

# Accommodating students with disabilities: Case studies

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- Jane Dickson, Foundation for International Education  
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# Video

Disability Awareness  
The edf advert



<http://theinclusionclub.com>



# Social Model of Disability

- Society is the main contributory factor in disabling people via systemic barriers, negative attitudes and exclusion (purposely or inadvertently).
- Focuses on changes required in society, e.g.
  - Attitudes
  - Social support
  - Information
  - Physical structures
  - Flexible work hours

# Who Are We?

## Case Studies

- Hard of hearing student to Dresden, Germany
- Student in a wheelchair to Spain/Wheels in Motion
- Student with POTS to London, England

# Boston University Study Abroad

- BUSA is a unique actor as study abroad advising office for BU students and as External provider for non-BU students
- Over 99 programs in 40 cities in 20 countries
- Direct Enroll, Hybrid, BU Academic Center programs; as well as Exchange and External programs
- 320 Staff around the world
- Staff in central office work with on-site staff and other BU offices to provide off-campus experiences for all students through pre-departure, on site and post-return

# General Resources for Students

- BUSA Office
- Student Handbook
- Site Specific Handbook
- Office of Disability Services
- Office of Behavioral Medicine
- On-site resources (on-site Director, other support services), university support
- Students home school (if non-BU student)

# BU Office of Disability Services

- Engaged, enthusiastic and supportive
- Access and accommodations are completely student driven
- Any student is eligible to receive accommodations based on review of their request and documentation
- Accommodations are provided on an individual, case-by-case basis
- Student relationship with ODS can start before a student even arrives on campus (needs for campus tours, etc.)
- Study abroad can be a part of the students' overall academic plan



# Disability Services

Boston University takes great pride in the academic and personal achievements of its many students and alumni with disabilities. The University is committed to providing equal and integrated access for individuals with disabilities to all the academic, social, cultural, and recreational programs it offers. This commitment is consistent with legal requirements, including Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, and embodies the University's historic determination to ensure the inclusion of all members of its communities.

Our goal, at Disability Services, is to provide services and support to ensure that students are able to access and participate in the opportunities available at Boston University. In keeping with this objective, students are expected and encouraged to utilize the resources of Disability Services to the degree they determine necessary. Although a significant degree of independence is expected of students, Disability Services is available to assist, should the need arise.



## Resources

[Association on Higher Education And Disability](#)

[FAQ's](#)

[Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing](#)

[Office of the Ombuds](#)

[PEPNet-Northeast](#)

[Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf](#)

[University Service Center](#)

## Calendar

5/7 [Final Exams](#)

5/7 [Extended Study Hours at BU Hillel](#)

5/7 [The American Civil War: Treasures from the Vault](#)

5/7 [Exhibition: Simultaneity](#)

5/7 [One Room: BFA Thesis Exhibitions](#)



# “Ideal” Time Line

- Student sees Office of Disability Services
- ODS contacts BUSA at least one-two semesters in advance to alert us of student in pipeline
- Starts researching available services for student overseas (if student doesn't already know)
- Student applies and is admitted to the program/s (can also start here)
- Student receives information from BUSA about contacting ODS:
  - All students submit medical forms to BUSA as standard pre-departure materials, which goes to one point person in BUSA office
  - Medical forms are forwarded to sites and outreach done on individual level
  - Reach out to student in case of any self-disclosed special needs for next steps/accommodations
  - Point person in BUSA office coordinates with point person in ODS

## Case Study: Hard of hearing student in Dresden, Germany

- Necessary Services:
  - CART (Computer Aided Realtime Transcription) services in another country/language
  - FM Frequency devices- what rooms do they work in? How well? Same frequency? Student Note takers

**\*\*Burden falls on BU NOT the student**

Start testing services in October, 2012 that were already identified in Spring, 2012



