

## **Women of Excellence 2014 Grant Year End Report**

### **Executive Summary: June, 2015**

Global X supports students to be culturally competent, confident, and conscientious global leaders through peer advisors, both advising students interested in study abroad from pre-decision to re-entry, and organizing gender issues events each semester.

Successful outcomes are seen not just through positive survey feedback and well-attended events, but also through supporting more students with the additional study abroad advising hours made available through the peer advisors.

#### **Peer Advisors**

- Student satisfaction of advisors was high with 21% 'superb' and 63% 'great' ratings.
- In the fall, 168 advising sessions held by peer advisors, which parallels the 166 advising sessions held by the one full-time employee in Education Abroad. Data from Sept.-Dec. 2014.
- In the spring, 55 advising sessions held by peer advisors, while there were 94 advising sessions with the full-time employee in Education Abroad. Data from Jan.-May 2015. Lower spring numbers is very normal as students tend to be more excited about planning at the start of the school year.
- Added an average of 45.5 hours of advising and support to the office each week: slightly more than one staff member.
- "By having students help in the study abroad process, it allows for aspiring study abroad students to visualize the reality of their own experience. They see a student in front of them who has studied for an extended period of time, who has filled out the paperwork, who has returned in one piece and on track to graduate." Josh, peer advisor
- Peer advisors were trained in the advising process, study abroad program offerings, scholarship options, the application process, and office protocol.
- "The peer advisor team was beneficial...because they not only mentored students, but advisors helped with events, created promotional materials, organized applications, helped with researching data and programs, and more. The peer advisor's allowed...staff members to focus on improving the office mission of preparing students to live in a global society by promoting internationalization efforts and fostering intercultural understanding for Xavier University's campus." Lexi, peer advisor

#### **Programming**

- Events held: Fall 2014: Global Gender Roles and a Re-entry event; Spring 2015: Cross Cultural Dating, International Women's Day Dinner, and two additional Re-entry events.
- The events were valuable assets to the work the CIE does and were well received with very positive feedback by students. Students want to see more of these events, especially re-entry events for those returning from study abroad programs.
- Programs brought together a diverse group of students and increased their cultural awareness and competencies.

Global X: Cultivating Cultural Competencies has been a successful project as it has added value and supportive services to the Center for International Education (CIE) and to the campus at large. Global X is part of a goal to change the culture of Xavier's campus to one where students come into Xavier knowing that study abroad is a real opportunity and take it. A long term goal takes time to accomplish, but even after just a year measurable impact can already be seen. The Fall 2014 semester served as the initial development stages for the peer advisor team; including hiring students, training them, and the learning curve for the peer advisors to learn about more study abroad options aside from their own experiences. The CIE also learned how to fully utilize the peer advisors and how it built up the capacity of Education Abroad and the CIE as a whole. Internal processes were set up to support the work of the team and streamline the team's support to the office. During Spring 2015 the students felt much more confident in their advising and took on projects that led to additional outreach outside of the classroom. These included visiting classrooms and creating a presentation for those visits. Since the peer advisors have started, there has been an increase in the numbers of students studying abroad for a semester when compared to the previous corresponding semester, see Figure 1 (p 4). While a definitive causal relationship cannot be determined, the increase in numbers does correlate to the peer advisors doubling the advising capacity over the past year.

## **Peer Advisors**

### *The Team*

Between the Women of Excellence and the CIE cost sharing, six students were hired during the Fall 2014 semester. The team members were: Margaret 'Marney' Arney, Sarris Balcerzak, Lexi Chapman, Josh DeVincenzo, Mihailo Dimitrijevic, and Kenzie Guiver. At the start of the Spring 2015 semester, Kenzie graduated and two more team members joined the team, bringing the team to seven. Here is a team picture. Not pictured are Kenzie, Mihailo, and Marney.



