

Study Abroad in the Time of COVID-19: A Zoom Roundtable Conversation

NAFSA Region X EA Knowledge Community

Introductions

Hosts/Moderators:

- Catherine Collado, EA KC Rep, State University of New York at New Paltz
- Scott Keller, Region X NJ State Rep, Saint Peter's University
- Jolene Bowser, Region X K-12 Rep, Bishop Kearney High School, Rochester, NY

Panelists:

- Ben Levy, Director of International Education, Ramapo College of New Jersey
- Helen Newman, Assistant Director, Outbound Immigration Services, New York University
- Christian Wilwohl, Director of Study Abroad, SUNY New Paltz

Ground Rules

Please mute your microphone when not speaking to reduce background noise

Please write your questions/comments in the chat box

Confidentiality: Attendees may use information received but the identity and affiliation of the other community members may not be revealed

This presentation will be recorded and shared with colleagues who cannot attend

Thank you!

Topics to be covered today

- Study Abroad Outlook for Fall 2020 & Beyond
- Visa Application Processes for Fall 2020
- Implications for Cancelled Summer 2020 Programs
- Marketing Study Abroad During a Pandemic
- Lessons Learned from the Spring 2020 Evacuations/Cancellations
- Engaging Your Campus Community from your Home Office
- Effectively Managing the Transition to Online Learning
- Faculty-Led Refund Policies
- Outlook for 2021 Faculty-Led Programs
- Open Floor

Study Abroad Outlook for Fall 2020

Ramapo College

- Do not offer any Faculty-led options; only 3rd party, direct or exchange options
- July 1 target date - additional waiver or status quo
- Require a reduction of CDC & DOS alerts; eventually move back to country-by-country analysis
- Virtual Pre-Departure Orientations (PDOs)

New Paltz

- Only bilateral and exchange programs; contingency planning/communication with partners
- Monitoring CDC and DoS guidelines
- Some programs canceled by partner institutions
- Final decision - TBD

NYU

- Intend to run Fall semester* and A/Y programs; no host family stays
- Targeting June for country by country/city by city analysis with final decisions made later in the summer
- CDC, WHO, DoS, OSAC on the ground site staff and the NYU Global Public Safety, & Global Resiliency teams

Visa Application Processes for Fall 2020

Ramapo College

- All partners have reduced programs to less than 90 days to accommodate consular closures

New Paltz

- Depends on program/country

NYU

- US DoS is not issuing or renewing passports, only for documented emergencies. Passport Agencies remain closed
- Most area consulates (and embassies) are closed and not accepting visa applications
- Group processing for Italy is on hold and unclear if it will be an option for this year
- UK - VFS and visa processing in Sheffield remain closed as do most global IELTS testing centers, including the US.
- Schengen visa updates:
 - Applications accepted 180 days in advance
 - Increased scrutiny of global health insurance to ensure standard minimums, expect requests for health certificates
 - Check for updated visa fees
- Argentina - bans international flight sales through Sept 1st

Implications for Cancelled Summer 2020 Programs

Ramapo College

- Students with graduation requirements
- Unable to meet goals for 2 federal grants
- Loss of projected revenue
- Loss of projected enrollments

New Paltz

- Similar to Ramapo

NYU

- Summer programs = remote instruction
- Canceled programs = frustrated students (parents) and faculty, lost revenues, and increased technology costs
- Alternative terms (J-term, next summer)
- Programs that require an abroad course/experience creating alternatives

Marketing Study Abroad during a Pandemic

Ramapo College

- paused until further notice; focus on planning for 2021
- FY21 - almost entirely digital marketing strategy
- Virtual info sessions and presentations

New Paltz

- Similar to Ramapo
- Virtual Study Abroad Fair?

NYU

- Updates to NYU websites to reflect the current state and upcoming offerings
- Increase use of webinars for admitted students (and parents), including campus tours
- Virtual advising appointments
- Fall 2020 and A/Y 20-21 applications are already closed / Spring 2021 open

Lessons Learned from Spring 2020 Evacuations/Cancellations

Ramapo College

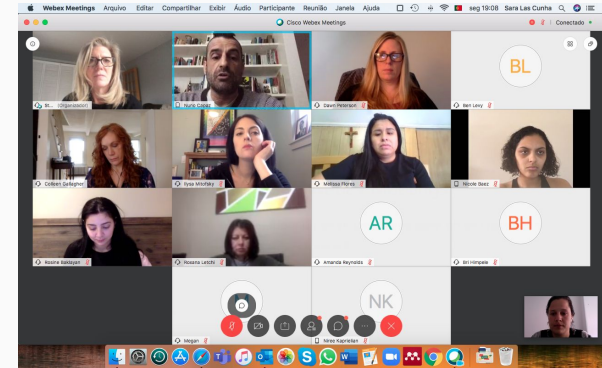
- Website developed (<https://www.ramapo.edu/international-travel/resources/health/coronavirus/>)
- DOE Financial Aid for virtual/remote instruction (petition programs)
- Increased attention on financial risks/trip insurance
- Modified study abroad/loC (i.e. Portugal & China)
- Previous crisis experience and emergency planning helped

New Paltz

- Contingency planning moving forward
- Surprisingly manageable

NYU

- COVID webpages for updates, travel, and longer term implications
- Contingency planning and crisis simulations for future
- Leveraging in-house talent, knowledge, and networks



Engaging your Campus Community from your Home Office

Ramapo College

- International Ed was first to be impacted/engaged with pandemic
- Many not ready for virtual campus / technological learning curve
- Regular outreach to constituent groups (alternative communication mediums)
- Focus on response/impact
- Future planning

