



diversityabroad

# Insights into the Field

**DEI & Student Identity in an Intercultural  
Context: Toward Bridging the Gaps  
Between US & European Campuses**



**Regional - Europe  
Community of Practice  
2023-2024**

# Regional - Europe Community of Practice 2023-2024



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- Community of Practice Europe - Insights into the Field from:
  - Community Discussion 2023
  - Poster Session Global Inclusion Conference Chicago 2023
  - Global Inclusion Summit London 2024
- DEI and the different stages of the education abroad experience
- Case Study
- Critical Reflection
- Why DEI Still Matters
- Action Plan



# Session Agenda

# DEI & the Pre-Departure Stage

- Students may not have a lot of experience outside the U.S.
- Advisers may not have a lot of country-specific experience

## Resources and strategies:

- Provide diversity resources on your website
- Intake forms for advising and proactive outreach
- Appreciative advising
- Collaborate with campus and overseas partners
- Utilize returned study abroad students as a resource



# DEI & the On-Site Stage

## Practices, policies, & program elements that help build on-site community:

- Clear guidelines for community engagement
- Define and build Intercultural Agility
- Strong Student Support through Appreciative Advising
- Explore personal identities in host culture
- Make room for discussion of diversity, inclusion, privilege and oppression in host culture
- Commitment to Inclusive Excellence
- Anti-discrimination policy

# DEI & the Re-Entry Stage

## Ensuring Students Feel Supported When they Return to Campus

- Students need a supportive space to reflect on their experiences abroad, and time to unpack them as it relates to their identity.
- Keeping in mind that the study abroad experience does not end when our students return home, we shouldn't underestimate the importance of our students' experiences in remembering, analyzing, and interpreting their time abroad(1).
- According to Diversity Abroad's Student Survey, only 22.6% of students used re-entry resources.
- Ask students if there were any episodes that occurred while abroad that were related to their identity.
- Involve various on-campus departments or counselors in re-entry exercises.
- Support students in connecting with other students of similar identity.
- Encourage student involvement with the study abroad office & initiatives.
- Mentor students to leverage their experience abroad.

# Case Study

Course: Food, Culture and Society

Class Discussion Topics:

- How culture and food in society are intimately connected.
- Student backgrounds and what they like to eat.

# Case Study continued...

Student comment in class:

“I only eat white food.”



# Case Study continued...

Impact of student's statement:

- Confusion:
  - Food that is only white (rice, bread)?
- Other students in the class were offended.
- Group dynamics - incident starts to divide group.
- Instructor managed the conversation as best they could; discussed with onsite director

# Case Study Reflection Questions

- What could have been done differently:
  - In the pre-departure preparation and/or arrival orientation phases to help the student in this situation?
  - To prepare the instructor in managing this type of comment?
- If you were the onsite director, what would be your next steps in managing the group dynamics?
- If you are the study abroad adviser at the student's home institution, what would be your response if/when the student complains about how the incident was handled?
- In what ways may U.S. and European understandings of equity, diversity, and inclusion differ in this critical incident?

# Wrap up - Why DEI Still Matters

## Snapshot of the State of DEI 2023-2024

- On June 29, 2023, the U.S. Supreme Court's enacted its ban on affirmative action in higher ed..
- 30 states have passed some type of legislation restricting or eliminating DEI in higher education, affecting admissions, jobs, training, diversity statements, scholarships, and much more.
- Despite legislation, the social impact and the business case for diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) not only holds, but grows even stronger.
- Teams with gender diversity and ethnic diversity within their executive teams have a 39% greater likelihood of financial outperformance versus their peers.
- Academic and industry leaders will continue to partner to share science-backed insights and best practices, strategize on common problems, and find ways to engage all stakeholders, even the ones who don't believe in DEI.

# Taking Action

Looking forward, identify actions you can take.

## Consider:

- Systemic and/or policy changes at your organization
- Strategies for student support throughout each stage of the process: Pre-Departure, On-Site and Reentry
- Opportunities to connect and work together with your counterparts in the U.S./Europe to assist students in preparing for identity-based issues abroad
- Support for faculty and staff including resources, trainings, and professional development
- Diversity Abroad's challenge: To ensure that all students - domestic and international - have equitable access to the benefits of global education and are able to leverage such educational opportunities to thrive in globally diverse academic settings, workplaces, and in the communities they live.

# Regional - Europe Community of Practice 2023-2024

# Thank you!

