Recruiting and Serving Underrepresented Students in Study Abroad

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Why care about diversity in study abroad?

• Think of study abroad as an integral part of overall educational policy
• Study Abroad profile should mirror the profile on campus
• In a rapidly globalizing world, studying abroad should be an option for all students
• Efforts to diversify study abroad programming will enhance learning outcomes for all students
Barriers to studying abroad

• Finances
• Faculty, advisers and academic fit
• Foreign language
• Family and Friends
• Fear
• Flying
How to Attract and Better Serve Diverse Students

• ethnically and racially diverse populations
• students from diverse socio-economic groups
• LGBTQ students
• STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) students
• students with disabilities
Suggestions for all students

- Gather data as a base line and establish goals
- Start with pre-college awareness efforts and build relationships
- Provide information early in their college careers about the benefits, financial aid options and credit transfer. Provide a strong support system when they are abroad and when they return.
- Most students have the same needs. Follow the same usual processes for all students.
- Offer a diverse variety of programs models
- Consider heritage programming
Suggestions for all Students (cont.)

• Identify support systems, units and individuals across campus
• Enlist faculty support and involvement
• Establish strong working relationships with staff across campus
• Hire diverse staff, especially peer advisers
• Develop the top reasons to study abroad and adapt the list to fit the group that you are targeting.
• Utilize materials such as Diversity Abroad to dispel myths and explain why it is important to study abroad.
Ethnically and Racially Diverse Populations

• Look for and eliminate bias in your written materials
• Include students of color in your promotional materials
• Use returned students, especially students of color, as resources
• Collaborate with cultural and minority aides
• Outreach to student organizations, community organizations and family members
• Tap into incoming freshmen or summer programs through student support services
• Build coalitions with administrators who can articulate commitment to diversity and serve as mentors
• Highlight influential leaders who have been impacted by international experiences
• Reach out to faculty and advisers of color to encourage study abroad
• Create cultural programming
• Hold meetings in the multicultural center to send a message
• Cross training of Study Abroad and Diversity Office staff
Diverse Socio-economical Groups/First Generation Students

- Keep costs down
- Provide complete costs
- Make financial aid available for all programs
- Provide additional need based scholarships
- Provide short term (1-2 week programs)
- Gilman scholarships
- Remember importance of family
LGBTQ Students

Provide students with tools and information:

• Get to know the destination
• Understand the context, customs and attitudes in the host country
• Learn the laws of the host country
• Think about changes that may occur upon return
STEM Students

- Provide a variety of programs (exchanges, project-based, research, internships, service learning)
- Offer programs taught in English
- Offer feeder programs
- Have clear set out desired outcomes
- Establish study abroad identity for STEM colleges
- Provide recognition for faculty leaders
- Establish support systems within STEM colleges/units
- Boren Scholarships
Students with Disabilities

• Encourage early disclosure
• Have students register with Disability office and meet with adviser
• Develop an accommodations request form
• Arrange a meeting for the student with disability, study abroad and faculty leaders
• Establish contacts on-site
• Mobility International and other resources
Thank you!

For further information, contact Cindy Chalou at chalouc@msu.edu