The peer advisors provided walk-in advising hours Monday-Friday, for students interested in studying abroad. Students could contact the team to set up appointments or ask questions via the peer advisor email address: [studyabroad@xavier.edu](mailto:studyabroad@xavier.edu). In addition to advising students, the peer advisors assisted with data entry, office organizing, and event promotions, which included creating and posting flyers and banners. Team members also helped at events outside the office. In the Fall this included promoting study abroad at a weekend event for prospective students, at "Get the Scoop on Study Abroad," the Study Abroad Fair, and to all freshman biology majors at a Freshman Fridays Biology seminar. In the Spring this included two pre-departure orientations, the Spring Study Abroad Fair, two re-entry events, and three events that promoted study abroad, X-perience Day for prospective students and two Preview Days for admitted students. Peer advisors also assisted with scholarship information sessions and prepared for an International Coffee Hour, a weekly networking event hosted through the CIE. In all, the team added 42 hours of advising and support each week to the office in the fall and 49 hours each week in the spring.

### *Methods*

Several methods were used to evaluate the peer advisor team. We tracked the numbers of students who met with advisors, self-evaluations were completed by each advisor, and the supervisor held mid-year and end-of-year evaluation meetings with each advisor. Also, an online survey was created so that it could be emailed to all students who received study abroad peer advising sessions.

### *Results*

- While we know that students and advising sessions were under counted in our office, the figures we do have show:
  - 223 students entered the office for the first time in Fall 2014 for study abroad advising, at least 60 of these students saw a peer advisor
  - 168 advising sessions held by peer advisors, which parallels the 166 advising sessions held by the one full-time employee in Education Abroad
  - 55 advising sessions held by peer advisors, while there were 94 advising sessions with the full-time employee in Education Abroad
- Thirty-three students completed a survey evaluating the peer advisors (18.3% response rate)
- Figure 1 shows change over time of students studying abroad for a semester
- Figure 2 shows the overall satisfaction level of students to the peer advisor team.
- Figure 3 illustrates students' satisfaction broken down by area of information requested.

