

**Forum on Education Abroad
Education Abroad in Europe
All Voices on the Table
November 10, 2020**

Presenters:

Loren Ringer (Secretary EUASA, Director New School Paris, APUAF)
Lee (Leland) L'Hote (Intl. Program Dean IES Abroad)
Stephen Robinson (Deputy Chair EUASA, Champlain College in Ireland, ASAPI)
Pia Schneider (Chair EU ASA, Iowa State, Rome, AACUPI)

Participants – from the chat:

Janine Ludwig, Dickinson College at University of Bremen, AASAP, Germany
Barbara Garcia, APUNE, Spain
Emily Gorlewski, Wesleyan University, Connecticut, USA, with programs in Madrid, Bologna, and Paris
Monica Perez-Bedmar, APUNE, Spain
Christine Kelly-Vereda, Consortium for Advanced Studies Abroad, Granada, Spain
Noah Goldblatt, Champlain College, Vermont, USA
Ketja Lingenfelter, Penn State University, College of Agricultural Sciences
Mary Ann Letellier, CUPA in Paris
Lee L'Hote, an International Programs Dean with IES Abroad
Martin Kley, Resident Director of the "American Junior Year" program at Heidelberg University
Laura Raynaud, Dickinson in France (Toulouse, France)
Mandy Brookins - DePauw University Greencastle IN
Lisa Frauens (sheather) EPA Internships in Europe
Stephen Robinson, Director and Professor with Champlain College, Dublin Ireland Campus
Sylvie Koneski USC Paris France
Florence Claassen, The George Washington University in Paris
Carol Huber, Resident Director - UNC in Montpellier France
Thomas Roman, Co-Director of the Institute for Field Education / IFE (Belgium, France, Spain)
Kristina Schinder - Northeastern University, I advise on several countries in Western Europe
Adrienne Sullivan, DIS, Study Abroad in Scandinavia. Director of Housing & Student Affairs in Copenhagen

- Intro to all European Associations under the umbrella of EUASA
- Poll: Do you feel out of sight on your site?
 - o More often: 17%
 - o Often: 21
 - o Sometimes: 40
 - o Rarely: 18
 - o Never: 4

I. Question: Who sits at the table? Stakeholders? Who is making decisions?

Answers from the chat:

President, dean, provosts, intl. office, finance office, staff abroad, Intl. Office at home campus, CFO, Pandemic Planning Team, University Counsel, consortium partners, Home campus, Chancellor, in

cooperation with language Dpt., Board of Directors, Provost, Senior International officers, ultimately the president, Study abroad directors at sending schools, academic advisory board, president of our company, my staff (on site coordinators), colleagues from study abroad offices, faculty from language departments, VPAA, faculty oversight...

During the pandemic the finance office is gaining prominence! And risk management is important. Risk management and avoiding lawsuits vs providing intercultural and global learning abroad

What do people on both sides want/need?

Answers from the chat:

Continuity moving forward. Not cutting programs for short term financial savings that impact long term continuity.

Risk managers definitely, even after the pandemic, need to be prominent, and informed

Study abroad fits into the global strategy.

Financial stability, staff job security

Serve the College as a whole - reputation, finances

Hold until Fall 21 // keep welcoming students (Fall 20 / Spring 21) // Stay positive / creative

At home Campus: reliability, Student interest, safety and security, academic reputation, intercultural competency

At abroad site: leeway, academic integrity and demands, trust in our knowledge, flexibility

Attractive to maintain programs, but short-term pressure to cut cost/staff

Internationalization of the campus

Health & safety top priority, high-quality education abroad that goes beyond the conventional, undergraduate research opportunities, inclusive environment

Breakout Sessions on topic #1.

List of stakeholders in your organization? Who sits at your table and who makes the decisions?

Intl. Office at home campus (me being RD in Germany), in cooperation with German Dpt., President, Provost, Associate Vice President of Global Programs, Executive Director of Study Abroad.

Myself as RD, our sending school study abroad offices, our academic board, our president, staff,

Academic department/school, Campus abroad, On-site faculty

External actors (finance, safety, and others) play a role

Finance has become (too) important with covid-19

Where do you fit in? Are you listened to?

We deliver the product and are consulted when things go wrong but not when they go well

Yes

Yes, I feel listened to almost all of the time. :-)

Am listened to! But sometimes financial matters are considered more important than staff stability, or even program quality (to a certain extent)

I liaise between the decision makers at the universities and the program directors at the programs in Europe. I would say that we are listened to by the study abroad dept's but rarely by the administrators above them.

We are consulted when things go wrong, but when things go well, out of sight out of mind.

Unfortunately, as a 3rd Party provider - we don't really have a voice.

In the beginning of the crisis, they were asked more because their knowledge on the ground was needed, but not anymore

Are we really to expect permanent transatlantic communication and a seat at this larger table?

Differentiating between different programs was not done, everything "one size fits all"

People seemed to have been overwhelmed at home campus in this crisis, therefore understandable

Comment by participant: For decades, RD directors used to BE the table! We brought a lot of money to the colleges. Now we should ask for a seat at the table? Now we are told what to do and have to look at financial cuts. I think sometimes you need to choose the topics or situations where you want to have a seat and when it is best to just sit there.

II. Transatlantic Personal and Program Alliances

Need for developing and nurturing personal and program alliances and networks, both transatlantic and on your own side of the ocean

On the nature of these alliances: personal, professional, mentoring, support

Session leaders share some success stories in developing alliances

Breakout sessions on topic #2:

What strategies have been effective in developing transatlantic alliances? Create closer connections by:

- Liaison trips: Invite people from home campus (not just intl. office administrators, but others, too) to abroad site – those are the best allies, once they have seen the site, e.g. to celebrate program anniversary
- Faculty often does not come over (workload?), a delegation would be good for efficiency
- Determining the most important people (from faculty, advisors etc.)
- call people on the phone, RDs must establish relationships, participate in conferences and boards, visits
- Local relationships in host community

Sending people from abroad site to home campus: e.g. RD does campus-wide academic lecture to gain more respect and visibility

US Administrators, what can you do to ensure your On-Site staff develop the needed alliances? On Site staff, what can you do to help your US administrators develop the needed alliances?

