

MARKETING PACKET

Introduction

When looking at the attributes of successful faculty-directed study abroad programs, they are often led by well-known professors, heading to popular places, meeting a specific academic need for certain majors, etc. Survey information gathered from past study abroad participants suggests that the most effective recruitment tool for faculty-led study abroad programming is a motivated and energetic faculty leader! The most effective form of promotion is word of mouth. Marketing is not advertising or selling your faculty-led study abroad program; it's creating and delivering value to your target population. If you are leading a study abroad program for the first time, please keep in mind that successful programs require a considerable amount of time and effort spent marketing. While the WSU International Programs Office (IPO) can promote your program, good marketing can really only come from you. This is because you are your program, and it is only through you that students can see the full range of benefits in considering the study abroad option.

Source: www.facultyled.com/study-abroad-marketing/

Top Reasons Students Consider Short-term Programs

When marketing faculty-led programs to WSU students, it is helpful to keep in mind why some students choose this type of program. Students who decide to participate in a faculty-led program are likely to do so for one or more of the following reasons:

- The desire to go abroad with an WSU faculty member. The faculty member may have a reputation or teaching style that attracts students. The student may feel more comfortable going abroad with someone they know and have an established relationship with and whom they view as a representative of the University abroad.
- Interest in a particular course. The assurance that credit for an exact course will be received abroad is a particularly attractive feature of WSU faculty-directed programs.
- The option to study for a short-term and over the summer 'break'. For those who have never traveled far from home, this is an opportunity to whet their appetite in a less threatening way. For many students, this is an excellent way to cover coursework in the summer and have an adventure as well.
- The appeal of a short-term program and not "miss" out on a semester on campus. Summer is a naturally appealing time for many students to study abroad and being away for 2-3 weeks seems more manageable for many students.
- The attraction of a WSU-sponsored program. Some students and families prefer the familiarity and feeling of security that come with an WSU-directed program, because they are assured the same quality teaching experience the student would receive on our campus
- The appeal of a program that is pre-planned. Many students want the independence of being abroad but may find an independent immersion experience overwhelming. The current U.S. student culture increasingly leads to student selection of highly-structured programs.



Fliers and Print Materials

IPO Role:

IPO produces .PDF and limited paper versions of a program flyer for email circulation and distribution using a standard template. These fliers are available in our office and distributed at the Study Abroad Fair.

Faculty Leader Role:

We encourage you to distribute print or electronic versions of this flier as you see fit. We suggest that you share them in your classroom, on Plato, throughout your department and with any other units that may have a “thematic crossover.”

Web Brochure Page

IPO Role:

IPO will work with you extensively to create a brochure with engaging and accurate information so that interested students may contact you or begin the application process through our office. Every approved WSU program has a page on our website and can be searched in the database by interested students based upon the criteria they select. A student may apply to a program once a program budget has been approved.

Faculty Leader Role:

We encourage you to spend time ensuring that the information you are providing is correct (managing student expectations) but also engaging to them (precise and dynamic). Incorporating student-produced photos or videos and/or including student quotes and recommendations will greatly increase student interest. Speak to your academic unit about using their sites as advertising options as well.

Classroom Promotion

IPO Role:

IPO proactively reaches out to instructors of FYO courses to give brief presentations to freshman courses..

Faculty Director Role:

Speak to students in your own classes about study abroad opportunities and your program in particular. Utilize Plato to make announcements about your program (particularly upcoming deadlines and the Study Abroad Fair). Ask colleagues to allow you (or a past participant of your program) a few minutes in their courses to discuss these opportunities or ask them to distribute your flier or post it on their Plato pages.

Academic Unit/Department Promotion & Outreach

IPO Role:

IPO regularly reaches out to academic units and academic staff in a variety of ways including but not limited to:

- Holding informational sessions for faculty
- Holding sessions in the Faculty Center
- Tabling in the Dining Commons

Faculty Leader Role:

Your department, school or college can be an invaluable source of support in marketing your program. Ideas for reaching out to the academic advising staff may include:

- Attend staff meetings and discuss the details of your program with colleagues so they can convey this information to students in their advising appointments.
- Obtain advice from advisors as to the needs of your program's student population and how best to target your marketing toward them.
- Provide Program Flyers to advising staff that can be given to students in advising appointments.
- Include promotional material in the waiting areas, hallways and on the flat-screens around advising offices.
- Invite advisors to your information sessions to discuss Core and credit articulation.

Other resources available at the department, school and college level may include the following:

- Announcements within the department's literature
- Email Blasts/E-Newsletters
- Freshman Orientation/Welcome Events
- Class and Organizational Announcements
- Study Abroad webpages or mention within the unit's website

Electronic/Social Media

IPO Role:

- Utilizes a Facebook page at InternationalProgramsatWestfieldStateUniversity
- Hosts a twitter account
- Hosts an Instagram account
- Coordinates student peer mentors

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Student Outreach

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Faculty Leader Role:

There are many creative ways in which social media can be used to generate buzz for your program. Consider starting a blog both before and during your program. This will allow students to get excited leading up to the program and then capture future interest while you are abroad with the group. If you have interesting pictures of the location you've taken, use Instagram to share with students. Create a Facebook page for your program so students can 'like' the page and stay informed about deadlines and other information. We encourage you to let us know how you are using social media and 'tag' us as appropriate in your social media interactions.

