

Noles Abroad SE06 EP01 Transcript

Vanessa: "Welcome to Noles Abroad. A podcast by Florida State University International Programs. I'm Vanessa."

Zoe: "And I'm Zoe, and where your hosts. On this podcast, we'll talk about study abroad from the perspective of the students, faculty, staff, and alumni who make it an experience worth sharing."

Vanessa: "We'll also bring you travel tips and fun facts from around the globe."

Zoe: "On today's episode, we interview our very own Hannah Marchbanks. For those of you who are frequent listeners, you know that Hannah and I have been hosting this podcast from the beginning Vanessa will now be taking on the role of hosting with more excited for this new chapter. Hannah talks about her study abroad experience, her role as marketing director at IP, and how soon success is at the center of what we do. Let's get to our conversation with Hannah now."

Zoe: "Hi Hannah how's it going?"

Hannah: "Hello! Good how are you?"

Zoe: "Good we're super excited to sort of flip things around and interview you today on the podcast. So our listeners would know you obviously as one of our podcast hosts as we've heard you talk about your study abroad experience and working for IP but can you just remind everyone where you studied abroad, what program you did and then also what role you had with IP professionally?"

Hannah: "Absolutely it is so fun to be on this side of the podcast today. As reminder for everyone, my name is Hannah, I recently got married so my name was changed I'm no longer Hannah Meister, I am now Hannah Marchbanks but I studies abroad with FSU as part of my masters program at Florida State. I did the London insides of higher education program during the summer between the first and second year of my program and my time with IP, I started out as the event coordinator after such a positive experience studying abroad and I just went for it and applied and started out my career with IP there and then our little over a year ago I guess, I was given the opportunity to become the director of marketing. So that is what I have done at IP."

Vanessa: "Wow so you've moved up and you've made your mark."

Hannah: "It's been a fun ride that's for sure."

Vanessa: "Would you talk about how your study abroad experience influenced the type of work you wanted to do in higher ed?"

Hannah: "Absolutely. So working with international education was not something I ever would have considered if not for my study abroad experience. Honestly studying abroad was not really something I had ever heard of before I got into grad school and undergrad I was just really involved in a lot of other things that I didn't really know anyone that had studied abroad until after I graduated. So after having had that experience, I realized like international education is super cool this is something that I could see myself working in and so through my study abroad experience I got such a well rounded view in higher education. We did a comparative study of some highered institutions in the state of Florida and then compared them to the institutions we got to visit while we were in England and I just really appreciated having that experience."

That well rounded view of this field that I had dedicated two years of my life to study and get a masters degree in and I think that that experience just really helped me see the value of higher ed and the global value of highered. That's it wasn't just an American thing or it wasn't just an English thing like it was I just really liked seeing how all of these things interacted and how you could have this global experience while still focusing on education. So I think that obviously really influenced by the start of my career getting into international and I think the other really interesting thing about my experience with IP is having studied in London and having had lectures with doctor Paul and having her as a professor for the day and I had a meeting with Kathleen yesterday and it's just really fun to like had that experience. Getting to studw with these people and not getting to call them a colleague and a good friends, it's just not something I would have ever considered it's not for my study abroad experience."

Vanessa: "What were some of those specific crossovers you saw in the institutions overseas and in the US?"

Hannah: "So I honestly was shocked at how similar they were I don't know what I was expecting in terms of differences but there were so many similarities there certainly were some differences but there were so many similarities and in my particular projects, we kind of broke into our trip and so my particular group was focused on studying student wellness and how student wellness is approached in the United States and then in England and kind of comparing and contrasting. And it was really interesting to see the different approaches yet the same kind of like heart of the matter like at the end of the day just cared about student wellness and they wanted students to do well and they wanted to be successful and they wanted students to have the resources and support to get their education as the most well person that should be so there were different approaches to that I mean we saw some institutions focus more on physical Wellness and having robust intermural programs and campus recreation activities. Other institutions focused way more on the mental health and they had a lot of like campaigns around mental health or different resources on campus for mental health so it's interesting to see how people kind of approach them from different types of Wellness but then at the end of the day it was about students being well. I think that was one of the coolest thing that I got to experience in both the US and in England."

Zoe: "That's really cool. I'm sure that you took some of those aspects as well, like working with students in your marketing role and just caring about student wellness and seeing student success. That's really neat that you got to study that."

Hannah: "Absolutely."

Zoe: "So you talked about this a little bit but what kind of insights from studying abroad did you bring with you into your marketing role?"

