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# Experiential Learning through Short-Term Study Abroad: A Business Approach

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## Introduction

Passarelli and Kolb (2012) suggest that an experiential education model can be useful in designing and assessing study abroad programs. As business school professors in the Driehaus College of Business at DePaul University who direct and assess short-term study abroad programs, we could not agree more. Our global framework not only encourages students to leave their comfort zones and experience unfamiliar cultural environments, but they are also provided with opportunities to explore issues of academic and business interest with academic, governmental, business, and non-business leaders in other countries. Moreover, they can also observe how public and private organizations operate in various parts of the world. Through study abroad, students leave the classroom, interact with key leaders in their countries, and learn through engagement, discussion, and immersion. The purpose of this paper is to explain how short-term study abroad programs developed in our college provide such possibilities for busy undergraduate and graduate students; moreover, we provide suggestions for

professors wishing to implement similar programs at their own institutions.

## Experiential Academic Programs

As early as 1938, researchers (e.g., Dewey, Mezirow, and Kolb) were putting forth ideas on the necessary and almost inseparable connections between learning and experience. In *Experience and Education* (1938), John Dewey wrote about the interconnectedness of a person's experiences over time (past, present, and future) and their overall educational path (i.e. continuity). Additionally, he stressed the importance of interactions people have with their environment and others around them. Dewey wrote that "amid all uncertainties there is one permanent frame of reference: namely, the organic connection between education and personal experience" (1938, p.25). This idea was expanded upon by researchers such as Mezirow (1991), who developed the Transformative Learning Theory (TLT). In his view, learning is based on "experiential activities or thought-provoking scenarios and the opportunity for new perspectives to be developed (due to) disorienting dilemmas" (qtd. in

Perry et al., 2012, p. 681). Mezirow provides a list of steps that lead to transformation, many of which focus on a “dilemma” (experience), examination and cognitive reviews of the dilemma, and adopting and applying the new perspective in subsequent experiences. This view is similar to dozens of other scholars such as John Dirkx and Malcolm Knowles who focus on not just the experience itself, but the interpretation and finally re-application of what was learned or gained for future scenarios.

Other theories also use steps or strategies to help dissect and explain the power of experiential learning. One of the most popular is that of Kolb (1984) who put forth one of the most widely known theories on the topic with his “simple description of the learning cycle.” Similar to TLI, Kolb’s theory begins with a “concrete experience” that is then processed through a series of steps that ultimately concludes with application to a situation accompanied by observation and reflection. These lead to the development of abstract concepts and generalizations which are then used by the person to create actions that are, in the end, tested in new situations which constitute a “new” experience.

What is agreed upon across theories is that experiential learning is interdisciplinary and heavily vested in real-world encounters that are filtered through a person’s own past, present and, future. It is a transformative experience that has a foot in self-exploration while the other is potentially affected by emotional change. In addition, the individuals themselves play a significant role in the process of learning through experience. They must be open

to the experience and the possibility of change. This is sometimes viewed as a weakness of study abroad programs being used as experiential learning.

All too often students are able to take a class without participating; pass a class without applying ideas; travel abroad without engaging in culture and topic or, more importantly, without absorbing or reflecting on the rich experience of the trip. Montrose (2002) recounts an interview with a recently returned study abroad student who could happily describe the trip, living situation, key events and fun engagements but struggled to describe any academic or educational impacts from the course. In truth, the stories of students who spent a semester abroad without learning a single word of the host country’s language or not making any friends with any “locals” are rare. However, they do exemplify the need for rigorous, well-developed programs that will provide students with an environment in which they are primed to use their experiences for transformational growth, both personal and academic. This responsibility falls on faculty to create learning environments and provide supportive relationships with students going through the transformative process.

The National Society for Experiential Education (NSEE) has developed a set of guidelines (e.g., “The Principles of Good Practice”) that can aid study abroad practitioners in creating such an environment. These principles add a third variable to previous theories: that of the facilitator. In the learning process and in the relationship between the learner and any facilitator(s) of learning, there is a mutual responsibility. All

parties are empowered to achieve the principles while at the same time, the facilitator(s) of learning are expected to take the lead in ensuring the quality of both the learning experience and the work produced, as well as supporting the learner to use the principles which underlie the pedagogy of experiential education. The eight principles of good practice are outlined in Table 1.

