

FSA LEADER HANDBOOK

*John Carroll University
Immersion Experience Program*

Revised - January 5, 2013

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1. Foundations of the Immersion Experience Program

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Since the inception of the order, the Jesuits have been well known for their contributions as teachers and founders of educational institutions. Today, the Jesuits maintain over 600 colleges, universities, technical schools, seminaries, primary schools and high schools in more than 40 countries. Over half of these schools are in India. A typical statement of the mission of a Jesuit school will often contain concepts such as the pursuit of excellence in teaching and learning and life-long spiritual and intellectual growth.

Under General Superior Pedro Arrupe (1965-1983), the Jesuit's commitment to social justice and the preferential option for the poor was revitalized and has emerged as a dominant theme of the Jesuits' work. Before this time, assisting the poor and marginalized had been assigned to those Jesuits who worked in the "social apostolate." But in its new incarnation, Arrupe intended the commitment to social justice to infiltrate every area of Jesuit ministry, including education. Arrupe suggested that the primary goal of educational institutions is to form students who would have the skills and intelligence to change the world for the better, particularly for those who are poor.

*"Today our prime educational objective must be to form men-and-women-for others; ... men and women who cannot even conceive of love of God which does not include love for the least of their neighbors; men and women completely convinced that love of God which does not issue in justice for others is a farce."*¹

- Pedro Arrupe, S.J.

In this spirit, the mission statement of John Carroll University reflects the traditional themes of Jesuit education as well as the emphasis on the promotion of justice:

As a Jesuit Catholic university, John Carroll inspires individuals to excel in learning, leadership, and service in the region and in the world.

Several of our Core Values at John Carroll also mention this dedication to service:

The university's core values include a commitment to learning in order to create:

- *A culture of service and excellence that permeates every program and office*

- *A commitment to sharing our gifts in service to each other and the community*
- *An appreciation that our personal and collective choices can build a more just world*

For this reason, Campus Ministry & the Center for Service and Social Action strive to create opportunities for students and the John Carroll community to engage the issues of poverty and social injustice.

“John Carroll University exists in order to provide our students with the skills to analyze the real needs of our world and to open their hearts to the many individuals in our world who live lives of struggle, in situations which seem intractable as the result both of human action and inaction – hunger, disease, human rights abuses, illiteracy, discrimination or violence – and often lead to a lack of hope.”²

- Robert Niehoff, S.J.

At the Commitment to Justice in Jesuit Higher Education Conference at Santa Clara University (2000), Fr. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach suggested that the most effective way to learn about the issues of poverty and injustice is to build solidarity with those who suffer. This involves more than just learning “concepts” about the poor and marginalized but actually having meaningful “contact” with them.³ Immersion experiences, then, which expose students to real people who are facing issues of poverty and injustice, are an ideal environment for fostering this sort of contact.

Interaction with those who suffer can often develop into relationship and sometimes friendship. This is “solidarity” at its most profound level because we are most likely to have compassion and advocate for those we consider our friends. Fr. Niehoff has noted that immersion experiences which foster these personal connections move “from powerful personal tourism experiences to a reflective learning experience which challenges our values, personal commitments and ultimately our world view.”

“When the heart is touched by direct experience, the mind may be challenged to change. Personal involvement with innocent suffering, with the injustice other suffer, is the catalyst for solidarity which then gives rise to intellectual inquiry and moral reflection. Students, in the course of their formation, must let the gritty reality of the world into their lives, so they can learn to feel it, think about it critically, respond to its suffering and engage it constructively.”⁴

- Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J.

In his recent 2010 address to Jesuit Higher Education Institutions in Mexico City, the current Superior General of the Society of Jesus, Adolfo Nicolás, S.J., echoed a similar sentiment:

“The depth of thought and imagination in the Ignatian tradition involves a profound engagement with the real . . . the world as we encounter it; the world of the senses so vividly described in the Gospels themselves; a world of suffering and need, a broken world with many broken people in need of healing. We start there. We don’t run away

from there. And then Ignatius guides us and students of Jesuit education, as he did his retreatants, to enter into the depths of that reality. Beyond what can be perceived most immediately, he leads one to see the hidden presence and action of God in what is seen, touched, smelled, felt. And that encounter with what is deepest changes the person.”⁵

- Adolfo Nicolás, S.J

These are the foundational principles of the John Carroll immersion program. For the furtherance of our University mission, we hope that every student and member of the John Carroll community will have the opportunity to engage in one of these intensive service learning experiences.

