CIE ASSESSMENT REPORT

**Event:** Pre-Departure Orientation Fall 2014  
**Date:** November 14, 2014

### SUMMARY OF EVENT:

Pre-departure orientation was held from 4-8 p.m. on Friday, November 14th in Mercy. The purpose of the pre-departure orientation is to prepare students for their study abroad experience. This orientation is an important way for CIE staff to convey information that will be relevant to students' time abroad. It also affords an opportunity for students to ask pressing questions and meet with past participants and current international students.

The Fall 2014 pre-departure orientation was held for students studying abroad in Spring 2015 on all programs, including Loyola exchange and study abroad, ISEP exchange and direct, and non-Loyola programs. 39/41 students attended the orientation. 1 student attended the make-up orientation and 1 student withdrew from the program after orientation so did not come. 37/39 evaluations were received this session as compared to the 42/48 evaluations received in the Spring 2014 Session.

### OBJECTIVES/GOALS:

- Clarify policies and procedures
- Make students aware of the preparation that they need to do both on logistics and practical information as well as learning about their host country.
- Provide students with practical and logistical information
  - Travel documents
  - Travel arrangements
  - Money matters
  - Computers and communications
  - Health and safety
  - Academics
  - Travel documents
  - Registration and transfer of credits
  - Academics abroad
  - Resources for preparing
- Help students develop realistic expectations
- Help ease pre-departure anxiety
- Provide intercultural training
- Provide opportunities for students to meet other future study abroad participants, past study abroad participants, and current international students
- Enhance relationships between students and CIE staff

### EVALUATION METHODS:

All participants are asked to complete an evaluation at the end of the pre-departure orientation presentations by CIE. The evaluation questionnaire asks students to comment on the following: day and time of orientation, topics of orientation, helpfulness of orientation, highlights of orientation, and suggestions for improvement. CIE staff reviews the event and the student evaluations, conducts an overall assessment, and proposes changes for future orientations.

### SUMMARY OF RESULTS OF EVALUATION:
37/39 evaluations received

- The opening activity/ice breaker while simple, seems to work best. Students were asked for one thing they’re most excited about one they’re most nervous about.
  - It’s a good transition into introducing what we talk about in preparing to go abroad and the cultural adjustment process since many students bring up similar topics or concerns.
  - Students were also given bingo worksheets to complete in the wait time beforehand. Only about half completed it but it could be a good idea to allow the students to mingle more beforehand.
- Evaluations indicate that students were very satisfied with the pre-departure orientation.
- Students found the “Preparing to Go Abroad” session most helpful in preparing for the study abroad experience. 37/37 “strongly agree” or “agree” that this session helped prepare them for their experience.
- 30/37 students “strongly agree” or “agree” that the “Cultural Adjustment” Session helped prepare them for the experience.
- Students were generally satisfied with the content of the various sessions.
- The session on journaling had a much more mixed rating than the other sections. 27/35 “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that the session was helpful while 4 were neutral and 4 “disagreed” or “strongly disagree” that the session was helpful.
  - “The recording/reflecting was too long for the information being given”
- As usual, the students enjoyed the food and company of returnees and current international students.
  - Because we had all of the rooms reserved, we were able to separate the students into smaller, more country/region specific rooms.
  - This allowed for the students speak more intimately with the returnees and current exchange students.
- When asked what they found most valuable or helpful in preparing to go abroad:
  - 8/22 respondents cited that the panel discussion was most valuable.
  - 6/22 cited that the culture discussion was helpful, one student specifically cited the reverse culture part.
- 19/22 cited that the general preparing to go abroad session was most helpful.
  - 5 cited the visa information as most helpful specifically.
  - 5 cited the packing info.
- When asked whether their feelings or attitudes/goals about study abroad have changed as a result of orientation:
  - 10/34 explicitly stated that they would make or alter their goals for study abroad as a result of the orientation.
  - 3/34 mentioned that they feel more “open” or “open minded” about going into their experiences.
  - 4/34 mentioned they would begin or continue planning and preparing more actively for their time abroad.
  - The changes in attitude were varied but these responses stood out:
    - “It had put everything into perspective for me and I feel like I just walked into a brick wall. Before, I had a more casual attitude, still nervous but now I realize how big of a deal this is. As nervous as I am, I am extremely excited.”
    - “Yes, it has inspired me to look back at my goals and re-evaluate/add to them.”
    - “Yes, I believe that my perspective that I had on studying abroad has been altered. I am more open-minded and not as nervous about the experience.”
- When asked whether their feelings have been affected by orientation:
  - 1/4 students also responded that they felt a bit more nervous or anxious about going abroad.
  - 4/36 students stated that they feel more prepared or confident about going abroad.
  - 2 students simply responded that “no,” their feelings have not changed. Others who responded no said:
    - “No, I still feel it as an incredible/rewarding experience.”
    - “No, I felt it was sufficient and informative.”
    - “Nope. Super excited.”
    - “No I am just overwhelmed/anxious.”
- Many students had suggestions for material to be added or deleted:
  - 1 student wanted more information about insurance.
  - 1 student commented that the recording/reflecting was too long for the information given.
  - 2 comments were that international student perspectives would have been nice on the panel.
  - 2 students wanted more country specific information but may be going to countries from which we had no representatives this year.
    - “More African countries”
    - “I think it would be cool to meet personally with a person who has previously studied in that country for a one-on-one.”
- In comparison to last semester, this session seemed less regionally focused perhaps because students were studying in about 17 countries versus the usual 20+. One notable comment included:
  - “I think it should be less assuming and American-centered and more general for people who aren’t Americans.”
- The Peer Advisors were not as prepared for public speaking this semester. The students still seemed to pay attention to the information given.
- The students generally agreed that the day and time was convenient:
  - No students stated that the day was not convenient this semester.
  - 6/32 students said that although the time was convenient, they would suggest another day either during the week or daytime on a weekend.
  - “It was tiring but I was engaged”
- 15 returnees and exchange students committed to attending the dinner.
- Additionally, about 10 more students showed up and contributed to the discussions with students in attendance.
  - All of the students were solicited by e-mail as well as in facebook groups.
  - Heavy inibus involvement also seemed to be a driving force in the connection with students.

