

Forum Session
3/26/15

Slide 1

- Welcome to the session on Who Owns Faculty –led Courses: a conversation about ownership of faculty-led programming and the benefits and liabilities of centralizing. We're so glad to see so many of you interested in this topic!
- Four of us are involved in this presentation and we're all four part of the UMAIE consortium (upper Midwest association of intercultural education), a consortium of 7 institutions that offers faculty-led short-term programs during January. UMAIE has been offering faculty-led courses for 50 years, so we've been thinking for a long time about what it means to offer high quality programs, thinking about how to work cooperatively between faculty and study abroad professionals—and we've been thinking about the concept of "ownership" of faculty-led courses.
- I'm CSpaeth, IPC for Seminars International. Seminars International is and has been the travel provider for the consortium for nearly 50 years and we also work with many other faculty-led programs. I recently moved to Seminars from two positions that are relevant to our session: directing the study abroad office at St. Catherine University in Minnesota and serving as president of the Board of the UMAIE consortium.
- Aga is the assistant director for short-term programs at UST in Minnesota. Her role there is managing all aspects of the short-term faculty-led process for approx.. 20 programs per year.
- Tave Reser is Executive Director at Seminars International. Seminars is involved in over 100 faculty-led programs each year from a variety of institutions.
- Bill Swart is a professor of Sociology at Augustana College in South Dakota and has taught over 15 short-term courses abroad. He is also a former UMAIE Board member and served as the president of the consortium for 4 years.

I want to give you a quick overview of how we'll organize our time during the session.

1. We will talk briefly about some definitions and organizing concepts and then present three different perspectives in the issues of ownership and centralization.
2. Then, we will give you some time to discuss the models you're working with on your campuses, the challenges involved, what's working well, and what does it mean for faculty-led courses when faculty say they "own" the curriculum?

- a. we have 3 sets of questions for you to discuss at your tables. We'll walk you through those questions and discussions in a few minutes. We'll ask you to take notes on your table discussions.
3. The last part of the session will be a discussion with all of us and will draw from your table discussions. Instead of reporting from your tables, we have 3 larger questions that we think bring together the topic of our session with the larger theme of the conference. Those are on the back of your handout at your tables.

Slide 2

We believe we need to define our terms before we have a discussion about their benefits and liabilities, so here is how we're thinking about how to describe the two concepts.

While we have 2 columns, we acknowledge that there is a continuum between decentralized and centralized models, and that many people and offices may be somewhere in between. It's not an either/or.

And while the items in the two columns list tasks and responsibilities, we also believe that whether you fall into the centralized or decentralized model, or somewhere in the middle—the model you use means more than putting administrative tasks in one place or another. It also reveals a philosophy about the type of programming you have (and that philosophy or approach may or may not be articulated but it does exist), about how to allocate resources, and who gets involved in which aspects.

The goal of this session is NOT to determine which approach is better, but to hear differing perspectives on the ways to organize and administer faculty-led programs and to raise issues and questions about the concept of ownership and how that plays out in different models.

Slide 3

We want to give you some definitions or at least broad categories of how the two main models of organizing faculty-led programs: de-centralized model and a centralized model

Recognize that this is a not an either/or proposition but is a continuum with probably many of you somewhere in the middle and with hybrid types of structures.

- I've been working in study abroad for about 20 years, and up until recently, it looked to me as if the history of how faculty-led programs were administered was a progressive movement: from a certain way of doing things in the past to a newer, better, more improved way of doing things in the future. A one-directional movement
- The "old" model from the past before study abroad offices really existed was the "decentralized" model where faculty taught the courses, made all the logistical arrangements, collected the students' money, paid all the bills, dealt with emergencies, and basically did everything.
- As the education abroad field grew and became more professionalized and we talked more and more about best practices, it looked like the old models would fade away and we were moving towards more centralization of responsibilities in education abroad offices. It looked to me like the goal was to centralize because running faculty-led programs from the study abroad office (with the EA office being primarily responsible) would make the programs more organized and be better quality.
- The rationale was that education abroad professionals have the knowledge and expertise about how high quality study abroad programs should function. Faculty would still teach the courses but most other aspects should be handled by EA professionals. In discussions at conferences like this, the common knowledge has been that to centralize makes best use of our expertise: we can ensure efficiency; we can pay careful attention to risk management; we understand best practices in cross-cultural understanding; we can deliver consistent student services; we know how to put budgets together, etc.
- I think the assumptions were that de-centralized models continued to exist only because we as education abroad professionals didn't have the power or influence to get faculty and administrators to agree to give us the responsibilities we know we're good at and the resources to make it happen!
- But, in recent years, more faculty have become involved and I think their involvement along with the maturing of EA best practices is changing the game, so to speak. So Faculty have gotten better educated on what makes a good short-term program good.
- At the same time resources for our offices are not increasing. More faculty-led courses is not necessarily translating into more staff in the EA office to administer the programs.
- I'm wondering if the movement isn't really more like a pendulum swinging back and forth between centralizing through the education abroad office and de-centralizing through individual faculty and academic departments. And many hybrid versions in-between.

Slide 3

A graphic I couldn't resist using and a Short Survey

Slide 4

Now we'll hear from three different perspectives on faculty-led programming and their thoughts and experiences on centralizing and decentralizing.

We'll start with Tave, then Aga and Bill.

Slide 5

We have questions for you to discuss at your tables. There are 7 questions and we will divide them up into 3 sections.

Start with questions 1 and 2 – 5 min.

Questions 3 and 4 – 5 minutes

Questions 5, 6, 7 – 5-7 minutes

We'll keep you moving through the questions.

Slide 6

Where do we go from here? What can you take from your discussions and our presentations back to your university to inform your own model of faculty-led programs?

Instead of asking you to report from your tables, we'd like to take what you've been discussing and focus your discussions on a large group conversation about these three final questions :

We want to get to each of the three questions, so we'll focus our larger discussion on one question at a time.