

# Domestic Intercultural Immersions (DII) Faculty / Staff Handbook



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# Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION.....	4
Intercultural Immersion Programs .....	4
DII at UW-Eau Claire .....	4
PROGRAM POSITIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES.....	5
Faculty / Staff Leader(s) .....	5
Immersion Coordinator .....	6
Program Assistant.....	6
PROGRAM LOGISTICS.....	7
General Timeline.....	7
Flight Arrangements .....	7
Car Rentals .....	8
Faculty / Staff Stipends .....	8
Student Stipends.....	8
Cash Advance.....	9
Program Budgets and Spending .....	9
Student Payments.....	10
Student Eligibility and Participation .....	10
Application Procedures.....	11
Target Enrollment and Course Credit.....	11
RESPONSIBILITIES DURING THE PROGRAM .....	12
Who at UW-Eau Claire Knows Where You Are? .....	12
Communication is Key! .....	12
Setting the Tone and Social Contracts .....	12
Program Orientation.....	13
Group Management .....	13
Behavior Problems.....	14
Dismissal from a Program .....	14
Voluntary Withdrawal .....	15
Emotional Problems among Students Abroad .....	15
Suggested Guidelines for Dealing with Distressed Students .....	16
ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION .....	17

Program Evaluation .....	17
Student Artifacts .....	17
Post-Program Report .....	17
Liberal Education Requirements.....	17
RISK MANAGEMENT AND EMERGENCY SITUATIONS .....	18
Who Should I Contact in the Event of an Emergency? .....	18
Do Emergencies Occur? .....	18
What is an Emergency? .....	19
What Should You Do to Prepare for Emergencies? .....	19
How Should You Respond to Emergencies? .....	20
General Recommendations for Crisis Management.....	20
Incident Report .....	21
USEFUL NAMES & ADDRESSES.....	22

## INTRODUCTION

This handbook is written specifically for faculty / staff members who are leading **short-term Domestic Intercultural Immersion (DII) programs**. The guide contains general information to consider while leading students on domestic immersion, as well as specific UW-Eau Claire policies that you need to know. Please read it carefully and refer to it when you have questions.

### Intercultural Immersion Programs

**Mission of the Intercultural Immersion Office:** To enhance the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire student experience by administering and supporting high-impact intercultural immersion programs that are integrated into the curriculum. We aim to deepen student intercultural competence through experiential learning opportunities and engagement with people, cultures, languages, environments, and systems different than their own, in order to foster engaged citizens who have personal and professional skills for lifelong learning in a diverse world.

We fulfill our mission through a commitment to

1. Work with faculty / staff and departments to develop and promote a diverse array of high-impact intercultural immersion programs through mutually beneficial collaborations with international and domestic partners.
2. Foster development of intercultural competency and a respectful understanding of diverse cultures, populations, and environments through transformative learning opportunities.
3. Increase access to immersion experiences and encourage participation by all students, particularly those traditionally underrepresented in off-campus high-impact practices.
4. Develop faculty / staff expertise in building global relationships through cultural immersion and international research opportunities.
5. Bring knowledge, increased capacity, and understanding back to UW-Eau Claire.

Within Academic Affairs and the Office of Undergraduate Studies, Jeff DeGrave is the Intercultural Immersion Coordinator and responsible for all faculty-led immersion programs at UW-Eau Claire. He works in collaboration with other offices to manage these programs. The Immersions Office is located in Schofield Hall 17 (ORSP) and he can be reached at [degravjr@uwec.edu](mailto:degravjr@uwec.edu) or (715) 836-4471.

The Immersions Office also will have a Program Assistant for all faculty-led immersions programs at UW-Eau Claire. They work in collaboration with other offices to manage these programs. Their office is also located in Schofield Hall 17 (ORSP) and their contact information will be provided at a later date.

### DII at UW-Eau Claire

Funded by the Blugold Commitment Differential Tuition program, the Domestic Intercultural Immersion program provides students with a high-impact practice that helps prepare them to take part in an increasingly diverse and interconnected world. DII started in the 2009-10 academic year to support faculty-led projects that are intercultural and cross-cultural, interdisciplinary and collaboration, and provide high-impact immersion experiences to students.

A domestic intercultural immersion experience at UW-Eau Claire is defined as a guided, critically-reflective intercultural experience outside the classroom designed to challenge and transform students' perspectives regarding cultural norms and values. People's beliefs, customs, experiences and environment create shared ways of perceiving and engaging in the world. Through dialogue and relationship building, students become more aware of and reflect on multiple perspectives. Guided, critical reflection is a key component to students' transformations as they seek a deeper understanding of another culture as well as their own. A

meaningful engagement within the cultural environment inspires students to analyze the foundational assumptions that govern their thoughts and actions.

Goals of the Domestic Intercultural Immersion (DII) Experiences Program:

- To engage learners firsthand with various cultures, populations and environments within the U.S.
- To deepen learners' understandings of intercultural dynamics as they relate to the UW-Eau Claire Liberal Education Learning Goals.

## **PROGRAM POSITIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

This section outlines the positions related to faculty-led programs, and the roles / responsibilities of each.

### **Faculty / Staff Leader(s)**

Program Promotion (predeparture):

- Design and print program flyers and posters
- Speak to classes about program, and ask colleagues to promote program in class
- Lead info sessions for interested students
- Meet individually with students who would like additional details about the program

Processing Applications (predeparture):

- Review applications and accept students into program (in coordination with Jeff)
- Lead orientation or predeparture preparation meetings

Faculty / Staff Training and Preparation (predeparture):

- Research academic, cultural, and historical resources related to program
- Identify medical facilities accessible during program
- Attend all Community of Practice meetings
- Meet with Jeff DeGrave and / or the ASK Center regarding program expenses

Confirm Program Itinerary (predeparture):

- Communicate regularly with Immersions Office to arrange travel, activities, lodging, etc.
- Confirm detailed itinerary with local partners and host staff
- Book airline tickets, car rentals and local accommodation (within UW Policy)
- Finalize program budget and make all payments or deposits (in coordination with Jeff)

Lead Program (on-site):

- Provide on-site orientation for all students
- Teach course and academic / program themes
- Arrange all excursions, events, activities
- Manage detailed program expenses, keep all receipts, track all spending
- Maintain contact with Immersions Office for updates, even if program is going well.