**CHANGES FOR NEXT SEMESTER:**
Based on student comments and assessment by CIE staff

- Pre-Departure Orientation should be kept to a Friday evening from 4-8, which would conclude with dinner with returned and current exchange students. This is more convenient for staff and student workers as well as returnees and exchange students.
- Prepare emails on the following topics:
  - LGBT
  - Women abroad
  - Sexual assault
  - Alcohol and drugs
  - Learning about your country
  - Include all areas covered in orientation in case they need these.
- Prepare learning content and assessments in Studio Abroad on the following topics:
  - Grades and credit transfer
  - Financial aid and budgeting
  - Visas and immigration info
- The “Preparing to Go Abroad” session went over time again although quite a bit of information was cut.
  - More time does not need to be dedicated to this session
  - This group had many more questions which also contributed to going over time.
- The “Cultural Adjustment and Resources for Preparing” was rushed in order to account for lost time
- Most of the students seemed to enjoy the culture talk so improvements should be made to make this session more interactive
- For the adjustment section there should be more testimonials from students about adjusting as well as reverse culture shock rather than simply presenting the different theories and generic tips.
  - For the culture session, an activity should be added to connect the students more with the information.
  - A “Curious/Obvious” activity could be added with pictures that could possibly introduce many concepts such as gender and sexuality and other issues to demonstrate the importance of changing perspective.
- The handbook needs to be digitized.
  - This could be a web document or other material in Studio Abroad. This would allow students to read the handbook and directly click links to outside websites such as those dedicated to diversity or even just flight finders.
  - Alternatively, it could be created as a pdf and then uploaded to a USB and given to each student. This would make it more portable and accessible and students would likely use the usb for class materials abroad as well.
- While the Mercy classrooms are convenient, the room was packed to capacity at 40 students. There was very little room for staff and peer advisors. For the next session if we have over 50 students in attendance we will either:
  - Have 2 separate sessions on 2 different dates dividing students either by region or program type.
  - Have concurrent sessions on the same night but divide students into similar groupings and have smaller rotating sessions (as done in Spring 2012).
- The redundancy of information was reduced from last year’s presentations.
- The peer advisor team was a little disjointed and confused this semester mainly due to the Study Abroad Advisor’s lack of preparing them. For the next session thy will need to be more carefully briefed and expectations will need to be reviewed.
- Although many students said the visa info was helpful, we need to do a separate session specifically for visas as students go on more exchanges:
  - Small sessions should be held in the weeks leading up to as well as after the pre-departure to ensure that students are on the right track with applying for visas.
  - Specific countries this is needed for include Italy, France, Spain, and the UK
- Adjustments to food order (see below).

Pre-Departure Orientation Evaluation: Spring 2015

Evaluation Responses
Likert scale evaluation of sessions
1 - Strongly Disagree, 2 - Disagree, 3 - Neutral, 4 - Agree, 5 Strongly Agree,

Preparing to Go Abroad- This session helped me prepare for my study abroad experience.

1 2 3 4 (10) 5 (27)

Cultural Adjustment- This session helped me prepare for my study abroad experience.

1 2 (3) 3 (4) 4 (12) 5 (18)

Recording/Reflecting- This session helped me prepare for my study abroad experience.

1 (2) 2 (2) 3 (4) 4 (12) 5 (15)

Returning Home- This session helped me prepare for my study abroad experience.

