



diversityabroad

THE GLOBAL IMPACT EXCHANGE

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HEALTH, SAFETY, AND WELLBEING:
GLOBAL EDUCATION IN A
CHANGING WORLD



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GLOBAL INCLUSION 2022

10th ANNUAL DIVERSITY ABROAD CONFERENCE

Celebrating 10 years of Equity & Inclusion in Global Education



October 2022
San Francisco, CA

CALL FOR PROPOSALS CLOSING APRIL 22, 2022



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Diversity Abroad E-Learning Courses

Diversity Abroad's online course provides professional development opportunities centered on topics of access, inclusion, and diversity to professionals working in international education and exchange. Using a convenient asynchronous learning model, this course(s) is intended to:

Increase Participation in international education by promoting good practices, offering training and providing access to student resources that assist international education practitioners in effectively recruiting, advising, and serving the needs of their diverse students;

Save Time for institutions by providing a centralized and easy to navigate location to quickly access good practices, advising tools, and training, as well as connect professionals with similar objectives and goals to promote inclusion in international education; and,

Improve the student experience before, during, and after an international education experience by ensuring that global education professionals are equipped and prepared to holistically address the needs diverse and underrepresented students in international education.

ELEARNING COURSE TITLES

Inclusive Advising for Education Abroad Professionals
diversitynetwork.org/InclusiveAdvisingEdAbroad

Inclusive Advising for International Student & Exchange Professionals
diversitynetwork.org/International-Student-Advising

PUBLICATION INFORMATION

The Global Impact Exchange

*A Quarterly Publication
of Diversity Abroad*

The Global Impact Exchange quarterly publication serves to advance domestic and international conversations around diversity, inclusion, and equity in global education with respect to the thematic focus identified each quarter.

Acknowledgments

A special thank-you to members of the Diversity Abroad consortium for supporting thought leadership at the intersection of global education and diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Winter/Spring 2022 Edition:

Health, Safety, and Wellbeing: Global Education in a Changing World

Published April 2022

As we begin to plan for global education opportunities, how are we framing health, safety, and well-being in the changing world? The Center of Disease Control (CDC) has recently announced “racism as a serious threat to the public’s health.” Considering the negative impact that racism and discrimination has on the mental health of students, staff, and faculty, what support mechanisms are being built or enhanced to ensure all constituents are supported when impacted by instances of discrimination and/or racism? How are we centering equity and inclusion in health, safety, and wellbeing discussions, strategies, and programming? How are campus leadership, faculty, staff, students/families, and providers integrating new health, safety, and wellbeing protocols into global education programming? After over a year of working from home, how will wellbeing be factored into staff and faculty success as global education programs begin to pick back up? What strategies would be helpful for offices who continue operating under a hybrid model to ensure effective student support? What support is in place for international students who are arriving on campus? For international students who will be participating remotely, how will their wellbeing be centered in their global education experience? How are we tailoring the message specifically for international students around health, wellness, and wellbeing to ensure they are supported and can be successful?

INTRODUCTION



By **LILY LÓPEZ-MCGEE, PHD**

Executive Director

Diversity Abroad

Over the course of the last two years, the global community has navigated life-altering events that have happened both in rapid succession and simultaneously. These include the global pandemic resulting from COVID-19, social unrest as a result of racial injustice and police brutality, climate-related catastrophes, nationalist uprisings, and military invasions, just to name a few. And still, international educators and practitioners, and the field of higher education more broadly, are asked to press on in the daily activities of educating students and providing student and academic services. It is no wonder, then, that issues of mental wellbeing and health have drawn the attention of educators and administrators in a rather unprecedented way.

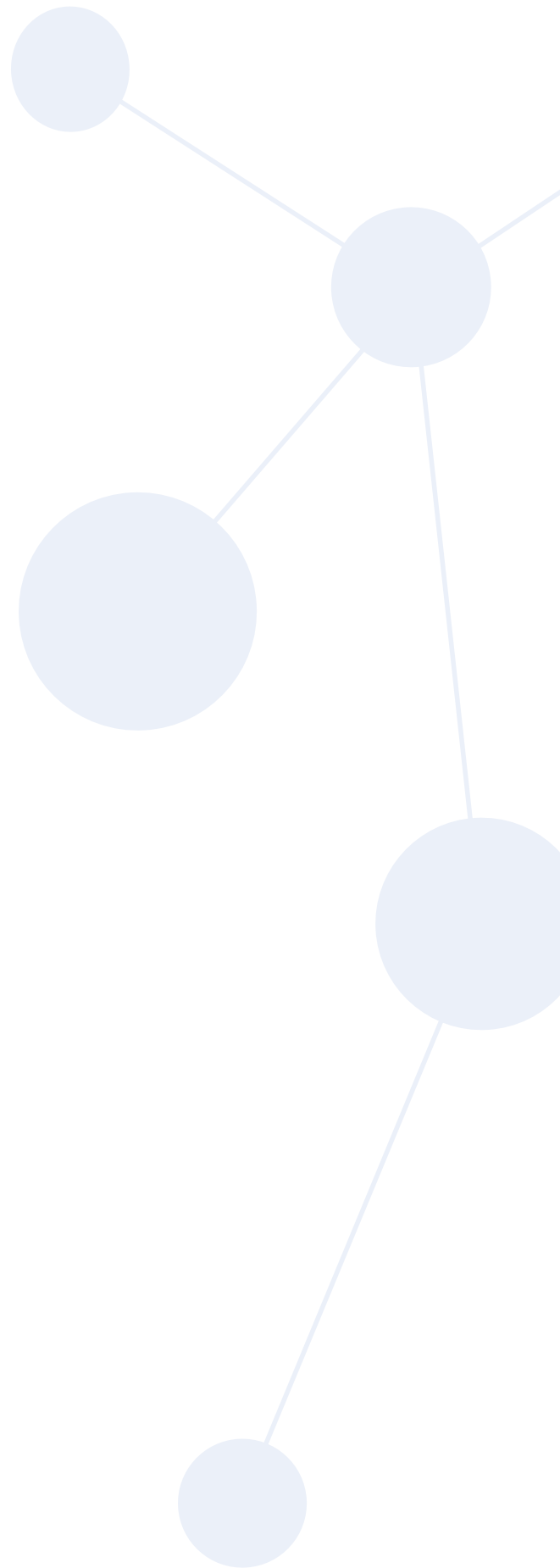
Institutions of higher education are looking more closely than they have in the past at their infrastructure and ability to provide adequate mental health and health care services to all students, and the results from such examinations have left much to be desired. Assessing these gaps in services is a critical step to identifying what resources institutions can bring to bear to respond to higher demand for mental health services and access to trained professionals. In our current global circumstances, it is vital that we recognize that students, faculty, and staff do not simply wear their professional and/or academic titles, they are human beings navigating emotional, social, and personal responses to the often overwhelming events taking place globally and in their communities.

