

**Forum on Education Abroad  
Standards of Good Practice Case Studies  
For Resident Directors in France  
Workshop Sponsored by A.P.U.A.F.  
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**Case 1: Exchange Agreement Balance**

As the director for a large U.S. university program in France, you are leading the discussion regarding a new agreement between your university and your primary host French institutional partner. The existing agreement goes back at least 20 years and has involved to date only reciprocal student exchange between the two institutions with a 20:1 ratio (10 per semester), i.e., 20 U.S. students per year/ 1 French student). You know already from your conversations with French colleagues that the French university seeks more spots for its students at your institution in the U.S. At the same time, your institution has indicated that due to recent large first-year classes and a shortage of on-campus housing, there are no more spaces available for exchange students. You are concerned that if your institution does not offer more spots to French exchange students that the French university will cut back on the number of students you may enroll or courses which they may take (and may need in order to have a full course load). One of the stated program goals that is highlighted in all of the marketing materials is that qualified students will have full access to host institution courses.

*What areas of the Standards might provide guidance to you and your institution in its considerations about the agreement?*

**Case 2: School of Record Responsibilities**

You are the resident director of a provider organization's study abroad center located in Aix-en-Provence that enrolls 200 students each year on short- and long-term programs in the humanities, social sciences and business fields. The organization is considering a transition to having a new School of Record (SOR) that will provide academic credit for program students who request it. You have not been very involved with the current SOR other than hosting a visit every other year by its study abroad director. However, the new president of your organization has become aware of recent scrutiny of SOR relationships and wants your organization to set the bar high in its SOR arrangements. She has told you and the staff that she wants to ensure quality programming and establish your organization as a leader in this area of education abroad. You are leading the organization's task force that is charged with developing a Request for Proposals that will be advertised to potential SORs.

*Using the Forum Standards, draft the section of the RFP that lists the desired responsibilities of the SOR. What services will the SOR be expected to provide? Pay particular attention to Standards 3 and 7 as you prepare the list.*

**Case 3: Assessment of Outcomes and Institutional Effectiveness**

As the long-time resident director of your college's study abroad program in Toulouse, you are aware that the program has positively impacted hundreds of students over the years. You regularly receive email messages from former students and meet program alumni who return to Toulouse to visit. They express how important their experience on the program was to them personally and how it has positively impacted their career path and achievements. Your college is preparing for its reaccreditation review, which will take place two years from now. A colleague in the French department has been appointed the lead person who will compile information and draft your institution's self-study report. She contacts you and informs you that the regional accreditation commission places a heavy emphasis on the documentation of student learning outcomes that relate to the goals of the college's academic programming. "Basically," she explains, "they want to know if we are delivering on what we say we are teaching students." She then relates that a second point of emphasis is an equally strong focus on the assessment of institutional effectiveness. "This has to do with how we assess our institutional processes, learn from those assessments, and improve them," she explains. In sum, each academic program is being asked to document what assessment activity they have in place to document student learning outcomes and institutional effectiveness. In addition, your colleague says that each program may propose additional assessment activities that the college will consider to support for possible funding.

*What areas of learning outcomes and institutional effectiveness do you think are important to assess? How are you currently assessing outcomes and effectiveness? What additional assessment activities might you propose? Many of the queries contained in the Standards will assist you to think about student learning and program assessment.*

#### **Case 4: Health, Safety, Security, and Risk Management**

After a very trying and challenging year for education abroad, with programs impacted by volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, and political unrest in certain countries and, in a program in France, the tragic death of a student in an apartment building fire, the provost of your university (or CEO of your organization) has paid for you and the other program directors to attend the Forum's Standards of Good Practice Institute that focused on the revised Standard 8 on Health, Safety, Security and Risk Management. You return from the Institute motivated to assess how well your program is prepared and how well it meets the revised Standard.

