



**Annual Assessment Report Template: Non-Learning**  
Academic Year: 2015-2016

**Date of Report Submission:** July 7, 2016

**Name of Department:** Vincentian Community Service Office

**Name of Contact Person:** Emily LaHood-Olsen

**Name of Person(s) completing report or contributing to the project:** Emily LaHood-Olsen and Rachael Suffrin

**Type of Assessment:** Benchmarking

## **I. Abstract**

This assessment focuses on a benchmarking project to gather data nationally from other universities' immersion programming staff. With these types of programs, reintegration is a key component to meaning-making as part of the service immersion experience. Therefore, we are specifically interested in how VCSO's post-immersion reintegration practices compare with those of other universities.

In order to complete this assessment, VCSO staff surveyed universities around the country that have immersion programs. While most schools completed an online survey, a handful of mission-driven schools participated in in-depth phone interviews. Common trends among the participating programs included the challenge of keeping students involved after immersion trips return to campus, as well as the importance of specific post-trip programming. It was also noted that the majority of the programs assessed do not have well-established programming for post-immersion reintegration process and are continuing to work through their own challenges, which include attendance, accountability, and long-term relationships.

## **II. Assessment Question**

This year, VCSO assessed the following question: Reintegration is a key component to meaning-making in the service immersion experience. How do VCSO's reintegration practices compare with those of other universities?

## **III. Introduction & Context**

### **University Context**

The importance of post-immersion reintegration is two-fold. Not only is it necessary for participants' development and meaning-making, but it is also key to developing long-standing relationships with community partners and seeking systemic change. The benchmarking of re-entry practices will help VCSO assess the following learning outcomes. Each of the outcomes listed below is directly tied to the re-entry process.

- Learning Outcomes of the Vincentian Community Service Office

- Students who participate in Vincetian Community Service Office programs will demonstrate their Vincetian responsibility in systemic change at individual, community, and global levels.
- Students who participate in fighting injustice (direct service, advocacy, and activism) will acknowledge different approaches to systemic change and will articulate their role as Vincetians in Action/Vincetian responsibility.
- Students who meet social justice advocates during the Service Immersion experience will identify different approaches to systemic change.
- Students who participate in Post-Trip meetings will define an action plan that connects to a social justice issue they learned about on the immersion with local issues.
- The division's strategic plan and [Vision2018 goals](#).
  - Deepen the University's distinctive connection to the global city of Chicago.
  - Strengthen our Catholic and Vincetian identity.

Currently, DePaul's Service Immersion program addresses post-trip re-entry and systemic change in the two ISP 331 classes, which all immersion leaders take in preparation to lead the immersion. Upon returning home, DePaul students are required to attend a reunion retreat and encouraged to engage in at least two post-trip meetings with their groups. The hope with the retreat and post-trip meetings is that students will use the time to plan Bring Change Back Home projects as a way of staying connected to the communities they entered and striving for systemic change. Finally, students have the option to take PAX 250, a post-trip class that focuses on the re-entry process, gives students the opportunity to engage academically in the experience they had on their immersions, and helps students frame their commitment to the communities they encountered.

### **Supporting Scholarship**

There are multiple barriers that may interfere with the maintenance of positive outcomes gained from students' experience on a service immersion trip. Students may feel intense paralyzing emotions (such as shame or guilt) after going from immersion in a marginalized community to their normal lifestyle (Ver Beek, 2006). Students may also have difficulty adjusting back to their normal routines and way of life with their new mental schemas and world views, similar to what students experience when returning home from study abroad experiences (Ivory, 1997). Students may experience difficulty relating with their peers in the same way as they did pre-trip (Ivory, 1997), and even may have a hard time articulating and effectively communicating their experience (Jones, Rowan-Kenyon, Ireland, Niehaus, & Skendall, 2012). In addition, students may feel impacted by their immersion experience, but be unable to articulate how they were impacted which may leave students feeling frustrated (Cermak et al., 2011). Students may feel a pull to "act" because of what they experienced, but may not have the tools or skills to actually make real social change (Cermak et al., 2011). Students may not be adequately prepared by many immersions to act upon the lessons they have learned from their experience (Cermak et al., 2011). These potential barriers highlight the importance for VCSO in learning common practices

related to reintegration programming post immersion in order to provide best practices support programming that promotes maintenance of positive outcomes across time for students. Therefore, this year's assessment focuses on a benchmarking project to better understand these common practices.

### References

- Cermak, M. J., Christiansen, J. A., Finnegan, A. C., Gleeson, A. P., White, S. K., & Leach, D. K. (2011). Displacing activism? The impact of international service trips on understandings of social change. *Education, Citizenship and Social Justice*, 6(1), 5-19.
- Ivory, B. T. (1997). The re-entry crisis of students returning to campus following a volunteer alternative break experience: A developmental opportunity. *College Student Affairs Journal*, 16(2), 104-12.
- Jones, S. R., Rowan-Kenyon, H. T., Ireland, S. M. Y., Niehaus, E., & Skendall, K. C. (2012). The meaning students make as participants in short-term immersion programs. *Journal of College Student Development*, 53(2), 201-220.
- Ver Beek, K. A. (2006). The impact of short-term missions: A case study of house construction in Honduras after Hurricane Mitch. *Missiology: An International Review*, 34(4), 477-495.

