

International Travel Safety & Security Symposium Agenda

The Planning Committee, comprised of members from the University of Pittsburgh, the University of Victoria, and RCM&D, envisioned a dynamic training session that not only delivers valuable content and takeaways but also fosters networking and partnerships. With the help of several engaging presenters, we've turned that vision into reality through this symposium.

Join us on **October 25, 2024**, to learn, connect, and grow together. We look forward to seeing you there!
Attendance is free of charge.

8:30 a.m. – 9:30 a.m. | Attendee Check-in and Continental Breakfast

9:00 a.m. | Welcoming Remarks

9:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. | Session 1

An Open Dialogue on Medical and Security Evacuations

Presented by: Matt Bradley, Vice President of Risk Solutions at Crisis24

Medical and security evacuations are rare, but they are the most serious incidents your institution will deal with in travel risk management. Stakeholders include institution leadership, faculty, staff, students and parents. Communication, expectation setting and operational execution all present challenges. This session will describe the best practices in medical and security evacuations and provide an opportunity to share your own experience for the benefit of the group.

About the Speaker: Matt Bradley has spent the past 25 years adding value through security in the public and private sector. He specializes in teaching organizations how to leverage technology to improve their risk management outcomes. A veteran security and intelligence professional for more than two decades, Matt has deep, first-hand knowledge of the critical challenges facing organizations. He has held executive leadership positions at OnSolve, International SOS, and Tigo Honduras. Previously, Matt had a distinguished 14-year career with the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).



10:30 a.m. | Break

10:45 a.m. – 11:45 a.m. | Session 2

Preparing In Advance and Other Best Practices for Responding to an Overseas Emergency

Presented by: Audrey Hammond, Executive Director of International Education at Liberty University

Responding to an overseas emergency starts with preparation back at your home university. This session will explore various ways to prepare for an overseas incident and look at case studies from real events, analyzing best practices and “lessons learned”.

About the Speaker: Audrey Hammond currently serves as the Executive Director of International Education at Liberty University. She has worked in International Education for the past 13 years, and previously served on the board of the VIE (Virginia International Educators). She holds a degree in Global Studies and an M.Ed. in History. She also holds CTA (Certified Travel Agent) and CTIE (Certified Travel Industry Executive) certifications.



11:45 a.m. – 12:45 p.m. | Lunch



12:45 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. | Interactive Crisis Management Exercise

Presented by: Michael Balderson, Hillary Koller, University of Pittsburgh & Henning Snyman, International SOS

About the Speakers:

Michael Balderson is an accomplished higher education business leader from Annapolis, Maryland. He currently serves as the Director of Administration at the University of Pittsburgh's University Center for International Studies, where he oversees financial operations, human resources, and business operations. With a wealth of experience across multiple institutions, Michael previously held leadership positions at the University of Pittsburgh's Office of University Communications and Marketing and Carnegie Mellon University's CyLab Cybersecurity Institute and Civil & Environmental Engineering departments. He holds a Master of Public Management and a Master of Music Performance from Carnegie Mellon University, as well as a Bachelor of Music Performance from The Peabody Institute of Johns Hopkins University.



Hillary Koller is the Director of Global Experiences Office at the University of Pittsburgh. She has over 17 years of higher education experience and has been the director of the Pitt Global Experiences Office since October 2023. In her role, she is responsible for strategic development and implementation of a portfolio of global programs, management of school-embedded offices on Pitt's main and regional campuses, and oversight of processes managing risk, health, safety, and security for students abroad. Prior to Pitt GEO, Hillary spent 15 years at Pitt Business in global education and career development roles. She is an alumnus of the University of Pittsburgh, receiving both her undergraduate and master's degrees at Pitt.