THE FIVE VALUES OF THE IMMERSION EXPERIENCE PROGRAM

Education

Immersion experiences are rich learning environments. Interaction with different people and different cultures offers the opportunity for invaluable learning, although this is not easily quantifiable. For example, visiting an elementary school classroom in Mexico can illustrate the intangible aspects of the country’s educational system in a very different way than reading a book on the subject. There is also a great deal of qualitative learning that takes place as students develop leadership skills and the ability to navigate in a different culture.

In addition, there are many opportunities for students to quantitatively increase their knowledge about a variety of subjects. During the immersion preparation process, materials are provided which educate the students about the history and culture of the location they will visit as well as the social justice issues they will encounter. Our goal is for the students to be well-prepared as they travel to locations very different from the university setting.

Students are also exposed to a wide variety of information and educational opportunities that expand their knowledge about a broad range of subjects. Below is a list of topics which have very obvious correlations with the immersion experiences that are offered:

History	Economics
Foreign Language	Culture
Technology	Business/Entrepreneurship/Trade
Agriculture	Construction/Architecture
Political Science/Sociology	Rural/Urban Health Care
Education	Religious Studies

We desire to work collaboratively with the faculty of John Carroll to provide experiences which supplement and enhance the classroom education that students are receiving. We hope to integrate our immersion experiences with existing classes and courses of study and to offer course credit when possible. Currently, students can choose to receive one AR credit for most of our immersions when they complete assigned work in response to their experience.

Service

One of the most important lessons that students learn through immersion experiences is how to be of service to others. Service often requires that we put our own agendas and ideas aside so that we can respond to the *actual* needs of people, rather than the needs that we perceive them to have. Service requires listening and a great deal of work in building relationships. Without these, the people we serve are likely to feel as though we have used them for the purpose of feeling good about ourselves.

Service is something that cannot be taught from a book. It must be lived and explored. As students learn to serve, they are likely to discover personal gifts, talents and leadership abilities. When they serve well, they find that they are able to do some definite good, and to improve the situation of others. This is true even when they are only able to serve for a short period of time. Often, the service that students provide is not the kind that requires hammer and nails. Rather, students are asked to offer listening ears and a desire to learn the stories and culture of the people that they will meet. This sort of service is often the most beneficial to the communities we visit.

As students return to campus, we hope that they will continue their service by sharing their experiences with others in the university community. Students who have participated in an immersion experience are uniquely equipped to educate others about the issues facing the poor and they are key promoters of the social justice culture at John Carroll.

Social Justice

With direct service as a starting point for students, a deeper purpose of immersion experiences is to help students to consider issues of social justice. Although service may contribute to the short-term needs of a community, students need to ask the bigger questions about the causes of poverty and the possible solutions. Immersion experiences should foster and explore the following questions:

- What are the reasons that people are in this situation?
- What are the social/political structures that contribute to poverty?
- How can one explain the inequities in this society?
- Is it possible that we unknowingly participate in the oppression of others?
- How does this experience challenge my values and preconceptions?
- What would need to change in order to improve the situation of these people?
- What are tangible things that I can do to help these people over the long-term?
- How much personal sacrifice will be required of me in order to help others?

The basis for social justice comes from the foundational principle that every human life is sacred and endowed with dignity. Social justice is about creating a society where everyone is in right relationship with one another because of the fair distribution of advantages, assets and benefits among all members. Catholic Social Teaching also insists that believers make a “preferential option for the poor” and vulnerable, which means that we must be advocates first and foremost for the rights of the marginalized who are systematically neglected. Ultimately, when social justice is realized in the world, the outcomes will be peace and the opportunity for all people to reach their fullest potential.

Community

We recognize that we are all part of a global community. No matter how rich or how poor, all people are brothers and sisters under one Creator who gives dignity to all without partiality. Because of this understanding, we are not permitted to isolate ourselves from others or to ignore the suffering of any member of the human family.