Student Growth and Safety (on-site):

- Support students in adjustment to program themes, new environment, cultural immersion
- Advise students in both academic and personal matters
- Respond to behavior problems, emotional issues, physical ailments of students
- Keep students safe by following emergency and risk management procedures



#### Program Follow-Up (post-program):

- Finalize expenses and submit receipts to Jeff DeGrave in a timely matter
- Evaluate student artifacts using Liberal Education Learning Outcomes and submit summary report
- Submit a written post-program report within 30 days of end of the program
- Lead a program debrief session with students to reflect on learning
- Meet with future faculty / staff leaders to discuss program improvement and adjustments

### **Immersion Coordinator**

#### Program Promotion (predeparture):

- Assist in program marketing and promotion
- Update DII website to provide accurate information about course credit, costs, and program details
- Communicate with interested students to provide additional information

#### Program Preparation (predeparture):

- Initiate transfer of program funds and faculty / staff / student stipends to departments, if requested
- Communicate with / staff regularly about student numbers and enrollment targets
- Confirm program itinerary with faculty / staff, provide logistical support if requested
- Provide information regarding Accounts Payable procedures, buying flights, expenses, etc.
- Check student eligibility for DII funding
- Answer questions regarding program rules, regulations, and / or restrictions
- Receive student forms, review medical forms, make copies of all forms to have on file
- Lead Community of Practice meetings and faculty / staff training

#### Provide Program Support to Faculty / Staff (on-site):

- Be available to faculty / staff with questions or concerns during the program
- Communicate with relevant support on campus if necessary
- Provide suggestions, resources, and support for student growth or issues
- Respond to emergency situations, following risk management policy

#### Program Follow-Up (post-program):

- Work with faculty / staff to complete expense report and finalize program expenses
- Receive and review post-program report, send to Chairs and Deans
- Receive and share student program evaluations with faculty / staff
- Strategize ways with faculty / staff to improve program in future years

### **Program Assistant**

The Program Assistant provides overall logistical and administrative support in the following ways:

- Work with faculty / staff to design promotional flyers (if requested)
- Assist in student enrollment including collecting necessary forms and materials
- Provide faculty / staff with necessary documentation, including medical records, contact info, and other information
- Assist with any budget or expense related questions

## PROGRAM LOGISTICS

Leading a DII program is a lot of work and there is much to remember about what needs to be done! Below are some suggestions to help you organize the preparation of your program.

### General Timeline

#### Winterim Programs

- Spring Semester: coordinate program itinerary, confirm activities and accommodations
- Fall Semester: marketing and promotion of program
- September-October: Receive student applications, continue promotion
- November: Set enrollment deadline, confirm student numbers
- November: Book flights, make deposit payments, confirm itinerary
- December: Hold predeparture or preparation meetings with students
- January: Travel

#### Spring Break Programs

- Fall Semester: marketing and promotion of program
- Fall Semester: coordinate program itinerary, confirm activities and accommodations
- November-December: Receive student applications, continue promotion
- January: Set enrollment deadline, confirm student numbers
- February: Book flights, make deposit payments, confirm itinerary
- February-March: Hold predeparture or preparation meetings with students
- March: Travel

#### Summer Programs

- Fall / Spring Semester: Marketing and promotion of program
- Fall Semester: Coordinate program itinerary, confirm activities and accommodations
- January-February: Receive student applications, continue promotion
- March: Set enrollment deadline, confirm student numbers
- April: Book flights, make deposit payments, confirm itinerary
- May: Hold predeparture or preparation meetings with students
- May-June: Travel

### Flight Arrangements

**IMPORTANT:** Travel policies change often, so please check with the Immersions Coordinator and the ASK Center for the most up-to-date information. First, visit the ASK Center website at: <https://www.uwec.edu/ask/firstsource-travel/#getting-started>

Here are the two options regarding a group flight for the program:

1. **All group reservations of 10 travelers or more must be initiated through** Fox Travel via the [UW Group Reservation Request Form](#). After completing the UW Group Reservation Request Form, the person who completed the form will be contacted within a few days by a travel agent from Fox Travel. Each airline has different regulations regarding group tickets, minimum number for seating blocks, refunds, payment deadlines, etc. **NOTE:** Because the Immersions Office can coordinate the group block with Fox Travel, provide student names, and make all deposits or full payments on the Immersions procurement card, you will save A LOT of time by allowing the Immersions Office to book your group flight for you as you will not need to be reimbursement for such purchases!

2. **If there are fewer than 10 air tickets being purchased for your group, you will need book through Travel Inc.** Please check with Travel Inc. before making the booking, because each airline has different regulations around group tickets, seating blocks, refunds, payment deadlines, etc.