1 2 (1) 3 (4) 4 (12) 5 (20)

Has the orientation influenced your attitudes/goals for studying abroad? If yes, in what way?
• It got me more excited and made it much more real.
• Yes. The orientation stressed the importance of setting goals ahead of time, which I will definitely do in detail. It made me a lot more excited for going abroad.
• Helped to understand the importance of making goals for the study abroad experience.
• It helped me solidify several goals and think about my future reflection and outlook.
• I am more excited to get on a plane and just get there. It also calmed my nerves a bit because no one is 100% confident before they get there, and that was very apparent in the presentation and panel.
• This orientation was so well done and I find that I feel much more open and well-equipped to go to a new place.
• It had put everything into perspective for me and I feel like I just walked into a brick wall. Before, I had a more casual attitude, still nervous but now I realize how big of a deal this is. As nervous as I am, I am extremely excited.
• I am definitely going to take the advice of journaling and trying everything, as well as be okay with acclimating to the new environment.
• It has made me think of small things that make a difference in the experience like measurements and communication styles.
• Yes it has made me want to get more organized so that I can get the most out of the experience.
• Not particularly but it did make me more aware of the goals I had already made.
• Yes. I had not really thought of goals, and now I will begin to write down what I want out of this experience. I had some idea about attitudes and experience, but this orientation enlightened me more about what to culturally expect and how to deal with it.
• Yes it has because it has made me realize some of the things I still need to do in order to go abroad.
• Yes, it has made me more excited for studying abroad and enabled me to better formulate specific goals and envision myself actually going through it.
• Yes I have started to think about my goals when I do go abroad.
• Yes it made me realize I really need to figure out stuff about the culture and politics.
• Yes. I got more humble about my study abroad for next year.
• Made me more excited! (3)
• No (2)
• Yes, I now have more concrete plans for how to prepare.
• Yes it has made me want to embrace each opportunity that comes my way.
• It reminded me that I need to be prepared for culture shock both in England and when I come home.
• Yes, it has inspired me to look back at my goals and re-evaluate/add to them.
• A bit. It reinforced some ideas I took away from my sister’s having studied abroad.
• Yes, it answered a lot of the questions I have been asking.
• Yes, overall I feel more confident.
• Yes, I believe that my perspective that I had on studying abroad has been altered. I am more open-minded and not as nervous about the experience.
• A little. It brought a few things to light that I’m a little more concerned about that I hadn’t thought about before.
• Yes. This orientation has made me want to create goals that I do want to follow abroad to help enhance my experience.
• It made me want to be more open when I study abroad and showed the importance of joining clubs and staying active.
• I am more excited now that I was before. I was anxious on getting all proper documentation but now things have been clarified.
• Yes. Now I have more goals and a more open mind on what to expect when I leave.
• Yes it has made me want to plan more.
• Yes, I want to join more clubs.

**Have your feelings about studying abroad been affected by pre-departure orientation? If yes, in what way?**

• I am much more excited now (3)
• I feel much more open and accepting of the challenges I will face.
• I think it was very important that the idea of reverse culture shock was brought up. In all the excitement of preparing to leave I think it is good to understand some of the challenges that we will have to overcome upon returning.
• MORE EXCITEMENT!
• I kind of touched upon this above, but I learned my nerves are okay and expected.
• Yes! It helped to recognize the challenges I will face in order to realize what I want my experience to be like.
• It has just made me more aware of the situation and much work and thought goes into it.
• I think I’m a little more nervous about it, but I’m also incredibly excited. I have so much to think about before I go!
• I feel more secure about leaving.
• It’s made me more excited but also more nervous as it’s becoming a little more real.
• Yes, it made me a bit more nervous about the experience, but also excited. I know now that it is going to be a long and hard adjustment, but it will be worth it.
• Yes! I feel better about many aspects of study abroad. I was nervous about travel requirements, weather, classes, etc. But talking to students who have done this before and listening to the presentation/panel has been very helpful.
• Yes it has made me a little nervous about being in a new country by myself.
• No, I still feel it as an incredible/rewarding experience.
• No (2)
• Yeah I’m freaking out way more! But in a positive way! Gave me clear goals on how to proceed.
• Yes. I got more nervous and also excited.
• Made me more confident!
• Yes, it made me more aware of how different cultures really are different from one another, which made me a little more nervous.
• Yes, I now anticipate return-home shock.
• Made me less nervous.
• Yes. I learned valuable tips like packing lightly and getting involved.
• Yes I want to go more now.
• Anxious! So many things I need to do.
• Kind of. I’m going to pack less.
• Yes, it has informed me more.
• I feel more confident about formal procedures like visas and housing.
• No, I felt it was sufficient and informative.
• Nope. Super excited.
• Yes. I never really knew about reverse culture shock and that ideal. It has opened my eyes to not only the experience abroad but back home as well.
• Yes, I am a lot more nervous now. (especially the first part)
• The visa section clarified a lot of my questions. I am also happy I learned about what to bring and what not to bring as well as having prior study abroad students present to share personal stories.

