College Policy on International Programs and Travel Abroad Involving Students

Executive summary: Ursinus College recognizes that international travel by students (with or without faculty and/or staff) can advance the liberal arts education and mission of the College. The College wishes to encourage and support such initiatives while ensuring that they are consistent with our mission and with current best practices. To this end, the College mandates that all programs involving international travel of students are to be coordinated through the Center for International Programs (CIP) in conjunction with the Office of Risk Management (ORM) and administered according to this policy. The guidelines contained herein point interested parties to the individuals and offices on campus that can help to develop programs that are both exciting and viable.

(A) Program Types
  (1) International program. Any program or course for which a part of the program or course involves the student or students traveling to an international location for any educational purpose. International programs may take the shape of study abroad for academic credit, travel seminars, field studies, internships and/or service learning, athletic or recreational good will travel, etc.
  (2) College-operated international program. Any program or course, regardless of duration or purpose, established by a College office, department, or faculty or staff member in which international travel is a component whether or not it is accredited or funded by the College. Student-led international travel in representation of the College in the absence of faculty or staff supervision onsite is strictly forbidden.
  (3) College-approved international program. Any program or course that has been registered and officially approved and recognized by the College through the process described herein.
  (4) Third-party international program. Any program administered or independently supported primarily by an entity, university or college or company not operated or controlled by the College.
  (5) Third-party provider. An organization that provides contracted services and support for international programming to a college or university that wishes to create programming that meets its specifications and purposes.
  (6) Customized international program. An international program designed to the specifications of a sponsoring college, university, or consortium. It may be administered by the college or university alone or as a partnership between the college, university, or consortium and a third-party provider.
  (7) Memorandum of Understanding. An MOU is a one-time or renewable contract between the College and third-party program(s) or provider(s) in which the two parties agree to collaborate on a particular type of international program such as those described above.

(B) Eligibility. This policy applies to all international programs or other travel abroad opportunities involving students to be undertaken under the auspices of the College for any purpose. Such opportunities include all those embarked upon in representation of the College as well as those undertaken for College credit under faculty supervision (whether direct or indirect), those supported by College funding or other resources, and/or those initiated or led by College faculty and/or staff. This policy does not apply to independent third-party international programs that are engaged in formal agreements with the College and already approved by the International Education Committee, nor does it apply to the professional activities pursued abroad by individual faculty or staff members that do not involve students. **Please note** that individual faculty or staff who wish to work as independent contractors for an international program provider must discuss their plans in advance with the Provost's Office in order to ensure that there is no conflict of interest between their independent work and their employment at the College.

(C) Implementation.
  (1) The Center for International Programs is the coordinating office for all College-approved and/or College-operated international programs. It also manages the third-party and customized programs for which the College has formal agreements or MOUs.

(2) All proposals for new or recurring international programs to be administered or led by College faculty and/or staff must be registered with the Center for International Programs and approved by the College *a minimum of one year prior to the expected departure date*.

(3) The approval and registration process includes a review for compliance with accepted College/higher education standards to be coordinated by the Center of International Programs and Office of Risk Management in cooperation with the organizing faculty and/or staff member. For programs involving academic course credit, the Center for International Programs requires that credits are verified by the Provost's Office for final approval.

(4) The Center for International Programs and the Office of Risk Management will provide reasonable services to assist in international program development including, but not limited to, identifying and/or vetting potential service providers and other partners, facilitating necessary insurance coverage for student, staff, and faculty participants, and the monitoring of government and international sources for the latest information affecting the safety and security of regions where international program activities are to be conducted. The CIP will also facilitate liaison duties and communications with third party providers regarding contractual and risk management issues. Faculty and staff leaders will maintain control over the learning goals and educational content of the program. Proposals for a new academic course associated with a program, or for core designations associated with an academic course, must be submitted to Academic Council and approved before program start.

(D) Procedures.

