



COLLEGE of  
CHARLESTON



## Effectively Marketing CofC Faculty-Led Study Abroad Programs

### Introduction

When looking at the attributes of successful CofC faculty-led study abroad programs, they are often led by well-known professors, heading to desirable locations, meeting a specific academic need for certain majors, etc. While the Center for International Education (CIE) can help promote your program, good marketing can really only come from you. This is because you are your program, and it is only through you that students can see the full range of benefits in considering the study abroad option. The most effective form of promotion is word of mouth.

Marketing is not advertising or selling your CofC program; it's creating and delivering value to your target population. If you are directing a study abroad program for the first time, please keep in mind that successful programs require a considerable amount of time and effort spent marketing.

The key to successful recruitment is to begin **early** and provide enthusiastic details. Beginning early allows students to save money. Providing thorough and detailed information about the itinerary, housing, meals, costs, and travel arrangements in both printed material and personal presentations increases student enthusiasm and reduces concerns and questions from students and parents.

Source: <http://www.facultyled.com/study-abroad-marketing/>

### Top Reasons Students Consider CofC Programs

When marketing CofC programs to students, it is helpful to keep in mind why some students choose this type of program. Students who decide to participate in CofC faculty-led programs are likely to do so for one or more of the following reasons:

- **The desire to go abroad with a CofC faculty member.** The faculty leader, known as the Program Director (PD), may have a reputation or teaching style that attracts students. Students may be more comfortable going abroad with someone they know and have an established relationship with, and who they view as a representative of CofC abroad.
- **Interest in a particular course.** The assurance that credit for an exact course will be received abroad is a particularly attractive feature of CofC programs.
- **The option for short-term study abroad.** For many this is an excellent opportunity to cover coursework in the summer and have an adventure as well. For those who have not traveled far from home, this is an opportunity to whet their appetite. Being away for 2-6 weeks seems more manageable for some students, and it allows them to not “miss out” on a semester on campus.
- **The appeal of a CofC-sponsored program.** Some students and families prefer the familiarity and feeling of security that comes with a CofC program because they are assured the same quality of teaching they would receive on CofC's home campus as well as the support of multiple CofC offices throughout the program cycle.
- **The appeal of a program that is pre-planned.** Many students want the independence of being abroad but may find an independent immersion experience daunting. The current U.S. student culture increasingly leads to student selection of highly-structured programs.



# Marketing Opportunities & Tips

## Flyers and Print Materials

### CIE Role:

For CofC semester and summer programs, the CIE produces promotional postcards for distribution using a standard template. Spring break program directors may create promotional flyers of their own. These materials are available at the CIE for students to view and are distributed at the Study Abroad Fairs.

### PD Role:

We encourage you to distribute print or electronic versions of marketing materials as you see fit. We suggest that you share them in your classroom, on OAKS, throughout your department, and with any other units that may have a “thematic crossover.”

## Web Brochure Page

### CIE Role:

The CIE will work with you to create an application page with engaging and accurate information so that interested students may contact you or begin the application process through our office. Every approved CofC program has a page on the CIE application portal, Abroad Office, and can be accessed through the CIE main webpage. A student may apply for a program once a Study Abroad Program Proposal has been approved by the CIE.

### PD Role:

We encourage you to verify that the information provided is accurate (managing student expectations) and engaging to the students. Incorporating student-produced photos or videos and/or including student quotes and recommendations will greatly increase student interest. Make sure to direct students back to the Abroad Office application page.

## Classroom Promotion

### CIE Role:

The CIE has a team of trained students who conduct classroom visits to present on general study abroad information upon request. These students touch on all study abroad options, including CofC faculty-led options. Additionally, faculty-led options are highlighted in the weekly study abroad advising sessions in the CIE.

### PD Role:

Speak to students in your own classes about study abroad and your program in particular. Utilize OAKS to make announcements about your program. Ask colleagues to allow you a few minutes in their courses to discuss these opportunities or ask them to distribute your flyer or make announcements about your program.

## Academic Unit/Department Promotion

### PD Role:

Your department or school can be an invaluable source of support in marketing your program. Ideas for reaching out to colleagues may include:

- Request to post program webpage link to your academic department’s website, social media, and anywhere else with which your students interface.
- Attend faculty meetings and discuss the details of your program with them so they, in turn, can convey this information to students in their classes and/or advising sessions.
- Ask colleagues what the needs are of the program’s student population and how best to target your marketing toward them.
- Provide program flyers to advising staff that can be given to students in advising sessions.
- Include promotional materials in waiting areas and hallways.
- Invite CIE advisors to your information sessions.
- Include announcements about your program within your department’s listserv, newsletter, or any appropriate departmental e-newsletters.
- Add a study abroad tab to your department’s website.

## Electronic/Social Media

### CIE Role:

The CIE has multiple social media outlets through which we promote all of our study abroad programs. We can post informational sessions through our outlets upon request.

### FD Role:

There are many creative ways in which social media can be used to generate buzz for your program. Consider starting a blog both before and during your program. This will allow students to get excited leading up to the program and then capture interest while you are abroad with the group. If you have interesting pictures of the location you’ve taken, use Instagram to share with students. Create a Facebook page for your program so students can ‘like’ the page and stay informed about deadlines and other information.



# Marketing Opportunities & Tips

## Overall Tips for Marketing to Students

CofC includes a diverse range of students with unique needs. Many students think study abroad is not a viable option for them. When marketing your program, here are some useful considerations.