## **IV. Data Collection & Methodology**

### **Data Collection**

Phase I: Identifying survey participants.

To do this, assessment facilitators, Rachael and Emily, targeted various immersion programs around the country. The institutions chosen to participate in the online survey ranged from public to private and urban to rural. While some schools were affiliated with a religious tradition, others were secular. Meanwhile, the schools invited to participate in the phone interviews were all private Jesuit universities. These were chosen for the more in-depth interviews because, like DePaul, they are all mission-driven, and their immersion programs share similar charisms and goals.

Groups and staff leader emails were identified online through universities' websites across the U.S., as well as by phone by calling universities' Department of Student Affairs, or other offices that house information about students' alternative break service immersion programs. Other types of immersion programs that are not university affiliated were identified by searching online. As this information (staff members' contact information, their phone numbers and email addresses) is publicly available online, thus this was an appropriate recruitment strategy for identifying immersion programs. Contact information was cleaned by a student worker in the Vincentian Community Service Office.

Phase II: Announcing the assessment and disseminating assessment materials to immersion programs.

Once staff from immersion programs were identified, an email was sent to the staff members requesting participation in the online assessment project. The researchers sent an initial email to

immersion program staff, followed by three reminder emails spaced at least 4-7 days apart requesting participation. These reminder emails were sent to the schools who had not yet completed the online survey.

Once materials were disseminated to participants, completion of the survey online should have taken about 20-30 minutes to complete, depending on how much detail participants provided about each question. The survey contained a mixture of eight quantitative and thirteen qualitative (open-ended) questions related to reintegration post-immersion programming, as well as participant and program demographic questions. All questions presented less than minimal risk. Please see appendix for the full survey items.

No incentives were provided as part of data collection for participants. Participants were reminded that this study is not IRB approved and therefore the results of this "internal" assessment focused on benchmarking does not qualify as "generalizable" knowledge. The results of this internal assessment will not be published or presented formally other than within our department and university. Although, participants were notified they would be able to receive a copy of the internal assessment report findings.

Phase III: In depth interviews.

At the end of the online survey, participants were to email Emily directly with any reintegration training materials they were willing to share (e.g., powerpoints, discussion questions, activities, etc.). None followed through with this step.

Emily also contacted immersion staff from a short list of attendees from the June, 2015 Immersion Coordinators Summit, 23 programs in total. These specific programs and universities were targeted specifically for their similarity in mission and values as well as previously established relationships with the programs. Emily reached out individually to each of these programs to invite them to participate in in-depth phone interviews. Phone interviews were recorded for later transcription and qualitative data analyses. The goal of these interviews was to provide a more detailed understanding of the questions that were being asked on the online survey. Participants responded to the same list of questions as the online participants. However, being on the phone allowed the facilitators to ask follow-up questions and expand on responses.

### **Data Analysis**

Facilitators Rachael Suffrin and Emily LaHood-Olsen analyzed the data. Rachael Suffrin took the lead in analyzing the data obtained from the online surveys, while Emily LaHood-Olsen took the lead in analyzing the data from the in-depth phone interviews. For the short answers provided in the online survey, data was reviewed and summarized and any relevant re-emerging themes noted. Attention was also paid to outlier or individual responses due to the nature of our project, specific questions asked and that individual ideas may still help inform our immersion programming even if they do not represent a broader trend across programs. Therefore, more traditional qualitative coding methods were not applicable for this portion of the project. For the in-depth phone interviews, Emily LaHood-Olsen took notes while conducting the interviews. She then re-reviewed her notes and re-listened to a number of interviews to code and pull for significant themes. Rachael also reviewed and coded Emily's interview notes to determine if any

additional themes should be considered. Major themes from in-depth interviews are reported along with relevant quotes.

### **Participant Consent**

Participants were required to indicate their consent to participate in the online assessment before being moved forward into the online assessment questions. If they did not consent, they were redirected to the end of the survey. Please see the full survey, including the initial consent, in this report's appendix.

Participants were required to provide verbal consent for the in-depth phone interviews. Participants were informed of the recording, and offered the opportunity to decline participation, choose to not answer any questions or hang-up at any time.

Rachael and Emily analyzed all raw data, and only de-identified data was provided back to VCSO for their review in the final report in order to protect the confidentiality of student participants. Electronic data was stored on a password protected computer, and recordings stored in a locked office.

## **V. Data & Results**

### **Participants**

#### Phone Interviews:

The facilitators contacted twenty-three immersion staff members directly to participate in in-depth interviews, and 7 consented to participate.

