Open Forum on Developing Risk Mitigation II

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Agenda

• Who is here? Poll questions interspersed...
• Learn from different contexts, approaches and perspectives
  • What is the context?
  • How many students were on site?
  • How did that work?
  • Where did you get information?
  • What was your strategy for reassurance?
• Sharing resources
• Questions and answers
Who is here?

- Education Abroad Director
- Senior International Officer
- Education Abroad Organization Representative
- Risk Manager
- Faculty Leader of Education Abroad
- Resident Director
- Insurance Provider
- Health and Safety Officer
- Other
Pivoting during the pandemic
Mission

The Center for International Programs and Sustainability Studies at Universidad Veritas is committed to offering innovative courses and programs to develop an interdisciplinary and sustainability-focused mindset. We provide a diverse and inclusive intercultural learning-platform for international students in pursuit of becoming leaders and service-oriented citizens in a changing, challenging, and diverse world.
Quick transition to virtual sessions

- Spring 2020: 194 International students
- March 6th: First COVID19 case in Costa Rica
- March 16: Transition to virtual sessions and intense use of the LMS for assignment submissions.
- March 20th:
  - All students had returned to their homes.
Communication with stakeholders

- Students' disappointment to SA cut short
- Immediate and fluid communication with partner institutions
- Act as an information source for all stakeholders (students, partner institutions, families, faculty, host families and other)
- Act according to policies and work on next steps
Stay informed through official sources
Local Information and resources

Sources vary according to Risk Mgmt

Sitio Web del Ministerio de Salud de Costa Rica. Bienvenido
Local Information and resources

Sources vary according to Risk Mgmt

Inicio - Presidencia de la República de Costa Rica (covid19.go.cr)
Alertas COVID-19: Costa Rica - Ingreso de turistas al país (google.com)
Sources vary according to Risk Mgmt

U.S. Embassy in Costa Rica (usembassy.gov)
Sources vary according to Risk Mgmt

COVID Live Update: 167,360,571 Cases and 3,475,049 Deaths from the Coronavirus - Worldometer (worldometers.info)

Tracking - Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Center (jhu.edu)
Global Information and resources

Sources vary according to Risk Mgmt
Sources vary according to Risk Mgmt
Industry Information and resources

GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCTING EDUCATION ABROAD DURING COVID-19
Industry Information and resources

Sources vary according to Risk Mgmt
Industry Information and resources

Sources vary according to Risk Mgmt

NAFSA Resources for Operational Resilience | NAFSA
Sources vary according to Risk Mgmt

Industry Information and resources

Coronavirus Critical Resources

Topics: Education Abroad, International Students and Scholars, Regulatory Information
Sub Topics: Student Health and Safety, Crisis Management, Risk Assessment and Crisis Management, Visas, Travel, Entry, International Faculty, Staff, Researchers

NAFSA has assembled these resource links to help you navigate issues arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. COVID-19 is the disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus.

ICE and SEVP  DOS EVP  Visas and Entry
Sources vary according to Risk Mgmt

Industry Information and resources

Advisory on Online and Distance Education Strategies in the Context of COVID-19

Topics: International Enrollment Management, International Students and Scholars, Regulatory Information
Sub Topics: International Students and Schools, Exchange Visitors and Exchange Visitor Programs

The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in most schools using online or distance education modalities as part of their strategy to mitigate interruptions to coursework. This has both academic implications, which apply to domestic and international students alike, and immigration questions, because...
Support for your stakeholders

• Logistical support for students
• Emotional support
• Ensure academic continuity
• Start training for a new way of doing things
Training for Virtual environments
Pedagogical principles for online learning
Instructional course design for virtual environments
ONLINE SUMMER STUDY ABROAD ORIENTATION

Study Abroad Veritas Orientation

Student preparation and information
Your academic framework, courses, and attendance policy.

The best way to understand the Competency-based learning model used at VERITAS is to compare it to what you might have been accustomed if you come from a traditional educational system.

We have found visual aids from the KnowledgeWorks Foundation, which we will use to illustrate. You can find the reference at https://knowledgeworks.org/resources/traditional versus competency education infographics/.