Immersion experiences are a vehicle to introduce members of the John Carroll Community to other segments of this human family with the hope of generating friendship and solidarity. Students can then discover what resources they have which they can access to serve others. In addition, students are often surprised to find that they are being served by our hosts who are often extremely talented and generous. Students have often reported that they felt that they had received much more than they were able to give. In this way, immersion experiences are truly and “equal exchange” of gifts which empowers both parties.

“If you have come to help me, you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together.”

- Aboriginal activist group, Queensland

Solidarity is a difficult value to live. Solidarity is very different from the “top-down” ideas that distort the human dignity of others by treating them as children who need our “solutions” to their problems. Solidarity begins with careful listening and the offer of companionship. The listener must trust that the people who are experiencing oppression know best the path to liberation. There is a saying attributed to Lao Tzu that sums up the essence of solidarity: “Go to the people, live with them, learn from them, love them. Start with that they know, build with what they have. But with the best leaders, when the work is done and the task accomplished, the people will say, ‘We have done this ourselves.’”

As a first step on the road to solidarity, we ask immersion participants to embrace a simpler lifestyle while on the immersion. Our immersions intentionally partner with low-income communities with residents who are forced to live simply every day. As a result, we ask participants to leave behind cell phones, laptops, iPods and other electronics which can create financial barriers and distraction. We ask participants to shift their focus from technology and consumption so that they are free to experience the value of simple pleasures, conversations, and their own creativity.

The ability to simplify means to eliminate the unnecessary so that the necessary may speak.

- Hans Hofmann

Another important goal we have for the immersion groups is the building of community within the groups themselves. We have found that groups who do a good job of getting to know one another before the trip often have the best experiences when they arrive. When the members have more familiarity with one another, they are able to communicate more openly about difficult experiences they may have during the trip. They are also more open to meeting new people and

forming relationships in the host community when they have already formed strong relationships within the group. In the end, we expect that these immersion groups will bring back this positive community spirit to campus, thus improving the John Carroll community as a whole.

Spirituality

As a Jesuit Catholic University we provide the opportunity for students to explore the intersections between faith and service. Many of the organizations we partner with at our immersion destinations cite faith and spirituality as motivating factors for their work. We encourage our hosts and the immersion participants to speak freely about their faith and convictions. Certain immersion experiences will have a more intentional retreat atmosphere and faith components while others may have less. The spiritual components of each trip will be clearly described in the online trip descriptions.

People of all faiths or no faith are welcome to participate in the immersion program. All are invited to investigate the spiritual underpinnings which inform the Jesuit commitments to social justice and human dignity. For all immersion participants, reflection is a constitutive element of the immersion experience. In general, every evening, all immersion groups meet to discuss the events of the day and examine the impact that these experiences are having upon the group members. Students are encouraged to use the Examen of St. Ignatius which is a method of reflecting on the activities and feelings of the day to find meaning and direction. A typical question might be, “where did you see God today?”, or “What stood out today as particularly meaningful?” This method can then also be used to examine one’s personal history in order to discern how one is developing beliefs and values and, ultimately, a vocational path..

“God calls you to the place where your deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet.”

-Frederick Buechner

Notes:

1. Pedro Arrupe, S.J., “Men For Others: Education for Social Justice and Social Action Today,” Tenth International Congress of Jesuit Alumni of Europe, Valencia, Spain, July 1973.
2. Robert Niehoff, S.J., Inaugural Address, John Carroll University, October 2005.
3. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J., “The Service of Faith and the Promotion of Justice in American Jesuit Higher Education,” Santa Clara University, October 2000.
4. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J., “The Service of Faith and the Promotion of Justice in American Jesuit Higher Education,” Santa Clara University, October 2000.
5. Adolfo Nicolás, S.J., “Depth, Universality and Learned Ministry: Challenges to Jesuit Higher Education Today,” Mexico City, April 2010

2. The Leadership Team

There are a number of different partners who work together in the immersion experience process to share responsibilities and make the program a success. Below is a listing of those partners with a description of their individual and overlapping roles:

COORDINATING OFFICE

The Center for Service and Social Action and Campus Ministry work collaboratively to coordinate 12-15 immersions every year. It is our responsibility to handle the vast majority of the planning and logistical details to make these experiences happen.