It is with this in mind that we wanted to draw on the experiences of individuals and institutions responding to the issues of health, safety, and wellbeing in international education. We were eager to hear how practitioners and educators were thinking about how to respond to the crises that seem to surface daily. Importantly, we wanted to better understand the strategies the field has developed, informed by the last two years, that can help prepare us for the inevitable disruptive events that will arise in the future. In the subsequent articles, the authors help us apply theoretical frameworks from different disciplines to understand how racism and discrimination

permeate our systems and processes; detail campus efforts to create spaces of healing and opportunities to listen to student voices; reframe how we can advise students to draw on their strengths; and outline strategies for how to embed health and wellbeing throughout international education opportunities.

It is important now more than ever to center student (and faculty and staff) wellbeing and health, and invest in restructuring our processes, policies, and procedure in a way that considers diversity, equity, and inclusion principles from the outset rather than as reactive measures. The field of international education has and continues to be significantly impacted by the events of the last two years; simultaneously, we are presented with a unique opportunity to rebuild our field with students, diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice at the forefront of our planning, just as the authors in this issue challenge us to do.

As you read the articles, if you are inspired to share how you or your office or organization is learning from the experiences of the last two years evolving to meet the needs student, faculty, and staff health and wellbeing, I invite you to submit a proposal to Global Inclusion 2022, Diversity Abroad's annual conference, or reach out and share a best practice with us. We would love to hear from you. Please share your reflections and ideas with us at [@diversityabroad](#) and [members@diversityabroad.org](#). We also invite Diversity Abroad members to join the conversation on the online community forums.



Reframing International Health Insurance as Essential to Student Healthcare Access and Equity

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The COVID-19 pandemic has had far-reaching and pervasive effects within the field of international education; it has highlighted the supranational linkages in our collective health and well-being, reinforced the paramount importance of health and safety travel plans and contingencies, and revealed more clearly who the US healthcare system works well for and who it does not. They say “never waste a good crisis”; COVID-19 has given us the time to stop, reflect on what we do, how we do it, and how we can do it better. At the University of Miami, this reflection led to our proposal to mandate a specific international health insurance policy for all students traveling internationally. Our goal is to provide a comprehensive insurance policy to all study abroad students that is partially subsidized or fully paid by the university.

UM’s benchmarking of 25 peer institutions revealed that the majority (80%) have a mandatory international health insurance policy for study abroad students. The remaining 20% offered students the option to purchase international health insurance from a preferred provider. These results are in line with a 2019 University Risk Management & Insurance Association report, which found that 100% of institutions surveyed, provide medical and emergency coverage for their travelers.

In addition to benchmarking, recommendations from the field’s major organizations were incorporated into our proposal. [NAFSA](#) best practices recommend that institutions “obtain and maintain appropriate health and travel insurance coverage ... during the program” (NAFSA, n.d.). [The Forum on Education Abroad](#) reiterates that organizations “maintain[s] appropriate kinds of insurance at recommended levels, operate[s] in compliance with local laws, and follow[s] best

practices in reporting on critical incidents” (Forum on Education Abroad, n.d.).

Initially, we conceived the insurance proposal as simply a health and safety compliance measure. But the more we learned about various inclusions and costs, we realized how providing a comprehensive, inclusive insurance policy could be a tool to overcoming barriers that discourage students from pursuing international experiences. Most diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives target specific underrepresented groups; adopting a comprehensive and inclusive insurance policy can effect change and positively impact multiple underrepresented populations. We wanted to share this realization with the international education community to encourage others to also reframe how to approach, develop, and enact DEI efforts.

Increasing accessibility to international opportunities for a diverse student population is a

key component of the University of Miami study abroad office's strategic plan. We believe that a comprehensive international health insurance policy makes it possible for a wider group of students to travel internationally.

Without a subsidized, comprehensive insurance policy provided by the university, students are left with their existing coverage or the best international travel health insurance coverage they can afford. This results in students of higher socioeconomic status (SES) obtaining excellent coverage and care while lower SES students are left afraid to visit a doctor or clinic to avoid a high deductible or large bill. A university-provided and mandated insurance policy can erase this divide, while reducing or eliminating upfront costs to students. Equity of health insurance coverage while abroad ensures that all cases are handled following the same procedure. While there will still be variation in the care received depending on where students are in the world, equity of coverage guarantees similar handling of advising and claim processing as well as identical provision of information and resources.

