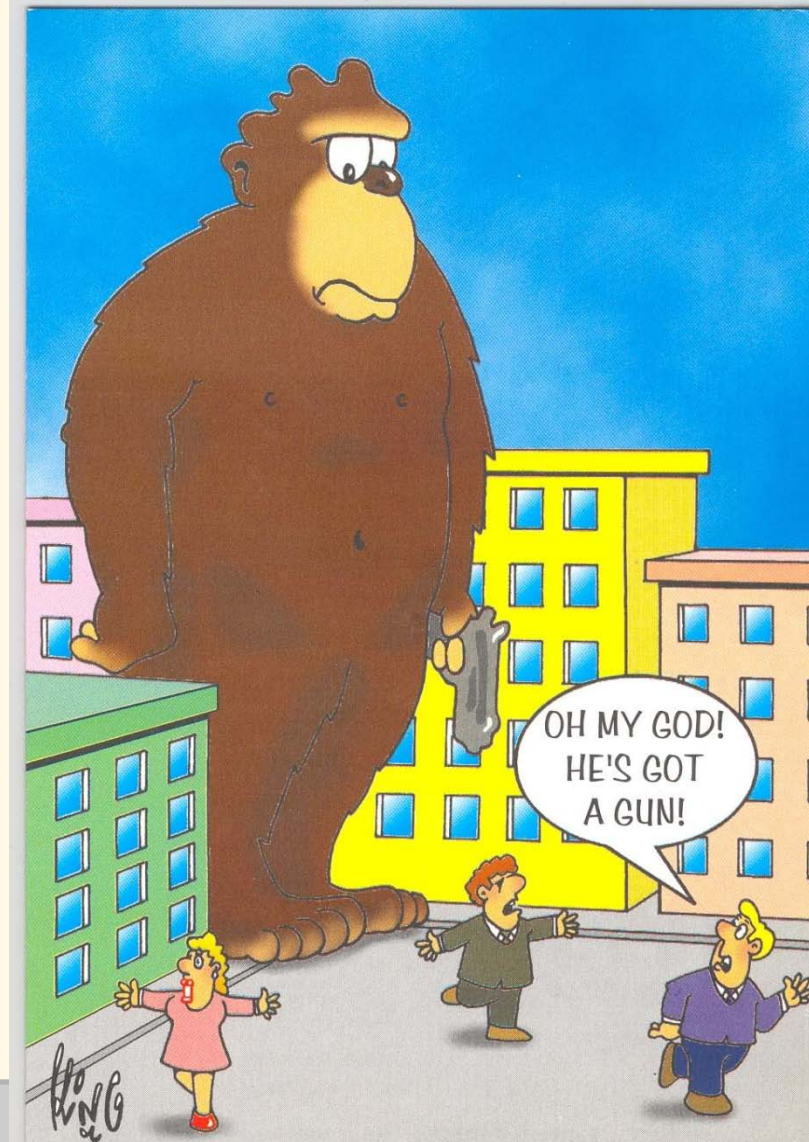


Keeping things in perspective...

Risk Management and the Hazards of Study Abroad

Natalie A. Mello

Director of Global Operations
Interdisciplinary & Global
Studies Division
Worcester Polytechnic Institute



RM & CM in Education Abroad

Always an issue in the field

- Recent tragedies & publicity
- Increased awareness of terrorism
- Natural disasters including hurricanes, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions, etc.
- Diseases such as SARS, Avian Flu, H1N1

We would like to regard students as adults, BUT...

- Study abroad *is* different from home campus
 - Greater risks
 - Often fewer resources
 - Student naiveté
 - Travel psychology
 - Predators
 - Stressors
 - Usual developmental
 - Academic
 - Cross cultural
 - Increasing mental health issues
 - Lack of usual supports
 - Cognitive research
 - Drinking age usually lower

Standard of Care:

- *Standards of Good Practice for Education Abroad*, The Forum on Education Abroad – 2008
 - *Responsible Study Abroad: Good Practices for Health & Safety* by the Interorganizational Task Force on Safety and Responsibility in Study Abroad – re-released 2007
 - Code of Ethics – NAFSA, 2003
 - Statement of Professional Competencies for International Educators – NAFSA, 1996
- ...all set a standard of care that you owe your students, program staff, colleagues and institution.

