Auburn Abroad
Assessment Report, 2012

Outcome: Auburn Abroad will provide satisfactory orientation sessions covering study abroad opportunities.

Method: An electronic survey, develop through Qualtrix, was sent to all students attending the twice-weekly study abroad orientations sessions conducted the Auburn Abroad staff starting with sessions conducted after the Spring Study Abroad and Passport Fair, February 13, 2013. Thirty seven students were sent the survey, five responded.

Findings
All student respondents indicated that they attended the sessions to learn more about the opportunities abroad offered by Auburn University, they were planning to study abroad the next semester or that it was required by their faculty program abroad director. The respondents reported that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the powerpoint presentation covering (1) the types of programs offered, (2) getting credit for programs, (3) funding resources, (4) evaluating programs, (5) next steps. In addition, they reported being very satisfied with the amount of time allotted to questions and answers at the end of the presentation. Students reported that they liked the fact that they learned the steps they needed to take to get ready for their study abroad program. While the survey asked if the students could suggest any ways in which the Study Abroad Orientation Sessions could be improved, no students suggested improvements. This may be a function of the low response level, as stated above, will run the survey again.

How did you use findings for improvement?
The findings indicated that we were presenting information to the students that they needed to complete their logistical/academic planning in a successful manner. We have noticed since our office started using the on-line application combined with the twice weekly study abroad orientation sessions that students are better prepared to complete the logistical areas of their program abroad preparation. There is however the additional issue of “cultural preparation”. Our office is looking into creating programming sessions to address this area and will be surveying returning students to find out what areas they would have liked more information on prior to departure in both the logistical and cultural preparation areas.

Outcome: Auburn Abroad and Exchange Programs will provide satisfactory preparation for students travelling to Belize.

Method: An email survey of students travelling to Belize on July 28 – August 3, 2012 was conducted a month following a program. Of 16 students participated in the program, 10 responded. The survey included items related to (1) “predeparture material” (what to bring, how to prepare for the trip, readings to complete for the course, prior to the trip), (2) feedback on logistics at the site (transportation, housing, food, presentation and how safe the students felt on the program (3) whether the students felt they had achieved their goals for this program and if they had suggestions for the next program.
Findings
All students reported that written communication (i.e. “predeparture material”) regarding items to bring and how to prepare for the trip was complete and easy to read. An additional question asked students if the pre-departure instructions had missed any items they needed on their trip now that they were back. All students indicated that the information was sufficient and they were able to bring all items they needed. A majority of students indicated that they had enough time to complete the readings. One student mentioned that we had indicated that we would Skype all students prior to departure, however, due to student availability issues, we were not able to. Several students indicated that the readings were on the Rain Forest but we did not actually go into the Rain Forest due to road problems during the rainy season. The second section of the survey dealt with logistics. Students indicated that the housing was satisfactory, the Bunkhouse was preferred by more students when compared to Tom’s Inn because the later did not have air conditioning. The water taxi to and from Caye Caulker was preferred over the long (4 hour) bus ride to Barranco. Food was uniformly praised by all and all students indicated that they felt safe at all locations. Students preferred the sustainability, Mayan and Garifuna presentations over the presentations at the Port. The Port’s lower rating was due to the fact that it was off-season and there was very little activity. The third question dealt with student goal achievement and suggestions for improving the program. Respondents indicated that they had achieved their goals, including the ability to experience a different culture up close, to view sustainability in a developing nation and the goal of learning about study abroad opportunities as well as meeting and making new Auburn University friends before the the student’s college career started.

How did you use findings for improvement?
We are using the findings to improve the site planning and implementation timetable. Regarding communication prior to the program, we still have the equipment and will try skyping the participants (students) preparing for the next program. The itinerary has been changed for 2013 to include a different area of Belize as well as Rain Forest and zoological areas which will provide the next group of students an experience which more closely match their experience to the readings. Housing requirements changed to include air conditioning in each site and the route to excursions, per our guides, will not include a four (4) hour bumpy road ride on the bus. These changes will include a slight cost increase.

Outcome: Faculty leaders for Auburn Abroad Programs will be knowledgeable about the resources needed to handle emergencies abroad on programs that they lead.

Method: An paper survey of faculty attending the Managing International Travel Crises Workshops in 2010 and 2011 was conducted at the end of the Workshop. Participants were asked to send the surveys back to the Office of International Programs. Of the forty four attendees to the two workshops in 2010, thirteen participants turned in their surveys. Of the twenty participants in 2011, three turned in their surveys. The survey included items related to presentations, logistics and cases including (1) the Auburn University Managing International Travel Crises Manual, the four response levels and the expected duties of the faculty leaders, (2) an explanation of the International Travel Emergency Insurance Plan, its benefits and services, (3) information from on-campus medical, risk management, public safety, study abroad and psychological services representatives, (4) Case studies, videos, table top exercises and discussion of responses, (5) logistics such as room location, handouts, seating and (6) request for feedback on improving the sessions.
Findings
Faculty members on both surveys, 2010 and 2011 rated the presentations and the logistics as helpful/very helpful. The presentations with the highest ratings included the travel warning section and the case studies with discussions. The 2010 survey respondents did indicate that they would like to get electronic copies of presentations prior to workshop, possibly move to a larger room. All survey respondents indicated that they got the information they needed. Survey respondents indicated that they achieved the goals of understanding their liability and the resources they would have access to in emergency/crisis cases. The 2011 survey respondents rated the sessions as helpful/very helpful. Faculty felt that the situational videos were very helpful and recommended additional introductions/warnings before being shown to students. They also indicated that they would like to have a laminated card or some kind of check list along with helpful hints regarding crises management. Respondents stated that more time should be given to discussion of cases and that the review of the manuals and materials presented should be mandatory for all faculty leading programs abroad. Survey respondents indicated that they achieved their goals of understanding their resources in cases of emergencies and it practicing responses to cases.

How did you use findings for improvement?
We used the 2010 and 2011 findings to create an on-line faculty portal for new faculty which includes all program development manuals and forms as well as a section which includes the emergency materials and forms from the workshop. Faculty members leading programs would access at this portal 24/7 to review and submit information after receiving a link provided by our office to set up their account. This portal is being expanded this March 2013 to include a second section for experienced faculty which includes only the emergency materials to be reviewed and the emergency information forms. We will continue to work with Risk Management and Public Safety as well as other presenters to create short videos for the site and table top sessions on cases.