Furthermore, an inclusive international health insurance policy will help address some of the barriers for students with disabilities. Students with disabilities can succeed in study abroad programs with ongoing support from the home university, the international health insurance provider, and our international partners. With attitudes and laws surrounding physical mobility, mental illness, and many chronic conditions varying depending on study abroad destination it is essential that we have an insurance partner that has an understanding of the support services available in the student's host country.

Nationwide trends show that more students with anxiety, depression, and other mental health issues are studying abroad. Students who are already aware of mental health conditions and comfortable

managing their symptoms may require on-going mental health care as part of their treatment. Moreover, international travel may necessitate extraordinary care beyond their normal treatment protocols due to new and unfamiliar environments. Students who have conditions which have not yet presented could experience this for the first time while abroad without their normal support systems available to them. Institutions can ensure equitable mental health coverage and support for all students going abroad by including this in the group policy. Additionally, it is important to ensure that injuries resulting from alcohol or drug use are covered under the provided policy. Ideally, the coverage should extend to students experiencing substance/alcohol abuse or dependency.

Students covered under the same international health insurance coverage will have the support of on-campus offices along with an experienced healthcare provider abroad allowing students to get customized support and recommendations for their specific health needs. We are hopeful that the implementation of a university-provided and mandated comprehensive insurance policy will open the doors for more underrepresented students to seek out study abroad opportunities without concerns of healthcare costs or coverage. Reframing international health insurance as a tool for DEI access and equity rather than a health and safety compliance measure may assist fellow international education professionals with advocating for an inclusive, comprehensive, and funded policy at their institutions.

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Wellness & Wellbeing for Education Abroad: Holistic Support to Reduce Harm and Enhance Learning

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It took less than 24 hours for our world to upend. Like countless others, in March 2020, our study abroad cohort had to evacuate from our study abroad location. At first, it was a tumult of logistics: How would everyone get on the flight? What health precautions were necessary? What would happen with the classes and plans we were leaving behind? It wasn't until all students had boarded their domestic flights home, and my job as a resident director was deemed "done," that I thought about what we had truly left behind: daily structure, freedom to explore, community. Many of us also left a space where we were learning how to navigate our intersectional identities, relationships, and interests in new contexts. In the clarity of hindsight, our work supporting education abroad students stopped when our duty, and our students' learning, was far from done.

Mental and Physical Wellbeing, Justice, and Learning

The ongoing COVID pandemic, racial justice movement following the murder of George Floyd, and gymnast Simone Biles' acknowledgment of the importance of mental health during the 2020 Tokyo Olympics all underscore the interconnectedness of mental and physical health and wellbeing. Higher education too must respond to the precarity of mental and physical health for all students.

Higher education's acknowledgment of the need to support student wellbeing has been increasingly

accompanied by calls to action. For example, in 2020 NIRSA: Leaders in Collegiate Recreation, NASPA: Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education and ACHA: American College Health Association assert that wellbeing "allows people to achieve their full potential" and articulate the need to focus on "the whole person, the whole educational experience, the whole institution, the whole community" in this way "well-being becomes a multifaceted goal and a shared responsibility for the entire institution" (NIRSA: Leaders in Collegiate Recreation et al., 2020, p. 2). The emphasis on achieving potential connects wellbeing to learning while the person, experience,

institution, and community elements reinforce the importance of designing an entire system for wellbeing.

In contrast, current education abroad (EA) program design and administration tend to emphasize illness, crisis, compliance, and management of institutional risk. This focus fails to recognize day-to-day harm from unaddressed systemic racism, sexism, heterosexism, and ableism that is embedded in EA policies, programs, and practices. Our experiences managing the COVID-19 crisis have shown that we must consider both physical and mental health beyond the boundaries of any individual crisis.

Impacts of Current Education Abroad Practices

Even before COVID-19, research provides abundant examples of how microaggressions, prejudices, and discrimination in relation to students' identities directly harms their mental wellbeing. These experiences have occurred in formal academic settings with faculty and staff as well as outside of class with host community members and peers.

Situations that negatively impact student wellbeing may emerge from student assumptions of host community treatment. Students might believe they will be readily welcomed because they identify as ethnically, culturally, or religiously similar to host community members, but actually come to discover they are criticized because of their nationality and assumed economic status (Barlow, 2007; Beausoleil, 2008; VeLure Roholt & Fisher, 2013; Willis et al., 2019). Discrimination of student linguistic abilities and cultural knowledge based on their ethnicity is also common, especially for heritage learners (Beausoleil, 2008; Burgo, 2020; Quan, 2018). Situations involving racial microaggressions and gendered host community prejudice also impact

student wellbeing. Students facing race-based microaggressions and gendered host community discrimination often have their concerns neglected or diminished by facilitators who explain the painful experiences as encounters with cultural differences (Goldoni, 2017; Malewski & Phillion, 2009; Talburt & Stewart, 1999; Twombly, 1995). Microaggressions, prejudice, and discrimination may also come from other study abroad students on the same program (Chang, 2017; Green, 2017; Jackson, 2006; Willis, 2015).

Each of these situations influence a student's mental and emotional wellbeing ultimately harming the student's holistic growth (Solorzano et al., 2000; Sue et al., 2007). In most of the situations described above, students were left to navigate these complex and sensitive issues with little or no support and reported feeling misunderstood, angry, vulnerable, and emotionally drained (Chang, 2017; Willis, 2015, Twombly, 1995). Given the prevalence of these experiences, international educators need to address the influence of discrimination and identity on mental wellness and wellbeing.