## Background of Experiential Learning and Study Abroad at DePaul University

St. Vincent de Paul himself fostered a mission of providing assistance for those less fortunate. DePaul University in Chicago, Illinois has a long history of making “quality experience” a prominent part of a student’s education. For example, all students are required

*Table 1. NSEE Principles of Good Practice for Experiential Learning Activities*

Category	Description
Intention	Intention is the purposefulness that enables experience to become knowledge. It is this deep sense of purpose that drives an experiential education program’s goals, objectives, and activities, and that ultimately define the experience
Preparedness and Planning	Participants must be provided a foundation that will support their learning. Educators will need to identify intentions and adhere to goals, objectives, and activities as they are described. There will also need to be a plan set in place that is understood by all parties, one that should also be flexible in order to allow for any necessary adaptations that come from the experience.
Authenticity	The experience must have a real-world context and be applied to a certain setting for added meaning. This means that courses should be designed in collaboration with all members of the program (i.e., students, teachers and community partners).
Reflection	Reflection transforms simple experience into a true learning experience. The learner must test their assumptions, beliefs, decisions, and actions, and then weigh those considerations keeping in mind past learning and future implications. This reflective process is integral to all kinds of experiential learning, and can help educators adjust the experience and measure outcomes.
Orientation and Training	For the full value of the experience to be accessible to both the learner and the learning facilitator(s), and to any involved organizational partners, it is essential that they be prepared with important background information about each other and about the context and environment in which the experience will operate. Once that baseline of knowledge is addressed, ongoing structured development opportunities should also be included to expand the learner’s appreciation of the context and skill requirements of her/his work

Monitoring and Continuous Improvement	Any learning activity will be dynamic and changing, and the parties involved all bear responsibility for ensuring that the experience, as it is in process, continues to provide the richest learning possible, while affirming the learner. It is important that there be a feedback loop related to learning intentions and quality objectives and that the structure of the experience be sufficiently flexible to permit change in response to what that feedback suggests.
Assessment and Evaluation	Outcomes and processes should be systematically documented in a way that can be widely understood. This form of assessment will develop and refine specific learning goals and quality objectives that were identified during the planning stages of the experience. This point also refers to a more comprehensive evaluation of the experiential process, and how it compares with the initially stated goals and objectives.
Acknowledgement	Recognition of learning and impact that occurs throughout the experience, which can be achieved through reporting, documentation and sharing of accomplishments. All parties should be included in the recognition of progress and accomplishment. In a sense, this celebration of learning and impact will then provide closure and sustainability to the experience.

Source: National Society for Experiential Education, <https://www.nsee.org/8-principles>.

to satisfy an Experiential Learning (EL) requirement in order to graduate. The objective is to ensure that students have at least one meaningful educational experience outside the classroom during their time at college. The requirement can be satisfied in a number of ways from community-based service-learning courses; internships with approved organizations; individual or group research projects involving extensive field or laboratory work; domestic study away programs focusing on diverse populations and locations within the United States; and study abroad programs that range from seven days to a full year abroad. The aim of the requirement is to push students into learning by doing, helping them to develop the skills to continue this learning after graduation.

Since the 1970's, the business school at DePaul University has been providing

various international opportunities to students as one way to fulfill the university experiential learning requirement. One of the first short-term programs was to London and provided accounting students with the opportunity to learn about the differences between the British and American systems of accounting. Marketing faculty from Eastern Europe developed a program that sent students to the Czech Republic to study business and marketing in the post-Communist era. The program has since evolved into exploring the idea of doing business in the EU. In addition to the study abroad trip to the Czech Republic, faculty led a "Grand Tour of Europe" seminar that lasted roughly 4 weeks during the summer. Students then visited businesses and governmental agencies in several countries including Germany, France, Holland, and Switzerland.

An Asian business seminar to Taipei, Hong Kong, Shenzhen, Guangzhou, and Beijing was instituted in 1988. During the mid-1990s, it became increasingly evident that demand for short-term programs was exceeding the then current supply (roughly one program per year with a cap of 20 student participants), and the College of Business sought to expand its model to provide significantly more international opportunities for a larger population of students. At the same time, the university was moving towards a centralized study abroad program office that would utilize economies of scale and expertise to improve back-office functions (including application collection and processing, travel logistics and planning, and risk management procedures and safety protocols). The business and law school portfolios were two of the last to be assimilated into the university-wide short-term study abroad program.