Planning

- Identify and confirm immersion partner organization, sites, and topic areas
- Establish formal agreements with partnering organizations to host groups in a manner that promotes the values of the immersion program
- Establish experience budgets
- Select and train student coordinators
- Recruit FSA leaders
- Publicize the immersions and recruit participants

Before the Trip

- Develop itineraries in collaboration with partner organization, faculty/staff leaders and student coordinators
- Organize and facilitate the preparation process with the student coordinators and FSA leaders
- Develop and facilitate participant fundraising efforts
- Coordinate JCU Development office donation collection, acknowledgement, and reporting to participants
- Facilitate on-campus immunization clinic for participants of international trips
- Communicate monetary procedures to faculty/staff leaders and student coordinators
- Develop and communicate emergency, safety, and security protocol to faculty/staff leaders and student coordinators
- Organize trip logistics (all travel, lodging, meals, etc.)

During the Trip

- Organize and implement group departure and arrival transportation and logistics
- Communicate group travel status to parents/guardians via the “Immersion Information Line”, internet, and other necessary forms of communication while groups are away
- Provide travel support to immersion groups during their trip, including contact with airlines, hotels, travel insurance companies, etc.
- Provide emergency situation assistance to faculty/staff leaders during the experience
- Monitor “Immersion Emergency Line” and respond appropriately to concerned parties

After the Trip

- Facilitate an assessment of immersion program
- Work with student coordinators and faculty/staff leaders to develop and facilitate post-trip meetings and activities
- Evaluate immersion experience sites and partnering organizations
- Communicate with partnering organization regarding effective practices and concerns
- Provide and communicate opportunities for participants to continue reflecting and engaging in their experience

COMMUNITY PARTNER

We work with 10-12 different community partners who facilitate the immersion experiences in the actual location where the group is traveling. Our community partners are responsible for taking good care of the group and ensuring a safe and productive trip.

Planning

- Define the goals for hosting an immersion group and identify prerequisites for students visiting their site
- Identify how a partnership with John Carroll can further their organizational goals
- Establish formal agreement with the coordinating office to host a group in a manner that promotes the values of the immersion program

Before the Trip

- Develop an itinerary in collaboration with coordinating office, student coordinators, and FSA leaders
- Make logistical preparations for hosting a group (transportation, lodging, meals, etc.)
- Identify and communicate medical and security protocol

During the Trip

- Host JCU group according to agreement with coordinating office in a manner that promotes the values of the immersion program
- Assist in response to emergency medical or security situations

After the Trip

- Evaluate experience of hosting JCU group
- Seek feedback from JCU regarding group experience

STUDENT COORDINATORS

Every immersion includes two student coordinators. Typically, these students have participated previously in the immersion experience that they are coordinating or, at least, they have been an immersion experience in the past. We challenge our student coordinators to take on a high level of responsibility. Because of their previous experience, they often understand how best to take the lead while on site and they are able to educate their peers and build community in the group during the preparation process.

We hope that FSA leaders will act in a supportive/mentoring role so that the student coordinators can have a rich learning experience and improve their leadership abilities. However, each leadership team is different. Some student leaders like more freedom to make decisions, others need a lot of support. Therefore, the heart of a successful leadership team consists of establishing an open forum for communication. A leadership team that can talk to one another and make decisions collaboratively will have success during the immersion.

Planning

- Aid in the recruiting of students for immersion experiences, including publicity
- Aid in selection by interviewing students for trips
- Serve as liaison between participants, FSA leaders and the coordinating office

Before the Trip

- Plan and implement preparation meetings in collaboration with the coordinating office and FSA leaders
- Meet weekly with coordinating office
- Meet occasionally with FSA leaders
- Develop group dynamic through community building activities
- Mobilize group to fully engage in established fundraising program activities
- Assist coordinating office in implementing pre-trip Retreat/Team-Building Day

During the Trip

- Promote values of immersion program through words and actions
- Continue to build community and monitor group dynamics
- Model immersion program conduct guidelines stated in commitment form
- Communicate with FSA leaders regarding problems and concerns

- Work with FSA leaders to facilitate meaningful reflections grounded in the immersion values
- Encourage and motivate participants to fully participate in the experience
- Develop and manage a plan for equal distribution of group chores and responsibilities in collaboration with FSA leaders

After the Trip

- Complete post-experience report and meeting
- Work with the coordinating office and FSA leaders to develop and facilitate post-trip meetings and activities

GUEST PARTICIPANTS

Occasionally participants are present on an immersion who are not current students or employees of the University. These participants may be alumni, family members of FSA leaders, medical doctors, or other interested people from our community. The guests are **not** considered part of the official leadership team on our trips.

