

Report of the Subcommittee on International Students and Instruction

Roughly 20% of all Cornell students are international, coming to campus from over 100 countries. Due to ongoing travel restrictions, significant visa-processing delays, and other health and safety concerns, there is a significant chance that many international students will be unable to be in Ithaca for the fall semester. At the same time, it is unlikely that any of our students, staff or faculty will be traveling as freely across the globe as they did pre-COVID. Given these restrictions, we make the following recommendations:

1. We recommend that the university work to provide fall semester, residential options abroad for international students who are not able to return to Ithaca this fall. Referred to as “study away,” these options would be available in international locations where Cornell has significant numbers of students, good university partners, and student life can be provided in a context that matches the Cornell Ithaca campus for health and safety. While this ‘study away’ option cannot (and should not) replace or replicate the on-campus experience at Cornell, students in these locations would have the opportunity to be with Cornell peers and have access to university facilities while taking all or most of their classes online from Ithaca.

At present, the locations where we can offer these study-away options are likely to include Shanghai, Beijing, Hong Kong, Singapore, Seoul, Hanoi, New Delhi, and Aix-en-Provence. At each of these locations:

- All Cornell classes will be available online and asynchronous, and students who enroll in one of these study-away options will be mostly taking these Cornell classes;
- The Office of Global Learning will take the lead in publicizing these options, advising students who have questions, assigning students to locations and connecting with college advisors for enrollment;
- The same tuition will be charged for a semester of online courses, whether the student is in the US or abroad;
- Room/board determined by the partner (in consultation with Cornell);
- Decisions made as soon as possible regarding residence options;
- Students move in when the semester starts in the local university OR when the semester starts in Ithaca, whichever comes first;
- Health insurance provided by Cornell’s SHP and international services provided by Cornell’s contract with iSOS;
- Partner responsible for ensuring that all local regulations are met, in coordination with Cornell legal counsel and overseen with an MOU/Program Agreement;
- Partner responsible for providing a COVID-19 preparedness plan – students abide by local decisions regarding health, safety, travel and privacy; partner decides if students need to be sent home should a second wave occur;
- If there is a second wave and students are sent home, partner universities refund pro-rated room/board costs.

2. We recommend that additional co-curricular programming be offered for international students who cannot be on campus: For students in these study away locations, we recommend that the office of international affairs offer a set of ways to connect with staff, faculty and students in Ithaca, including:

- Organizing on-site alumni groups to interact with students;

- Enlisting “Global Ambassadors” (faculty) to provide programming and connections between the students and campus;
- Fostering peer-to-peer buddy networks between students in Ithaca and international students off-campus – ideas for connection include “coffee without borders,” presentations by the International Student Union, and more;
- Enlisting in-country companies and organizations to provide internships and networking opportunities.

3. Ensure that all instruction is accessible to international students who may be situated across a variety of time zones and for whom English may be a second or third language. Consult these [excellent guidelines](#) from the John S. Knight Institute.

For international students surveyed for this report, there were some key best practices:

Students complained of poor internet quality, which was particularly disruptive for asynchronous downloading and watching of lectures. We recommend that international students studying from home receive access to devices (hot spots) that will allow them to access the internet more easily.

Time zone differences came up frequently as obstacles to learning. Some recommendations:

- Instructors find out which students need time zone accommodations at the beginning of class and embed accommodations for teaching between 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m. into their syllabus (so that students do not have to request accommodation repeatedly over the semester);
- Provide options at different times of the day for office hours (morning one day, afternoon another day);
- To the extent possible, assign exams according to time zone, so that students are not taking exams during off-hours;
- Assign study groups, discussions and group projects by time zone.

For international students in different time zones, having access to recorded lectures was key. We recommend that, as possible:

- Instructors upload recordings as quickly as possible after the lecture is recorded or provide the recording beforehand;
- Instructors provide notes for the lectures, if possible (to guide the watching, like an outline might be used if in person).