Core 10 rules of netiquette to follow

In her book Netiquette, Winer *Vespera Sites* wrote these important guidelines:

1. Remember the humans — this is the Golden Rule of internet communications. Always be aware that you are talking to a person, not a device. Therefore, the same rules of courtesy apply.
2. Adhere to the same standards of behavior online that you follow in real life.
3. Know where you are in cyberspace — netiquette varies from domain to domain. What is acceptable in a chat room may not be appropriate in a professional forum, so "think before you type."
4. Respect other people's time and bandwidth.
5. Make yourself look good online — spelling and grammar count! Always write thoughtful posts and keep your language clean.
7. Help keep forums’ users under control.
8. Respect other people’s privacy.
9. Do not abuse your power.
10. Be forgiving of other people’s mistakes.
Design protocols for on campus return

COVID-19 CAMPUS PREPAREDNESS PLAN
Spring 2021 As of March 4th, 2021

INTRODUCTION

VERITAS’ goal is to provide a safe learning environment for its students, faculty, staff, and administrators. We know that the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects have impacted the world and although Costa Rica has already begun the vaccination process through our Universal Healthcare systems, by groups, we need to maintain sanitary measures to best respond to the needs of our community and international students. We hope the protocols and measures, inspire confidence for international travel amongst universities, students, and families. Our campus protocols are based on instructions from local government officials and
Preparation before they travel

Page 2. Rules of the game and forms you need to sign.

1. Before you come to Costa Rica, make sure to comply with entry requirements:
   - Although a negative PCR test for the COVID-19 is not mandatory. It is recommended that students do get tested in the 48 hours prior to entering the country. [Link to test requirements]
   - Before your travel date, anyone entering Costa Rica must complete the online "Health Pass" health certification form. The form can be filled out within 48 hours of your flight and access to the health form will be required. It is very important to know that on day 6 and 10, students must return to the online health certification form.

Page 3. University platforms, Canvas LMS and other systems.

We use Four Platforms that are important in your enrollment, student records, learning process, and class meetings!

1. eAdmissions: Many of you only used this platform to either apply to the program and if you came through one of our partners, you might have never used it at all.

2. CANVAS LMS: This will be your "Learning Management System" to access all your courses, the syllabus (which we recommend you download), your grades, progress and details, the feedback from your professors, meetings, activities, exams, and notifications from your classes!

To access CANVAS, you will need your Student ID number for the user name (the one you used for the placement exam or that was assigned as your Veritas ID) and the password will be: Veritas (the 6-digit password) you used to

Page 8. Your Health, Safety and Risk Management

We want you to have the best experience so be SAFE!

Safely being by knowing all issues involving the country where you are traveling so you can prepare and be aware of how to take care of yourself and make sure your program aligns with safety protocols.
Preparing them for the experience
Preparing resources and infrastructure
Academic infrastructure and equipment
Laboratories and smaller closed in spaces
Continuity of fieldwork through site assessment
Creativity in a hybrid participation modality
Prepare spaces and activities for leisure

Reentry support
SUMMER SESSION 1  May 24th – June 25th, 2021

- Staying informed
- Structuring a plan
- Training everyone involved
- Preparing students for a different experience
- Professionally, physically and emotionally support all stakeholders so the program flows!
- Support for entry and reentry
- 68 on-campus in presences students
- 21 fully online students
As your organization evaluates future education abroad and international travel policies or guidelines, what are the three main external factors that affect decision-making?

**Check up to 3**
- CDC guidance
- U.S. Department of State Travel Advisory guidance
- Entry and exit restrictions for education abroad locations
- Flight availability
- The level of new COVID-19 cases
- Benchmarking peer institutions
- Unsure
Operating during COVID-19

Summer & Fall 2020
Cancelled

Spring 2021
3 sites open
35 students

Summer 2021
2 sites open
15 students

Fall 2021
3 sites will run
150+ expected
## What we experienced

### Program Related
- All housing options available
- Mostly hybrid courses
- No excursions but more activities
- Virtual orientation for some
- “Good news only” philosophy

### COVID-19 Related
- Dozens of PCR & Antigen tests
- Several Close Contact cases
- Quarantine upon arrival for some
- 2 positive COVID cases
## Risk mitigation & communication

### Information
- Government websites – official info only
- APUAF COVID-19 Info Sheet
- Shared only objective data
- Weekly updates to students

### Reassurance Strategy
- Nuanced approach
- Transparency
- Confidence – we have the resources, we can do this
- Training & workshops for staff
- Pre-departure Q&A for students
# What’s next?

## The positives

- Things are improving on the ground
- Experience managing the health side
- Experience with hybrid and online education
- Students, staff, faculty protected with vaccinations

## The uncertainties

- CDC/State Department
- End to restrictions?
- What does the next phase look like?
- When can we get back to planning in advance?
- What will be the new normal?
Will your organization allow travel to countries rated at Level 4 by the US Department of State?

