Establishing a study-abroad program

Gary Rhodes

A faculty member conducting a study abroad program “is responsible for a lot of things,” said Gary Rhodes, director of the Center for Global Education at Loyola Marymount University. In March 2002, Rhodes was awarded a Fulbright Senior Specialist Grant for India after receiving another grant in September 2001 for South Africa to collaborate with universities in both countries on issues related to international cooperation in higher education. He earned a BA in English from UCSB, an MS Ed. from USC in Germany, and a PhD at the USC Rossier School of Education. He is considered an expert on international study programs.

Running a study abroad program is not something that can be done without a lot of planning, said Rhodes. “As a faculty or staff member, you’re responsible for the two sides of the field: the academic side and the student services side. Our campuses either do one or the other, but in study abroad you’re responsible for both sides of that world.

“Basically you’re running the university in miniature. You’ve got to do the insurance, get the books, house people and provide travel to/from the country as well as transportation within the country. You have to make sure everyone has a visa and passport. In addition to handling these details, you have to write materials for the program.

“One of the things that doesn’t happen in study abroad is any kind of accreditation. The accreditation that takes place in our colleges and universities and our business schools does not really look that closely at how study abroad is done. The reality is that study abroad is not done the same at many institutions across the country; there are lots of different models.

“It is critical that your institution make sure that your programs are well developed with quality support services.”

Resources for establishing a Study Abroad Program:

The primary U.S.-based professional study abroad organization.

- NAFSA: Association of International Educators.
  http://www.nafsa.org
- NAFSA’s Section on US Students Abroad
  http://www.secussa.nafsa.org

Center for Global Education Resources

- http://www.lmu.edu/globaled
- Practical Resources for Study Abroad
  http://www.usc.edu/globaled.rfsa
- Student and Parent-Centered Student Study Abroad Safety Handbook
  http://www.usc.edu/globaled/studentsabroad
- Worldwide Colleges and Universities
  http://www.usc.edu.globaled.wwcu

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- www.iiepassport.com
- www.studyabroad.com
- University of Michigan International Center International Internships and Work Abroad Information.
- http://www.umich.edu/~icenter/overseas/work/index.html