Promising Practices for Holistic Wellbeing

As indicated in the research cited above, individual identities, learning environments, and persons involved in EA impact student wellness and wellbeing. If we seek to create an environment in which everyone can reach their full potential, we must attend to the wellbeing of both the whole person (individual wellbeing) and the whole community (community wellbeing).

Individual wellbeing relates to human rights and needs, being valued, satisfaction, and happiness (NIRSA: Leaders in Collegiate Recreation et al., 2020). Practices to support individual wellbeing include identity reflection, guided facilitation, wellness mapping, and building support structures. **Identity reflection activities** like the Personal and

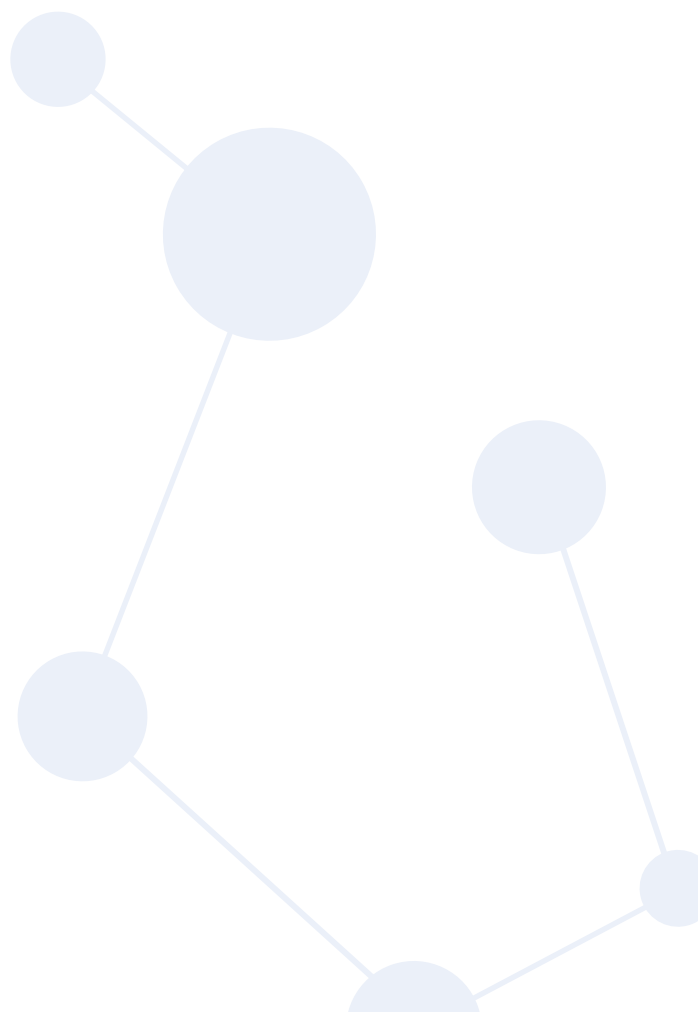
Social Identity Wheel (Calderon & Runnell Hall, 2010) help students make sense of their identities and how they change in different settings. **Guided facilitation** in the form of group discussions or personal journaling supports student wellbeing by giving students space to talk about and process their experiences of discrimination, prejudice, assault, and microaggressions without fear or retaliation.

Support structures benefit both individuals and communities. **Wellness mapping** helps students take ownership of their growth through assessing their own support needs and determining what resources (personal, community, structural) they can use for their support systems (Hardy et al., 2014). Building support structures through interactions with peers, community members, and advisors can encourage students to both better manage their own wellbeing and contribute to community wellbeing. **Reflective intercultural learning** is critical throughout this process so students can assess the needs and risks they might encounter in the context of their program location (Sorrells & Nakagawa, 2008). For example, students who share aspects of identity with their host communities may benefit from reflecting on their assumptions of how they might be received by people in the host community and identifying ways they can find support.

Community wellness and wellbeing is defined by connectedness and overall quality of life within a community through collective support systems (NIRSA: Leaders in Collegiate Recreation et al., 2020). A promising practice for this is **creating community agreements**. Similar to roommate agreements, these are guidelines on how the community will inhabit a space. The purpose of the agreement is not to remove liability from the institution, such as waivers and contracts, but instead to raise awareness of risks so that students can make informed choices and intentionally build

a healthy and supportive community. Encouraging students to actively create and uphold their own support systems may also provide a better learning space in which students can share and reflect on their experiences rather than feeling unheard or dismissed when they bring up issues, such as microaggressions or discrimination. Reflective intercultural learning is again vital in community wellness work as students learn how to understand, value, and support the diverse strengths and needs within the group and larger community.

When students study abroad, they bring their whole selves with them, but we have not built structures or expended resources to provide holistic support for wellness and wellbeing. The above practices for facilitating holistic individual and community wellbeing can contribute to a realignment of resources away from crisis management toward a proactive system that minimizes harm and optimizes student learning.