In place for well over a decade, the current portfolio in the business school offers multiple four-credit short-term study abroad courses. The new structure was built around the quarter system and was designed to fit with students' work, internship, and academic schedules, allowing both undergraduate and graduate student populations to have meaningful international experiences. While the university offers multiple models for the creation and delivery of short-term programs, the business school continues to offer rigorous *faculty-driven* programs. Development begins with a professor submitting a proposal for a study abroad course that is organized around a theme and location of his/her choosing. Such themes might include "the business of sustainable energy" or "luxury market-

ing." The faculty member must demonstrate a clear connection between the topic and the need for it to be studied on a global level, and then tie the idea concretely to a specific geographic location (e.g., luxury marketing and Paris). Proposals are vetted by faculty on the college international committee where the team considers the academic quality of the proposal; how it compares with other programs with respect to locations, themes, and topic/location spread across quarters; and faculty qualifications to teach the topic selected. All programs are required to have at least 12 hours of pre-trip classes and are encouraged to host a post-trip reflective class upon returning.

Proposals must include a combination of both academic/theme-focused visits and cultural experiences. The initial twelve hours of pre-trip meetings are designed to: (1) prepare students for in-country experience through a discussion of culture; (2) prepare students for academic experience through lessons on the course topic and organizations to be visited; and (3) develop a rapport among the group. The knowledge gained is meant to set a foundation for successful high-level engagements with businesspeople, organizational leaders, and even government officials. The in-country portion of the seminar must then include at least five rigorous organizational visits (e.g. "board room" visits with representatives of various organizations; academic visits/lectures by faculty experts on the trip's theme; factory/industry guided tours; etc.). In addition, faculty are expected to build in a variety of cultural outings in which student participants will engage. These include opportunities such as sports matches, theatre performances, trips to heritage/historic

sites, connections with locals, or even alumni events sponsored by the University or business school. The travel portion of the course takes place between academic terms (fall quarter classes with a December intercession trip; winter quarter classes with a spring break trip; or spring quarter classes with a summer trip). Finally, upon their return, faculty are encouraged to host a final reflection class with discussions and/or presentations. This is in addition to assessment of the course material and some type of reflective writing assignment about their learning during the course.

In recent years, the College of Business has run roughly 10-15 programs per year. The 2018-2019 portfolio of short-term programs is listed in Table 2. In addition to the experiential learning requirement previously discussed, these short-term study abroad courses can also satisfy an international business requirement of the college called “Global Business Perspectives.” The goal for this course is for DePaul business students to have a deeper understanding of international economies, institutions, business practices and cultures along with an awareness of differences across countries.

Detailed data on the student makeup of these courses are used to formulate strategic ideas for how to enhance and grow the overall College of Business portfolio (see Table 3). Short-term study abroad programs are available to all undergraduate and graduate students, and most accept students from other disciplines across the university when applicable. On average, undergraduates outnumber graduate students on these seminars by a three-to-one margin. In

the past few years, there has been a surge in MBA student participation as supply chains become more integrated and students realize the networking opportunities available when interacting with leaders of foreign companies. Many faculty believe that graduate students bring additional experience and insights that actually improve seminar quality by enriching the experience for undergraduate participants. Another point worth noting is the gender difference on short-term programs. More women participate than men, despite the fact that only 42 percent of the undergraduate business population and 49 percent of graduate business population are female. This finding is consistent with empirical evidence reported in the literature (see for example, Salisbury et al., 2010).

In order for these programs to maximize educational benefits for students, they must be designed carefully to provide authentic international experiences. In both the development and evaluation of courses, faculty follow the guidelines previously laid out by NSEE to ensure programs conform to the eight principles of good practice in experiential education. The next section provides examples of two successful programs in our portfolio that showcase how short-term study abroad programs in business function through an incorporation of the aforementioned NSEE principles. We contend that academic rigor need not be sacrificed to develop high quality experiential programs; indeed, we insist that the academic component is the most (but not the only) important part of an engaging international experience.

Table 2. Examples of Short-Term Study Abroad Programs in 2018-19

Country	Title	Department of Faculty Director
Chile	Understanding Wine Supply Chains	Management
China	Business Behind the Great Wall	Management
India	Business and Culture in a Rapidly Growing Economy	Marketing
Switzerland	Exploring the Business of Global Nonprofits	Marketing
England	The Business of International Sports in London	Management
France	Understanding Marketing in Luxury Contexts	Marketing
Germany	The Impact of Innovation & Technology on Product Quality	Marketing
Ireland & Northern Ireland	Business Conditions in a Pre-Brexit World	Economics
Japan	"Hidden Champions" in Manufacturing, Innovation, & Start-Up Services	Marketing
Czech Republic and Germany	Business and the European Union	Marketing
England	Developing a Business Plan in London	Entrepreneurship
France and Switzerland	Exploring European Hospitality, Tourism, & Culture	Hospitality
Iceland, Denmark and Sweden	Sustainability in Action	Marketing
Hong Kong, Macao, and Singapore	Exploring the Growth of the Hospitality Industry in Three Colonial Pearls of Asia	Hospitality
Hong Kong & Shenzhen	Financial Services in Hong Kong and China	Finance