#### Online Survey:

To conduct the online survey, the facilitators contacted 285 individual staff members from as many immersion programs. As it was impossible to determine how many of these staff received the invitation to participate in the survey (due to emails bouncing, changes in staff, staff members out of the office, etc.), the facilitators were unable to calculate a response rate. However, it is known that forty-three individual staff from different university immersion programs participated in our online survey assessment tool. Five individuals declined to participate.

#### Online Survey Quantitative Results:

Of the 43 online survey participants, not all staff answered all questions. Thus, some data totals to less than 43 responses.

Staff who participated in the survey were asked to report their annual total of student participants and leaders. The average came to 78 student participants ( $SD = 85$ ,  $Min = 8$ ,  $Max = 300$ ) and 11 leaders ( $SD = 13$ ,  $Min = 0$ ,  $Max = 50$ ). Seventeen programs indicated their immersion programs were not religious or spiritual in nature, while 5 indicated "yes," and 3 programs indicated "sometimes." The majority of immersion experiences occurred during spring (24 programs) or winter (15 programs) break, while 9 programs held immersions during the summer sessions and

6 programs during other times of the year (e.g., weekends, fall break). The majority of programs classified themselves as volunteer and direct service trips 24. Other programs classified themselves as social and political growth service trips (10 programs), cultural learning trips (13 programs), or other types of programs (i.e., community leadership and nursing experience, alternative break; 3 programs).

One program offered post-immersion retreats, 17 offered post-trip meetings, 15 offered reunions, 6 offered post-trip classes and 11 offered other types of post-immersion experiences for students (e.g., presentations, reorientation events, one-on-one meetings, alumni groups, volunteer opportunities, re-entry dinners, cultural experiences). No programs were only international in nature, while 11 were domestic only, and 14 programs were offered both international and domestic immersions. The majority of programs used a model in which alternative breaks are planned through an office on campus (16 programs) or a student organization and a campus staff member work together to plan and execute the trips (13 programs). Fewer programs had a model in which a student organization planned and executed the trips with little or no support from campus staff (3 programs) or where the alternative breaks occur through a service learning or civic engagement course (4 programs). One program used an alternative model.

## **Results**

### **Post-Trip Meetings**

Of the 43 institutions that completed the online survey, 32 schools offered post-trip meetings and/or reunions. These varied from social reunions to re-orientation projects to story sharing events.

### **Student Attendance**

Student attendance was cited as a challenge to the post-immersion engagement process in 5 phone interviews and 11 online surveys. Tips for overcoming this obstacle included creating reorientation framework and planning post-immersion programming in advance and well as holding post-immersion activities on Sundays and with food.

*“We tried to do a retreat after the experience together, and it just didn’t work. People did not show up. For more than a day or just a couple hours, it was really hard to get people there to do something...Our study abroad program here holds the final grade until you actually go to the re-entry thing, but what do we have?”*

### **Post-Immersion Projects**

Post-immersion projects were emphasized by five phone interview institutions as an important way to promote accountability among students. These schools not only preface their trip experience with the understanding that there is a post-trip commitment, but they also book end the experience with a post-trip project.

*“All of the groups have to do a solidarity project. What that looks like varies widely between different groups, and we intentionally leave the framework for that pretty loose to allow for student interest, and we’ve seen things as wide as organizing a one-day summit on immigration reform to as small, but I would argue still affective, as getting residence halls to ok posting*

*posters with easy ways to be sustainable in a residence hall...and some folks will do focused service in the same vein or area in the city of Chicago.”*

One program provided an informative and detailed description of their reorientation philosophy on the online survey. It is included below:

*Reorientation- The process in which participants and programs readjust and transfer the lessons learned on-break back to their lives on campus. In essence, reorientation is the “integration” or “Now What?” stage of the alternative break experience. Reorientation should allow participants to:*

- *Present or communicate their experiences,*
- *Plan for future action,*
- *Celebrate accomplishments,*
- *Further their education on the issue,*
- *Educate others about their issue,*
- *And provide a method for support and accountability for further growth.*

*Why is reorientation important?*

- *Helps participants deal positively with their alternative break experience,*
- *Keeps participants involved by acting on lessons learned,*
- *Promotes social awareness on campus,*
- *Helps to publicize for the future of your program.*

## **Story Sharing**

There appeared to be a shared theme of in the power of storytelling. Six phone interview institutions spoke of the importance of storytelling as a tool for processing re-entry and creating systemic change. Not only do schools encourage students to share their stories with families and friends as a way of bringing change back home, but many also train students to incorporate their stories into advocacy and legislative efforts. Six out of seven schools spoke to the importance of storytelling as a tool for processing re-entry and creating systemic change.

