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Peer Advising 101: A Training Workshop For Peer Advisors In Study Abroad

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Running Head: PEER ADVISING 101: A TRAINING WORKSHOP

**PEER ADVISING 101: A TRAINING WORKSHOP FOR PEER ADVISORS IN STUDY
ABROAD**

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PIM 74

A capstone paper submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master of Arts in
International Education at SIT Graduate Institute in Brattleboro, Vermont, USA.

May 16th 2016

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ABSTRACT

Peer advising and peer education programs have been prevalent in all areas of higher education. Recently, there has been growth in peer advising programs in study abroad offices to address the gap between student advising needs and the time constraints of professional staff. While initially intended to take pressure off understaffed offices, other benefits emerged from the use of students as paraprofessionals. Peer advisors were able to encourage students to go abroad, as well as provide valuable insider information about specific programs. While a lot has been written on the topic of peer education in other areas of higher education, there is limited research into adapting peer advising for study abroad offices.

The Office of Cross-Cultural Programs (OCCP) at Susquehanna University (SU) employs over ten student workers every semester to advise and assist fellow students through their study away process. SU is a small liberal arts college in central Pennsylvania that requires all students to participate in a cross-cultural experience, at least two weeks in length. The peer advising program at the OCCP supports students in selecting and participating in their program of choice through advising, workshop facilitation, and assisting the OCCP with standard office tasks.

The literature has shown that the key to a successful peer advising programs is selection and training. This capstone paper outlines a comprehensive two-day training for peer advisors in the OCCP focused on advising techniques, OCCP policies and procedure, study abroad programs, and workshop design. The workshop, known as Peer Advising 101, is based on research about peer advising and peer education programs in higher education, as well as in study abroad specifically. Peer Advising 101 is designed based on several needs assessments from peer advisors and students who interact with peer advisors.

Introduction

Susquehanna University (SU) is a private liberal arts college in central Pennsylvania with around 2,200 students in attendance. As part of its mission, SU focuses on an “education integrating the liberal arts and preparation for professions and careers” and creating “a learning community that values diversity” (Susquehanna University, 2015). Most students come from the surrounding states of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Maryland. A large portion of the student population has never left their home state, let alone the country. To achieve SU’s mission and goals, the faculty and administrative leadership decided to challenge students by creating the GO (Global Opportunities) requirement. As part of the GO requirement, students must participate in at least a two week long cross-cultural experience and complete a pre-departure and global citizenship course. The practical portion of the GO requirement has been designed to be flexible to accommodate all students. The three ways to complete the requirement are by participating in a “GO long” or semester-long program, a “GO short” faculty-led program, or a “GO your own way” self-designed summer or winter break program. As a result, around 500 - 600 students participate in cross-cultural experiences every year.

SU’s Office of Cross-Cultural Programs (OCCP), also nicknamed the GO office, created a peer-advising program that hires work-study students to serve as the first contact for students seeking advice on programs. The peer advising program was developed to increase the staff capacity to accommodate the growing number of students attending GO programs due to the cross-cultural requirement. As my practicum, I have been working as Graduate Intern in the OCCP since August 2015 and have been promoted as Study Away Advisor Intern as of January 2016. A large part of my duties include managing around ten student workers in the peer-advising program. Throughout my experience overseeing peer advisors and being a co-trainer

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during the peer advisor training held in August, I noticed a need to revise the current training. A major catalyst for the need for further training was feedback received through peer advisor journal entries, written for the two-credit internship course peer advisors attend. In journal entries, peer advisors expressed a need for more training and knowledge on aspects of advising such as discussing programs they did not participate in and helping students select programs who did not have any limitations on location or duration. In addition, through observing peer advisor workshops, answering advising questions, and discussions with my supervisor about the peer advisor program, I noticed an opportunity to enhance the program by creating a research-backed training, known as Peer Advising 101: An Interactive Workshop.

The following capstone paper will outline a proposed two-day training for peer advisors, GO program assistants, and university assistants for the Office of Cross-Cultural Programs at Susquehanna University. Peer Advising 101 will occur before the beginning of the fall Semester and will train peer advisors, GO program assistants, and university assistants on all aspects of their roles for the upcoming year. Peer Advising 101 has been designed based on feedback from peer advisor journal entries, peer advisor workshop evaluations and observations, scholarly literature on peer advising, and a needs assessment to determine the advising needs of students at Susquehanna.

The OCCP's Peer Advisor Program

The 500 students who participate in GO programs each year often visit the OCCP to decide on their program and for assistance applying. With small professional staff and only one study abroad advisor in the office, the OCCP needed to extend their reach to accommodate student needs. The peer advisor program was created to provide students with extensive resources and support in choosing and participating in their study away program. Since most

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students have not traveled before, they require extensive attention and support to assist them in completing the cross-cultural requirement.

The OCCP hired around 21 work-study students for the fall of 2015. Eight students were designated as global ambassadors, working to mentor international students – another growing initiative at SU for comprehensive internationalization. Five students were selected as GO bloggers, who blog about their study abroad program from abroad. GO bloggers and global ambassadors are not incorporated in the training since their jobs do not include advising students on study abroad and they receive separate training on their duties.

Peer advisors are students who work five hours a week as well as participate in a two-credit internship. During the fall of 2015, several global ambassadors also worked as peer advisors. However, students had to choose only one role for the Spring of 2016 to make student positions more streamlined.

Peer advisors are often the first point of contact for students looking to narrow down their option for completing the GO requirement. Peer advisors explain the application procedure, programs available and financial aid options. Afterward, peer advisors use an excel spreadsheet with all the available programs to narrow down program options for each student. After the initial appointment, students can make a follow-up appointment with a staff member for more information about their top choice programs.

Peer advisors also facilitate pre-departure workshops and work on special projects during their office hours. GO program assistants have the same duties as peer advisors, as well as an extra set of office duties. For example, the social media GO program assistant also manages the social media accounts. GO program assistants work 10 hours to accommodate their extra duties. University assistants receive a scholarship from the university to work 10 hours a week for the

OCCP. They function as peer advisors and are also designated to particular staff members to assist with office projects, but do not participate in the two credit internship. For the purpose of this paper, peer advisors, GO assistants and university assistants, will be referred to as peer advisors since all the positions will be included in the Peer Advising 101 training, and have similar core duties.

Literature Review

What is Peer Advising?

Throughout the scholarly articles referenced, three terms are associated with the use of peers as paraprofessionals to provide services to students in the education field: peer advising, peer education, and peer mentoring. Ender (1983) defines paraprofessionals as “students who have been selected and trained to offer educational services to their peers” (as cited in Ender & Newton, 2000, p.2). Within the field of study abroad, the term peer advising is most frequently used to denote students who provide advice to other students about study abroad programs. Peer advising programs can also be found in other areas of higher education such as student affairs.

The term peer education is most widely used and refers to the largest range of services provided by peers from role modeling in social justice organization to teaching study skills within higher education to the prevention of drug use in high schools. The term peer mentoring is infrequently used within the literature and usually denotes a more holistic advising and teaching approach in student services outside of study abroad. For example, the Graduate School at Washington University St. Louis (2016) defines a Peer Mentor as “another student who can serve as a resource, a helping hand, a sounding board, and a referral service” (para. 1). Often the definition of these terms changes to accommodate the particular role peers have within the context of the organization. The common denominator within the mentioned about is the word

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'peer'. Shiner (1999) studied peer education in high schools and worked to define what characterized a peer. Shiner (1999) found peer did not just refer to someone of a similar age but to someone with a similar social status and ethnicity (p 557-558).

Considering the lack of definition of peer advising within study abroad, Lo (2006) interviewed the supervisors of 18 peer advisor programs to discern the meaning. Lo's (2006) study that a peer advisor is "a former study abroad student whose age is similar to other prospective students and whose role, through advising and outreach activities, is to serve as a resource for such students" (p.18). Based on Lo's definition, a peer is defined by similar age and participation in a study abroad program. Drake (2014) described peer advising as a less formal advising where students learn from each other "without the immediate intervention of a teacher" (p.15).

The use of peers in education dates back to the early 1900s when students served in multiple roles in residence halls and assisted students as tutors (Ender & Newton, 2000, p. 3). Peer advising program continued to be prevalent in student affairs at universities to mentor incoming freshman, and in specific majors to assist students in selecting courses, and getting information about major requirements and professors. (Devlin-Scherer, 1984 & Peck, 2011). Rosenthal & Shinebarger (2010) believe peer advising is meant to lessen "the gap between student needs and the type of mentoring they receive," particularly when there is a lack of staff to meet the needs of students (p. 24).

Benefits of Peer Advising

A major reason most articles cite for creating a peer advisor program is a lack of staffing to serve the needs of the student population in their respective department. The University of Tennessee developed a peer advising program because professors lacked the time to devote to

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each student due to the "competing responsibilities" of "teaching and scholarly work" (Diambra, 2003, p.25). Levinson (1974) also thinks a limited budget was the catalyst for their peer advising programs. King (1993) compares various delivery systems for advising and explains that using peer advisers "frees up professional advisers to do more in-depth advising" (p. 52). While peer advising programs started as a way to find a solution to staffing needs in higher education, other benefits emerged from peer advising programs.

