assume that only certain majors are eligible to participate as the faculty member/course is housed within a single department
- Shorter travel dates may be particularly appealing as it would not interfere with semester work schedules and summer-long internship opportunities
- If available at that particular institution, students participating in a spring or fall break embedded program may do so at no additional tuition cost
- Alternative Spring Break (ASB) options are often less expensive with shortened lengths and minimal accommodation costs, however there are normally fewer destination options
- Because ASB is not tied to a specific course, some students may find this more accessible as students: do not need to pay for tuition; nor figure out how a program fits into their required courses.
- ASB is a non-academic opportunity to travel within a university setting.
• The centralized structure of multi-institution consortium programs inherently possesses the ability to reach students from more than one institution and provide professional development and accessible teaching opportunity for new/early career faculty.
• If organizationally feasible, a single tuition rate and unified teaching salary provides equity.
• However, multi-institution consortia are complex and require a high(er) level of organization such as shared use technology which allow for separate institutions to ‘talk to each other’

Lastly, participants chose one model to explore and moved to specific tables to explore the feasibility of using their chosen model on his/her campus. Interestingly, no participant chose the Alternative Spring Break model to explore. This may be because oftentimes attendees at an IDEAS workshop work in education abroad and Alternative Spring Break is often student-run, and therefore supervised by folks in Student Affairs. Overall, participants with little to no experience chose the Traditional Short-Term discussion, participants with more experience chose the Embedded discussion, and participants from smaller institutions who might benefit further from collaboration chose the Multi-Institution Consortium discussion.

Best Practices
During the presentation portion of the session, the panel members gave a general description of each of the 4 main models. The panelists also included information on the ‘real life’ example as well as unique and key aspects of each model.

1. The description of Traditional Short-term Faculty-Led programs highlighted to participants that this type allows students to study abroad without disrupting their collegiate course rotation and also does not require students to use their full financial aid.

2. The description of Embedded Faculty-Led programs highlighted to participants that this type integrates international travel into a semester-long course and is credited as either a requirement of the course or as optional additional course credit.

3. The description of Alternative Spring Break programs highlighted to participants that this type is a short-term volunteer service that occurs over students’ spring break vacation.

4. The description of Multi-Institution Consortium programs highlighted to participants that this type is a model involving 2 or more institutions whereby each institution contributes students, faculty, logistical organization, resources, and support to one unified study abroad program.

Session 2: Sharing Best Practices in Launching New Faculty-led Study Abroad Programs

Summary
Facilitator: Laura Thomason (Middle Georgia State University)
Panelists: Melanie Smith (Savannah State University), Emily Caskey (Georgia State University), Sarah Quinn (University of Georgia).

The knowledge sharing session among participants around case studies (groups facilitated by individuals above) discussed best practices in developing and operating faculty-led study abroad programs: (1) recruitment, selection, and training of faculty; (2) program proposal process; (3) annual program review process; and (4) program evaluation.

Lessons Learned
During Session 2, participants received helpful tips for choosing the right faculty member for new programs:

- International educators are a very collaborative group and will share resources and ideas
- Teaching abroad is professional work and merits earning a salary—the travel alone is not appropriate compensation
- Experienced international travelers don’t always make outstanding study abroad faculty
- Interested faculty members may need development on intercultural competency

Additional takeaways participants received during Session 2 pertained to the planning process:

- Building a library of forms, documents, policies, etc. for study abroad programs may be the most challenging but also the most useful part of program development
- Collaboration with financial aid office is critical to student recruitment

Best Practices
The panel shared their best practices for creating new faculty-led study abroad programs:

- Using a program proposal form that walks faculty through key elements of program design
- Selecting courses that “count” for multiple majors
- Selecting destinations that have specific scholarship support available
- Knowing who at your institution is responsible for a program’s academic quality
- Understanding how the various parts of a program are paid for: program cost, tuition, faculty travel cost, faculty salary
- Cultivating faculty interest intelligently by communicating honestly about the rigors of teaching abroad
- Using faculty rotation as a form of faculty development and means of ensuring program continuity
- Developing faculty into program directors by encouraging use of providers and helping find funding for exploratory travel

Resources
Forum: Short-term Programs
USG: Study Abroad Handbook
Middle Georgia: Study Abroad Approval Request

Session 3: Key Pillars of Operating a Faculty-Led Study Abroad

Summary

Facilitator: Melanie Smith
Panelists: Sarah Quinn (University of Georgia), Emily Caskey (Georgia State University), Laura Thomason (Middle Georgia State University), Coryn Shiflet (University System of Georgia)

This session highlighted the key pillars of operating a faculty-led study abroad: communication, application process, risk management, financial systems, technology tools, student recruitment, and post program evaluation. Due to a need to try not to overlap previous discussions too much, the conversations morphed into more of a “what-not-to-do” session.

