

## SLA Safety & Security Considerations

*The following considerations and strategies have been adapted from Safety & Security Abroad by the Notre Dame Office of International Studies (OIS).*

### Factors that Contribute to Your Safety

- **“RESPONSE-ABILITY”** – Your ability to respond appropriately to your surroundings.
- **PROTECTION** - Safe buildings, locked doors, programmatic components, et cetera.
- **DETERRENCE** - Program staff, orientation/ preparation, knowledge.

### Tips for your SLA experience

#### **I. Before You Go**

- Inform yourself about your destination
  - o Research your destination online and/ or in guidebooks
  - o Consult with staff and fellow students
  - o Keep up with local news
- Make copies of your important documents
- Add an emergency contact card to your wallet
- Pack light, leave valuables at home, and avoid wearing branded clothing

#### **II. Once You Arrive**

- Have an arrival plan and guidelines
  - o Change money
  - o Check in with people at home and on-site
    - Use email if cell phones do not work
  - o Seek assistance from airport employees or uniformed personnel if necessary
  - o Stick with others who are ‘safe’ (ie women, families)
  - o Use only official transportation
  - o be careful of unsolicited offers in general
- protect yourself
  - o distribute cash, cards in different places
  - o make copies of important documents
  - o do not leave possessions unsupervised
- trust your instincts
  - o stay vigilant
  - o take decisive action to stay safe when you feel uncomfortable or threatened
  - o plan how to respond to situations *before* you encounter them

- Identify potential risks
  - pickpockets and thieves,
  - alcohol-related problems
  - transportation or location-specific dangers (ie unsafe parts of town)
- reduce probability of incident
  - travel with a friend and watch out for each other
  - stay alert and sober
  - keep cell phone charged, on, and programmed with emergency numbers
  - DO NOT rent vehicles
- Remain aware of how others perceive you
  - What preconceptions do people have about U.S. students?
  - Gender-based assumptions:
    - Dress appropriately for local culture
    - Avoid encouraging unwanted attention
    - Do not agree to meet a person you don't know in a non-public place
    - Be aware that U.S. friendliness can be misinterpreted

### III. If Something Happens

- Remain calm
  - De-escalate the situation
  - Give the thieves what they want
  - If you can't afford to lose it, don't take it
- Identify a safety route/ plan
  - Know the city's main roads, etc.
  - Go inside a familiar business
- Make noise
  - Scream
  - Use a personal alarm or whistle (DO NOT bring any chemical/ physical defense items)
  - Assert yourself
- Get physical
  - Use self-defense (i.e. push, shove, kick, bite)
- Commit to your decision
  - Don't be tentative!
  - Move to safety, not just away from danger
- Check in to let people know you are safe
  - Local staff
  - Family back home
  - *In the case of a wide-scale emergency, use email if cell phones don't work*