

September 12, 2023

As first conveyed in a [March 7 letter to the community](#), and again in an [update posted on May 23](#), The Forum on Education Abroad and NAFSA have been in communication with the filmmaker of the documentary, [Trip of a Lifetime: Hidden Dangers of Study Abroad Programs](#). Producer and director Robyn Symon is working closely with the two mothers who founded the 501(c)3 organization Protect Students Abroad, Ros Thackurdeen and Elizabeth Brenner, and attended a health and safety workshop at the NAFSA 2023 Annual Conference and Expo.

The following is a statement the two organizations recently provided to the filmmaker:

*NAFSA and The Forum are committed to supporting international educators in providing safe education abroad programs that prepare students for the competitive global environment into which they will graduate. We take student safety very seriously. While we are not regulatory agencies, we advocate for all education abroad programs to adhere to strong safety standards that specify strict requirements and quality indicators. Higher education institutions and their partners, through their risk management offices, must have policies and procedures in place to prioritize safety by conducting robust risk assessment and emergency planning and responding to and reporting critical incidents, whether the student is on campus or studying abroad. Both associations provide resources on these topics to members, including professional training, The Forum's Standards of Good Practice, [guidelines](#), and research, in addition to online communities where practitioners share knowledge.*

*Keeping students safe is a shared responsibility between the institution and the student. Even though incidents where education abroad participants experience significant harm are rare, The Forum is creating a new annual report to track critical incidents and contextualize data to give families, students, and institutions the information they need to assess risk.*

*The Forum and NAFSA welcome legislation that is likely to have a positive impact on student health, safety, and well-being. We believe the most effective way to achieve this goal is for institutions to have adequately resourced education abroad offices and a staff person dedicated to health and safety assessment. Higher education institutions must also ensure that faculty, staff, administrators, and students are trained on how to evaluate and minimize risk.*

Note that The Forum plans to release the annual report mentioned in the statement later this month. We will keep you posted as new information becomes available.

Sincerely,

NAFSA: Association of International Educators

The Forum on Education Abroad

