

# 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 does to foster connection between incoming study abroad students?



# 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 connection and meaning
- Engage students
- Build community
- Promote social connection
- Enhance students with resources for growth (but not everything has to be fun)





# 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.

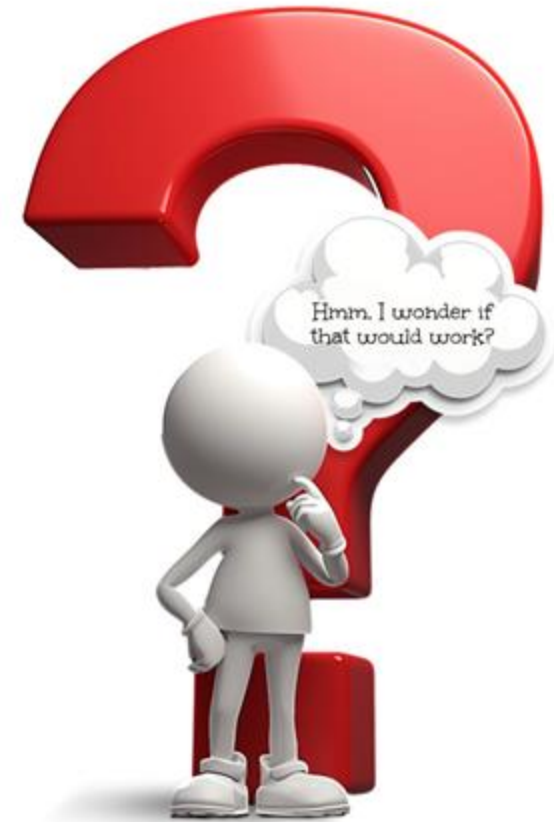


# Best Practices (According to Advisors)

- 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?



# Selected Sources

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