

NOT-SO-FOREIGN

Overseas Insight For American International Educators

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Abroad Perspective

Ghana, Kenya, Egypt, China, and Korea. These are only a sample of the less traditional destinations students attending Ball State University, IN have an opportunity to discover through study abroad. And according to Ms. Yuki Kurosawa, Study Abroad Program Coordinator at Ball State University's Center for International Programs (CIP), "the more unknown the locale, the more satisfying the experience".

Of course, such destinations are not always an easy sell for students, and therefore, "the less familiar students are with a country, the more difficult it is to recruit participants", says Ms. Kurosawa. With most of its student body consisting of first generation college students who have not been exposed to outside cultures, the main challenge is thus to dissipate the fears and anxieties associated with travelling to "less developed" parts of the world.

Part of this fear often stems from the (erroneous) notion that personal safety and health will be at risk in these parts of the globe. Ms. Kurosawa's philosophy on this matter is that "anything can happen anywhere". "A big part of my job in promoting these types of programs is to minimize fears, both students' and parents'", she adds.

To make these destinations more palatable to prospective participants, Ball State University offers students the chance to take part in 6-week educational tours in China and Korea, among others. This allows those students who might be reluctant to embark for a full semester abroad journey to "test the waters" and decide whether or not they want to go back. In addition, the CIP organizes week-long events which focus on different parts of the world, and in which it seeks the collaboration of Ball State's large pool of international and internationally-oriented faculty to give talks and conferences on relevant topics.

Although the numbers of students embarking on study abroad in less traditional locales remain small in comparison to traditional destinations, Ms. Kurosawa is confident that an increasing number of students are looking at and appreciating the "added value" of such experiences. And more than ever, understanding of and knowledge about otherwise unfamiliar cultures and societies remains critical to ensuring a safer and more secure world. ♦

Globe Tipping

If you are planning a trip to Malaysia, you should take advantage of the new Kuala Lumpur International Airport Express.

The non-stop journey between KL Sentral and KLIA takes only 28 minutes. KLIA Ekspres departs from both terminals every 15 minutes, on the hour and every quarter of an hour, seven days a week. The cost is the equivalent of 9 USD one way.

From KL Sentral you can take the PUTRA Light Rail Transit (LRT), this will take you right downtown to Central Market, China Town, Petronas Twin Tower/ KLCC, and Ampang Park. Visit <http://www.kliaekspres.com/trains/index.htm> for more information. ♦

Over the Counter

Following up on last week's issues of working with agents in China, we focus on the initial strategic decisions that must be contemplated in connection with China as a whole.

Is China a country one wishes to engage in with an active strategy? If so, should the strategy be restricted to student recruitment or extend to other potential arenas such as faculty research, student exchanges, development projects, or others?

Should the strategy focus on a centre or region of China or on a wider segment of the country?

Should the student recruitment component focus on undergraduate or graduate level programs, or both?

Does one have the necessary infrastructure to serve students' language proficiency needs?

How flexible can one be in accommodating the particular needs, linguistic or otherwise, of students from China?

Does one have the budget to travel to China regularly to monitor the sources of students, meet with key players, contacts and agents, if any, and otherwise directly oversee the implementation of the strategy?

To what extent is there a plan in place to develop the necessary expertise regarding student qualifications including the range of source institutions and qualities, the differing probabilities of obtaining student authorizations for students depending on the region of origin, the potential types of abuses or misrepresentations that might be encountered, and the regulatory parameters for foreign institutions to recruit on-the-ground in China? ♦

The Playing Field

Is the foreign student movement to the West a "brain drain" on developing nations ?

A report released in April of this year by the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) clearly articulates the great economic benefits for Asian nations. Focusing on the two large new immigrant groups (Chinese and Indian nationals) who are attracted by education and research opportunities in the high-tech sectors, the PPIC survey indicated:

- 27% of respondents advise or consult companies in their country or origin
- 30% of respondents meet with government officials in their country or origin
- 40% of respondents arranged business contacts in their country of origin
- More than half the entrepreneurs set up business operations in their country of origin

A research brief from PPIC is found at: <http://www.pplic.org/publications/PPIC159/PPIC159RB.pdf>. ♦

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