## Car Rentals

If your program requires a car or van rental, you must rent the vehicle through the UW-Eau Claire contracts that are already in place, and not use your personal vehicle. Doing so will ensure coverage of both the car and driver and protect against additional liability issues. Also note that all drivers of 12- or 15-passenger vans are restricted to employees who are van driver training certified and age 25 or over. Please refer to the ASK Center website for up-to-date information about vehicle rental:

<https://www.wisconsin.edu/travel/policies/ground-transportation/enterprise-national-car-rental-big-ten-rates-and-procedures/>

UW-Eau Claire has specific stipulations that faculty / staff need to follow when renting a car for the program. There are two options for booking car rentals, please refer to the information below to determine which is most appropriate for your program:

1. Big Ten Contract: all drivers must be 21 or older AND either a graduate student, employee, guest or consultant of UW-Eau Claire.
2. Wisconsin Contract (WSCA): drivers can be under the age of 21, but all travelers in the car must UW-Eau Claire students or employees.

Anyone driving the rental car must receive authorization from the University Police and Public Safety Department. For more details on this process, visit: <https://www.wisconsin.edu/uw-policies/uw-system-administrative-policies/vehicle-use-and-driver-authorization/>

## Faculty / Staff Stipends

Faculty / staff who receive DII funding are eligible to receive up to a \$1,500 stipend. This stipend is meant to recognize faculty / staff for the enormous amount of work put in before and after the program to make it a successful and impactful experience for students.

In the original DII proposal, faculty / staff can request up to \$1,500 per faculty / staff member who is traveling with students, up to \$3,000 maximum per program. However, faculty / staff can decide how to divide the total stipend award to recognize other people who might have contributed work to the program but will not be traveling with students. Each faculty / staff working on the program can receive up to a maximum of \$1,500 stipend. **NOTE:** Leaders who are not faculty should speak with the Immersions Coordinator about the stipend, as there are inconsistent policies regarding the stipend for staff depending on the staff member's type of appointment, their supervisor's perspective on Immersions, etc.

Faculty / Staff stipends will be requested by the Immersions Coordinator and paid as a lump sum (Overload during Winterim or Spring Break programs, Summer Contract for summer programs) shortly after completing the immersion experience. **Faculty / Staff stipends cannot be paid prior to your program.**

## Student Stipends

In your DII proposal, you can request funds for student stipends, up to \$500 per student. This money is intended to fund (a) student(s) who has / have participated in your DII program in past years and will be participating a second time as a Student Leader. That student is expected to serve as an additional leader on the program and contribute substantially to the preparation and planning of the program. If those stipulations are met, students are eligible to receive a stipend for helping with the program—in addition to having their travel and accommodation costs covered by DII funding. The Immersions Office will initiate and manage



payments of student stipends, which may be allocated as meal allocation stipends or as a per hour payment prior to, during, or after the program.

### Cash Advance

Group travel is eligible for a cash advance from the Accounts Payable Department. You can apply for an advance for group expenses you expect to pay in cash (but not for anything you could put on a university credit card). To receive a cash advance, you must first complete a Travel Authorization and Cash Advance through the TravelWise Portal, which must be approved by your supervisor and account approver. Once both are approved, you will receive this amount into your checking account (same as where your salary is deposited). Faculty / Staff leaders are responsible for knowing all eligible expenses and keeping receipts and documentation for reimbursement.

You must collect receipts for ALL expenses paid from the advance. Upon return, you must start the e-reimbursement form from your cash advance form, and include all those expenses in the reimbursement. The amount given previously in the cash advance will be deducted from your overall reimbursement.

While faculty / staff may move around expenses within different budget lines (for example, if local transportation was less than budgeted but entrance fees were more), faculty / staff MUST stay within the overall budget. Faculty / staff will not be reimbursed for expenses due to under budgeting or overspending. Furthermore, all expenses must be eligible expenses for reimbursement (accommodation, transportation, airfare, meals, supplies, entrance fees NOT personal expenses or non-program related fees).

### Program Budgets and Spending

Upon receiving a DII award, you can choose how to handle your program budget:

- Manage within Immersion Programs: your DII allocation stays in the main DII account and you work with the Immersions Office regarding all payments and expenses.
- Transfer to department: Up to two-thirds of your approved budget (travel and supplies) may be transferred into the department's BCDT 102 account at the beginning of the fiscal year. Faculty / staff are then responsible for knowing all eligible expenses and keeping receipts and documentation for reimbursement. You should work with your ADA regarding expenses.

Within the allocated funds for travel and supplies (flights, accommodations, honorariums, activities, etc.), faculty / staff can reallocate between budget lines. For example, if flights cost less than budgeted, that money can be allocated to another budget line such as an additional program activity. However, money allocated to student or faculty / staff stipends cannot be used or reallocated towards travel or supplies because these are separate funds transferred into a separate account and are associated with fringe benefits. All program costs must be eligible expenses and include accurate receipts. Ineligible expenses include student meals, tuition, phone and internet, laundry, personal expenses, and expenses not related to the DII original program. Further, faculty / staff must still stay within the overall budget; it is the responsibility of the program leaders to manage program expenses against the original budget. **NO additional DII funding will be allocated due to inaccurate cost estimates or over budget expenses.**

Please note that department 102 government funds cannot pay for prizes, awards, or gifts. If you would like to purchase a gift for an on-site partner or host family, it must follow Accounts Payable Guidelines and be reimbursed from a Foundation or other non GPR account. For further details and information about gifts, visit: <https://www.uwec.edu/accounts-payable/gifts-awards-giveaways/>

All funds related to your DII program must be expended by early June of the fiscal year in which the monies

were allocated. If your program is running during the summer near the end of the fiscal year, please contact the Immersions Office regarding the date to complete your TER. If you do not file your TER in a timely manner before the close of the fiscal year, your department might not be reimbursed for any additional expenses related to your DII from the following year's funds.

If there are any unspent funds from your original funding allocation, it is expected that your department will return those unspent funds to the DII BCDT account by the end of the fiscal year. Upon submitting your post-program materials, the program expenses and TERs will be checked against your original budget, and the Immersions Office will be in contact to initiate the return of any unspent funds.

