

When 'Here' Becomes 'There': How Creative Collaborations Can Position Us for Growth in a New Era

Introductions

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Jack Be Nimble, Jill Be Quick

- Faced with a new world order, it was important to identify internal partners willing to take a chance on something new, despite being overwhelmed with challenges, questions, and a sense of being on the edge of a crisis.
- The pandemic forced a reconsideration of the definition of “study abroad” and a re-evaluation of who were our internal partners.
- The entire experience was a reminder of the importance of building bridges early—and maintaining them always.

Jack Be Nimble, Jill Be Quick

- The new partners weren't only internal to the University, but to our own international programs unit.
- Time was critical. A significant challenge was to persuade other units and offices to listen to us about what seemed a crazy notion, when everyone was already overwhelmed.
- Could this really be run “just like” a typical study abroad program?

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- Can we do something very new in a very short timeframe? How much do we want to risk of our credibility or our relationships? When we do determine the bureaucracy wins?
- Has everyone weighed in? Has everyone weighed in? Has everyone weighed in? (only space prevents more repeating!)
- What values do we emphasize? Quality, investment of time and money, brand and reputation (internally and externally), risk of permanent damage to relationships or trust.

Online Opportunities in Study Abroad: Learning Outcomes from an International Academic Collaboration

Program Overview:

- Partnership between Wake Forest University and CET
- Residential academic experience in China for WFU students living there
 - 65+ first-year students in Beijing
 - 30+ continuing students in Shanghai
- Curriculum was a blend of CET face-to-face and WFU fully remote courses
- CET faculty vetted by respective WFU departments for WFU credit courses
- Some face-to-face courses taught according to WFU syllabi
- Support teams comprising CET and WFU staff were created
- Co-curricular programming was collaboratively developed

Online Opportunities in Study Abroad: Learning Outcomes from an International Academic Collaboration

Leveraging What Was Learned for Future Possibilities:

- Collaborate with program providers to offer home school online courses as part of study abroad curriculum to enable students to more easily stay on track with their major/minor requirements
- Pursue COIL (Collaborative Online International Learning) more intentionally as “an innovative pedagogy involving collaborative teaching and learning in two or more countries facilitated by online communication” (ACE, 2021)
- Connect abroad and international students around the globe through one or more online courses that can then provide a more pancultural understanding of the subject matter

Re-imagining Partnerships: International Student Retention and Sense of Belonging

"The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes." — Marcel Proust

What does it mean to re-imagine in international education?

- Entrepreneurial
- Nothing gets re-imagined into existence – it takes work, collaboration, finances & human resources.....
- Continuous learning and improvement
- Requires courage and trust

What does it mean to re-imagine partnerships?

- Reciprocity
- Collaboration
- Transparency and Sustainability

Re-imagining Partnerships: International Student Retention and Sense of Belonging

Like many, Dickinson was facing the challenge of supporting international students from afar and creating a sense of belonging.

What did we do?

- Reached out to exchange and study abroad programs and partners: CET (China and Vietnam), University of East Anglia (England), Yonsei University (Korea)
- Flexible model: Dickinson remote, program and direct enroll courses
- Partnered quickly across campus particularly with Admissions, Registrar & Academic Advising (it takes a village!)
- Created a scaffolded support system for our international students wherever they were in the world
- Communicated plans to all stakeholders

Re-imagining Partnerships: International Student Retention and Sense of Belonging

What did we learn?

- Feedback from students has been positive – they feel supported, seen & part of a larger community
- None of this can happen without a strong foundation of trust with on and off-campus partners
- Excellent communication is a must for success – both challenging and critical
- A small community can have a large reach
- Excellent new narratives and practices in recruiting international students, retaining them and getting support from key stakeholders like donors and alumni

Re-imagining Partnerships: International Student Retention and Sense of Belonging

What next?

- In collaboration with CET, building in-country bridge programs for students in China who have been accepted to or are applying to study in the US with Dickinson College credit
- New pathways through a Dickinson education using our centers and partnerships abroad
- Even more open to new ideas and innovation

“Progress is never permanent, will always be threatened, must be redoubled, restated and reimagined if it is to survive.” — Zadie Smith

Reversing Polarity: Using Reactive Change to Inform Proactive Innovation

Necessity is the mother of invention.

Necessity:

Serve our partners

Use IFSA's strengths for mutual benefit

Stay true to our mission

Leverage lessons learned for the future

Invention:



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Reversing Polarity: Using Reactive Change to Inform Proactive Innovation



- University of Arizona gains access to a campus community experience and new enrollment markets.
- IFSA gains a new means to integrate local and study abroad students utilizing our existing strengths and structure.

Reversing Polarity: Using Reactive Change to Inform Proactive Innovation

Leveraging Lessons Learned:

- Challenge assumptions
- Maximize new models/partnerships

“I’m convinced that about half of what separates the successful entrepreneurs from the non-successful ones is pure perseverance.” – Steve Jobs

Discussion Questions!

1. How do you see the solutions and lessons of Fall 2020 shaping institutional strategy for Spring 2021 and beyond?
2. How did your institution respond to challenges around international student enrollment for fall? What innovations arose from this experience?
3. For those of you who pulled together an innovative or new response to the situation, what do you wish you had done differently?
4. What is your institution doing and what are lessons learned as you are helping international students find a sense of belonging in your campus community even if they are remote?