Diambra (2003) found that the three main purposes of peer advising are "[to] provide a service to their department while, concurrently learning more about their academic pursuits," to aid in recruitment and retention, and to provide "a sense of connection through similar experiences" (p. 27). The reciprocal relationship allows peer advisors to assist the department while learning about the workings of the department. Peer advising does not only benefit students receiving the service but peer advisors as well. Peer advisors in Drake's (2014) study wrote that they benefited from improved communication and presentation skills, met new people, developed transferable skills, and enjoyed helping classmates (p.18).

The reciprocal relationship between the peer advisor and the university office creates a greater connection between the student and the university. Peck's (2011) research found that at Stephen F. Austin State University, due to the peer advisor program, "91 percent [of students] said it made them feel more connected to the university, 82 percent said it made them more likely to seek leadership roles" (p. 24). Russel and Shinkle's (1990) study also found that students who participated in the peer advisor program as advisees had a "greater sense of membership in the university community" (p. 392).

In the higher education, retention is a major reason for utilizing peer advisors, especially with high-risk students (Davis & Ballard, 1985, p 15). While improving retention is not the

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primary duty in study abroad offices, it is still a consideration for most departments at universities. The graduation requirement at Susquehanna makes retention more of a priority for the OCCP because unhappy students run the risk of transferring to a different university if they do not want to participate in the study away requirement. In universities where study abroad is not mandatory, peer advising can improve attendance of study abroad programs. At Loughborough University, after implementing the peer advisor program, "the conversion rate of interest to actual mobility was approximately 90 per cent in comparison to an annual average of 50 per cent or below" (p. 17).

Emotional reassurance and connection are other benefits of peer advisor programs. Lo (2006) describes peer advisors as catering to the students' emotional side because students can relate to peer advisors experience while study abroad professional provide the technical skills – specific details about programs. Lo (2006) explains that peer advisors have "a special "insider-status"—a unique expertise in their study abroad program" (p. 181). Drake (2014) echoes Lo's sentiment by stating "only peers...can provide students with...reassurance and information on study abroad that can truly make or break a hitherto tentative expression of interest in taking such a step" (p. 15). Drake (2014) found that students benefited from meeting with a peer advisor by gaining confidence, enthusiasm, and inspiration to embark on their study abroad experience.

Another benefit to peer advisor programs is students often feel more comfortable sharing their concerns with peers rather than professionals who students view as authority figures. Levinson (1974) noticed that peer advising occurs informally when students discuss classes, professors and study strategies among friends. Through creating peer advisor programs, the tendency to discuss academic strategies in informal conversations is channeled to provide students receive more accurate information. Shiner (1999) also writes that using peers can be

preferable to professionals because professionals can be viewed "as distant authority figures who lack credibility" (p. 557). Peck (2011) explains, "students express more comfort with posing these questions to fellow students than professional staff members." (p. 24). Drake's (2014) research also showed that students felt more comfortable asking peer advisors about the personal aspects (rather than academic aspects) of the study abroad experience.

Drawbacks of Peer Advising

The literature includes less information about the drawbacks of issues that arise in peer advising programs. The lack of information may be because the focus of many of the articles listed above is to introduce the peer-advising model as a viable new model in higher education, rather than to evaluate the model. However, a few authors share some of the problems they encountered with peer advising programs.

Diambra (2003) noticed that after speaking to peer advisors about academic difficulties, advisees sometimes would "blame other students for their failures," but this tendency was avoided by "effective communication skills and personal characteristics" (p. 27). Since peers are more familiar with each other, it may be easier to blame their peer if something does not turn out well.

Drake (2014) found that advisees preferred to speak to a peer advisor who has participated in the specific program of choice, but the limited number of peer advisors made it near impossible to provide each student access to a peer advisor who participated in the specific program the student is interested in. In the peer advisor program at SU, the office tries to connect students with other students, not necessarily peer advisors, who went on their program. The drawback of the aforementioned model is the inability to monitor those communications for

accurate information. A larger issue seems to be finding a way to train peer advisors to discuss programs they did not attend.

King's (1993) short evaluation of the pro and cons of different advising delivery systems finds that a peer advising program "requires significant professional time for training, supervision and evaluation" and there can be a "lack of continuity and sometimes accountability because of graduation" (p. 52). While the program frees up professionals from some basic advising duties, the primary advising duties are replaced with peer advisor management duties. Professional staff often balance the time needed to train and manage peer advisors with the benefit of having extra advising staff. Another drawback is that every year the peer advising team changes due to student graduation, making it difficult to have continuity in projects started by peer advising.

Frisz (1999) was the most forthcoming with a list of six issues that arose in the peer advisor train for students working in student services at Queens College, which included:

(1) limited training; (2) paraprofessional status; (3) role is to enhance services, not to replace the professional staff; (4) strict time limitation with clients; they are not permitted to see a client more than three times; (5) ethical dilemmas regarding confidentiality when confronting very serious issues presented by clients... (6) knowing when their own training and competency are not sufficient to help the client and making speedy and appropriate referrals in such cases. (p. 521)

Most of issues Frisz mentions stem from peer advisor's status as paraprofessionals. Their skills fall in-between being a student and being a professional in higher education. The list quoted above shows the difficulty in discerning where the role of the peer advisor ends and more in-depth advising needs to occur through referrals. Frisz's (1999) peer advisor program falls in

the student services department where peer advisors advise about a variety of issues from study skills to adjustment to college. Peer advisors in study abroad have less area to cover in terms of advising which can alleviate issues such as lack of extensive training or ethical dilemmas.

However, to some extent ethical dilemmas still apply to study abroad, in cases where students do share personal issues related to going abroad.

From the Human Resource Perspective

As paraprofessionals working in higher education the human resource perspective is a major factor in peer advising programs. Human Resource Management "acknowledges that employees are important assets rather than just parts plugged into positions" and is meant to increase performance of employees (Liu, Combs, Ketchen & Ireland, 2007, p. 504). Liu, Combs, Ketchen & Ireland (2007) explain the research backed practices that increase the performance of employees. Training and selection are the two main practices that often cited in articles detailing peer advising programs, classed as practices that increase knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs). While the scope of this research is mainly training, selection practices also play an important role in peer advising because they allow the trainer to understanding who is being trained.

Lo's (2006) study found that study abroad experience was a prerequisite and "nearly half of the schools additionally required personal characteristics" such as "being friendly and enthusiastic and having solid communication skills" (p.178). Personal characteristics are often harder to train and it is easier to select peer advisors who possess the desired characteristics. Frisz (1999) asked current peer advisors to do the first round of peer advisor applicant interviews. Devlin-Scherer (1984) describes a similar screening process that entailed an interview with a committee that included previous peer advisors, and application questions that

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seek out compatible personality traits. Russel and Skinkle (1990) also explained that peer advisors who had "concern for others and valu[ed] emotional ties" and those who "tolerance, breadth of interest and values orthodoxy" had better student outcomes. Peer advisors who had a variety of interests often had the best outcomes because they were able to relate to the diverse interests of the students they advised (Russel & Skinkle, 1990).

The third KSA increasing technique is compensation which takes the form of course credit and work study pay in the overall field. Lo's (2006) study found that most peer advisors get paid, and very few are volunteers or receive only course credit. By updating the training, and updating peer advisor selection practices, the OCCP will increase peer advisors KSAs.

The other two categories that Liu, Combs, Ketchen & Ireland (2007) discuss are motivation-enhancing practices and empowerment techniques. Motivation enhancing practices motivate staff members to apply their skills to the best of their abilities. Incentive compensation practices allow those who do a better job to receive more compensation. Peer advisor grades serve as compensation—higher grades for better performance. While students do not end up working permanently for the OCCP, internal promotion relates to peer advisor success stories for those who continue in the industry.

To enhance motivation, Liu, Y., Combs, J., Ketchen, D., & Ireland, R. (2007) recommend providing grievance procedures, employment security and promoting employee participation. The employment security in peer advising program extends to keeping the position for at least a semester or year in most cases. Returning peer advisors get preferential treatment when it comes to hiring. Employee participation is inherent in the program because peer advisors can propose events and initiatives. There is nothing in place for grievance procedures so a system will be developed and introduced in the training. As the first meeting with peer advisors about

the program, Peer Advising 101 will set up the program and requirements in the most favorable terms, so peer advisors are excited about their upcoming roles.

Peer Advisor Training Practices

The literature frequently cites training as an important aspect of peer advising programs. Rosenthal & Shinebarger (2010) believe "the key to a successful peer-mentoring program goes beyond the selection process; the most important aspect is training" (p. 25). Frisz's (1999) peer advising program details the more rigorous training for peer advisors, which requires two three-credit classes before students begin to work as peer advisors. In study abroad, Lo (2006) found that training orientation usually "took place in the span of 1 - 2 days and lasted from 1- 4 hours" (p.177).

The length of training is considerably less for peer advisors in study abroad than peer advisors in other areas of higher education. For example, Russel & Skinkle (1990) discuss a peer advising program where peer advisors assist students living off campus in integrating into the university. In Russel & Shinkle's program, peer advisors received "50 hours of training" on "communication skills (16 hours), student development theory (2 hours), group dynamics (3 hours), Student services referrals (3 hours), issues and problem solving (22.5 hours) and administration (4 hours)" (Russel & Skinkle, 1990, p. 388). In Lo's (2006) study a peer advisor supervisor felt peer advising was "learn-as-you-go" job that peer advisors learn through experience. Lo (2006) speculates that peer advisors in study abroad receive limited training because professionals in the field believe peer advisors learn from experience in this role.