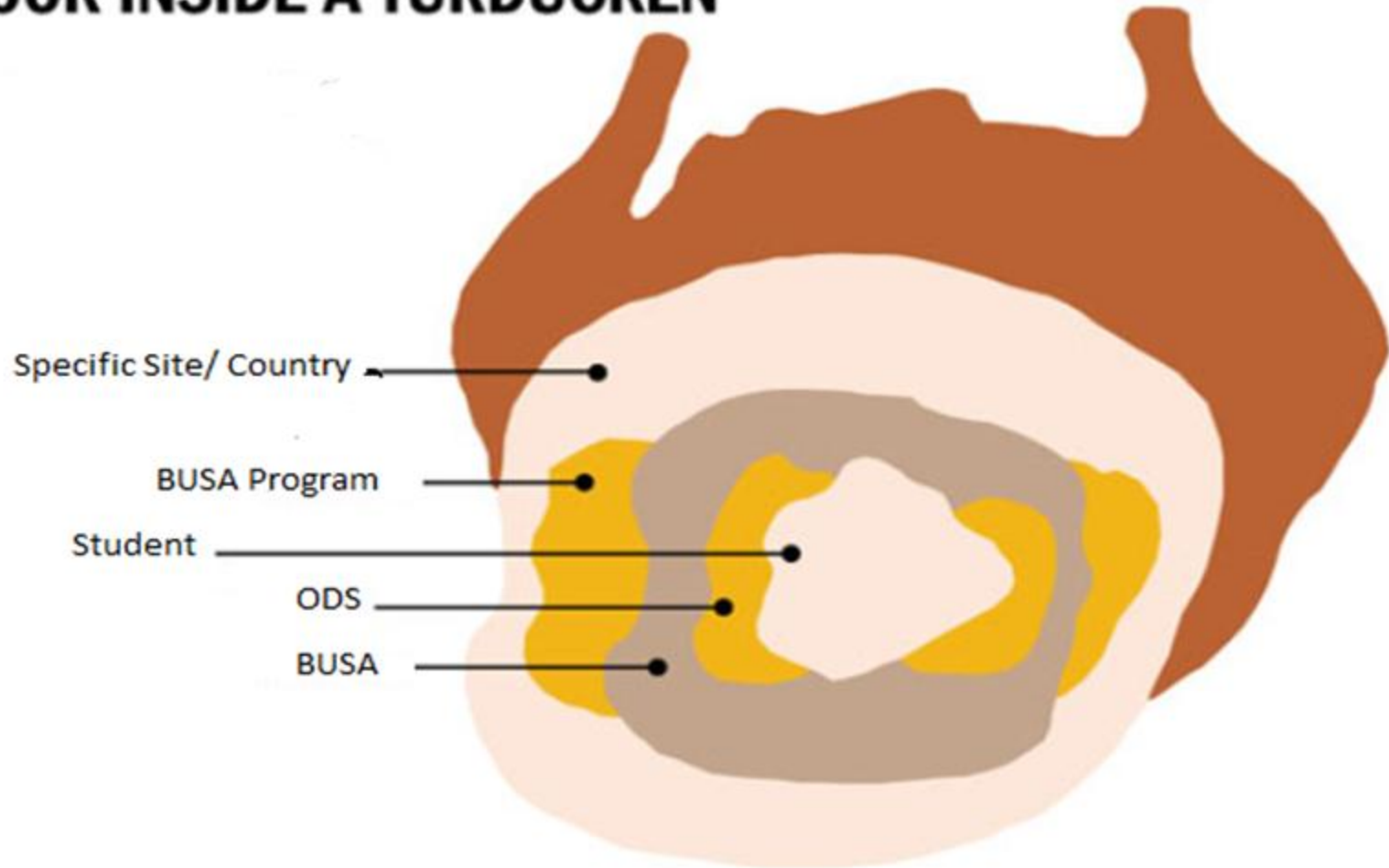
# Other Issues

- Intercultural issues (teaching styles, professor availability)
- Legal/data protection laws
- Getting the students schedule in advance to test out the frequencies and audio in every room/ checking the size of the room/ were they lectures or seminars?
- Excursions/lab?



In other words....

