Living life on the edge
(of the world)

Student risk taking behaviour and the continuum of concern.
Why do we care about the risks students take outside the classroom?

- Their well being
- Our well being
- Our institutions’ well being
What are the risks study abroad students are taking?
How many of you have ever asked your students what risks they took while studying abroad?

What THEY perceived as risky?

We care so much about keeping our students alive but do we survey what they do outside the classroom? Let’s face it, sitting in a classroom is probably the least risky part of a student’s day.
Risk Questionnaire 2015

Participants:
105 Feb semester and 63 July semester US study abroad students studying at NZ universities for one semester
Questionnaire given at the farewell dinner ‘optional’ and ‘anonymous’
What percent of your students consume more alcohol when they are studying abroad?

35%

What percent blacked out while abroad from drinking too much alcohol?

Alcohol and Drugs

33%

What percent tried illegal drugs for the first time?

9.5%

What percent smoked marijuana more than in the US?

14%
Driving

What percent drove a car?

78%

What percent thought driving overseas was more dangerous than at home?

39%

What percent hitchhiked?

24%
  - 31% of Semester 1 students and
  - 13% of Semester 2 students
Tinder and Grinder

What percent sought casual hookups more when abroad than at home?  
12.5%

What percent used apps like Tinder and Grinder?  
25.5%

What percent ever felt at risk of sexual assault or violence?  
6.5%

Only 6.5% tried couch surfing.
Risky behaviours as perceived by students:

Did you ever feel you undertook activities that were risky?

47% responded yes

**Most common perceived risks (number of times listed):**
- Hiking: 24
- Sky diving: 14
- Jumping off high places: 12
- Bungy Jumping: 7
- Driving: 6
Risky behaviours as perceived by students:

Overall 94% felt safer or the same level of safety while living in NZ.

“People and strangers were more trustworthy/friendly/helpful than back in the US”
(23 comments)
Advice for Future Students

Outdoor Education
- Provide more training on hiking/warn them about risks hiking (x3)
- Be prepared to turn back because of weather.
Advice for Future Students

Leaving comfort zone is good
- Stay positive! Don’t be afraid to leave your comfort zone.
- Don’t minimise risk because you won’t have fun and you won’t learn! Take risks (but not incredibly dumb risks) (x2)
Advice for Future Students

Importance of having friends/network
- Always stick with a friend. Do stuff in groups. Don’t hike solo. (x6)
- Be smart about who you hang out with – it’s no different than in your home country
Advice for Future Students

**General comments:**
- Being real with us is best.
- Just tell people they need to know what they are comfortable with and that it’s OK to say ‘no’ if a situation is uncomfortable.
- Think things through before you do things, if unsure think whether you would do it at home or not.

(x2)
## How did students in NZ compare with a group in Australia (18 pax) and Spain (19 pax)?

### Main Differences:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>NZ (%)</th>
<th>SP (%)</th>
<th>AUS (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Drink/black out more than at home</td>
<td>35%/33%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>50%/33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illegal drugs for the first time</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Driving</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hitchhiking</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sought more casual hook ups</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used Tinder/Grinder</td>
<td>25.5%</td>
<td>31.5%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felt at risk of sexual assault/ violence</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felt as safe or safer abroad</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusions

Different countries will get different results.

Students are more likely to take risks when they are in a country where they feel safe.

Language proficiency may impact on sense of safety.

Appropriate advising will be more effective if based on most likely behaviours for that specific cohort.
STUDY ABROAD RISK-TAKING BEHAVIOR

Survey results from UMN participants
Survey Respondents

• 2170 invites / 478 responses (22%)
• UMN students who went abroad during 2016 Calendar Year (AY 15-16 through WB 2016)
• 71% female, 27% male, 1% not specified

• 46% semester or longer
• 19% Summer (3-12 weeks)
• 35% Short-term (less than 3 weeks)
• 35% instructor-led program
• 43% study center
• 22% university direct-enroll

• 28% had not been abroad
• 55% some international experience (0-3 months)
• 17% significant international experience (3+ months)

• 94% 18-22 years old
• 4% 23-30
• 2% 31+
Did you drink alcohol more often abroad than when at home?