Lo (2006) found that trainings for peer advisors include "one or a combination of the following sections (a) role and responsibilities of the PAs, (b) office-related topics (staff, programs, study abroad application process, financial aid, and available resources), and (c)

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advising techniques" (p. 177). At Iowa State, Davis & Ballard (1985) required peer advisors who worked with college freshman to attend training at each department of the university and totaled 100 hours of training. Since the breadth of the advising content in study abroad is not as wide as in student services such an in depth training may not be necessary. Training for peer advisors in the field seems to follow a similar pattern. Study abroad offices train peer advisors on the content of their advising (such as study skills in student services advising, or study abroad programs in study abroad advising), interpersonal skills for advising, and policies and procedures in the office.

Levinson (1974) points out that another area of training peer advisors required was understating of self and their values. She felt peer advisors project their values while advising and having a clear understanding of what those values are made advising more effective. Frisz (1999) also believed self-understanding would produce "culturally competent counselors" who "are aware of their own assumptions about human behavior, values, biases, preconceived ideas and personal limitation" (p. 515). Frisz (1999) used values clarification techniques in peer advisor training and taught the importance of avoiding assumptions or judgments" (p. 520). Diambra (2003) adds several other skills that peer advising requires that include interpersonal skills, administrative skills, information skills, and technological ability.

Devlin-Scherer (1984) also included team-building activities in the training for peer advisors at the School of Business that create "create group identity and pride" (p. 8). Diambra (2003) adds several other skills peer advising requires that include interpersonal skills, administrative skills, information skills, and technological ability.

Needs Assessment

Before creating training curriculum, Barbazette (2006) recommends conducting a needs assessment, which is "the process of collecting information about an expressed or implied organizational need that could be met by conducting training" (p. 5). The existing data of peer advisor journal entries for their two-credit internship, assessment data from peer advisor led workshop and observations from training serve as the basis for the needs assessment. To gain input from students who are the consumers of peer advising, the researcher created another needs assessment to discern students experience with peer advisors. The needs assessments will "identify what skill deficiency is to be fixed by training" and show "the specific behavior improvement behind a vague desire" (Barbazette, 2006. p. 5 & 8).

The peer advisors in the OCCP were required to write six journal entries as part of their two-credit internship course through the Blackboard, online course management platform. The first journal entry asked students to describe what they liked and disliked about training. Students also wrote about what they were nervous about moving forward into the internship. Two of the journal entries asked students to reflect on two advising session they experienced and share what was most difficult. The final journal entry asked peer advisors to reflect on their workshop facilitation skills. Peer advisor journal entries helped define the need for further training in several areas. While the training at the OCCP is longer and more detailed than those in Lo's (2006) study, several key skills were missing. The two journal entries that were not consulted were a reflection on international education week – the planning for international education week does not occur at the training, but at the peer advisor staff meeting before international education week. Peer advisors also wrote a reflection about a video that helped them reflect on cultural competence, which is not related to training.

Evaluation of the Past Training

The first journal entry describes peer advisor training. Eight work study students were required to write each journal entry due to their participation in the two credit internship: three GO program Assistants, and five peer advisors, out of which two were also Global Ambassadors. One peer advisor was not able to attend the training and came to a make-up training, so her journal entry is not mentioned.

Five of seven peer advisors enjoyed the icebreakers. The overall feeling was that icebreakers helped peer advisors get to know each other and feel more comfortable thinking on their feet for advising. Devlin-Scherer's (1984) emphasis on team building activities in peer advisor training supports the observation by peer advisors that icebreakers are an essential part of training. Four out of seven peer advisors enjoyed hearing about all of the programs that were available. Four out of seven peer advisor also felt peer advising would be an opportunity to help students or give back to the community. Drake's research (2016) also found peer advisors enjoyed giving back to the university community. Three peer advisors mentioned answering questions they did not know: two peer advisors felt the training prepared them for these questions while one student was still nervous about finding out the answers to student questions that were not immediately apparent. Two students felt information about required forms was unnecessary because they already were familiar with the forms already. Another common trend was students felt they knew some of the information presented at the training from their experience as a student going through the study abroad process. The Peer Advising 101 training may have to be more interactive allowing peer advisors to share what they already know.

Evaluation of Peer Advisor Advising Experiences

All eight peer advisors answered both journal entries about advising. Four out of eight peer advisors wrote that they felt uncomfortable because they did not know the specific details of the programs – such as housing, or if the program provided cell phones. Only one peer advisor mentioned a need to know more information about the programs in the second journal entry and two peer advisors wrote that they learned new information and were able to answer questions they previously would not have before. Feeling more comfortable answering specific questions about programs may be an aspect is picked up through experience rather than training.

Three peer advisors wrote that they helped students who were unsure about what program to choose with varying degrees of success in their first advising entry. The second set of peer advisor journal entries did not mention helping students who had few restrictions on program location. Peer advisor may not have written about this advising scenario because the subject was discussed in the monthly meeting since it came up so frequently. Monthly meetings are staff meetings each month for all peer advisors.

Two peer advisors in the first journal entry and four in the second entry mentioned helping students find programs based on their major. Only one peer advisor referenced using the matrix, an Excel spreadsheet used for advising, in the first advising entry, while three mentioned it in the second journal entry. The topic of assisting students using the matrix may have been brought up more frequently because students began to feel more comfortable with the document as time went on.

Surprisingly, only one peer advisor in each round of journal entries mentioned discussing her personal experience with students during advising meetings. One peer advisor was able to reference her personal experience because the student she was advising was interested in the

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program that she attended. The second mention of personal experience was a peer advisor directing a student to her blog. Drake (2014) suggests that discussing a peer advisors experience helped students make the leap from initial interest to enrolling in a study abroad program because it made the student feel more confident about the programs fit. At SU, while study abroad is a requirement, stories of peer advisors experience could make students feel more comfortable with their plans to go abroad.

Workshop Evaluations

There were two sessions of three workshops facilitated by peer advisors during the fall semester, 2015. Students going on semester-long programs and self-designed programs are required to attend at least one of the three workshops. Peer advisors were required to facilitate two workshop sessions. The most attended workshop was the budgeting workshop, which covered both budgeting abroad and finding scholarships. The traveling workshop dealt with the logistics of traveling outside of students' study abroad location. The packing workshop detailed what to pack and how to pack.

Journal entries reflected two main trends among the workshops. Three peer advisors wrote specifically about using their experience to contribute to the workshops, and most peer advisors spoke about their experience during the workshop. Peer advisors felt drawn to a particular workshop based on experience with the topic and wanting to share the experience with students who are going abroad. The second trend was a pride experienced by peer advisors who were able to answer most questions that students asked during the workshop.

Besides there two trends, the responses varied based on the specific workshop that peer advisors facilitated. A few general observations that individual peer advisors mentioned were the group being not very talkative, and being able to break misconceptions about study abroad.

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Through observations of the workshop, the traveling and packing workshop lasted only an hour of the two-hour allotted time and in one case only a half an hour. The workshops may have been shorter than planned due to the limited content of each workshop. During the spring 2016 semester, the packing and traveling workshops have been combined into one workshop. While peer advisors felt comfortable discussing their experience, they struggled with facilitation techniques and responding to answers generated by activities.

The budgeting workshop had the most students in attendance. Peer advisors facilitating the workshop discussed scenarios based on personal experience and wanted to help students figure out where to start when planning a budget. The budgeting workshop had the highest response rate corresponding to student attendance. Twenty-nine students answered the survey for the first budgeting workshop. Eleven students participated in the survey for the second budgeting workshop.

The two main positive comments about the workshop were getting resources to research conversion rates and cost of living and learning the budgeting skill through utilizing the budgeting worksheet. Eight students in the first workshop mentioned the websites in a positive light and five students in the second workshop mentioned the website. Eight students in the first workshop noted learning the budgeting skill as a positive outcome and three in the second workshop. Students responded well to hearing peer advisor experiences and wished there was more of it (four mentions in the first workshop).

Participants of the budgeting workshop communicated the need for a more organized and clearer workshop (eight direct mentions). The need for more organization in the workshop was commonly tied to the second half of the workshop when the experiential activities occurred. There were also several responses that indicated a preference for a lecture rather than a workshop

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due to time constraints. However, overall the response was more positive than negative to the workshop format. For example, the budgeting hand out activity received a significant number of positive comments. Several other comments included three mentions about the need for more advice about their specific program and three mentions of the need for more content on non-traditional programs. Since so few students go to non-traditional locations, there were no peer advisors who studied abroad in non-traditional locations. There is a need for more training on how to research and discuss programs that the peer advisor has not attended, as well as a need for more peer advisors who attended programs in non-traditional locations.

