

Collaborate

2025

Student Affairs and
Services

Working Together for
Student Success



Building Community Beyond Borders: Strategies for Student Success Abroad

- Around 400,000 US university students (1.5%) and 364,000 EU students (8.9%) studied abroad for a semester during their career (2022-23 numbers)
- What challenges are these students facing?
- How can we build community among this population?
- Goals: Explore homegrown solutions, share best practices, take home at least one implementable technique.

About You and Me

- Who is in the room?
 - Role at institution
 - Type of institution
 - Location of institution
 - How many years in the field?
- Who is presenting today?
- Why is this topic important?



Challenges For Students

- **Cultural Adjustment and Homesickness** - culture shock, and difficulty navigating a new cultural environment.
- **Social Isolation** - far from familiar social networks, leads to loneliness and difficulty building meaningful connections.
- **Academic Challenges** - different teaching styles, language barriers, and expectations create stress.
- **Financial Strain** - significant financial pressure on students.
- **Information Overload** - with such limited time in country, where to focus?!



Challenges For Advisors



- **Multiple Cultures** - students come from all sorts of backgrounds and cultures, leading to different expectations
- **Workload** - focus on student success, but not enough hours in the day
- **Student Attention Span** - “did you read the email?”
- **What else?**

Reflect

- How does your university engage and build community for incoming study abroad students?
- Describe a unique program, activity, or event that your university offers to foster connection between incoming study abroad students and the university or local community?



Solutions

Advisors play a critical role in bridging connections between students and the wider community, while ensuring a network of support that enhances their sense of belonging.

- Foster meaning from the start
- Engage students for success
- Build community through long-term programs
- Promote social connection
- Enhance students with resources for growth



Best Practices (According to Students)

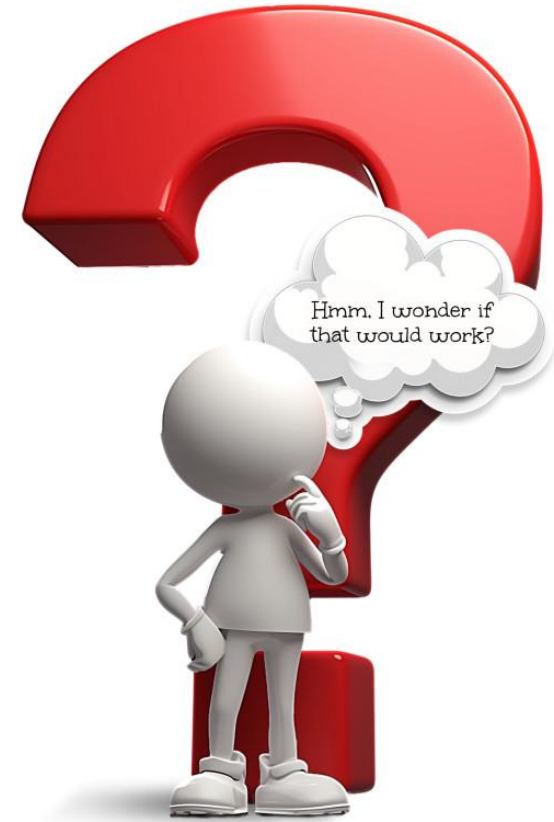
- Make connections before arrival
- Involve full-time students in orientation activities
- Create fun, impactful, meaningful moments and reflection
- But keep it short (and optional)
- Develop connections between students
 - Secret handshake or dance moves
- Check in (but maybe don't expect a response)
- Free stuff = yes.

Best Practices (According to Advisors)

- Discuss with students how engagement with peers and local communities through extracurricular activities, student organizations, and co-curricular initiatives can help foster connections and make lasting relationships.
- Capture attention in first weeks. “Be a part from the start!”
- Collaborate on how to empower growth using targeted resources, skill-building opportunities, and techniques support.
- Not everyone will participate. That is OK.

Moving Forward

- What is one new technique that you can do to engage and build community for incoming study abroad students?
- What unique program, activity, or event can your university implement foster connection between incoming study abroad students and the university or local community?



Selected Sources

- Caligiuri, P., Torres, M., & Lombardi, M. (2025, May 27). *Education abroad develops cultural agility*. AACSB Insights. <https://www.aacsb.edu/insights/articles/2025/05/education-abroad-develops-cultural-agility>
- Eurostat. (2024, November 14). *Almost 9% of EU graduates in 2022 studied abroad*. <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/w/ddn-20241114-1>
- Martirosyan, N., Bustamantea, R., and Saxona, D. (2019). Academic and social support services for international students. *Journal of International Students*, 9(2), 659–674. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1208150.pdf>.
- Medani, K. E., Alqadhibi, M. A., Almutairi, A. M., Asiree, R. H. A., Silsilah, M. A., Almutairi, K. N., & Sami, W. (2024). Challenges University Students Face while Studying away from Hometown: A Cross-Sectional Study. *Journal of pharmacy & bioallied sciences*, 16(Suppl 1), S459–S462. https://doi.org/10.4103/jpbs.jpbs_719_23.
- Oduwaye, O., Kiraz, A., & Sorakin, Y. (2023). A Trend Analysis of the Challenges of International Students Over 21 Years. *Sage Open*, 13(4). <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440231210387>.