COMMITMENT TO GLOBAL EDUCATION

At Cottey College we believe every student deserves a global education, and the best way to do that is to travel to another country. At Cottey, sophomore level students (28-56 credits) and transfer students (after completion of 24 credits at Cottey) have the opportunity to spend part or all of spring break visiting an international destination with classmates and faculty, learning about art, history, science and culture.

VISION

Cottey College, an independent liberal arts and sciences college, educates women to be contributing members of a global society through a challenging curriculum and a dynamic campus experience. In our diverse and supportive environment, women develop their potential for personal and professional lives of intellectual engagement and thoughtful action as learners, leaders, and citizens.

RELATED LEARNING OUTCOMES

Respects Diversity: A Cottey student is attentive to cultural contexts, compares and contrasts patterns, and respects differences.

Acts Responsibly: A Cottey student is reflective and acts ethically as a personally and socially responsible member of global, national, and local communities.

PARTICIPATION

Of the students who met the Step Into the World requirements in the last seven years, 89% of students have participated in this short-term study abroad.

HISTORY & OVERVIEW

Students spend spring break visiting an international destination with classmates and faculty learning about art, history, science and culture. Cottey professors and staff enhance the cultural experience by developing learning modules for focused study and accompany students on the study abroad to teach the modules.

The first short-term study abroad experience for Cottey students took place in 2009 in London. Each year another European destination was chosen. Destinations have included Paris, Barcelona, Madrid, Rome/Florence, Munich, Tokyo, Beijing, and more.

Beginning in 2009 the funds that supported the European study abroad could also be utilized for faculty-led short-term study abroad in alternative destinations. These destinations have included Japan, China, Thailand, Peru, Guatemala, New Zealand, Australia, Poland, and Tanzania.

The International Travel Advisory Board (ITAB) serves in an advisory capacity to the President and reviews and recommends future destinations based on faculty and staff submitted proposals that meet specific qualifications and guidelines. The President reviews qualifying proposals and selects the destination(s) each year.

The Cottey College Board of Trustees must also approve the destinations. Currently the European destination is organized and scheduled by the College, whereas other study abroad opportunities are planned, scheduled, and organized by a faculty or staff member.

COST

There is no extra tuition fee for the one-week experience. The Cottey College Board of Trustees pays for the airfare and hotel through specially approved Board funds, and students are responsible for meals, insurance, and incidentals.

Some students choose study abroad opportunities that are two weeks in length and personally pay the additional costs above a one week study abroad.

ASSESSMENT

Indirect assessment of the Step Into the World experience has been conducted since 2014. The chart below summarizes student responses to a common set of questions about the experiences.

Using the AAC&U Value Rubrics as a guide, ITAB created a Respects Diversity rubric to evaluate student learning during the Step Into the World experience.

A direct assessment measure was added in 2015. Writing samples collected on Assessment Day from the Step Into the World students are scored by a group of faculty and staff using the Respects Diversity rubric. Additionally, the writing faculty use these samples to score the Communicates Effectively rubric.

Student writing demonstrates that they learned to be attentive to cultural contexts, to compare and contrast cultural patterns, and to respect differences, which is how “Respects Diversity” is defined in the sentence that accompanies that student learning outcome.

While students clearly demonstrate through their writing that they have learned to respect diversity, there are indications that student learning could be improved.

Data collected from the scored rubrics determine the recommendations for student learning. These recommendations are then used to inform changes to future Step Into the World experiences.

Recommendations for student learning from 2019 Assessment:

- Encourage module leaders to continuously reinforce cultural competency: this may include a short post-module meeting
- Propose to ITAB that it sync all Step Into the World experiences around common ideas and assignments so that curriculum taught is consistent
- Encourage common assignments for Step Into the World that allows students to consider these factors more deeply, possibly field notes or travel journals
- Consider use of pre- and post-experience surveys to examine change in cultural competency

ASSIGNMENTS

Course Syllabus  Current Topic  Final Project  Reflection Journals

For their final project, students chose five to ten photos from their Step Into the World: Australia experience that represented Cottey’s learning outcome: Respects Diversity or Acts Responsibly. The photos were used to create a digital photo collage. A blog post explained the significance behind the photo collage and demonstrated the students’ learning.

AUSTRALIA 2019

Australia was chosen as a travel destination by ITAB out of several study abroad proposals in October 2017. Students were given destination and itinerary information about the Australia study abroad in December 2017 and were asked to deposit by May 2018.

A total of 14 students, one faculty member and one staff member traveled together in March of 2019. Cottey students on the Australia study abroad were from different disciplines, therefore students were given one free day in each city to explore activities, events and performances that supported their interests.

ITINERARY

- Melbourne
  - Historical walking tour of Melbourne
  - Visit Brighton beach boxes
  - Explore the Moonlit Sanctuary Wildlife Conservation Park
  - Watch and learn about the Penguin Parade on Phillip Island
- Port Douglas
  - Snorkeling at the Great Barrier Reef
  - Aboriginal culture walk through the Daintree Rainforest
  - Fish and gather crabs, mussels and fish using traditional Aboriginal techniques
  - Visit the Mossman Gorge
- Sydney
  - Bike tour of Sydney’s highlights
  - Tour the Sydney Opera House
  - Aboriginal Dreaming Tour of The Rocks area of Sydney
  - Surf Lessons at Bondi Beach

ASSESSMENTS

- Course Syllabus
- Current Topic
- Final Project
- Reflection Journals

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