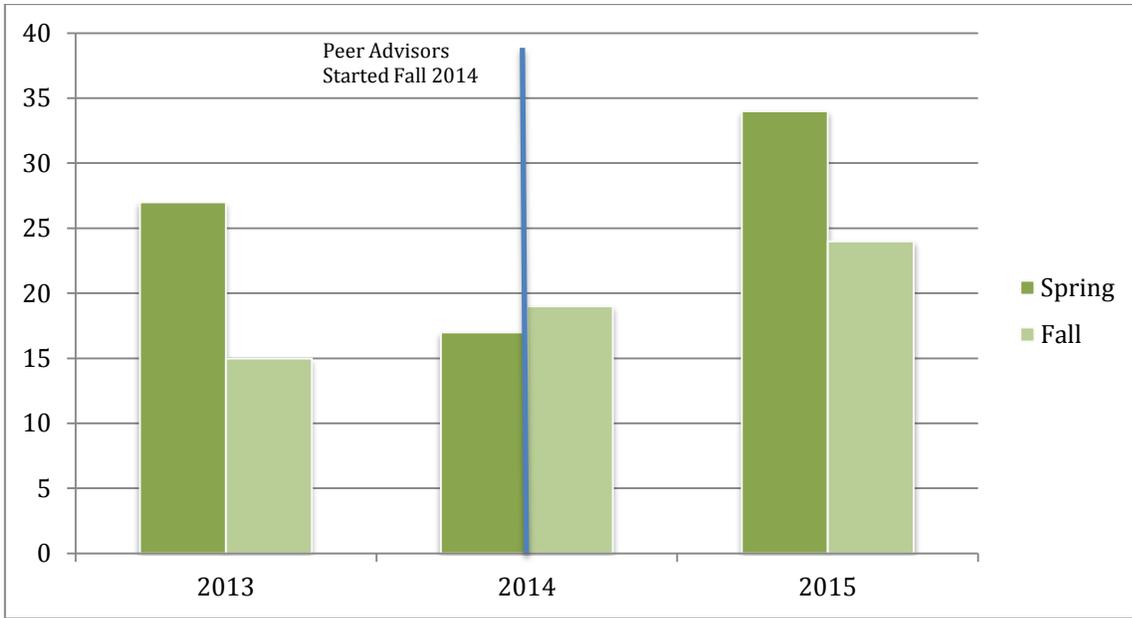


Figure 1

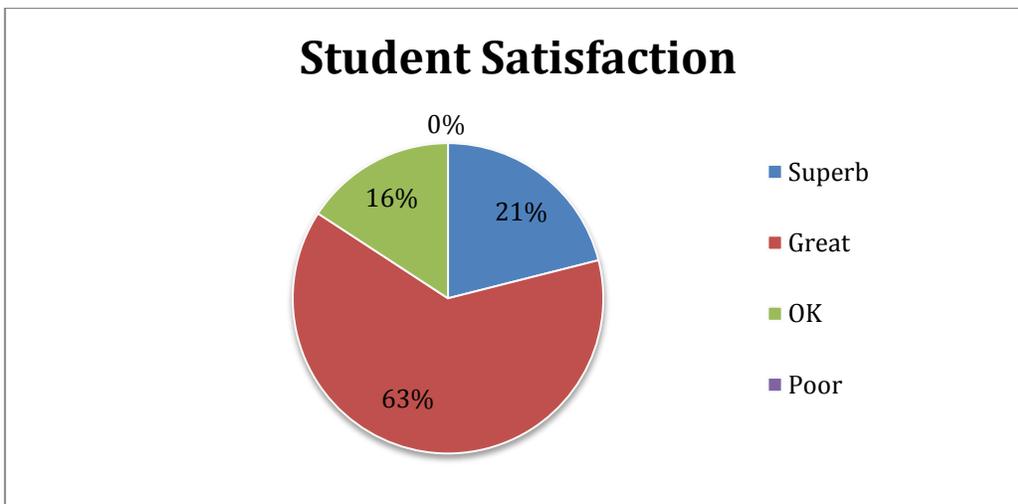


Figure 2

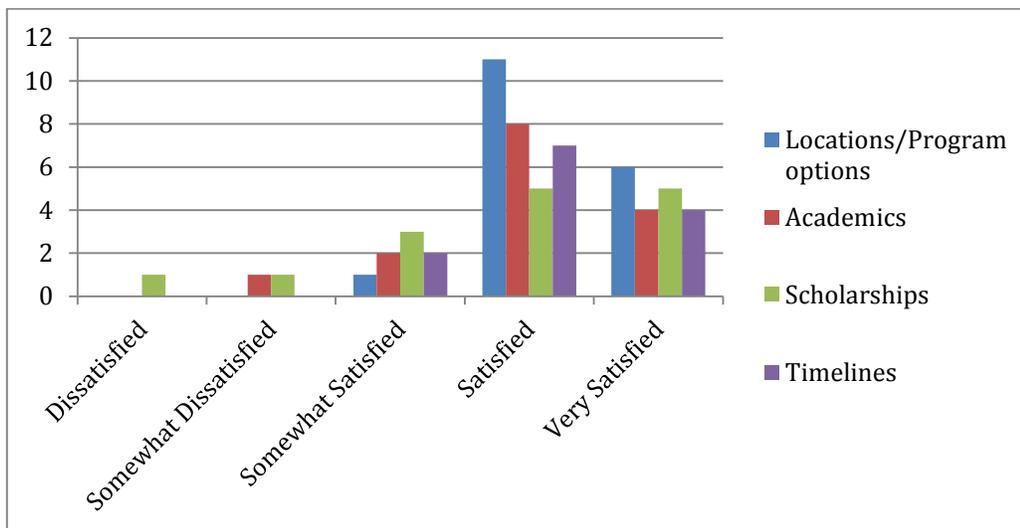


Figure 3

- 83.3% reported receiving all information sought, in one visit
- Most common areas of improvement identified were gain more knowledge of scholarship options, additional program information, and additional training in office protocol, per self-evaluations by the peer advisors and by the supervisor
- Rates students met with peer advisors are: 53% met once, 23% met twice, 18% met thrice, and 6% met four or more times with an advisor

### Programming

Initially, we proposed organizing a Global Gender Roles and a Cross Cultural Dating event each semester, as well as hosting an International Women’s Day event. Instead, we changed the plan to organize one event each semester. We found it was easier to focus on one program in order to make it a stronger event and collaborate with other offices or faculty members. In doing this we were able to mitigate the amount of time and energy we were asking of others who helped put together and run the events. Additionally, we were able to promote the event more broadly and visibly and provide a nicer food presentation at each event. Knowing our audience, we also know that food is a large factor in bringing students to events.

