

Some Guidance for Parents of Study Abroad Students

Adapted from Atkins, Susan and Kay Kimball Gruder. "Parents as Partners" Nafsa Region XI Conference. November 2010.

Some recommendations for guiding your student through the Study Abroad process:

- Read all through all Pre-Departure materials as well as the Study Abroad Manual
- Read program-specific manuals and handbooks
- Reinforce your student's ability to and confidence in planning and managing this process
- Understand the full scope of the program(s) your student has selected
- Know the contact info for the program on site and at Holy Cross
- Learn about student support services and how to access them
- Learn about the emergency procedures and steps to take while abroad
- Have action steps ready for any health concerns
- Schedule annual medical and dental visits before he or she leaves
- Work on a budget together
- Have a communication plan, especially for when they first arrive

Helping Your Student Grow, Learn and Develop

Study abroad is a superb opportunity for your son or daughter to grow and learn, but it can be difficult to strike the right balance between being engaged and allowing your student the space needed to grow and develop independently. Below, is a chart designed to help you recognized the possible growth that can come from potentially negative or stressful incidents or scenarios.

Common Developmental Opportunities

Common Issues and Events	Opportunities for Growth
Encountering difference	Expanding perspectives and cross-cultural awareness Tolerance of ambiguity, of difference
Homesickness	Greater independence
Fear and failure	Increased self confidence
Exploration of values	Individuation from family
Adjustment problems	Ability to adapt
Money management challenges	Satisfaction of managing personal finances
Relationship conflicts	Health bonds with others
Lack of focus	Academic and Career-Life Clarity
Time management problems	Ability to balance social and academic commitments
Stress and anxiety	Lifestyle changes to manage stress and anxiety
Unfamiliar situations	Ability to solve problems, navigate and adapt Tolerance of ambiguity
Conflict	Negotiation skills
Poor decisions	Enhanced decision making and problem solving skills