## Student Payments

DII funding covers 90% of all student program costs stated in the proposal and students must pay 10% of program costs in addition to meals and tuition. This 10% program fee should be collected from all students in advance of their experience. The program fee must be collected and deposited into the appropriate University account based on the following:

**Credit Bearing DIIs:** Student program fees can be collected as a special course fee. Faculty / staff must file a Special Course Fee form with the Registrar's Office according to University deadlines, and that revenue will be deposited into an existing departmental Fund 136 special course fee account. If you prefer not to mingle these fees with other departmental special course fees, you can request a new account in your department specifically for these fees by requesting a new Dept ID, using the [Special Course / Program Fee Request eForm](#). After the special course / program fee eForm has been approved, the DII funds will be transferred into your departmental BCDT account, as usual. The Faculty / Staff Leader(s), in collaboration with the Department ADA, must coordinate spending funds from both accounts.

**Non-Credit DIIs:** Student program fees cannot be collected as a special course fee, but must be collected from students and deposited into an existing departmental or unit 136 account. If the course is not for credit, you are not tied to the strict deadlines by the Registrar's or Business Office. However, setting an application and payment deadline to establish commitment from the students is highly recommended. If you prefer not to mingle these fees with other departmental special course fees, you can request a new account in your department specifically for these fees by requesting a new Dept ID use the same form identified above. The DII funds will be transferred into your departmental BCDT account, as usual. The Faculty / Staff Leader, in collaboration with the Department ADA, must coordinate spending funds from both accounts.

## Student Eligibility and Participation

All DII participants must be full-time UW-Eau Claire undergraduate students at the time of the program to be eligible for DII funding. **NOTE: December graduates may be eligible for a Winterim program and May graduates may be eligible for a summer program providing they contact the Registrar's Office to request to delay the receipt of their diploma until after the program term ends.** The goals of the Blugold Commitment are to extend access and affordability to these exceptional high-impact practices for all UW-Eau Claire undergraduates, to ensure that more of these opportunities are available for these students, and to increase the numbers of students who participate. Therefore, while UW-Eau Claire undergraduate students are encouraged to participate in multiple high-impact immersion programs, each student is eligible to receive BCDT funding for only one DII experience. **Any student who has participated in a previous DII experience is not eligible to receive funding through BCDT for a second DII experience.** The only exception to this is if a student who participated in a previous DII experience returns as a student leader to the same program.

Before a student is officially accepted into a particular DII program, that student must be checked against a

Master List of past participants. Students often do not know exactly which Immersions were DII funded and which were not. For example, the Civil Rights Pilgrimage is funded by BCDT but is only offered as a DII for a limited number of students. Therefore, a student who participated on the Civil Rights Pilgrimage may or may not be eligible for funding for an additional DII program. Students who have participated on other immersion programs funded by BCDT (such as a faculty-led international FLIIE program or the International Fellows Program) are still eligible to receive DII funding. In order to reduce confusion over Blugold funding eligibility, all students must apply through the Studio Abroad online application system and be approved by the Immersions Office before being officially accepted into the program.

## Application Procedures

Depending on the DII program, applications may be generated differently. For example, some faculty / staff leaders prefer to simply have the students email initial applications to them. On the other hand, the Immersions Office now utilizes Blugold Connect to manage the initial applications for all DII programs. Eventually, once the decision has been made as to which students have been accepted into the program, all of these students must complete a formal online application through Studio Abroad, the online study abroad management system. The Immersions Office will set up a profile for each of these accepted students and then email each student with instructions on how to access their online application. The student will be instructed to complete additional forms, including a Medical Assessment Form, Emergency Contact Information, sign various waivers to participate on the program, among others. These forms must be completed and submitted to the Immersions Office at least one month before travel. The Immersions Office will set up a meeting with the program leaders to review and share relevant student information shortly before departure.

If a student is accepted into the program and then withdraws after payments are made (flights, hotels, tickets), they are financially responsible for any nonrefundable program costs already paid. **DII funds will not cover expenses paid for a student who later withdraws from the program.**

## Target Enrollment and Course Credit

In contrast to other courses or experiences on campus, faculty-led DII programs are more heavily based on target enrollment numbers for a variety of reasons. DII programs have a variety of structures, each with different requirements around student numbers:

**Winterim and Summer Courses for Credit:** Program leaders must first decide how the associated number of credits will be allocated between leaders based on teaching responsibilities. Because they are outside of the academic year and treated as either overload (Winterim) or contracts (summer), they are subject to target enrollment numbers (around 12 for 2 faculty / staff) to pay full faculty / staff salary and fringe benefits. If the program does not meet the target enrollment, either the program has to be cancelled, the Department or College must make up the difference in tuition costs, or the faculty / staff decides to not receive a full salary.

**Fall or Spring Courses for Credit:** because these fall within the academic year and normal workload, they are not subject to minimum enrollment numbers. However, students are paying a portion of the faculty / staff travel costs, so a lower overall enrollment of students may result in higher per student program fees than originally stated in the proposal and estimated budget.

**Non-Credit DII Experiences:** if the program is not offered for credit, there is more flexibility around minimum student enrollment. However, students are paying a portion of the faculty / staff costs, so a lower overall enrollment of students may result in higher per student program fees than originally stated in the proposal and estimated budget.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES DURING THE PROGRAM**

As a Program Leader, you assume multiple roles during the program. You are the professor, advisor, counselor, coordinator, facilitator, dean, and liaison all at once. This section provides resources for faculty / staff while they are on the program to effectively assume all these roles.

### **Who at UW-Eau Claire Knows Where You Are?**

It is very important that multiple people on UW-Eau Claire campus are aware of your destination and itinerary. The Immersions Office should have copies of the program itinerary, as well the flight itinerary and medical and emergency contact forms for all students. In addition, it would be good for your department secretary or Chair to have copies of this information as well.

