Proposing Credit-Bearing Pre-Departure Education Abroad Course

This document corresponds to the "Process Model for Proposing a Credit-Bearing Pre-Departure Education Abroad Course" document. It breaks the process down into a series of questions to be asked at each stage in the process

Stage One: Reconnoitering

Curricular approval processes are (by design) methodical, deliberate, and engage a multitude of stakeholders.

Institutional Curricular Process

- What is the overall framework for the institution's curriculum?
- Who owns curriculum at the institution?
- What is the institution's *formal* curricular approval process?
- What is the institution's *informal* curricular process?
- How would this proposal fit into the curricular process?
  - Would it require state or accreditor approval?
  - Would it meet liberal arts/core requirement(s)?
- What are the commonalities of recent curricular proposals that succeeded *and* failed?
- What is the current state of the curricular process (e.g., review of liberal learning core)?

Institutional Stakeholders

- Who are the key curricular stakeholders across the institution?
- Who are the key curricular obstacles across the institution?

Institutional Political Environment

- Does the institution use FTE budgeting (i.e., what is the budget framework)?
- Do similar courses/programs exist already in the curriculum (i.e., is there a model)?

Broader Landscape

- What does pre-departure look like at peer and aspirant institutions?
- What institutions have successfully navigated this process? How did they achieve success?

Stage Two: Planning

Argument

- What is the rationale for adopting a credit-bearing pre-departure course? Where does it fit?
- What are the key arguments in opposition to credit-bearing pre-departure courses?
- Who would own the education abroad curriculum at the institution?
- What approach will we adopt for integrating pre-departure into the curriculum?
  - Is a stand-alone course the best curricular approach?
  - Is credit-bearing the best approach?

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Logistics

- Is a pilot necessary?
  - What might a pilot look like?
  - Who would be the partner for a pilot?
- What is the staffing plan for the course?
  - What are the requirements for the faculty teaching the course?
  - What are the projected enrollment numbers?
- What timeframe will be best for the proposal?

Curriculum is the currency of higher education institutions.

Proposal

- Who should draft the curricular proposal?
- What would a course syllabus look like? Who should draft it?
- Who will lead the proposal process?
- What are the review intervals for updating the course?
- What is the assessment protocol?

Stage Three: Proposing

Proposal Development

- Who will provide feedback regarding the proposal and syllabus?
- Who makes final decisions regarding the content of the proposal and syllabus?

Guiding the Process

- Who are the best spokespeople for the proposal?
- What (counter)arguments do you need to make to garner support and/or address questions?
- Who needs to make which arguments to which stakeholders?

Strategy

- What are your non-negotiables?
- What are you willing to give (up) to obtain curricular approval?
- How much political capital are people/units willing to expend to obtain approval?
- At what stage do you punt the proposal to a future cycle?

Tips

Be flexible – the argument(s) and course structure are *very* likely to change.
Be patient – substantive curricular changes (and this is one) typically take years.
Be strategic – consider the time, energy, bandwidth, and political capital required for course approval.

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