*“We’ve been really intentional this past year about storytelling and the recognition that so many students are having similar interactions happen with many of their friends where they’ll say,*

*‘What did you do over break?’*

*‘I went on a service trip’*

*‘That sounds really cool.’*

*‘It was.’*

*‘OK, see you later.’*

*Really no depth or serious reflection happens and so being able to get them to reflect and ask some pointed questions from people who understand it a little bit. That’s part of the reason why we do that.”*

## **Discernment and Vocation**

Four out of seven phone interview schools explicitly name the themes of discernment and/or vocation in their re-entry process. In faith-based institutions, these terms spur questions of social responsibility and calling after the trips are done. This is of particular interest to DePaul because currently, DePaul is working on the V3 initiative, a program that will help students discern their vocations throughout their undergraduate experience.

*One school engages in a welcome back dinner themed on “vocation and engagement returning to campus, how to carry this experience forward.”*

### **Points of Interest**

While many common practices emerged, the phone interviews provided the opportunity to learn about the more unique practices that work for individual schools. Some of these are listed below.

- School 1
  - Participants on international immersions meet throughout the year for an overnight preparation retreat, monthly 4-hour-long workshops where they prepare for the immersion and discuss books related to their trips, and social events to build community.
  - School 1 utilizes university alumni as adult mentors on trips
- School 2
  - Rather than relying on the student leaders to schedule pre-trip meeting times that work for their participants, school 2 holds all of their pre-trip meetings on Thursday nights prior to the immersions. Here, students meet in one large group and small, trip-specific groups. The reunion is also held on a Thursday evening to remain consistent with students’ calendars.
  - School 2 provides advocacy training for student leaders before they depart.
- School 3
  - School 3 recently changed their advertising to include more exterior-facing language. As a result, their program has doubled in size in the last three years.
  - School 3 sends the list of participant names to campus staff partners so that staff can check in with students when they return and listen to their stories.
- School 4
  - In order to reach students who cannot afford weeklong trips or who have scheduling conflicts with school breaks, school 4 recently started a President’s Day weekend immersion, which runs locally for 3 days.
  - School 4 ran a successful Post Secret event, where they invited participants to document their experience on post cards and show them in an exhibit on campus.



- In order to make trips accessible for students experiencing monetary difficulties, school 4 reaches out to alumni to fund scholarship contributions.
- School 5
  - At school 5, service immersions fulfill a social justice experience graduation requirement.
- School 7
  - School 7 invites other departments/groups to attend the reunion and share next-step opportunities.
  - In an attempt to create long-standing relationships, school 7 encourages student leaders to return to sites where they've participated in the past. Participants are also limited to a total of 3 locations. If they wish to participate on a fourth trip, they must return to a site they've visited before.

## **VI. Discussion & Interpretation of Results**

### Results of the Assessment Project

#### **Post-Trip Meetings**

Based on the responses from all participants, it seems to be common practice to provide structured post-trip meeting opportunities. Not only do these meetings provide a space to process the experience, but they also hold students accountable for remaining connected to their service sites. DePaul's immersion program requires that students attend a day-long reunion retreat, as well as two post-trip meetings with their groups. The PAX 250 class is optional. Our findings reaffirmed that our current post-trip programming is valuable.

#### **Student Attendance**

As listed above, the most common challenge to post-trip engagement is getting students to attend meetings and programs. This could be for a multitude of reasons. Students may view the week of the immersion as the entire immersion experience. Others may be overscheduled with many commitments. Student attendance is also the greatest challenge that DePaul faces in the post-immersion process. While student participants name the immersion experience as life-changing, they also rarely attend post-trip meetings in full numbers. After completing this assessment, it is clear that it would be worthwhile to reframe how we present post-trip programming to students. Mainly, we can emphasize the full immersion experience that goes beyond the travel week.

#### **Post-Immersion Projects**

Currently, DePaul's immersion program leaves post-immersion projects and bring change back home initiatives to student leaders to address in post-trip meetings. However, since participants oftentimes do not attend post-trip meetings, we rarely see follow-through on these projects. Completing this assessment has shown us the importance of creating structured projects for students to complete. These hold student accountable to attending post-trip events and to fostering relationships with community partners.

During the course of this assessment, it was also made clear that some students remain connected to partners in ways that we never see. When a community partner in Montgomery fell ill and was hospitalized, we received news that the Montgomery group from two years ago sent him flowers on their own accord. Hearing this news was heartening.

### **Story Sharing**

Before Emily was hired in VCSO, students created digital stories to document their immersions. These were ways to remember the experiences, process the coming home process, and honor the community partners. This practice fell to the wayside as students were not fully committed to the process. Completing this assessment has encouraged us to revisit the opportunities we create for students to share stories. While digital stories may not be the best option, we might learn from the success that other schools had in hosting events and coffee houses.

### **Discernment and Vocation**

This theme was very interesting, as DePaul is in the midst of developing a vocation initiative. It was especially prevalent in mission-driven schools that hold similar values to DePaul. Based on this common theme, the VCSO immersion program will work to collaborate with the DePaul vocation initiative.

Due to staff transitions in VCSO this year, it was not possible to begin surveying schools as early as originally planned. Thus, the window for phone interviews was only three weeks long, and some schools that were willing to participate in the assessment were unable to find availability in the shortened timeline.