While on the program, program leaders should ALWAYS carry copies of all participants' IDs, medical information, and insurance information. In an emergency, this information must be readily available to share with local police, hospitals, or other local partners.

### **Communication is Key!**

While only 1 or 2 program leaders will be traveling with the students, it is important to know that you have a wealth of support and resources around you. You should be able to rely on your local partners for help in carrying out the itinerary and making any last-minute changes to activities or events, as well as suggestions of where to eat or what to do!

The Immersions Office should be your first point of contact for support related to emergency situations or risk management, group management and student behavior problems, mental health issues, or budget and expense questions. Essentially, the Immersions Office is the liaison between you and the many resources on UW-Eau Claire campus. Therefore, it is important to keep in touch with the Immersions Office about small or large questions that come up. Again, don't be afraid to ask for help and utilize the support around you for any questions, concerns, or help you might need!

### **Setting the Tone and Social Contracts**

It is extremely important that faculty / staff leaders set clear expectations and rules even before the program starts. This initial tone setting can be done during all pre-program meetings, and must continue during orientation sessions, and throughout the program activities. If students are acutely aware of the expectations of the faculty / staff leader, as well as the consequences of breaking those expectations, they are much more likely to not challenge those boundaries or set rules. Students must be reminded that they are representing not only themselves, but UW-Eau Claire. Oftentimes, Immersion programs maintain ongoing relationships with on-site partners and organizations, and therefore misbehavior from one group or one individual can threaten that relationship in future years. Students must also be reminded that they have to follow the federal and state laws, as well as the rules set by each faculty / staff leader.

A good activity that not only sets the tone and expectations but also involves students in the formation of their group rules is a "Social Contract." The exercise can take place during pre-program sessions or on the first day of the program. The contract consists of certain rules first set by the faculty / staff leaders. Then, students are able to add or change the rules to create the group environment they would like to maintain throughout the program. This contract should not only include rules about disciplinary behavior, but also rules around respecting each other, active listening and participation, supporting each other, etc. After everyone is in agreement, each student and program leader sign the contract. If a student then breaks the contract during the program, this document can be utilized to remind that individual or the group of the rules set communally. Ask the Immersions Coordinator for a sample Social Contract to provide you with a

template from which you can create your group's Social Contract.

## **Program Orientation**

Faculty / Staff are required to provide an on-site orientation covering the following topics:

- Up-to-date information on program schedules and itineraries
- Behavior expectations
- Intercultural competence to help student develop awareness
- Health and safety issues
- Provide students with necessary contact information
  - Your contact information and other local staff contact information
  - Map of the area
  - Address of nearest Police Station
  - Written list of local medical clinics or hospitals
- Risk management emergency protocols – discuss with students what they should do in the case of an emergency and include a “three-phase” plan regarding meeting locations for the group

## **Group Management**

Faculty / Staff leaders should be continuously aware of the group's activities at all times. It is necessary to have systems to keep participants together, especially for larger groups. Examples may include the use of sheriffs, extra staff, or the buddy system. It is important to have contingency plans in place if the group becomes separated and to ensure that students are aware of such plans.

Within every organization, there are informal group pressures that influence and regulate individual behavior. Informal groups form to fill needs not met by the larger group. Informal groups form unspoken or implicit norms and standards establishing acceptable behavior, and communication tends to be smoother and less inhibited within the informal group than with the larger group. Through these standards or norms groups can support, obstruct, or have no effect on the goals of the larger group.

The degree to which a group satisfies its members' needs determines the limits within which the group will influence the individual members. A group provides the following to its individual members: sense of belonging, identity and self-esteem, stress reduction, and support, especially in times of distress / conflict / insecurity. If the larger group does not fulfill these needs, informal groups form to fill the gaps. Further, group cohesiveness increases whenever the members perceive a conflict / threat from the outside.

Informal groups will form during group activity because students are experiencing new and unfamiliar contexts with mostly new and unfamiliar people. These informal groups will form to fill the emotional, social and psychological needs of the student participants. While this can lead to new and productive social networks and personal transformations, there are still plenty of opportunities for group dynamics to go wrong. Faculty / staff leaders can minimize possible negative effects through specific strategies:

- Be accessible to the group and communicate with all members regularly on an informal basis, even before the program starts
- Keep the group informed and involve them when possible in decision-making, especially regarding revisions to pre-set plans or general travel planning. Make sure all participate.
- Encourage the positive influences of the informal group and all participants.
- Make group members aware (delicately) of any negative influences of their informal group (they may not even be aware of these negative influences and are likely to modify their behavior).
- Remember that first impressions are lasting. Make arrivals into a new locale smooth and provide



a special reception for the group.

- When going to new accommodations, be aware of students' comfort and respond to concerns.

## **Behavior Problems**

Most often, program leaders are challenged by students who display a poor attitude and / or do not want to participate in the course / program. Most of the problems can be resolved; however, the program leaders must be prepared to act as disciplinarians. Behavior problems of one individual can have a negative effect on the entire group and may escalate if not addressed promptly. Examples of minor behavior problems include:

- lateness to class or activities
- rude behavior toward faculty / staff leaders or other participants
- indifference toward program activities
- disrespectful behavior or comments towards local culture or local people

In these cases, faculty / staff leaders must issue the student a verbal warning. The best remedy is often a frank discussion with the student and repeating your expectations for behavior. If a group contract has been created, faculty / staff should remind the student of those rules set as a group. Faculty / Staff leaders should also keep a written log of each incident / offense. Telling the student that you are keeping a log of their behavior is often an effective way to prevent future incidents. The log also serves as a record should you need to take further corrective action. If the behavior continues, faculty / staff can create a written contract with the student that includes consequences for further offenses. A student must sign that contract and be aware that future offenses could result in dismissal from the program.