*Using the queries related to Standard 8, discuss each of your programs by responding to the queries, noting where you think improvements can be made in your programs.*

#### **Case 5: Institutional Relations and Marketing**

As the resident director for a U.S.-based provider organization in France, you are often called upon to assist with the marketing of your semester-long and summer programs. Your marketing director in the U.S. has developed a comprehensive marketing plan to recruit more students to your program, which has seen a steady decline in students over the past few years. The plan includes the following initiatives:

- Your sending an email to all French majors at "feeder" schools that describes the program. The marketing director was able to obtain the names of majors from both former program students who are now seniors at the institutions, and from faculty members who have supported the program over the years.
- Paying program alumni to recruit students from their alma maters. Alumni will receive \$100 for every student whom they recruit.
- The development of a new program web site that will not list the (relatively expensive) program fees. Students will instead have to inquire about the fees and then be sent the information.
- Using returned students to set-up information tables in their campus Student Centers and pass out program information and answer questions.

*Based on the best practices for Institutional Relations and Marketing of Education Abroad on Campuses and the Code of Ethics for Education Abroad, which of these initiatives might be problematic and why?*

#### **Case 6: Evaluation Data**

You have been the resident director of a France-based education abroad program for the past five years. During this time you have revamped the program's evaluation processes so that now there are a number of layers of evaluations. Evaluations include:

- Every student completes a program evaluation at the end of the program;
- Each home stay family evaluates its experience with the program;
- Each internship host organization completes an evaluation;
- A number of U.S. universities send faculty and administrators to visit the program each year and they write a report detailing their observations and impressions.
- You complete an extensive annual report that details the programs successes as well as recommendations for further improvement.

A colleague who is the director of study abroad at a large U.S. university has contacted you and told you that your program is among the "final three" programs being considered for inclusion on the university's approved program list. If chosen, your program would be the primary program of choice for qualified students wanting to study abroad in France. The director asks you to please provide all program evaluation data that you can to help the university make a final decision.

*Discuss what data you will provide. What is reasonable information to provide, and what might you decide to hold back? What data, if any, should be routinely placed on your web site?*

### **Case 7: Vision, Mission and Innovation**

You have been a resident director in France for the past ten years with a successful track record directing a major program. A resident director position has come open to work for a large, comprehensive research university (in the U.S.) that runs a well-regarded center in Paris, and you are interested in this position. The search committee is impressed with your credentials and invites you to the U.S. for a campus visit and interviews. In advance of your visit, the search committee sends you an email describing how the university has decided to “reinvent” and “reenergize” the program, and that this is a unique opportunity to create an *innovative* education abroad program. The committee adds that the successful candidate will be someone who can lead by helping to create a compelling vision for the future and attract students from different disciplines. The committee asks you to be prepared to discuss:

- Your general philosophy of education abroad, its purposes and desired outcomes;
- The distinctive learning opportunities available for a program based in Paris;
- The program elements that you believe are most important to have in place;
- Some key questions for a large university to consider regarding its vision for developing an innovative program.

*Discuss as a group your responses to these prompts.*

### **Case 8: Home Stay Incident**

During the summer, you direct a 6-week program that includes a home stay with a local French family. Halfway through the program, a student comes to see you on Monday and informs you there was an incident during the weekend that made her very uncomfortable. She says that she is still upset and has been having trouble sleeping since it happened. The host family and the student were on an outing together on Saturday and when they arrived home in the pouring rain everyone hopped out of the car quickly except for the host father, who prevented her from exiting the car by gently holding her wrist. As they sat in the car he put his hand on her shoulder and was talking to her in what she is sure was a suggestive manner (her French is poor and she did not understand every word). His hand prevented her from getting out of the car until another family member came out to retrieve something from the car and she was able to extricate herself. This family is well-known in the community in which the program is based and has welcomed students from your program for several years; the experience has always been positive. The host mother and children are big supporters of your program and are responsible for bringing in 5 or 6 new host families in the last couple of years.

