

Safety Abroad Enhancement Forum (SAEF)

Background:

Cornell has long recognized the importance of international travel for its students, staff, and faculty's success. This can be seen in the rich history of international programming and the investment in support staff who work with the Cornell community to make their travel goals a reality. However, decentralization of international program management and travel oversight in general resulted in inconsistencies in traveler preparation, responsibility during a crisis, and expertise in international risk-management. Knowing its obligation to mitigate foreseeable risks associated with international travel, respond diligently to protect its community abroad, and care for those who return to campus, Cornell was at the forefront in recognizing duty of care.

In 2011, a full-time employee dedicated to international health and safety was hired into what was then Cornell Abroad. The positive results were many but most notably the drafting of Policy 8.5, Risk Management for International travel. This policy brought with it the development of an international travel registry, the establishment of the International Travel Advisory & Response Team (ITART), and practices designed to mitigate elevated-risk travel. Where no central database of traveler locations existed before, the travel registry became the essential tool by which Cornell could more efficiently provide for its community abroad in times of need. ITART likewise began evaluating destinations that posed higher risks and worked to protect against them through emergency travel assistant services and enhanced pre-departure education. While integral to a strong foundation of international risk management, these resources brought to light the scope of Cornell's traveling community and a need for even more consistent practice in support of all Cornell travelers; whether undergraduate, graduate, staff, faculty, alumni, or the public.

By 2017 there growing obstacles to safe and successful international programming. Faculty, staff, and administrators from numerous units raised concerns that an ever growing traveling population, a changing socio-political environment, and shifts in types of programming necessitated some additional oversight. To this end, several projects were initiated, two of which were; 1. The Provost established a subcommittee on Requirements and Guidelines for Off-Campus Student Experiences. 2. The Manager of International Travel Health & Safety role was established within the Office of the Vice Provost of International Affairs. Both developments were aimed at proposing, developing, and implementing cross-campus standards, guidelines, protocols, and processes that would promote and support travel safety and program integrity.

As Cornell makes steady progress towards improving the support provided to its traveling population it is important to note that units across campus have vast experience and success in this area. There are also many different needs, perspectives, and resources. The formation of the SAEF is intended to not only be a platform for all stakeholders to raise concerns or areas of need but to also be a think-tank for solutions that furthers Cornell as a world leader in higher education.

Charges:

The Safety Abroad Enhancement Forum will:

1. Bring together representatives from stakeholder units across campus who both work directly with travelers prior to departure, and as response personnel during and after incidents affecting travelers while abroad.
2. Foster the interests of the university by collectively raising awareness of opportunities to improve the support provided to Cornell's international traveling population as it relates to health, safety, and security.
3. Provide recommendations on guidelines, protocols, techniques, tools, events, and policy that mitigates foreseeable risk, better prepares international travelers, and promotes effective response and recovery.
4. Be responsible for annual reporting on all incidents that affected or impacted the Cornell community while traveling abroad.
5. Be responsible for staying apprised of, and disseminating information regarding protocols, procedures, policy, and best practices to their respective units.

Composition:

The Safety Abroad Enhancement Forum will consist of representatives from units across campus involved in international travel (i.e.: sending students, supporting faculty) and those that provide crisis response and care services. There is no limit to the representation permitted on the Council.

Representatives should be identified and appointed by their respective department/unit/office head.

The Council should additionally strive for representation from the following:

College of Agriculture and Life Sciences; College of Architecture, Art and Planning; College of Arts and Sciences; Cornell SC Johnson College of Business; College of Engineering; College of Human Ecology; School of Industrial and Labor Relations; Faculty of Computing and Information Science; Cornell Law School; College of Veterinary Medicine; Graduate School; School of Continuing Education and Summer Sessions; Einaudi Center; Engaged Cornell; Cornell University Police Department; Title IX Office; Crisis Manager Team; Care and Crisis Services; Cornell Health; Student Disability Services; Counseling and Psychological Services; The Office of Global Learning; Office of the Judicial Administrator; The Office of Emergency Management; Risk Management & Insurance; The Student Assembly; Campus Activities Office

Reporting

The Manager of International Travel Health & Safety will serve as Chair of the Council. As a non-voting member of ITART they will bring issues, reports, and advocacy for the Council's recommendations to ITART and other relevant stakeholders.

Meetings

Members are expected to commit to consistent attendance at quarterly meetings for a term of 2 years.