#### *Global Gender Roles*

Global Gender Roles, held on November 19, 2014, was an event discussing the differences of gender roles in various cultures. A four-member student panel, facilitated by a social work adjunct professor, shared their experiences of how they see their roles in their home culture and their perception of gender roles in the culture in which they studied, or are currently studying. The facilitator addressed larger gender topics and asked questions to the panel and the audience related to these. One example was “where is the line drawn between what is good or bad versus just being different, including what is violence versus an appropriate cultural practice.”

The event was attended by 30+ students. They stayed for the entirety of the event and were actively engaged in the Q/A portion. The feedback after the event was very positive. Their comments and questions were all related to an increase in their cultural awareness. One

student asked a female international student how she viewed her independence in the United States compared to her independence back home. Another student asked the Saudi male student how dating and marriage worked in Saudi Arabia given the gender roles he had described.

In addition to Women of Excellence, this event was co-sponsored by CIE and the MGWC. MGWC not only financially contributed but also offered the use of their location. Jessica Dioh-Donohue, social work professor, facilitated the event. The students were Lexi Chapman, peer advisor, studied abroad in Rwanda; Chuma Nnawulezi, studied abroad in India, Senegal, and Argentina; Mai Pham, studying in the United States, from Vietnam, and Adonis Hawari, studying in the United States, from Saudi Arabia.

### *Re-entry Program*

Beginning Spring 2015, another way the peer advisors have been involved in the office and have taken leadership initiative is by organizing a re-entry program. The CIE identified this as a need, but with previously only one staff member in Education Abroad, there was never enough staff and time to organize an event. However, one of the advisors, who just returned from studying abroad, came forward saying she wanted to send out a message welcoming students back and to organize an event. The event was open to any current Xavier student who had studied abroad at any time while at Xavier. It served as a social event for people to talk about their experiences and emotions about returning. It also served as a reminder about reverse culture shock, its stages, and how everyone's re-entry experience is different.

Sixteen students attended and 13 people completed the survey, which was distributed at the end of the event. The responses were extremely positive. Ten people rated the event as excellent and three as good. The aspects students enjoyed/benefitted from the most were sharing their experiences and realizing they are not alone in how they are feeling. Most students reported there was nothing they liked the least. When asked what new information they learned, the most common responses were what campus resources are available to them and again that they are not alone. Possible improvements that were reported most often for additional re-entry programs were to have more events and make it more active, as they were sitting the whole time during this program.

### *Cross Cultural Dating*

Cross Cultural Dating was held on February 19, 2015. In addition to the Women of Excellence, this event was co-sponsored by the CIE and the Title IX office. Presenters at the event included student representatives of the Student Wellness Advocacy Group (SWAG), peer advisors from the Global X program, and Interlink peer mentors from International Student Services. Together they talked about safe dating practices, sexual harassment and assault resources, ways to say "No," the dating culture in the US, and the complexities or possible miscommunications of dating cross culturally. This event was particularly important for international students, as they do not currently receive any information or training regarding what Title IX is or how it can be of benefit to them.

This event was attended by 20+ students. The feedback was very positive with 78% saying they thought the event was useful or very useful and 91% said they would recommend the event to others.

### *International Women's Day*

On March 19, 2015 a dinner was held in honor of International Women's Day.

International Women's Day is observed globally as a day to celebrate the achievements of women and to promote equity for women and girls. The theme for Xavier's IWD dinner was to explore women's empowerment across different cultures and generations. There were three panelists sharing stories of how womanhood is discussed in their culture. Following the panel there was time for facilitated table conversations. The event was co-sponsored by Women of Excellence, CIE, and MGWC. There was a wonderful turnout of 100+ attendees. The panelists were well appreciated by all those in attendance based on feedback, as was the facilitated talks at the tables.

### *Re-entry events*

#### *Unpacking your Study Abroad*

This event, held March 10, was co-sponsored by the Career Development Office. The objective is to give students the language and skills to utilize their study abroad experience to benefit them in their job search or graduate school application process, including adding it to their resume and how to bring it up in a job interview. This event was attended by five students. The feedback after this event was very positive and the students said they learned helpful tips they could use.

#### *Journey Home*

This event, held in conjunction with International Student and Scholar Services, was a joint event for American students returning from studying abroad and international students preparing to return home after graduating. The objective was to talk to students about the re-entry process and give students the language for common rewards and obstacles in re-entering into their home culture. Five students attended this event. The feedback was very positive with 80% of the of the survey responses saying each topic was either useful or very useful. Four out of five students said they would recommend this event to other students.