Please keep any personal issues or problems that you encounter with students confidential and do not share this information with any of the other program participants. It is important not to ostracize a member of the group by informing the others of their behavior / academic / personal problems.

## **Dismissal from a Program**

Major behavior problems are grounds for dismissal from the program and may include, but are not limited to:

- Behavior that is disruptive and detrimental to the group (repeated offenses)
- Behavior that disturbs other participants (repeated offenses)
- Alcohol misuse
- Physical or sexual assault
- Harassment
- Possession, use or distribution of illegal drugs
- Theft

The best way to avoid dismissing a student from a program is to continuously discuss behavior expectations before and during the program. Faculty / Staff leaders can also have students sign a contract of expectations and consequences, including dismissal from the program in which the student must cover all expenses of dismissal and transportation home. However, in cases of repeated behavior offenses, the faculty / staff leader should be prepared to take corrective action and dismiss a student from the program. Oftentimes, presenting the student with the option to leave (at their own expense) is a relief for all parties concerned.

As stated earlier in the section entitled "Communication is Key," faculty / staff leaders should inform the Immersion Coordinator about escalating behavior problems well before it results in dismissal from the



program. This way, the Coordinator can inform the necessary parties on campus, as well as involve the student's parents or guardians if necessary. The faculty / staff leader should communicate with the Immersion Coordinator if dismissal from the program is appropriate. The faculty leader should maintain thorough documentation of the violations(s) in writing before dismissal. The student should sign a statement that acknowledges that she or he is no longer a participant and must vacate the housing by the designated date.

## **Voluntary Withdrawal**

Inevitably some students return early from a program for personal or family reasons, or because they no longer wish to be a part of the program. If a student decides to withdraw, he or she should consult with you to determine whether a solution can be reached that would allow the student to stay. If the student decides to withdraw after the consultation, he or she must sign a written statement that he or she is no longer a part of the program effective on the designated date and that the withdrawal is voluntary. The statement must also indicate that the student understands that all expenses from that point forward are his or her own responsibility, including housing and transportation home. No student will be allowed to remain in the program accommodations after withdrawal. In no case should the faculty / staff leader promise any refund of program fees or tuition. The student is still liable for both the program fee and the tuition.

Faculty / Staff leaders should be in contact with the Immersion Coordinator when a student first discusses wanting to withdraw, as well as after the consultation with that student. Faculty / Staff leaders should send the signed statement to the Immersion Coordinator for our records. If the student must return home for a family or medical emergency, it is at the faculty / staff leader's discretion whether to continue to work with the student in order to assign a grade for the course. We strongly recommend that faculty / staff leaders have a contingency plan to work with students in these cases.

## **Emotional Problems among Students Abroad**

By Dr. Kathy Schneider

Recognizing Distressed Students:

As a member of the faculty / staff or staff you may find yourself in a position to observe and recognize changes in students which signal psychological distress. This is not to imply that you are to be a "watch dog," during your time abroad with students, but rather that students may seek you out to share their distress. Being cognizant of these distressed students, and being aware of appropriate referral sources that can assist you will allow you to be more in control of situations which may present themselves overseas.

**Depression:** Everyone gets depressed from time to time. That is normal. Having only one symptom is usually not enough to describe someone as severely depressed. Abnormality may be defined as maintaining a larger number of depressive symptoms over a longer period of time with the symptoms tending to become progressively more severe. The symptoms of depression are: insomnia or change in sleeping patterns, inability to concentrate, change in appetite, loss of ability to experience happiness or pleasure, apathy, sloppiness, crying, poor personal hygiene, feelings of worthlessness, no desire to socialize, loss of self-esteem, and preoccupation with death. All of these symptoms, except preoccupation with death, are also symptoms of culture shock / stress. When they last for more than a few weeks or interfere with daily activities, they are cause for concern.

**Unusual Acting Out:** This would represent a change in behavior from normal socially appropriate behavior. It would include being disruptive, overly antagonistic, and may include alcohol or drug abuse.

**Suicidal Ideation:** Most suicide attempts are pre-ceded at some point by messages that the person is considering suicide. These messages can range from “I wish I wasn’t here”, to a very direct “I’m going to kill myself.” Non-verbal messages include giving away valued possessions, putting legal, financial, and university affairs in order. Each type of message about suicide should be taken seriously.

If you are concerned about a student, keep in mind that professionals assess the suicide potential, in part, by asking:

- What the plan for suicide is— how will he or she do it?
- When and where does he or she intend to carry out the suicide?
- Has he or she ever attempted suicide in the past?

The more specific and lethal the plan, the more recent a previous attempt, and the greater the ability to carry out the plan, the higher the risk for a successful suicide. You need not be afraid to ask these questions. For people who are considering suicide, these questions will not furnish them with new ideas. Most people who are actively suicidal are more than willing to discuss their plan. Conversely, many people consider suicide from time to time in passing. The less specific and lethal the plan (e.g. “I guess I’d take a couple of sleeping pills sometime.”), the less likely a suicide attempt.

**Other Signs of Distress:** Again, the more symptoms observed, the more likely the individual is to be truly distressed. These signs include a drop in class attendance; drop in the quality of class work, generally tense or sad appearance such as a change from normal appearance, and typically inappropriate or strange responses to questions.

**Students who may be Dangerous to Others:** You may become aware of or develop a concern that a student may be dangerous to others. This may be manifested by:

- Physically violent behavior
- Verbally threatening or overly aggressive behavior
- Threatening letters or emails
- Harassment, including sexual harassment or stalking
- Possession of a weapon

Sometimes these behaviors are the result of or are exacerbated by mental illness. You need to take appropriate action to protect both the potential victim and the potentially dangerous student, such as getting the student the help and support they need.