Lessons Learned

- **Communication**: Communication is the most important piece for study abroad, all departments need to identify a study abroad champion because programming is different from what happens for regular classes
- **Application process**: Each campus does things differently, but each campus must develop what works with the current system
- **Risk management**: Having policies and procedures in place, and practicing those measures, is necessary. The coronavirus issue is a perfect example of what departments need to be ready to do when changes occur
- **Financial systems**: While all campuses are different, it is necessary to meet with the budget department to determine best practices for each element of study abroad accounting – be sure to identify a champion
- **Technology tools**: Keeping faculty, students, and study abroad staff on the same platform is necessary for keeping the dialogue running before, during, and after the program
- **Student recruitment**: Having a study abroad ambassadors helps spread the word, students hearing from their peers normalizes the practice among students
- **Post-program evaluation** (didn’t get to this topic at the conference): It is imperative to have accountability and measures for each study abroad program and to know what students think of the program as well as the program manager so changes can be made when necessary

Best Practices

The best practices for each key pillar are as follows:

- **Communication**: Keep communication with students and faculty open and direct
- **Application process**: Identifying students that need extra support as early as possible so needs can be addressed for program participation
• **Risk management:** Develop contacts with inside and outside agencies that can help in an emergency situation – embassies, consulates, insurance companies, etc.

• **Financial systems:** Be sure to address student payments, vendor payments, and budgeting requirements

• **Technology tools:** Find an IT champion to discover how to keep everyone in contact both in and out of country

• **Student recruitment:** Previous program participants are your best resource! Have class discussions where possible, and be available to students who have questions

• **Post-program evaluation** (didn’t get to this topic at the conference): Evaluate from both student and program manager perspectives. Be sure to evaluate the course and the location with students. Additionally, study abroad should have a separate evaluation from the course evaluation that academics conducts for each class.

**Resources**

* Savannah State: Manual  
* Savannah State: Student Handbook  
* Savannah State: Program Approval  
* Savannah State: Survey Questions

**Session 4: Collaborations to Strengthen Faculty-led Study Abroad Programs**

**Summary**

**Facilitator:** Emily Caskey (Georgia State University)  
**Panelists:** Coryn Shiflet (University System of Georgia), Melanie Smith (Savannah State University), and Laura Thomason (Middle Georgia State University)

Panelists offered examples of successful collaborations and challenges working with on-campus and off-campus partners (internal partners such as: departments/colleges, advising, legal, registrar, financial aid, student accounts, health center, provost’s office, IT, committees, faculty affairs, & development; external partners such as: trusted organizations for logistical support, consulates/embassies, NGOs, etc.).

**Lessons Learned**

24 workshop participants shared their top three collaborations in support of faculty-led programs at the beginning of the session. The top 5 results include:

1. Academic Departments/Colleges: 50%
2. Academic Advising: 38%
3. Providers/Affiliates/Travel Agencies: 29%
4. Financial Aid: 29%
5. International Student and Scholar Services/International Office: 21%

The session included an activity to encourage participants to identify potential partners and
brainstorm ideas in small groups. Participants were asked to share the top three collaborations they would like to pursue in the future based on the discussions at their tables. Fourteen participants shared their ideas, including these top results:

1. Career Services: 36%
2. Financial Aid: 36%
3. Alumni Office: 21%
4. Veteran’s Affairs: 21%

One of the key takeaways from this session was best summed up by a participant: no is usually the easiest answer, but International Education practitioners are some of the most generous and eager to collaborate in order to help one another out.

**Best Practices**
The panel of speakers shared their insights and experiences in pursuing collaborations both on and off campus, eliciting the following best practices to initiate and maintain collaborations in support of faculty-led study abroad programs.

- Get out of the office. Go to the person/office you want to meet, tour their office, learn what services they provide and get to know their goals.
- Make friends. Plan a coffee meeting or happy hour to get to know each other first. Keep it casual and see what kinds of things you connect on. Hosting an office party or potluck? Invite your colleagues from other units!
- Show up! Support offices and organizations that you would like to work with by attending events they’re hosting or by signing up for a committee, to be a judge, etc. Even if you don’t have the capacity to do this regularly, think of other ways you can show up for these offices: sign up for their newsletter, let them leave flyers for their office’s events/services or send a note of thanks/ congratulations.
- Be strategic. Identify your goals and consider how your goals relate to your partner’s. Be prepared to talk about how study abroad and how your initiatives reflect the institution's goals and mission as well as how you can be an advocate for their office/initiatives.
- Encourage relationships at all levels; not every collaboration is done on a director-to-director level.
- Ask for advice. Turn to your colleagues on and off campus for their expertise and in return, they will seek out yours.
- Use your network. Ask for an introduction if needed.
- Recognize that one size does not necessarily fit all. What works for me at my institution may not work for you at your institution and that’s ok.