## A LOOK INSIDE A TURDUCKEN

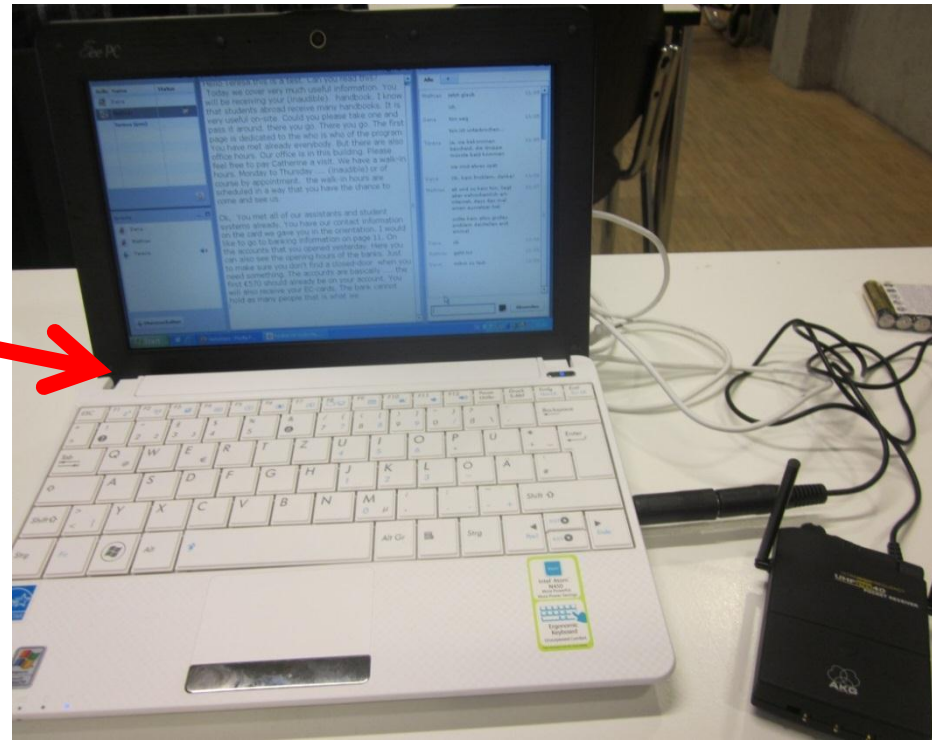
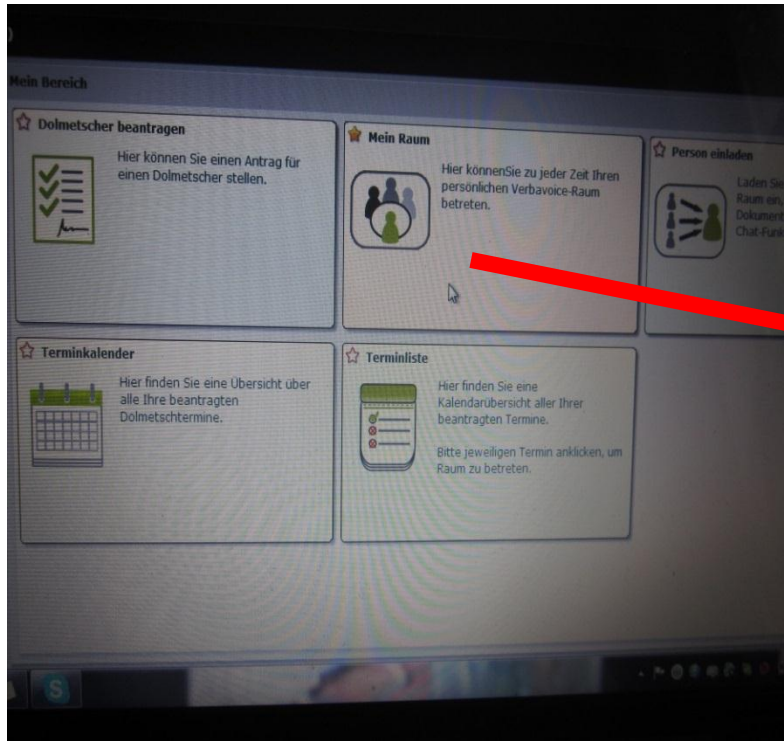


# VerbaVoice to the rescue! CART in Action



“I hand a microphone to my professor for him to wear similar to the ones used for FM systems. I sign into VerbaVoice and someone is online scheduled at the time of my class waiting to begin. As soon as the instructor starts talking, the transcription appears in a instant messaging window on my screen. It is just like real time with an interpreter sitting next to me only the interpreter here is in Munich or Berlin, hours away! Very much less intrusive in class and it works two ways so if there is a problem I can type to the interpret and he can talk to me just like any IM service.”

# VerbaVoice



“The screen shot with multiple boxes with different headings shows one called "Mein Raum" (LEFT) and that is the conference center. Once I open that window, a screen with multiple sections appears (RIGHT). The biggest center section is the live text that i receive. On the right I have a live chat with the interpreter so that I can greet her and she can ask questions on the side. Sometimes she clarifies a word that she didn't hear or the spelling of some technical terms. It is also a way to contact tech support if there is a glitch or delay on either end. The left two boxes show who is online (me and the interpreter).”



