Chapter 11
Low–Cost Initiatives for Expanding Study Abroad Opportunities

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ABSTRACT

Community colleges without a budget strictly allocated to study abroad programs need to be creative in how they expand opportunities for their students. This chapter will focus on the strategies developed by the Peralta Community College District’s Office of International Education to develop a stronger study abroad program with limited resources and staffing. After the Peralta Colleges committed to the Institute of International Education’s Generation Study Abroad initiative in 2014, it created new study abroad programs, organized annual study abroad fairs, was awarded a scholarship of $7,500, created new promotional materials and an administrative procedure, launched a new website and newsletter, organized financial aid workshops and professional development day presentations for faculty, and opened a study abroad scholarship through its foundation. The chapter will share how other colleges can learn from these efforts and institutionalize study abroad on their campuses.

PERALTA COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT BACKGROUND

Located in the East Bay Area of Northern California, the Peralta Community College District, which is referred to as Peralta Colleges, consists of four community colleges (Berkeley City College, College of Alameda, Laney College and Merritt College) that are accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC, 2018). The colleges have a diverse student population which adds to the richness of its learning community and study abroad programs. In spring 2017, approximately 25,000 students enrolled at the Peralta Colleges, which includes 1,000 international students studying from over 80 different countries. On average Peralta Colleges sends approximately 50-70 students to other countries each year on its faculty led study abroad programs. The Peralta Colleges students mirror the Bay Area’s ethnic, cultural and socioeconomic diversity. They include single parents, international
students, full-time workers, re-entry students, career changers and high school students. Ethnicities for all students includes 27% Asian, 23% African American, 22% Hispanic, 17% White Non-Hispanic, 3% Filipino, and 8% Unknown/Other. More than half of Peralta Colleges’ students are between 19 and 24 years of age. 55% are female, 42% are male and 3% are unknown or declined to state (California Community College’s Chancellors Office, 2017).

Prior to 2018, very limited data was collected regarding specific student demographics participating in study abroad programs. Beginning in 2018, Peralta Colleges required all students participating in a faculty-led program to fill out a Pre-Travel Study Abroad Information Form which includes demographic data, travel history, educational goals, medical history and other information which will be used for future studies in understanding the types of students who are enrolling. For Peralta Colleges’ study abroad programs to Cuba, Japan and China (35 students total) offered during the summer 2018 term, 37% were male and 63% were female. The average age of students was 29 (ranging from 17 to 70). Ethnicities include 8% Asian or Pacific Islander, 44% African American, 20% Hispanic, 8% Multiracial, 8% White Non-Hispanic and 12% Unknown/Decline to State. Students who enrolled in these study abroad programs indicated their current educational goals as 51% obtain an associate degree and transfer to a 4-year institution, 20% transfer to a 4-year institution without an associate degree, 6% obtain a 2-year associate degree without transfer, 6% earn a career technical certificate without transfer, 3% prepare for a new career (acquire job skills), 6% advance in current job/career (update job skills), 6% educational development and 2% undecided on goal. 28% of the students were first generation college students, and 80% of the students indicated that they were the first person in their family to study abroad. 37% of the students said they had never traveled abroad before.

**Peralta Colleges Educational Programs**

Peralta Colleges offer many two-year Associate of Arts/Associate of Science (A.A./A.S.) Degrees and Certificate programs in fields such as Business, Performing Arts, Computer Information Systems, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), as well as many Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math (STEAM) fields of study. Peralta Colleges also offer Career and Technical Education programs such as Aviation Maintenance Technology, Culinary Arts, Cosmetology, Cyber-security, Automotive Technology, Apparel and Fashion Design, Dental Assisting, and Nursing (PCCD Career and Technical Education, 2018). All college level units taken at Peralta Colleges are transferable to the University of California (UC) and California State University (CSU) systems, as well as most other 4-Year public and private Universities. Faculty from any department may choose to propose a study abroad program in their discipline. Peralta Colleges offers study abroad courses which are transferrable and help fulfill the General Education transfer requirements to a 4-Year University. Additionally, Peralta Colleges has also created career education study abroad programs in fields such as Cosmetology.

**Peralta Colleges Education Abroad Programs**

In line with current trends across higher education, Peralta Colleges has steadily increased the number of faculty-led programs since the early 2000’s. Each program has approximately 10-15 students participating. Each program is linked to an individual class, which is determined by the faculty leader working alongside with the Chair of their department and Division Dean to decide on minimum course enrollment needed.
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