Getting Oriented: Safety in study abroad

- What do we think we know?
 - Anecdote and experience
- What do we know?
 - Data and research
- What can we do?
 - Strategies that just might work

Getting Oriented: Safety in study abroad

- **What do we think we know?**
 - Anecdote and experience
- **What do we know?**
 - Data and research
- **What can we do?**
 - Strategies that just might work

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THE MIAMI HURRICANE

STUDENT NEWSPAPER OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI IN CORAL GABLES, FLORIDA, SINCE 1929

Tuesday, March 17, 2009

UM student dies in Singapore while studying abroad

Posted March 4, 2009 at 3:58 pm

By [Matthew Bunch](#) // Editor in Chief

A photo of Scott Monat on his Facebook remembrance page, "RIP Scott Monat"

UPDATED 3/4/09 6:55 P.M.



A University of Miami student studying abroad at the National University of Singapore has died.

Scott Jared Monat, a second-year neurobiology major, was found in a student housing kitchen at approximately 6 a.m. local time Wednesday morning, [according to *The Campus Observer*](#), the student newspaper of NUS. It's unclear at this time whether he was dead in the kitchen or died in medical care. [A report from the *Straits Times*](#), the largest English-language newspaper in the country, is reporting that he was in Prince George's Parks Residences, a location popular among international students and an option for living for UM students who study abroad in Singapore, [according to the school's Web site](#).

"He and some others had been making noise in the kitchen, then around that time he fainted," said third-year engineering student Christopher Aldo to *The Observer*.

The cause of death has yet to be released by police in Singapore. *The Straits Times* is reporting that local police are handling the case as an unnatural death and are investigating.

Monat was a National Merit Scholar who attended [Pope High School](#) in Mariette, Ga. before he came to UM and received the Isaac Bashevis Singer scholarship, the highest scholarship awarded at the university. He was also a member of the College of Arts and Sciences' Edward T. and Roberta Foote Fellows. He was also very involved in Hillel, the Jewish student center on campus.

"He was a great guy, good friend," said Robyn Fischer, a rabbinical director at Hillel. "[Hillel] was a home away from home for him."

Student killed by car while living abroad

By: Erin Banco /The Daily Cardinal - November 10, 2008

Kurt Leswing, a UW-Madison senior participating in the Semester at Sea program, was killed in Hong Kong last week.

A UW-Madison student and participant in the Semester at Sea program, Kurt Leswing, 21, of Milwaukee, was struck by a car and killed in Hong Kong Nov. 7.

Hong Kong officials said the driver of the vehicle was intoxicated when he hit Leswing and was arrested at the scene.

Leswing was a senior business major at UW-Madison and has been described by members of the Semester at Sea program as gentle, kind, caring, easy-going and thoughtful.

While traveling in the fall, the program hosted Nobel laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu during its stopover in Cape Town, South Africa. Friends and family said Kurt was positively influenced by the archbishop's address.

Leswing repeated a quote, "Take the anger from your hearts, wipe the tears from God's eyes and live a life of love," from the archbishop's speech and shared it with family.

"This terrible tragedy reminds us of the value of every human life and how fragile it is. Each of us who knew Kurt must try to remember him in a way that honors his life and the contributions he made to our community," said Jack Van De Water, executive dean of the fall 2008 voyage.

The U.S. Consul General in Hong Kong and the Institute for Shipboard Education are continuing to investigate the case. Leswing is survived by his parents, who reside in Milwaukee.

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11 MSU students robbed, kidnapped in Guatemala

By [Robin Erb](#) • FREE PRESS EDUCATION WRITER • March 20, 2009

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Eleven Michigan State University students are safe after being ordered off a bus last week in Guatemala, tied up and robbed at gunpoint during spring break.

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Classes resumed this week, but it was unclear how many of those students had returned to school, MSU officials said.

The students, a tour guide and two bus company employees were heading to Lake Atitlan on March 13 when several men approached their tour bus

More Michigan headlines

- Michigan gets \$8.5M for hospitals helping the poor [\(4\)](#)
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SU student dies in France

Matt Wanetik reportedly fell while studying this semester in Strasbourg.

Saturday, October 04, 2008

By Douglass Dowty
Staff writer

A Syracuse University student studying abroad died Friday at the home of his host family in Strasbourg, France.

Matt Wanetik, a junior political science and international relations major in The College of Arts and Sciences, had been studying in Strasbourg this semester through the SU Abroad Strasbourg Center.

Wanetik was a member of the Alpha Epsilon Pi fraternity at SU. A fraternity brother said Friday night university officials told him that Wanetik died after a "slip-and-fall" accident.

