

Notes on our conversation follow-up from DC, 12/9/15

Participating: Becca, Sarah Schnall, Sam C, Haley M, Kelley A, Franky, Meagan, Marina, Vicki, Susan Howard, Jackson, Matisse R, Casey, Makaila, Andrea, Emily, Jake, Ben, Maddie, Fiona, Sabrina, Naomi and a few others

- **Kelley: proposal to include documentation status in our inclusion statement**
- Vicki: wondering how it will change the program, i.e. ISSLE, Curious to what & how including that will change the summer programs & what ripple effect may come from including it
- **Franky: vetoing because this needs to be fully backed by our actions—are we sure we'll be able to do this?**
- Kelley: In including documentation status, we are then moved to figure out how to actually act on it; as long as we don't include it, we are actively excluding non-citizens
- Haley: Also wondering how it will change the program
- Casey: What would be the long term effects on the program if we *don't* include DS; not including it could result in funding being pulled—but so could nixing the ISSLE; need to talk about both effects of including or not including it
- Fiona: more important to include people than think about the possibility of losing ISSLE—we can create a meaningful alternative, what's important is that we're inclusive
- Sabrina: doesn't have to be a choice between including DS vs. keeping the ISSLE; concerned that we haven't yet educated ourselves about undocumented students and asking how INVST might appeal to them, but rather making assumptions beforehand. Been meeting with undoc'd students, and there are loopholes (advanced parole) for allowing undoc'd students to participate in an int'l component
- Andrea: not our choice to decide between undoc'd *and* ISSLE—personally, I'd stay in INVST regardless of whether I could do the ISSLE
- Franky: proposal just to include statement falls short—needs to be more thorough and guarantee that we'll do the work
- **Sarah: proposal to include “documentation status” to the inclusion statement—PASSES: DECISION**
- Jackson: can we make decisions in this meeting, doesn't it have to go to DC?
- Sabrina: this is a continuation of the DC meeting that ran out of time
- Casey: we're talking about going out and doing research about this student population, but we already have an undoc'd student in the program
- Sabrina: good point, though there are more nuances to the effected population at CU (e.g. DACA students)
 - DACA student population at CU is expanding rapidly; ODECE is in talks about how to respond to these students' needs, and it's been difficult for other departments as well but sending them on int'l trips is something

- that's being worked on; it's a new challenge and takes institutional courage, but progress can be, and is being, made
 - One thing that's being done is creating "Dream Zones", like Safe Zones, to support undocumented students
 - Almost all, if not all, undocumented students at CU are DACA students
 - See *Institutionalizing Support for Undocumented Latino/a Students in American Higher Education*—produced by Univ of Denver scholars
- Franky: how are we defining undocumented, let's make sure we're not creating a binary—are we just supporting DACA, or others affected by documentation status?
 - Proposal to clarify: amend previous proposal to include "non-citizens" rather than simply "DACA students"—we are including students with a variety of documentation status considerations -- PASSES
- Maddie: what would an inclusive community look like for non-citizen students—how can we make our community itself more inclusive? Probably need to redefine some of our financial tools as well—e.g. FAFSA requires social security #, not accessible
- Sarah: what are ways in the here and now that feel like important ways to move forward—not regarding the ISSLE right now
- Casey: what do we do when Andrea can't come on the ISSLE?
- Sabrina: Andrea and I met about this, will be talking in January about what an ISSLE would look like if she couldn't travel abroad; talking about extending the border awareness experience for her; she also may be able to go, but this is planning for a plan B
- Maddie: is it possible for INVST to be as flexible and responsive now as it may have been when the trip had to go to Chicago rather than MX
- Kelly: sounds like the plans for next year are pretty set—is that so? If that's so, what does it say about our ability to create authentic membership?
- Franky: how can we have a trip like the ISSLE without the flexibility to change it when someone can't go? ISSLE time is crucial for creating the relationships that carry us through to the next year
- Casey: would be damaging to the cohort to not be able to include everyone on the ISSLE, would not feel comfortable with that plan B
- Fiona: yes, the tickets are booked; but it's more important to me to make sure that everyone is included. Is it truly off the table to change the trip?
- Sabrina: not fully off the table, but people do apply to INVST with certain expectations (e.g. going on ISSLE); and it's not a conversation that I'm prepared to have at length at the moment—haven't even met with Andrea
 - When we couldn't go to MX, had to change the trip in 4 days, while we were on the border; but we try to make these sorts of changes with 2 years notice to ensure that the trips are well-conceived
- Matisse: this means a commitment to prioritize authentic, inclusive decisions as they arise—right now, that means figuring out what to do about the next ISSLE. Fair that we're not prepared to have that conversation now, but needs to be at the forefront of INVST's priorities right now, seems we do have ample time to

plan a new trip. It's just as out-of-line with INVST's mission to exclude a student from this trip as to create a trip that may not be as well-researched.