Henning Snyman is Security Director, US South Atlantic (Americas Region) for International SOS. Prior to joining the Americas team, Henning was the Security Director, Africa for International SOS and Control Risks based in Johannesburg, South Africa. Henning worked for over 20 years across Africa and the Middle East, gaining extensive experience within a range of complex environments in a risk management and consulting capacity. In his previous roles, Henning utilized his extensive network to service clients across many verticals including government, aviation, logistics, and financial services, to name a few. Henning also previously lectured at Australia's Macquarie University and at the South African Naval College after commencing his career as an officer in the South African Defence Force. He holds a Master's degree in Policing, Intelligence and Counter Terrorism, which he obtained, cum laude from Macquarie University. In addition, he has a BA in Development Studies and an Honours Degree in Political Studies (Cum laude).



2:00 p.m. | Break



2:15 p.m. – 3:15 p.m. | Session 3

How Evidence-based Health and Safety Information Can Benefit Your Institution and Stakeholders

Presented by: Elizabeth Brenner & Ros Thackurdeen, Cofounders of Protect Students Abroad

As newly bereaved mothers, Ros Thackurdeen channeled her grief into identifying other impacted students and families, while Elizabeth Brenner searched for academic researchers with relevant death and injury data. When these two moms met, a coherent view of international education began to emerge. In 2014, these two moms cofounded Protect Students Abroad (PSA, a 501c3), to advocate for evidence-based health and safety information for the benefit of students, their families, and the study abroad industry. Join Elizabeth and Ros as they discuss their entry and evolution into student safety advocacy and PSA.

About the Speakers:

Elizabeth Brenner is cofounder of Protect Students Abroad (PSA, a 501c3). In 2011, Elizabeth's son Thomas suffered a fatal fall during an overseas educational program. Since Thomas' death, Elizabeth advocates for the collection and analysis of student deaths and serious injuries during education abroad. This is because better-informed decision-making requires evidence-based information to save lives. Prior to PSA, Elizabeth was an advanced practice nurse, specializing in maternal-child health and midwifery; she is also a writer.



Ros Thackurdeen is cofounder of Protect Students Abroad (PSA, a 501c3). In 2012, Ros's son Ravi drowned during an overseas educational program. Since Ravi's death, Ros has advocated for passage of the Ravi Thackurdeen Safe Students Study Abroad Act which mandates reporting of student deaths and serious injuries during education abroad. This information will benefit the decision-making of future students, families, and programs. Prior to PSA, Ros was a school counselor in the New York City public school system.

3:15 p.m. | Break



3:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. | Session 4

Mental and Behavioral Health Training – Prevention and Intervention

Presented by: Michael Luxemburger & Christopher Lu, LPC, Pittsburgh Mercy Behavioral Health

The Mercy Health team will present innovative strategies, techniques, and ideas for preparing for and coping with mental and behavioral health challenges. These tools can be used to support students, faculty, and trip leaders before, during, and after their trips.

About the Speakers:

Michael Luxemburger currently works as an Intervention Program Administrator and Prevention Intervention Specialist at Pittsburgh Mercy Health system. In this role, Michael utilizes 34 years of experience at Mercy to supervise the Allegheny County Drug and DUI Courts, the "Breaking Free: the Power of Choice" Cognitive Behavioral Therapy based program, the Pittsburgh Mercy DUI program, and the Allegheny County Housing Authority Support Specialist program. Additionally, as a Prevention/Intervention Specialist Michael facilitated CBT psychoeducational programming with the Allegheny County Jail Re Entry program, provided wellness counseling as well as individual tobacco cessation counseling. Michael completed Cognitive Behavioral Therapy training at the Beck Institute in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Prior to working as a Prevention/Intervention Specialist, Michael worked for 18 years as a Mental Health Service Coordinator and for 12 years as a part time contracted crisis clinician.



Christopher Lu, LPC has spent 15 years working in the fields of mental health and substance use. He currently serves as the Practice Administrator of the Co-Occurring Disorders and Deaf Services programs at Pittsburgh Mercy and is a practicing therapist specializing in trauma. Christopher also works to assist with safety and harm reduction efforts, serving as a volunteer at Prevention Point Pittsburgh and as a board member of Bridge Outreach. As someone who has family living abroad and who has received treatment outside of the United States, he has firsthand experience travelling internationally with a mental health diagnosis.

4:30 p.m. | Closing Remarks