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April 7, 2007

Crash Kills 2 Students at Florida State U. in Panama

A car carrying four students from Florida State University's campus in Panama City, Panama, plunged nearly 500 feet off a cliff on Friday, killing two people and injuring two others, the *Tallahassee Democrat* reported. The dead were identified as Joseph Rock of Panama and Elizabeth von Heiland of California and Panama. The injured students, who were not identified because their families were en route to Panama, were in stable condition. One is a woman from Alaska, and the other is a male student at Florida State University in Tallahassee who is in Panama as part of a study-abroad program. The students were reportedly going on a weekend camping trip with a second carload of students in a remote part of Panama. —Don Troop

Posted on Saturday April 7, 2007 | Permalink |

Previous: Education Dept. Puts Student-Loan Official on Leave as Controversy Widens

Next: 3 Football Players at U. of Minnesota Are Accused of Rape

In the Comments

"I find it ironic that posters to Chronicle blogs are so insistent that we hold our political leaders to account for the results ('outcomes') of the war in Iraq, K-12 schools for how they prepare students in our classrooms, and administrators for their work in our schools, but insist that their own work should not be evaluated in the same way -- by its results."
--drj50

New National Alliance Plans to Promote Measurement of Student Learning



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TALKING POINTS

Student dies while studying abroad in India

Katherine "Katie" Sherman, a junior from Chelmsford, died last week while studying abroad in Auroville, India.



Dean of students Jo-Anne T. Vanin reported Sherman's death in a March 25 e-mail message to the campus community.

The e-mail said Sherman was a Bachelor of Fine Arts major with a concentration in photography. She also worked at the Student Union Craft Center.

According to Vanin, Sherman was studying sustainable living, ecology and group dynamics while in India.

"We extend our deepest sympathy to her family and friends during this difficult time," said Vanin.

March 26, 2008.

 [E-mail story to a friend](#)  [Printer-friendly version](#)

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Home > News > Local News

UT student dies on study abroad trip in Paris

Professor reports that body was found at bottom of stairwell

News Sentinel staff

Originally published 02:26 p.m., July 9, 2007

Updated 02:26 p.m., July 9, 2007

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A University of Tennessee student died Sunday while a study abroad trip in Paris.

Nathan Boals, 21, of Hixson, Tenn., was a senior in communication studies at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville.

According to a release today from UT's Communications Office, Boals was one of eight UT students on a trip led by Kenneth Levine, an assistant professor of communication studies.

Eleven students from Michigan State University also are on the trip.

UT police were notified Sunday night by Levine.

Levine reported that Boals' body was found lying at the bottom of a stairwell at 5 p.m. Sunday, Paris time, and there was no preliminary evidence of foul play.

An autopsy was done today, and the investigation is continuing.



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Student dies while studying abroad

Issue date: 1/28/08 Section: News

Print Email Article Tools

Page 1 of 1

A 21-year-old USC student from North Attleboro, Mass. died in Italy while studying abroad this semester.

Karen Young, a third-year accounting, finance and art history student, was found near the Tiber River in Rome early Thursday morning. Young had begun a semester-long program of study at John Cabot University in Rome, where she was enrolled in courses in business, Italian and media arts.

The cause of death is unknown as of now, although medical examiners said they believe it was due to natural causes.

Young was a Capstone scholar and McKissick scholar, according to Media Relations. "We are deeply saddened by the death of Karen Young, who was a bright and ambitious student at the university," said Pat Willer, assistant vice provost for International Programs, in a news release. "The South Carolina community extends its deepest sympathy to Karen's family and friends."

Plans for funeral arrangements and memorial services have not been set. There is a Facebook group, "Forever Young - RIP Karen," dedicated to her with her friends leaving messages, telling stories and mourning their loss.

-Compiled by Liz Segrist

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SA student



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Dickinson College student dies in Guatemala

by The Patriot-News

Monday January 12, 2009, 5:31 PM

A Dickinson College sophomore drowned Saturday while on a Serve the World trip to Guatemala with 17 other students and staff of the Carlisle school, college officials reported.

Nathaniel Kirkland, no age available, of Philadelphia, was discovered missing when the rest of his group finished swimming at a beach that was protected by lifeguards, college President William Durden said in a message posted on the school's Web site. His death was confirmed by local authorities Sunday.

Durden said the other students on the trip, sponsored by the United Methodist Church, will return to the U.S. as soon as possible.

Plans are being made for a memorial service on campus, he said.