**Resources**

- [Georgia State: Cooperation Agreements](#)
- [Georgia State: Letter of Intent](#)
- [Georgia State: Parent PowerPoint](#)
- [Georgia State: Vetting External Providers](#)
Networking

Networking activities were created for participants to engage in during their breakfast and lunch times. These activities were intended to provide participants with low-commitment, flexible but also structured ways to engage in conversation with fellow workshop participants. Networking opportunities were provided because of the short timeframe of the workshop and because many of the participants did not know each other already and therefore may not feel initially comfortable making connections.

First Breakfast Activity: Get to Know You Bingo

As participants arrive and check-in, they were given a Bingo card and a pen. The Bingo card had instructions outlined at the top for participants to follow. Participants were prompted to find others in the room who fulfilled the descriptions in each of the Bingo card boxes. When a participant found someone who met the description, they wrote that person’s name in the box. They only used one name per box and, when they used one person, they could not use that person for another box on the Bingo card.

Second Breakfast Activity: Conversation Jar

Each table had a bowl with conversation prompts inside of it. The conversation prompts were designed to focus conversations between participants on key questions, themes, and ideas about the conference. This allowed participants to begin thinking about their baseline ideas, motivations, and challenges within their institutions, and sets the stage for productive listening and participation throughout the conference.

Each table was prompted to select someone to pick the first prompt from the table’s jar. They read the prompt to the table, and then guided the conversation about that prompt. While table members were not required to verbally respond to each prompt, they made an effort to allow for as many voices to contribute to each prompt. Someone at the table wrote down the “big ideas” generated during each conversation.

First Lunch Activity: Diplomatic Ties

The session leader instructed each table to find someone at their table with the same flag on their nametag. These were pre-assigned based on institutional differences with the goals of prompting people with different backgrounds/ work experiences to have a structured chance to talk. If a person from the table was missing a partner—there is no one at the table with the same flag—that person was instructed to find a person with the same flag from another table and sit with them.

Each pair was provided with a list of fun facts about their country. They read the fun facts together, and then answered the icebreaker question:
Based on these fun facts and anything else that you know about this country, would it be a good destination for a study abroad program? If not, why not? If so, why—and what programmatic model would you recommend?  

Transition:

Second Lunch Activity: Reflection, Debriefing, and Gallery Walk

Pairs were instructed to take a minute to independently read the prompts and reflect on the morning session. Then, pairs discussed their reflections with each other. Each individual wrote brief responses to each prompt on a sticky note, and then, when they are finished, placed their sticky notes on corresponding pieces of butcher paper/areas on one of the walls identified with each prompt.

Both activities received moderate levels of engagement from participants; roughly half of the participants engaged in the Get to Know You Bingo and Conversation jar activities, and about one-third of participants engaged in the Diplomatic Ties activity. The reflection, debriefing, and gallery walk portion of the activity did not occur.

These networking activities served their intended purpose and provided participants structured ways to interact with other participants. The lack of participation in the lunchtime activities may have indicated that participants had successfully established familiarity with their fellow participants and perhaps no longer felt that an activity was necessary to provide them with guidance for conversation. Additionally, it spoke to the success of the panel discussions, as participants were actively engaged in conversations surrounding the content of those discussions and their reactions to panelist and fellow participant experiences.

In summary, both the breakfast and lunch networking activities were successful in achieving their stated goals of familiarizing participants, providing opportunities to engage with each other, and to prompt discussions about the workshop topics. Although engagement in the specific activities declined throughout the workshop, this can be attributed to the success of the panel discussions more than to a failure of the activity design based on the deliverables of the workshop. Feedback from the future collaborations poll and postcard responses indicate that participants were able to successfully learn and reflect on the topics of the workshop, and even go as far as decide how those topics could be built upon in their own institution.

Conclusion

At the end of the workshop, participants were instructed to create a minimum of three action items and write them on a post card. The University of Georgia will be sending post cards to participants as a reminder of their workshop goals. Additionally, the Office of Global Engagement is creating videos, which will be displayed here.