## Short-Term Study Abroad Business Programs

### *Ireland and Northern Ireland: Business Conditions in a Pre/Post-Brexit World*

Run for the first time during Spring Break of 2014, the program to Ireland (and later Northern Ireland) was designed by an economics professor interested in teaching about the rise of the

Irish economy and its subsequent fall and recovery from the Global Financial Crisis of 2008-09. Although this topic in general can be discussed in business courses, the short-term program sought to enhance experiential authenticity by placing students directly within companies and government agencies in Ireland. Such companies and government

agencies (e.g., Central Bank of Ireland, Accenture, Citigroup, Deloitte & Touche and KPMG) specialized in addressing the effects of the financial collapse. Other company visits included Johnson & Johnson, Intel, and EMC<sup>2</sup>, allowing students to observe global companies operating subsidiaries in Ireland.

In preparation and preparedness for the program, students attend four 3-hour seminars to ensure that they had a sufficient foundation to support a successful experience. Class topics focus on the structure and recent performance of the Irish economy and banking system as well as the development of skills useful for studying abroad. Students also begin the introspective and essential process of reflection during these preparatory classes, with at least half of each meeting focusing on students' questions and an immediate opportunity to reflect on the course material. This open dialogue assists students by gathering additional insights from their peers and faculty leader(s). A short take home exam due on the day of departure

helps to verify that students absorbed the background knowledge before attending meetings. The exam also aids in advancing the assessment and evaluation principle by providing constructive feedback to help formalize a framework for their experiential transformation.

The travel portion of the first two iterations of the trip lasted nine days over the traditional spring break in late March. Weekends were typically used for cultural activities thus saving weekdays for business meetings or in-country travel. There was also time built in for students to explore the cities visited (Dublin, Cork, and Kilkenny) on their own or in groups in order to compare the city's business activity with what they had experienced at home. The program meetings were designed with various objectives in mind—a primary one aimed at avoiding redundant material—with each visit building on the experiences of prior visits. In addition to regular course content, many of the speakers brought in discussions related to a more personal view of Ireland, such as how

*Table 3. Student Breakdown of Study Abroad Programs: 2010-2019*

<b>Term</b>	<b>Number of Programs</b>	<b>Number of Students</b>	<b>Percent Graduate</b>	<b>Percent Undergrad</b>	<b>Percent Male</b>	<b>Percent Female</b>
AY2010-11	9	176	37.5%	62.5%	40.3%	59.7%
AY2011-12	13	243	30.9%	69.1%	45.7%	54.3%
AY2012-13	12	219	15.5%	84.5%	40.6%	59.4%
AY2013-14	11	209	20.6%	79.4%	34.4%	65.6%
AY2014-15	13	252	17.9%	82.1%	43.7%	56.3%
AY2015-16	13	233	13.3%	86.7%	39.1%	60.9%
AY2016-17	12	209	15.8%	84.2%	36.4%	63.6%
AY2017-18	11	181	26.5%	73.5%	31.5%	68.5%
AY2018-19	15	235	32.3%	67.7%	33.6%	66.4%
All Years	108	1957	23.0%	77.0%	39.0%	61.0%

individuals were dealing with the Irish financial crisis and recovery, and what it was like to work in Ireland. Other meetings were of a more general business nature, focusing on the presenters' own organizations and their roles in them. The diversity of businesses selected was purposeful to give students exposure to a wide range of business perspectives. This meant that accounting majors and marketing majors both found meetings that were directly relevant to their own areas of specialization and all benefited from an exploration of issues related to the export business within and from the EU. Meetings typically lasted around 90 minutes with at least half of each meeting left for questions from the students. After the meetings, students are given the opportunity to offer reflective commentary as they made connections between what different speakers and organizations presented.

