RETHINKING EDUCATION ABROAD: PRE-FIRST YEAR PROGRAMMING

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Early programming abroad

- Enrollment management trend
- Work with first-year transition & success programs
- Informed by student development theory
- Encouraged by trend to link state funding to performance metrics, e.g. retention, time to degree, etc.
- Early high impact programming.
- Symposium at MSU Sept 2011

http://studyabroad.isp.msu.edu/frseminar/symposium.htm
What do we want students to be and become in terms of their developing holistic and global perspective?

What can students experience in college that are most promising in fostering these desired ends?

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Braskamp model
over 2,600 students abroad on nearly 300 programs to all 7 continents

1/4 of MSU undergraduate students

#1 Public University

Freshman Seminars Abroad

Study Abroad top rated attraction for admitted students
Global Competence Goals

• an **understanding of themselves** culturally and the ability to use this knowledge to live and work effectively in diverse settings and with diverse individuals

• the knowledge and skills associated with **intercultural** content areas such as language, geography, history;

• a desire and ability to seek out and use **diverse sources of information** to inform their decision making; and

• a desire and ability to engage in **communities of practice** as citizens and scholars.
Rethinking education abroad: pre-first year programming

European Association for International Education (EAIE) Annual Conference
Dublin, Ireland
September 13, 2012

Brian Harley
Associate Dean, International Programs &
Director, Office of Programs for Study Abroad
Purdue University
About 3 ½ % of all US study abroad students are freshmen.

Likewise at Purdue, historically less than 5% of US study abroad students have been freshmen.

New Program Innovation (summer 2011)

- Provost’s commitment
- Early experience (thinking and/or doing)
- Interdisciplinary (albeit no core course currently at Purdue)
- Symbolic commitment to new students
- Admissions partnership
Why Costa Rica?

- Expenses
- Safety
- Perceived safety
- Alumni contacts
- “Leadership” and “Green” as interdisciplinary topics
- Edu-eco-adventure-learning
- General allure
- Prediction of success
Goals
- Early experience (mindset plus future)
- Interdisciplinary
- Innovative program (relative to Purdue)
- Partnership with Office of Admissions (for recruitment)
- Minimized issues of cost, safety, perception management
Program had varied features

- Museums
- Rainforest
- Lectures on history and culture
- Lectures on communication
- Volcanoes
- Coffee plantations
- Alumni contact
- Company Visit
- Hikes and walking tours
- *(optional)* zip line experience
- Local speakers
- *(optional)* opera
- Cooking instruction
- Dance instruction

Note: A program provider was utilized
Global Leadership in Costa Rica for Freshmen

“Be part of something special. Participate in this unique program meant to enhance the Purdue experience from day one. Create lasting bonds with fellow students whom with you'll be spending the next four years. A multi-disciplinary team of Purdue faculty/staff escort a small group of incoming freshman on a two-week academic program in and around San Jose, Costa Rica.”
Challenges and How We Responded:

Admissions related
- Including in cycle of Admissions communications and events
- Admittance effective date (i.e. fall, not summer)
- Recruiting prospective students (i.e. even after May 1st)
- Academic Advisors not in rhythm of including as Fall option
- Importance of visit days, direct emails, and relentless recruiting
Challenges and How We Responded  {continued}

- July activity, but treated as fall semester endeavor (note the Provost-related exception)
- Campus wide curiosity but less able to boldly advocate
- Issue of non-US citizens (so restricted to US only this first time)
- Student who completed the program but deferred fall admission
Other success
- Behavior great
- Students became “Purdue identified” immediately
- No alcohol abuse noted
- People on time (i.e. worries of grade cuts initially)
- Students wanted more integration and challenge
- Students began speaking of long-term plans
Outcomes

- Interdisciplinary (almost every College represented)
- Experienced student group self-selected
- Noted that it was high-achieving students
  - 2011: seven (7) honors students (out of 23)
  - Most had prior travel experiences
  - Most had ambitious personalities
  - 2012: estimated five (5) honors students (out of 27)
Second cohort (summer 2012)

- Reached the enrollment cap in March
- Added book from university core reading program (i.e. *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind*) to the experience
- Added service learning component
- Continuing conversations about future ties with residential “Learning Communities”
Conclusions
- Less emphasis on “Leadership” than anticipated
- Bonding (prevailing theme, even if secondary)
- Early influence to ongoing learning outcomes
- Important symbolism (that international education is available to all)
- Challenges within institutional culture to considering study abroad as enhancing student recruitment then early intervention (versus merely adding a program)
Thank you for your interest!

Brian Harley
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US Freshman Programming: A European Perspective
UCD: receiving institution for MSU Freshman Seminar

- MSU Freshman Seminar is one of a number of Study groups hosted by UCD in the summer

- MSU is the only group UCD receives of this age profile

- MSU has more direct involvement in the structure and delivery of the program than any other partner
Our experience of the Program

• MSU structure already in place which make delivery seamless for the receiving institution

• MSU’s excellent pre-departure program ensures students are well prepared by the time they arrive.

• MSU model works well – 2 Faculty and 1 operational/logistical staff person (pastoral care element)
Our experience of the Students

• Freshman students are younger, more open-minded for learning, enthusiastic and still forming their opinions on College life.

• Group dynamic changes from year to year – last year 30 this year 20. Smaller group jelled better.

• Last years group – Galway 5 days /UCD 8. Last year preferred Galway, this year preferred Dublin

• This year’s group showed initiate e.g. one of the students organised an trip to the fire station independently with three other students

• UCD’s Verdict – best group this year
European Freshman Programming: Case Study

Focus on 1st Year

University College Dublin
Freshmen issues in UCD up to 2010

- **University Commitment**: “Early & Lasting Student Engagement” a key strategic goal for University College Dublin

- **Adjustment**: 5,000 incoming Freshmen, majority have only had their programme choice confirmed 12 days before start of semester. Some programme only 3 Year in length

- **Readiness for Independent Learning**: Irish High school curriculum tends towards more passive learning and lack opportunities for group projects etc.
UCD ‘Focus on 1st Year’ 2010-2013

• Major 3-year institutional project run by Dean of Undergraduate Studies to improve **engagement, performance and retention** of 1st year students.

• Undertook full review of **curriculum design, assessment approaches** and **academic supports** in 1st year.

• **Used robust evidence & KPIs** to assess success of new approaches (attrition, progression, performance etc)
Improving Semester 1, Year 1

Programme Orientation

Transition to Independent Study

Semester 2

Engagement with Study and UCD life

assessment & feedback
2010-2011

1. Structure of all Undergraduate Programmes fully reviewed

2. Introduction of ‘Graduate Identity’ modules in 1st Semester

Supporting Projects also Completed 2010/2011

- Institutional Review of Academic Supports ✓
- On-line Study Skills Resource ✓
- Attrition Analysis Research ✓
- On-line Module Feedback & NSSE ✓
- Development of Academic Analytics ✓
Focus on 1st Year Outcomes

- **Improved retention** in most programmes

- **Improved student engagement** shown in NSSE scores (2012)

- Every 1st Year/Freshman has a peer mentor for first 6 week of their university career

- Students do **less assessment**, but the assessment that is completed **drives** better learning.