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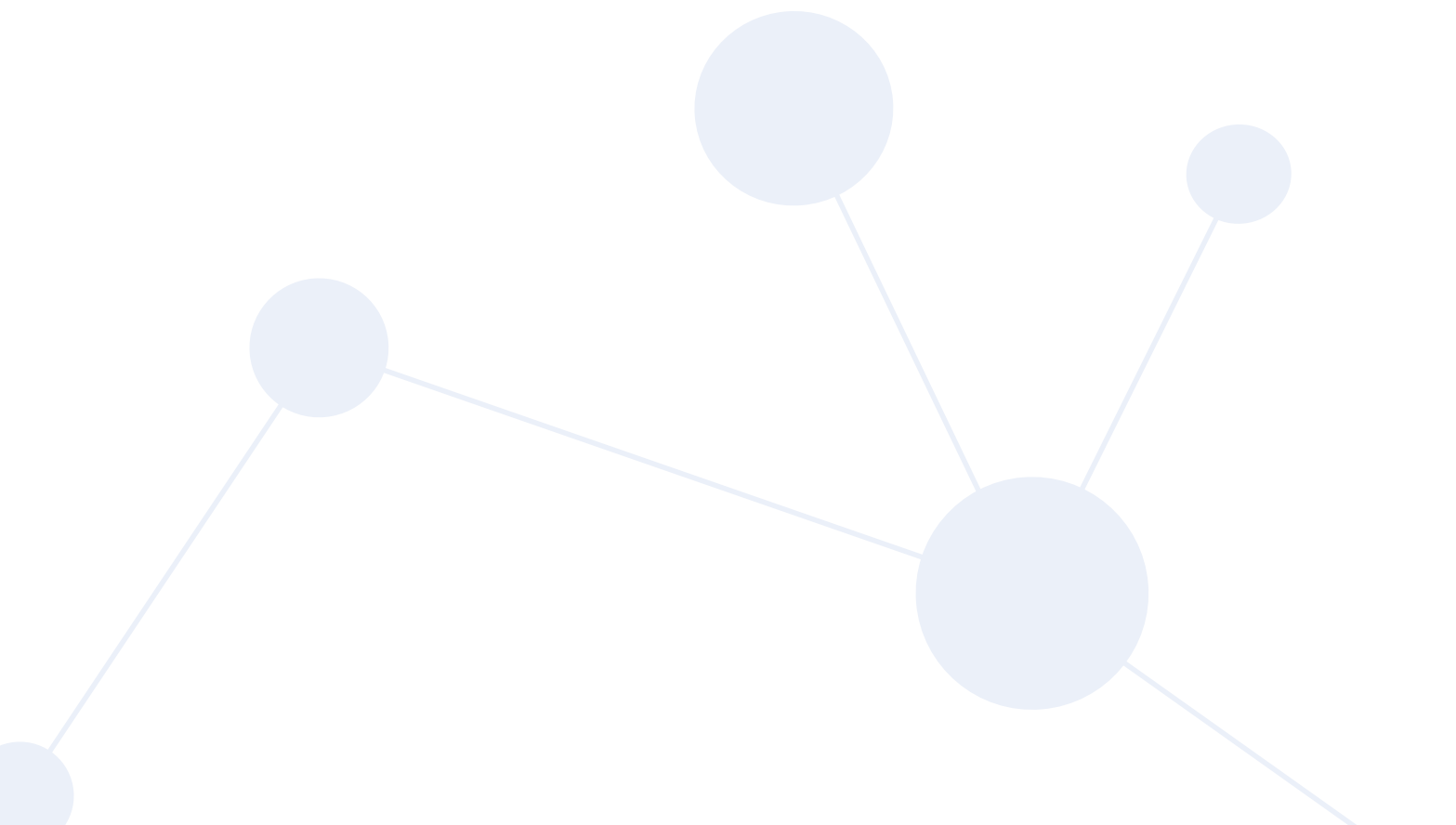
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Dueling Pandemics: Global Learning at the Crossroads of Racism and Public Health

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This article will explore a focused case study regarding one university's efforts to incorporate anti-racism and anti-extremism learning outcomes into its global education efforts. We will highlight the ways in which our institution adjusted programming due to the pandemic by relying on international community partners and the sharing of their lived experiences, while at the same time, addressing regional and national issues around racism and extremism. The programming adjustment enabled us to address the confluence of two pandemics, one rooted in public health and the other rooted in persistent racial inequality. Moreover, we reassessed the content of our curriculum for study abroad / immersion programming specifically, as well as diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) student learning outcomes more broadly. For the coming year, our university will focus on the theme of "care for ourselves, care for our community" as a means of emphasizing that we are all members of a larger human community. The article will offer recommendations for future intercultural learning opportunities embedded with anti-racism themes and learning objectives.

At the beginning of the 2019-2020 semester, a collection of leaders from around our university gathered to try to be proactive about the coming election year. Faculty leaders, student affairs practitioners, student activists, and community partners envisioned how our institution might prepare for the coming year, knowing that - if the political heat was to continue at the same intensity level - it would be particularly divisive with more vitriol that we had previously experienced. A coalition emerged from this planning session dedicated to confronting instances of extremism on campus and incorporating anti-racism outcomes into our work. In light of this experience and in a spirit of retrospect, we engaged in a focused case study regarding our university's efforts to incorporate some of these anti-racism and anti-

extremism learning outcomes under the broader umbrella of our global education efforts.

Moving into the academic year, we had done some preliminary work in promoting AAC&U's standing definition of global learning as an important foundation. That definition understands global learning as "a critical analysis of and an engagement with complex, interdependent global systems and legacies (such as natural, physical, social, cultural, economic, and political), and their implications for people's lives and the earth's sustainability" (Whitehead, 2016). Further, that definition gives some clear direction regarding student learning outcomes. Through global experiences, students should "become informed, open-minded, and responsible people who are attentive to diversity

across the spectrum of differences, seek to understand how their actions affect both local and global communities, and address the world's most pressing and enduring issues collaboratively and equitably" (Hovland, 2014). These specific learning goals of becoming informed and attentive to diversity, while also being aware of local and global impacts of their actions, prompted campus discussions about the need to support student voices of dissent.