However, they might be looked upon as a leader in the eyes of our team members because of their age and/or experience. Oftentimes guest participants are an asset to the group, offering new perspectives, wisdom or specialized knowledge. The leadership team is certainly welcome to include the community support person in leadership conversations if this seems appropriate.

FSA LEADERS

In broad strokes, we envision FSA leaders in a supportive and empowering role for our student coordinators. In addition, FSA leaders act as the representative of the University when making decisions regarding finances and emergency situations. FSA leaders are role models who help all the participants in making healthy and smart choices while traveling. We expect FSA leaders to participate fully in all the activities of each day alongside the students. We anticipate that there will be many opportunities for FSA leaders to share their perspectives and knowledge with the students to further enhance the educational content of the immersion. At the end of each day, a student-led reflection takes place. We expect FSA leaders to participate in these reflection sessions and assist the students in processing the experience.

Planning

- Aid in the recruitment of student participants when possible
- Attend and participate in pre-trip preparation meetings
- Meet occasionally with Student Coordinators and potentially assist in developing educational content and other preparation materials
- Design experience itinerary in collaboration with the coordinating office and the partner

organization

- Participate in FSA Leader development sessions as offered
- Ask for departmental travel funds, if they are available, to cover the cost of the immersion. Kahl Grants may also be available to faculty if it can be demonstrated the the immersion will help to internationalize the curriculum.

During the Trip

- Serve as primary representative of the University when making financial, emergency or other important decisions
- Respond to emergencies and communicate necessary information to the Immersion Program Coordinators
- Be present to participants throughout the experience, 24 hours per day
- Promote and uphold the values of the immersion program
- Model immersion program conduct guidelines identified in the participant commitment form including the restriction on alcohol
- Work with Student Coordinators to facilitate meaningful reflections grounded in the immersion values
- Encourage and motivate participants to fully participate in the experience

Post-Trip

- Complete post-experience meeting with the facilitating office
- Attend the post-experience Reflection Day
- Work with Student Coordinators to develop and facilitate post-trip meetings and activities

3. What else should you know about serving as an FSA Leader?

GETTING APPROVAL TO PARTICIPATE IN AN IMMERSION EXPERIENCE

As an employee of the University, the immersion experience should be seen as an extension of your normal work responsibilities. It is necessary to get approval from your supervisor or department chair in order to participate. Vacation time or personal days should not be taken to participate in an immersion and it is important for everyone to understand that you will be working while you are traveling with the students. Taking vacation time during an immersion can also nullify your right to workers compensation should you become injured during the immersion.

FUNDING FOR FSA IMMERSION PARTICIPATION

Because FSA participants are working during the immersion, we do not accept any personal payment for the expenses of the trip. The University should and will cover the expenses of your participation in the immersion in one way or another.

As a first step, we ask all FSAs to approach their department to ask if there would be funds available. If you feel uncomfortable asking for this money, we are willing to approach your department for you, or find another source of funding altogether.

If department funds are not available, we ask full time faculty who are travelling on international immersion to consider applying for a Kahl Grant. The purpose of the Kahl endowment is “to provide funds for faculty travel related to the internationalization of the curriculum.” Proposals are submitted to the Academic Vice President. and should include the following:

1. Statement of goals.
2. Rationale for use of funds and relationship to internationalizing the curriculum.
3. Evidence of how the project activities (a) would relate to a specific international course, including when the course would be scheduled, or (b) would otherwise specifically contribute to the internationalization of the curriculum.
4. A letter of support from the faculty member’s department chair and approval by the appropriate dean.
5. A budget showing how the funds would be used.

If funds are not available from these sources, money will be allocated from the Immersion budget or given as a grant from the Office of Mission and Identity.

WHAT MAKES A “GOOD” FSA LEADER “GREAT”?

As an FSA leader, you play a key role in the success of the immersion experience. There are certain things you can do to make the experience extraordinary for the students and by the end they will be singing your praises!