The packing workshop had 15 - 20 students in attendance. Based on journal entries, peer advisors wanted to communicate that students should adopt a minimalist attitude to packing. Peer advisors also mentioned that male and female students had different packing needs. Only four participants answered the survey from both workshops. One student shared that they enjoyed having peer presenters express their experience. The other three responses dealt with the content of the workshop. One participant wanted more stories of peer advisors experience, and one participant wanted a more organized workshop.

The final traveling workshop had the least feedback, with no survey data. Peer advisors enjoyed sharing information about their travels with their peers and specific travel advice. One peer advisor wrote about suggesting hostels, and airlines.

Based on responses to the needs assessment, more training is necessary on the topics of planning and organizing workshops, facilitating experiential activities, and encouragement for sharing personal stories.

Student Assessment

The final assessment gathered student feedback for the peer advising program and was created specifically to collect information for the Peer Advising 101 workshop. Students who applied to GO programs in the fall of 2015 received a survey asking them to describe their experience with peer advisors (see Appendix A for questions). The study included all students who applied for semester-long programs for the 2016-2017 academic year and students who applied for summer 2016 faculty-led programs. The purpose of the survey is to analyze what occurs in advising sessions and discern what peer advisor skills need further training. The first survey was sent to about 500 participants via email and received nine responses with only three students indicating that they met with a peer advisor. A reminder email was sent later in the semester with a final result of 20 participants and nine students indicating that they spoke to a peer advisor. Another question was added for the second round to discern why students who choose not to meet with a peer advisor decided not to do so.

Regarding the reason for the advising session, three out of the nine participants who spoke to a peer advisor wanted to discuss the GO short (faculty-led) option while the majority were interested in a GO long (semester long) program. Only one student was interested in GO your own way (custom designed) program. GO short students often know what program they want to attend based on the program director advertising the program to his or her students. Six of the nine participants were looking for more information about the programs available, specifically which ones were a good fit for their major and interests. Two participants were interested in learning about financial aid. One participant was interested in getting reassurance about safety concerns, and one participant was interested in learning about the application

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process. Eight out of nine students wrote that peer advisors mainly helped them narrow down their options from a wide range of options.

In terms of the content of the advising session, three out of the nine participants received information about all the topics peer advisors are required to discuss – cost, application procedure, and programs. Two of the three students noted the information received was vague and the students wanted more specific information. Students considered program locations in most advising sessions. More clarity up-front about what information peer advisors can provide versus professional staff, could increase student satisfaction.

Five out of eight respondents did not speak to peer advisors about their experience abroad. Peer advisor journal entries also had very few mentions of peer advisors talking to students about their experience. Based on Drake's (2014) research on the positive effect of discussing experience, peer advisors will be encouraged to share their experience in advising sessions. However, the needs assessment did not show a correlation between student satisfaction and sharing personal experiences.

Regarding satisfaction, two participants were satisfied with their advising sessions; three felt it was average; two were dissatisfied with the advising session. The two students who were satisfied by the advising session mentioned shortcomings of vague information but seemed to have lower expectations from peer advisors. Satisfied students felt the purpose of peer advisor meetings was to narrow down programs rather than find specific information. Both students were looking for quick general information rather than details about specific programs.

Three participants felt the the advising session was average. They believed they received very general information and wanted more specifics about their program. One student felt peer

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advisors read information from the website and matrix document rather than telling the student what they wanted to know.

In the cases of the two dissatisfied students, the first student's point of dissatisfaction was misinformation about a faculty-led program that the student believed would be offered but was in fact not offered the upcoming summer. Peer advisors seemed to do their best to explain the options available to the student. In the end, the student still felt dissatisfied because he or she felt misled by the OCCP as a whole. While the student's comment is more about the department in general, peer advisors should be trained to refer students who are dissatisfied with departmental policies to a staff member who is better equipped to address more serious concerns. The other student who was dissatisfied felt that the information provided was vague and centered only on available programs. The student had further questions about program costs that were not addressed by a peer advisor. Peer Advising 101 will include a more intentional section on how to find and explain the costs of a program.

The most common question students had after the advising session were questions about cost and financial matters. Three students mentioned they still had questions about the cost – one participant's question was referred to the Office of Student Financial Services because it was a question about the amount of financial aid they would receive. The other student had a question about the cost of a program, which a peer advisor was not able to answer.

Three participants expressed the need for more information besides what was on the matrix sorting document. One participant wanted clearer information about their next steps after meeting with a peer advisor. Training on referral skills, explaining cost information, and more follow up regarding appointments could have alleviated student concerns.

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Regarding the students who did not speak with peer advisors, four participants answered the question. Two participants felt they did not have a need to talk with a peer advisor but did not explain why. Two participants did not know about the peer advising program or that speaking to a peer advisor was available to them. An important aspect of the Peer Advising 101 training will be teaching peer advisors to discuss their role outside of the office and spreading the word about the services they offer.

Limitations

While the needs assessment can be used to determine what should be included in the Peer Advising 101 workshop, there are certain limitations inherent in each type of information gathered. Peer advisor journals generally focus more on the successful aspects of the program because they are read by the instructor who grades their work. Some peer advisors took the journal assignment more seriously than others – therefore the answers vary in detail and in quality.

Surveys sent after workshops only take into account the opinions of those who choose to participate. The packing workshop had very limited responses due to the small number of participants. The observations mentioned are the opinions of the researcher who was present during the workshop.

Finally, the final assessment gathered from students had a limited response rate. Without an offer of additional compensation or prizes for participation, responses depended on the good will of students to share their opinions. The survey did not capture as many responses from students who did not speak to peer advisors. Students are frequently sent surveys to evaluate different aspects of the OCCP, and may be weary of the frequency of surveys.

Peer Advisor Training

Experiential Learning

David Kolb pioneered experiential learning, which is the basis of experiential workshops. Borzack (1981) describes experiential learning as a “direct encounter with the phenomena being studied rather than merely thinking about the encounter, or only considering the possibility of doing something about it” (as quote in Smith, 2010, para. 1). In experiential trainings, participants practice the skills they are taught and use personal experience as the basis for learning. Harris and Ward (1999) describe workshops as “a short-term learning experience that encourages active, experiential learning and uses a variety of learning activities to meet the needs of diverse learners” (p. 6).

In experiential workshops, four quadrants of learning that are emphasized in a cyclical fashion to produce learning: reflecting on experience, assimilating and conceptualizing, experimenting and practicing and planning for application (Harris & Ward, 1999, p. 13). Arnold (1991) describes the experiential cycle using the spiral model to explain the procedure for planning a training. The model shows a spiral outlining each of the steps within a workshop in the following order: start with experience, look for patterns, add new information and theory, practice skills and strategize and apply in motion (Arnold, 1991, pp. 31-68). The experiential training cycle is the basis of each activity for each phase of training. During the reflecting on experience phase, participants will participate in an activity that allows them to share their experience on the subject and draw conclusions based on their experience. During the assimilating and conceptualizing phase, participants will learn new information that will add to their existing knowledge of the subject. During the experimenting and practicing phase, participants will practice utilizing the information they just learned. Finally, during the planning

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for application phase, participants will learn how to practice the techniques learned in the training within their role as peer advisors.

Development of Training Goals

Wiggins & McTighe (2005) describe the theory of backward design, a way of developing curriculum by first creating the goals for the workshop or class and working backward to design the curriculum based on the intended goals of the workshop. The first step in backward design is identify desired Results – “What should students know, understand, and be able to do?” (Wiggins and McTighe, 2015, p. 17). The previous needs assessment and research aimed to discern the answer to the question above. The second stage is to determine acceptable evidence or “How will we know if students have achieved the desired results?” (Wiggins and McTighe, 2015, p. 17). During the second step, a list will be generated of evidence needed during the training to make sure the goals are met. The evidence will form the basis of the formative evaluation or evaluations collected during the training to make changes as the training occurs (Harris & Ward, 1999, p. 146). Finally, stage three entails planning the learning experience and instruction, based on the information obtained in step one and two (Wiggins and McTighe, 2015, p. 17).

Within Peer Advising 101 training, each section will have a goal and several objectives. Wiggins and McTighe (2005) describe goals as “broad aims or purposes that identify general domains where learning will occur” (p. 55). Each section will also be comprised of objectives with are “specific and measureable methods of realizing goals” (Wiggins and McTighe, 2015, p. 55). The objectives will help set up activities for each section of the training. Finally, using the backwards design model, each part will contain evaluation indicators that list evidence to prove the designated goals were achieved.

Training Purpose, Goals and Objectives.

The overarching purpose of the training is to provide peer advisors with the knowledge and skills to advise students, create and run workshops and other initiatives, and assist with office work in the OCCP. The training will occur over a weekend encompassing two days of training from 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM including a provided lunch break, for a total of 12 hours of training. The schedule was designed to balance peer advisor satisfaction and office needs. The training is longer than most peer advisor training in Lo's (2006) study to cover all the material Lo felt was missing from peer advisor training—such as peer advisor duties. The training is shorter than most peer advisor trainings in other areas of higher education because the breadth of knowledge needed in study abroad is not as intensive as other areas of student affairs. The training will be broken up into four sections: day 1 morning, day 1 afternoon, day 2 morning, and day 2 afternoon. Each section is three hours long (see Appendix B for breakdown).

