Increasing Study Abroad Participation in Constrained Resource Environments

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### Session Objectives

Participants in this session will:

- Learn actions that are most effective in increasing study abroad participation, from different perspectives
- Discuss why constraining costs is important
- Examine costs and benefits of study abroad to the university
- Explore cost containment options for study abroad programs
Peter McPherson

• President, APLU
• Former President of Michigan State University
Kathleen Fairfax

• Assistant Vice President for International Affairs and Outreach, South Dakota State University
• Former SIO at Arizona State
• Former Director of Study Abroad at Michigan State and Purdue
Increasing SA participation

Many ways to do it, but focus on three:

1. Financial model for study abroad
2. Creating champions on campus
3. Fundraising for scholarships
Money talks...

...Especially in a constrained resource environment
Importance of Financial Model

• Key to increasing study abroad participation is to **at worst** make it “no cost” to the academic units, and **even better**, appeal to their need for resources.

• Figure out a financial model in which most programs will yield some revenue to the sponsoring academic unit
  - *Works best with faculty-led programs*

• When the academic units start to get revenue from study abroad programs, suddenly they become very interested in developing more such programs (which leads to an increase in participation)
SA Financial Models

**Tuition-Based Models**
- Determine what is paid by tuition dollars and what is charged in a program fee to students
- Structure budget so tuition surplus is returned to the sponsoring academic unit and program fee breaks even
- The more efficient the program, the greater the tuition surplus will be

**Non Tuition-Based Models**
- Comprehensive program fee needs to include a revenue stream to the sponsoring academic unit
- But careful not to artificially inflate program fee to assure revenue stream
- Encourage (and reward) efficiencies
Budget Sample
Budget Model Benefits

• At MSU, went from @1800 students to @3200 students in 5 years

• Lots of factors influenced that growth, but impact of budget model was huge

• Over 80% of growth happened in faculty-led programs
Creating SA Champions

• To do it right, takes a little money
• But the ROI is HUGE
• Focus on two groups:
  – Academic Advisors
  – Admissions counselors
• Regular “training” + opportunities to travel
Creating SA Champions

• Appeal to others’ pressing issues – how can SA help them achieve their goals?
• For many public universities, retention and persistence to graduation are key goals
• Great data available from UGA and UMN
Fundraising

- Study Abroad scholarships have appeal for many potential donors
- But it takes commitment from the top to direct the Development Office to seek out SA scholarships
- Many competing priorities on campus for fundraising
Fundraising

• It only takes one big gift to get the momentum going, create a buzz

• Simply having scholarships available increases applications
  – Though not everyone gets a scholarship, many applicants find that with other financial aid, they can actually afford to go abroad (and wouldn’t have considered it if there hadn’t been scholarships available)
Earl Kellogg

• Senior Vice President for International Affairs of Strategic Consulting – The Wyly Kellogg International Group

• Former Associate Provost for International Affairs, University of Illinois-Urbana Champaign
Study Abroad Focus Group

• Composition
  – 9 students: 7 females, 2 males; 5 seniors, 3 juniors, 1 graduate student
  – 6 colleges represented
    • 3 Liberal Arts and Sciences,
    • 2 Agriculture, Consumer and Environmental Sciences
    • 1 each from Business, Applied Life Studies, Media and Graduate College (Translation Studies)
  – Studied in Japan, Sweden, Kenya, Turkey, Spain, New Zealand and Thailand
Study Abroad Focus Group:

Rationale for SA

- Experience heritage or another culture – 1\textsuperscript{st} and 2\textsuperscript{nd} generation immigrants
- Personal growth
- Improve language
- Take courses not offered at Illinois
Study Abroad Focus Group:
How Students Learned about and What Influenced SA Decision

– Other students and friends – 4
– Parents – 3
– Academic departments – 2
– High School teacher who had SA at Illinois
– Professors
– SA advisors
Study Abroad Focus Group:
Student Advice on How to Increase SA Participation

- Embed in curricula
- Increase financial aid – Cost is a critical variable in decision to SA
- Get “early” advisors to encourage students to SA and plan – reach students early
- Make SA more prominent in recruiting
- Develop better student – student communications on SA – for making decision and for how to reduce costs in country
Study Abroad Focus Group:
Cost of SA – Detail and Importance

– Costs include:
  • Tuition at home and abroad
  • Travel
  • SA Fees
  • In country Expenses
    – Living
    – Academic
  • Foregone income
Study Abroad Focus Group:
Cost of SA – Detail and Importance

– Perspectives differ
  • Student/family cost
  • University costs
– Options to reduce costs
  • U.S. university tuition options
  • Lower cost 3rd party providers
  • In country costs
    – Academic
    – Living cost
  • Exchange options
  • Fund-raising
  • Group study abroad with local staff or leadership
DISCUSSION