Participate in the all aspects of the immersion - You can get off to a good start by participating in as much of the preparation process as possible. All participants go through a semester-long educational process where they get to know one another and get ready for the trip. This is a good opportunity for you to meet the participants and show that you are also interested in preparing. While you are on the trip, you should participate in every service outing, community meeting, meal, and reflection session. This will demonstrate that you are a fellow learner and that you want to experience everything along with the students.

Lead by example - FSA Leaders should model appropriate immersion behavior for the participants. That means that FSA Leaders, along with the student coordinators, should take the lead when building relationships in the community, engaging in service opportunities, following the alcohol policy, and living simply. In addition to setting a positive example for the students, this will also send the message that you are not putting yourself in a special class of observer or chaperone.

Be flexible - Adult participants on immersions can sometimes be more rigid in their belief systems and have more well-established comfort zones. It is helpful to accept the likelihood that

your assumptions and comfort zone will be challenged on the immersion. You are going to another place. Things don't happen there the same way they happen here, especially schedules. The things that are important to people and the way they go about doing things are different from what you are used to. Relax and keep smiling. This is an important learning opportunity for students and you can model adaptability and flexibility.

Keep the lines of communication open - If your group is experiencing a problem, talk it over with the student coordinators and/or with the community leaders. It is better to get problems out in the open and see if there can be a resolution instead of letting the group members become angry and frustrated. There are usually one or two people in an immersion group who like to grumble, fight the participants and break the rules. It is better to deal with interpersonal situations directly rather than letting problems fester and divide the group.

Be Compassionate - Students are in a foreign environment and being exposed to many things that might make them uncomfortable. They are dealing with homesickness, culture shock and sometime physical illness. This is all OK and normal – every person adapts to a new situation differently. One of the most important things to remember as a leader is to be compassionate towards your team members. Know that acting strange is a response to being nervous and overwhelmed. Sometimes people are sick because they are having trouble adapting. Because you are the leader, there are times that you are going to have to play more of a parental role. Treating group members with empathy and kindness will pay huge dividends..

Share your Expertise - Part of the reason you were asked to participate in an immersion is because of the specialized knowledge you have from your academic training or special skills that you use at the University. We ask you to share this knowledge and skill with the participants. There are many times on an immersion when you will meet someone or have an experience which calls for further explanation or analysis. We want the students to be exploring how to apply their learning at the University to the real world. As professional members of the John Carroll community, you are uniquely equipped to enhance the educational value of the immersion experience.

Challenge the Group to go Deeper. Anyone can do an immersion trip. But is every person changed by what they have experienced? Immersions are designed to directly expose participants to the marginalized people of the world in order to transform the heart and mind. We hope that our participants will return to John Carroll with a commitment to those who are poor and suffering. But, in order for this to happen, students must be challenged to make connections and consider their responsibility in creating a world where social justice is the norm.

IMMERSION PREPARATION PROCESS

All immersion participants go through a semester-long preparation process prior to travel. There are multiple goals for this process including building community within the group, education about the immersion location, planning for activities that will take place on the trip, and the completion of logistical details for travel.

Community Day

The preparation begins with an afternoon where participants can meet the other members of their group, have lunch, and engage in competitive activities with the other immersion groups. We have found that the competition aids in team building and helps to break down some of the social barriers.

Thursday Evening Gatherings

We host 4-6 Thursday evening gatherings which focus on the values of the immersion program. All the groups travelling at a particular time (January, Spring Break, etc.) gather together for these meetings. Typically, we have a guest speaker for 15 minutes at the beginning of the session. The speaker introduces the topic and provides questions for group reflection. Immediately after the speaker, the individual immersion groups meet to discuss the topic and talk about issues that pertain specifically to their immersion location. The student coordinators have been given increased responsibility in these meetings to design the content and to keep their groups on track for the trip.

Commissioning

All the immersion groups that are travelling at a specific time are asked to come to a special liturgy in which they stand before the congregation and are commissioned for their journey. This is a good way for the immersion trips to be tied to the spiritual foundations of our University. Both Catholics and non-Catholics are invited to attend and participate.

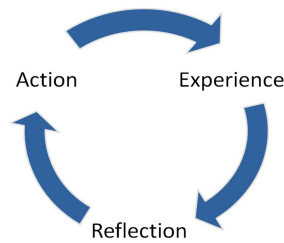
Other Gatherings

Student coordinators are responsible for planning other group gatherings that further community building and help move the group toward being completely prepared for the trip. These may be as simple as getting together for dinner in the dining hall or more involved meetings in which participants to plan activities for the trip or prepare supplies. We encourage FSAs to participate in these gatherings as well so that you are fully integrated into the group and fully aware of the preparations that have been made for the trip.