The goals for the morning of the first day are:

- to increase peer advisors' knowledge of their role within the OCCP
- to practice explaining their position and making referrals

The objectives are:

- to define and delimit the duties of a peer advisor in the OCCP
- to learn the basic office policies of working in the OCCP
- to practice explaining ones' role as a peer advisor
- to become aware of a few best practices for being an effective advisor

Evidence of completion of the listed goals are workshop discussions about the role of peer advisors, observing role plays showing understanding of referral skills, and peer advisors adhering to office policies throughout the semester.

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The aforementioned goals are based on research about the role of a peer advisor and the benefits and drawbacks of peer advising programs. Fritz (1999) found that a limitation of peer advisors was limited training, which brought up the question of “paraprofessional status” during training (p. 52). Lo (2006) found that many peer advising programs did not present peer advisors with information specifically detailing their role and their duties” (p.180). Journal entries have shown that peer advisors struggled answering question that should be directed to another staff member for a referral. The assessment of student experiences with peer advisors revealed that many students do not know about the peer advisor program, or had high expectations about the information they would receive from peer advisors.

The goals for the afternoon of the first day are:

- to increase participants’ knowledge of the policies of the OCCP
- to practice basic advising techniques.

The objectives for afternoon of the first day are:

- to be able to answer questions about application procedures, required forms, deadline, and financial policies of each of the three GO programs
- to practice the interpersonal communication skills of active listening, and discussing personal experiences

Evidence of the listed goals is gathered by observing role play activities, the responses to a worksheet testing peer advisor knowledge of OCCP policies, and workshop discussions showing increased understanding.

The goals listed stem from Lo’s (2006) study on peer advisor programs where she found that peer advisor trainings cover among other topics “study abroad application process” and “advising techniques” (p.177). The two goals are some of the fundamental duties of advisors.

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Love and Maxam (2011) state one of the roles of an advisor is “providing accurate information about institutional policies, procedures, resources and programs” (p. 416). It is important for peer advisors to be clear on policies and procedure so they advise with accuracy. The second part of the goal deals with interpersonal advising skills, which Love and Maxam (2011) also list as one of the three core skills of advisors. The other two are “problem solving skills” and “understanding and applying developmental and learning theories” (Love & Maxam, 2011, p. 416-417). Since peer advisors are paraprofessionals, it is important to cover several basic interpersonal and information-giving skills. More complex situations and problem solving require referrals to professionals.

The goals for the morning of the second day are:

- to increase knowledge of available study away programs
- to practice advising students on available study away programs

The objectives for the morning of the second day are:

- to be aware of all the options available for completing the GO requirement
- to practice helping students select a program using the matrix sorting Excel sheet
- to reflect on ones’ experience with diversity to better advise students.

Evidence of meeting the above goals will be based on observations of practice advising role plays using the Matrix, and the discussion during the cultural competence activity.

The second day of the training will concentrate on the content of advising. While peer advisors do not need to have in-depth knowledge of each program it important they understand what programs are available to help students select their program. Knowledge of programs offered is the last piece of office related information that both Lo (2006) and Love and Maxam (2011) mention peer advisors and advisors need to know. To better advise on available programs,

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the training will build on the previous day to include an activity on cultural competence to advise students from different backgrounds. Frisz (1999) felt it was important that advisors were culturally competent and used values clarification techniques to train focuses on “the importance of avoiding assumptions or judgments, of being flexible, receptive, and empathic” (p. 520). Since many of the peer advisors have taken the Global Citizenship class required for all students after their semester abroad, the approach will deal more with the application for advising.

The goal for the afternoon of the second day are:

- to learn how to develop and facilitate an experiential workshop
- to brainstorm new initiatives for the GO office

The objectives of the workshop on workshops are:

- to learn basics of experiential learning theory
- to practice planning a workshop
- to practice workshop facilitations skills
- to participate in a brainstorming session for new workshop initiatives
- to become aware of the requirements of the workshop and outreach requirements of the peer advisor position.

The evidence of meeting the listed goals will be the final workshop presentations as reflected by feedback from students attending peer advisor led workshops, and the ideas that come out of the brainstorming sessions.

Since workshops, outreach and events are another major duty of peer advisors, the final piece of the training will be devoted to workshops. Based on the needs assessment, there was a lack of training on how to run an experiential workshop. Peer advisors felt comfortable talking about their experience and following a PowerPoint, but the workshop format was not familiar.

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The final day of Peer Advising 101 will focus on workshop design based on the principals of experiential learning. While the templates for each workshop have already been created, peer advisors will use the templates to personalize their workshop.

The second part of the workshop deals with brainstorming new initiatives for the office. Peer advisor input helps the office be more in touch with students. It also promotes employee participation, which is a human resource management strategy that improves empowerment (Liu, Combs, Ketchen, & Ireland, 2007).

To summarize, Peer Advising 101 will be divided into the following topics:

- Peer Advising 101: Part 1 – The Role of a Peer Advisor – Day 1 Morning
- Peer Advising 101: Part 2 – OCCP Policies and Advising Skills – Day 1 Afternoon
- Peer Advising 101: Part 3 – GO programs and Cultural Competency -- Day 2 Morning
- Peer Advising 101: Part 4 – Workshops and OCCP Initiatives -- Day 2 Afternoon

Peer Advising 101: Part 1 -- The Role of a Peer Advisor

The first day will begin with introductions and icebreakers to set the tone of the training. In previous trainings, peer advisors enjoyed an icebreaker where they threw a ball to each with questions written on it. Then they answered the question that their left index finger landed on. The question ball icebreaker can be used again to start the training because it combines movement and lighthearted question to get to know each other. A few other ice breakers to start the training section can be sharing the details of their study abroad experience with a partner, a game where participants share something about the country where they studied and the class guesses if it is true or false, and easy improvisation games. The facilitators will select icebreakers

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during the training based on participants' reaction to them. Icebreaker activities are meant to loosen up participants and allow them to get to know each other. After a few icebreakers, the facilitators will then discuss the overview of the training including goals and topics to expect during the training.

Participants will then begin to reflect on their experience, which “captures motivation, imagination, & energy and affirms what participants already know” (Harris & Ward, 1999, p 66.) Participants will reflect on receiving advice from a peer advisor or a close friend. Several peer advisors noted in journal entries that they became peer advisors because of a good experience with a peer advisor before they went abroad. Those who did not meet with a peer advisor can share an experience receiving good advice from a friend. Participants will share their experience with a partner and come up with 3-5 characteristics of the interaction that were positive. As a group, the class will up with a list of best practices for peer advising.

After a discussion of the list of peer advising best practices, the training will help participants assimilate and conceptualize the topic through additional information. The presentation will be a PowerPoint detailing the peer advising program and required assignments. Participants will then learn important policies for the office and their repercussions (see Appendix C for topics). The discussion will move toward an understanding of peer advisors' paraprofessional status. A chart will be presented explaining the difference peer advisor duties and professional staff tasks (see Appendix D). Peer advisors will discuss general information about deadlines, application procedure, costs information and programs available, share their experience, provide moral support, and refer students to professional staff if needed. Professional staff will address more complex concerns, meet with dissatisfied students and provide more specific details about programs. Finally, peer advisors will learn how to make a referral if the

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question is outside the scope of their duties. Ender & Newton (2000) describe several tips for quality referrals, which include being clear and honest about the recommendation, knowing about the services they are referring to, following up, and personalizing the referral (p. 216-217).

After learning about their roles and how to make a referral, participants will practice both concepts through a role-play activity. The purpose of the role play activity is to help peer advisors learn to explain their role in different contexts and understand when and how to refer students to other professionals. Peer advisors will each pick a sheet of paper from a bag. Each paper lists a different scenario such as workshop introduction, in-office advising or speaking to students outside of the GO office (see Appendix E). They will approach another participant at random and in pairs, act out each respective scenario, then swap papers and approach another student. In each scenario, the peer advisor will be required to explain their role and in some cases make a referral. The activity will form the basis for a discussion about referrals and an explanation of the role of a peer advisor

During the planning for application portion, peer advisors participate in a speak out activity where each person shares one thing they learned about their role as a peer advisor, and one thing they are looking forward to learning. The first part will evaluate what peer advisors learned about their role, and the second part will encourage enthusiasm for the rest of the training.

Peer Advising 101: Part 2 – OCCP Policies and Advising Skills

Each section will begin with a short icebreaker and a recap of the goals for the corresponding section. By making the goals explicit, participants will know what to expect.

Part two of the training will present the policies of the office in an interactive way. Peer advisors felt the previous training about required forms was not as stimulating because they were

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familiar with the forms. First, the reflecting exercise will re-cap the differences between the three types of programs GO Long (semester long), GO Short (faculty-led), and GO your own way (student proposed program for the summer). The workshop facilitators will ask peer advisors why they choose the program type they did, and then, why others have chosen a different program type. Using answers generated as a group, the class will fill in a chart showing the differences between the three types of program and the target student for each program. Toward the end, facilitators will have a list of words and phrases that characterize each type of program and will ask participants to place them on the chart.

Presenters will go over the application policies for each program by asking the participants some questions and then revealing the answers. The presentation will also include information about financial policies and program costs, which came up as a need in surveys sent to students. Facilitators will present common forms on a PowerPoint presentation and ask participants to share what each form is for, where a student would get it, and when it is due. Participants will learn or re-learn the information about the application process through the interactive presentation.

