Mitigating Risk Associated with College or University Sponsored Travel

Professor Jerry Urquhart, a study abroad program leader, properly harnessed and helmeted in Nicaragua
International Analyst for Travel Health, Safety, & Security

Licensed Attorney
OSAC Executive Council
NAFSA Health & Safety Subcom.
• Workshop Presenter
• Curriculum Review & Revision

London

N. Ireland

Israel

India

Nicaragua
Agenda

OSA/MSU Overview
• OSA at MSU

Types of Sponsored Travel
• Faculty & Staff
• Students
  • Study Abroad
  • Alternative Spring Break
  • Graduate Research

Risk Mitigation
• Understanding Liability
• Centralized Student Review and Approval
• Program Leader Training
• Staff/Faculty Travel Registry
• Int’l Medical Insurance
• Emergency Assistance
• Crisis Management Plans
• Controlled Equipment & Material

Australia
• 250+ programs
• 60+ countries
• 2700+ students
• 20+ OSA employees
• 500+ MSU faculty

❖ Long tradition of faculty support and involvement
❖ Most programs are short-term, faculty-led
❖ Risk & Security Assessment Committee
International Programs

- 5 area studies centers
- 7 thematic institutes
- 1,300+ MSU staff/faculty
- 6000+ trips abroad/year

- MSU established its position of Dean of International Programs in 1956, the first such office among major universities in the U.S.
- MSU is recognized internationally for its work in basic human needs; education; international trade; sustainable agriculture; plant, animal, and human health and welfare; and the environment
- MSU is one of a handful of institutions that employs a full-time international security analyst and crisis manager
Duties of Analyst

Assist in the interpretation and development of University policies, procedures and practices related to faculty, staff and student travel abroad, with special emphasis on risk analysis, emergency preparedness, and crisis management.

Serve as MSU’s first responder to all crises abroad, including after-hours calls into the 24/7 International Emergency Assistance hotline.

Other Institutions with Similar Positions:
- Univ. of California
- Univ. of Minnesota
- Brigham Young Univ.
- School for Field Studies
- Penn State Univ.
- Univ. of Washington

70 Total Incidents Summer 2009
- 39 medical incidents
- 13 safety or security incidents
- 10 logistical incidents
- 4 behavioral incidents
- 4 other unclassified incidents
Risk Assessment

What types of international travel are you supporting??

Faculty/Staff/Graduate Students
- Field research
- Teaching
- Conference attendance
- Project work

Study Abroad
- Faculty-led programs
- Internships/Externships
- Direct enrollment
- Provider
- U-operated study centers
- Independent research

Note: Short-term faculty-led program pose the highest risk

If it isn’t credit bearing, it may not be study abroad, but it still may be university-sponsored travel

An advisor from the College of Social Science making a friend in Nepal
Why higher risk?

**PRGRAM LEADER’S JOB DESCRIPTION**

- Academic freedom advocate
- Academic program developer/adviser
- Admissions and enrollment officer
- Academic records officer
- Budgetary officer
- Bursar
- Computer center manager
- Contract developer
- Course development and evaluation administrator
- Crisis and emergency manager
- Cross-cultural issues consultant
- Drug and alcohol counselor
- Equipment manager
- Evaluation officer
- Facilities manager
- Financial aid officer
- Grades department administrator
- Housing rental agent
- Currency exchange expert
- **Insurance counselor**
- International communications expert
- **International law expert**
- Internship program sponsor
- Librarian
- Loan officer
- Orientation program administrator
- Paralegal
- Parental liaison
- Personal and professional counselor
- Personnel administrator
- Program developer and evaluator
- Public relations officer
- Recruiter
- Risk manager
- Student affairs administrator
- Student conduct judicial officer
- Students with disabilities manager
- Student health professional
- Testing administrator
- Textbook manager
- Translator
- Transportation supervisor
- Travel agent and tour operator
- Visa and immigration specialist
- **Women’s issues advocate**
- Writer and editor

