Value Added: Intercultural Skills Enhancement

Steven T. Duke
Director of International Studies
Wake Forest University

NAFSA Annual Conference
Kansas City, Missouri – June 1, 2010
dukest@wfu.edu
Study Abroad at Wake Forest

- 60-65% of undergraduates study abroad for credit before graduation (~670 in 2009-10)
- Approximately two-thirds of students who study abroad do so for a semester or year
- Wake Forest owns facilities in London, Venice & Vienna; programs at host univ.; offers faculty led summer programs and affiliate programs
- Active faculty involvement in study abroad, from teaching abroad to advising students
Responding to Economic Crisis

Strategies and programs to help students:

• Advisors spend more time in early phases of advising on financial considerations
• Prepared cost-comparison sheets
• Prepared lists of other resources (such as info on credit cards that don’t charge intl trans fee)
• Opened additional advising appointments so accepted students get more “seat time”
Additional strategies:

• Allocated a larger pool of study abroad scholarships to need-based awards
• Continue to allow students to take their WFU aid package on non-WFU programs
• Staff in Financial Aid have held large group info sessions about scholarships and process
• Staff in Financial Aid meet individually with students to plan a financial strategy
In 2009-2010, we adapted our events:

- Format of Pre-Departure Orientations (PDO’s) changed, more individualized for largest non-WFU programs, with rep from provider (IES, NYU, IFSA, Syracuse, BU, SIT)
- PDO’s for WFU-administered programs were also more customized to each program
- Peer Advisors organized events and student panels: pre-med, business, programs in the Middle East, etc.
Intercultural Competency Program (ICP)

- Three courses help students develop new skills and awareness of intercultural communication
- Pre-departure (INS 150) – started Fall 2007
- While abroad (INS 151) – started Spring 2008
- Re-entry (INS 152) – started Fall 2008

- Each course is 1 credit hour, pass/fail grade
- Voluntary enrollment (not required)
Culture:
“…that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.” (E.B. Tylor, 1871)

“…the learned and shared patterns of beliefs, behaviors and values of groups of interacting people.” (M.J. Bennett, 1998)
Talking about Intercultural Competence

• **Knowledge**: self-awareness (foundations of one’s own culture), understanding of world history, knowledge of norms, values, and patterns in other cultures.

• **Skills**: Use knowledge during interaction with others by listening and observing; using appropriate behavior and greetings; establishing rapport; seeking to understand; serving as a “cultural bridge”

• **Attitudes**: motivation to understand and respect others; adaptability; openness; hardiness; tolerant of ambiguity; curiosity; readiness to suspend belief or disbelief
Intercultural Competence

Pre-Departure Course (INS 150) Goals

• Understand the value of intercultural competence
• Explore self-awareness and one’s cultural identity
• Examine (non)verbal communication styles
• Develop knowledge of cultural adjustment processes
• Survey basic facts/principles of host country culture
• Non-traditional classroom activities

• One credit hour, meets in second half of semester
While Abroad Course (INS 151) Goals

- Enhance exploration of host culture and values
- Encourage active pursuit of intercultural experiences
- Guide reflection on encounters and observations
- Facilitate greater adaptation and fuller immersion
- Activities encourage interaction with locals

- One credit hour, activities done while student is abroad, strong emphasis on written reflection
Re-entry Course (INS 152) Goals

• Facilitate re-entry into the home culture
• Examine personal change and growth
• Identify cultural learning gained during sojourn
• Extend and apply learning in new situations
• Students can skip INS 151, but must have had 150

• One credit hour, meets first half of semester immediately after student returns to campus
Student Quote

“I participated in the ICP to gain support before, during and after my time abroad. This program forced me to think outside my comfort zone and to truly expand my horizons. I found [INS 152] to be most helpful, as it gave me the opportunity to process everything I had experienced... Without this course, I probably would not have realized the true magnitude of my experience and personal growth.”

- Jenna, studied in Italy, Fall 2008
ICP Website

http://www.wfu.edu/cis/icp/index.html

- Descriptions of courses, links to syllabi
- Reflections from students
- List of info sessions and course sections
- List of speakers and events
- Notes about Intercultural competence
Student Participation

Enrollments (2009-2010)
- INS 150: ≈ 10% of semester abroad students
- INS 151: ≈ 3%
- INS 152: ≈ 2%

Challenges
- Elective courses
- Recruiting students into the courses
- Many students lack context or appreciation of need for intercultural competence
- Scheduling conflicts, students feel overloaded
Workshop on Intercultural Skills Enhancement (WISE)

- Created by Wake Forest faculty, geared for faculty teaching abroad and study abroad staff
- Third annual workshop slated for Feb. 2011
- Faculty attendees have been nearly universal in their praise of this two-day workshop
- Registration open in July 2010 for WISE 2011
Next steps

• Increase number of students in ICP courses
• Develop an additional re-entry course
• Develop a course for new international students
• Develop events and programs for on-campus students that relate to intercultural competence and career development
• Assess student learning and development
• Publish our findings and continue research