Overall Tips for Marketing to Students

WSU includes a diverse range of students with unique needs. Many students often think study abroad is not a viable option for them. When marketing your program, here are some useful considerations :

- **Financial Aid**—Students are most concerned about the cost of programs when making the decision to study abroad. Inform students that they may utilize their financial aid and send them to Financial Aid for further aid and scholarship details. If students receive additional financial aid it will most likely only come from student loans.
- **Academic Credit**—When choosing what courses to teach on your program, keep in mind that students often look for programs to keep them on track academically. Choose Core courses that help students fulfill requirements.
- **Early Planning**—Most first year students are looking to grow and learn about another country and will likely study abroad again. Getting them excited about a location will be important. The Study Abroad Fair and your college or department orientations are also great venues to reach these students.
- **Holidays**—The Thanksgiving and winter breaks are perfect

times for students to discuss study abroad options with their families. Make a big push for your program prior to each of these holidays to capitalize on this!

- **Faculty Influence**—Faculty are the biggest influence on a student's decision to study abroad. For your program to be successful, it is critical that you actively seek out and encourage students to participate in your program.
- **Non-traditional study abroad students**—First-generation students represent some of the lowest participation numbers in study abroad. Being readily available and directing these students to other resources to assist with credit and financial aid questions will be key. Males and females make different decisions when choosing study abroad programs. Men tend to be more influenced by personal values and reaching tangible goals. When marketing to males, detailing the academic benefits will be important.

Informational Sessions

IPO strongly encourages you to conduct informational sessions as you see fit. When you plan a session on your own, we ask that you notify IPO, and we will try to come to at least one information session per program. To provide students information on the application process, credits, financial aid and health & safety to help them into the program.

IPO Role:

Each year, the IPO is involved in dozens of outreach events to prospective students, incoming first-year students (tabling and presentations at orientations and at Open Houses and Accepted Student Brunches), current students (tabling in the DC, hosting events in residential and dining halls, campus visit days) and families (Parents Association coffees, Homecoming table). These serve to inform the WSU community at large about the opportunities available to them but also to speak more specifically about some of the benefits of participation in faculty-led programs.

Faculty Leader Role:

- **Attend Campus Events with a Global Focus**—Reach out to organizers of these events to find out what is appropriate and if you can promote your program.
- **Reach out to Student Organizations**—Ask Student Clubs with a relevant interest in your program area to distribute program information to their student listserv.

Tips for Successful Info Sessions

The following are suggested guidelines for running a successful information session to increase excitement in your program:

- **Purpose of your program**—Provide students with an academic overview of your program and what the expectations will be. This includes possible coursework requirements as well as a general discussion of the program itinerary and housing. Keep in mind the following: credits/courses, thematic focus, future career opportunities.
- **Culture**—Provide tips and insight into specific aspects of the culture of the country where your program will be going. Students appreciate knowing specifics to prepare in advance.
- **Web Brochure & Application Process**—Your International Coordinator can walk students through program information online, such as costs and application requirements.
- **Financial Aid & Cost Sheets**—Similarly, IPO can explain to students what the costs are, how they are assessed and payment deadlines.

Study Abroad Fair

IPO Role:

IPO plans and coordinates a fair each semester (September and February)

IPO provides the following services during the Study Abroad Fair:

- General advertising of fair through MyWestfield
- Fliers and posters for each program
- Email prospective students through StudioAbroad
- Secure student study abroad alumni as volunteers fair-wide

Faculty Leader Role:

The Study Abroad Fair might be the only opportunity you have to contact students outside your academic unit. It could also be the only time students can put a face with your program. Have an active presence at the Study Abroad Fair by providing a powerful display and energy to attract students to your program. Recruit your former program participants to share their experiences with students attending the study abroad fair. Your program alumni are the most powerful tool in your toolbox when it comes to marketing. Bear in mind that the Study Abroad Fair is just one avenue for marketing so it shouldn't be your primary method of recruiting program participants.

Successful IPO Fair Tables:

Helpful Tips for Creating a Dynamic Presence at the Annual Study Abroad Fair

A Powerful Display:

- is easily understood by anyone who walks by your table.
- shows past participants (through photos) being exposed to culture.
- highlights what skills the participant will receive through your program.
- encourages nontraditional students to study abroad.
- is clean and concise.

Other Promotional Tips:

- When talking with students, get to the point...fast! Students are accustomed to finding information quickly.
- Be approachable. We recommend standing in front or to the side of your table so that you can quickly engage with students.
- Create promotional materials which provide a comprehensive overview of the program. **IMPORTANT:** ensure that wording is the same as that posted on the ASU website, particularly in regards to cost, deadlines, etc. Please let us know if you notice any inconsistencies between your information and ours.
- Highlight financial assistance and travel grants for study abroad. Our research has shown this to be WSU students' number one barrier to studying abroad.
- Add your vision statements to all of your study abroad program publications.
- Students love free promotional materials like pens, candy, etc.!