*TAKEN FROM THE MARCH 1994 EDITION OF NAFSA Newsletter*  
(Rhodes, G. & Millington, W.G., Avoiding Liability in Study Abroad: Home Campus and International Campus Concerns, NAFSA Newsletter, March 1994, pp. 3,44,46.)
Overview of Risks

• Health/medical
• Crime/safety
• Accidents/injuries
• Large-scale crises

OSA Associate Director Cindy Chalou with students in Cape Town, South Africa

MSU Professor Paul Roberts with students in Chichén Itzá, Mexico
MEDICAL

- Food- and water-borne diseases
- Onset or worsening of mental health condition
- Mismanagement of pre-existing condition (mental or physical)
- Tropical diseases (malaria, dengue fever, etc.)
- Communicable disease (H1N1, SARS, HIV, TB, etc.)
- Medical error/misdiagnosis of illness/injury
- Animal or Insect bites
CRIME

- Non-violent crime (pick pocketing, identity theft, credit card fraud, etc.)
- Residential crimes (burglary and home invasions)
- Stalking, sexual assault and sexual harassment (by known or unknown assailants)
- Violent crime (armed robbery, murder, rape, kidnapping, etc.)
ACCIDENTS

• Transportation accidents (car, bus, ferry, train, moped, motorcycle or aircraft)
• High-risk recreational activities (bungee jumping, repelling, parachuting, hang-gliding, scuba diving, etc.)
• Drowning

Australia

Kenya
LARGE SCALE CRISES

- Natural disasters (hurricanes, earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanoes, etc.)
- Terrorism, war or civil unrest

Georgia, 8/08 – file photo, BBC

Costa Rica (Police Training Camp)

Chengdu, China 5/08
Mitigating Risk

• Understand liability and risks
• Centralize international activities
• Require program leader training
• Mandate staff/faculty travel registry
• Provide international medical insurance
• Prepare crisis management plans
• Offer emergency assistance

Argentina

India
When leaders or institutions:
- Facilitate dangerous activities or experiences
- Express indifference to, dismiss, or ignore known risks
- Perform an expected & reasonable responsibility in a negligent fashion
- Dictate rules they don’t actually enforce
- Promise services that are not performed

This may lead to claims of:
- Sexual harassment and/or sexual assault
- ADA violations
- Negligence

Italy
Six female students enrolled in a large public institution’s short-term study abroad in South Africa reported recurrent incidents of harassment by three male students, including the graduate assistant. After repeated, failed attempts to get the faculty leader involved, the females left the program early, and sued under Title IX (King).

A wheelchair-using student from a small, private college in Oregon claimed she was denied accommodations during her faculty-led study abroad program in Australia. She was unable to participate in all activities and had to be occasionally carried because alternate forms of transportation were unavailable (Bird).

A female student from a small, private Pennsylvania college participated in a 3-week traveling program to Peru. During the program, she became too ill to travel further, so the three faculty leaders left her at a Cuzco clinic in the care of a missionary. The clinic prevented her from contacting home or transferring to a facility in the capital city. After receiving unnecessary surgery, she was sexually assaulted by medical staff while under local anesthesia (Faye).
Centralize Int’l Activities

• Standardize program creation/approval process
• Implement regular program reviews
  – Academic, health, safety, security
• Create a high-level committee to oversee controversial policy development
  – Travel Warning policy
  – [http://studyabroad.msu.edu/safety/warnings.html](http://studyabroad.msu.edu/safety/warnings.html)
• Develop comprehensive health and safety educational materials
• Require program leaders to undergo emergency preparedness and response training
For new study abroad programs, create a program proposal review process requiring a site visit.

As an incentive, offer full or matching funds.

Provide travel checklist that includes questions regarding academic concerns as well as health, safety, and security.

Proposal should be reviewed by relevant stakeholders:
- Academic department/college
- Risk manager/general counsel
- Physician
- Study abroad office
- Faculty representative

For existing programs, require periodic, comprehensive reviews.
Is someone thoughtfully monitoring world events?
Do you know where your students faculty and staff are?
How quickly and accurately can you find out?
Do you have readily accessible contact information to ascertain their well-being?
Who is responsible for reporting this information to the institution and/or the media?
What plans are in place to render assistance, and do those who may be called to help have access to these plans, or know who to call for advice?