Students indicated that they had good interactions with professors but very little social or class-related interaction with other students if they did not know those students beforehand. Social isolation is an issue. Some suggestions included:

- Promote discussion in class;
- Call on people quickly when they raise hands;
- Design activities with students outside of class;
- But – minimize participation grades;
- Provide etiquette guidelines so students know if they should turn their video on or not, understanding that many people for whom English is a second language read lips to better understand.

4. Assess privacy concerns early on for international students and explore the best platform and modes of delivery for lectures and small group discussions. In most cases, Zoom works well for

meetings abroad but we recommend that instructors ask international students at the beginning of the semester if they have any concerns about privacy online. Given the variety of technology challenges delivering international content, especially those which censor content, CIT will continuously monitor and investigate potential alternative solutions. CTI will develop teaching related resources and share details on the CTI webpage when alternatives become available via the CIT vetting process.

5. Provide access to international co-curricular and curricular programming and content as most people will not be physically traveling but will be able to access international and area studies content from faculty, staff and students in Ithaca and abroad. Content from international and area partners includes intercultural engagement, virtual internships and lecture series.

Intercultural Engagement: To facilitate curricular and co-curricular enhancements and offerings, Cornell faculty and students can work with select Cornell global programs and specific abroad partners, in partnership with Cornell academic units. The [Mario Einaudi Center for International Studies](#) is an excellent resource for curricular and co-curricular content from across the globe. For example, the [Einaudi Summer Passport Series](#) is a summer-long lecture series designed to connect graduate and undergraduate students, faculty, and the broader Cornell community with global learning opportunities while travel is still restricted.

Staff at Cornell's study abroad locations can also support co-curricular and more limited curricular engagement with home campus students and units. The following programs, where Cornell is consortia member, will be a resource to language teachers to offer content for their classes or co-curricular opportunities:

- CASA Seville (Cornell lead institute)
- Berlin Consortium for German Studies
- Bologna Consortia Studies Program
- Kyoto Consortium for Japanese Studies
- EDUCO Paris

As an example, EDUCO can provide the following resources:

1. Video-conference French language exchanges with French students.
2. A weekly newsletter of cultural events in Paris and France that can support French-language learning.
3. A transatlantic buddy program with our Université de Paris exchange students slotted to leave in Spring 2021, as well as our regular language exchange partners.
4. Video conference lectures and colloquium organized in Paris and streamed to your campus.
5. Real-time visits of cultural sites conducted via FaceTime, for example, to complement what you may be studying in class from the most traditional to the most off-the-beaten-path.
6. Virtual cooking classes to turn oral comprehension into edible fact.
7. Real-time or recorded orientation tutorials to reveal the practical aspects of living in Paris: Using the Métro, how to buy and eat a baguette properly, how to be at table in the French manner, how to adopt the Parisian *gueule*, how to avoid pickpockets. The list is long for these *Tutos d'EDUCO*.

Internships: A number of virtual internships have been offered from international partners during Summer 2020 and will likely continue into the fall, depending on demand. Interns are eligible for one-time awards with opportunities through a variety of programs:

- Institute of Politics and Global Affairs
- Mario Einaudi Center for International Studies
- Latin American Studies Program
- Institute for African Development
- Peace and Conflict Studies
- South Asia Program
- Southeast Asia Program
- East Asia Program
- Cornell China Center
- International NGO partners: Oxfam affiliates, Institute for Food Policy Research, African Development Bank, Management Systems International, Kids In Need of Defense, etc.

The list of [virtual internship opportunities](#) from 3rd party providers also grew steadily during May and early June. The Office of Global Learning has worked with partners to identify expanding opportunities and vets possible third-party programs to share as resources.

Lecture series: Many different centers on campus are offering seminar series featuring international content for the fall, including:

- Weekly seminar series from Einaudi Center Area Studies programs (fall)
- Cornell China Center presentations
- Ongoing events hosted by the Institute of Politics and Global Affairs
- Weekly seminar series on the Global Grand Challenge: Migrations