Use covid situation for more connections – virtually? Integrating abroad faculty via remote teaching
RD survey and report here: <http://www.eu-asa.org/resident-directors-in-europe/>

What are the main gaps and problems in transatlantic alliances on a personal or program level?

- Navigate university/college politics, e.g. between language dpts. and study abroad office
- Effectively and timely communication between offices
- Aligned policies for communication, risk management, budgets
- Gap between administrators and faculty - how is that bridged? We need a buy in from faculty - find it difficult to speak to them sometimes when you aren't one of them - local instructors are not often considered faculty by profs and main campus
- Lack of interest in personal relationships with onsite staff, lack of understanding of each other's daily work
- Budgetary constraints now
- Lack of feedback about performance
- Lack of continuity in personnel
- Direct contact to higher positions missing, mediate persons don't always report it right

III. Future: Sector Alliances

- Using individual alliances from section 2, how do we influence at sector level moving forward – from the personal level to the sector level – not just thinking about our own alliances?
- In which organizations (Forum, EUASA, NAFSA, NACUA, EAIE, Dpt. of State of Study Abroad, Diversity Abroad etc.) have you been most active and what are their greatest strengths?
- Moving forward, what should be the top priorities for these organizations specific to transatlantic cooperation and collaboration?

Guiding Questions for Session 3

What are the most effective ways for Resident Directors to have a greater voice in the field's organizations?

Not only directors, but general staff at programs should be able to make contacts, attend conferences, etc. – budget issue

How do we make inroads with associations that represent university administrators outside the direct sphere of international education? (Examples: Italian lawyer that is the legal advisor to all Italian programs who also communicates with American lawyers, attends their conferences; program alumni, esp. when they become successful or famous)

What venues or products (session panels, journal articles, etc.) are more influential at the sector level?

Can we pitch ideas to:

Inside Higher Ed

Chronicle

Frontiers

Chronicle of Higher Ed

Problem: US hegemony in study abroad

More of our staff participate in country associations... right now it is leaders only, so it seems, more networking events.

Notes from breakout sessions:

- Conferences, Forum meetings, county associations etc. should be more accessible, esp. for younger staff – too expensive
- We as RDs should also include our colleagues at home more
- How to disseminate the RD study
- Stay connected via LinkedIn
- RD representation on the American side – could the Forum help? E.g. people on committees?
- Universities politicized right now, because people are afraid to lose jobs right now
- Opportunities since the crisis: more involvement through technology
- Future changes: will virtual become the norm, hybrid?

IV. What needs to be done? Outcomes? Can we have a product from these sessions?

Let's outreach more to the US and involve them in our discussion.

Stephen Robinson: Can we plant a story on our situation and discussions in an article or so?

Can we put out a statement? To a journal?

Chronicle: Karen Fischer (responsible for intl. issues)

Idea/pitch for an article (several people volunteered to work on it together):

Why COVID isn't going to kill study abroad. Why and how it will come back even stronger. We learn the value of something when it's gone. Suspending study abroad has shown how valuable it is. There have been problems – pre-covid (as the survey shows, enlarge a bit upon that) that had mostly to do with communication, visibility, cooperation on both sides of the Atlantic. In a weird twist, this can be improved by the covid situation that everything has gone virtual. Now RDs and staff abroad can: participate in online workshops, meetings, panels, boards, commissions etc. We should make use of that and make ourselves more visible to pave the path for making study abroad even stronger once the pandemic is over. However, there have been layoffs and shut-downs of programs, but staff in Europe should step to the plate in and offer (conceptual) work and ideas that cannot be fully developed right now at (overwhelmed) home institutions...

Some comments from the final Chat:

Is there a report available from that **RD survey** you all have mentioned a few times?

Yes, it's on the EUASA website. I'll post in a minute.

Thank you!!

Yes. posted on SECUSS-L a while back

<http://www.eu-asa.org/resident-directors-in-europe/>

An additional comment on hosting delegations: program anniversaries are a great occasion to do that!

We were talking about the same thing... personal relationships are so important in these situations and most often help smooth out the professional difficulties

We should also acknowledge that our colleagues at home institutions (who do not work in international education) are completely overwhelmed with all the COVID related work and ensuring fallout. Revenue and Enrollments are down across the board, and costs have gone up. People are feeling very unstable generally, and don't want to even think about international.

Familiarization tours and/or delegation visits are an excellent opportunity to build personal, professional and institutional relationships. I still remember fondly the fam tours I have participated in both as a visitor and as a host even many years ago. There is nothing like knowing who is working with your students (in both places, home campus and on-site).

True but this has been seriously compromised by Covid. Will they be able to resume in the future? Or will virtual encounters have become the new norm?

Good point, and of course I fear that so much has been compromised by Covid. Virtual encounters will certainly gain in popularity, but can they really replace in person visits? Perhaps they will for the next little while, tough to say.

I hope visits both ways will resume in the future and we will not solely depend on virtual encounters!

By the way, I could not agree with you more on how the "table" has turned over the past few decades. When I started in this field, study abroad not only brought money into the home institution, it brought a lot of prestige and put the college on the map in some cases.

We also need to spare a thought for those who have lost their programs and jobs during this difficult time... the abroad landscape will be quite different in the near future.

Indeed. And we need to look at WHO is losing jobs and how those people are being supported (or not).