



**ACS Final Report Form
Grant Cycle May 2021 – May 2022**

- Complete this form in no more than five pages.
- Attach your final financial report in a separate document and submit it along with your report to grants@acsouth.edu.
- Note that portions or the entirety of your final report may be reprinted on the ACS grants webpage.

Name of project lead: Anne Ledvina
Campus: Birmingham-Southern College
Project title: ACS Global Learning Abroad Module
Today's date: 08/16/2021

I. Project summary

Briefly describe the purpose, intended goals, and major activities of your project.

The purpose of the grant was to collaborate on the design of an academic module that is designed for students to reflect upon the full cycle of the study abroad experience from pre-departure through their return to campus. The goal is to provide this collaboratively designed module to all ACS campuses to be used in the way that best works for each campus. We envision this module incorporated into an existing course or added to a study abroad orientation or used by individual students who want to record their reflections and growth throughout the experience. The major activities during the grant cycles involved a workshop for representatives from all ACS institutions, multiple visioning and module design meetings and presentations. We were also planning for ACS institutions to pilot the module on their campuses between spring term 2020 and May term 2021 but the pandemic made this impossible to do before the completion of the grant. The module and assessment tool is available to ACS institutions to use as they want.

II. Attainment of goals

Explain the steps you took to achieve and evaluate the success of *each* project goal. Provide details regarding the tools and methods used to measure each goal and the extent to which, based on those measurements, each goal was met.

The goal was to design and pilot the academic module over the grant period. The design of the module included the design of an assessment rubric that can be used by the instructor or an individual to evaluate the quality of the final project created by the student upon completion of the module. This rubric was also used during the January 2020 ACS IPD meeting at the

University of Richmond with IPD colleagues during our presentation of the final design of the course and rubric.

Evaluation of each project goal:

Visioning meeting – BSC – September 2018

We recognized our calendar for the completion of two pilots (spring and summer 2018) by the end of the grant cycle (July 2017-August 2018) would not be possible, so we shortened it to one summer pilot in 2018.

Collaborative Learning Workshop – BSC – October 2018

ACS Collaborative Teaching Workshop was held on October 26-27 at Birmingham-Southern College. The goal of this workshop was to design and prepare for an ACS collaborative, multi-faceted “course” that uses remote teaching and on-line technology for the preparation, overseas reflection and reorientation of students who participate in international experiences (study, internships, research and service-learning). Faculty and administrators who sent students abroad and who wanted to use digital stories, remote or on-line technology and tools in their classrooms were invited to participate. We utilized technology to enrich the learning outcomes for students participating in global opportunities.

Sessions included:

1. Ethnography and Approaches to Culture
2. Remote and on-line teaching
3. Digital storytelling and other on-line tools

We built in time for the attendees to break into groups focused on the three phases of the study abroad experience and to explore what the components of a course on that phase would include. This material was collected and used in the future design of the course/module that was ultimately developed.

Regular design meetings – conference calls November 2018-January 2020

The grant committee held regular meetings throughout the grant period to report and comment on the design of the three components of the new course using the brainstorming group materials that came out of the ACS Collaborative Teaching Workshop- pre-departure, abroad and return. Two committee members teamed up to design one component (pre-departure, abroad, return) of the course.

Design meeting before ACS IPD meeting- Hendrix- January 2019

The grant committee met in person at day and half ahead of the ACS IPD meeting to put the pieces of the course together and ended up throwing out the idea of a course. We kept running up against a wall when looking at institutional barriers at our own and other institutions. One example was that a course for study abroad would never be approved because of staffing, curriculum limits, etc. However, the struggle was meaningful because after we threw out the traditional course design, we went back to the questions all our institutions ask their students to reflect upon throughout the study abroad experience (see appendix). We had gathered this set of questions during the workshop in October 2018. Using this list of question, we were able to capture the collective knowledge of 12 of our 16 institutions whose faculty and staff participated in the workshop and pull out those questions that captured the student experience and personal growth. As a group representing 6 ACS institutions, we were able to put together a set of

reflections for each phase of the study abroad experience. We then returned to the course we had started to build and pulled together an academic “module” that could be added to an existing or new course involving travel or to a course or orientation preparing students for study abroad or given to an individual who wants to assess her travel experience. The grant committee then agreed to pilot the module ourselves over the next summer 2019.