IMMERSION REFLECTION

Reflection is an integral part of every immersion. Typically, groups gather every evening during the trip to discuss the events of the day. Participants may be asked to share their thoughts, feelings and what they are learning through the immersion. Sharing reflections in a large group often spurs new ideas and connections and helps participants to begin processing complex and conflicting experiences.

Flowing from the spirituality of St. Ignatius, it is imperative that participants reflect on what happened during the day so that they can begin to integrate their experiences into their lives, notice where God was present, and challenge previously held values and beliefs.



FSA's may wonder if it is intrusive to join the group during the reflection sessions. Quite to the contrary, students appreciate the presence of an older person who can also share their own thoughts and feelings about the experience and perhaps wisdom from previous life experiences.

ALCOHOL POLICY

The consumption or purchase of alcohol is not permitted during immersion experiences, even if a student is of legal age in the state or country the group is visiting. By refraining from drinking, students are able to focus most clearly on the experience and develop positive relationships with their JCU group members. Drinking can become a roadblock to building community between students and can hinder the relationships John Carroll has established with its community partners. Drinking can also be very dangerous in an unfamiliar city or country because it can make one a target for crime or put one in situations which are not safe.

We also require FSA Leaders to abide by the same rules that we ask our students to follow. In this way, FSA's model the behavior we are asking of our students. In addition, when FSA's refrain from alcohol there is never any concern about being the least bit impaired in interactions with students and when emergency situations arise.

SIMPLE LIVING AND TECHNOLOGY

Immersion participants will be visiting communities facing varying levels of economic poverty. While conditions differ from experience to experience, in general, students are asked to live simply during their experience. Groups will stay in retreat centers, volunteer houses, or churches, depending on the trip. Participants will generally sleep in shared rooms or dorm style sleeping spaces. Some experiences require students to bring a sleeping bag and floor mat. Food will be sufficient, but simple. An emphasis is placed on experiencing local cuisine and culture.

Because of our partnership with poorer communities, participants are asked to be very conscious of the items they bring into these communities. In many of our immersion locations, it is very possible for a student to have an electronic item that is worth more than the monthly wage of a local person. In general, we ask that students not bring iPods, smart phones, laptops, etc. These items can detract from the experience of immersion and also often hinder the ability

of the student group to develop in their sense of community. Digital cameras, video cameras, and voice recorders, depending on the destination, can be brought. However, special care and awareness of the risks of these sorts of technologies is necessary.

During the course of the preparation process, groups will have the opportunity to discuss how they intend to live simply during the immersion. In the past, groups have decided to leave behind hair dryers, makeup, excess clothing, cell phones, etc. Other groups have made agreements to refocus their energies on conversation, journaling, and building relationships with their hosts.

SAFETY

The number one responsibility of FSAs is to provide for the safety of the group and the individual participants. We ask you not to leave decisions regarding safety to the student coordinators or the participants. For the most part, students are not as cognizant of the risks of certain actions, the difficulties posed by emergency situations in international locations, or the liability risks to the University.

Avoiding certain behaviors can greatly increase the safety of the group. Activities to be avoided, particularly in international locations, are as follows:

- Do not swim in unfamiliar waters. Rip currents, underwater rocks, pollution, and stinging animals are dangers that will not be marked with signs in other countries. Your hosts should know if certain areas are safe.
- Do not jump off anything into water (trees, cliffs, docks, towers, etc.)
- Do not interact with animals. Dogs and cats are typically not treated for various diseases as they would be in the United States. Horses can be very unpredictable and unsafe. Other animals are wild and should be left alone (snakes, mountain lions, tarantulas, etc.).
- Do not eat food that is not suggested or provided by your hosts.
- Never go anywhere individually. Stay in a large group setting as much as possible.
- Do not have anything to do with alcohol or drugs. This goes directly against our policy and will put a participant in a dangerous situation.
- Do not walk around a neighborhood at night unless you are with your hosts.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

It may be necessary for FSA leaders to resolve conflicts that develop in the group. Conflicts are not a regular part of our immersions, but they do happen from time to time.

