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# Panel Discussion Proposal Study Abroad as an Education Experience: Challenges, Realizations, and Lessons Learned

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# **Panel Discussion Proposal**

## **Study Abroad as an Education Experience: Challenges, Realizations, and Lessons Learned**

### **Part 1: Statement of the panel topic and the target audience**

The business environment has expanded to a point that many companies compete on a global level. Companies need new employees who are globally aware. This is especially important for future information systems (IS) employees since IS is the enabler of globalization. The labor market for IT employees has become globalized, with workers shifting readily to the countries with higher salaries. Many Web sites can be accessed in various languages, and inept translations may have a significant negative impact on their effectiveness. The technologies are the same the world over, but the conditions in which they are used may be very different. Supply chains connect companies across countries and continents. Outsourcing and offshoring are commonplace in most large companies. It is vitally important that all business students, and especially IS students, understand the global environment in which they will work, including both the similarities and differences between countries, cultures, languages, and work practices.

One way for students to prepare for the global business environment is to take part in a study abroad experience. A study abroad experience can be short term (7-14 days), medium term (15-30 days), or longer term (over 30 days). Study abroad experiences can provide students with a rich educational experience. They allow students to experience the culture, language, and, many times, the work practices of the country visited.

From the faculty viewpoint, leading study abroad trips can be exhausting and challenging. Study abroad trips require a lot of planning, coordination, and leadership. This panel will discuss the challenges, realizations, and lessons learned from the study abroad experience. It is aimed at faculty who want to gain more understand of the planning and execution of a study abroad trip.

This panel should be of interest to all faculty that have lead or would like to lead study abroad trips. It will also be of interest to faculty from universities that serve as hosts to study abroad trips.

### **Part 2: Statement of the panel objectives**

The objective of this panel is to provide an exchange of ideas among panel members and the audience regarding study abroad trips. It will address all of the issues encountered by faculty in leading study abroad trips. Some of the areas that will be addressed by the panelists include:

- Planning the study abroad trip
- Maximizing the educational value of the trip
- Finding companies that will host “company visits” for students
- Working with a “host” institution
- Projects that are appropriate for U.S.-Host institution student teams
- Balancing cultural/sightseeing with educational objectives
- Student safety and security
- How many students should go on a trip?

### **Part 3: Statement of the panel format**

The panelists are experienced faculty that have lead study abroad trips. Each panelist will address the challenges and student realizations of different types of trips, and of lessons learned. Specifically, one panelist will address each of the following:

- Challenges and realizations of short term (7-14 day) study abroad trips
- Challenges and realizations of medium term (15-30 day) study abroad trips
- Challenges and realizations of long term (over 30 day) study abroad trips
- Logistic issues for study abroad trips
- Lessons learned from the experiences of all of the study abroad leaders.

Each panelist will have 10 minutes to make a presentation on their topic. After making presentations, the panelists will take questions from the audience.

### **Part 4: Short Bio of each panelist, and the panel facilitator, emphasizing those aspects in the bio that make the individual highly qualified to serve on the given panel**

Panel moderator: **Albert L. Harris**

Panelists:

**France Belanger**, Virginia Tech

**Andrew Urbaczewski**, University of Michigan-Dearborn

**Karen Loch**, Georgia State University

**Meg Murray**, Kennesaw State University

**Al Harris**, Appalachian State University

**France Belanger** has been teaching information systems for more than 15 years in the United States, as well as in Canada, Portugal, and New Zealand. She has published two books and several articles on IS education-related topics, including a highly cited book on distance learning. During the last three years, she has taken students on month long study abroad programs in France. She currently teaches introduction to information systems classes to undergraduates, Masters students, as well as Executive MBA students, in addition to teaching information systems research seminars to Ph.D. students.

**Andrew Urbaczewski** is the chair of the Department of Management Studies and Associate Professor of MIS at the University of Michigan-Dearborn. In addition to his numerous other scholarly, pedagogical, and service activities, he has been very involved with International activities. Since 1997 he has been teaching abroad, and in 2005 he formalized an agreement with the Helsinki School of Economics (now part of Aalto University) to take UM-D students to Helsinki each summer to study IT and in return host some students in the winter in Dearborn. The program has been successful in not only exposing students to work on international teams for international projects, but also in exposing some students to IT and to become MIS majors when they might not have previously considered it.

**Karen Loch**

**Meg Murray** is an Associate Professor in the Department of Computer Science and Information Systems at Kennesaw State University, part of the higher education system of the state of Georgia. She has over thirty years experience in both academe and industry. Meg specializes in the area of emerging technologies and the development and implementation of those technologies to meet business and organizational needs with a special interest in technology infusion in healthcare. Her focus in teaching is to inspire students to create and devise new and innovative ways to implement information technologies to solve real-world problems. She has collaborated with researchers from around the globe and has participated in several study abroad initiatives including leading a study abroad to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

**Albert L. Harris** is a Professor in the Department of Computer Information Systems at the John A. Walker College of Business, Appalachian State University. Al led a study abroad trip to Paris and Angers, France in March 2010 for 22 MBA students. He took a group of undergraduate students to Bangalore, India to study IS outsourcing in 2008 and co-lead a study abroad trip to Japan and Taiwan in 2006. He teaches every September at the Fachhochschule Vorarlberg in Dornbirn, Austria. He was Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of Information Systems Education from 2000-2010. He co-edited a book titled “Managing Global Information Technology” and published often on global IS and education issues.

**Part 5: Statement of any equipment needed**

The panel would need the ability to project PPT presentations for the audience to see.