• Yes. I feel a little less nervous now that I had some questions answered.

• No I am just overwhelmed/anxious.

Is there anything that should be added to or deleted from the orientation? What?

• No (20)

• I thought the quotes and shaved stories from students who have studied abroad were very helpful. Seeing what other international students had to say about studying in the US was also helpful to put things into perspective.

• Possibly a bit more information about insurance. Everything else was great!

• I would have liked more focus on the in-depth discussion on culture and adaption.

• I think it should be a little less assuming and American-centered and more general for people who aren’t Americans.

• The recording/reflecting was too long for the information being given.

• Add more about African countries.

• More testimonials from students who studied from another country in New Orleans (interesting perspective)

• Not really..maybe pretzels.

• I think it would be cool to meet personally with a person who has previously studied in the country for a one-on-one.

• It was long but it’s all important.

• I thought when the students talked I did not learn anything new.

• Less time on culture since it’s so unique to each country.

• One part that I believe was common sense is the explanation on how to communicate.

• Shorten cultural adjustment

What information did you find most valuable or helpful in preparing to go abroad?

• The student panel discussion (5)

• All the info about pre-departure preparations (e.g. vaccinations, visas) was really helpful. Also students and staff sharing personal stories was really nice.

• I really appreciate the talking about how to record your experience because I didn’t think about it.

• I hadn’t taken into consideration the difference in grading scale.

• Information about cultural differences and the ways we can be more open.

• The culture shock process and adjusting to your host country. It’s a huge change and it’s not going to be easy.

• Travel/registration/disabilities

• Definitely the segment about culture and reverse-culture shock.

• Travel requirements, packing, what to culturally expect.

• I found the preparing to go abroad helpful. (5)

• The Q&A session was extremely helpful.

• The panel was the best stuff about confrontation/language

• Cultural differences (2)

• Classes

• The packing info (4)

• Visa info (2)
• Visa help and advice on getting out there.
• The initial powerpoint was most valuable. The other powerpoints should have been left out.
• I felt both the student panel an safety info were helpful.
• I appreciated the logistical info.
• Definitely the financial and visa part helped answer questions.
• Visa, passport info, application, acceptance info

**Was this day and time convenient for you? If not, what day and time would be best for future orientations?**

• Yes, this was a good time and day. The snacks and dinner are very thoughtful and definitely helped to make the meeting feel more informal and relaxed.
• It was tiring but I was engaged.
• Saturday could have been better
• Yes (19)
• It was, but weekends during the day would be convenient too.
• It was because I didn’t have any classes, but it was inconvenient that it was on the weekend.
• It was convenient for me; although friday afternoon/night was tough to get through.
• Maybe not a Friday night.
• During the middle of the week/Wednesday.
• Yes, I just needed to arrive on time because I forgot.
• End a bit earlier. Maybe start a bit earlier.
• Yes, honestly no other day would have worked better for the majority.
• Yes-ish. I had to skip practice. During the week could be helpful.
• I think having it on a Friday wasn’t the best day, but the time was fine. Just a little too long.
• Any additional comments you have regarding the orientation?
• Really, really helpful!
• It was a little overwhelming to talk about all the different processes of applying for a visa- I think it would be more helpful to do that for the specific countries in some other context.
• Possibly more substantial food throughout.
• This was so well-organized and informative, and the time and care put in was very evident. I value that you didn’t just give us the hard facts, but addressed our whole person- the challenges we may face, the importance of reflection, etc. Thank you!
• providing connections to international students from country
• It was great! (4)
• Thank you for the journal
FALL 2014 PREDEPARTURE

Around 70 ppl

COSTCO: $111.41
1 big box of red grapes
1 big box of green grapes
big bag clementines
big bag Asian trail mix
big bag GORP Trail mix with M&Ms
2 veggie trays
2 pack mango juices
2 pack apple juices
2 pack grape/cranberry juices

LEBANON’S: $732.09
3 trays chicken
1 tray lamb
2 trays roasted veggies with feta & rice
10 sides:
3 rice (only received 1?)
2 salad (only received 1?)
5 hummus (may have received 6...)

Students Helpers $200.00
4 x $10 per hour x 5 hours

NOTES FOR NEXT YEAR:
- only half as much juice (apple was barely touched, mango appeared to be the favorite)
- cans or bottles of soda
- only 1 costco veggie tray needed
- whole tray of chicken was left, one less tray?
- order equal parts lamb and chicken
- more salad (less hummus?)
- double check that Lebanon’s is giving you the right sides!

Journals - $10 per journal x 35 = $355.25

55 Handbooks = 221.33

Total expense - $1,620.08