### *Discussion*

The events were well received as could be seen through the attendance at most events, students' engagement, and feedback, which was very positive. Attendees of each event said they were informative and enjoyable. Additionally, the events brought together a diverse group of students. The stories of the panelists at the events were very good. They were well thought out and on point. For all these reasons, we see these events as valuable assets to the work we do and want to present them to students again. Those who were involved said they would do it again.

Some of the events had a low attendance, mainly the re-entry events. This is something the office wants to increase next year. Students have asked for this, so we will work with the peer advisors to recruit and strengthen these events.

## **Recommendations**

- If budgeting allows, we would keep the same event topics again. The topics presented are not replicated elsewhere on campus. Therefore, these events are filling a gap, as they cover information students ask about in the CIE. As numbers of students studying abroad and international students studying at Xavier grow, these topics are imperative to discuss as they can relate directly to a student's lived experience. Thus, these events increase student levels of cultural competency in very beneficial ways.
- Specialize the peer advisor outreach by holding office hours in the Multicultural, Gender, and Women's Center (MGWC) and TRiO. There is potential for greater impact as this would allow peer advisors to reach students of color and first generation students, groups that have historically faced additional barriers to studying abroad.
- Assign one advisor to setting up classroom visits and getting volunteers (other students who have studied abroad) to do the visits. Having one person in charge of this endeavor will make the process more organized and therefore more efficient.

This has been a great pilot program for CIE. We have learned about our capacity to provide services to students about studying abroad and teaching them many of the gender lessons/issues that arise as a result of living in different cultures. Looking forward to next year we will still have a peer advisor team. The numbers of peer advisors and the schedule of walk-in/advising hours will be reduced. But we will still be able to hire 3 students who will work a total of 26 hours/week.

## Global X Final Budget

	Fall	Spring	CIE Cost Share	Total budget	Includes	Actual Fall WoX	Actual Fall CIE	Actual Spring WoX	Actual Spring CIE
Dating in the US	\$ 75.00	\$ 75.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 250.00	Guest speaker honorarium, marketing/promotion, snacks/drinks	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 31.50	\$ 74.18
Global Gender Roles	\$ 75.00	\$ 75.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 250.00	Guest speaker honorarium, marketing/promotion, snacks/drinks	\$ 150.00	\$ 64.90	\$ -	\$ -
Int'l Women's Day		\$ 100.00	\$ 150.00	\$ 250.00	Guest speaker honorarium, marketing/promotion, snacks/drinks	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 150.00	\$ 900.00
Ed Abroad Peer Advising	\$3,300.00	\$3,300.00	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 9,600.00	Four undergraduate peer advisors working 10 hours per week, 15 weeks per semester	\$ 4,533.32	\$ 891.48	\$ 5,094.78	\$ 1,171.74
Workers' Comp Insurance						\$ 20.20		\$ 20.20	
Graduate Student Intern/Coordinator	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	Stipend for a 15-20 hour per week graduate student intern (no benefits/tuition included) to coordinate the Global X programs and develop and manage the peer advising group	\$ -	\$ 5,212.50	\$ -	\$ 6,847.50
<b>Total Budget</b>	<b>\$4,950.00</b>	<b>\$5,050.00</b>	<b>\$ 5,350.00</b>	<b>\$ 15,350.00</b>		<b>\$ 4,703.52</b>	<b>\$ 6,168.88</b>	<b>\$ 5,296.48</b>	<b>\$ 8,993.42</b>
					Balance	\$ 5,296.48		\$ -	



Students attending the Global Gender Roles event.



Student panelists and facilitator for Global Gender Roles. Pictured from left to right are Mai Pham, Chuma Nnawulezi, Lexi Chapman, Adonis Hawari, and Jessica Diah-Donohue, social work professor and facilitator.



Students engaged in discussing their study abroad experiences during the Re-entry event.



Peer advisors, Lexi, Arney, and Mihailo, listening to a fellow student describe his study abroad experiences during the Re-entry event.



Lexi hard at work in the peer advisor office.



Mihailo and Marney preparing food for International Coffee Hour.



International Women's Day 2015 panelists with family members who attended.



Students at the Cross Cultural Dating program.



Students at the Cross Cultural Dating program, with presenters on the left.