Hokie SENTINEL

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Global Education Office (GEO)
Overview

• What is Hokie SENTINEL?
• Before Summer 2015
• Since Summer 2015
• By End of Summer 2016
• Prepare & Protect
What is Hokie SENTINEL?

• **“SENTINEL”** – person(s) that stand watch; to watch over
  • Guardian, protector, lookout, watchperson, vigilance

• Identifies the initiatives, & the attitude the Hokie family embraces as we:
  • Prepare Hokies to travel abroad,
  • Protect them during the duration of their trip, &
  • Assist them in an emergency, or as needed

• Promotes a change in culture & teamwork
  • We all have a role to ensure international safety
What is Hokie SENTINEL?

• Includes...
  • Global Travel Oversight Committee (GTOC)
  • Policy & procedures
  • Medical & security insurance coverage
  • Communications
  • Personnel tracking & accountability
  • Global travel assessment
  • Pre-departure preparation
  • Awareness
  • Training
  • Emergency response & assistance
  • Monitoring of world events
Before Summer 2015

- Hokies traveling at will with no central oversight
- Inability to account for all Hokies abroad
- Inconsistent medical & security coverage
- Uncoordinated assistance in case of emergencies
- Poor communication with travelers
- Nonexistent international emergency action plan
- Global travel policy incomplete & not communicated
- Missing dedicated position to lead international safety
- Overall training, preparation & awareness lackluster
- Created & interviewed for 2 new positions
  - Global Education Office (GEO) & Student Affairs
Since Summer 2015

- Hired 2 new Hokies:
  - Eliza Wethey, Associate Director for Global Engagement (VT Engage)
    - Responsible for service learning & non-credit group trips
  - Randy Penson, Assistant Director, Global Safety & Risk Mgt
    - Oversight of all VT international travel

- Initiatives
  - Global Travel Oversight Committee (GTOC)
    - Chaired by Dr. Karl Markgraf, Associate VP for International Affairs
      - Includes: Dean, Provost’s Office, Faculty, University Counsel, Global Education, Emergency & Risk Mgt, Police, Student Affairs, & Export Control
    - Charged to…
      - Review & recommend global travel policy,
      - Evaluate program proposals to areas of concern
Since Summer 2015

- GTOC drafted an update of Global Travel Policy 1070
  - Approved by President Sands June 2016
- Hokie SENTINEL – Excel tool containing info on all Hokies abroad
  - Name, program name, location, dates of departure & return, emergency contact info (both personal & in-country), & USDOS & CDC concerns
- Hokie SENTINEL Global Travel Assessment – Excel tool with varying worksheets for the different programs abroad filled out by the leader or the individual student
  - Provides program info above & guides traveler through due diligence
    - USDOS Travel Warning/Alerts, CDC Travel Notices, CISI/Worldcue country ratings, STEP, insurance, plans, issues to consider, & helpful links
Since Summer 2015

- Collaborated w/Controller’s Office to identify employee travel abroad through Travel Authorization (TA) process
  - Travelers identified each Monday & contacted to...
    - Ensure CISI medical/security insurance obtained (including dependents)
    - Obtain emergency contact info & encourage STEP registration
    - Inquire on any additional travelers going with them
    - Inform of any USDOS Travel Warning/Alerts & CDC Travel Notices
    - Provide VT emergency contact info
  
- Established CISI as the sole medical & security insurance provider for all Hokies (less expensive & outstanding protection)
  - Eliminated MEDEX as an option (more expensive & less protection)
  - Provides consistent coverage for all
  - Enhances VT response in an emergency
Since Summer 2015

- Hokie Passport Office creates Emergency Contact Cards for group members of Faculty-Led Study Abroad programs (traveler majority)
  - Same material as the Hokie Passport
  - Customized to program’s destination
    - Front of card: contact info for AXA Assistance, VT Police & Randy Penson
    - Back of card: “In case of emergency, contact” in local language, & contact info for Faculty Leader, nearest US Embassy & vetted local taxi, & local 911 equivalent

- Training
  - Faculty Leader training each semester prior to breaks
  - PreD for undergraduate students studying abroad individually
  - Presentations (group study abroad programs, classrooms, college committees, functional orgs, individuals, & any other request)
  - New Employee Orientation
Since Summer 2015

- Students studying w/ 3rd party providers can waive CISI
  - All Hokies are required to be covered by CISI while abroad, AND 3rd party providers require their specific insurance
  - Process to waive VT CISI made more simple by signing waiver form
  - Eliminates double coverage & expense for student, & reduces any confusion during an emergency

- 24/7 personnel accountability & assistance
  - Terrorism: Paris shooting; Belgium bombing, Nice, Munich
  - Crime: theft in Barcelona & DR; sexual assault
  - Illness/Injury: Austria, Ecuador, Thailand, Australia, Denmark, Malawi
  - Accidents: bus crashes in Spain & Honduras; train crash in Italy
  - Natural events: earthquakes in Japan & Ecuador; typhoon in Japan
  - Civil unrest: Turkish coup attempt
Since Summer 2015