During the practice portion, participants will learn and practice advising techniques. First, the facilitators will explain active listening. Participants will learn about how miscommunication may happen because “as the sender formulates a message, his or her filter influence the content of the message” (Griffin, 2008, p.177). A few tips will be shared for active listening such as “asking for clarification when confused,” “demonstrate[ing] engagement through non-verbal behavior,” “notic[ing] cues, verbal or non verbal,” and “look[ing] and listen[ing] beyond the words” (Griffin, 2008, p.195). Using information from Ender & Newton’s (2000) guide for peer educations, facilitators will explain why giving advice is not as helpful as guiding students to the

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answer. Some of the reasons include “giving advice requires little or no skill development” and that “advice giving demonstrates a lack of respect for the individual seeking help” (Ender & Newton, 2000, p 84-85). Peer advisors will be encouraged to use the active listening technique to help students make their decision. After explaining active listening, participants will pair up and share something that happened to them over the summer. They will be instructed to ask questions about the story, practice paraphrasing what their partner said and checking if they understood what their partner meant.

The next technique presented will be sharing ones’ experience to help students feel more confident in their ability to studying abroad. Facilitators will present ways peer advisors can discuss their experience to address personal concerns and fears of studying abroad. They will be encouraged to use 'I statement' to “clearly tak[e] responsibility for the ideas and feelings you express” (Ender & Newton, 2000, p. 98). Then, peer advisors will pair up for a second role play activity where they will practice sharing an experience using ‘I statements’ in response to a typical advising scenario (Appendix F).

During planning for application, participants will combine what they learned by practicing advising. Peer advisors will be paired up into groups of two with a different partner. Using a handout list of 19 questions (Appendix G) about study abroad policies, peer advisors will take turns responding to each question. Devlin-Scherer's (1984) Q & A drills are the basis for this handout. Facilitators will then ask the participants share the answers with the class.

Peer Advising 101: Part 3 – GO programs and Cultural Competency

The second day of training begins similarly to the first, with an icebreaker, and a rundown of the agenda for the day.

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Peer advisors will then be asked to do their quick two-minute presentation on the study abroad program they attended. They will be prompted to mention aspects such as location, housing, classes, and unique characteristics of their program. Usually, peer advisors are selected strategically to cover programs that the office wishes to highlight or increase enrollment. The presentations will serve both as feedback about programs mentioned and help share information about programs among peer advisors. The presentations will prompt a follow-up conversation about peer advisors' paraprofessional status.

Peer advisors sometimes have insights about their program that professional staff do not because of their experience participating in a particular program. However, program information gathered from experience needs to be presented using advising techniques presented during the first day. The next point of discussion will be how to answer specific questions about study abroad programs. Peer advisors will be encouraged to be upfront about their experience and refer students to other peer advisors or staff members if necessary. Facilitators will ask the group, "how do you think you can present your experience to students," and "what can you say when asked about a program you have not gone on." The third topic for the discussion is presenting personal experiences in a positive light. Peer advisors may have personal criticisms of the program, and they will learn to discuss those in an appropriate and objective way, so students do not lose confidence in their ability to study abroad.

The second part of reflecting on experience will entail a discussion on cultural competence during advising. Facilitators will use Fritz's (1999) training exercise. The trainees will be "asked to self-identify by using labels. They also describe what it is about the label that makes them proud and what makes them uncomfortable. This exercise generates a lively debate, which focuses on stereotyping, assumptions, judgments, prejudice and bigotry" (p. 521). Peer

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advisors will be asked to discuss their answers in groups of three. Each person will then share one label and what makes them proud and uncomfortable about it. A few questions posed to the group are “how have the labels that were mentioned helped or hindered you from going abroad,” “how have these labels affected you while abroad,” and “what are some ways you can use your experience to advise those with similar issues.”

The next part of the training will go over each region and the programs available. In peer advisor journals, going over each program was cited as one of the most successful aspects of the training. The presentation first goes over strategically important programs that the OCCP wishes to promote. Then the facilitators share all the programs in each region, as well as a few important facts about each one. To cut down on time, facilitators will be brief when going through each program.

For the practice portion, peer advisors will practice with the matrix Excel spreadsheet. Peer advisors will be asked to bring a laptop for the second day to practice the mechanics of the spreadsheet. The matrix Excel spreadsheet has sortable columns with categories such as majors, housing options, language, and country. In student feedback for peer advisors, a student commented that peer advisors would read from the matrix document without providing more information or interpersonal interaction. Peer advisors will practice both using the matrix and using the interpersonal skills from the first day of training. Facilitators will demonstrate the mechanics of the document and how to use it in an advising session. Facilitators will also briefly discuss incorporating skills from the first day into advising. Peer advisors will then write 5-6 sample characteristics of their ideal program. Then peer advisors will break into pairs of two, and take turns using the matrix to find a match. Peer advisors will use the matrix document to find them a program and they will also use one of the techniques from the previous day in the

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advising session (referral, sharing experience, or active listening). Upon completing the role-play activity, peer advisors will be asked to come up with a few ideas on how to make the advising process more personal and less mechanic.

Finally, peer advisors will learn about the regional presentation requirement. During regional presentations, peer advisors form groups by region and make a presentation discussing office policies and their individual programs during the next peer advisor monthly meeting. In the past, regional presentations have been a useful evaluation of students' knowledge. To encourage students to learn more about programs, a new requirement to interview a friend about their program in the region will be added. Peer advisors will need to include the information they gathered from a friend in the presentation. The last activity will place peer advisors into groups by region to begin planning for the regional presentations. Facilitators will check in with each group to help them prepare for the presentation. Each group will also receive recommendations for students to contact for more information about other programs.

Peer Advising 101: Part 4 – Workshops and GO Initiatives

The second half of the day is devoted to workshops and brainstorming outreach strategies. The afternoon will begin with a quick rundown of current and past OCCP initiatives and workshops. Then the room will be broken up into three groups, each tackling a different office need. One group will focus on creative ways to provide information to freshman and sophomores about OCCP policies, deadlines, and programs available. The second group will focus on topics for workshops and information for students going abroad. The third group will focus on other miscellaneous outreach activities such as open house (for prospective students) and events for international education week. Each group will discuss and come up with a few new ideas based on the needs that they have seen from their peers. After brainstorming

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initiatives, peer advisors will be designated to work on these initiatives throughout the year. The purpose of this activity is to gain some feedback from the student perspective to improve the services provided as well as use HR practices to empower peer advisors to work to tailor GO office initiatives to the current student population.

After the brainstorming session, the workshop on workshops will begin and peer advisors will get some information about the three required workshops available to students, as well as the requirements for presenting a workshop. First peer advisors will be asked share what the difference between a workshop and a lecture is. The conversation will move into a discussion of experiential workshops and the experiential learning cycle. The discussion will be geared to helping peer advisors understand the value of experiential workshops.

Then information will be provided about creating experiential activities. The main information will include the purpose of experiential activities, and guiding questions to help design them. Each of the workshops already has an experiential activity built in, but peer advisors will get a chance to update them or change them altogether. Peer advisors will be broken up into groups based on which workshop they volunteered they are facilitating. Using a worksheet (Appendix H) peer advisors will update the experiential activity for the workshop. The worksheet is a guide to organizing and planning out a peer advisor workshop. While the worksheet for workshops was created beforehand, it was revised based on feedback from workshops which showed that workshops are not very organized. The experiential activity section of the worksheet asks questions such as “what will participants learn from this activity,” “what are the instructions for the activity,” and “what follow up questions will you ask.” The activity will have elements of backward design where facilitators create the goals before the

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activity. After re-designing the experiential activity, each group will share what they came up with and receive some feedback from the class.

The next portion will deal with facilitation techniques, another area of peer advisor-led workshops that needed improvement. Peer advisors will receive a hand out of facilitation techniques. The facilitation technique list will come from Harris and Ward's (1999) list of facilitation techniques. The facilitators of Peer Advising 101 will briefly discuss the techniques and demonstrate a few. Then each group will practice a few of the facilitation techniques in conjunction with the experiential activity that they created. Each group of peer advisors will create a few specific questions related to their experiential activity to ask after the activity.

Finally, peer advisors will have the opportunity to complete the rest of worksheet and plan out their workshops. Each group will present the workshop plan to the class. Facilitators will discuss the feedback from past workshops and feedback for the workshop that each group planned. At the end of the training, peer advisors will be reminded to fill out the first journal entry that asks them to reflect on Peer Advising 101 training.

Assessment Strategies Assessment Strategies

Formative

Formative assessment is an evaluation that is interwoven into the workshop itself to allow facilitators to make changes during the workshop based on participants' feedback. (Harris and Ward, 1999, p. 146). Using participant responses to experiential activities, answers to worksheets, and questions from participants, facilitators may see that an area needs to be covered in more detail. Since Peer Advising 101 is packed with activities for the allotted time, the feedback could be used to expand certain topics during peer advisor monthly staff meeting.

Summative

Peer Advisor trainings have always had a summative evaluation through the first journal entry that requires peer advisors to reflect on their experience in training. Morris and Fritz-Gibbons (1978) explain that a summative evaluation “looks at the total impact of the program” (as quoted in Harris & Ward, 1999, p. 146). Peer advisor journal entries are a valuable place to gather summative feedback about the workshop as a whole.