Upon returning to campus, students are required to write a reflective essay on an experience they had from the program. The essays are due within a week of return to capitalize on fresh memories and deepen learning. In addition, students are required to write a term paper on an Irish business topic of their choice. This has resulted in many examples of high-quality work. For example, one student interested in the food industry wrote about how Brexit will affect the trade in food products between Ireland and the UK, and the knowledge she gained landed her a job with a consulting firm helping companies deal with the regulatory changes that Brexit has wrought. Another excellent paper came from a student from Nashville, Tennessee, who wrote about the influence of Irish music on the glob-

al music business, with special attention to the linkages between Irish and American country music. In both of these cases, students combined their own life experience with what they learned on the seminar to produce outstanding work.

The final post-trip meeting is typically a class combined with a meal to allow everyone to reconnect and reflect on their experiences. Occurring within a month of the end of the travel portion of the seminar, this time allows for a completion of the study abroad experience, and the celebration of learning and impact provides closure and sustainability to the experience. Final papers offer the faculty leader with an opportunity to observe how students benefited from the seminar.

The first two trips (2014 and 2015) followed this basic model. After a year off, the program was revised with an important change that stemmed from the June 23, 2016, majority vote in the UK to leave the EU. Within the UK, a majority of Northern Irish voters supported remaining in the EU, presenting an opportunity for a different educational experience by splitting the seminar between two cities: Dublin and Belfast. This gave students the chance to travel to two countries, use both the euro and British pounds, and observe how Brexit is viewed from both an Irish and a Northern Irish perspective. While there are some excellent written materials on how Brexit would affect Ireland and Northern Ireland (e.g., Connelly, 2017), going to these countries and having a dialogue with business and government leaders provided a deeper, more nuanced understanding of the complexity of these issues. This timely change

turned out to be an even richer environment for creating experiences that could transform student thought, behavior, and applicable business knowledge. For example, in Dublin, the students visited Bord Bia (Irish Food Board) which is involved in both EU/UK negotiations on Brexit details as well as preparing food companies for the changes that will occur. In Belfast, the students visited Danske Bank (a Danish bank that bought the largest bank in Northern Ireland) to learn how banking technology is evolving and how Brexit is likely to affect business conditions. Students also visited the Chicago Mercantile Exchange (which operates a rapidly growing technology center in Belfast) to see its role in the company's worldwide operations and learn about Belfast's growing role as a technology center. This seminar was conducted three times from 2017 to 2019 and is slated to run again in 2022 to immerse students in a Post-Brexit world.

### *Switzerland: Exploring the Business of Global Nonprofits*

Starting in 2010, Switzerland: Exploring the Business of Global Nonprofits course was proposed to fill a specific area of interest for many millennial and incoming Generation Z students. The proposing marketing professor already taught a first-year program course on nonprofits and communities in the city of Chicago and wished to expand to a global program showcasing the broader power and reach of organizations from the United Nations down to smaller grassroots international nonprofits. The specific purpose or intention of the program was to introduce business students to the concept that although the business school successfully prepares students for the for-profit world, opportunities

were plentiful in the third sector, or the non-profit/NGO/social enterprise areas where traditional business skills were needed, and the mission or vision of the organization would be more applicable to social and environmental objectives (an application of authenticity).

For preparation and preparedness, students meet on four separate nights for three hours each to engage in lecture and discussion in three areas: nonprofit content, cultural preparedness and rapport building. Academic content explores the background of nonprofit business strategy including issues related to marketing, logistics, and finance, with the goal of preparing students for high-level discussions with representatives from various organizations while in-country. Cultural preparedness focuses on the vast differences between the United States and Switzerland and includes background information on history, neutrality, and politics. In addition, students are introduced to the idea of the four cultural/linguistic regions, two of which were to be visited during the program (Zurich and Geneva). Readings and discussion posts on Swiss culture are used as a way to assess student knowledge and growth on both academic and cultural topics. The fourth and final class is reserved for student presentations where teams of two are responsible for leading in-depth discussions about one of the organizations to be visited on the trip. Additional features of this presentation include the creation of color handouts that contain background information, interesting facts and possible "QTAs" (questions to ask). These summary sheets are then used as a mini-reference book for the trip to refresh their knowledge prior to each visit, and to help stimulate discussions with the speakers.

