Using the Standards as a Roadmap for Improving Education Abroad Practices

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Agenda

● Using the Standards of Good Practice in our work
● Institute for Study Abroad external evaluation
● Macalester College approved program list
● Portland State University - stealth Standards implementation
● Small group discussion: using the Standards in your work
● Reporting back and take-aways
Institute for Study Abroad (IFSA) External Evaluation

- **Context**
  - Over 2,000 students in over 20 countries
  - Our roles
  - Experience with Standards
Institute for Study Abroad (IFSA) External Evaluation - Scenario

IFSA instrument: Program Evaluation of Systems and Operations, PESO

Why a priority: high quality programs, continually evolving to meet student needs and the realities of our environments

Stakeholders: students, program staff and faculty, partner universities and organizations abroad, Indianapolis staff, and home universities
IFSA Evaluation - Standards

IFSA

Staff: ...We seek to provide on-going professional development, including plugging into local networks when possible, and a positive working environment. Staff should be appropriately evaluated on a regular basis. Consider the ratio of staff to students, staff training, and retention...

Housing: ...Consider how housing is selected, assigned, and supervised...Examine how families or apartment/residence personnel are trained about issues such as cross-cultural understanding, health and safety issues, and emergency response...

Forum

7. Organizational and Program Resources: The organization ensures that its programs are adequately funded and staffed.

- Faculty and staff are qualified for their roles, fairly compensated, and appropriately trained, with workloads that enable them to support the educational goals of the program and devote sufficient time to their students.
- Programs are funded at levels that ensure safe, clean, and hospitable student housing; co- or extra-curricular activities that support the program’s educational aims, and responsible health, safety, and security measures.
- Facilities and infrastructure are suited to realizing the goals of the program, providing a safe environment that is conducive to learning, and accommodating students of varying needs and abilities.
IFSA Evaluation - On Site

During the actual evaluation

- Constituents involved: local faculty, host universities, academics (local and program courses), internships, host-families, community members
- Preparation of local contacts
- Coordination
IFSA Successes, Challenges, Lessons Learned

Commendations of process (successes):
● Opportunity to review own structures
● Connect with local contacts
● Empower local contacts
● Self-evaluation of our own programs

Recommendations (challenges):
● Standards are not common to local contacts: PESO helped provide clarity in the local context
● Improve evaluation at the intercultural level
● This type of evaluations is “Usonian”
● More tangible results after this exercise is over
Macalester College:
Developing an Approved List of Study Away Programs

Macalester
- Liberal Arts college in St. Paul, MN
- 2100 undergraduates
- 100% Financial Need met
- Mission-driven: Internationalism, Multiculturalism, & Service to Society

Center for Study Away
- 4.5 staff
- 60% students study away for semester (approx. 160/semester)
- 75% of program participation through providers, direct enroll or exchange (AKA not Mac-run programs)
- Home school tuition
Macalester College: 
Developing an Approved List of Study Away Programs

Why?
- Rising costs
- Faculty (and student?) perception of inferior academics

Priority (from above):
- Maintain expenses
- Increase participation
- Evaluate programs based on academic quality

What?
- Approved list of programs based on alignment with learning goals
- Structure for managing expenses
Macalester College:
Developing an Approved List of Study Away Programs, part 1

#2: Student Learning & Development

> Organizations seek to create and maintain continuity with student learning and development on the home campus.

#6 Policies & Procedures

> The organization has guidelines governing its marketing practices, partnerships, and institutional relations.
Macalester College:
Developing an Approved List of Study Away Programs, part 2

OUTCOMES:

● Approved list that has flexibility to manage cost without sacrificing quality
● Institutional learning goals for study away
● Policies and procedures for adding and removing programs to ‘Approved List’
● Internal guidelines for institutional relations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Program Type</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Macalester Faculty-Led and Exchange Programs</td>
<td>Programs in this group are either Macalester faculty-led semester programs or exchange programs between Macalester and another university. Programs in this group, the largest of the three, includes programs that fit a wide variety of student learning goals. Programs in this group have limited enrollment, and all applicants are required to select an approved back-up program from Groups A or B. Macalester approval will be decided based upon academic fit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Macalester Approved Study Away Programs</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Macalester Competitive Study Away Programs</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
LESSONS LEARNED:

- Standards provide foundational support
- Policies and practices must be dynamic
- Institutional/faculty buy-in is the long road, but worth the effort
Portland State University

● PSU
  ● Large, urban, research university in Portland, OR
  ● 28,000 Students (22,000 undergrad, 6,000 grad), app.

● Education Abroad
  ● 100% Self-Support - recent change
  ● 6 Full-Time staff
  ● Sent 560 abroad in 16-17
  ● Forum members, but lacking active, full engagement
  ● Written Protocols/Procedures did not exist prior to 2016 (institutional culture)
PSU - Standard 8

Health, Safety, and Risk Management

The organization prioritizes the health, safety, and security of its students through policies, procedures, advising, orientation, and training.

PSU Needs:
2. Justification (and formalized process) for vetting new programs.

Outcomes:
1. Working draft of our CMH
2. Referencing the drafted guidelines, along with the standards, has allowed us to push back on requests for adding programs.
3. Program Proposal Vetting Process
4. Revised Travel Advisory petition protocol

Still to Come:
1. Final Draft!
2. Designing and offering training for staff and faculty.
3. Designing on-going review and assessments of existing programs.
PSU - Standard 2

Student Learning and Development: The organization’s mission, goals, and operations prioritize student learning and development.

- Educational objectives remain central to program design and management. *(For PSU EA, program design also means programming and advising work)*
- Regular evaluations are conducted to assess student learning and development.

**PSU Needs:**
1. Redesign, the re-redesigned Orientation - look at Orientation as an ongoing, holistic process
2. GA at the time needed a final project for her Masters Program
3. Desire to apply Standards - but lacking buy-in

**Outcomes:**
1. Established **Learning Objectives and Goals** for:
   a. Pre-Advising
   b. Program Selection Advising
   c. Pre-Departure Orientation
2. Stealth implementation of Standards into everyday work of team

**Still to come:**
1. Develop learning objectives and goals for “While Abroad” and “Re-entry” phases of student cycle
2. Create content and modules
3. Design and implement assessments
4. Link learning objectives to Ed Abroad mission
Questions?
Questions for Your Group

- Do you already intentionally align your work with the Standards? How does aligning it with the Standards strengthen your work? What obstacles does it present?

- What part of your work could be made stronger by aligning it with the Standards? What obstacles do you see for getting there?
Take-aways and Action Points