

A. Background and rationale:

There are several circumstances under which faculty members travel off-campus with students, with the faculty member serving as the “Group Leader”. These trips may range from day trips to New York City or the Adirondacks, to week-long research trips over break, or full-term (or mini-term) experiences under the auspices of the International Programs (IP) office. When faculty members travel off-campus with students on trips organized under the auspices of IP (full-terms and mini-terms, both international and domestic), faculty members undergo required training sponsored by that office and are made aware of their responsibilities in that context. Participating faculty members are also briefed on the responsibilities that students have agreed to in the Student and Parent Participant’s Agreement, the IP Code of Conduct, and IP Alcohol and Drug Policy. However, faculty members may also travel with students outside the context of the International Programs office on class-related field trips, travel to conferences, research trips, or participation in academic competitions (as examples). This document is intended to help faculty members who travel off-campus with students understand their responsibilities when serving as a Group Leader for off-campus activities. The Policy is designed to inform the College when a faculty member plans an event that involves travel with students at some distance from campus. It is also intended to establish reasonable protocols for student behavior and provide both students and faculty with an understanding of the risks and liabilities associated with extended duration travel and students’ responsibilities to abide by College policies on such trips.

B. Authority:

Group Leaders have within the scope of their duties the authority to separate a disruptive student from the program, to enter into contracts with external service providers on an “as needed” basis, to implement emergency or evacuation plans, to delay and/or alter a planned event, etc. Group Leaders are obligated to inform the Dean of Students or designee in a timely fashion on student conduct code issues, alcohol or drug incidents, or any other behavior that may violate appropriate standards of conduct imposed by the Group Leader. In such circumstances, the Group Leader will be requested to complete an incident report, which initiates an investigation into a possible conduct code violation. Group Leaders are required to report sexual misconduct incidents in accordance with [College Policy](#). Group Leaders should consult with the Dean of Academic Departments and Programs with respect to emergency evacuation plans or major alterations to a scheduled itinerary (excluding routine travel delays or minor alterations to scheduled activities) during extended periods of travel.

C. Applicability:

There are some policies that apply to all off-campus outings with students, including day trips that involve travel at some distance from the College (but excluding other activities—see exclusions below). These policies are included in the first section, below. Other policies apply to all extended trips (defined here as **trips of 3 nights or more**), whether domestic or international. A final set of policies applies to international trips only. Faculty members may exercise their judgment to ask students to adhere to more restrictive policies than are required for the type of travel, to strive to ensure student safety and minimize risk.

EXCLUSIONS: Please note that this policy does not apply to every off-campus experience shared by students and faculty. Local trips of less than a day's duration (e.g., events that occur in within the city of Schenectady or its immediate surroundings) are excluded from the policy. Other exclusions include: local meals off campus with students, informal gatherings at faculty members' homes, and off-campus events in which both faculty and students participate but that the faculty member did not organize as a "Group Leader".

Note that this document does not replace the requirements imposed by the International Programs Office for programs under their jurisdiction.

NOTE: For all international travel and extended domestic travel with students, students should be directed to the International Programs website to complete all participant paperwork at least one month prior to scheduled departure.

TRAVELING OFF CAMPUS WITH STUDENTS POLICY:

SECTION I. FOR ALL OFF-CAMPUS TRAVEL WITH STUDENTS NOT SPONSORED BY THE INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS OFFICE

1. The Group Leader should provide a trip itinerary and contact information while away to the Department Chair and Department administrative assistant. This information should also be provided to the Dean of Academic Departments and Programs. The purpose of this step is to ensure that the faculty member and students can be reached in case of an emergency.
2. The Group Leader should have available contact information for all students participating in the trip and College representatives to facilitate communication among trip participants and, if necessary, the College.
3. The Group Leader must have a budget and adequate financial resources to accomplish the goals of the trip safely. The Group Leader must arrange safe transportation for the group, as outlined in the [Union College Motor Vehicle and Driver Policy](#). **Please note that students are not allowed to rent and/or drive rental cars because they are not insured under any college policy for rental cars (per state law).**
4. Students should be made aware that it is highly recommended that they provide essential medical information to the Group Leader, including medications and ongoing health concerns that may require the Group Leader's intervention while off-campus.
5. The Group Leader should have an adequate emergency action plan, which at the very least should include a call chain to provide information to the proper individuals on campus in case of an emergency. (See chart below for appropriate campus contacts.)
6. The Group Leader should review the [FAQ](#) regarding faculty responsibilities in the event of Sexual Misconduct, so that they are aware of their responsibilities if an incident occurs while they are supervising students off-campus.

SECTION II. ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES FOR EXTENDED OVERNIGHT TRAVEL

When traveling for an extended period (more than 3 nights) away from campus with students (whether domestic or international), students should complete the following forms using the International Programs online form submission system:

- Union Participant Agreement

- Conduct Code
- Alcohol and Drug Policy
- Medical Information Form (optional)
- Self-Identification Form (optional; for requesting disability accommodations)
- Sexual and Other Forms of Unlawful Harassment Policy

The Group Leader should become familiar with the material in these forms to be adequately informed about students' responsibilities while traveling away. Forms may be accessed by logging onto the IP website using the link below (log in to the site as if you are a participant using the link below—you will be directed to the forms that students should fill out).