- *Is there anything else you want to know?*
- *What are the issues?*
- *Are there any strategies that could have prevented this?*

### **Case 9: Hosting a Site Visit**

The study abroad program in France that you direct for a provider organization receives a relatively large number of students from a consortium of small liberal arts colleges in the U.S. It has been a few years since any members from the consortium schools have visited the program, mainly due to budgetary issues at the schools. This year, your organization’s home office has invited consortium representatives to participate in an all-expenses-paid-for site visit to your program the second week of September. The group includes a faculty member who also advises students going abroad, two study abroad administrators and a newly-appointed dean. The faculty member is a native French speaker, two others know a little French, and the dean has never visited France and doesn’t speak French.

*Using Appendix A in the Code of Ethics discuss the agenda for the site visit and the materials that you will make available to the visitors. Also, discuss any ethical concerns or challenges that you may have experienced in arranging, hosting, or debriefing about site visits to your program.*

### **Case 10: Budget Cuts**

As a result of the economic crisis and a 20% drop in enrollments in its Europe-based study abroad programs, your provider organization/university has decided to reevaluate its programs and is contemplating creating new programs in non-traditional locations. In the meantime, you have just been informed that you must make cuts and reduce your program budget by at least 20% next year. Enrollments are down from 45 to 30 students per semester. In addition to a full-time resident director, the program employs a full-time Student Life coordinator who handles housing, co-curricular activities and service learning; an administrative/office manager who also acts as a registrar and accountant; and eight part-time instructors who teach program courses essentially in the humanities. The program has always included field trips, group cultural and weekend outings, student computer facilities and student expenses such as local transportation passes, a monthly meal allowance, library cards, etc.

***Discuss how you will respond to the budget cut. What will you cut and how will you balance the program budget? What are the implications of cutting certain aspects of the program? The queries contained in Standard #7 on Organizational and Program Resources may be useful to consult.***

### **Case 11: Student Advising**

You're the director of a small, traditional immersion program in France that is struggling to maintain enrollments and has worked especially hard to recruit full-year students and boost the number of French majors. Just after the holiday break in December, one of the twelve full-year students comes to talk to you about various academic and non-academic issues (e.g. financial and personal difficulties) that she is having. She is visibly anxious about spring semester and tells you that she is considering returning to her home institution for 2<sup>nd</sup> semester but hasn't decided yet and hasn't discussed it with anyone else. You know from the host family and a program instructor that this student had some adjustment issues in the fall, but she seemed to have successfully overcome these and has not been visibly unhappy since November, so you assumed everything was fine. Because your institution has expressed serious concerns about enrollments, you feel the pressure to encourage this student to stick it out until late-May even though you suspect that her issues will not be easily resolved, even with counseling. You are concerned that the student will continue to struggle and that her anxiety may increase, and that, if she stays, her overall experience in France and her perception of the program will be extremely negative.

***Discuss the approach that you will take in advising this student. What factors will influence your approach to advising the student? What are your ethical obligations? You may find it useful to consult Appendix II of the Standards, "Best Practices for On-Site Academic Advising for Education Abroad."***

**Case 12:** You direct a program that includes an internship option for which students receive academic credit toward their major. You work with an internship organization which arranges the placements, acts as a liaison between the hosting organizations and students, and ensures follow-up. But when students are not happy with their placements, they often come to you first. A Public Health major was placed in a social services center that works primarily with homeless people and immigrants; her duties include helping to serve meals and making conversation with those who come to the center. After four days in the internship, she e-mails you to say that she is very unhappy, having trouble communicating with people (her French is intermediate-level) and that she expected a more "professional" internship, preferably one involving some public policy research. She asks if a change is possible. You remind her that it takes time to adapt, get to know people and understand the dynamics, and you encourage her to talk to her internship supervisor and also the placement organization to ask for advice and tips on how to fit in and contribute. The next day, you receive an e-mail from her father, who is irate after speaking to his daughter. He tells you that she called to say how upset and unhappy she was and burst into tears on the phone. He is demanding that a more suitable internship be found as soon as possible and makes it a point to say that he is an alumnus, has donated money to the university and personally knows the provost. He has copied the head of the internship placement organization and your direct supervisor in the U.S. and also made it clear that he is prepared to appeal to a higher authority if this issue isn't resolved in the next two days.

***Discuss what steps you will take to manage this situation.***