

Embracing Change in International Program Planning: Strategies for Financing
International Programs in Times of Economic Turbulence

*International Legal Education Abroad Conference
American University Washington College of Law – April 2014*

Summary of Discussion

Moderators:

Diane Penneys Edelman, Villanova University School of Law,
edelman@law.villanova.edu

Toni Jaeger-Fine, Fordham Law School
tfine@law.fordham.edu

Reporters:

Anthony Jarvis, t.jarvis@latrobe.edu.au

Cara Morris, Georgetown University Law Center, woltermat@law.georgetown.edu

Julie Sculli, Brooklyn Law School, julie.sculli@brooklaw.edu

I. Year-long exchange collaboration

- a. Budget neutral
 - i. Students from abroad pay a regulated tuition that cannot be exceeded
 - ii. U.S. students pay regular tuition
- b. Students spend fall term abroad at host law school
 - i. Students from host country, U.S., and other schools abroad participate in English language semester.
- c. Students spend spring term at U.S. partner school.
- d. Keeping exchanges in balance
 - i. Ability to do so depends on program.
 - 1. If law school is a part of university, consider trying to balance with undergrad. Will undergrad pay law school for places?
 - 2. Some schools ignore imbalances when they have them.

3. University/law school tensions – there may be accounting issues with university and if students come in to university but do not go out.
 - ii. Another model: if your exchanges are out of balance, any additional students pay 50% tuition. If they return to U.S. host school for LL.M., they will receive 6 credits towards LL.M.
 - iii. Additional model: code one semester exchange students as LL.M. students
 1. Must return within 24 months to finish.
 2. Must pay visa fees.

II. Summer Programs

- a. One model: all tuition-based equivalent to 6 credits at U.S. host school
- b. Most use reduced per-credit tuition
- c. Lost [academic year] tuition has become a financial issue if students earn credits and pay less tuition during summer.
- d. Increasing concern that summer based credit programs which are provided as an alternative to semester credit programs will shift income and reduce the overall viability of law schools
- e. Partner arrangements to use facilities are very common.
- f. Resources that actually go into planning and running the programs – are they really revenue neutral or profitable?
 - i. All spoke of considerable planning and management costs that were not factored into the overall balance sheet.
 - ii. This led on to a discussion of the possibility of using 3rd party providers in order to provide both a better experience and relieve the administrative burden.
 1. Providers for infrastructure means better value for students (housing, transportation, etc.) but may want to control too much.
 2. Negotiation is possible to get a **bespoke** arrangement e.g. IES Abroad.

3. May reduce hidden costs for law schools to organize difficult aspects and details of the program.
 4. Allows for better presence on the ground and overall risk management and improved experience.
- g. Discounts for students who getting friends to come on the program seems to work to improve the attractiveness and viral marketing of programs. How the discounts are applied varies – some reduced costs individually and others used the incentive as an overall reduced cost for everyone involved.
- h. Role of faculty – most are faculty who teach and direct but not always so. Some direct and do not teach.
- i. Need to be enough staff to manage the logistics of the group and teach.
 - ii. This is where there is some value in a comprehensive infrastructure provided by a third party.
- i. Possibility raised of cooperation between two or three schools to reduce costs and overhead for programs in specific locations.
- i. Some are using this, split revenue, administration borne by one school, transcripts sent automatically as it is done between partner schools but they have to go through each partner’s curriculum processes and approvals, issues with differences in tuition.
 - ii. May ultimately improve profitability by amortizing costs over more participants and improve the revenue stream for everyone involved. May also work best when leveraging existing partners where there is already a good and trusted relationship.
 - iii. Great variation in-house/external participation in these programs ??

III. Other methods to generate sources of outside income

- a. Create programs that are conducive to providing CLE credit. This would entice law firms to send associates to programs and fund them. Costs could be deducted as charitable deduction.

- i. Problem-not all states allow summer abroad programs to count for CLE credit. New Jersey does.
- ii. Also, development offices at U.S. law schools are protective and don't want other departments going to law firms or alums to ask for sponsorship.
 - 1. One suggestion is to put together a package of information that refers to international programs and allow development to send it out once they have decided that a potential donor is not likely to donate to non-international programs.
- b. Pursue outside organizations (including foreign government agencies) to invest in specific programs that could benefit them. Include a request for discretionary funding that can be spent keeping other programs afloat.
- c. Dean's perspective and said that even when deans are very pro-international, they still need to be mindful of competing interests within the law school and often can't let programs continue if they don't at least break even. Programs need to be able to justify their existence.
- d. One possible option is to charge a fee (e.g., \$8,000) to students who want to study at U.S. institution on an individual basis and outside any exchange agreement.