(1) Program registration. All international programs to be operated by the college must submit a formal registration packet as provided by the Center for International Programs in advance. This registration process ensures that the program meets the minimum operation and administrative requirements for international programs, while also ensuring that the proper security and health considerations have taken place on behalf of the student, staff and faculty member who may participate.

    a. Faculty or staff members who wish to propose a program or opportunity involving students abroad should start by seeking the guidance and support of their direct supervisor (usually a department chair or program director). Supervisors should weigh department and program learning goals, priorities, and resources and consider other departmental or College projects that may enhance or compete with the proposed program. Supervisors may also suggest changes for the proposed program.

    b. If the program proposed by a faculty member or department includes or necessitates a new academic course, or if an existing course is being modified to include or add on an international travel component, the faculty member and/or department chair must consult with Academic Council to obtain approval for the new course, the modified course format, or specific core designations. The course must be approved by the Faculty before it or the international travel component is advertised to students.

    c. Once the supervisor endorses the program proposal, the individual(s) proposing the program (normally, the faculty or staff leader(s)) compiles information for the registration packet to be submitted to the Center for International Programs. The registration packet must at least have a minimum budget attached. Faculty or staff leaders are strongly encouraged to begin conversations with the CIP and/or the registration process as early as possible; however, the completed registration packet must be submitted *no later than one calendar year* prior to the intended departure date. No program should be advertised, promoted or carried out, nor should any non-refundable deposits be collected or paid until the registration and approval processes have been completed.

    d. Individual students or student groups who wish to travel abroad under the auspices of the College without a faculty or staff leader (for example, to pursue an independently-arranged research or internship experience for which the student will earn Ursinus credit and/or be awarded Ursinus funding) must register their intended project or program well in advance to the direct supervisor (in most cases, a department chair or program director) for review and

approval following the same process described herein. The CIP and ORM will meet with the faculty or staff leader to identify and address any issues that arise. Last minute proposals may not be approved if there is not sufficient time to satisfy the need for due diligence.

(2) Program approval.
   a. Once the registration packet is returned to the Center for International Programs, the program leader will be invited to present it to the International Education Committee for discussion and comment. Afterwards, the committee will forward the proposal to the CIP/ORM team with feedback. The team will then present their recommendation to the Provost's Office. The Provost's Office will issue one of the following decisions:
      i. **Program approved**. The program is approved and ready for implementation.
      ii. **Program approval pending, further information requested**. The program meets several minimum requirements, but further information is needed to determine remaining compliance issues. The program is not ready for implementation at this time.
      iii. **Program denied, revision and resubmission recommended**. The program substantially fails to meet the minimum requirements as established by the College and must be resubmitted at a later time. This program is not ready for implementation at this time.

(3) Program safety and security. The Center for International Programs is responsible for monitoring local, national, and international alerts and warnings regarding the regions in which College-approved international programs are operating.
   a. Ursinus College students may not ordinarily travel under the auspices of the College for any purpose to any country or region designated by the US Department of State as Level 3 (Reconsider travel) or Level 4 (Do not travel). Click here for current travel information. Proposals for international programs that include travel to or through countries designated Level 3 or 4 will require approval by the College in the College's sole discretion.
   b. Students, staff, and faculty participants in College-operated international programs will be notified prior to departure of any arising issues, alerts, or warnings which may affect their designation.
   c. If the US DOS changes the designation for a country or region where a College-operated international program is planned or ongoing from a Level 1 or 2 to a Level 3 (Reconsider travel) or Level 4 (Do not travel), the College will use reasonable measures to communicate any necessary and relevant travel alerts/warnings to program participants.
   d. Severe security and safety concerns may result in the amendment of the program itinerary or the suspension or cancellation of the international program and/or withdrawal of all participants from the region, with assistance provided by the Center for International Programs and Office of Risk Management and other departments as necessary.

Registration Packet for International Program or Travel Abroad Involving Students

All proposals for new or recurring international programs to be operated by College faculty and/or staff must be registered with the Center for International Programs and approved by the College. Planning should begin as early as possible; however, this registration packet must be submitted to the CIP *a minimum of one year prior to the expected departure date*.

(A) Planning Phase

   (1) Program leader(s).

a. Under most circumstances, the College requires that there be a minimum of 2 program leaders.
b. Names, titles, affiliations and qualifications of each program leader and their experience in and familiarity with the host country (including prior experience or training in international programs and/or any plans to conduct a site visit in advance of the proposed project).
c. Names and roles of any non-College participants (including chaperones, volunteers, and/or family members) and the purpose of their participation. Please note the "Policy for Family and Visitors on Faculty-Led Programs" governing non-College participants specific to your program.