- 48% YES
- 28% NO
- 24% About the same
Did you ever black out from drinking alcohol while abroad?

- 81% NO
- 14% Yes, but not more often than when at home
- 6% Yes, and more often than when at home
Did you use illegal drugs while abroad?

- 83% NO
- 13% Yes, but not more often than when at home
- 4% Yes, and more often than when at home

- 3% Tried drugs for the first time while abroad
- 64 marijuana
- 10 Molly / Ecstasy
- 6 cocaine
- LSD, mushrooms, Ritalin, Adderall, unsure
More...

• 6% drove a vehicle while abroad
• 65% felt that driving abroad is more dangerous than at home

• 9% hitchhiked or accepted rides from strangers
  – 34% of those were alone when they did so
Did you seek casual sexual hook-ups?

- 80% NO
- 12% Yes, but not more than at home
- 8% Yes, and more than at home

- 15% used Tinder, Grindr, Bumble, WhatsApp, other hook-up apps
- 5% used these apps more often than when at home
More often than at home:

• Drank alcohol – 48%
• Blacked out – 6%
• Used drugs – 4%
• Sought sexual hook-ups – 8%
• Used hook-up apps – 5%
Blackout drinking:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Instructor-led</th>
<th>Study Center</th>
<th>Host University</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td>91.5%</td>
<td>78.7%</td>
<td>66.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, but not more than at home</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, and more than at home</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
</tr>
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</table>
## Illegal drug use:

<table>
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<th>Host University</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>NO</strong></td>
<td>95.7%</td>
<td>78.2%</td>
<td>71.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, but not more than at home</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>16.8%</td>
<td>18.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, and more than at home</td>
<td>NONE</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>First-time drug use?</strong></td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Sex and hook-up apps:

<table>
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<th>Study Center</th>
<th>Host University</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>NO</strong></td>
<td>89.6%</td>
<td>76.8%</td>
<td>72.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sought casual sexual hook-ups abroad</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, but same as at home</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
<td>12.6%</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, more than at home</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NO</strong></td>
<td>93.8%</td>
<td>80.8%</td>
<td>76.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used Tinder, Grindr, other apps</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, same as at home</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, more than at home</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Other notes:

• Males more likely than females to blackout (33% vs 15%), use drugs (22% vs 15%), seek casual sex (33% vs 14%)

• Females more likely than males (10% vs 8%) to hitchhike, accept a ride from a stranger or unmarked taxi
Other notes:

• Strong positive correlation (significant at 0.01 level) between blackout drinking, drug use, casual sex and hookup app use

• Students who had never been abroad before were slightly more likely than students with some international experience to blackout (7.6% vs 4.8%) and use drugs (6.1% vs 3.6%) more than at home
• Without doing a few slightly risky things, you risk not making many fabulous memories, whether you're abroad or not.

• I went to a natural disaster zone to help with the relief effort. The university explicitly told us not to, but it would have been inhuman of me not to have gone. That experience changed my life, and the U would have kept me from having it.
Start with Why

Simon Sinek

Simon Chu
Director International
University of Otago New Zealand
The student experience

*Otago’s response to one risk taking behaviour*

Generation Z

To manage risk... people, equipment, environment

“Education in context” - *collaborate*
How do we collaborate with partners, university services, other stakeholders and students to decrease the risk?

To manage.. People, Equipment and Environment

What was our response?
Education – orientation
Recreation centre activities
Videos
Equipment rental
Facebook page (peer2Peer)
Partners
Simple signage
Constant reinforcement
Making good decisions
People, environment, equipment
Serve the student..
Collaborate with student...
Support the student...