- Maddie: if consensus is the foundation, we won't have authentic inclusion
- Casey: ironic that we fear dissolving the structure of INVST with this issue, when maneuvering through these challenges seems so fundamental to that structure; what's most vital is walking the walk and standing by our commitment to solidarity over funders, etc.
- Emily: while I agree with everything that's been said, there are cohort members who joined INVST in part for the study abroad experience, and it's not fair to totally neglect the value they seek in the ISSLE
- Jackson: same—I do feel that we need to change the ISSLE to make it fully inclusive, but we first need to talk to the whole cohort; as much as we want to be inclusive, we can't put one person's experience over everyone else's. We need the rest of the voices to be engaged before decisions can be made
- Fiona: valid that some have joined for the opportunity to go to NI, but again that's a privilege, one that we need to be able to challenge if we're a social justice organization.
- Kelley: there's a binary being created that we have to go abroad to have an international experience; but we could gain a similar perspective on the border, or in Chicago, etc. People join INVST with different expectations, but our statements do emphasize centering marginalized voices.
- Andrea: uncomfortable making all of these decisions without the whole cohort present. INVST needs to decide where it wants to go, not just for this year but for the future; people should get what they signed up for, but as a social justice organization maybe people shouldn't be encouraged to sign on for a study abroad experience. INVST may need to advertise itself differently in the future if it wants to be a social justice organization.
- Matisse: can we create a plan for figuring this out in a process that includes the whole cohort?
- Emily: also uncomfortable without whole cohort present; not everyone in the cohort has had vocal input. Doesn't feel like the space is open to talk about everything that needs to be discussed.
- Maddie: by continuing to go on the ISSLE and excluding those who can't go, we're choosing to uphold the power of authority rather than the power of solidarity.
- Jake: as an instructor, it has been really helpful to have students come in with the experience of the ISSLE. Agree that there are lots of things we could do that would give students a similar perspective; but, it's really hard to break out of our US-centric view and an international experience is a great way to do that.
- Casey: would be especially damaging to give that experience to all but those students who couldn't go due to documentation status
- Emily: international experience is irreplaceable, but yes, we could probably get a similar experience domestically.
- Fiona: Puerto Rico is a place we can all go, would be like leaving the country and could be a replacement; not everyone is here—how can we move forward

ensuring that all voices are included? What action steps can we take toward what we will do next summer?

- Becca: the mission statement and inclusion statement create the container for what INVST is about, what it offers students; can fulfill them without travelling abroad. Don't necessarily agree that it's a consensus decision, but rather have found a hole in INVST that needs fixing—the trip itself isn't the "point" of INVST, and if it's not consistent with the mission and inclusion statements, maybe it has to go
- Emily: got the feeling from Bobby that we *should not* go to Puerto Rico, but again, that's from a conversation that happened outside of INVST discussions. Request that moving forward, even if it's not with consensus, we need to be mindful about every student's INVST experience
- Andrea: agree about Puerto Rico—can't consider that without Bobby here, and it's equally problematic; similarly, what would it be like to go to NI with a Nicaraguan in the cohort?
- Susan: important to be conscious about why we go where we go—but, it should be said, we *are*. We go to NI to learn about our own country's policies, which we don't see in our lives personally, affect other parts of the world, giving us a critical perspective on things that we otherwise take for granted
- Maddie: sounds like one concern is of working class students' loss of an important piece of what they work toward. That's something I've been working on—being inclusive to working class students—and it's a conversation that can be continued
- Matisse: Authentic inclusion means that we can't have an international trip. However, the trip can provide the needs that the ISSLE provides while still meeting every cohort member's needs and restrictions.
- Sarah: as a volunteer at A-House, received feedback that the experience there was extremely meaningful. We can have these meaningful experiences domestically.
- Casey: removing the ISSLE wouldn't be marginalizing folks whose socioeconomic status might make effect their feelings around the loss of the ISSLE in the same way that it currently effects undocumented students
- Becca: the rhetorical that "people might not get what they signed up for" showed up last time I experienced big changes in INVST—but we sign up for a certain kind of educational program that prioritizes social justice. This rhetoric is not really useful, rather grasps onto notion that maybe we can avoid difficult changes. Nothing that we sign up for is guaranteed as "the experience we sign up for" anyway.
- Emily: meaning and purpose of INVST could be clearer from the outset—that the social justice focus is far more integral than the study abroad experience. Still, we can't forget that every member's emotional needs should be recognized.
- Kelley: much of the learning in INVST comes from the experience of sitting with such discomfort
- Emily: also about the push-and-pull of being supported, then having the rug pulled out from under you in a place that was expected to be supportive.

- Andrea: It's unlikely that I'll be able to go on the ISSLE, but I won't know whether or not I can until very close to the trip. Do we have any sort of deadline?
- Sabrina: no set deadline, the most important thing we need to do is to talk more about this. There will certainly be a change in the trip, but not sure what that will look like at this point—need more discussions.
- Fiona: how do we start generating ideas?
- Sabrina: we have 262 alumni who are stakeholders and fund whatever we choose to do, need to be included. This is a bigger discussion than what curriculum committee can do on its own.
- Becca: seems like a framing issue—we can and should frame this as a fairness and inclusive necessity, which alumni should support. Don't think we need them all to help us decide our trip, if we're changing it in the name of being more just.
- Kelley: would be useful to have intergenerational support, at least.
- Emily: need clarity about who is going to make this decision; will some not be included in what seems like it should be a consensus decision?
- Sabrina: when we had 4 days to change trips, I chose the change in collaboration with our prior partner—we went with the same people to their Chicago office, and it was a very powerful experience. After that, it went to curriculum committee, and it took the whole year to happen, which felt like a very accelerated process. May make sense to go to curriculum committee, but still feel we need a more open process to get more Sonder Root Sky members included and to reach out to potential partners.
- Becca: could call all members of Sonder Root Sky, or have them all write something, if we want all of their voices to be included. May not be feasible to get them all in the room together.
- Becca: what should we ask SRS?
- Emily: need to know what people feel strongly about, and not simply say “this is what we're going to do, what would you like to see?”
- Out of time :/
- **Sabrina** will call SRS students, tentatively plan for another meeting next week, same time and place (1:00pm, UMC 417)