(2) Target audience and selection criteria.
a. Intended participants, minimum and maximum enrollments, and eligibility criteria including prerequisites or responsibilities for each type of participant. Please note the "Policy for Family and Visitors on Faculty-Led Programs" governing non-student participants specific to your program, and approach the Provost's Office with questions on this policy.
b. Criteria for selection in case of over-enrollment; wait-list procedure and timeline, if appropriate.
c. Any minors to be included in this program and whether or not all other participants will have appropriate clearances.

(3) International Program Description and Goals.
a. Brief statement about how the proposed activity supports both the departmental and the college mission.
b. Description of how the program will encourage students to engage with and reflect on one or more of the four Quest core curriculum questions (What should matter to me? How can we understand the world? How should we live together? What will I do?).
c. Learning goals for the proposed experience and how they will be assessed at program end.
d. For programs carrying academic credit:
  i. Number of contact hours (total, and split by on-campus and abroad component where applicable).
  ii. Number of course credits associated with the program, based on total contact hours.
  iii. Quest core designations (if any) for which the program will submit applications to Academic Council
e. Timeline for submission of debriefing report and final budget.

(4) Timeline and Travel Itinerary.
a. Preferred start and end dates for proposed travel.
b. Application and commitment deadlines for all participants.
c. Withdrawal policy including any financial or other penalty for late withdrawal.
d. Desired air and ground transportation arrangements and providers.
e. Detailed travel itinerary or schedule of activities including dates, accommodations, hosts or host organizations, sites visited, activities planned, etc.

(5) Local Needs.
a. Description of any foreign language challenges and how they will be addressed.
b. Health or safety issues as indicated on the US DOS Travel Advisories page and any plans to prepare for and manage them while abroad.
c. Specific or anticipated needs of program participants and the accommodations available to them on location for physical, mental or other disabilities.
d. Cultural issues that may relate to participant identity or behavior.

(6) Program Support and Crisis Preparedness. Under most circumstances, a professional third-party organization with significant expertise in crisis and emergency management should be

contracted to provide support on the ground. The CIP can help identify an appropriate third-party provider.

a. Names and contact information for any service provider organizations with which you would like to partner.
b. Please note that group leaders must submit written contract proposals to the Finance Office and to the Vice President and General Counsel for review and approval prior to making any payments to the service provider. Contract proposals should be submitted for review no later than 4 months prior to the departure date and/or 4 months prior to a down payment due date.
c. Contracts should not be submitted until after the program has been officially approved by the Provost's Office.
d. Outline action plan of how crises or emergencies will be handled and by whom in case of:
    i. accident/illness
    ii. mental health emergency
    iii. hospitalization
    iv. arrest
    v. sexual harassment
    vi. death
    vii. natural disaster
    viii. evacuation
    ix. political unrest
    x. missing student(s)
    xi. pandemic
    xii. incapacitated staff
e. Programs must include appropriate insurance. Group leaders must consult with the Director of EHS & Risk Management and the Finance Office to assess insurance needs during the planning process.

(7) Program Budget.
a. As a general rule, all faculty and staff-led programs are expected to be cost-neutral to the college or to generate revenue. The budget should show how the cost of the entire program, including faculty and staff compensation as well as ancillary expenses, are covered by student fees, grants, and other non-operational funds.
b. Attach an Excel spreadsheet with an itemized estimated budget that shows the total cost, inclusions and exclusions, and the cost to be charged per participant. Show separately estimates for expenses not included in program fee that will be borne by individual participants.
c. Description of any external funding intended to be used in support of the program. Please note that efforts to secure external funding must be communicated to the Provost's Office well in advance to facilitate strategic planning and support efforts to secure funding.
d. Commitment deposit payment and other payment deadlines to be required of participants.

(8) Program Approval.
a. Submit the completed Registration Packet to the Center for International Programs.
b. The program leader will be invited to present the proposal to the International Education Committee for discussion and comment.
c. Afterwards, the CIP/ORM team will make a recommendation to the Provost's Office.
d. The Provost's Office will issue one of the following decisions:
    i. **Program approved**. The program is approved and ready for implementation.
    ii. **Program approval pending, further information requested**. The program meets several minimum requirements, but further information is needed to determine remaining compliance issues. The program is not ready for implementation at this time.
    iii. **Program denied, revision and resubmission recommended**. The program substantially fails to meet the minimum requirements as established by the College

and must be resubmitted at a later time. This program is not ready for implementation at this time.

    e. Once a program is approved, each future iteration of the same program requires a simple re-approval by the Provost's Office. For any credit-bearing programs, the Provost's Office considers each application in the context of other course offerings, staffing, and other considerations.