(Former) Hotel of Joe Codde, Professor, College of Education, in Lebanon
Established in 1999, the MSU RSAC consists of eleven high-level university officials who meet regularly to analyze safety and security conditions of newly proposed and existing MSU study abroad programs in order to assess whether the risks at each of these sites are unacceptable for participants and for the University.

In making the determination, the group considers:

- the safety of the students
- the University's ethical responsibilities to participants, as expressed in the academic freedom report
- the University's exposure to legal liabilities
- the public relations issues relating to problematic program sites

The Chair is a senior university official, appointed by the President and Provost. Other members include:

- University Risk Manager
- Rep. from General Counsel's Office
- Dean, International Studies and Programs
- Dean, Graduate School
- Vice-President, Student Affairs
- Rep. from the Provost's Office
- Associate Provost, University Outreach
- Director, Office of Study Abroad
- University Physician
- Travel Security Analyst
- Other members as deemed necessary
Detailed Student Handbook at http://studyabroad.msu.edu/people/students.html

Travel Clinic
Appointments/Consultations

Required General Orientation

Country-specific orientations (US/Abroad)

24/7 Emergency Card

Registered with State Department

IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY WHILE ABROAD
Contact your faculty leader.
Local phone: ____________________________

Call the local emergency services.
Local phone: ____________________________

Call the MSU 24/7 Police Operations Desk at (517) 353-3784.
Be prepared to provide a number where you can be reached. Record your international cell phone number here:

(please include your country code)
Detailed Program Leader/Assistant Handbook/Web Site
Travel Clinic Appointments/Consult
Required Emergency Preparedness/Response Seminar
Required Cell Phone
Individual Consults
Wallet Guide for Emergency Preparedness and Response

The priorities of MSU/OSA include the following in the event of an emergency abroad:
- Account for all students and faculty
- Respond to concerned callers
- Provide MSU President with regular updates
- Assess safety of location for continued program presence
- Communicate assessment to faculty/students
- Inform the media

Preparing for Emergencies Abroad
1. Read Emergency Procedures section of the Faculty Handbook.
2. Share faculty cell phone numbers with students.
3. Convey the local emergency number.
4. Obtain student cell phone numbers.
5. Create a communications tree for students.
6. Implement the “Buddy System.”
7. Advise students to never leave their residence without ID and money.
8. Designate a primary meeting place.
9. Designate a secondary meeting place.
10. Create an emergency plan.

To report an emergency call 1-517-353-3784
This will connect you with the 24/7 International Emergency Assistance Line operated by the
MSU Department of Police and Public Safety (DPPS).
Using Insurance

Verify a complete emergency medicine insurance policy and who will advocate on behalf of the patient

- Communicate whose is responsible for talking to various audiences
  - Other students, parents, university officials, media, State Department, insurance provider, etc.
- Leaders/resident directors should always have provider contact information and contract number available
- In places where care can be suspect, seek facility referrals in advance, and include in your Emergency Action Plan
  - Get provider involved in medical emergency as soon as possible
  - Adhere to guidelines and require written incident reports
    - Remind all to take good notes
  - De-brief and revise protocol
1. Discuss the potential crises that could occur in your area
2. Agree on when and how to check in if an emergency occurs
3. Designate a primary and secondary meeting place
4. Report your status to home campus
5. Require students to check-in with home
6. For short-term programs, designate a student leader in case the program leader is incapacitated or unavailable
   • If there is only one leader, identify an on-site contact person for before departure
24/7 Int’l Emergency Assistance Hotline

Extensive Written Emergency Procedures

In-house Crisis Management Team

University-wide Incident Command Team
24/7 Assistance

To report an emergency or receive immediate assistance anyone can call 517-353-3784. This number is answered by the Department of Police & Public Safety (DPPS) They will record the caller’s concerns and contact the most appropriate MSU official to respond