Hannah: "I think one that we haven't touched on quite yet but that is huge is flexibility. I think that we talked about that or heard about that on the podcast in terms of being flexible and studying abroad and things don't always go according to plan and sometimes you're going to have to roll with the punches and change your plan as your going and just on the marketing team, they say to keep moving forward but it doesn't always go for the plan and I think that that is something we learned studying abroad that has absolutely helped me in my professional roles up until this point. The last two and a half years, since the start of the pandemic, we have experienced that to new degrees but even before that, planning events or marketing campaigns and something changes at the last minute or something doesn't arrive in time or something

happens and just being able to roll with it like still get the job done being flexible. That was something that I definitely experienced throughout my study abroad experience that has 100% come in handy in my career so far.”

Vanessa: “Yeah that's honestly great advice anywhere and being able to adapt and be flexible. What has been the best thing about working as the director of marketing at IP?”

Hannah: “So that's a great question there have been so many great memories of working at IP and different projects that we have gotten to do and event that's that we have hosted but I think my favorite part of my time at IP as a whole has been working with our IP Ambassador staff that was really what I wanted to do. When I was in grad school, I was working in more of a communications center role still kind of higher ed tangent position before I went back to grad school and I realized what was missing from that role was people. I was sitting at a computer most of the day, I was doing a lot of social media and graphic designs and it was great and I loved it but I didn't have people interaction on a daily basis so I realized that I really wanted to work with students in a higher ed setting so becoming the event coordinator and then the director of marketing and getting to retain that IP ambassador staff has been my favorite part of my career. They're just so fun, it's a group of undergraduate students that work in our office. They have all studied abroad so they have that same excitement and passion for study abroad and they just want to share it with other people so they are always enthusiastic and fun and willing to work and wanting to do the work coming up with new ideas and they've really helped our office be innovative. Having that staff of students who are kind of like in the know or on the pulse, their peers want to know what is needed to have this experience of studying abroad so I think that they really have been the best part of my job, getting to work with them and work on their own personal development and helping them with their career goals and what they want to accomplish during their time in undergrad and beyond and see them go through that process and see students now attend graduate school overseas or working in these jobs where they get to use their experience having studied abroad and their experience at FSU and just getting to see the people that they're becoming so that has been the most fun.”

Vanessa: “I think one of the best things about working with students is that you stay on top of trends. I mean there is so much benefit with working with people who are directly in our market, would you say that there is benefit with working with students directly on that?”

Hannah: “Oh absolutely. The students on our staff are way cooler than I could ever hope to be and I don't know where we would be without them. So getting their inside thoughts, I mean we would have brainstorming meetings sometimes like if there wasn't a whole lot to discuss work wise, we would just have brainstorming sessions asking like what would be fun or what would y'all like to do like are there event ideas that you have, are there giveaway ideas that you have, are there any questions that you think your peers have but don't know how to ask or don't know where to go for the answers. What are cool and engaging ways that we can share this information? So honestly, like our students staff has had such an impact on IP's marketing overall and just IP's presence on campus and it wouldn't be the same without them. I mean obviously we have a really talented staff of full time professionals but a lot of that influence comes from the generation that we are marketing to. I mean, I think we can admit to ourselves, none of us are gen z and that's OK but we can we really need those students to kind of keep us in the know and keep up with what is cool, which I know sounds so uncool saying but it's fine.

Yeah so the students really help us stay in the know about what is going on on campus, so they are definitely are a huge part of IPs marketing.”

Vanessa: “What are some of the ideas that have come from ambassadors that we've seen like implemented in marketing efforts for IP?”

Hannah: “Good question. So some of the things that they've been a part of, they've really helped with some of our events, like new ideas for new events. There's one that we've kind of tried a few different ways and I think it is continuing to evolve and we'll get it right one day but we've had this idea of around the world with IP and doing different stations for different countries to represent the programs that we have and a lot of those ideas came from students, for example for London, we kind of did a pub quiz style and the students wrote the questions for those and they came up with the rubric, they created all of it and submitted it to me and I printed them out. Getting their insight is important because they are the ones that spent a long period of time in these center locations. I'm so grateful for my experience studying abroad but it was only a week, I didn't really get the same amount of time that a lot of our students spent spending a whole summer, a whole semester, even four weeks is obviously longer than the time I spent, so they're the ones that are really subject matter experts so to get their opinions on how to best represent the study centers or best represent their program, even if it wasn't a study center location, they're really the ones to know those things.

Trying to think of other things, I've always liked to get their insight on like if we're changing something so a little less fun example but I think it was a really great example of how they been really helpful is like for the study abroad fair, we kind of switched up the way that we set up the fair and they were a huge part of approving that, like saying like oh that does make more sense and easier to look at it like and to like understand having been to study abroad fair, they were like absolutely let's do that so just to kind of get their approval or their insight on it is always very helpful.”

