Leadership of Study Abroad Semester Programs – Pilot Travel Fund FY2015 & 16

MSU’s incentivized funding model has helped cultivate the nation’s premier catalog of faculty-led study abroad programs and we are proud to have the country’s largest cohort of actively engaged faculty leading and teaching programs abroad. We need similarly engaged champions for our semester abroad programs. These do not usually include an instructional assignment for MSU faculty but offer significant value for a longer educational experience. In order to increase student participation in semester programs, the Office of Study Abroad has allocated funds to encourage more leadership and advising support for semester programs abroad.

Who? Colleges will identify tenure-stream or fixed-term faculty or advisers with a desire to engage with study abroad and encourage students to consider the high value of semester programs abroad.

Benefits:
- Opportunity to vet semester abroad programs, identify joint research opportunities for faculty, enhance advising support for the visited program and for study abroad in general
- May result in formal assignment of program leadership, with annual letter from OSA to be used in annual review of service

What? Colleges may propose travel to
1) incentivize faculty leadership,
2) increase awareness of the program visited,
3) increase understanding of study abroad programming,
4) increase advising support,
5) undertake program review, or
6) pursue additional strategic objectives in collaboration with OSA.

Proposals that further the following strategies will receive preferential weighting:
- potential for collaborative research with strategic partners;
- positioning semester study abroad as a High Impact Learning Strategy (HILS) within Bolder by Design;
- enhancing retention and completion rates through early study abroad integrated into the degree plan;
- outreach to first-generation, high-need, and under-represented groups.

Implementation:
Semester abroad programs are ‘co-sponsored’ by one or more degree-granting colleges and usually do not include an instructional assignment for MSU faculty. Colleges will review their list of sponsored programs and prioritize three for increased engagement &/or review as well as suggest potential champions for each. The recruitment campaign will be handled at the college level under the leadership of the dean’s designee for study abroad. OSA will provide the colleges with a flyer and respond to questions. OSA will coordinate priorities across colleges to identify programs with significant intersection of interests and finalize assignment of traveler/leadership roles in consultation with appropriate colleges. If interest is identified from several colleges for a particular program, OSA may stage a group site visit.

Funding will cover the economy-class travel, room and board, and reasonable costs for up to five days on-site to visit an existing MSU semester abroad program during Summer 2014 through Spring 2016. (OSA’s shared funding model for new program development will continue during this time.) OSA anticipates funding up to 20 trips in FY2015 (Summer 2014 – Spring 2015) and up to 30 in FY 2016 (Summer 2015 – Spring 2016). Proposals that maximize the cost/benefit ratio will be favored. Funded travelers may move to take on a leadership role for the semester abroad program, after consultation with the sponsoring college(s) and OSA. After analysis of the pilot phase, and depending on resources, OSA may implement travel support for assigned leaders for semester abroad programs on the basis of site visits on a three-year cycle.
Expectations:
During a site visit, leaders will visit appropriate classrooms and academic staff as well as work with the local staff and/or Resident Director to familiarize themselves with the program. Operating under the direction of the local personnel or the local Resident Director, they will, as appropriate: pursue potential research connections, if appropriate; visit several different classes and meet with academic instructors; scrutinize facilities such as residence halls, computer labs, dining facilities, etc.; network with local personnel; schedule a meeting with MSU and local students and participate in any scheduled activities, if applicable.

The following list provides the minimal expectations, but leaders may be asked to assist in additional ways.

- Identify potential areas for research collaboration, as appropriate, depending on the profile of the traveler.
- Undertake review of academic offerings, working with appropriate college processes and OSA. Leaders will represent additional academic areas, outside of their immediate department, to gather information for review. All curriculum decisions remain the responsibility of the appropriate academic unit.
  - Before traveling, review list of currently approved courses that fulfill MSU degree requirements
  - On-site, review existing list of approved courses, update syllabi appropriately, and identify additional courses of interest.
  - Post-visit, provide updates to existing list of approved courses and propose additional courses for review by appropriate college/department personnel. Documented review of proposed revisions to approved courses list to be completed within three months of return. College support of travel request includes commitment to assist with this process. OSA will provide forms and further instructions in the pre-trip briefing.
- Provide a report to OSA and sponsoring college(s) within one month of return that describes the academics of the site including type of instruction, course offerings, etc.; site visit activities and general impressions; positive program features and those that need improvement, and specific strategies and activities that will increase participation. This report is critical for expansion of course offerings, program assessment, feedback to OSA, and ideas to share with other personnel and colleges. It is required for reconciliation of travel expenses.
- Play an active role as an advocate in his or her college, including sharing site visit insights and experiences with other faculty, staff, and advisers. Additionally, leaders will work with the Office of Study Abroad in developing and implementing effective recruiting strategies and activities within his or her college/unit. This will include at least five classroom visits during the academic year following the visit to encourage participation in this program.
- If the visit leads to an assignment of program leadership, the leader will also
  - Assist OSA and college leadership in communication with the partner university.
  - Advise students interested in the program.
  - Be listed, if appropriate, as program leader on marketing materials.
  - Provide an annual progress report to OSA and the sponsoring college(s) that includes activities and promotion, strategy, challenges, enrollment, successes, etc.

Expectations will be discussed in person during a mandatory pre-trip briefing with an OSA director and appropriate college leadership. OSA will provide templates and examples of expected output.

Site Visit Application Process:
Applicants should provide a vita and indicate previous international travel or education and linguistic skills. Colleges may support applications intended to assist in professional development of advising staff through a focused site visit. Submit a proposal of approximately 2-4 pages in length that describes:

- interest in this particular program; role and interaction with undergraduate students; previous interest and experience with this or other study abroad programs; the desired timing for the visit and proposed budget; plans for collaborating with OSA to promote semester study abroad in future years

Include an e-mail of support from immediate supervisor and the Deans’ Designee for Study Abroad in the applicant’s college.

For travel in FY2016 (Summer 2015-Spring 2016), 3 rounds of review will be scheduled, contingent on funding:

1. April 15, 2015
2. May 15, 2015
3. October 1, 2015

Applicants should submit proposals via e-mail to Inge Steglitz, Acting Director of OSA, 109 International Center, steglitz@msu.edu. Applications for site visits will be reviewed by OSA, Department Chair or School Director, and the appropriate Deans’ Designee for Study Abroad. Applicants will be notified of results within two weeks after the deadline. Expense receipts and site visit report is due within 30 days of return.

Questions: Inge Steglitz, steglitz@msu.edu, 517-353-8920

Rev. 3/20/2015