New Paltz

- Similar to the above
- Existing/new relationships key to managing the process
- Communication with stakeholders

NYU

- Lead with empathy - understand the spaces your community members are living/studying/working
- Focus on mental health / reiterate resources / healthy remote school/work expectations
- Use technology so communications fall within traditional work day unless Emergency Notifications
- Use multiple methods of communication: emails, virtual meetings, and phone calls

Effectively Managing the Transition to Online Learning

Ramapo College

- Academic continuity;
- Initial delay and working through kinks;
- Access to required technology (address equity issues)

New Paltz

- Most partner institutions offered remote instruction/learning; beneficial to academic continuity
- Time zone differences and delivery challenging

NYU

- Routine and consistency + flexibility
- Have a plan for when technology issues arise, what are the expectations, and socialize the plan
- What accommodations need to be made and what resources do you have to make them

Faculty-led Refund Policies

Ramapo College

- refund policies were thrown out the window; students were refunded 100%
- Contract expectations vs. non-recoverables
- Airfare
- Future mitigate financial risk (i.e. travel insurance)

New Paltz

- Credit for next year's programs (Italy)
- Most programs canceled before funds were committed

NYU (semester and A/Y programs)

- Housing was prorated
- Return emergency travel assistance provided
 - Travel insurance? How much, how to evaluate, will it be possible post COVID-19?

Outlook for 2021 Faculty-led Programs

Ramapo College

- Deferrals
- Revised approach to faculty-led program operations and delivery

New Paltz

- Winter programs will be closely monitored; same with summer

NYU

- Short Term Programs (J-Term, Summer, Spring Break)
 - Individual NYU Schools autonomy to cancel
 - Deferrals encouraged without penalizations and waiving of deposits
 - Program locations should be evaluated for entry feasibility - i.e. Argentina
 - Programs should be analyzed through Global Public Safety for potential travel and security concerns

Open Floor: Questions, Concerns, Silver Linings?

Next steps: Evaluation/Survey, Follow up resources/webinars/conversations

What questions should study abroad professionals be asking right now?

Student Perspectives?

Resources Slide

- [NAFSA: Coronavirus Critical Resources](#)
- [The Forum on Education Abroad: Resources on Coronavirus & Impacts on Travel](#)
- [Diversity Abroad: Is Study Abroad Safe?](#)
- [IIE: COVID-19 Effects on US Higher Education Campuses](#)
- [NAFSA E-Connection](#)
- [OSAC's Academia Working Group](#)
- [New Jersey Partnership for Study Abroad](#)

Poll Results

Which adjective best describes how you're feeling this week? (check all that apply)

- Isolated- 15%
- Grateful- 40%
- Overwhelmed- 38%
- Peaceful- 5%
- Lethargic- 24%
- Optimistic-18%
- Blue- 16%
- Energized- 5%

Are you a member of a regional study abroad association?

- Yes, New York Area Study Abroad Association- 16%
- Yes, New Jersey Partnership for Study Abroad (NJPSA)- 9%
- Yes, other association- 16%
- No- 58%

Poll Results

By which date do you plan to make a decision about fall 2020 programs?

- We have already made a decision about fall to go forward as planned- 4% (3)
- We have already decided to cancel fall programs- 18% (13)
- By May 15- 4% (3)
- By June 1- 15% (11)
- By June 15- 11% (8)
- By July 1- 14% (10)
- By July 15- 1% (1)
- By August 1 or later- 0%
- To be determined- 32% (23)

At your organization, who is responsible for making the final decision about fall 2020 programs?

- My office- 8% (6)
- Senior International Officer- 4% (3)
- Provost- 25% (18)
- Executive Council- 15% (11)
- Board of Trustees- 1% (1)
- Consortiums- 0%
- Combination/Collective decision- 36% (26)
- Unknown- 10% (7)

Poll Results

What are you hearing from students (and parents) regarding future study abroad? (check all that apply)

- Students still intend to go abroad- 60% (43/72)
- Students are hesitant to study abroad in 2021- 33% (24/72)
- Students are eager to defer study abroad to a later date- 60% (43/72)
- Students are eager but parents are less so- 18% (13/72)
- Students are opting for shorter-term programs- 3% (2/72)

Have the majority of your fall programs shortened their dates to eliminate the need for a student visa (for visa waiver countries)?

- Yes- 22% (17)
- No, not yet- 41% (31)
- To be determined - 37% (28)

Poll Results

Are you actively marketing 2020-21 study abroad programs? (check all that apply)

- Yes- 69% (48/70)
- No- 26% (18/70)
- We are marketing virtual study abroad programs/internships- 16% (11/70)

Have you offered virtual re-entry programming for returned students? If so, what was the turnout like?

- 0-25% of returnees- 19% (10)
- 26-50% of returnees- 0%
- 51-75% of returnees- 0%
- 76-100% of returnees- 4% (2)
- We have not yet offered a re-entry program- 62% (33)
- We will not be offering a re-entry program- 15% (8)

Poll Results

How many faculty-led programs did you have to cancel this spring and summer?

- 0 - 2- 21% (10)
- 2 - 5- 31% (15)
- 6 - 10- 25% (12)
- More than 10- 23% (11)

What approach are you currently taking regarding 2021 faculty-led programs? (check all that apply)

- Carrying on as if all will be back to normal by then- 40% (19/47)
- Limiting programmatic options- 11% (5/47)
- Taking a wait-and-see attitude- 64% (30/47)
- Restructuring to avoid financial commitment- 19% (9/47)
- Pulling your hair out- 23% (11/47)