Collaborating with Third-Party Providers for Student Group Travel Abroad

Penn Travel Symposium 2018
Introduction

Jenny Seng-Russo
- Program Manager of International Studies, Lauder Institute
- Primarily work on summer immersion for the Global Program – 5 countries, 8-weeks, 10-12 graduate students

Brittney Wisecarver
- Program Development Manager, WorldStrides | ISA
- Responsible for developing faculty-led programs for university partners and has experience working with the top universities across the United States

Laurie Jensen
- Global Seminars Manager
- Oversee development and execution of Penn Global Seminars Program – 12 programs per year, 14 – 22 undergraduate students each
When to utilize a travel provider

No expertise on the region within your own team
Lack of local contacts
Complex logistics
Anticipate last-minute changes or revisions to itinerary
Payments to local vendors
Multiple programs at once
Services offered by travel provider

Protection and assurance for the university

Assigned travel support team

◦ Liaise with airlines for group air tickets
◦ Liaise with accommodation sales team
◦ Liaise with in-country ground team
◦ Assist with last minute changes/issues

Programming (custom or pre-developed)

Country-specific inquiries (safety, security, logistics)
Integrated Experiential Learning

- **Hands-on projects.** On-site work makes connections for students
- **Work closely with career services.** Visit class before AND after the program.
- **Select destinations** that push your students beyond their comfort zone.
- **Develop career-relevant visits** that go beyond a presentation. Aim to make it relatable and interactive.
- **Don’t skip the cultural activities.** Go early to provide context, and maximize interaction.
Unmatched logistical expertise

**Travel Details**
- Accommodations
- Guides or field staff
- Local staff support
- On-the-ground transport (trains, buses, public transportation)
- Meals
- Travel app
- 24/7 emergency support

**Planning Support**
- Marketing website, flyers, and on-campus support
- Dedicated Program Manager
- Instant visa needs evaluation
- Pre-departure orientation and materials
- Registration & emergency contact data collection
- Scholarships and financial aid

**Cultural Immersion**
- City tours
- Excursions
- Site entrances
- **Service projects**

**Meeting/Classroom Space**
- On-Campus
- In ISA offices
- Hotels

**Housing Options**
- Homestays
- Apartments
- Dorms/student residencies

**Value-Add Options**
- International group air booking
- Pre and Post-travel Accommodations
- Mobile phones/wifi
- Visa processing
- Payment collection
Request for proposal process

Determining a budget

Creating a request for proposals (RFP)
  ◦ Information about program
  ◦ Scope of work
  ◦ Itinerary
  ◦ Requirements and preferences

Bid list

Academic travel providers vs. travel agencies

Calls with providers and faculty
Questions to Help Select a Travel Provider

Global Access and Academic Support

- How many countries do they support?
- Is there a dedicated academic support team?
- Is it an accredited organization?
- Are the guides selected to match academic needs?
Questions to Help Select a Travel Provider

Health, Safety & Security

What is their liability coverage?

Is there medical and emergency evacuation coverage?

Is there access to 24/7 on-call support?

Are they registered under all applicable state Sellers to Travel laws?
Questions to Help Select a Travel Provider

Proven Program Logistics

- How long have they coordinated programs?
- Can they process visas?
- Can they provide marketing assistance?
- Is there a customizable online registration?
- Can they hedge currencies?
Developing & Implementing Program

Pre-planning
- Create a checklist of services needed/required
- Establish Communication
- Identify preliminary travel locations and dates

Planning
- Request quotes for services
- Discuss timeline and expectations
- Draft a proposal

Implementing
- Communication Strategies – program manager/travel leader/travel provider
- Gather information and distribute accordingly
Program Development

- Academic Goals and Learning Outcomes
- How to Measure the Implementation and Success
- Intentional Reflection for Students
- Career Readiness
Measuring Learning Outcomes

**VALUE Rubric**
Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education

- **16 Essential Learning Outcomes** that all students need for success in work, citizenship, and life

- **Learning Outcomes**
  - Intellectual & Practical Skills
  - Personal & Social Responsibility
  - Integrative & Applied Learning

**IDI Tool**
Intercultural Development Inventory Tool

- Assesses intercultural competence
- The capability to shift cultural perspective and appropriately adapt behavior to cultural differences and commonalities
- Critical capability in a number of studies focusing on international business adaptation, study abroad, oversees effectiveness, and job performance
Reflection

On coach back to the hotel – ask questions to help students understand

Use of tools such as IDI – helps students think through their experiences

Back on campus – a debrief session, use of journals and pictures
Global Citizenship/Career Readiness

According to an IIE study, true global competence is learned through immersion, cultural frameworks, and reflection.

