**International Programs Pre-departure Check list for Faculty 2015**

Prof. Anthony Miraglia – April 2015

I have been teaching in International Programs in Italy, Sicily and Nocciano for the past 13 years. I offer the notes and suggestions below to anyone who is leading students in such programs based on my years of experience and observations. I sincerely hope they are of some help to you.

In addition to the orientation given by the International Programs Office, I would strongly urge you to organize one of your own that specifically address issues and concerns directed to the class/es you will be teaching and the place you are visiting.

\_\_ Make certain that students have their itinerary, flight information, and passports with them and that they have a suitable and safe carrier for the passport (Men or women might consider a belt that has a hidden zipper to hide money and women can purchase a snap in purse that attaches to the inside of their bras).

\_\_Make certain that you, as faculty leader, have copies of their passports and all personal information for each student.

\_\_Make certain that each student has a debit card and at least one credit card as a means for accessing money while overseas. Traveler’s checks are useless even if they are in the currency of the country you are visiting. Many shop owners will not honor them and you will need to go to a bank to exchange them.

\_\_Make certain each student notifies their bank and credit card company that they are traveling oversees and provides them with their travel dates.

\_\_Make certain each student packs 2 days of clothing and any medications they need in their carry on. Luggage often gets lost and it may take days for it to be sent to them.

\_\_Discuss packing light and fees associated with overweight bags. It is my experience that students pack too much and it is a problem for many moving their bags from location to location.

\_\_Discuss the climate and have them pack appropriate clothing.

\_\_Suggest that they lay out clothes and items they will need 2 weeks prior to date of departure and when the think of something they may require so as to not forget anything of vital need (personal items, hygiene, materials, books for class, etc.). Then, a few days prior to departure begin to review and remove duplicate items of clothing that may not be required.

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\_\_Have them purchase a small pocket dictionary that translates English to language of country being visited. I also urge that you put together a list of words and phrases in that language that are spelled phonetically which will help them greatly.

\_\_Strongly urge them to pack one good pair of walking shoes that they have already broken in and avoid bringing newly purchased ones.

\_\_A cellphone should be a requirement and often easier and cheaper for them to arrange international service here in the states through their provider.

\_\_Make certain you have each of their cell phone numbers and that they also have your number.

\_\_Remind students to check their email twice daily for any updates and or changes to the flight and departure information beginning several days prior to leaving.

\_\_ Before leaving home, make sure you have your passport, a printed flight itinerary, and a photocopy of your passport in a safe place other than where you have your original.

\_\_Have student meet you at the airport, inform them to have their cell phone and yours on for any last minute emergency. For international travel, make sure they arrive 2 hours in advance.

\_\_Although more expensive, have students exchange about $50 dollars at the airport prior to departure for spending money the first day they arrive to their destination. It takes too much time for them to do it when they land oversees and many will try.

\_\_Try and keep your group together especially as you move through airports oversees, going through passport control, and changing planes. Students have a tendency to wander…make sure they know the gate number and time of departure for any connecting flight prior to letting anyone wander off.

**Upon your arrival**

\_\_Collect your group and make certain all are settled into their accommodations.

\_\_As soon as it is possible, have an onsite orientation to discuss that they will be doing, how to get around (provide maps when possible).

\_\_Always remember to inform them that while in a foreign country that they are ambassadors for the university and the USA. Urge them to be on their best behavior.

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Remind them that they will be governed by the laws of the country they are in (most often much harsher than ours). Drug use must be forbidden and ask them to drink responsibly.

\_\_Encourage students to never go anywhere alone and to travel in small groups at night and let someone else know where they are going.

\_\_Encourage students to not do anything here that they would not do back home. Students often feel safer in a foreign country. While that is often true, bad things can and often do happen.

\_\_Consider a walking tour to point out important places they may need to know how to get to such as the pharmacy, ATM machine, place to purchase water, groceries, Laundromat, etc.

\_\_For ATM withdrawals, remind them that their bank may assess them a fee for each transaction. As such, have them avoid small withdrawals.

\_\_Remind them to only carry sufficient cash for the day and not carry large amounts of money.

\_\_Make certain to give them a copy of a typed note, in the language of the country you are visiting that includes the following information (example).

My name is\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_I am a student of Prof. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_staying at\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. I have become detached from my group. Could you please extend me the courtesy of calling him/her so that I may speak with him/her. Thank you for your kindness.

\_\_If you are traveling and staying overnight in hotels, the group leader must have a list of all of the students in alphabetical order along with all of their passport information. That is full name, passport number, date and place of issue to present, along with the group leaders original passport at the desk…this is critically important. Do not have students carry their passport on field trips.

\_\_It is essential for students to have this with them at all times in the event they forget their phone, or loose it.

\_\_On field trips, make certain they know your itinerary, where you are going with times and places to meet should they become detached from the group.

\_\_Understand that if it can go wrong, it will. Be prepared for every possible situation, remain calm and have contacts on site for emergencies and the unexpected.

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**Prior to returning to the states**

\_\_Meet with students to ensure they are ready for departure.

\_\_Instruct them prior to leaving about any gifts they have purchased, customs and declaration forms.

\_\_Make certain that they know the time they are to be ready for transport to the airport. Many students will wish to stay up all night and it is imperative that they gather on time to depart.

\_\_Make certain prior to departing on the bus or other means of transport that all students have their laptops, phones, valuables and, above all, their passports.

\_\_Upon arrival at the airport, see that all students move through check in ahead of you in the event that there is a problem with any of them.

\_\_Upon arrival back in the states, stay behind the group to make sure all get checked through customs and meet their party for their return home.

**At this time, celebrate, for you have completed an extremely challenging, demanding, and anxiety ridden few weeks, hopefully, without any major incidents.**