SITUATION:  LEGAL INFRACTION COMMITTED BY TRAVELER IN A HOST COUNTRY

PROTOCOLS

Prior to departing on your semester or interim experience, please prepare by completing the following:

- During the pre-departure briefing(s), reiterate the importance of knowing the laws and customs of the host country.
- Important information to review with students:
  - KNOW RELEVANT LAWS
    Review the U.S. State Department’s Background Notes for the country or countries where the group will be studying (link listed below under resources).
  - UNDERSTAND CONSEQUENCES
    If a student(s) break local laws while abroad, the U.S. government (and Calvin) can do very little to help them. U.S. citizens are granted no special privileges or rights and will be dealt with according to the standard procedures of the legal system of the host country. In addition, breaking a law while studying abroad may result in the student being sent home and having to bear any additional financial expenses that are incurred on his or her behalf.
  - UNDERSTAND CAUSES
    According to the Center of Global Education (2010), alcohol consumption is involved in most cases where students break a law unintentionally.

- Resources Available Prior to Departure:
  - Have the students’ research laws and customs of the host country and present them to the group.
  - When the group initially arrives in country, if possible, have the U.S. Embassy or Consulate talk with the group about specific customs or laws and the importance of adhering to those laws while studying in their host country.
Infraction Response

- MINOR VIOLATIONS
  - Work with local authorities to address issues and/or problem solve;
  - Have the student contact his or her emergency contact (e.g. parents);
  - Speak to the parents. If possible, wait until the student has made contact with parents.
  - Contact the U.S. Embassy or Consulate and inform them of the situation and ask for any specific advice on how to proceed.
  - Communicate with Calvin about the situation, consult on whether the student should be allowed to continue the program or be sent home. If the decision is made to be sent home, the Director of Off-Campus programs will arrange for appropriate transportation back to the United States at student’s expense;

- MAJOR VIOLATIONS
  - Work with local authorities to understand the severity of the situation;
  - Communicate with the Director of Off-Campus Programs and decide if a Crisis Response Team needs to be formed;
  - Contact the U.S. Embassy or Consulate and inform them of the situation and ask for any specific advice and assistance in moving forward. The Embassy/Consulate may be able to assist you in the following ways: visit the student in jail after his/her arrest, give a list of local attorneys, help discern the financial resources needed to move forward, and intercede with local authorities to help ensure proper treatment.
  - Have the student contact his or her emergency contact (e.g. parents). If this is not possible, the director and/or Calvin will notify appropriate individuals;
  - Continue to monitor the situation and offer whatever assistance you can throughout the process.

- DOCUMENT the incident and Calvin’s response (including the director’s response) using an incident report.

Follow Up Protocols upon Return from Semester or Interim Experience

- Meet with the Off Campus Programs Director and Crisis Response Team (if formed) to evaluate Calvin’s response.
- File a final report that addresses the infraction incurred and Calvin’s response. Update any policies and procedures as needed.
SPECIFIC RESOURCES

Important Phone Contacts at Calvin:
  o Don DeGraaf, Off-Campus Programs Director – 616-526-6225 (office) – 616-558-7245 (cell) – ddegraaf@calvin.edu
  o Calvin Campus Safety (24/7 line) – 616-526-6452
  o Calvin Off-Campus Programs Office – 616-526-6382

• Incident Report Form

• U.S. STATE DEPARTMENT BACKGROUND NOTES. These publications include facts about the land, people, history, government, political condition, economy, and foreign relations of independent states. They often will cover many of the laws and customs you need to be aware of while studying in a particular place. These notes can be found at: www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/

• State Department webpage on the Arrest or Detention of an American Citizen Abroad
  o www.travel.state.gov/travel/tips/emergencies/emergencies_3879.html

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