

FORUM
ON EDUCATION
ABROAD

HIGHLIGHTS
FROM THE
DIALOGUE SESSIONS

AUSTIN CONFERENCE – MARCH 2007

FORUM ON EDUCATION ABROAD

DIALOGUE SESSIONS



Indispensable Partners: Advocating with Academic Advisers

- Integrating study abroad throughout administrative structure (university advisers, faculty, staff *and* higher administration) is essential, yet challenging
- Differences between professional and faculty advisers should be factored into outreach
- Disconnect between core or general education courses and study abroad courses needs to be addressed
- Discussion touched on nature of advising, best practices for collaboration, adviser's role in curricular integration, etc.

FORUM ON EDUCATION ABROAD

DIALOGUE SESSIONS



Data: Beyond Collection

- How do we make data work to go beyond being an end in itself?
- Making a strong case in many scenarios involves gathering data from a variety of sources to create a balanced and thorough treatment of complex issues
- Building relationships with campus offices/departments that have information you need is essential to successful data collection
- Mindful data analysis and dissemination strengthens outreach to students and other constituencies. Issues of transparency and access paramount

FORUM ON EDUCATION ABROAD

DIALOGUE SESSIONS



Is Education Abroad Valuable for Pre-medical Students?

- The question is difficult to answer due to variation among both med school and study abroad programs
- It is difficult to appeal to pre-med students due to the course requirements, high-stakes tests, and other pressures they face
- It would be helpful for The Forum to help med schools understand that accommodations are necessary if “global medicine” is truly a priority

FORUM ON EDUCATION ABROAD

DIALOGUE SESSIONS



Focus on Latin America

- Institutions need to undertake strategic planning at the international level
- There is a need for creative programming that takes advantage of an institution's internal assets and maximizes opportunities for cultural learning based on multiple factors
- It can be helpful to optimize educational environments, dividing up what is provided by partner schools based on expertise/resources

FORUM ON EDUCATION ABROAD

DIALOGUE SESSIONS



Engaging the Issues: Making Federal Programs Work for You and Your Students

- Finding funding for “middle income” students is a serious challenge
- Semester vs. summer funding options vary by institution and can be a barrier to participation
- Can use Gilman/NSEP/Freeman to publicize scholarships and reach audiences that might not normally make it to study abroad office
- Concerns about implementation of Lincoln scholarship – future administration?
- How to convince financial aid offices that federal/state/institutional aid should travel?

FORUM ON EDUCATION ABROAD

DIALOGUE SESSIONS



The Value of Education Abroad: Perspectives from the Workplace

- Students lack ability to articulate the skills they have acquired during study abroad
- Recruiters may not recognize the value of study abroad in providing skills they value in recruits
- Students need to be coached in recognizing and expressing the value of their study abroad experience to them as leaders and decision makers

FORUM ON EDUCATION ABROAD

DIALOGUE SESSIONS



Customer Satisfaction or Educational Challenge?

- Possible links or disconnects between student and program goals
- Challenge of maintaining balance between meeting program goals in academic realm with competing customer service expectations in non-academic realm
- Purpose of evaluation should drive language/content. Do you want to pass on lessons learned (students to peers)? Gauge institutional effectiveness in operations/goals attainment? Context/audience/timing key for meaningful evaluation
- During revisions - need to link evolution of evaluation with that of program mission/intent

FORUM ON EDUCATION ABROAD

DIALOGUE SESSIONS



Integrating Student Research Abroad into Liberal Arts Education

- Conducting research abroad adds to undergraduate preparedness for graduate programs, but is difficult to arrange. Challenges include:
 - Language barriers (especially scientific terminology)
 - Lab requirements
 - Scarcity of inter-institutional relationships
 - Ethical issues
 - Reciprocity issues with US students studying abroad

- Fundamental question: How do we convince faculty in the sciences and engineering that study abroad is important?

FORUM ON EDUCATION ABROAD

DIALOGUE SESSIONS



Mid-Career Professionals

- Survey sent to chief international education officers at academic institutions
- Respondents cited similar job definitions, engaged in strategic planning and program development
- Senior administration officials on campus do not recognize the volunteer work of mid-career professionals in international organizations
- Factors in career advancement = accomplished track record, good references/contacts
- On-campus advocacy could raise visibility of education abroad to their benefit

FORUM ON EDUCATION ABROAD

FUTURE DIRECTIONS



How can The Forum continue the dialogue and address issues raised?

- Provide training on program evaluation models/questionnaire design
- Create tools for assessment, emphasize importance of transparency in process
- Carry out wider survey of education abroad professionals
- Include other constituencies (e.g., professional and faculty advisers) in discussions
- Focus on methodologies for integrating study abroad into larger institutional structure
- Continue support through QUIP program