- Yes
- Only as an exception
- No
- Unsure
Open Forum on Developing Risk Mitigation II

Mark A. Ritchie, Ph.D., Executive Director, ISDSI — isdsi.org
Context and Background

• Thailand had the **first documented case outside of China** of COVID-19

• **ISDSI staff with relevant training and experience** in public health, epidemiology, and risk assessment, with long history working with NGOs and communities

• **Immediately started talking with Thai Public Health** and others, gathering data and hosting public forums with Public Health and community

• **Thailand went into lockdown, rural villages cut themselves off** from the outside, extensive COVID control measures, including domestic travel restrictions

• **Students were recalled home** and we went **online in March 2020** to finish the semester, cancelled all summer programs

• Put most **staff on furlough**, and **formed a core “reboot” team** to prepare to reopen if possible, based on planning from 3 years ago about pandemic preparedness
How we ran Fall 2020 / Spring 2021

- Numbers fell to zero in Thailand after an extensive lockdown for months
- A partner school contacted us as well as a couple of students about possibly running Fall 2020
- Called together the “reboot team” and started planning along with US staff
- Fall 2020: 6 students / Spring 2021: 16 students (including launching a new program)
- Worked closely with Thai Public Health and local communities to plan COVID safe experiential studies, including testing, quarantine, modifying activities, etc.
- Dropped home stays in urban areas, modified in rural areas, involving our partner communities in the decision making process
- We figured out the VERY complex process of entry into Thailand with constantly changing visas, quarantine requirements, Certificates of Entry, new insurance requirements, and flights
Strategy and ongoing assessment

• **COVID is a moving target** and requires assessing how and when to run programs

• Thailand has had two additional waves, with the “3rd wave” still ongoing, but concentrated around Bangkok, with smaller numbers or zero in other provinces — **geography matters!**

• **Continued to engage** with and dialog with Public Health, NGOs, epidemiologists and our own assessments

• **Increased orientation and dialog** with incoming students and partner schools

• Planning for Fall 2021 includes **multiple scenarios** with vaccinated students, increasing vaccinations in Thailand, challenge of controlling COVID in country, changes in sending school COVID policies
Things that helped us

- Most of our course are already experiential and field based so we could quickly modify programs and courses while being COVID safe
- Staff with relevant experience in social science, epidemiology, public health, and risk management
- Existing relationships to experts in public health, etc.
- Previous planning (3 years ago!) identified a pandemic as a risk in our SWOT analysis
- Ability to cross-check data from the Thai government to see if the numbers were reliable
- Two staff on furlough worked on COVID-19 testing locally in Chiang Mai and learned the system and who the key players are
- One American staff member stranded in the US helped figure out the very complex process of returning, and accompanied students back
- Thailand has an excellent public health and village health volunteer system, and Thai people are on-board with efforts to control COVID, including masking, social distancing, etc., along with daily briefings
If not, what is your organization doing with regard to travel?

- Cancelling all travel of any sort to those countries until the Level is decreased.
- Cancelling all education abroad programs to those countries until the Level is decreased.
- Looking to other sources of data to inform our decisions on whether the risk is manageable.
Field Resources

• Guidelines for Conducting Education Abroad during COVID-19
• Responsible Education Abroad: Best Practices for Health, Safety, and Security
• The Standards of Good Practice (6th ed., 2020)
• The Code of Ethics for Education Abroad (3rd ed., 2020)
• NAFSA Resources for Operational Resilience
Expert Resources

• COVID Live Update: 166,243,526 Cases and 3,451,708 Deaths from the Coronavirus - Worldometer
• Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
• Tracking - Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Center
• COVID-19 Travel Recommendations by Destination | CDC
• How CDC Determines the Level for COVID-19 Travel Health Notices | CDC
• The latest global coronavirus statistics, charts and maps (Reuters)
• COVID Live Update: 171,059,036 Cases and 3,557,460 Deaths from the Coronavirus - Worldometer
Local Resources

Costa Rica

• Sitio Web del Ministerio de Salud de Costa Rica
• Inicio - Presidencia de la República de Costa Rica
• Alertas COVID-19: Costa Rica - Ingreso de turistas al país

Thailand

• COVID-19 - ISDSI (case study, FAQ, contingency plans, links)
• Corona Virus Disease (COVID-19) (Thailand)
• Thailand International Travel Information (DOS)
• COVID-19 Information | U.S. Embassy & Consulate in Thailand
• Thailand COVID: 159,792 Cases and 1,031 Deaths - Worldometer
• Thailand: the latest coronavirus counts, charts and maps (Reuters)
Local Resources

Europe

France
• [https://www.apuaf.org/](https://www.apuaf.org/) for the APUAF COVID-19 Info Sheet
• [https://www.usa.campusfrance.org/covid-19-faqs](https://www.usa.campusfrance.org/covid-19-faqs) Campus France Covid FAQ
Thank you!

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