Cadets are jointly trained by Police Inspector Mary Johnson and OSA’s Julie Friend

An MSU police cadet responding to a call

Julie Friend receiving an emergency call in London
Priorities

- Account for all students, staff and faculty on site
- Respond to concerned callers
- Provide e-mail or phone updates to student, staff and faculty emergency contacts
- Provide campus leaders with regular updates
- Assess safety of location for continued program presence
- Communicate assessment to faculty/students
- Inform the media
Travelers Database

A web-based system designed to collect international travel itineraries and emergency contact information for faculty, staff, students, and independent contractors going abroad on MSU business, assignment or programs (excluding study abroad)
What the Registry Shows

Doe, James  Faculty  CROP AND SOIL SCIENCES  Nagaoka, Japan  01-19-2009 to 01-26-2009

Doe, Jay  Grad Student  MICROB MOL GENETICS CNS  London, UK  01-31-2009 to 02-21-2009

Doe, Jim  Faculty  COMP SCI ENGR  Islamabad, Pakistan  12-18-2008 to 06-03-2009

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Address:</td>
<td>Nagaoka University of Technology, Nagaoka, Niigata 940-2188, Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact Phone:</td>
<td>011-81-258-47-9405</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternate Phone:</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Host/Colleague email:</td>
<td><a href="mailto:masao@vos.nagaokaut.ac.jp">masao@vos.nagaokaut.ac.jp</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Export Controls

- Exports are any items (e.g., commodities, software, technology) or release/sharing of restricted technology or data (orally or in writing) with foreign nationals inside or outside the U.S.
- Export controls are federal laws that regulate the export of sensitive technologies, equipment, software, biological agents, and related data and services.
- These laws require that licenses be obtained for exports unless an exemption exists, and apply to all research activities whether or not there is a specific citation to the regulations in the grant or contract governing the project.
- However, the National Security Decision Directive (NSDD) 189, issued in 1985, states that fundamental research is not subject to the license requirements of export control regulations.

Kenya
• Fundamental research is basic or applied research in science or engineering at an accredited institution of higher learning in the U.S. where the resulting information is not restricted in the form or content of its release to the public and is ordinarily published and shared broadly in the scientific community.

• University research will not be deemed to qualify as fundamental research if the university accepts any restrictions on the publication of the information resulting from the research, or research is federally funded and specific access and dissemination controls regarding the resulting information have been accepted by the university or the researcher.

• Trade sanctions against hostile targets including countries may prohibit travel, payment or providing anything of value to the sanctioned country, regardless of the fundamental research exemption. Current listings of the targets affected by these regulations are maintained by the U.S. Office of Foreign Assets Control, http://www.ustreas.gov/offices/enforcement/ofac/
# Resources

## Off-campus
- Organizational
- Governmental
- Institutional
- Associations
- Private Agencies
- Conferences
- Publications

## On-campus
- Risk Management
- General Counsel
- Judicial/Student Affairs
- Travel Office/Services
- University Physician
- Health Clinic
- Police/Security
- Disability Services
- Human Resources
- Registrar
- Counseling Center
- Int’l Student Services
- Area Studies Centers
- Regulatory Affairs/Export Controls

*India*
A word about OSAC

Overseas Security Advisory Council

Membership is free, and benefits include
- Twice daily news updates
- Access to RISC analysts
- US Embassy/Consulate referrals

Sign-up today at [www.osac.gov](http://www.osac.gov) and click on login/register at the top of the page

500 colleges and universities can’t be wrong

Come to the Annual Briefing in early November

Contact Julie Friend at friendju@msu.edu for more information
Convincing Factors

• Lawsuits and bad publicity experienced by other institutions
• Possible cost savings on overall institution’s insurance policy
• Good public relations
• Greater role awareness in a crisis situation
• Better adherence to university and study abroad policies
• Consistent and appropriate emergency response

Mexico
“Without risk, there’s no discovery, there’s no new knowledge, there’s no bold adventure. The next greatest risk is to take no risk.”

- June Scobee Rodgers, Widow of Challenger Commander Dick Scobee