Microphones have a digital screen with a display of the feedback and battery life of the microphone; each mic piece requires two AA batteries and is about a little thicker than the size of a deck of cards.



# Other Thoughts

- Company quick to assess any issues
  - Can email ahead of time to move a class or cancel a session.
  - If need to contact them immediately, or vice versa, they have exchanged numbers on the mobile app, Whatsapp.
  - Students may have a different interpreter for each class, presumably one who knows the subject.
  - Staff are often students or recent grads.
- *“It makes a huge difference in my classes. I have a very hard time with the German accents and the poor classroom acoustics. These rooms tend to echo a lot more than I ever noticed at BU. The only downside, compared to the BU services, is that since the microphone only picks up the teacher's voice, I do not receive a transcription of student's questions. However, in my classes here, we never have more than about 25 so that is not such a problem.” – Student Testimonial*

# Success!

- Student was able to come back after a VERY successful semester abroad and is now an enthusiastic ambassador for the program.
- We learned that to plan in advance and to be aware of the possibility of issues were key (even if we did not know yet what those issues would be)
- Collaboration and diplomacy are key when dealing with the different intercultural issues presented with overseas academia
- Anything is possible for students!



FITCHBURG STATE  
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# Office of International Education

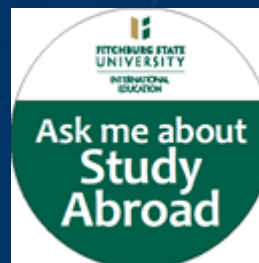
- **Mission Statement**

- The mission of the Office of International Education is to increase cross-cultural awareness on campus through the following three areas:

1. **International Education** - by creating and facilitating study abroad opportunities and campus-wide, cross-cultural programs and by supporting the International Studies minor.

2. **International Students** - by assisting with their recruitment, cultural adjustment, and immigration concerns.

3. **Faculty Support** - by assisting them in their participation in cross-cultural exchange programs and with the development of faculty-led study abroad programs.





FITCHBURG STATE  
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## What we do...

- Intake with students involves a discussion of many topics, including:
- Where student would like to study abroad,
- International Studies minor and academic advising,
- LGBTQ identification issues as they relate to study abroad,
- Disclosure of a disability,
- **All students are treated equally!**





**FITCHBURG STATE  
UNIVERSITY**

# Office of Disability Services

- The primary objective of Disability Services is to empower qualified students with disabilities to engage in all facets of Fitchburg State University's academic, residential and student life.





# Collaboration is Key!

- We work closely with ODS with any student who wants to study abroad and discloses a disability.
- Our offices collaborate to satisfy the mission of both offices, providing all students with opportunities to study abroad. Some students require software for their laptops, while others require more intervention. Understanding the ADA helps to provide what is mandated.
- Have a working relationship with your ODS! They know the rules better than you do!

Julie Maki, ODS





# Case Study

- We had a student with documented disabilities study abroad for a semester on a provider led program. The student utilized a wheelchair for mobility and had a canine service animal.
- Since we had already worked with the student on a short term faculty led program, both offices were cognizant of the issues surrounding the students mobility and medical issues. The student was encouraged to utilize the services of the same provider that ran the summer program, having already collaborated.
- The Provider worked with OIE, ODS and the Site Director to try to mitigate the issues surrounding mobility. We worked together throughout the semester to communicate and mitigate any problems student was having.



## Case Study Continued...

- Countries were discussed that had more/less of a “disability ethic, ” but the student ultimately chose Spain so she could study flamenco and complete a Spanish Minor.
- The student chose a home stay in Spain, and the Site Director inspected the home environment to ensure that it was wheelchair accessible.
- In the midst of developing the study abroad semester, the student received a service dog from NEADS.





## Case Study Continued...

- OIE/ODS/Provider/Site Director now had to manage getting the service dog on the airplane, into the home, the university **and** follow the NEADS contract for a service dog.
- The host family had never lived with a dog before, it was a high rise apartment building. ODS was instrumental in assisting the team with navigating red tape involved with this whole process so that all ADA requirements were fulfilled.