Companies are looking for candidates who have the global/intercultural skills to work with clients from different countries and cultures.

Many students are already looking for resume/CV skill building experiences.
Timeline for faculty-led program development

15-18 Months
- Course approval
  - 1.5 years

9-12 Months
- Contract approval
- Begin student recruitment
  - 1 year

100 Days
- Students registered/ticketed
- Program components final
  - 0.5 years

Before Departure
- Pre-program call
- Student orientation

12-15 Months
- Provider selection
- Budget
  - 1.5 years

6-9 Months
- Campus recruiting
- Academic collaboration
- Group bookings (Air, hotel, buses, etc)
  - 1 year

60 Days
- Checking details
- Chasing students
- Improving the experience
  - 0.5 years
Considerations for pre-departure and on-the-ground support

Communication tool with faculty – suggest having 2 modes of communication
- Cell-phone
- Email
- Chatting tool specific to the country (i.e. WeChat for China)

Contact Sheet
- List of contacts on the ground, at Penn, and embassies

Checklist for students & faculty
- Passport dates, visa entry dates, phone # for contact, username for chats

Protocols for issues
- Student protocol; faculty protocol (i.e. air tickets issued to incorrect name, etc.)
Risk Management for Group Travel

Graduate vs. undergraduate considerations

Choosing a location
  ◦ Safety of location
  ◦ Ease of acquiring visas

Trip leaders
  ◦ Ratio of students to leaders
  ◦ Trip leader training

Pre-departure orientation to discuss expectations, dress code, itinerary, ISOS, cultural norms, money and communication

Group health consultation

Code of Student Conduct + local laws + group-specific rules
Risk Management: Protective and Agile

**Risk Avoidance:** Develop and enhance internal policies and protocols and external communications and travel documents

- Logical and appropriate itinerary
- Strong on-the-ground partners
- Appropriate hotel selection
- Safe airline selection
- Accurate visa analysis
- Setting expectations with students

**Risk Mitigation:** Monitor world events/assess and mitigate security risks

- Dedicated team, Tour Central, experienced leadership
- Contingencies
- Emergency contact info
- Doctors on Call
- iJet, State Dept.
- Medical insurance

**Crisis Management:** Emergency response in large and small situations

- Logical and appropriate itinerary
- Strong on-the-ground partners
- Appropriate hotel selection
- Safe airline selection
- Accurate visa analysis
- Setting expectations with students
# Comprehensive risk management

## Protection and Planning

- **Liability insurance**
  - *WorldStrides can name your university as additionally insured.*

- Additional primary medical and evacuation insurance for all participants

- Comprehensive vendor vetting, including adherence to local laws

- Protection of advance trip deposits

## Emergency Response

- **Global network**

- **Partnerships**

- **24/7 phone access to a U.S.-based physician for consultation**

- **24/7 emergency service line, staffed by trained travel professionals**
Risk Management: A Global Network

24/7 Support:
› Tour Central
› Emergency On-Call Phone
› Ground Teams in 100+ countries with local staff
› Offices in 30 countries
› Doctors on call
› iJet

Tools:
› Emergency Preparedness Maps and Protocols
› Advisory Memos
› Enhanced STEP registration process for better student access to emergency information
› Satellite phones for client rental
› WorldStrides ISA Mobile App

“Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow mindedness, and many of our people need it sorely on these accounts. Broad, wholesome, charitable views of men and things cannot be acquired by vegetating in one little corner of the earth all one’s lifetime.”

- Mark Twain
## Best practices for getting started

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Questions?

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