Pilot A – Summer 2019

Each of the six institutions on the grant team used the module in very different ways and ran into different barriers.

Birmingham-Southern College added this module to an existing pre-departure course required for study abroad during spring term 2019. The course had two groups of students preparing for travel. One group was planning for four-week or eight-week programs during the summer and the other group was preparing for study abroad over the fall term 2019. The module was completed by students during all three phases of their experience. The students abroad for summer 2019 completed the module from spring term 2019- fall term 2019. The students abroad for fall term began the module in spring term 2019 and completed the module by spring term 2020. The pilot was a success and helped us to redesign the pre-departure course. The new study abroad course starts the last seven weeks of the pre-departure term and continues through the first four weeks of the term students return to campus. The study abroad course was approved in fall 2019. In the second iteration of the re-entry component of the course, the module rubric was used by the students who traveled during the fall term to assess their final project before completing it for final evaluation by the instructor. This process of self-assessment created higher quality poster presentations than from the summer students and will be incorporated in future courses. The study abroad course with module included is now a regular part of our curriculum.

Davidson College was not able to complete a pilot of the module in 2019 but had two faculty-led travel projects planned to pilot the module in Summer 2020.

Furman University used the module to shape a new course being designed for students studying abroad. Furman was not able to implement the module due to COVID but had two courses for May Experience 2020 that had been planning to offer the course.

Hendrix College Hendrix College piloted the study-abroad module with students studying abroad during summer 2019. The Director of International Programs asked for volunteers in exchange for a nominal gift card; five students volunteered representing both faculty-led and individual programs. The students progressed through the three components of the module with simple check-ins from the director. All students completed video stories of their experiences, demonstrating various mastery of the module learning goals. In the future, Hendrix will improve the student experience and enhance learning goals by: 1) sharing the learning goal rubric during pre-departure and frequently reminding students of the goals and required steps of assignments; and 2) developing a “cohort” group among all participants, including group check-ins and interactions. Finally, Hendrix would like to have a second pilot with all students on a specific, faculty-led program.

Rhodes College had a change of leadership in the international office over summer 2019, so they postponed the pilot until the fall of 2020. They redesigned a two-part “study abroad course” to incorporate the goals of this grant. The “Global Cultures: Predeparture” and “Global Rhodes: The Return” courses were both seven weeks long, optional, and carried two international studies credits each. These two courses were offered as “bookends” in the semester prior to departure

and the semester after return. Seven students who were scheduled to study abroad in the spring 2020 semester enrolled in these courses. The Predeparture course included a workshop with the Rhodes videographer to teach skills on recording content with nothing but a smart phone, plus storage and organization tips. Rhodes had planned for the Return course to include additional skills workshops on editing videos, adding voiceover, etc.; this institution was prepared to celebrate a successful pilot following the completion of this second course. However, these students' programs were cut short in February of 2020 as the pandemic began to take hold in Europe and around the world. Rhodes was unable to complete the pilot but is planning to begin again in the fall 2021 semester.

University of Richmond piloted the module with student athletes who participated in international travel to Cuba and South Africa (both in 2019) as part of the Department of Athletics' Global Leadership Immersion program and International Education's EnCompass program. These programs are designed to help student athletes have an international experience since they are less likely to study abroad than their non-athlete student counterparts. The staff member who travelled with the groups used the modules before, during and after each trip. The final product was an insightful video compilation of student participants describing their experiences. The module's format and structure helped the trip participants be better prepared and to contextualize and process their time abroad.

Grant committee meeting/ACS IPD meeting- Richmond- January 2020

ACS Global Learning Abroad committee presenting our findings during the ACS IPD annual meeting hosted by the University of Richmond. Using the course assessment rubric designed for the module, the participants evaluated the final projects available from several colleges. We also discussed next steps to offer more institutions a chance to join a second pilot and talked about ways to share this module with institutions and individual students through the new ACS website.