However, a drawback to using peer advisor journals for summative evaluation is the lack of anonymity in the journals entries. Peer advisors may not feel comfortable being honest and sharing all of their feedback. By adding an anonymous evaluation tool a month into the peer advisor program, facilitators can help gauge further the overall success of the workshop and make changes for next year. The new evaluation tool added to the evaluation plan will ask specific questions such as “what skills from the workshop have you used as part of your peer advisor duties,” and “what skills would be more helpful to perform your job as a peer advisor.” The assessment tool will be distributed to peer advisors a month after training and will need to be deposited in an anonymous box in the OCCP.

Staffing Plan

Due to the attendance of around 10-12 peer advisors at the workshop, at least two trainers will be required to organize and facilitate the Peer Advising 101. Peer advisors need close supervision from a professional staff member as they learn their roles throughout the semesters. To establish a relationship with their supervisors, the trainers will be existing professional staff from the OCCP. The study away advisor, faculty-led coordinator and director may be co-trainers based on their work with peer advisors throughout the semester. No extra staff needs to be employed to conduct the training.

Program Marketing and Student Recruitment

Peer Advising 101 will be a mandatory workshop for all students who plan to work for the OCCP as peer advisors, GO program assistants or university assistants. Students who apply for a peer advising position will be notified in advance of the requirement to undergo training the weekend before classes begin. In the past, residence life has allowed peer advisors to move to campus early to complete peer advisor training.

Marketing will focus on attracting the best students to the peer advising program. The program is initially attractive to students because they receive a two-credit internship as well as a paid work-study position for up to 10 hours a week for GO program assistants. Returning students receive a raise for their second year as a peer advisor. The program is advertised on the university's work study listing. Students returning from programs receive an email to provide them with information peer advising program and encourage them to apply. The peer advising program is well established and popular at SU. Throughout the semester, there are often requests to be notified of spots available in the peer advising program.

Recruitment entails an application that asks students several targeted questions about their experiences and their reason for applying to be a peer advisor (see Appendix I). Successful students will be called back for an interview. Since the OCCP knows many of the students personally through the advising process, it is easier to select the finalists for the interview. A hiring committee of at least two staff members interviews the students and makes sure they are aware of the demands and benefits of the internship. Peer advisors receive an email before the start of the semester to remind them about the required training. Unless students present a compelling medical or academic issue, they are not able to make up the training, and the position is passed on to the next best candidate.

Health and Safety Plan

Peer advisor health and safety is vital to the design of the training. The training is located in the GO House, a residence that serves as a living-learning community for students preparing to study abroad, or those returning from abroad. The room in the GO house has plenty of space for peer advisors to safely complete activities, as well as several comfortable couches for the lecture portion. The office of public safety is on call 24/7 in case there is an injury during the training. During the more personal reflecting activities, students will be made aware of the counseling center in case the activities bring up emotional issues from experience. The health center on campus is also available in case there are any incidents of injury or sickness.

Crisis Management

Peer Advising 101 has very low risk involved since it occurs on campus and requires no high-risk activity. Any risk due to minor medical injuries or natural disasters is covered by the campus-wide crisis management plan. The office of public safety will be called if there is an emergency. They have a detailed protocol in place for all types of crisis situations.

Budget

Peer Advising 101 is a low-cost training since the facilities and materials are already available for use. The only cost required is the cost of peer advisor lunches which comes out of the events budget during the semester, and is a perk to compensate peer advisors for taking their weekend to attend training. Peer advisor are not paid for Peer Advising 101 training because it counts as a class period for their peer advisor internship course. The total cost of the training is \$120 (see Appendix J).

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There is no cost for the room in the GO house, additional staff members, projector, writing utensils and materials because those items have already been purchased. Printing and office supplies are covered by the office supply budget for the OCCP.

Limitations of the Training

While Peer Advising 101 was created based on extensive research on the training needs of peer advisors, there are certain limitations of the training. A major limitation is the time limit involved in the training – 12 hours of training for an intensive job requiring many new skills. The time limitation relates to peer advisor's paraprofessional status. Based on a two-day training, peer advisors are required to fulfill semi-professional duties that take professionals years to learn. The training was designed so that it does not create a burden to peer advisors class schedule but still covers the main skills necessary for the position. Peer Advising 101 is longer than peer advisor training's surveyed in Lo's (2006) study but shorter than several semester-long classes that peer educators in other areas of higher education undergo. Through the training, peer advisors receive a quick snapshot of basic skills and information and are encouraged to learn on the job and seek out information on their own.

Another limitation is that Peer Advising 101 occurs before peer advisors have started their job and, therefore, do not have advising experience to contribute to the workshop. Instead, the workshop is based on peer advisor's experience as students who have participated in a study abroad program. The training aims to build upon students' personal experience with paraprofessional competencies. However, advising is often difficult to teach before peer advisors have any experience practicing the skill.

Finally, Peer Advising 101 has limited content to cover office work. Besides listing office policies and procedure, the topic of office work is difficult to train because duties vary by

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project. It is assumed that peer advisors will have certain office skills such as the use of Microsoft office, outlook and excel. Peer advisors' unique strengths and interests can be incorporated into targeted at the office office projects. In-office training occurs before any project is given to a student. Training each student before a project can be a time-consuming task at the start of the semester, but once peer advisors learn a particular skill; they can continue to work on projects using the learned skill. Since office skills require on-the-job training, they are not covered in Peer Advising 101.

Topics for Further Training

Due to the limitations of time, several elements did not make it into the training and may be covered if time is available, such as during peer advisor monthly meetings. Student development theories did not make it into the training because they are a more advanced topic in advising. Interpersonal skills, study abroad programs and policies were more basic skills that needed to be covered first.

The topic of handling stereotypes and misconceptions about program locations did not make it into the training but is an important aspect of advising. Students frequently choose to go Europe because of misconceptions they may have about other parts of the world. Discussing misconceptions ties in with the larger topic of cultural competency which is only briefly covered in the training. Since students at SU take a Global Citizenship course upon coming back from their time abroad, they have a base of information on the topic. However, more training on how cultural competency pertains to advising and delivering workshops may be necessary.

Need for Further Research

Due to the limited amount of research of peer advising programs in study abroad, this capstone paper begins the process of inquiry into best practices of these programs. The

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researcher located and referenced two studies of peer advising programs in study abroad. The first is Lo's (2006) study on common practices in peer advising programs study abroad offices, including duties, selection and training. The second is Drake's (2014) study in the United Kingdom, covering the newly developed peer advising program Loughborough University designed to increase participation in study abroad. The rest of articles referenced about peer advising are from a student affairs perspective in higher education.

Several research questions for further inquiry emerged:

- How much training is adequate for peer advisors in study abroad?
- Where does the role of study abroad peer advisors begin and where is a professional role necessary?
- How much professional skills should student peer advisor be expected to master to perform well as a peer advisor?
- How successful are peer advisors in giving adequate guidance to students compared to professional staff?
- How can peer advisor's insider knowledge of their study abroad programs be leveraged to assist study abroad offices?
- What are best practices for hiring and training peer advisors in the study abroad field?

In addition, Ender and Newton's (2000) *Students Helping Students* is a well-respected training guide in the field of higher education. However, it is more focused on peer education in the student services field and focuses on assistance with study skills. A similar guide for peer advisors in the study abroad field is needed to condense professional study abroad content into a few core paraprofessional skills for peer advisors.

Conclusions

Peer education and peer advising have been a growing trend in higher education making its way to study abroad offices. The topic is the subject of many NAFSA sessions but has not been written about extensively in scholarly articles. The need for students to receive more personal support within busy offices has been a major catalyst for the widespread use of peer advisors in higher education. However, other benefits have emerged from placing students in the role of paraprofessionals. While a lot has been written on the topic of peer education in other areas of higher education, there is limited research into adapting peer advising for study abroad offices. In the field of higher education at large, peer advisors often have roles in student services, tutoring, counseling services and some academic departments. Most articles cite careful selection and training as the main two characteristics in creating a successful peer advising program.

This capstone paper begins the process of further inquiry into peer advising best practices for the field of study abroad. Through several needs assessments, and an analysis of existing peer advising literature, the researcher has designed Peer Advising 101, a two-day experiential workshop for peer advisors that includes training on office policies and procedures, interpersonal advising skills, peer advisor duties, workshop facilitation and design, study abroad programs and intercultural competency. The aforementioned workshop can be adapted to match other university peer advisor programs by changing the policies and programs section to match individual office policies.

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Appendices

Appendix A - Needs Assessment Questions

1. Have you met with a peer advisor to discuss your GO program? Peer advisors are fellow Susquehanna students that provide advising usually in office 5 of the Office of Cross Cultural Programs. (Multiple Choice: yes, no or unsure.)
2. Optional: If you are unsure if you met with a peer advisor, please describe or name whom you met with.
3. If you did not choose to speak to a peer advisor, what was the reason?
4. Select all the types of program you were interested in at the time of your meeting? (Check Box: GO Long, GO Short, GO Your Own Way)
5. What was the purpose of your meeting? What questions or concerns did you have?
6. How did the peer advisor assist you with this concern? What information did he or she provide you with? What questions did he or she ask you?
7. What other questions did you have at the end of the session? What other information do you wish you were provided with?
8. Which of the following topics were discussed: program types, cost information and scholarships, program locations, or how to apply. What were you told about these subjects?
9. Did the peer advisor speak about his or her experience? If so, what did he or she tell you? How did it affect your decision?
10. Overall were you satisfied with your meeting? Why or Why not?