Over the past few years, senior leaders on campus - particularly within student affairs - noticed the need to address tensions among student groups, and also allow for students to protest and raise their voices in a safe atmosphere (O'Brien, 2018). To encourage conversation and build relationships with student leaders, and to also show the campus at large that productive, civil dialogue was expected and taking place, we gathered program leaders - both students and staff - to form a thematic initiative to inspire and build upon the notion of campus unity, ultimately titled "ECUnited." This would set the stage for other programs to fall under this umbrella, ones that would center around similar learning objectives and move the work forward.

Within this thematic effort emerged some specific programs and opportunities to focus the conversation on set topics. An important initiative over the previous few years had focused on building coalitions and promoting civility. Offered as a type of regional summit, our university's Civility Summit was a program that started as a response to the racially motivated murder and subsequent unrest in Ferguson, Missouri (Michael Brown) and Baltimore, Maryland (Freddie Gray). Again, as an effort at promoting some type of reconciliation in the midst of this collective trauma, and engaging in proactive discussions, this summit served as an attempt to create space for dialogue and community action. Now in its seventh year, this summit has a history of raising challenging questions for the campus community.

At the same time, one silver lining through the pandemic was the way in which the unique situation allowed for doors to be opened more seamlessly, particularly with our international partners. Our institution had begun to cultivate some impactful relationships with NGO partners through Amizade, a fair trade learning nonprofit based in Pittsburgh. We had also maintained connections with Stranmillis University's nonviolence and peacebuilding program located in Belfast. Combining our desire to keep these relationships strong while recognizing that in-person opportunities were limited, we developed a university-wide program to address the growing divisiveness we witnessed in light of the January 6, 2021 U.S. Capitol attacks. While these effects were not experienced on a wide scale on our campus, we wanted to be sure to continue to lay the groundwork and focus the conversation for the coming years. During the program, global partners led powerful conversations with campus community members, sharing their perspectives on growing violence and extremism in our national context as well as strategies for promoting and strengthening democratic values within this climate.

These efforts at promoting global learning did not only find a home within specific programs and in response to political divisiveness. Our work of integrating global learning outcomes into our departmental efforts within student affairs - and in partnership with faculty colleagues - also had been building through our use of the Global Engagement Survey (GES) as an important assessment program (Hartman et al., 2015). Focused on global citizenship, cultural humility, and critical reflection, our use of this tool was part of a twofold strategy. First, because many of our leadership education and community-engaged learning programs overlapped, we needed a tool that would help us assess student learning across a wide diversity of types of programs. The GES served this need well, and also allowed for longitudinal assessment of

student learning over several years. Second, while conversations about ethical global engagement happened sporadically at our institution, there had never been a systematic emphasis on this type of approach to global learning. Yet, the guiding definition from AAC&U as well as a recent faculty development workshop on global service-learning pedagogy provided just such an opportunity, serving as the impetus for us to focus energy on global learning as a unifying approach (Hartman & Kiely, 2014).

At the same time, our institution participated in leadership opportunities offered through the The Community-Based Global Learning Collaborative - a network of educational institutions and community organizations that advances ethical, critical, and aspirationally de-colonial community-based learning and research for more just, inclusive, and sustainable communities. This participation allowed us to further institutionalize our global learning work by being an active part of this wider community of practice. Further, we could compare and contrast our student outcome data with other partner institutions to look for new opportunities to improve our approach.

Through all of these efforts - programmatic and through strategic planning and assessment - our global learning approach has been contextualized and responsive. Rather than launching a top-down programmatic effort, we have learned from student leaders sharing their voices, and subsequently built our work around their efforts to shape campus culture. For the future, our goal is to continue to encourage students to reflect on these experiences and connect their local experiences with respect to diversity, equity and inclusion to more global concerns.

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Critical Race Theory Imperative for BIPOC Student Wellbeing in International Education

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U.S. Black, Indigenous, and Persons of Color (BIPOC) will not soon forget the effects of the double pandemics of 2020 and 2021 for some time. The pandemic of Covid-19 has exposed severe racial inequity in healthcare such that recent CDC data for BIPOC infection, hospital, and death rates from COVID average 1.35, 2.5, and 1.9 times that of white, non-Hispanic persons (CDC, 2021). Beyond Covid-19, BIPOC have also survived the pandemic of highly publicized racialized trauma including but not limited to: the murders George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and the six Asian women in Atlanta, as well as the overt displays of white nationalism under the Trump administration and policies that decimated immigration and civil rights protections. The collective impact of racialized trauma such as these concurrent pandemics produces both physical and psychological stress known as racial battle fatigue (Smith et al., 2007).

Thus, as the field of international education navigates a new normal for U.S. education abroad in 2021 and beyond, the toll of these realities on BIPOC student mental health because of racial battle fatigue must be a part of the overall strategic vision for health and safety best practices. As a first step, international educators must familiarize themselves with research that centers race and racism in order to understand why strategies to support BIPOC students who likely experience racial battle fatigue are necessary and differ from traditional catch-all mental health strategies. This article constructs the foundation for international educators to reimagine and re-prioritize BIPOC students' wellbeing by introducing critical race theory (CRT) to describe how race and racism shape BIPOC student experiences. This article closes with implications for practice by pointing to research on BIPOC self-care informed by CRT.

