

## **Workshop:** International Immersion Experiences in Entrepreneurship

### **Abstract:**

Higher education institutions are increasingly seeking means to differentiate offerings among peer and aspirant institutions. One way many attempt to do this is through study abroad and/or international partnerships. But what does this mean for universities with entrepreneurship programs? This workshop will explore a variety of currently available opportunities in this space and will propose a new, easy to develop and test method to support continued advancement in the international entrepreneurship space.

### **Extended Abstract:**

In 2016-2017, approximately 330,000 American students participated in study abroad programs – an increasing of nearly 90,000 students compared to the 240,000 students who studied abroad in 2006-2007<sup>1</sup>. This is driven by both student interest and demand as well as an increasing globalization of the business world – that is, having experience living, learning, and, in some cases, working in a foreign country is highly desired among today's employers.

Increasing the availability of international experiences has not been without significant effort and costs for students. While many universities are well equipped to support students in these endeavors, others rely heavily on outside providers. These providers include for profit organizations as well as nonprofit organizations, including many universities such as Arcadia University in Pennsylvania and Webster University in Missouri which operate extensive study abroad programs open to students from any university.

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<sup>1</sup> Data retrieved from the Open Doors Project annual survey of international programs and experiences - <https://www.iie.org/Research-and-Insights/Open-Doors>

Universities have also made this possible is through the increase in short-term study abroad programs. These programs exist as micro (one to two weeks), short-term (summer or around eight weeks), mid-length (one semester), or long-term (full academic year) options. While spring break has traditionally been utilized as rest and relaxation periods for students, many are now taking that time, especially while undergraduates, to enhance their academic experiences. This is not limited to study abroad programs, as many students participate in service trips in their home country during this period.

Some universities have built campuses in foreign countries – New York University (Abu Dhabi), Rochester Institute of Technology (Croatia) – which come with even higher costs and even more risks. Other institutions have partnered directly with universities in foreign countries to provide stronger inroads for collaboration, research, and student pipelines (Washington University McDonnell Academy).

Where does entrepreneurship come in to this? Where should centers and academic programs for innovators and entrepreneurs deploy resources to develop programs?

In this session, we will examine current offerings by for profit entrepreneurship programs such as the European Innovation Academy and Startup Island which provide micro and short-term opportunities for students. Universities can choose to provide students with academic credit through these vehicles or students can take them as stand alone experiences – the merits of both will be evaluated.

The majority of the session will be focused on a new proposal for international innovation and entrepreneurship immersion experiences. Spinning up new programs of any kind have significant costs and risks associated with them. However, international programs have the added

expenses and logistical challenges of 1) figuring out who is eligible to participate (e.g. Visa requirements), 2) transporting students to the location, 3) securing accommodations, and 4) developing on the ground partnerships with entrepreneurial entities.

Our model will address these four considerations and provide an easy to test model that not only supports the student participants but also gives universities greater visibility into their alumni communities abroad. In this session we will workshop the model and build consensus around an approach moving forward.

### **Presenter**

This session will be presented by II (“two”) Luscri, Managing Director of the Skandalaris Center for Interdisciplinary Innovation and Entrepreneurship and the Assistant Vice Provost for Innovation and Entrepreneurship at Washington University in St. Louis.

In this role, II designs and implements strategies to connect the entirety of the university (medicine, business, law, engineering, arts/sciences, design/visual arts, social work/public health) across the broad themes of innovation, creativity, and entrepreneurship. The Hatchery (the nation’s oldest startup development course), the Student Entrepreneurial Program (student owned ventures operating on campus), and the Leadership and Entrepreneurial Acceleration Program (startup development for university IP) are among the programs and the Center’s umbrella.

Luscri has spent 12 years in higher education entrepreneurship, including serving as the founding executive director of the Innovation, Creativity, and Entrepreneurship (ICE) Institute at Villanova University.