### **Suggested Guidelines for Dealing with Distressed Students**

It is important that the faculty / staff leader communicates initially with the Immersion Coordinator about any concerns or questions he / she might have about a distressed or depressed student. Again, the Immersion Coordinator can work as a liaison to services provided on campus, and can provide guidance or suggestions on how to best deal with the situation.

**Know Your Limits as a Helper:** You may not feel comfortable trying to help someone cope with his or her problem; that is, you may sense that the person is in need of much more time and attention than you can honestly give. Your best course of action probably lies in encouraging the student to get in contact with a person who can provide the necessary services. To facilitate this you can do the following:

- Reinforce the person’s decision to confide in you; acknowledge their suffering
- Be accepting and non-judgmental
- Try to identify the problem area
- Indicate in a gentle but direct manner that professional assistance is a positive first step which is

needed to deal with pain, and that you will assist them in finding competent professionals

**Counseling and Other Options:** when dealing with distressed students, giving them a professional to talk to might be the best option. However, during faculty-led programs, referral to a counseling agency is more difficult than it is at UWEC. Sometimes, a local on-site partner can provide recommendations for nearby counseling services if necessary.

Another option would be to have the student speak to someone on UWEC campus over the phone. While a phone conversation might not be as effective as in-person, having someone from UWEC Counseling Services who understands the situation might be the most effective way to get student help. The Immersion Coordinator can assist in setting up a phone conversation with someone from Counseling Services.

## **ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION**

UW-Eau Claire is making concerted efforts to improve the assessment and evaluation of high-impact programs on campus. Through strong assessment models, we can collect better data about the true impact of these programs on students, determine if the program is meeting its stated goals, and validate continued funding from Blugold Commitment.

### **Program Evaluation**

All students will be required to complete an online Qualtrics survey that will evaluate the program, including itinerary, staff support, on-site logistics, accommodations, coursework, etc. The Immersions Office and faculty / staff leaders will use these evaluations to improve the program for future years.

### **Student Artifacts**

All students receiving Blugold Commitment funding will be required to produce an artifact after their immersion experience. This artifact could be related to the coursework for credit, or a separate assignment. Artifacts could be a reflective essay that asks students to critically reflect on and evaluate their experience and its contribution to that student's cognitive and personal growth. A specific writing prompt for students can be provided to the faculty / staff leaders before departure, and all artifacts should be evaluated according to the rubric established for Liberal Education R1 Outcomes.

### **Post-Program Report**

All faculty / staff leaders must complete a post-program report and submit it to the Immersions Office within 30 days of the program end date. This report will ask faculty / staff to evaluate the program on various topics, including the itinerary, accommodations, student growth, local partners, and coursework. Faculty / Staff leaders must also include any Incident Reports, if applicable.

### **Liberal Education Requirements**

All students on approved DII programs are eligible to receive the Responsibility Outcome 1 (R1): Equity, Diversity and Inclusion upon completion of all program requirements and assessment by the leaders. For programs offered with a course, this will be added to the CampS course listing and added to the students' transcript and degree audit. For non-credit programs, the Immersion Coordinator will send a list to degree audit of all students who completed all program requirements.

## **RISK MANAGEMENT AND EMERGENCY SITUATIONS**

Though emergency situations are rare on immersion programs, it is extremely important that you are knowledgeable about university policies related to emergency response, and are prepared to respond quickly.

The non-emergency number for campus Public Safety is: (715) 836-2222.

### **Who Should I Contact in the Event of an Emergency?**

In the event of an emergency during business hours (Monday-Friday, 8:00am- 4:30pm), please contact the following people in order (continue down the list if the first cannot be reached):

Jeff DeGrave  
Intercultural Immersion Coordinator  
Phone: (715) 836-4471  
Email: [degravjr@uwec.edu](mailto:degravjr@uwec.edu)

Louisa Rice  
Interim Associate Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs and Graduate Studies  
Phone: (715) 836-5276  
Email: [hoffmamf@uwec.edu](mailto:hoffmamf@uwec.edu)

University Police  
(715) 836-2222

If you should require assistance after regular working hours, please contact the following staff at home:

Jeff DeGrave  
Intercultural Immersion Coordinator  
[degravjr@uwec.edu](mailto:degravjr@uwec.edu)  
Cell: (715) 559-5759

Mary Hoffman  
Associate Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs and Graduate Studies  
[hoffmamf@uwec.edu](mailto:hoffmamf@uwec.edu)  
Cell: (715) 836-5276

University Police  
(715) 577-9045

### **Do Emergencies Occur?**

Yes, as a faculty / staff member who will be responsible for undergraduate students off-campus, you may find yourself facing an emergency involving one or more of the students who are in your care. Students can and do become ill, suffer accidents, fall victim to assaults and muggings, find themselves caught up in potentially violent political situations, fail to return on time to programs at the end of free days, etc. On occasion, students may be involved in perpetrating an assault or a crime, or breaking local laws.

While it is of course impossible to plan for all contingencies involving our students, procedures need to be

followed that will allow us to react in a cool and responsible manner when emergencies do arise. We need to be able to provide, in a consistent and predictable way, for the safety and wellbeing of our students. We also need to take reasonable and prudent measures to limit the University's legal liabilities.

Please be advised that we have a series of procedures designed to safeguard the wellbeing of program participants, and to protect the University's interests. As the faculty / staff member, it is your responsibility to follow the procedures outlined below and to be sure to inform the students in your group about these procedures during their on-site orientation.