The results of this assessment contribute to the goals and mission of VCSO. By viewing other schools' programs, VCSO was able to evaluate their own efforts towards both student re-entry and systemic change. By implementing the action plan created from this assessment, VCSO hopes to continue to develop a program that forms socially responsible students who have the tools to engage in meaning-making and discernment, as well as recognize their responsibility in systemic issues.

The results contribute to the greater division of student affairs because they will help VCSO to form students who are more deeply rooted in the Vincentian tradition of reflection, as well as the global city of Chicago. By creating a stronger structure for Bring Change Back Home projects, VCSO hopes to help students realize that the one-week immersion experience can be lived out every day in the city of Chicago.

## **VII. Recommendations and Plans for Action**

### **Recommendations**

Based on the common practice of hosting post-trip events, it is recommended that VCSO continue to develop the accountability for students to remain involved after the trip is complete. This would involve clarifying the Bring Change Back Home model that is already in place, as well as creating a more defined structure for post-trip projects. It is also recommended that Service Immersions partner with the V3 initiative to incorporate the theme of vocation.

### **Action Plan**

Currently, the Service Immersion participant orientation does not include information about re-entry and post-immersion commitments. After observing the importance of framing a larger immersion experience, VCSO will reframe the orientation around the quarter-long experience rather than focusing on the week of the trip. This requires that the Service Immersion Coordinator recreates the agenda and content of the orientation. This will be completed over the summer with an expected deadline of August 26.

While post-trip projects are currently encouraged, there is currently no way to require groups to complete these projects. Based on the findings that emphasized grades as an incentive for post-immersion accountability, the Service Immersion Coordinator will incorporate a post-trip project plan into the final grade that student leaders receive for their ISP 331 class. Along with turning in a final analysis paper when the trip is complete, they will also be required to submit a plan for a Bring Change Back Home project. This could include fundraising, advocacy, and/or story sharing. This requires that the Service Immersion Coordinator create a project template, edit final analysis requirements, and update the syllabus before the Fall Quarter section of ISP 331. This will be completed over the summer with an expected deadline of August 26.

Currently, student leaders have a binder with resources that can be used during the week of the immersion. In partnering with V3, VCSO can create a supplemental folder that contains post-immersion resources which are based on V3's curriculum. These resources will be used in the post-trip group reunions that students are already expected to attend. This requires the Service Immersion Coordinator to set up a meeting with Mark Laboe, who is chairing the V3 initiative, compile activities, and create the folders. This will be completed over the summer and during Fall Quarter with an expected deadline of October 7.

The facilitators do not foresee any challenges in implementing these actions.

### **Sharing the results**

As the researchers did not seek IRB approval, this assessment remains internal and will not be published. However, the assessment will be shared via email with the contributors who participated in the phone interviews by July 29. These contributors have already been informed that the assessment is internal and that they are the only external parties receiving the results.

Scott:

- The topic of re-entry and re-immersion seems very important and useful to the division and DePaul – great choice of topic!
- Your assessment question looked great!...However, the report never compares common practices to those used by VCSO. So in actuality, the assessment question is more so “What common reintegration practices are used by other universities?”
- The report talks about best practices; however, best practices normally are deemed “best” because their practices lead to superior outcomes that are highly desired. The report never describes what makes the universities who participated in the assessment an example of a best practice, so you might actually be talking about common practices.
- I love how thoughtful you were in collected survey and interview data. Sometimes it is not clear how these two forms of data were related or distinct from one another. In the future, it might be helpful to consider which form of data collection is best given the type of data you are looking for.
- There seems to be some confusion between the results section and the interpretation section. Ideally, you would report the most meaningful results in the results section (which would include thematic findings). Then, you would interpret these themes and explore why they are present (in this case, what practices might be most common or why certain barriers are most common) and apply those insights to DePaul’s programs. All of this would then lead to your recommendations. The report does not quite get to the interpretation of the findings which makes it hard to follow why you make certain recommendations for the department.

Sam:

- The methodology of a survey and follow-up phone interview for specific programs seems like an appropriate methodology. However, there are questions on the selection and sampling process (indicated in the notes within the report).
- The literature review did a nice job of setting up the context and importance of a reintegration program/process. It discussed major challenges and experiences that students may face on immersion trips and linked the reintegration process to the importance of processing the experience after the trip has ended.
- In the beginning of the Interpretation section, the way results are discussed appears to belong in the results section. Rather than talking about the individual schools, the Discussion and Interpretation section should focus on the bigger picture and connection of the results to VCSO’s program. The end of this section, touched on some of this
- The report seems to have been written with care and interest in the assessment question. There are some aspects of the Data collection, results, and discussion that were hard to understand or took many times reading to grasp the action taken or findings. Flow of report was good overall, I would suggest separating data collection/methods, results, and even discussion into two sections: Survey and Interview