**Financial Aid:** Students are most concerned about the cost of the program when making decisions to study abroad. Inform students that they can utilize their CofC financial aid. Direct them to the CIE for further assistance and information on scholarships or visit: <http://international.cofc.edu/study-abroad/financing.php>

**Academic Credit:** When choosing what courses to teach on your program, keep in mind that students often look for programs to keep them on track academically. You may consider core courses that help students fulfill requirements.

**Early Planning:** Most freshmen are looking to grow and learn about another country and will likely study abroad again. Getting freshmen excited about a location will be important. The Study Abroad Fairs and your department orientations are also great venues to reach freshmen.

**Faculty Influence:** According to a survey distributed to Summer 2016 study abroad participants, faculty are the biggest influence on students' decisions to study abroad. For your program to be successful, it is critical that you actively reach out and encourage students to participate in your program.

**First-Generation Study Abroad Students:** First-generation students represent some of the lowest participation numbers in study abroad across the nation. Being readily available and directing these students to other resources to assist with credit and financial aid questions will be key.

**Holidays:** The Fall, Thanksgiving and Winter breaks are perfect times for students to discuss summer study abroad options with their families. Make a push for your programs immediately before these holidays.

## Student Outreach

### CIE Role:

Each year, the CIE is involved in dozens of outreach events to prospective students, incoming freshmen, current students, and families through New Student Orientation, Preview Days, classroom visits, etc. These not only serve to inform the CofC community at large about the study abroad opportunities available to them, but also allows us to speak more specifically about some of the benefits of CofC programs.

### PD Role:

Attending campus events with a global focus is key. Reach out to organizers of such events to find out what is appropriate and if you can promote your program. Reaching out to student organizations is also beneficial. Ask student clubs with a relevant interest in your program to distribute information to their members or request to come to one of their meetings to present on your program.

## Informational Sessions

The CIE strongly encourages you to conduct informational sessions. When you plan a session on your own, we ask that you notify the CIE so that we can help advertise and/or send a representative to the session. We can provide information on the application process, registration, billing, and financial



## Tips for Successful Info Sessions

The following are suggested guidelines for running a successful info session:

**Purpose of Program:** Provide students with an academic overview of your program and what the expectations will be. This includes coursework requirements as well as the general program itinerary. Keep in mind the following: credits/courses, thematic focus, and future career opportunities.

**Culture:** Provide tips and insight into specific aspects of culture of the location(s) where your program will be going. Students appreciate knowing specifics in order to prepare in advance.

**Application Process:** You can direct students to the CIE or have a representative from our office attend your info session to discuss this process

**Financial Aid & Costs:** Similarly, you can discuss what the costs are, or have a representative from the CIE cover all financial aid and payment information/deadlines.

**Past Participants:** If this is a recurring program, invite a few study abroad program alumni to share their experiences on your program. If your program has never run before, you may contact the CIE to see if there are any students who have studied in your program location(s).

# Marketing Opportunities & Tips

## Helpful Tips for Creating a Dynamic Presence at a Study Abroad Fair

### A Powerful Display:

- Is easy to understand to anyone who walks by your table.
- Shows past participants (through photos/video) being exposed to culture.
- Highlights what skills the participants will receive through the program.
- Encourages non-traditional students (i.e. first-generation, minorities, non-traditional age, etc.) to study abroad.
- Emphasizes that your program is academic and culturally appropriate.
- Clean and concise.

### Other Promotional Tips:

- When talking with students, get to the point...fast! Students are accustomed to finding information within seconds of the search.
- Create promotional materials which provide a comprehensive overview of the program. **IMPORTANT** – ensure that wording is the same as what is posted on CofC website, particularly in regards to cost, deadlines, course content, etc.
- Be approachable. Set your work aside, place your phone on vibrate, and respond to texts and emails when students are not around your table.
- We recommend standing in front or beside your table so that you can quickly engage with those who pass by.
- Students love free “swag” like pens, candy, etc.
- Bring cultural items from your program location(s) to your table to create interest.



## Study Abroad Fair

### CIE Role:

The CIE plans and coordinates three annual fairs. The office provides the following services during the Study Abroad Fair:

- On-campus advertising of event
- Catered lunch for faculty directors
- E-mail prospective students through database
- Table reservation for your program
- Offers general study abroad information
- Provide a limited number of postcards for distributions

### PD Role:

The Study Abroad Fair might be the only opportunity you have to directly contact students outside your academic department. It could also be the only time students can put a face with your program. Have an active presence at the Study Abroad Fair by providing a powerful display and energy to attract students to your program. Recruit your former program participants to share their experiences with students attending the fair. Your program alumni are a powerful tool in your toolbox when it comes to marketing.

## Marketing to Non-CofC Students

Students who are enrolled at other institutions may participate in CofC programs as long as they apply to CofC as a visiting student. The CIE will work closely with these students to ensure that all additional admission documents are submitted in a timely manner. You are encouraged to reach out to your colleagues at other institutions to see if they may want to market your program to their students. Send any promotional materials you have created to your colleagues for distribution. Direct the non-CofC students to their institution's study abroad office for information about requirements pertaining to program approval, credit transfer, and possible scholarship opportunities. Please note: non-CofC students are not eligible for CofC financial aid and scholarships.

## Contact the CIE

The CIE is here to support your study abroad program from initial planning to post-program accounting and evaluation. You will be assigned a CIE staff member to work with based on which term you decide to offer your study abroad program. We look forward to helping make your faculty-led program a success!

### For Summer Programs:

Gaby Peschiera  
Assistant Director for Study Abroad  
[peschierag@cofc.edu](mailto:peschierag@cofc.edu)  
843.953.7823

### For Semester and Semester-Break Programs:

Holly Oppel  
Study Abroad Program Advisor  
[haoppel@cofc.edu](mailto:haoppel@cofc.edu)  
843.953.0441