NEADS puppy





## Case Study Continued...

- While abroad, it was determined the home stay was not working for a variety of reasons that the Site Director was unable to resolve. Issues were the usual, such as inability to communicate effectively with limited English/Spanish speaking skills on both sides, but also included bathing practices of the dog. The host family was not accustomed to living with a dog and did not look at the canine as a service animal.
- Cultural differences can be difficult to overcome!



## Case study continued...

- It was determined that the student could no longer stay in the home, and alternative arrangements had to be made. The University had no available wheelchair accessible housing (the semester had already started.)
- There was no hotel close to the University with a wheelchair accessible room.
- Ultimately, the student was brought back to Fitchburg State as a matter of safety, where Housing Services provided a room for the student and the service dog.



## Outcomes:

- The Skype meetings with the student in-country were crucial to determining the student's ability to maintain a safe home environment, considering her medical needs.
- The collaboration between OIE, ODS, Provider, and Administration were beneficial in getting the student there, and back to the University. The cooperation enabled the student to finish courses on-line and to work independently with faculty to could complete the semester successfully. This ensured student could maintain financial aid.



# Collaboration between OIE/ODS

- Meetings were set up that included the student, OIE and ODS. Countries were discussed that had more/less of a “disability ethic, ” but the student ultimately chose Spain so she could study flamenco.
- The student was made aware that our offices would be able to provide support in a number of ways throughout the stay, and ODS provided many services such as sending medical supplies throughout the semester.
- It was made clear that the student was empowered to make their own decisions, but would be provided with as much information as possible to make them *informed* decisions.



## Who was involved

- We worked with the student faculty Advisor, the Department Chair, the Registrar Office (those are all a part of any study abroad experience,) as well as the Office of Disability Services (ODS,) Academic Studies Abroad, NEADS (the providers of the canine service animal,) Iberian Airlines, and the Site Director.

# Diversity and Inclusivity at FIE

*Before I built a wall I'd ask to know  
What I was walling in or walling out,  
And to whom I was like to give offence.*

-- Robert Frost



# Accessibility

- FIE, in accordance with its mission, is committed to a comprehensive policy of equal opportunities and as such, our programs are tailored to give access to the widest possible student representation.
- We recognize that the environment, services and facilities may be 'enabling' or 'disabling' and support the social model of disability.
- Applications from students with various physical, sensory, cognitive and behavioral/emotional disabilities are welcomed.
- Students are encouraged to declare disabilities on their application to allow for discussion on access requirements for a course and time for reasonable accommodations to be made.



# FIE Diversity & Inclusivity Team

- *Dr. Julie Andreshak-Behrman, Chief Academic Officer*
- *Samantha Deave, FIE/N.U.in Programme Coordinator*
- *Jane Dickson, Institutional Relations Manager*
- *Hannah Feakes, Academic Coordinator*
- *Deanna Gouros, External Communication Coordinator*
- *Dr. Grahaeme Hesp, Director of Academics and Senior Faculty*
- *John Janoudi, VP - Facilities*
- *Charlotte Jordan, Residence Life Supervisor*
- *Pauline McKerrall, Study Centre and Disabilities Coordinator*
- *Ike Mohar, Residence Life Supervisor*

# Case Study

- Student from American University studying with FIE in London
- “Invisible” syndrome/disability
- POTS: Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia Syndrome
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0UyJ084yKz8>

# Timeline

- Early Fall 2011
  - AU notifies FIE of student with undisclosed mobility disability
    - » Meets with relevant FIE teams (Academics, Student Life, Experiential Education, Facilities) to determine possible barriers to students' full participation
- Mid Fall 2011
  - FIE Disabilities Coordinator contacts student
    - » Gains more of an understanding of syndrome
    - » Discusses semester and barriers that student may face
- Late Fall/Winter 2011
  - FIE, AU, and student confirm the details of the Spring programme as applicable

# Academic Accommodations

- Reduced course load overall
  - AU ASAC: no more than one class per day, avoid morning sessions
- International Internship Course
  - Two days/week at placement instead of three
- British Life & Cultures course
  - Provision of wheelchair for co-curricular excursions to Parliament, Brick Lane, etc.
- Media in Britain course
  - Taxi to co-curricular activities

# Internship Accommodations

- Based on student's interest, EE Team identified supportive site
- EE Team informed site supervisor of student's likely accommodation needs
  - tasks that did not require lengthy standing and/or bending over
  - working from home occasionally
- Student took a bus to site instead of the Tube
  - Less standing required; more likely to get seat