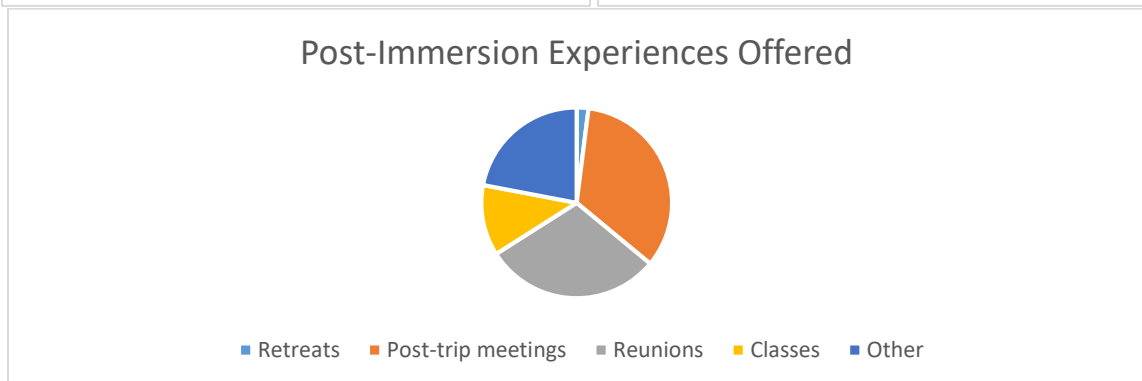
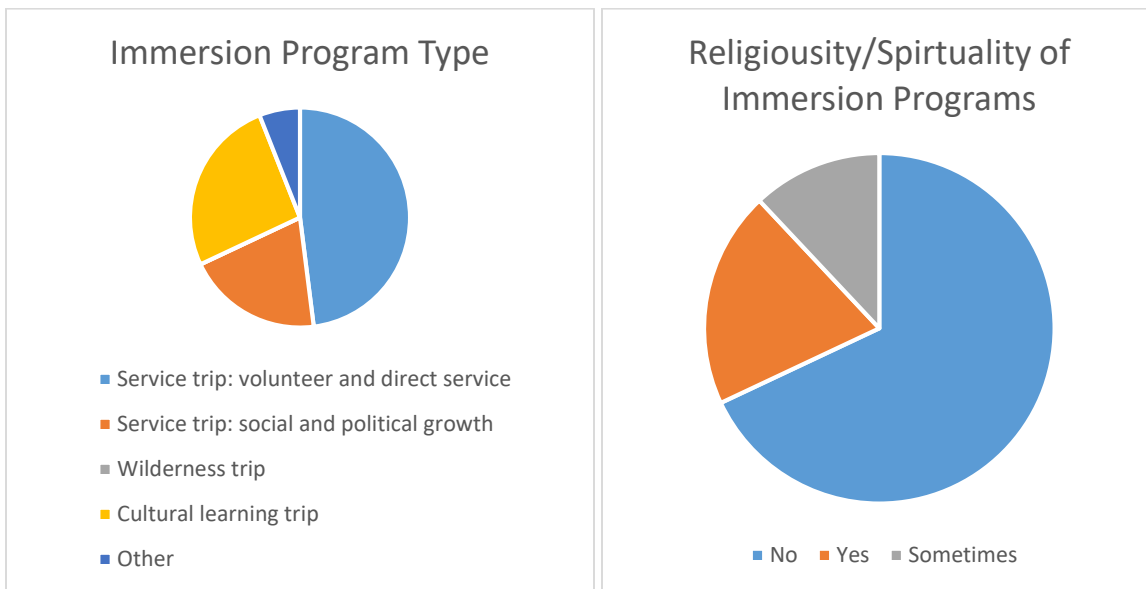
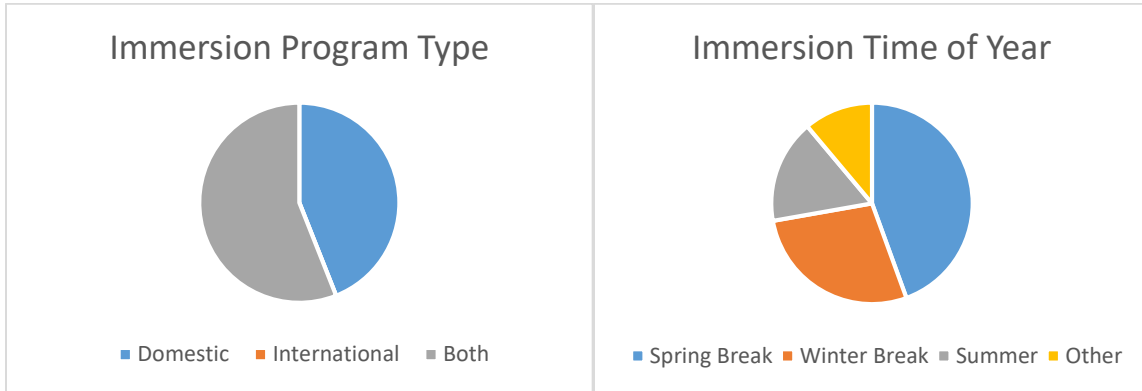
Joanne:

