

Case Problem

Prof. W.A. McGill of Palm Lakes University is directly involved with the new international business program at PLU. Sarah James, one of his students, is the first from the new program to complete a summer semester abroad. Sarah communicated with McGill a couple of times during her seven-week trip in Mexico, and worked closely with Alberto Jimenez, the director of international recruitment at Instituto de Negocios Internacionales; she seemed to be adjusting well and gaining immense professional experience. James sent an email to both Jimenez and McGill stating her issues with her host family. Her insensitivity towards cultural differences has jeopardized the relationship between PLU and INI. McGill needs to resolve this issue while keeping a good relationship with Dr. Jimenez, so McGill can promote the program.

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Obvious, Intuitive and Wrong

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Notes on Relevant Information

- W.A. McGill is a professor at Palm Lakes University
- He has worked closely with Sarah James, a student of the new international business program.
- Sarah James, a sophomore at PLU, is the first from the international business program to study abroad.
- She studied abroad in Mexico for seven weeks, in the summer.
- She studied at Instituto de Negocios Internacionales.
- McGill has been working closely with INI and Alberto Jimenez (Director of International Recruitment) on creating a strong bond between PLU and INI to promote PLU's international business program.
- James has had numerous professional success, according to Jimenez
- James sent an email to Jimenez and CCed McGill that addressed major complaints about her host family in Mexico.

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Underlying Assumptions

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- James faced many issues with her host family that may be attributed to her lack of adaptability or a poorly communicated program
- The difference in cultural aspects of communication within James' message is likely insulting to both Jimenez and the host family
- Jimenez is focused on promoting his program with PLU, but he has no responsibility or loyalty to either James or McGill
- McGill and Jimenez assumed that James' living situation was suitable
- McGill hopes to use James' experience abroad as a promotional tool for the new program
- There is a possibility that James' complaints are unjustified

Objectives

- Maintain professional relations between INI and PLU
- Communicate with Sarah James regarding her grievances
- Improve the semester/internship-abroad program
- Create the best image for the new international business program at PLU.

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Order of Critical Issues

Urgent:

- Maintain growing relationship between INI and PLU
- Creating a positive image for the new program

High:

- Improve the international business program

Low:

- Communicate with Sarah James

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Possible Solutions

| Solution A | Solution B |
|---|---|
| McGill can contact Jimenez directly and discuss how to improve the relationship about programs. | McGill can address Sarah's situation in a mediated and leave the program on it. |
| Pros: | Pros: |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> By taking control of the situation, involvement of James, McGill can avoid any further backlash from Jimenez. McGill can maintain a positive relationship by being direct. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It will take time then and can cause little cooperation regarding Sarah's experience. The rapid growth of the situation with both Jimenez and Sarah. |
| Cons: | Cons: |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The solution is time-consuming. Implementing recruitment changes will not be easily short time and money. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> James may be upset with the decision. The program will not be able to handle the situation if recruitment problems are high again. |

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Best Solution

McGill should directly contact Jimenez. Doing so addresses the problem that Sarah has created and preserves a professional relationship between INI and PLU. This solution also corrects the recruitment and training issues with students studying abroad. By handling the email quietly and directly, McGill will maintain a positive image that will help promote the international business program.

Implementing the Solution

McGill will explain to Jimenez the efforts to create a better recruitment process to accept more adaptable students to the program, creating better cultural preparation and awareness. Preparing students for a variety of cultural differences will help avoid problems similar to James'. McGill will need to have more culturally diverse faculty to teach cultural sensitivity and provide guidance in the transition. Students and host families can communicate by email in order to establish a relationship beforehand and possibly correct issues before they emerge abroad. McGill and Jimenez can work together to create a survey for students and host families to rate their experience. This will provide detailed feedback on the program improvements.

Communicating the Solution

McGill will coordinate this new plan with Jimenez via phone or e-mail. This allows both them to be aware of all aspects of the worries and the problems on both ends. The student and host family will communicate by email being given a specific outline and rubric of what questions should be asked. This also allows for a mutual and beneficial opportunity for the student and host family to bond. Overall, the promoting of this study abroad program will be communicated to international business majors by e-mail, word of mouth by professors and possibly by posted fliers.

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Possible

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Solution A:

**McGill can contact Jimenez directly
and discuss how to improve the study
abroad program**

Pros:

- **By taking control of the situation,**

- McGill can maintain a positive relationship, by being direct.

Cons:

- This solution is time consuming
- Implementing recruitment changes will be costly (both time and money)

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