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Appendix B - Training Outline

Training Day 1: 9AM – 12 PM	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Icebreakers and introductions • Presentation of workshop goals • Reflecting on peer advisor skills and qualities • Lecturette <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Office policies ○ Peer advisor job description and assignments ○ Professional duties vs. peer advisor duties comparison ○ How to make effective referrals ○ Contacts for referrals (handout) • Role play activity: explaining your role • Speak out: ways to be an effective peer advisor 	<p>15 minutes 5 minutes 30 minutes 60 minutes</p> <p>45 minutes 25 minutes</p>
Training Day 1: 1 AM – 4 PM	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Icebreakers and Agenda • Program types chart • Interactive lecture: study abroad policies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Application policies and deadlines ○ Costs and financial aid ○ Required forms • Interpersonal advising skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Active listening ○ Speaking from experience • Advising Q&A Drill 	<p>10 minutes 35 minutes 50 minutes</p> <p>50 minutes</p> <p>35 minutes</p>
Training Day 2: 9AM – 12 PM	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Icebreakers and agenda • Experience with study abroad programs presentations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Short presentation ○ How to discuss your experience? • Cultural competence and advising activity • Lecturette on available GO programs • Advising practice • Planning country presentations 	<p>10 minutes 45 minutes</p> <p>30 minutes 45 minutes 30 minutes 15 minutes</p>
Training Day 2: 1 AM – 4 PM	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brainstorm new office initiatives • Lecturette on experiential workshops <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Overview of peer advisor led workshops ○ What is the difference between a workshop and a lecture? ○ How to plan a workshop? ○ How to create experiential activities • Group activity: creating an experiential activity • Group activity: workshop facilitation techniques • Group activity: workshop planning 	<p>30 minutes 45 minutes</p> <p>45 minutes 30 minutes 30 minutes</p>

Appendix C - List of office Policies Covered During Training

- Assignments required for 2-credit peer advising internship
- Computer log in procedure for the office
- Organization of documents in the office – both physical and on the computer
- Late/sick/time off/tracking attendance policies
- Office demeanor and etiquette
- Tracking projects and tasks
- What to do if there is nothing to do in the office

Appendix D - Peer Advisor Duties vs. Professional Staff Duties

<u>Peer Advisor</u>	<u>Professional Staff</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide general information about policies, deadlines, paperwork and applying to programs• Provide basic information about programs available• Provide basic information about program cost• Explain where students can go to find further information• Share personal experiences from abroad• Connect students to other staff and services in the university• Make appointments for the student to follow up with a staff member	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discuss specific information about each program• Advise students with complex personal situations preventing them from going abroad• Speak to students with serious safety concerns• Speak to students who unhappy with GO office policies• Speak to any students about situations where peer advisors don't feel comfortable advising

Appendix E - Role Playing Scenarios for Explaining the Role of Peer Advisor

1. You are having lunch with your classmates. One of your classmates begins talking about applying to a GO long program but is not sure of application dates. She does not know you work in the GO office. How do you intervene?
2. You are facilitating a workshop on packing. You need to introduce yourself to the class and explain what your role is in this workshop.
3. A student has come to you during office hours and wants to know specific information about one particular program. You are unfamiliar with this program. How do you proceed?
4. A student has come to you during office hours and needs help figuring out what to do for the GO requirement. How do you introduce yourself?
5. After presenting a traveling workshop, a student approaches you with some specific questions about their program. You are unfamiliar with this program. How do you respond?
6. When talking to a friend after class, she confesses she is confused by the GO requirement and not sure what to do. How do you intervene?
7. You are presenting an information session about the region where you studied with three students in the audience. How do you introduce yourself?
8. A student comes in during walk-in hours and is terrified of going abroad alone. He has serious safety concerns about the threat of terrorism. You feel uncomfortable with his questions. How do you proceed?
9. A student comes to during your office hours and has a serious medical issue preventing her from going abroad. How do you proceed?

10. While working on a group project, your group mate begins telling you that he is unhappy with the GO program and some of its policies. How do you intervene and assist?

Appendix F - Role Playing scenarios for Sharing Experiences

1. A student feels overwhelmed by the application process, and the amount of programs available, and is not sure where to begin. She feels she may not be able to complete the required steps. What experience can you share to reassure the student of her abilities?
2. A student who has not been out of the country before, asks you for a suggestion for an easy program within his comfort level. What experience can you share in this case?
3. A student asks you a lot of questions about cell phones and internet access. It seems she may be worried about being in touch with family and friends. What experience can you share in this case?
4. A student is not sure about whether he wants to stay in an apartment or do a homestay. Can you share an experience to help him understand the differences?

Appendix G – Q & A Drill Handout

1. How do I apply for GO Long?
2. When do I apply for GO Long?
3. When do I apply for GO Short?
4. How do I apply for GO Short?
5. I want to create my own GO your own way program. What do I do?
6. How much does my program cost? (GO long, GO short, GO your own way)
7. Is there financial aid available?
8. How do I know if my courses will transfer?
9. What GO short programs are running NEXT summer? (Answer: GO short programs are not finalized until the Fall before the summer of that year)
10. Can I go abroad during my sophomore year?
11. What do I have to do once I applied? (GO long, GO short)
12. I want to go on this program I found online. Can I? (This program is summer program)
13. Where do YOU think I should go? (Answer: Bring the conversation back to the students' interests)
14. I have been approved to GO long next semester? What forms are due next?
15. What is the approval form? Where do I get it? (Hint: what kind of approval form?)
16. What is the waiver form? Where do I get it?
17. I missed the deadline can I still apply to GO long?
18. How difficult is it to get into a GO long program?
19. I'm a senior and I haven't completed GO. What can I do? (Answer: Refer to staff member)

Appendix H – Worksheet for Workshops

Workshop for Workshop Plan

Peer Advisors, Spring 2016

Workshop Title _____

Date/ Time _____

Group Members _____

Step 1: Who is your audience? Take a few notes about who this workshop is for.

Step 2: Define the Goals: Work with your group members to write 3-5 goals for your workshop. What will knowledge and skills will participants take away after they completed your workshop? (Bonus: Relate your goals to the cross-cultural learning goals)

Step 3: Create an Agenda

Part 1: Start the meeting with an [icebreakers](#) to get everyone relaxed and comfortable.

Create your own creative ice breaker that fits with the workshop goals. You can search online for more ideas.

Part 2: Main points – Create a list of main points for 5-10 main points you plan to discuss.

Part 3: Discussions and activities – Create or revise the experiential activity for this workshop to help participants practice the skill that they learned. Use the following questions to help plan your activity.

- What will participants learn from this activity?
- What are the instructions? Are there any necessary handouts?
- How much time will be given to complete the activity? What will you do while students work on the activity?
- What questions will you ask each group?
- What follow up questions will you ask?
- What new information will you contribute at the end?

Part 4: Create a workshop itinerary using the elements you created above. List the topic or activities you plan to go over in order and how much time each activity is expected to take.

Step 4: Handouts and Visuals: What hand outs and visuals will you be bringing to the workshop?

Appendix I – Peer Advisor Application

**Susquehanna University Office of Cross Cultural-Programs
Student Intern Program Spring 2016
Application**

Last Name	First Name	Class Standing SO JR SR
Graduation Date	Major(s)	Minor(s)
Program(s) Studied On (example: IFSA-Butler)	Location of Study Away Program	Term/Year of Program(s)
<p>What position are you interested in?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Peer advisor</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Global ambassador</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> GO program assistant</p>	<p>Have you worked for the GO office before?</p> <p>___ YES ___ NO</p>	

1. What extracurricular activities are/were you involved on campus (including sports)?

2. What is your availability (between 4:15 pm and 9 pm on week afternoon and evenings) during the Spring semester?

3. Why do you want to work (or continue working) in the GO Office?

4. What do you think are the biggest challenges in working with students? How would you help others overcome these challenges?

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5. Do you have an interest in working with international students (ISS) or in the field of study abroad (Education Abroad)? Please explain.

6. Please rate yourself on the following skills and note improvement from this semester as a peer advisor:

	Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor
Public Speaking	<input type="radio"/>				
Listening/Providing Feedback	<input type="radio"/>				
Leadership Experience	<input type="radio"/>				
Self-motivation/initiative	<input type="radio"/>				
Interpersonal communication	<input type="radio"/>				
Use of social network resources	<input type="radio"/>				

Return the completed application and your class

schedule for the Spring 2016 to:

Application Deadline:

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Appendix J – Budget

Peer Advising 101 Budget			
Item	Cost Per Unit	Unit	Total
Lunch - Day 1	\$5	12	\$60
Lunch - Day 2	\$5	12	\$60
		Total	\$120

Note: Budget takes into account 10 peer advisors and 2 facilitators