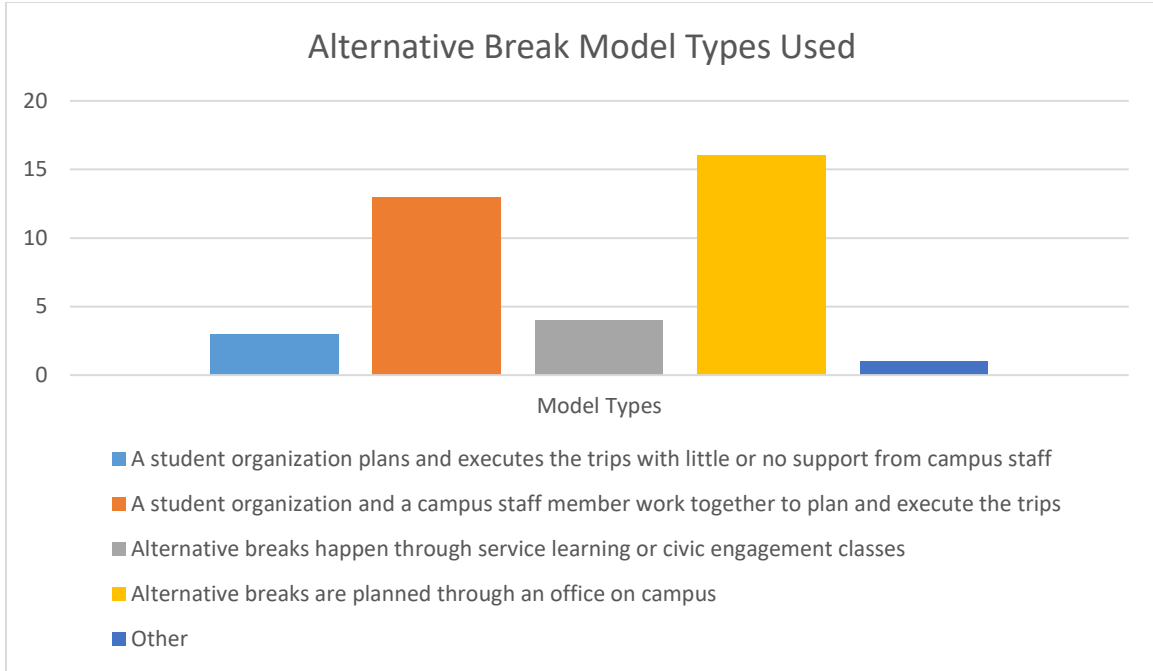
- Well-thought and interesting assessment report! I enjoyed reading through the practices at each institution, and it looks like clear recommendations are made to create change in VCSO’s curriculum. One thought I have is regarding the difference between best

practices and common practices. It seems like each institution's practice comes with challenges that may or may not be addressed yet (ex. Having re-entry programming with low attendance numbers). It would be good to think about what practices would help to remedy these challenges, which would then be defined as a best practice. Keeping a close assessment eye on this year's changes to the curriculum may help identify further needs in the program and ways to address it. -JK

Appendix

Participant Demographic Graphs and Charts





VCSO/VIA 2015-2016 Assessment: Immersion Benchmarking  
Online Survey

2015-2016 ASSESSMENT: IMMERSION PROGRAM BENCHMARKING

Assessment Project Facilitators: Emily LaHood Olsen & Rachael L. Suffrin, M.A.  
Institution: DePaul University, Chicago, Illinois, USA  
Department: Vincentian Community Service Office (VCSO)

**What is the purpose of this assessment?**

Each year, our office conducts an assessment on a different specific program within the department. This year, we are focusing on our service immersion program. With these types of programs, reintegration is a key component to meaning-making as part of the service immersion experience. Therefore, we are specifically interested in how VCSO's reintegration practices post-immersion compare with those of other universities.

**Why are you being asked to be in our assessment?**

Your department has been identified as also having service-immersion programs for students, and we would love your help to better understand other program's best practices for post-immersion reintegration.

**What is involved in helping with this assessment?**

If you agree to help us with our assessment, you will be asked to respond to open-ended questions about your immersion programming related to reintegration post-immersion, as well as to fill out a few basic demographic questions about you and your service-immersion program.

**How much time will this take?**

Our brief survey will take about 20 to 30 minutes of your time.

**Can my department also receive a copy of the findings?** Yes! We would love to share a copy of our final internal assessment report. To note, this study is not IRB approved and therefore the results of this "internal" assessment focused on benchmarking does not qualify as "generalizable" knowledge. The results of this internal assessment will not be published or presented formally other than within our department and university.

**Who should be contacted for more information about the research?** If you have questions, suggestions, concerns, or complaints about our assessment project, or you may be interested in participating in a phone interview in addition or instead of this online survey, please contact Emily LaHood Olsen, ELAHOOD@depaul.edu, 773-325-4772 or Rachael Suffrin, rsuffrin@depaul.edu.



