

Baldwin-Wallace College Explorations/Study Abroad Center
Executive Memorandum: In Response to Experiential Learning Requirements

The Baldwin-Wallace Explorations/Study Abroad office currently has one full-time employee, one part-time employee, one graduate assistant (15 hours/week), one graduate intern (10 hours/week; DISCLAIMER-graduate intern may not apply-determined year-to-year), and two student employees (10 hours/week each). Currently, the Explorations/Study Abroad Center offers faculty-led programs, exchange programs through recommended institutions, or the opportunity to study abroad through an alternative program or institution. The Explorations/Study Abroad Center provides opportunities that range from short-term trips, summer semesters, full semester programs, and full academic year programs. Over the last three academic years (F08-SP11), the Explorations/Study Abroad Center has sent 339 students abroad for various lengths of time, with 101 students studying abroad during the 2010-2011 academic year.

Throughout the last ten years, study abroad professionals have worked to establish a formula to determine the appropriate workload for advisers in the field. The most notable survey conducted was by the Forum on Education Abroad (FEA), a professional organization dedicated to “improve practices in education abroad, so that our students' international educational experiences are as rich and meaningful as possible” (Forumea.org, 2010). In 2008, FEA released “The Forum Pathways to the Profession Survey 2008”, a comprehensive report detailing responses from 110 organizations and 309 individuals in the field of study abroad (Spencer, Kreutzer, & Shallenberger, 2008, 2).

In that report, organizations that reported having a mean student to staff ratio of 47:1 felt appropriately staffed for the advising workload in study abroad, whereas organizations that reported feeling understaffed had a mean ratio of 70:1 (Spencer et. al, 2008, p. 6). Currently, the Explorations/Study Abroad Center has an average ratio of roughly 56:1, based off the average total number of students studying abroad and 2 FTE staff members (1FTE + .5FTE Part-time staff + .5FTE Graduate Student Staff).

The following chart details how Baldwin-Wallace College fares as compared to national ratios regarding study abroad staff workloads.

Institution	Students/Staff Ratio
B-W	56/1
National (Appropriately staffed)	47/1
National (Understaffed)	70/1

Source: Spencer et. al, 2008

As noted earlier, B-W Explorations/Study Abroad sends, on average, 113 students abroad each year, with one full-time staff member, one FTE staff member, and two student workers. According to data compiled in 1998 (the last available, full-scale compilation), institutions sending 101-200 students abroad average 1.4 FTE full-time staff members, .50 FTE part-time staff members, and 1.4 student staff members (Lochner-Wright, 1998). On average, the 30 institutions in this range offer 1.2 exchange programs and 1.7 short term programs.

If B-W Explorations/Study Abroad were to increase the number of students sent abroad each year to 201-300 students, the 1998 average for full-time FTE staff would call for 2 FTE full-time staff members, .57 FTE part-time staff members, and 2.9 student staff members (Lochner-Wright, 1998). Furthermore, Lochner-Wright (2008) pointed out that of the 22 institutions with 201-300 students abroad each year who responded to the inquiry, there are a total of 134 exchange programs offered, with one institution offering 60 of the programs alone. Factoring that in, the remaining institutions offer an average of 3.52 exchange programs. In comparison, B-W collaborates with 33 institutions every year, with 17 direct exchange programs, with fewer total staff members. The following chart details the average number of students studying abroad each year using the above parameters, the average number of FTE full-time, FTE part-time, and student staff support of study abroad offices using the above information.

Institution & Average Students/Year	Avg. # FTE Full-time	Avg. #FTE Part-Time	Avg. # Student Staff	Avg. # Exchange Programs
B-W (113)	1	.5 (+2 Grad Students*)	2	17
National (101-200)	1.4	0.5	1.4	1.2
National (201-300)	2	0.57	2.9	3.52

*2 Graduate Students does not apply every year

Source: Lochner-Wright, 2008

In terms of direct competition, the following graphic illustrates how B-W compares in terms with regional competitors in terms of the number of students studying abroad and the number of staff members in study abroad offices.

College/University	Total # Students Who Study Abroad Annually	Students in Semester Programs	Students in Short-Term Programs	# of Staff	Ratio (Students/Staff)
Baldwin-Wallace College	100-120	60	60	2 (1.5 FTE+ 2 Grad Students*)	56/1
Ashland University	100	5	95	1.5 FTE	66/1
Otterbein College	130	30	100	2 FTE	65/1
Capital University	70	30	40	2 FTE	35/1
University of Mount Union	120	30	90	3.5 FTE	34/1
John Carroll University	150	100	50	3 FTE	50/1

*2 Graduate Students does not apply every year

Source: Shrefler, C. K., 2011.

As evidenced by the above graphic, Baldwin-Wallace College is sending roughly the same number of students abroad as compared to direct competitors with either the same, or drastically fewer staff members supporting study abroad programs. The most notable difference is with the University of Mount Union, who sends roughly the same number of students abroad per year but has a staff workload that is 60% of that of B-W study abroad staff. Also of note is the information received from John Carroll

University, who sends marginally more students per year but has twice the number of staff members. When compared to the direct competitors and national averages, Baldwin-Wallace College's Explorations/Study Abroad Center is understaffed, while sending more students abroad. Were B-W to begin sending more students abroad per year, it would, by national and local standards, be grounds for adding a second full-time staff member aside from the existing part-time staff member.

We currently find ourselves in the era of efficiency and accountability in higher education, an era that expects faculty and staff to provide a greater number of services with fewer resources and finances. With the current state of Baldwin-Wallace College, it is reasonable to expect the Study Abroad Center to continue promoting its programs in hopes to send a greater number of students abroad, but doing so at current levels of funding and staff. However, when compared to national and local levels, B-W Explorations/Study Abroad is already doing more with less, while continuing to send 18% of its students abroad during their tenure at Baldwin-Wallace. To continue developing contributing, compassionate citizens in an increasingly global society, it would require the addition of at least one full-time staff member, a move that would ultimately prove to be necessary in order to continue creating a supportive environment that enhances students' intellectual and spiritual growth through explorations and study abroad programs.

Works Cited

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