Zoe: “Yeah absolutely. I think the ambassadors are a really valuable part of our team so it's great to hear you talk about it and all the ideas that they have and the trends that they keep us up to speed on.”

Hannah: “Oh yeah like their TikTok that they made for the study abroad fair is so fun and it just captured the study abroad are so perfectly, like excitement and the enthusiasm and just to get to see their creativity come out in that way is really fun too 'cause you realize they're not just being students, they're not just like student workers like they are creative people that want this outlet to like share their passion for city abroad and so to give them that opportunity through like a TikTok or something like that is just so much fun to see what they do with that.”

Zoe: “Absolutely. Ok so shifting a little bit, how would you say that marketing studying abroad changed during the pandemic?”

Hannah: “How didn't it change during the pandemic. I think there are so many things that we could talk about here but I think just overall it kind of goes back to that flexibility thing that I mentioned earlier. We as a team we realize more than ever like how flexible we needed to be. There were times when we decided we were going to try something out and we were going to go with it and we would get 3/4 into the project something huge would change it's like well never mind that's not going to work anymore so just the flexibility that it took and the patience that it took was huge but for more of like a conceptual how we marketing study abroad during a pandemic, there was a time where we didn't have students abroad and there was a time

when we didn't know when we were going to have students abroad again and so we kind of had to take a step back and like think about what is study abroad and why are we marketing this like if we don't have specific programs to marketing, what are we marketing? And so it kind of became a running joke that marketing was marketing the idea of study abroad because we didn't have like actual programs to market, we didn't have all the normal things but we knew that study abroad would return and we didn't think that this was the end of study abroad so we didn't want people to forget about study abroad. Like it might not be an option right now, but it will be an option soon, but we are working to make it be an option as soon as we can and now we know that we have returned and people are abroad now so study abroad is back. But it was kind of this idea of what is study abroad and why do we market what we market and why do we care what this industry does so we just kind of had to take a step back and think about what are the benefits of studying abroad and how can we talk about this idea like what is the essence of study abroad and we can kind of talk about without having specific things to market. So talking about some of those bigger taglines like lifelong friendships, and cross cultural communication, and getting to know your professors and faculty members and getting to see the world were all things that we continue to talk about. So those are kind of big like the broad subjects that we talked about but I think one of the coolest things came out of the pandemic and that's kind of reevaluate how we marketed or what we were sharing was this podcast. I mean this podcast started at the beginning of the pandemic because we didn't have programs to market and and so it was something that we kind of kicked around for a while and the idea kind of had come up in a meeting two years prior or something like that and at the time we were like we don't have the time we don't know how to do a podcast and it's a cool idea but it's not going to work. Then the pandemic started and we started to try and figure out how to do a podcast so it kind of gave us the time to step back and learn something new and figure something out and so this was one of the coolest things came out of it and now that we have students that are going abroad now we continue to share those stories of students who are abroad and we get to dig back into the archives and talk to alums that have studied abroad and some of the earliest study abroad alums that we have had were from like the late 60s and like how cool is that to share stories about people who have studied abroad with FSU in the 60s. That's awesome and to get to talk to other alums about cool things with their careers that have related to their study abroad experience and they just wanna talk about their stories in all these different voices and perspectives."

Vanessa: "Yeah I totally agree I think like you said through the pandemic is important like have different areas to voice study abroad or that voice the experience of study abroad in the podcast has definitely been one of the most beautiful things getting to have a variety of voices all across the world to talk about it this really elevated the marketing landscape of studying abroad with IP."

Hannah: "I think it also kind of shows like the longevity of study abroad because it was like at a time where we didn't have current photo or video to share, we had the memories and I think for the podcast it was such a cool way to share those memories like for people who studied abroad while ago or like as an example, my aunt actually studied abroad with FSU and she studied in London as well and she lost all of her photos in a flood so she doesn't have the physical photos anymore she doesn't have videos from her time abroad but she could still share her story so I think that the you might not have this physical memories or we might not be able

to have videos of current students abroad. But we have the people in our alumni base to share those stories.”

Vanessa: “So earlier you talked about how student success is important part of higher education and all three of us know the effort that goes into creating space that is accessible to students so in what ways would you say that IP supports students?”