Q2 Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information. I understand the purpose of this assessment.

Please click on the first box if you consent to participate in this assessment. If you do not consent to be in the assessment, just click the last box.

- I consent to provide information for this assessment, please take me to the online survey. (1)
- I DO NOT consent to provide information for this assessment, please do not take me to the survey. (2)

If I consent to provide inform... Is Selected, Then Skip To End of Block  
If I DO NOT consent to provide... Is Selected, Then Skip To Thank you for considering participati...

Q3 Thank you for considering participation in our internal assessment. If you have any further questions, you may contact: Emily LaHood Olson Ministry Coordinator for Service Immersions Vincientian Community Service Office | DePaul University ELAHOOD@depaul.edu 773-325-4772

You may now exit the survey.

If Thank you for considering p... Is Displayed, Then Skip To End of Survey

**Now we will ask some questions about you.**

What is your name? (1)

What University are you from? (2)

What department within your university? (3)

Is there a particular name for your service-immersion program? (4)

Q44 What is your best contact information?

Email (1)

Phone (2)

Q8 Now we will ask some questions about your immersion program.

Q45 Are your immersions programs...

- Domestic only? (1)
- International only? (2)
- Both domestic and International? (3)

Q32 What model does your campus use for its alternative breaks? (please choose all the apply)

- A student organization plans and executes the trips with little or no support from campus staff (1)
- A student organization and a campus staff member work together to plan and execute the trips (2)
- Alternative breaks happen through service learning or civic engagement classes (3)
- Alternative breaks are planned through an office on campus (4)
- Other (please specify) (5) \_\_\_\_\_

Q9 How many students, on average, participate in your immersion programs each year?

Number of Leaders: (1)

Number of Participants: (2)

Q10 When do you typically run your immersions? (please check all that apply)

- Spring break (1)
- Winter break (2)
- Summer session (3)
- Other (please specify) (4) \_\_\_\_\_

Q12 How would you classify your immersion programming? (please select all that apply)

- Service trip: volunteer and direct service (1)
- Service trip: social and political growth (2)
- Wilderness trip (3)
- Cultural learning trip (4)
- Other (please specify) (5) \_\_\_\_\_

Q13 Are your immersion experiences religious or spiritual in nature?

- No (1)
- Yes (2)
- Sometimes (3)

Q14 If yes, do they have a specific religious orientation? (Please specify)

Q46 What post-immersion experiences do you offer for students? (Please select all that apply)

- Retreats (1)
- Post-trip meetings (2)
- Reunions (3)
- Classes (4)
- Other (please specify) (5) \_\_\_\_\_
- Other (please specify) (6) \_\_\_\_\_
- Other (please specify) (7) \_\_\_\_\_

Q31 What is the mission and/or learning outcomes for your immersion programs? (feel free to copy past from departmental or program materials)

**Now we are going to ask you some open-ended questions about your program's post-trip reintegration practices. Please provide as much detail as possible!**

Q26 What have you found to be some of the best practices for assisting with re-entry that have worked well for your program/students?

Q28 Are there any practices, materials, or program structure components related to re-entry that you have found do not work well?

Q49 What does your post-immersion programming look like? How long after trips do you schedule your programming for students? How long does it last for students?

Q50 What challenges do you face in engaging students in post-immersion programming? What have you found to be successful?

Q23 Do your immersions integrate post-trip projects/work during their immersion? If so, please explain.

Q24 Do your students stay connected to community partners after the immersion is done? (e.g., fundraising, letter writing, advocacy work, etc.). If so, how?

Q30 Do you prepare your students for returning home during their pre-trip preparation? If so, how is that integrated into the pre-trip prep?

Q31 What types of training materials do you use for training student leaders, staff, and students on the re-integration process?

Q32 Do you connect participants to other service and/or ministry opportunities after the immersions? If so, what does that look like? Are these connections successful and result in short- or long-term student engagement?

Q33 What methods do you use to assess and evaluate your immersion programs? Do you focus on outcome assessments, evaluation of specific program components, or both?

Q35 How do you engage alumni from your immersion programs?

Q39 Is there anything else that you would like to share? This could be anything else that you would like us to know about your immersion program or university:

Q43 Would you be willing to be contacted at a later date for a follow up phone call to discuss your program's immersion reintegration practices more in depth? If so, please provide your best contact information (e.g., phone and email):

Phone (1)

Email (2)

Thank you for taking the time to complete the survey! Your responses will help us to better understand the best practices in post-immersion programming and post-trip reintegration for students.

\*\*If you have any reintegration training materials you are willing to share (e.g., powerpoints, discussion questions, activities, etc.) please email them to: Emily LaHood-Olsen, ELAHOOD@depaul.edu \*\*

If you have questions about this assessment, please contact Emily LaHood-Olsen, ELAHOOD@depaul.edu or Rachael Suffrin, rsuffrin@depaul.edu.