Procedure:

Ask your students to complete the forms designated above through the International Programs website well in advance of departure:

http://international.union.edu/index.cfm?FuseAction=Programs.ViewProgram&Program_ID=10074

You and your Department administrative assistant will be given administrative access to the International Programs online system so that you or your designee can ensure that your students have turned in the required paperwork. NOTE: Failure to complete and submit the forms will mean the student cannot participate. Please be in touch with Ginny Casper in the International Programs office for access.

SECTION III. ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES FOR INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL (including Canada)

1. At least sixty (60) days prior to offering / publicizing an International Travel Program, Faculty are obligated to comply with the Travel Advisory Policy and, in particular, Section III. In accordance with the Travel Advisory Policy, the Dean of Academic Affairs and Programs reserves the right to deny travel in a Level 2 Country and / or request a modification to the itinerary based upon a risk assessment.
2. In advance of traveling abroad, students must enroll in GeoBlue for insurance coverage (through the International Programs website referenced above). Faculty members should contact HR for information on international coverage for their own emergency medical needs.
3. In addition to the on-line forms specified in the previous section, each student should also submit a copy of the Passport Biographic Page (the page with photo and expiration date) and should ensure that all passports are valid for 6 months AFTER RETURN DATE from the trip. A copy of the Passport page should be kept with the Department administrative assistant for the duration of the trip.
4. The Group Leader and students should review relevant health and safety information for the country or countries that they plan on visiting. Research what vaccinations are required and/or recommended for the trip and inform students that they will need to get any required vaccinations for entry into the region and that they need speak to their doctor about any recommended vaccinations. For more information consult:
 - WHO <http://www.who.int/en/>
 - CDC <http://www.cdc.gov/>
5. It is also recommended that the Group Leader review the Health and Safety Protocol for International Travel.

6. The Group Leader should secure reliable in-country language assistance, if necessary.
7. Ensure that visas are not required for travel to your destination and obtain them if they are required.
8. Determine if any students are non-US Citizens and if so, if there are any special visa requirements for them to go to your country of destination (there are different agreements between nations and not all are treated in the same way).
9. Emergency procedures: In addition to providing immediate phone contact back to campus in the event of an emergency (see phone contact chart, below), Group Leaders are advised to review the International Programs Emergency Protocols to ensure that they are prepared to take the necessary steps to respond to an emergency that may occur while traveling internationally. Please consult with the Dean of Academic Departments and Programs if you have questions.

SECTION IV. ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Individual faculty members or academic departments may develop other criteria for travel with students in order to ensure adequate preparation and attention to safety. Group Leaders may also wish to attend an orientation session for faculty sponsored by the International Programs Office prior to departure.

Housing

Faculty should be housed in close vicinity to the student accommodations as reasonably possible in order to be accessible in case of issues, misbehavior, noise, or emergency. Faculty should NEVER be housed in the same room as students or the same tent (if doing research). Faculty could stay in the same hotels but in different rooms/floors as students or in one of similar value close by. When at all possible faculty and students should have separate bathroom facilities. Faculty housing should be comparable or not terribly disparate in quality from student housing/accommodation (e.g., faculty should not be in 5-star hotels while students are in hostels or tents). **Faculty are encouraged not to use Airbnb unless there are no other hotels or similar lodging options available. Prior approval by the Directors of Budgets and Risk Management should be given for instances when Airbnb is required, with information on where they will be, their experiences in that location, and reasons why not other lodging is available.**

Confidentiality

Timely notification of parents in the event their son or daughter has encountered a health or safety issue is not only permissible, but necessary. Notification should also include officials at the College with a legitimate educational interest. This would include the Director of the Counseling Services and the Dean of Students and may include other College officials. FERPA is not a bar here, and the Group Leader is not obligated to follow the student's request that his/her parents not be notified. All Group Leaders should read and understand the nuances of the Student Records Policy prior to going abroad.

Contact Information			Reason
Jennifer Fredricks	Dean of Academic Departments and Programs	Office: 518.388.6233 Cell: 203.829.3547 fredricj@union.edu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency evacuation plans • Major changes in schedule (excluding routine travel delays) • Post-return report of experiences including unusual incidents
Steve Leavitt	VP for Student Affairs and Dean of Students	518.388.6116 leavitts@union.edu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporting disciplinary issues, including drug and alcohol violations, student harassment complaints
Trish Williams	Sr. Associate Dean of Students and Director of Student Conduct	518.388.6116 518.388.6061 williamt@union.edu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporting disciplinary issues and student sexual misconduct incidents
Lexi Bonitatibus	Director of Budgets and Risk Management	518.388.6104 bonitata@union.edu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions regarding notification of potential legal claims
Marcus Hotaling	Director of Counseling Center	518.388.6161 hotalinm@union.edu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health related questions and issues
Lara Atkins	Director of International Programs	518.388.6002 atkinsl@union.edu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “As needed”