

Education Abroad in the Context of a Major Global Event: Intercultural Learning at the Rio 2016 Olympic Games

Stage for student learning: a global event

James L. Knight School of Communication

Faculty expertise

- Olympic movement
- Media at the Olympics
- Filmmaking and digital media production
- Joe Cornelius, Associate Professor of Digital Media Productions
- Angie Edwards, Director of International Education
- Bob Page, Director of Digital Projects

Agenda

Background

Outcomes

Learning at a Global Event

Logistics & Risk Management

John Belk International Program @ Queens

- Faculty-led program structure
 - Faculty propose 18 months in advance
 - Semester prep + summer travel
- Student selection
 - Year before
 - Selective interviews- highly competitive
- Class profile
 - 19 students
 - Juniors and Seniors
 - Sports Communication
 - Journalism, Digital Media
 - Sport Management
 - English/Creative Writing
 - U.S., German and Italian



The Queens in Rio Project

Unique program for Queens

- Major international event
- Work-intensive for students
- Involved deploying small teams
- Engaged foreign university students
- Involved two cultures
 - Brazilian
 - Olympic
- Gap between prep course and int'l experience
 - More time for prep
 - Need to keep students engaged



Student Experience & Outcomes



Pre-departure preparations

- Strength-based production teams
 - Writer/Producer
 - Cinematographer/Sound
 - Editor/Photographer/1st AC
- Student-created website for content (www.queensinrio.org)
- Produced related stories before departure
 - Emulated scenarios in Rio
 - Corrected improper practices early
 - Provided insight into work involved
- Host organization (Campus Brasil) partnered with Mackenzie Presbyterian, selected top Brazilian journalism students
 - Application including English and journalism skills
 - Skype interviews
 - Expectation setting
 - Asked to ID and evaluate story ideas



Production and Collaboration in Rio

Pre-production

- Brazilian students vital – finding contacts, Portuguese
- Aided with travel, navigating city
- Provided culture and language interpretation
- What to look for, what's interesting, back stories

Production

- Live-time translation; played role of interviewer
- Understanding of culture and place meant they could provide ideas for B-footage and cutaway footage
- Strength in numbers as groups ventured out in Rio
- Added production value, hands, expertise

Post-production

- Translation assistance invaluable (worth expense!)
- Aspiring journalists contributed to creating stories
- Supported multiple teams simultaneously



Outcomes - External

National & regional coverage on

- NBC Olympics – 9 articles
- USA Today – 2 articles
- Charlotte Observer – 3 articles
- NBC Charlotte – 25 articles

QueensinRio.org Website

- 4k sessions after 4 weeks (now at 12k sessions)
- 8k pageviews
- 2 minutes average duration per session



Outcomes - Internal

Full story in Queens alumni/community magazine

- Circulation of 19,000

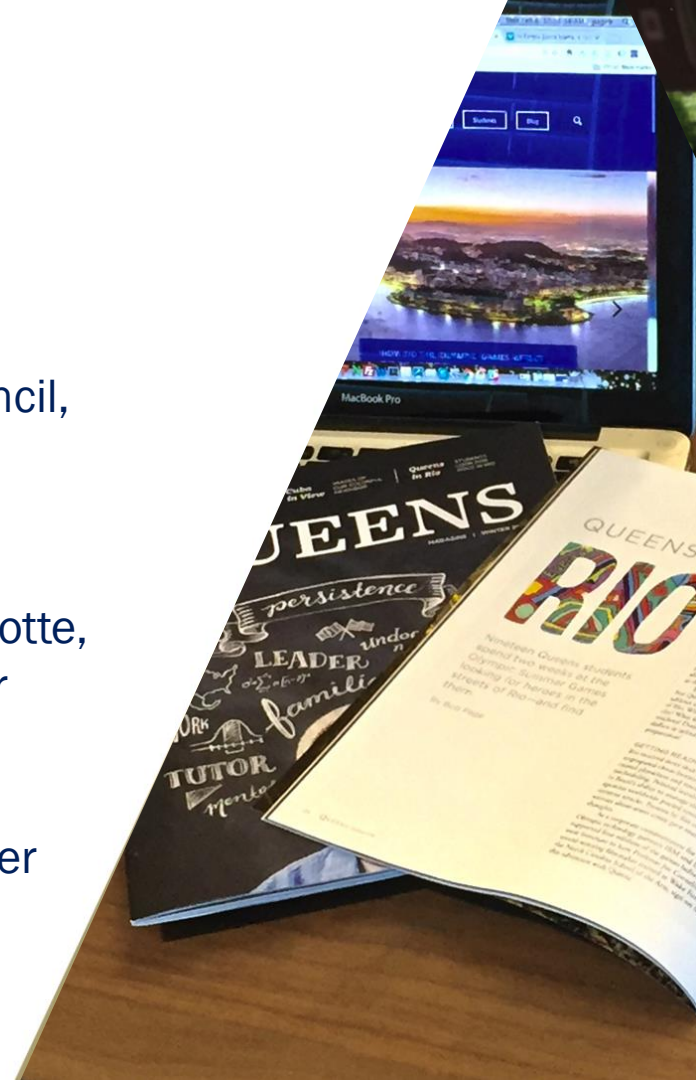
Post-Rio presentations to Board of Trustees, Alumni Council, Parent Council

