RISK MANAGEMENT IN STUDY ABROAD

What a Band-Aid and Handbook Won’t Fix
Presenters:

• Teresa King - Radford University
Interim Director, International Education Center

• Felix Wang – James Madison University
Director of Study Abroad

• Christian Wilwohl – Lynchburg College
Off-Campus Studies Coordinator
Session Agenda

Participant Input & Resources

• Experiences
• Policies & Procedures
• Plans and Documents
• Institutional Support
• Case Scenarios

• Key Issues
• Tools
• Sample Forms
• Planning Documents
• Specific work on our campuses (and next steps)
Recent Crisis Events
Case scenario

- Your institution has a faculty-led program abroad in Eastern Europe. It is late afternoon, and you receive a call from a student’s family to inform you that the student’s father has passed away. You reach the faculty leader via telephone to share the information. The group has completed two weeks of a four week program.
Discussion

• How do you proceed?

• What are some of the key issues?

• How would your Study Abroad Office respond to these issues?

• Who else on your campus needs to be involved in the response process?
Case scenario

- Your faculty/student group has encountered a freak snow storm upon their arrival in the south of France. They are unable to travel from the airport to their accommodation which is two hours away. The faculty leader calls you in a panic.
Discussion

• What do you do?

• What are some of the key issues?

• How would your Study Abroad Office respond to these issues?

• Who else on your campus needs to be involved in the response process?
An adult male student from another institution is concerned about lack of support and medical attention after arrival. After several attempts to provide for his needs, the student continues to complain about the situation. As a result, student does not participate in class and assignments. His behavior is affecting other students on the program, especially his room/group mates. When confronted by the faculty, he claims that he is not able to perform due to his medical conditions and refuses to do adequate work. Often, his responses are unpleasant, angry and uncooperative. At one point, faculty members felt threatened by his behaviors. The parent has been complaining to the university.
Discussion

• What do you do? Do you let him stay on the program?

• Can you dismiss the student? If yes, on what grounds?

• What are some of the key issues?

• How would your Study Abroad Office respond to these issues?

• Who else on your campus needs to be involved in the response process?
Case scenario

You have been contacted by the faculty of a study abroad program that she is very concerned about a female student who is in the program. The student has revealed to the faculty that she is currently seeking medical support due to extreme weight loss. The program is leaving in a week and the student, instructed by her doctors, wants to make sure that she can get the same attention while abroad. However, one of her doctors is quite concerned and does not think that going abroad is a good idea but is letting the university make the final decision. The student believes that she will get better once she is abroad and her parents strongly support her and are willing to do anything to make it happen.
Discussion

• What do you do? Do you let her go? If not, what are your reasons?

• What happens if her condition worsens while abroad?

• What are some of the key issues?

• How would your Study Abroad Office respond to these issues?

• Who else on your campus needs to be involved in the response process?
Emergency Action Plan
A SAFE TRIP ABROAD
Emergency Action Plan Development

• Who is responsible?
• Who are your key constituents?
• Who are you partners/collaborators?
• Where is the funding coming from?
• What is the communication plan?
• What is the public relations approach?
• Who does what in the international office?
• Who needs to travel for emergency?
Developing a Tool Kit

- Emergency procedure manual
- Student behavior agreement/contract
- Health and emergency treatment authorization
- Risk management Training
- Faculty expectation/contract
- US embassy registration
- External Resources (State Dept., OSAC)
RESPONSES
FROM OUR CAMPUSSES

- Risk management training
- Mental health support
- Embassy registration
- Faculty proposal
- Mandatory directors’ meeting
- Risk and liability audit

James Madison University
Lynchburg College

• Strict adherence to State Department travel warnings
• Work with providers on short-term faculty-led programs – increased service and reduced risk/liability
• All students and faculty sign liability/waiver forms before they travel abroad
  – Minimizes risk to the institution
  – Outlines student conduct/behavior policy and repercussions
  – Students return home at their expense, if necessary
• Pre-departure orientations for faculty and students
  – Discuss various scenarios and responses
  – Health and safety issues
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• Emergency protocol prepared/explained to faculty and campus constituents – Academic Affairs, Students Development, Campus Security, Business Office

• Emergency contact information/procedures given and sent to students

• Program packets for faculty and Study Abroad Office
  – Emergency response procedures/contact info
  – Student emergency contact information
  – Copies of passports
  – Copies of insurance cards
Purpose
Radford University maintains a comprehensive Emergency Action Plan for campus based emergency management based on principles of mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery. With the realization that emergency events or individual crisis may occur as students participate in RU international learning programs, the Radford University International Education (IE), Office of Emergency Preparedness (OEP), and Radford University Police Department (RUPD) departments have identified the need to expand the campus risk assessment and crisis management principles to support international education faculty, students, and staff.
Crisis Action Team (CAT) Core

- Program Administrator (International Education Department)
- International Education Staff
- Office of Emergency Preparedness Executive Director & Coordinator
- Radford University Police Department Chief
- Provost Office (Provost and/or assistant Provost)

Radford University
Extended Team as Required

- Academic Department Deans (As required)
- Business and Finance (As required)
- Student Affairs V.P. or Assoc. VP
- University Relations Representative (As required)
- RU On-site Health Provider (As required)
- RU On-site Counseling Provider (As required)
- Insurance Representative (As required)
- U.S. college or university/Study abroad program support team including student affairs administrators (VP of Student Affairs or representative)
- Embassy representative (as required)
- Student representative (SGA) (as required)
- IT representative
• Risk management training
• Embassy Registration
• Mandatory Health Insurance w/evacuation coverage
• Inclusion of Dean’s/Chairs for drills & training
• Pre-departure orientation = faculty & students w/Dean’s and upper Administration invited
• Program packets with safety & emergency supplies
• Crisis & Health incident report forms
• Inventory of Travel Ready faculty/administrators for emergency
• EMERGENCY GADGETS
  » GPS locators=pilot program w/faculty – may include student/parent notifications & optional purchase
  » Cell phone for each faculty
  » Info about international SIMS cards for students/parents
Tabletop Exercise/Walk Through

Crisis Management Scenario
Future Considerations

• GPS pilot program
• Parent Hot Line (with of the university ERP)
• Social media = twitter, facebook
• Inventory of travel ready expanded to include country of expertise, language, medical, other experiences
• Mapped locations – IT application
• Emergency medical kits & “go bag” ideas distributed to students
• Emergency card expanded to emergency pocket guide
Suggested Resources

- U.S. Department of State
- SAFETI
- Peace Corps
- OSAC
- Sample response plans of program providers, other institutions
- Center for Global Education
- Forum for International Education
- NAFSA
  http://www.nafsa.org/resourcelibrary/Default.aspx?id=19044
QUESTIONS/COMMENTS?