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## **Preparing Faculty For Overseas Assignments**

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# **Preparing Faculty For Overseas Assignments**

Dr. Garry McDaniel, Dr. Debra Petrizzo, Dr. Gary Stroud, Suzie Arehart

# Purpose of Research

With increased globalization, more colleges and universities are establishing faculty exchanges, overseas study options, collaborative research efforts and technical assistance programs with their counterparts overseas (McCully, et al., 2009). This expansion benefits the institutions, students and faculty in both the home country and country being visited in areas such as faculty professional development, increased learning for students, revenue generation and prestige for the partnering institutions (Hulstrand, 2013). Colleges and universities frequently rely on faculty to serve as the institution's representative teaching or conducting research abroad. Experience has shown that in today's global environment, small cultural gaffes with students or partner institution administrators can often have significant repercussions which threaten the image of the institution, the investment of time and money, and the professional standing of the faculty member (Sutton & Obst, 2011). The researchers will share the results of this study:

- Exploring why colleges and universities are expanding operations overseas
- The potential negative impact of failing to adequately prepare and support faculty for overseas assignments, and
- Actions which can be taken to ensure faculty are adequately prepared and supported for their overseas assignment.

## Methodology

Triangulation:

- Surveyed 4 country coordinators
- Surveyed 11 faculty with international teaching experience
- Literature review

Compiled survey data

Identified major themes

Reviewed literature for themes

Compared data sets

**Developed summary** 

## **Findings**

- Many institutions rely on faculty for significant overseas assignments
- Many institutions do minimal preparation of traveling faculty
- Consequences of poor preparation- image, time, \$
- Preparation:
  - ✓ Select carefully
  - ✓ Learn about country/students
  - ✓ Prepare for challenges (technology, content, etc.)
  - ✓ Provide pre-departure training
  - ✓ Socialize on-site
  - ✓ Share learning upon return





### **Conclusions**

Colleges and universities in the United States are moving quickly to expand their programming overseas. Faculty are the 'face' of the institution and putting the appropriate amount of time and effort into preparing faculty for overseas assignments is important not only for the institution, but for the faculty member as well.

- The institution has a responsibility to ensure they
  have selected the right person for the job, prepared
  them prior to departure, ensured they are properly
  socialized and supported while abroad, and that the
  faculty member and institution benefit from the
  experience upon their return.
- Faculty also have a responsibility to ensure they have developed their cultural awareness, planned their work abroad to adapt to local sensitivities, and planned for unexpected contingencies.
- By ensuring that both the institution and faculty do their due diligence to ensure faculty are well prepared for overseas assignments, the potential for success is greatly enhanced.