See more in [Breaking News](#), [Carlisle](#), [County: Cumberland](#)

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Getting Oriented: Safety in study abroad

- What do we think we know?
 - Anecdote and experience
- **What do we know?**
 - **Data and research**
- What can we do?
 - Strategies that just might work

Fatal Injuries of US Citizens Abroad

Clare E. Guse, MS, Leslie Cortes MHS, Stephen Hargarten, MD, MPH & Halim M. Hennes, MD, MS 2007

- Risk of injury is higher while traveling
- Although lack of familiarity, infrastructure, medical care, geography, etc. play their roles, the number one factor is behavior.
- If we refrained from alcohol, stayed out of bars and bad neighborhoods, wore seatbelts, utilized air bags, engaged in less risky activities (road travel at night and risky sports), wore helmets when appropriate, etc. – international travel would be comparable to staying at home (geographic variables)

Deaths Abroad – Non Natural Causes

CAUSE	TOTAL	%
MV Accident	721	32.7
Homicide	321	14.6
Suicide	281	12.6
Drowning	266	12.1
Air Accident	128	5.8
Terrorist Action	83	3.8
Drug Related	66	3.0
Maritime	24	1.0
TOTAL	2202	

Insurance Data Incidents ranked by # of claims

- Sexual assault, harassment
- Transportation
- Misc.
- Drowning
- Inappropriate behavior
- Slips and falls
- Medical (malpractice)
- Athletics
- ADA related
- Assault
- Suicide

Insurance Data: Types of claims

- 33% - Bodily injury
- 33% - Sexual misconduct
- 33% - Breach of contract, educational malpractice, discrimination (ADA), wrongful discipline

Insurance Data: Bodily injury claims

- 1/3 - Auto deaths
- 1/3 – Medical [mis]treatment, misinformation
- 1/3 – Athletic, assault, premises liability

New Efforts specific to SA

- Critical Incident Database
 - The Forum on Education Abroad
 - Pilot study going on now
 - Report available in March 2010
 - Standards in Practice: Beyond the Basics of Health, Safety and Security
 - 6th annual Forum Conference on Education Abroad

Getting Oriented: Safety in study abroad

- What do we think we know?
 - Anecdote and experience
- What do we know?
 - Data and research
- **What can we do?**
 - **Strategies that work**

Approach to Risk Management

Philosophical Approach

- Identify
- Analyze
- Manage

Practical Approach

- Tailored Program for each Off-Campus Program that includes planning for emergencies

Ultimate Goal

- To Protect the **Students**, Faculty, the Program and University

Risk Management

- Risk Assessment
 - Hazards (objective)
 - Contributing factors (subjective)
- Risk Strategy
 - Transfer risk
 - Reduce/minimize risk
 - Accept risk
- Emergency Response Plans and Protocols

Hazard Landscape

Hazards (Objective)

- Road travel
- Crime/predators
- Swimming
- Disease
- Natural disasters
- Electricity, fires, falls
- Terrorism, political violence

Contributing factors (Subjective)

- Alcohol/drugs
- Mental health issues
- Lack of familiarity
- Cultural incompetence
- Language issues
- Millennial generation
- High Income Country (HIC) vs Low/Middle Income Country (LMIC)

Millennial Generation

- Experiential learners: learn by doing; don't read as much; like interactivity; project-based assignments; games & simulations
- Results-oriented: focused on grades and performance; expect to do well; expect high standards & fairness
- Team-oriented: like collaboration, group learning
- Need structure and feedback
- Personalized learning: expect to make choices and customize learning; want flexibility
- Technology: expect technology...technology is not PowerPoint
- Uncomfortable with ambiguity

LMIC Greater Risks/Fewer Resources

- Poverty
- Poorer sanitation
- Higher disease risk
- Geography
- Underdeveloped infrastructure
- Underdeveloped regulatory systems
- Irregular regulation enforcement
- Political instability
- Underdeveloped insurance/tort law