Despite a contemporary flash point among global conservative political circles, CRT's historical purpose is to serve as a critical lens to understand

race and racism's influence within the United States' history in order to shed light on how race is used to continue inequity between white people and people of color (specifically Black people). *CRT's origins in 1970's critical legal studies and radical feminism emerged with the intention to interrogate and transform the power dynamics between race and racism within facets of law, policy, and property rights.* (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Delgado and Stefancic (2001) theorize CRT's interrogation of race and racism as a critique of color-blindness and legal neutrality of racial civil rights through four specific tenets: 1) racism is ordinary and commonplace, 2) racism provides systemic physical and material benefits to white people, 3) race is not biological and was formed as a social construct, therefore it is subjective and capable of changing its form when convenient, and 4) the uniqueness of voice from people of color serves as a space of resistance against master narratives of race and racism.

Patton (2016) expanded CRT's usage in higher

education to identify three propositions for understanding race and racism in higher education: 1) higher education is rooted in racism/white supremacy, 2) higher education utilized whiteness as property rights to maintain power/oppression over all aspects of the institution (curriculum, property accumulation, hiring practices and policies), and 3) higher education serves as a vessel for promoting knowledge construction/production rooted in racism/white supremacy. Thus, it is important to acknowledge racism's influence on higher education as an institutional system as largely uncontested and invisible in much of existing higher education literature (particularly in international education). So, in order to disrupt and dismantle its influence on practitioners, it has to be named and studied (Patton, 2016).

The effects of racialized trauma onset by the dual pandemics have yet to be fully studied, particularly their effects on BIPOC students; however, existing studies have used CRT to examine how racism impacts BIPOC student college experiences. Black students reported experiencing microaggressions inside and outside the classroom (Smith, 2007; Solórzano et al., 2000), undocumented Chicana students reported experiencing racialized nativism (Pérez Huber, 2010), and the perpetual invisibility of Filipino students racial identity among Asian American college students (Buenavista et al., 2009) are just a few examples of how racism shows up in the every day experience of BIPOC students. All of these experiences contribute to the detrimental toll of racial battle fatigue, which Smith (2007) describes as a physiological manifestation of "frustration, shock, anger, disappointment, resentment, anxiety, helplessness, hopelessness, and fear" (p. 551).

Therefore, as the field of international education moves forward in its response to the world changing with the Covid-19 pandemic, it is critical that the field find ways to disrupt the realities of

racism that challenge BIPOC students' mental health and wellbeing. One such strategy, informed by CRT, is by naming and validating the existence of racism occurring presently, and having occurred in the past, and how this has a specific impact on BIPOC students. Certainly, it is pivotal for U.S. higher education to do this work, yet it is equally important to extend this work to the field of international education. Fortunately, it appears that various education abroad organizations are turning the tide to address racial justice more publicly in their future strategic planning. However, all such efforts can only support BIPOC student wellness by centering the voices of BIPOC students. In closing, CRT instructively offers two possibilities that can honor this charge.

First, international education as a field must be willing to serve as a space that actively challenges dominant ideologies that continue to perpetuate racism. This is adapted from Patton (2016) who acknowledges the burden of such a task for higher education as a whole, but reminds educators that today's students become tomorrow's, "lawyers, doctors, judges, teachers, professors, scientists, business owners, leaders, and citizens in this country" (p. 335). All students participating in education abroad learn from what the field teaches, as such, revising any and all policies, practices, and paradigms to incorporate a racial justice lens will ensure that all who engage in international education understand their responsibility in this work such that BIPOC students can feel safe and centered. Such action is possible when international educators simultaneously interrogate and disrupt non-BIPOC students as well as their own monolithic constructs of racial identity that show up globally. BIPOC students have an individualized relationship with racism, which is shaped by their unique stories. These stories must be heard and shared. Delgado and Stefancic (2001) term this concept as engaging anti-essentialism and counterstory-telling, which points to the disrupting

of dominant norms generalizing BIPOC individuals into harmful stereotypes (anti-essentialism), and instead amplifying BIPOC students telling of their own stories. International education has the resources to achieve these outcomes for

racial justice, and it will be up to international educators to shift into action during this time of unprecedented change to prioritize wellbeing for all BIPOC students.

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Supporting Diverse Students to Achieve Mental Wellness Abroad

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Sam¹ was a talented student painter selected to participate in the cohorted study abroad program her school’s art department runs every summer in Ireland. Sam, an international student, identified as a queer student of color. She was enthusiastic about participating! The first four weeks her class would do an intensive residency program at a local art institute, and a professor from her home institution would then teach the second half of the program. But Sam never got to take her favorite professor’s class, nor did she complete the residency. By week two, she stopped showing up to class, was unresponsive to any outreach and ultimately had to withdraw from the program and return to her home in Singapore.

During the weeks that followed, we learned from Sam that she had struggled to face three compounding issues: a recent diagnosis of clinical depression; a disconnection with her overwhelmingly white, cis-gender female peer students; and lack of support and recognition of her mental health condition at home, due to cultural differences.² To make matters worse, her mental health provider had suggested that her study abroad program would provide a helpful perspective.³ While Sam’s most pressing issues were related to mental health, she also struggled with mental resilience as she dealt with problematic group dynamics and academic expectations from the local art institute that she found overwhelming.

Education abroad professionals often address mental wellness holistically in pre-departure (and re-entry) orientations, yet, diverse students, particularly students of color (SOC) could benefit from an approach that differentiates between mental resilience and mental health. Simply put, we understand “mental resilience” as the student’s capacity to deal with the challenges of daily life, which in an abroad context may be the student’s ability to navigate cultural differences, or to deal with homesickness or group dynamics. “Mental health” encompasses those conditions that warrant a mental health professional’s attention, and “mental wellness” functions as an umbrella term for both.