Portfolio content and broadening networks for students

- Graduates employed by Carolina Panthers, NBC Charlotte, Charlotte Hornets, Charlotte Agenda, Spectrum, Major League Lacrosse

Student storytellers became campus stars in fall semester

Some students decided this work is not for them



“Filming and documenting the people of Brazil literally changed how I plan on pursuing my film career.... Something clicked with me where I knew that I wanted to tell these people’s stories who didn’t have the tools to tell it themselves. I realized that I wanted to advocate real change through my film.”
-- American student



Learning at a Global Event



Deployment in a City During a Global Event

Language, Values, Culture, Rules of the Event

- Learning Olympic Movement = Learning Brazil
- 100-year history, value system, iconography, ethos
- Sydney 2000 = Lots of Australian experts
- 10k athletes in summer games - 40k storytellers
- Student contribution? Simulate experience
- NBC, Coke, McDonald's = same requirements
- Olympic Games, World Cup, World Economic Forum



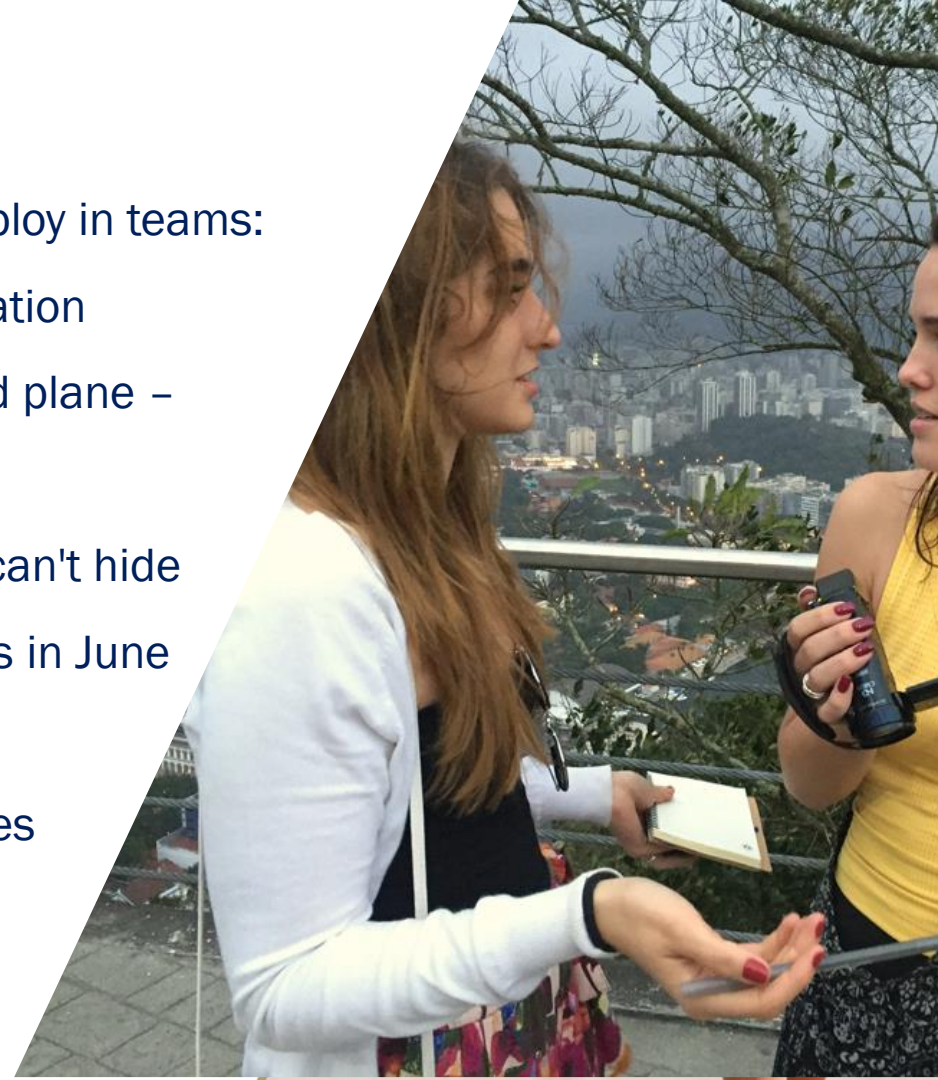
Event Creates Story Opportunity

- City Transformation – Legacy Impact
- How is city transformed forever?
- Story selection: intentional focus on community, not athletes
- Excuse for students to hang out with residents
- Ultimate Public Journal: Excuse to learn topic so well they can explain to someone else
- Learned Brazil by working with Brazilian students (cultural liaison/mentor)
- Hostel became learning tool



Teams

- People at USOC, NBC, Coke, Samsung deploy in teams: marketing, logistics, hospitality, transportation
- 15 weeks of team-building before boarded plane – immediate story assignments on arrival
- Optimal size – smallest number for task, can't hide
- Selected six more Brazilian field producers in June
- Video conferencing before deployment
- Mackenzie students had jobs before games
- Building trust = critical issue



Not a Once-in-a-Lifetime Opportunity

- One goal was to re-create demanding experience of Olympic Games
- Can students make a contribution that matches the standards of the athletes, the event, the professionals?
- Students delivered at demanding foreign assignments, showing experience/training
- The confidence to come back