- Changing world events & safety concerns monitored 24/7
  - GTOC & University Relations kept updated
- Total trips tracked a/o August 2015: 3,342
  - F/S: 1,457 (54 dependents)
  - Academic credit: 1,228-students, 116-F/S, 11-dep, 2-guest, 1-volunteer
  - Non-credit: 399-students, 61-F/S, 7-volunteers, 5-dep, 1-guest
Global Travel Policy 1070

• All Hokies must register travel (or group) before departure
• All Hokies on university-supported travel must be enrolled in VT’s CISI policy
  • Includes guests & dependents
  • Waivers for international scholars/students returning home
  • Does not include personal travel before or after trip
• Identifies roles of 2 new committees:
  • Global Travel Oversight Committee (GTOC)
  • Global Education Approval Committee (GEAC)
• Hokies prohibited from CDC Warning Level 3 countries
• Students prohibited from DOS Travel Warning countries unless approved by GTOC
Global Travel Policy 1070

- Established deadlines for program submission/review
- Clearer & more comprehensive definitions
- Removed reference to specifics, (i.e. CISI & Studio Abroad)
- Addressed position on support of RSOs
- Encouraged to purchase travel insurance that will cover trip cancellation, lost/damaged luggage, etc.
Global Travel Policy 1070

• Additional requirements for university-supported faculty-led student group programs/trips:
  • To lead student programs, individual must attend Faculty Leader Training once every 2 years
  • Leaders will provide orientation before departing U.S. & another upon arrival in destination
  • Establishment of required plans
    • Never leave a student behind
      • Group with >15 students must have 2nd person to assist at all times
    • Communications – leader must have working means of communication
      • Contact students during free time & emergencies
      • Individual responsibility to contact leader in an emergency
By End of Summer 2016 (& Beyond)

- Initiatives in the works:
  - Hokie SENTINEL Communication Plan (*GEO & University Relations*)
  - Hokie SENTINEL International Travel Preparedness & Emergency Response Plan (*GEO & Office of Emergency Mgt*)
  - Portion of PreD (Predeparture Orientation) going online

- Beyond
  - Hokie SENTINEL website
  - Upgrade method to identify & track Hokies abroad
    - Home-grown program vs proven off-the-shelf software
    - Must be user-friendly
Prepare & Protect

- Due diligence & trip registration
  - Employees Traveling Abroad
  - Faculty-Led Group for Credit
  - Group Travel Non-Credit
  - Individual Student Abroad
Employees Traveling Abroad

• Notification through Travel Authorization (TA) process

1. Obtain approval of TA 30 days prior to departure, OR for short-notice travel, email rpenson@vt.edu

2. Receipt of GEO email with guidance

3. Adhere to guidance (CISI, STEP, emergency contacts, communications, etc.)

4. Inform rpenson@vt.edu of any changes, & check-in w/VT after incidents
Faculty-Led Group for Credit

• Faculty/Staff leading students abroad (>1 student)
  • Study abroad, research, field trip, etc. (any trip w/course attached)

Step 1
Notify Rachel Fitzgerald (GEO) to discuss program

Step 2
Complete & follow guidance of HSGTA (*October 15 for summer/fall programs; March 15 for winter/spring*)

Step 3
Submit info for Emergency Contact cards 60 days prior to departure

Step 4
Upload accurate CISI Enrollment spreadsheet to Scholar 30 days prior to departure

Step 5
Inform rpenson@vt.edu of any changes & check-in w/VT after incidents
Group Travel Non-Credit

- Faculty/Staff leading students abroad (>1 student)
  - Service-learning, competitions, recruiting, conferences, research, continuing ed, etc.

1. Notify Eliza Wethey (VT Engage) at elizaw8@vt.edu to discuss

2. Complete & follow guidance of HSGTA (conference & competitions 3 months prior; all others 6 months prior)

3. Submit info for Emergency Contact cards 60 days prior to departure; ensure participants self-enroll in CISI, then send confirmation to Eliza

4. Submit Liability form; ensure participants register in STEP

5. Inform rpenson@vt.edu of any changes & check-in w/VT after incidents
Individual Student Abroad

- Students traveling alone abroad
  - Study abroad, internships, research, conference, competition, etc.

For travel receiving academic credit, notify Marielle Wijnands (GEO) at Marielle@vt.edu to discuss (must complete all GEO requirements prior to departure)

Complete & follow guidance of HSGTA (October 15 for winter/spring programs; March 31 for summer/fall) http://www.globaleducation.vt.edu/?go=hokie-sentinel

Inform rpenson@vt.edu of any changes & check-in w/VT after incidents
Policies/Procedures to Footstomp

- CISI enrollment (including dependents)
  - Keep CISI card with you
- STEP registration (subscribe for security msgs for countries)
- HSGTA walk-through, adherence & submission
- Communications (cell/satellite phone, email, etc.)
- Accurate departure & return dates (communicate changes)
- Check-In w/VT during incidents (simple “I’m okay” email)
- Hokie accountability
- In-country emergency contact info
- Keep emergency contact info with you
Your Emergency Contacts

• VT Police
  • 540-231-6411 (24/7 coverage)

• VT Global Safety & Risk Management (Randy Penson)
  • 540-750-5747, rpenson@vt.edu (24/7 coverage)

• AXA Assistance (CISI’s contracted support team)
  • (Collect) 312-935-1703, medassist-usa@axa-assistance.us
Questions or Comments?