# Housing Accommodations

- Housing arranged for optimum efficiency
  - Student housed on ground floor flat, with requested room mates
  - Particular residence has 24 hour reception for any emergency matters

# AU Academic Support and Access Center

Office of Campus Life

## Academic Support Center

- ASAC HOME
- ABOUT US
  - About Us
  - Meet the Staff
- ACADEMIC SUPPORT SERVICES
  - Meet with a Counselor
  - Skills and Workshops for Academic Success
  - Time Management
  - Reading
  - Note Taking
  - Study and Test-Taking Strategies
- WRITING LAB
  - Writing Lab
  - Meet the Writing Lab Counselors
  - Writing Tips
- TUTORING SERVICES
  - Tutoring Services
  - Tutor Information
  - Tutor Request Form
- SUPPLEMENTAL INSTRUCTION
  - Supplemental Instruction
  - SI Session Videos
  - Meet the SI Leaders
  - SI Leader Testimonials
  - Information for Prospective Leaders
  - Faculty FAQs

### Study Abroad for Students with Disabilities



AU Abroad and the Academic Support and Access Center (ASAC) make every effort to ensure that students with disabilities can participate successfully in study abroad programs. As a result of these efforts, AU students with

disabilities study abroad as frequently as other students and find that, for the most part, they can access accommodations with advance planning.

#### What can I expect overseas?

Please be aware that American University cannot guarantee that facilities, technology, or support services will be available at each location abroad in the same range and quality as on the AU campus. Laws in other countries are in effect, and procedures followed by institutions abroad may be different from what you are accustomed to at AU.

The ASAC can work with students to individually assess disability needs as they relate to a student's interest, support systems, and the availability of accommodations in specific locations.

#### How do I prepare to study abroad?

The following checklist can be helpful for AU students with disabilities who wish to study abroad.

1. In advance of deciding where to study, make an appointment with your counselor in the Academic Support and Access Center (ASAC) to begin a conversation about study abroad options.
2. Identify a study abroad site based on your interests and your disability needs.

#### QUICK LINKS

[AU Abroad](#)

#### NATIONAL AWARDS RECOGNIZE EFFORTS OF ASC AND DSS

NASPA's International Education Knowledge Community awarded the Best Practice Award for Global Partnership Program in 2008 to the AU collaboration, "A Three-Year Effort to Increase Study Abroad Opportunities for Students with Disabilities." This award was the third for the DSS, ASC, and AU Abroad collaboration, following the Gold Excellence Award in the diversity category and the Bronze Medal among all Gold Excellence Awards winners.

INTERESTED IN STUDYING ABROAD?

# Outcomes

- Commitment to social model of disability
- Proactive assessment all aspects of program delivery with an eye toward universal design and access
- Focus on helping students to live their lives, not their illness or disability



# Lessons Learned

- Begin working with student ASAP
- The student is the best source of info about their needs
- Involve all members of the teams overseas as well as on the home campus – **especially DS office!**
- Always be prepared for something new!

# Universal Design & Access

- Residential
  - Wheelchair accessible building
- Academics
  - Digital copies of syllabi for screen reading
- Experiential Education
  - Sourcing placements that are better designed to accommodate all students
- Student Life
  - Co-curricular and extra-curricular activities booked for students are irrelevant of abilities

# Wrap Up

- Communication
- Legal Issues
- Lessons learned
  - Plan in advance!
  - Identify alternate choices
  - Work with students to find best fit program
  - Seek out resources: Mobility International, AHEAD.org, Pepnet.org

# Other Resources

- **Mobility International ([www.miusa.org](http://www.miusa.org))**
- **Association on Higher Education and Disability ([ahead.org](http://ahead.org))**
- **Pepnet2 ([Pepnet.org](http://Pepnet.org))**
- **NAFSA:**  
**[http://www.nafsa.org/Find\\_Resources/Publications/Periodicals/Epublications/Advising\\_International\\_Students\\_with\\_Disabilities/](http://www.nafsa.org/Find_Resources/Publications/Periodicals/Epublications/Advising_International_Students_with_Disabilities/)**

# Questions for Discussion

- What offices do you currently work with to provide services for student with disabilities?
- How could communication be improved?
- What are some challenges? Direct enroll vs. Exchange vs. Island programs vs. Hybrid
- How can we reach more students with disabilities to make them aware that study abroad is a possibility for them?

## Thank You

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