Expectations for Program Directors of “Simpson Experience Abroad” Semester programs

Prior to going abroad

* Help recruit students for the program.
  + Staff a table at Fall and Spring study abroad fairs.
  + Hold information meetings for interested students in conjunction with the Office of International Education (OIE ).
  + Participate in interviews of applicants for the program with International Education Coordinator.
  + Make admissions decisions for the program in conjunction with OIE.
* Work with host institution staff prior to arrival in country to establish dates for planned group activities both in the local area as well as overnight excursions. Once such dates are established, it is important to share them both with the OIE but also with the students on the program so that they can plan accordingly and schedule their own independent travels around the group activities.
* Conduct a prep course the semester preceding the program.

While abroad

* Be available to assist students throughout the program who have questions, problems, concerns, etc. Hold regular office hours several days a week at times when students are not in class.
* Provide students with your cell phone number and give them clear explanations as to how and when they should contact you after hours (e.g., emergency situations, etc.).
* Set up a formal structure for all students to have a one-on-one conversation with the program director once within the first 3-4 weeks of the program and once about halfway into the program so that plans can be made to assist students individually to maximize their study abroad experience.
* Have frequent contact with administrators at the host institution to establish common standards in terms of academic expectations, interactions with host families, and appropriate interpersonal communication with local people.
* Help students find multiple outlets to interact with local people, not just their host families.
* Encourage students to communicate often with their host families to ensure good relations. Some students may not be good at talking with their hosts and therefore may avoid doing it. Nudge students to talk more often with their hosts if communication seems to be a problem.
* Encourage students to use Skype, Facebook, e-mail, etc., to stay in touch with family and friends back home, but help students to find a “healthy” balance so they are not spending large amounts of time online at the expense of improving their language skills and interacting with their hosts and other locals.
* Attend periodically classes taught by the host institution which students are taking in order to gain an understanding of the instructional style and the dynamics of the courses. Should student concerns arise about any of these courses, the director’s first-hand experience is essential for a clear understanding of the situation.
* Plan and lead group excursions, both day trips in the local area as well as extended-stay excursions, to supplement students’ exposure to host-country sites and culture beyond what they can experience in class. It is recommended that there be an overnight group excursion within the first month of the program to help with group cohesion.
* On a monthly basis, provide receipts of expenditures and ATM withdrawals made using college-issued procurement card to the International Education Coordinator and complete the online p-card reconciliation process.
* Provide advising assistance for students who need it for their next term at Simpson.
* For Thailand and Argentina programs, plan for and accompany a group excursion out of the country mid-semester in order for the students and program director to extend their visas. (Thailand groups generally go to Cambodia, and Argentina groups go to Uruguay.)
* Keep expenditures within the amounts budgeted in each line of the program’s budget. It is the responsibility of the program director to maintain a running total of in-country expenditures to ensure that no overages occur. Any expenditures which will create an overage in a budget line must be requested by the program director in advance and approved by the International Education Coordinator prior to incurring said expense.
* Act as Simpson’s on-the-ground crisis manager for program participants, making decisions based on information at the site, while communicating and consulting with Simpson’s administrative leadership in Iowa to determine best course of action. See Crisis Management Plan for Study Abroad (<http://www.simpson.edu/studyabroad/resources/crisismanagement.pdf>).
* Be “on-call” 24 hours a day, 7 days a week during the duration of the study abroad program to deal with all academic and student development issues.

After the program ends

* Complete the director’s evaluation of the program and submit it to the OIE within 30 days of the completion of the program. (The evaluation form is available on the faculty resources page of the OIE website: <http://www.simpson.edu/studyabroad/resources/faculty.html>).
* Meet with the Academic Dean and the International Education Coordinator to debrief the program.
* Work with the Business Office to submit receipts and reconcile in-country program expenditures within 30 days of the completion of the program. (Should an extension by necessary, arrangements must be made in advance with the Business Office.)
* Although it is not required, consider attending the re-entry gathering organized jointly by the OIE and Counseling Services for returning semester abroad students.