

BREAKFAST ROUNDTABLE # 12

Using partnerships to advance study abroad integration

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1. What kind of partnerships (institutional, public-private, formal, informal) can be leveraged to enhance study abroad curriculum integration?
 - *Partnerships of various kinds can be helpful – among higher education institutions of similar size and mission, whether public or private, through formal consortia or informal relationships. Partnerships between an institution and other kinds of institutions (such as museums overseas) can also contribute to students' learning experience.*
 - *A critically important relationship that is too often not well developed is the sense of partnership between faculty members and providers of study abroad programs. Faculty members often exert a substantial influence over students' choices of study-abroad programs; very often it is a fortuitous discovery rather than a systematic process that leads a faculty member to find a suitable program of high quality for his/her students. There is a need for a more highly developed network or set of arrangements that can link faculty members to high-quality programs that contribute to student learning at the institution and the department levels.*
2. How can educational consortia and memberships be leveraged to advance study abroad integration?
 - *Working with peer institutions provides a set of sounding boards – a reference group to help determine the suitability of given study abroad programs for one's own students. In some cases consortial organizations manage programs or oversee evaluation programs that ensure that students of member colleges have access to a range of programs suited to their educational goals. Consortia and membership organizations can be leveraged by an explicit commitment to sharing information, and to a sustained dialogue focusing on the development of programs that facilitate student learning from study abroad.*
3. How can institutions evaluate the appropriateness and benefits of potential partnerships?
 - *If an institution enters into partnerships with external providers of study abroad programs, that institution must gauge the extent to which programs help students apply insights from study abroad to their learning in the context of their course of study. Institutions must evaluate the extent to which given programs fit the needs of the college's own academic programs and learning goals. Accreditation can be a valuable indicator of program suitability. A detailed reentry evaluation can also be helpful. Another important gauge of program impact and quality is how well students retain and apply insights from study abroad to their academic work over the longer term (a year or more after the experience).*
4. Partnerships tend to be labor-intensive. How do we assure that the benefits outweigh the costs?

- *It is helpful to evaluate a partnership in terms of specific goals that gave rise to the relationship initially. If there are particular learning results that a partnership is expected to yield – such as an enhancement in language skills – the strength of a partnership might well be evaluated by the extent to which students demonstrate that result.*

5. Where should responsibility on campus for partnerships be located to make sure they are active and effective?

- *Responsibility for the success of partnerships is clearly a shared entity. The very nature of partnerships requires active and responsible collaboration. To be effective, study abroad must build from a foundation of strong partnership between the faculty and administration of a university or college. Academic departments must have a key role in identifying the kinds of learning that study abroad should foster in students. The administration must provide the organizational and financial support to ensure that study abroad yields the learning results an institution seeks to instill in its students.*