(B) Participant Recruitment and Selection Phase Once the program is approved, group leaders can publicize it and begin recruiting participants.

(1) Depending on the type of program and payment deadlines, recruitment should begin several months or up to a year in advance.

(2) Group leaders are responsible for announcing or publicizing the travel opportunity to the appropriate eligible audience, but the CIP can assist with this task if desired.

(3) Recruitment information and materials should make clear the application process and deadlines, selection criteria and any other obligations of participants (including attendance at mandatory meetings, pre-departure orientation, etc.).

(4) Application process for program participants.

    a. Applications should be submitted to and reviewed by an appropriate party without any conflict of interest. Normally this would be the International Education Committee, but other models may be appropriate.

    b. Applications for Ursinus credit-bearing programs should be submitted to the CIP which has a single deadline in early February for any travel to take place the next summer, fall and/or spring. Summer or winter break programs and programs that are not credit-bearing may necessitate another timeline. The CIP will help determine dates and deadlines appropriate to the needs of those programs.

    c. Applications for the special study abroad funding administered by the CIP in conjunction with the International Education Committee are normally due in early February. Early communication with the CIP about programs in development is critical to make these funds available to students interested in new initiatives.

    d. Applications for programs led by staff should be submitted to the sponsoring department or program and then to the Provost's Office.

    e. All participants must be approved to participate.

        i. Reasonable selection criteria and enrollment capacity should be determined and announced in advance.

        ii. In order to be eligible, students must not be on disciplinary probation. The group leader or sponsoring department must verify students' disciplinary status with Residence Life.

        iii. Participants who will be minors at the time of travel should contact Student Affairs to determine eligibility for travel.

        iv. Participants who are not U.S. citizens must contact the International Student Advisor for assistance in determining eligibility for travel.

        v. All faculty and staff employees, along with any non-Ursinus participants (such as volunteers, chaperones, or family members) must undergo a background check. Contact Human Resources. Please note the "Policy for Family and Visitors on Faculty-Led Programs" governing non-student participants.

(C) Pre-departure Preparation Phase (*at least one month pre-departure).* In most cases, the travel leader must ensure that all participants do the following.

(1) All participants must provide appropriate medical clearance and identify any needs (including medications) that must be accommodated while traveling. This information is shared with the program leader on a *need to know* basis.

(2) All participants must sign and submit the corresponding International Travel Agreement which shall include waivers.

(3) All participants must submit emergency contact information.

(4) All participants must submit electronic copies of valid passports. Please note that passports must be valid at least six months beyond the return date.

(5) Group leaders must register participants who are U.S. citizens with STEP (Smart Traveler Enrollment Program).

(6) Travel leaders must submit a final itinerary to department head and Provost's Office.

(7) All participants must participate in a pre-departure orientation led by a representative from the CIP or ORM. Pre-departure orientation will include information on the code of student conduct for the program, intercultural competencies, and other topics.

(8) In addition, travel leaders have a responsibility to undergo special training for the following:
    a. Title IX: Contact the Title IX campus coordinator.
    b. Emergency planning: Contact the Director of EHS & Risk Management. The Director of EHS & Risk Management will also provide information on college foreign travel insurance coverage and help the group leader to register online.
    c. Student Conduct: Contact Student Affairs
    d. Intercultural communication

(D) During Travel Phase

(1) Upon arrival or shortly thereafter, the program should include an on-site orientation with an overview of the following:
    a. basic location information
    b. logistics and schedule
    c. local transportation
    d. communication methods and protocols
    e. local customs and behavioral norms
    f. particular risks and how to minimize them, general safety
    g. health information
    h. emergency procedures

(2) Group leader communications with College staff
    a. Trouble-shooting
    b. Incident reporting
    c. Student conduct issues
    d. Crises and emergencies

(E) Post-travel Phase (no more than one-month post-travel).

(1) Participants must submit evaluations or other reasonable assessments of the program at program end or shortly thereafter.

(2) The travel leader must submit to the supervisor a written report of the activity to include comment on the following:
    a. services provided by vendors and contractors
    b. information about the location that should be considered for future programs
    c. suggestions for changes to future iterations

(3) The travel leader must submit all receipts along with a final budget to the supervisor.