Examples of a minor conflicts might be a personality conflict or dissent within the group. It is possible that dissention could occur in the group if some participants are not willing to assent to the leadership of the student coordinators or there is a disagreement about the decisions made regarding the activities of the day. FSA leaders should work with the student coordinators to resolve these issues in a way that is fair and maintains community in the best way possible.

The same policies that apply to students on campus according to the Community Standards Manual are in place for immersion experiences. Students violating a university regulation or local

law risk termination of their experience immediately, at the student's expense (i.e. transportation home, etc.), or, at least, discipline through the University system.

4. Other details regarding travel

IMMUNIZATIONS

While no immunizations are required by law for the countries we visit, JCU strongly encourages receiving immunizations recommended by the Center for Disease Control. The immersion program will offer an opportunity every semester to receive immunizations from a medical professional at JCU's Health Center. Participants may also choose to visit their own doctor.

For information about recommended immunizations visit the Center for Disease Control website at: <http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/default.aspx>.

If FSA Leaders choose to receive their immunizations at the JCU sponsored clinic, this visit can be paid for by the Immersion Program. JCU is NOT able to pay for visits to other travel clinics or personal doctors.

PASSPORT

All international immersion experience participants are required to have a valid U.S. passport. In some countries, the passport must be valid for at least six months after the return date of your immersion experience (ie. If the return date is May 31, 2012, your passport must be valid until at least November 31, 2012).

If you need a passport, please visit: http://travel.state.gov/passport/get/first/first_830.html and follow the instructions. **Be sure to apply for a passport book** and not a card. A passport card only allows you to travel via ground transportation into Canada and Mexico.

Participants should begin the process of applying for a passport approximately six months prior to their immersion experience departure date. The current cost for a U.S. Passport is \$135 (as of 8/15/12).

All participants are required to submit a copy of their passport to the coordinating office for security purposes and for the purchase of airline tickets.

CASH AND P-CARD

A certain amount of cash will be given to the FSAs who accompany every immersion. In some cases, this cash will be used for predetermined expenses which cannot be paid with a credit card. In addition to these expenses, cash is also provided for unforeseen costs or emergency purposes. FSAs are to keep an accurate record of these cash expenditures and to bring back the unused money to the coordinating office after the trip. Often US currency must be changed

into foreign currency. This can make record keeping challenging, but we ask FSAs to keep as accurate accounting of expenditures as possible.

At least one FSA on each immersion should have a P-Card. All expenditures that can be charged to the P-card should be purchased in this way. P-Card purchases are much easier to track and reconcile than cash expenditures.

EMERGENCY PROTOCOL

We have developed an emergency response system in which all calls regarding immersion participants, their families, and/or emergency situations can be directed to a single emergency number. Below are descriptions of the two phone lines that are used while Immersion Experiences are occurring.

Arrival Voicemail

Friends and family can call **216.397.4630** after a designated time and listen to a voicemail message to hear that the group has arrived safely at their destination. No other information or updates will be added to this voicemail beyond arrival information.

Emergency Hotline (7 days/week, 24 hours/day)

Friends and family who experience an emergency and need to contact their son/daughter immediately should call **216.397.6677**, the Immersion Experience Emergency Voicemail. Parents can leave a message describing the emergency situation, their name, the name of their son/daughter, and all necessary contact information. Immersion Experience Program staff will respond to this message as soon as possible (within 1 hour) and help the family establish contact with their son/daughter. The Emergency Voicemail is monitored 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The Emergency Voicemail for true emergencies, when it is urgent and necessary for the student to be contacted before returning from their immersion experience.

COMMUNICATIONS AND CELL PHONES

Communication for Immersion purposes on personal cell phones will be reimbursed by the Immersion Program. Personal use of a cell phone while on the Immersion is typically not reimbursed by John Carroll.

DEPARTURE INFORMATION

Participants are asked to return to campus the day before their immersion departs for dinner and a final meeting. It is beneficial for FSAs to attend this dinner and meeting if possible. On the day of departure, FSAs usually meet the group at the Student Center for transportation to the airport. Parking is almost always available in the Belvoir lot during the immersions. In some cases it is more convenient for FSAs to meet their group at the airport.