Hannah: “I think that there are so many ways that IP supports students and I think that some of the big ones would be, especially looking at a diverse student population, like wanting to make sure that our spaces are safe and accessible to as many students as possible and wanting to improve that and make it know to students that these are the things that we care like we are concerned about we want to show you support to have this experience of a lifetime. I think that some of those examples would be our overseas staff going through training and things like the diversity team creating a presentation to share with students here on campus to kind of talk about identity and reflecting on your own identity and understanding others and how that information is useful when you study abroad and you meet people from all over the world with different culture and perceptions, customs, practices everything but how that can also be helpful on campus in Tallahassee. Tallahassee has such a diverse group of people already and you're likely to run into people with different customs wherever you go, even just on the same campus so that type of information can be helpful in Tallahassee as well as abroad. We are trying to extend our scholarship offerings so offering financial support to students who might need it or at least having those opportunities available to students. There are so many ways that we are trying to improve the support for our students in those types of ways but also the being there for students is something that I think FSU has always done well. I think in Tallahassee our IP office is always welcoming to students in order to get the information that you need so knowing that the staff is there to support you, if you have financial aid questions, application questions, program questions you don't even know where to start, we want you to come in and ask those questions we are happy to help you with that. So once you are studying abroad you have to support of your faculty leader if you're on the curriculum focus program potentially a PA if you're on one of those programs. If you're in study center you have a whole staff that is there to support you whether you need academic support, if you need health support, if you need help finding a doctor or access to mental health counselor or something like that we have staff in those locations that are ready and willing because they want you to have the best experience. So I think there are a lot of ways that IP helps to support our students and ways that we are always trying to improve that support system.”

Zoe: “Absolutely. The last question of course is question that we ask everyone that comes on this podcast, what advice do you have for any students who are wanting to study abroad?”

Hannah: “I think I kind of alluded to this in my last answer so I may have kind of over sold myself there but my advice is to ask off of the questions. Use all of the resources, there is so much information out there and I know that knowing that can be kind of overwhelming or you don't start but you are not going to figure it out if you don't start, you just have to start somewhere. Even if you end up starting maybe that wasn't the first step at least you figured that out, now you can go back to the first step. One of the most heartbreaking things for me is when a student walks in the office and says like I heard that y'all have scholarships but I didn't really know much information and I am like well the deadline is today and it is like if you knew there were scholarships then why didn't you come in sooner. Ask these questions and use all

the resources. IP has information on our website, on all of our social media accounts, we have like I mentioned, we have staff members we have IP ambassadors, there is a contact list for our ambassadors on our website if you would rather talk to a student first about their experience, do that, they are happy to answer emails. Come on in and talk to them there or talk to a full time staff member whatever your questions are, please come and ask them. We want to help you and we want to help point you in the direction of whatever assistance that you may need. So ask all the questions, use all the resources and of course, study abroad and have the time of your life.”

Vanessa: “You hear that students we have got your back. IP has got your back.”

Hannah: “Absolutely. That is like the one thing that we can tell people. The tagline on our t-shirts is we are here to help you there. We want you to study abroad and that is why we exist. So many of our staff members have studied abroad themselves, whether it was with IP or not, we have been abroad and we see the value in it and that is why we do what we do. So we want you to have this experience too so come talk to us we love to talk to students that’s why we are here.”

Zoe: “Well Hannah, it has been such a pleasure to talk to you today and we were so glad to be able to do this.”

Hannah: “Absolutely thank you so much for having me on. It was so fun to be on this side of the podcast and it’s been so fun to be apart of the podcast and to get to end my podcast career on side of the mic so thank you so much for the invitation and it has been really fun.”

Vanessa: “Hey everyone, Vanessa here popping in before the disembark. I just want to say I am going to miss Hannah so much on this podcast and I am glad that we got to send her off with an episode of her very own. Anyways, I feel honored to take your place as co host. So a quick intro about me, I work as the graphic designer for IP and I also do sound editing on this podcast. Essentially I try to make all the audio sound good on your ears. I studied abroad in Greece and if you check our season three episode one of this podcast you can listen to me talk a little more about the art and design of IP. Well thanks for welcoming me on and back to the disembark.”

Zoe: “Before we disembark, we want to talk about season six of the podcast. We are excited to be back for another season of the NolesAbroad podcast. As we were planning this season and beyond, we are always looking for new stories to highlight. If you or someone you know studied abroad with FSU and want to share your experience, we would love to hear from you.”

Vanessa: “You can send us an email at IP-Media@fsu.edu to learn more about being on the podcast. You can also write for our blog or send us pictures to share in our social media. We look forward to hearing from you.”

Zoe: “Thanks to Hannah for talking with us today and thanks to all of you for listening.”

Vanessa: “This podcast is a production of FSU international programs. The music for this podcast was composed by John Fartman. Our logo was designed by me, Vanessa Guery, and I also do our sound engineering. Editing transcription and research done by us, Vanessa Guery and Zoe Crook.”