¹ The student’s name and some details have been changed for privacy reasons.

² Her family in Singapore did not acknowledge her mental health condition, and dismissed related physical problems (narcolepsy) as laziness. For recent research on the challenges of stigma in mental health globally see Krendle and Pescosolido (2020).

³ John Lucas (2009) notes: “Because not all mental health professionals have familiarity with addressing issues regarding culture shock or living abroad, a student in treatment may receive counseling that underestimates the additional stress that could complicate his or her study abroad experience” (p. 191).

As an international SOC who identified as queer, Sam may have already possessed specific forms of capital to help her navigate challenging situations abroad. Grounded in debates and insights from Critical Race Theory, Tara Yosso (2005) introduces the concept of community cultural wealth, which explicitly recognizes the strengths SOC bring to their educational experiences.⁴ Yosso proposes that communities of color nurture cultural wealth through at least six forms of capital (p. 77-81); the skills associated with ‘navigational capital’ in particular equip students to confront challenges commonly encountered abroad, such as deciphering a foreign educational system. However, as Hartman et al. (2020) note, “these are fluid forms of capital, which interact and build on one another” (p. 40). Navigational capital refers to the SOC’s skills to maneuver social institutions and structures of inequality permeated by racism (p. 80), thus highlighting the resilience that “has been recognized as ‘a set of inner resources, social competencies and cultural strategies’” (Yosso, 2005, p.80). International educators can help empower their SOC by creating opportunities for their students to recognize and intentionally tap into these strengths as they adjust to their host cultures.

One strategy is to facilitate venues to help create more awareness within the campus SOC community of the strengths, knowledge, and networks that often go unrecognized. In a recent study focused on first-generation Latinx college students, Wick et al. (2019) found that “familial and linguistic capital were critical to student success. Drawing out these strengths throughout the pre-departure process can also re-center the experiences of marginalized students as vital skills for success in

international settings” (p. 80). Prompting students to explore the strategies they possess for managing uncomfortable experiences, as often occurs abroad, surely will highlight to SOC the strength their experiences as part of marginalized communities bring to the cross-cultural environment. To the SOC who may have never left their home state, the message that not only do they *not* go into the study abroad experience with a deficit (which may be a concern if they attend school with well-traveled peers), but that they actually possess some of the critical cultural navigational skills that will help make their experience abroad successful, might empower them and boost their confidence.

While helping SOC to realize the cultural capital that they bring to the study abroad experience, international educators must also be mindful of the challenges that SOC may face in accessing resources to address mental health issues. To begin, cultural appreciation of mental health conditions particularly within Asian and African cultures may not be as widely accepted, potentially impeding a SOC’s ability or willingness to seek care (Krendl & Pescosolido, 2020; St. Louis & Roberts, 2013). Furthermore, recent studies highlight a reluctance of SOC to disclose or seek help for mental health conditions. Reasons include real or perceived discrimination, as well as limited financial means (Eisenberg et al., 2018).

An appreciation for this dichotomy can help international educators to better support the mental health needs of diverse SOC in their experiences abroad. While we did not find research specifically linking mental resilience in SOC to gains in mental health, studies tying resilience to positive mental

⁴ Tara Yosso (2005): “I define CRT in education as a theoretical and analytical framework that challenges the ways race and racism impact educational structures, practices, and discourses” (p. 74). Construed as such, CRT explicitly “begins with the perspective that Communities of Color are places with multiple strengths” (p. 82).

⁵ Helling, J. and Chandler, G.E. (2021) write about the psychological health benefits of programs designed specifically for Black students, with a specific focus on resilience theory, mirroring, and cultural resonance.

health suggest that this could be an insightful topic of additional study.⁵ A silver lining of the COVID-19 pandemic has been the focus on mental wellness, and international educators can capitalize on this attention by emphasizing the importance of preparing for self-care and wellness for everyone.⁶ This approach can help to deconstruct the stigma that surrounds mental health for some students.

To effectively support diverse SOC, education abroad professionals must expand their campus network and partner with student affairs colleagues in areas such as equality, diversity and inclusion, non-traditional and/or first-generation student support, and LGBTQ+ centers. They should also work closely with counseling professionals to identify and expand the resources available for SOC and understand how and when to connect SOC to trained professionals. Finally, given the reluctance of some SOC to disclose their mental health needs, education abroad professionals should highlight some of the challenges inherent in study abroad, encourage students to explore how they will adapt in the abroad environment and to disclose their needs for further support as early as possible in the pre-departure phase.

As compassionate international educators committed to successful education abroad experiences for our SOC, we must take steps to positively impact their mental health support. While research indicates certain challenges for SOC in accessing support, the community cultural wealth model shifts into focus the strengths, knowledge, and values of SOC, substantiating their mental resilience as they confront challenges, at home and abroad. The need for diagnosis and support of serious mental health conditions remains a critical concern, but helping SOC to see self-care and wellness activities as relevant while recognizing the mental strength they bring to education abroad are key components to addressing the needs of SOC.

In looking back on our experience with Sam, we can't help but wonder if we had been more aware of the research and utilized some of these approaches as she prepared to study abroad, perhaps her time in Ireland would have been the positive life-changing experience she expected when she first walked into the Education Abroad office. Efforts to customize the approach to the mental health needs of diverse SOC may make all the difference in the world.

⁶ See for example Beheshti, N. (2021).

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