Research and the Office of Study Abroad

1. OSA plays a facilitative role in connecting projects and participates in grant proposals.

2. To align with ISP priorities, OSA implemented a new travel extension grant to assist faculty who wish to pursue their research agenda abroad after leading a study abroad program.

3. OSA undertakes collaborative research in best practice and assessment.
   - longitudinal impact study, including Freshman Seminars Abroad
   - cross-referencing with national survey data, e.g. NSSE
   - long-term study abroad assessment plan

4. OSA supports faculty research on their study abroad programming.

Research Capacity Statement

Michigan State University has long been a leader in education abroad. With almost 1/3 of MSU undergraduates studying abroad on the country’s largest catalog of programs, MSU’s model of faculty involvement has an obvious record of success. Following the 2008 MSU Study Abroad Task Force Report, and pursuant to the mission of International Studies and Programs, the Office of Study Abroad is prepared to support research projects in international education and study abroad in the following ways:

We will encourage program leaders to consider a research project to reflect on what they have learned through their programming efforts. A variety of methods will be promoted, qualitative, quantitative, student surveys, external tools to measure intercultural or global competence, etc. Language to this effect will be included in program development materials and the program leader guide. OSA’s approach will be to give stakeholders easy access to information on what other MSU leaders are doing in this regard and to facilitate connection to university resources that can provide effective assistance.

We will organize workshops for program leaders on ideas and means to undertake research on their programs. The main objective of such workshops will be to highlight the activities of other MSU program leaders as well as those at other institutions. Summaries of such discussions will be made available to all program leaders.

We will create a web showcase to feature research projects of this nature. The primary focus will be to promote MSU projects and provide a centralized resource for MSU faculty and staff. This will include links to other resources, literature reviews, conference reports, etc.

We will invite program leaders to collaborate on conference panels, particularly on program models that illustrate MSU’s strengths. We will also seek collaboration with program leaders for publication opportunities. Areas of initial focus are community engagement, student research, program design, and adapting programming strategies to fit the strategic goals of units and colleges.

We will assist faculty/staff who undertake research projects in the following ways:

**Contextualization.** Program leaders often have extensive expertise in their academic discipline but may not be aware of the body of literature in education abroad and the growing number of tools that are widely accepted in the field for student surveys, external measures of intercultural competence, etc. OSA staff may assist program leaders to contextualize their project within what is happening across MSU, with the country’s largest catalog of programs. OSA staff may also offer suggestions for other contacts or with a preliminary review of the literature.
**Staffing.** OSA will encourage requests for assistance and review potential staffing assignments, within the constraints of available resources. Projects supported will be assigned to one main OSA collaborator.

**Communication support.** OSA may assist researchers in identifying appropriate venues for publishing or presenting their findings, outside of the academic discipline that is already the program leader’s area of expertise.

**Funding.** OSA will propose a co-funding grant for research projects. For substantial projects seeking external funding, we will encourage requests to participate. We will also propose a funding plan to encourage conference presentations with program leaders &/or students. This is consistent with ISP’s goal to raise visibility of MSU’s programming strengths. Funding amounts and approaches will be discussed with the ISP dean for the FY2011 funding cycle. The intention is to co-fund projects, not to replicate efforts already underway in other areas of the university.

**Themes.** The following areas are of particular interest:

- Connecting education abroad to the department’s research agenda
- How program design can maximize student learning
- Integrating cultural and linguistic learning in programs outside the humanities
- Student research on education abroad
- Community engagement in education abroad
- Underrepresented groups and destinations
- Education abroad for disabled students
- Education abroad and student development, particularly in global competencies

**Selection.** For competitive funding requests, OSA will form a review committee with representatives from the Deans’ Designees for Study Abroad and the Office of the Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies.

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