

# Leave Your Diamonds at Home: Tips for "Packing" Realistic Expectations

Presented by:

Courtney Goike, Academic Programs International  
Leah Miller, The University of Texas at Austin

# Today's Goals

- ✓ Identify strategies to manage students' expectations and match them to reality
- ✓ Manage our expectations as professionals-- what we can/should expect from students & parents
- ✓ Provide strategies for administrators to act professionally in provocative situations and not become personally overwhelmed
- ✓ Review some scenarios
- ✓ Questions & answers; share personal strategies

# Managing Student Expectations

- ✓ Before traveling
  - ✓ Provide resources in various formats
    - ✓ Online
    - ✓ One-on-one advising sessions
    - ✓ Group presentations/orientations
  - ✓ Be very specific— write down the most important points!

# Sample Document: Setting Housing Expectations

## APARTMENT LIVING IN ITALY

### WHAT NOT TO EXPECT

Elevators: You will be in great shape by the time you leave with all this stair climbing.

American-sized refrigerators: No Costco shopping here! You will learn to eat fresher food and shop more often like the locals do.

A long, hot shower: The days of a 45-minute shower to wake you up are over. (That's what espresso is for!) You'll need to work out a schedule with your roommates and not be a shower hog. Tip: Get in, get wet, turn the water off, soap, shampoo, shave, turn the water back on and rinse off. If we did this in America, think of how much water we would conserve!

# The Steps to Study Abroad

## BBA Exchange Checklist

**You are responsible for knowing and completing the following by the appropriate deadlines. Please read this carefully and in its entirety NOW, mark your calendars, and make a plan for getting it done!**

### **Step 1: Do now!**

**Application for host school and housing- Deadlines vary according to host school.**

**Host country visa and/or residency permit - *Requires a passport, which you should already have!* Deadlines vary according to host country's consulates in the U.S.**

**Step 2: Mandatory Preparatory Meetings - Mark calendars now!**



# Managing Student Expectations

- ✓ While abroad

- ✓ Extensive on-site orientation

- ✓ Utilizing the Code of Conduct to outline expectations for behavior
    - ✓ Housing move-in advice

- ✓ Upon return

- ✓ Provide information on transcript processing
  - ✓ Provide opportunities to discuss reentry adjustment

# Managing Our Own Expectations

- ✓ Unrealistic expectations held by study abroad professionals
- ✓ When “our” expectations come into conflict with “their” expectations: the “us” versus “them” mentality

# Ensuring Professional Success and Avoiding Personal Disaster

- ✓ Preparing rational populations through mass education efforts
- ✓ Minimizing effect of irrational and negative populations
- ✓ Establishing boundaries and cultivating professional detachment



# Using Parental Help to Ensure a Successful Semester

- ✓ Setting goals for progress
- ✓ Preparing for the cultural transition
- ✓ Budgeting for the session abroad
- ✓ Accepting differences
- ✓ Facilitating adjustment and independence on-site

# Scenario 1: Housing

A student arrives abroad. She finds that her apartment is a 30-minute commute from the university by subway and the local area is very residential. She would prefer to live closer to the entertainment district and calls home crying about living in an isolated area. Her parents demand that the student be moved immediately.

# Housing Scenario

## Questions to consider

- ✓ What expectations does the students have about what her neighborhood should be like?
- ✓ How expectations does the student have about an acceptable commute?
- ✓ How could proper pre-departure preparation help to avoid upset students and parents?
- ✓ How can the housing placement best be explained to the student and her parents?

## Scenario 2: Credit Transfer

On the study abroad application, a student lists the classes she wants to take abroad. During the registration process in-country, she finds out that one class is full, another has been cancelled, and her last two have time conflicts.

# Credit Scenario

## Questions to consider

- ✓ What expectations do students have about getting into courses on the home campus?
- ✓ How do students think the registration process will be overseas? How can you help them have more realistic expectations?
- ✓ How can proper preparation help to avoid upset students and parents?
- ✓ How can students be reminded that sacrifices abroad are worthwhile based upon the value of the experience?



# A Bit of Fun...

A young man studying abroad sent text message to his father:

Dear Dad, no money, no fun, your son.

Father replied:

Dear Son, too bad, so sad, your dad.