### **What is an Emergency?**

For our purposes, an emergency is any circumstance that poses a genuine risk to, or that has already disturbed, the safety and wellbeing of program participants (including faculty / staff). Emergencies could include, though are not limited to, the following types of incidents:

- Crime or robbery
- Physical assault
- Sexual assault or rape
- Significant accident and / or injury
- Hospitalization for any reason
- Serious illness—physical or emotional
- Any legal action involving a student
- Disappearance of a student
- Local political crises that affects safety
- Terrorist threat or terrorist attack
- Natural disaster
- Death of a student or faculty / staff member

### **What Should You Do to Prepare for Emergencies?**

During the orientation on-site, provide all of the students in your group with:

- A “three-phase” plan for regrouping of the faculty / staff and students (for example, if there is an emergency, first go back to the hotel; if the hotel is unsafe, go here; if that place is unsafe, meet here)
- The address of the nearest police station
- A written list of reputable local medical clinics or hospitals
- When possible, the name of a reputable rape crises center, or of an individual trained to respond effectively to a crisis involving a sexual assault or rape

Each of these above items should include the address, phone numbers, and hours of the facilities and staff members. Advise students to carry this list with them at all times. The Immersions Office will ask you for a copy of the above information during your final predeparture meeting with the Immersions Office.

During the onsite orientation, explain to the students that they are required to inform you about any medical emergency and that you are required to contact UWEC as soon as possible about the emergency. Inform the students that this information will be treated with the strictest confidentiality and that it will be shared by you and the appropriate UWEC faculty / staff members on a “need to know” basis only.

## How Should You Respond to Emergencies?

1) In an emergency, your **first responsibility is to protect the safety and wellbeing of program participants and yourself**. Do whatever is necessary to assure this, whether this means obtaining prompt and appropriate medical attention, or police protection. You will of course be reimbursed for all expenses relating to the management of an emergency.

2) When you have done all that you reasonably can to ensure the students' and your own wellbeing, **immediately contact the Immersion Coordinator** about the situation by phone if possible. Staff on campus will inform other necessary parties, including parents.

\*\*\*The Faculty / staff Leader should under no circumstances release the name of the student or make statements on behalf of UW-Eau Claire. The standard response should be "My first responsibility is to the students in this program, to their families, and to the University. Thank you for understanding." All public statements will only be made by the University Relations office.

3) **Notify the local Police about the crisis, and follow whatever procedures they may require**; if there is a continuing risk to the welfare of the students (during a terrorist threat, for example), ask the Police to advise you on a regular basis about the evolution of the crisis, and about how the students should respond.

4) In a **medical emergency, contact the nearest health center** so that they can assist you and help coordinate the necessary arrangements. **In any other sort of emergency, notify the local police about the situation**, then follow the procedures the police may require of you or the student.

5) **In case of terrorist attack, collect the group at the nearest Police Station.**

6) Begin **keeping a written log of actions** taken and update it as crisis progresses.

7) After on-campus staff is informed about an emergency, and after we consult with you and other appropriate individuals on site and at UW-Eau Claire, we will fax or email you a **description of the course of action** that you and the students will need to follow in responding to the crisis. All program participants will be required to sign a statement acknowledging that they have received, read and understand this response plan; after all the participants in your group have signed it, please fax it back.

8) When the situation has been assessed and these steps have been completed, the Immersion Coordinator will inform students that they may contact family and friends via phone and / or email. In the case of sexual assault, participants who know about the incident should receive counsel on how to respect and protect the victim's identity before they are allowed to call home.

In the event of a significant crisis, students have the option of returning home. Every reasonable effort will be made to allow them to continue their academic program on campus, and to be housed appropriately as well.

It is highly unlikely that participants would need to be evacuated from a site. If an evacuation should become necessary, the University would develop an evacuation plan in as much detail as possible. This plan would be transmitted to you in confidence, and we would continue to work closely with you throughout the process.

## General Recommendations for Crisis Management

In the **event of a crisis, try not to panic**; the students are counting on you to help get them through a difficult time. We have had experience dealing with crises and are ready to assist you during and after any type of



event or incident.

During an **on-going crisis, keep on-campus staff informed on a regular basis**, by telephone, fax, or email about the evolution of the crisis.

**In any emergency, it is the faculty / staff member's responsibility to give clear instructions to students.** These instructions must be obeyed promptly. Any discussion or disagreements can be brought to campus later on, but at the moment of the e m e r g e n c y , we look to the faculty / staff member to provide leadership to the student group.

### **Incident Report**

The Incident Report is included at the end of this document. It is very important that any incident concerning students' physical or mental health, finances, misconduct, or students becoming a victim of a crime be documented and added to the program file. The incident should be documented as it is taking place or as soon after as possible so that the information is fresh and accurate. In the event of complaints after the fact about how an incident was handled, the incident report serves as a record to show that faculty / staff leaders followed university procedures in resolving the situation. The incident report can also be used by Campus Life as a basis on which to begin judicial sanctions against a student for misconduct.

## **USEFUL NAMES & ADDRESSES**

**Dr. Jeff DeGrave**

**Intercultural Immersion Coordinator**

Schofield Hall 17

Phone: (715) 836-4471

Fax: (715) 836-2902

Email: [degravjr@uwec.edu](mailto:degravjr@uwec.edu)

Immersion Website: <https://www.uwec.edu/immersion/>

Personal Website: <https://www.uwec.edu/profiles/degravjr/>

**Dr. Louisa Rice**

**Associate Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs and Graduate Studies**

Schofield Hall 208a

Phone: (715) 836-5276

Email: [ricelc@uwec.edu](mailto:ricelc@uwec.edu)

Website: <https://www.uwec.edu/profiles/ricelc/>

### **UW-Eau Claire After Hours numbers**

In an afterhours **emergency**, you can call one of these numbers

And the University police will contact a staff member.

(715) 839-4972

(715) 577-9045