Pilot B – summer 2020 (canceled due to pandemic)

The plan was to offer small grants to all 16 colleges to support faculty-led study travel groups or leaders of orientations or study abroad courses to use the module. The COVID19 pandemic did not allow us to begin the pilot in spring term 2020. The pilot would have run from January term 2020 to May 2021. If it is possible in the future to offer small grants to implement this module into individual institutional study abroad programming (faculty/staff-led travel programs, individual study abroad, group-based global experiences) we think it would move us closer to having an effective academic tool that could be used by institutions with more limited resources and for the consortium as a whole if we move to shared programs abroad.

III. Impact of project

Explain the impact your project had on relevant constituencies (e.g., students), structures, (e.g., a major program), processes (e.g., community engagement), and/or relationships (e.g., consortial partnerships).

The creation of this academic module by international program directors from six colleges and universities was the next step in creating best practices in education abroad for our consortium. A larger representative group within our consortium agreed upon the value of student reflections at each stage of the study abroad process and from the reflections shared with us, our grant team developed a tool and assessment rubric that

can be used or incorporated into existing courses or travel programs by all ACS institutions.

IV. Consortial (ACS-wide) value of the project

Describe how your project results can or will strengthen ACS, e.g., via the dissemination of a final report, the future training of campus leaders, or the building of an inclusive community of practice.

The dissemination of the course module and assessment rubric to all ACS institutions to use as best fits with their programs will strengthen the best practices we build for international education within the ACS. A sustainable practice would be to offer small grants for more of our institutions to pilot the module and offer insight on its future development as well as a regular review and revision of the reflections and rubric that keeps up with the times. This module was designed before the globe was hit by a pandemic and a more damning report on climate change. The reflections should be reviewed considering these significant shifts that have impacted our profession. And in light of the recent sustainability working group in summer 2021, it would be worth reviewing this module to see where sustainability might fit.

V. Lessons Learned

Describe the surprises, challenges, and lessons learned during the project, e.g., is there something you are very glad you did or would do differently? Did you face obstacles that called for creative problem-solving? What would have made the project even more successful?

The project to design a shared course at the beginning of our grant was very ambitious and challenged us to explore what the core issues were that we wanted students to explore in a global course embedded within their study abroad experience. The method of delivery envisioned in the proposal did not and could not work on our six campuses and would have been impossible to design for all as we learned. Our success was designing a tool that is adaptable to the variety of institutions, programs, timelines, and locations represented by all of our ACS schools. We used creative problem solving throughout the process from designing a workshop in a very short timeframe, to designing a course and later a module that had core the values we all agreed upon as the most valuable for our students. What would have made this project more successful would have been no pandemic. We believe the strength of this module is that it is adaptable, but it does need further piloting in the field before we can provide a complete assessment for the consortium.

VI. Next Steps

Explain what you intend to do with/how to you intend to use or build on the results of your project.

We would like to find a place for this module to be shared and invite colleagues to assess the effectiveness of the module based upon student final projects. Using the ACS IPD meetings, it would be a valuable exercise to review the module and see what

modifications might be made for future iterations. As stated in the proposal, offering an annual study abroad fair that highlights our students' final projects might be something we can organize in the future if the module is used by a wider group of institutions.

VII. Feedback/suggestions for the ACS grant program (optional)

The 12-month grant period and even the no-cost extensions were not long enough to pilot this type of course. We had great success in the design process but more time to pilot the module would have been valuable. Thank you for the no-cost extensions and for funding this valuable project.


Appendix A: Module and assessment rubric

Appendix B: Budget Summary and detailed spreadsheet

Appendix C: Samples of final projects. **Please do not share publicly. These are examples only for review by grant committee.*

BSC: See attached posters (Czech Republic & China)*

Hendrix: Links to student videos.*

 [Study Abroad Elizabeth.mp4](#)

 [ACS Presentation - Hayley.mov](#)