Thinking about creating your own faculty-led program abroad?

Here are a few things to keep in mind:

- **The idea**: At its core, the rationale for developing any study abroad program must be academic; what are the learning objectives you and your department hope to achieve? Does the program support, enhance, and complement on-campus academics and the UW Madison academic mission?

- **Viability**: Once you have identified what your academic objectives are, come talk to IAP, and we can begin to determine if (and how) the academic vision you have is viable to implement. IAP considers many factors (safety and liability issues, administrative and logistical concerns, costs, student interest) to make this determination.

- **Creating a program**: It’s not easy! Creating a new program takes time. **From the moment IAP starts creating a program to the program running, expect at least a year or more.**
The steps include: idea formulation-approval from the host department(s)- creating a program plan and proposal and budget- possible site visit- IAP Faculty Advisory Committee review- program promotion- implementation (contracts, agreements, staff hiring, etc.)- student selection/ orientation/ preparation- go!- and after it is all over, evaluation. IAP staff will lead you through this process, making it as efficient and smooth as possible, but it is a serious time-intensive endeavor. For faculty leading a program abroad, IAP staff will explain and train you in each of these steps and your role with regards to each. Each step in the process has been developed with the goal of meeting UW Madison academic standards as well as making the experience as safe as possible for students and faculty.

- **Frequency**: Do you want to lead a program once? Every year? Every other year? Given the amount of time and energy needed, it is preferable to create programs that are viable for the long-term (though running a program once by “piggy-back” on existing programs or structures may be relatively straightforward to put together). Some things to think about: how much time, short- and long-term, can you commit to this endeavor? Is the academic idea flexible enough to allow other faculty to “join” in future iterations of the program? Does the program meet a core academic need of the department(s) such that the department would be able to provide faculty.
participation on a regular basis? Programs developed cooperatively with a department, multiple faculty members, or multiple departments may have a greater chance of long-term viability than a program developed by an individual faculty member, so we encourage that approach.

- **Budgets**: IAP creates and manages budgets for all of our programs, including setting program staff and faculty salaries. All programs must be financially viable in the sense that the price charged to students must meet all the costs incurred in establishing and operating each program (unless some or all of those costs are covered by an external source such as a donor gift or grant). Our guiding principle of budget creation is to design quality programs that follow university budgetary rules and regulations and overcome the financial barriers to study abroad for as many UW Madison students as possible.

- **Timing and Length**: Faculty-led programs can be for a semester (Spring, Fall, or Year) or summer (usually between 1-10 weeks). A semester program should award credit for a “full-time” student (between 12-18 credits). For summer programs it varies depending on time and content, but generally ranges from 3-12 credits. Spring-break and Winter-intersession programs are also doable!

- **Locations**: The academic objectives drive the selection of site(s) for each program (in accordance with UW travel policies regarding health and safety abroad). In general, more time at a specific site to develop a greater understanding of “place” is prioritized over a “travel tour” structure, but dual and multi-site programs are attractive for certain academic objectives and comparative approaches.

- **Structures and Logistics**: The guiding principle that IAP staff are working under is creating structures that meet the academic goals of the program which also satisfy the quality/safety/budget standards of the university. IAP oversees this process, which may include partnering with overseas universities, travel organizations, individuals, or creating new infrastructures.

- **Staffing**: UW faculty, assistants, support staff, instructors, etc. are added on a program by program basis to meet the needs of each program and to complement each other’s strengths and skills.

- **Academics**: A full syllabus for each UW Madison graded-credit course abroad needs to be included in the program proposal (which is submitted a year prior to the schedule program start date). Discuss with your department which courses will be offered (new or existing offerings? Special topics?). Please note that courses abroad, while taking full advantage of each locale and its resources, should meet the same academic standards as those at UW Madison.
standards and principles as on-campus courses. Additionally, study abroad program syllabi should include daily schedules which indicate out-of-class components and activities which are part of the academic program. IAP staff are happy to advise you with these aspects of the syllabi.

- **Safety, Legal Liability, and Risk Management:** It is essential that all UW students studying abroad do so under conditions whereby logistical arrangements (e.g., housing, health care, security, insurance, etc.) meet specified standards that minimize risk. One of the major responsibilities of the IAP is to cooperate with relevant university units to verify and maintain these standards. These standards will underlie all decisions made by the IAP staff as they work with you to create new study abroad programs.

- **Selection and Advising:** The IAP has a professional advising and application system that your program will utilize. Student eligibility requirements for your program will be set to ensure all participants are capable of successfully completing the program. You will be expected to read student applications (and interview students if needed) and take part in a pre-departure orientation for each program you lead.

- **Promotion:** This is important as a program cannot run if not enough students apply! IAP staff can tell you the minimum (and maximum) number of students needed for your program to run and work with you to create a promotion plan to meet those participation goals. The study abroad advisor will create a program page to put on the IAP website. Other activities may include: creating an additional program specific-website, mass and directed emails, hard copy posters/fliers, information sessions, and classroom visits. Faculty is encouraged to take an active role in program promotion, such as: join information sessions, attend study abroad fairs, and promote the program to students directly and via departmental resources.

- **A Note on Family Abroad:** Given the amount of time and energy it takes to lead a program abroad, we understand the difficulty of balancing those duties with family responsibilities, so you should think carefully if you are able to fully undertake the responsibilities required of faculty leading programs abroad. If you do take family members with you, the IAP takes no responsibility (logistical, financial, or legal), for family or friends of faculty during a study abroad program. As such, friends or family of faculty are not allowed to participate in any program activities.