The course runs during the fall quarter with travel beginning the week after the Thanksgiving holiday. Starting in Geneva, the first night begins with a lengthy walking tour to orient students to their new home. This is followed by a group dinner accompanied by live Swiss music. The following morning starts with a visit to the United Nations where an educational tour is used to set the stage for a lengthy discussion of politics and their role and influence on nonprofits. Additional visits with UN sub-organizations such as the World Trade Organization (WTO) to discuss world financial structures and strategies; UNICEF (the United Nations Children's Fund) to see how business principles are used to bring programming and outreach to areas in need; or the World Labor Organizations (WLO) where students meet with marketing and communication professionals. Other non-UN specific organizations fill out the rest of the 10-13 visits conducted during the 11-day trip. These include boardroom style visits with WWF (the World Wildlife Fund for Nature), the International Red Cross, and Red Crescent (ICRC) to discuss humanitarian actions, business law, and administrative management of programs; the Schwab Center for Social Entrepreneurship at the World Economic Forum which supports and broadens the scope of social enterprises; and the Environmental House of Geneva (a nonprofit think-tank). Each visit builds on the information offered by previous organizations. One other benefit of having a large diversity of topics is that each student can find one that is in an area they personally connect with either vocationally, academically, or emotionally. The connectedness then brings a deeper understanding of the

power and challenges of nonprofits. In addition, the Geneva portion has many cultural activities, including a private tour of the Museum of the Red Cross.

The end of the first week brings a transition from Geneva to Zurich via bus, making a variety of cultural stops which might include a trip to Lausanne, Montreux (Christmas Market), the Chateau de Chillon, Gruyere Castle (with traditional raclette lunch), and/or the Caillier Chocolate Factory. Zurich begins much the same way as Geneva, with a walking tour of the city including the massive Christmas market in the main train station, followed by a traditional meal to help settle students into the new city and culture. Continuing the exploration of business and nonprofit issues, visits focus on different organizational themes such as politics, sports, and corporate sponsorships at FIFA; the impact of independent funding (versus governmental) at Doctors Without Borders where transparency of communication is a key tenet; or the struggles faced by smaller grassroots global organizations at ROKPA International, a Swiss-based nonprofit that runs schools, hospitality programs, soup kitchens, and social programming for women and children in Nepal and Tibet. Throughout all of the visits, the students are asked to apply traditional business ideas, concepts, and strategies. A final cultural adventure is always provided where students go to a high peak in the Swiss Alps.

At the conclusion of the trip, undergraduate students are tasked with producing a comprehensive final paper. Half of the paper is a formal application assignment, taking ideas from the visits and answering a series of in-depth

questions on how to apply those ideas to national and local third sector organizations. Graduate students are asked to dive deeper by developing social good/nonprofit marketing plans that utilize course information, examples from organizational visits, and local application. The other half of the final work for both groups of students is a reflection on the academic, cultural, and social experiences from the trip. Students are asked to share any special experiences they had outside of the class program that made an impact, and to explain the breadth of that impact on their learning. The immediate reflection and reapplication are used to fully set the ideas gained through the trip and to stimulate additional thought and transformation. In addition, it aids students in the application of new ideas to other areas. A final class is scheduled but is not mandatory as many students graduate in the December intercession and are unavailable in January. During these meetings, we read aloud from our reflections and discuss the overall impacts of the program.

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

This paper describes a set of short-term study abroad programs that are organized around topics generated by faculty. The themes and locations can be quite diverse which gives students many choices for an international experience that can fit in with their busy schedules and diverse interests. They appeal to both graduate and undergraduate students, and although specific to business they seem to draw other students from disciplines such as political science or social justice. The overall argument made here is that academic rigor need not be sacrificed to develop high qual-

ity experiential programs; indeed, we contend that the academic component is the most (but not the only) important part of an engaging international experience. The principles that NSEE expounds are a useful guide for designing and implementing these programs and serve to provide an easy-to-follow foundation. Administration and faculty who oversee and monitor programs through an international committee serve as important gatekeepers for the maintenance of overall program quality.

There are still challenges to be faced, even with a program that has a long history such as the one described here. One of the challenges of this model is that it is hard to scale upward. Faculty have to be proposing trips in order for the program to grow, and with growing opportunities for faculty enrichment at universities, study abroad may not be a top priority because of the complexity of design and the extended travel it requires. For example, a typical faculty member may make the same overload stipend for a summer class as they would a study abroad course, and get to stay home with their family. Therefore, additional ways of recruiting and developing new faculty is crucial in the growth and continuation of any program portfolio. In addition, without new programs the number of students that can be served remains fairly low, with many students being left behind due to capacity issues. The programs described here have a maximum number of participants set at 20-22 as larger groups find it difficult to find hosts abroad as office space is small, and traveling by bus or tram can be challenging with so many traveling together. Nevertheless, this paper showcases the idea that programs driven by a faculty

member who is passionate for their subject and location can provide the type of engaging experiential learning courses for students of which we can all be proud. ■

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