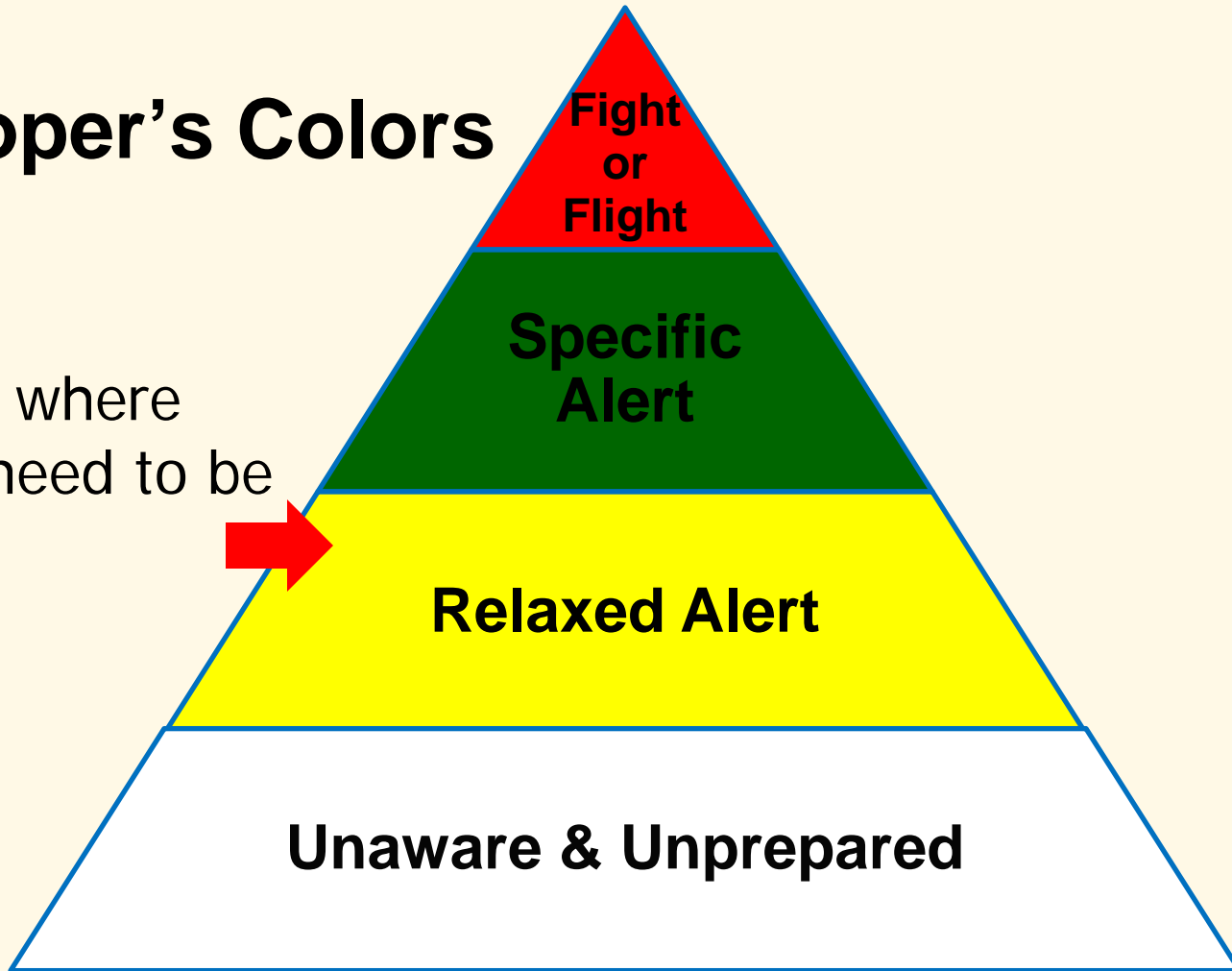
- LMIC populations represent*
- 85% of people exposed to earthquakes, floods, tropical cyclones, droughts
 - 97% all drownings
 - 95% all fatal fires
 - 95% all homicides
 - 90% all MV deaths

It's more dangerous for those who live in a LMIC and they are far more competent

Situational Awareness

• Cooper's Colors

This is where students need to be



Gerald J.S. Wilde – Target Risk

Triple E Approach to Risk Management

- **Engineering** – structure of program (planning: where, when and how)
- **Education** – share information to enlighten
- **Enforcement** – legislation, policies, rules, protocols

Perceptions + Expectations = More Risk

Less Afraid:

- of natural disasters
- of risks they choose
- if there is a benefit
- if they have some control
- if from something known to them
- **when they know more**

More Afraid:

- of human made disasters
- if risks are imposed
- if benefit is unclear
- if not in control
- if from something unknown to them
- **when uncertainty is high**

p. 481, *NAFSA's Guide to Education Abroad for Advisers and Administrators*, 2005

Resources (hyperlinks)

- [Responsible Study Abroad: Good Practices for Health & Safety by the Interorganizational Task Force on Safety and Responsibility in Study Abroad](#)
- [The Forum for Education Abroad](#)
- [NAFSA: Association of International Educators](#)
- WPI resources: [Interdisciplinary & Global Studies Division - Resources for Advisors](#)