Recruiting and Serving Underrepresented Students in Study Abroad

Cindy Chalou
Associate Director
Office of Study Abroad
Michigan State University

T. Shá Duncan Smith
Intercultural Programs Manager
Center for Global and Intercultural Study
University of Michigan-Ann Arbor
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 “Unlikely” Students

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

• Most students have the same needs. Follow the same usual processes for all students.
• Offer a diverse variety of programs models
• Partner with student organizations and student resource units and provide targeted outreach
• 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
Suggestions for all Students (cont.)

• 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

• Collaborate:
  – with student organizations and units that serve as effective resources
  – with cultural and minority aides

• Use returned students, especially students of color, as resources

• Promote global opportunities in the residence halls with multicultural councils and resident advisors

• Create:
  – programming on financing the study abroad experience
  – intercultural training and resources

• Outreach:
  – to student organizations, community organizations and family members
  – incoming freshmen or summer programs through student support services
Ethnically and Racially Diverse Populations (cont.)

- 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 advisors of color to encourage study abroad
- Hold meetings in the multicultural center to send a message
- Cross training of Study Abroad and Diversity Office staff
- Look for and eliminate bias in your written materials
  Include students of color who have participated in global programs in your promotional materials
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
- Collaborate with units and academic departments on fundraising efforts
- 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
- Provide onsite counseling, support and resources
- Provide program/region specific intercultural training to promote managing issues that may arise and supporting colleagues on site
STEM Students

• Provide a variety of programs (exchanges, project-based, research, internships, service learning)
• Collaborate with departments to provide higher level courses that will be approved for the student’s concentration
• Offer programs taught in English
• Offer summer and short term opportunities
• Offer feeder programs
STEM Students (cont.)

• Have clear set out desired outcomes
• Establish study abroad identity for STEM colleges
• Provide recognition for faculty leaders
• Collaborate with departments to establish student funding
• 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
- Create an onsite plan with the student so they are empowered to make sure their needs are met onsite
Students with Disabilities (cont.)

• Arrange a meeting for the student with disability, study abroad and faculty leaders
• Establish contacts on-site
• Mobility International and other resources
Males

• Conduct Focus Groups to assess their needs
• Make sure your promotional materials highlight the benefits
• Provide workshops to show how studying abroad will set them apart
• Provide programs that have internship opportunities
Athletes

• Collaborate with athletic department and academic counseling center
• Provide programs during all “off seasons”
• Offer programs in collaboration with Kinesiology, Sports Science, Sports Management and other departments with a high level of athletes enrolled
• Promote short term and spring/summer programs
How to Attract and Better Serve “Unlikely” Students

- Ethnically and racially diverse populations
- Students from diverse socio-economic groups
- LGBTQ students
- STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) students
- Students with disabilities
- Athletes
- Men
Thank you!

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

T. Shá Duncan Smith at tedsun@umich.edu