“It was exciting to work in Rio during the games, speaking in another language and making a little bit of our culture understood in another country.”

-- Brazilian student



Logistics & Risk Management

A decorative geometric pattern in the bottom right corner, consisting of a series of overlapping triangles in various shades of blue, separated by thin gold lines.

Concerns

- Housing
 - Availability, cost
 - Safety and security
- Flights
 - Cost, availability
- Sending small groups out
 - Risk exposure
 - Language barrier
 - Tracking who is where

Mitigation

- Partner- Campus Brasil
 - Booked entire hostel
 - Extra week 10% more
- Group flight
 - Booked asap
 - Missed opening & closing ceremonies
- **Added Brazilian students**
 - Mackenzie Presbyterian U.
 - Increased group size
 - Added native speakers
 - Enhanced story ideation & production
- Selfie protocol



Concerns, cont'd

- Crime, personal safety
 - General
 - Intensified in lead up
- Zika

Mitigation

- Consulted multiple resources for multiple perspectives
 - OSAC (prior and daily)
 - Department of State, UKFTA
 - EuropAssistance
 - Campus Brasil
 - Corporate sponsors
- Supplemental personal property insurance
- Discreet equipment bags
- CDC, WHO
- Travax reports
- Health Center
 - 1-on-1 consultations
 - Class visits

Invested 3-4x more time and effort into monitoring health & safety conditions than an average program.



What We Screwed Up

- Did not build visibility into dynamics inside the teams
- Did not deploy frequently enough with each team
- Did not create student meta / leadership structure
- Did not plan for transition to 2nd-week Brazilian teams

What We Didn't

- No thefts, assaults, sprained ankles, no trips to the emergency room or police
- Lost a lens cap



“There was one day in Rio where everything that could have gone wrong, went wrong,’ she wrote. ‘We had three stories completely fall through, and in the midst of it all, we stuck together and found solutions to the problem without getting mad at each other. At the end of the day we laughed it off, thanked God for each other and ate some churros.”

– American student



Information

www.queensinrio.org

Joe Cornelius

corneliusj@queens.edu

Angie Edwards

edwardsa@queens.edu

Bob Page

pageb@queens.edu

