WHERE IN THE WORLD ARE YOU?

During the coup d'état attempt in Ankara, Turkey, in July 2016, several faculty members and students from the University of Michigan had just finished an archaeological dig in a remote area of the country far from the capital city. Thanks to the university's faculty travel registry system, staff from the Office of the Provost were able to contact those on the expedition.

"Through our system, we were able to quickly connect with faculty on the dig and, by communicating with a professor, able to verify that the students with them were also OK," says Patrick Morgan, Senior Advisor for International Health, Safety and Security in the Office of the Provost at the University of Michigan. "Without knowing where they were, we would never have been able to have these conversations and prepare for evacuating the country, if necessary."

The contingent from Michigan were all fine: In fact, they weren't even aware of the coup because they were in the remote Turkish countryside. However, the scenario reinforced the importance of having a mandatory travel registry for faculty. "Through the registry, we have information at our fingertips to contact faculty in the event of an emergency and respond appropriately," says Morgan.

Denise Connerty agrees. "The No. 1 reason for faculty travel registries is to provide assistance during emergencies," says Connerty, Assistant Vice President of International Affairs at Temple University. "If we don't know where the faculty are, we can't help."

TRAVEL REGISTRIES ALLOW UNIVERSITIES TO HELP FACULTY—

AND THEIR STUDENTS— DURING EMERGENCIES ABROAD.

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REGISTRIES

While faculty at both Michigan and Temple overwhelmingly use their campus travel registration systems, these systems can be met with reluctance by faculty and staff. Faculty may be hesitant to register for several reasons: Perhaps they are accustomed to operating autonomously or believe any mandated registration is akin to "big brother" watching them.

But Morgan and Connerty agree that rather than being viewed as unwarranted surveillance systems, travel registries should be seen as welcomed safety measures. "We frame the registry as a benefit to our faculty," says Morgan. "It's a real selling point."

In addition to being able to contact faculty during emergencies, faculty travel registries offer a handful of other benefits:

- **Access to international medical insurance.** "If you are abroad on university sanctioned activities, you are automatically covered by this insurance," says Connerty. "So if there's a medical issue, we can look in the system and see at a glance that faculty are covered."

- **Travel discounts**. Some universities use the data in their registries to negotiate travel discounts with airlines, hotels, transportation services and so on.

- **Helpful data for deans**. "We know what the faculty are doing and can share the information with deans, which can impact budgetary decisions," says Morgan.

- **Big picture perspective for leaders.** "The registry can help us see whether we are over-reached in a certain area or not as active as we thought," says Morgan. "That's good for leadership to know so they can really drive the overarching agenda of the university."

- **Answers to outside questions**. In the unfortunate case of natural disasters, terrorist attacks and other emergencies, universities often get calls from a variety of people, ranging from parents of students to the media. When travelers are registered, you can more easily, quickly and accurately answer questions about the number of people in country and their status.

ADVICE FOR GAINING **FACULTY SUPPORT**

Universities adopt different approaches to faculty travel registration systems. At Michigan, registration is mandatory for students, faculty and staff traveling abroad for university-related purposes. At Temple, faculty are only required to register if they are bringing students with them on trips overseas. Some schools tie registration requirements to other issues: For example, faculty can only be reimbursed for expenses for trips registered in the system.

One of the best ways to get faculty buy-in, say Morgan and Connerty, is to keep the process simple. Temple only requires one piece of information. "We just want to know where faculty are," says Connerty.

The University of Michigan's secure online registration system allows faculty to enter a variety of data, but the school only mandates select information. "We want to know the dates of travel and the itinerary," says Morgan. "If there's nothing else input, at least we have the basics." If they choose to do so, faculty can also provide onsite telephone numbers, emergency contacts, passport information and more.

Aside from keeping the process simple, there are a few other steps you can take to encourage faculty to register their travel:

- **Spread the message across campus.** Morgan and his team do "road shows" a couple times a year, where they get in front of faculty and staff and discuss the benefits of travel registration and insurance.
- **Think beyond study abroad**. Connerty and her peers share the importance of registration with all faculty traveling abroad, whether it's on a study abroad trip or for research, a sabbatical, a conference or other reasons.
- **Find faculty to champion the cause.** "Find champions on your campus who agree with you that this is an important thing," says Morgan. "Faculty listen to each other much more than to administrators." For instance, professors who benefitted from timely contact after the London Bridge attack or Mexico earthquake earlier this year have important messages to share with peers.

When set up and presented correctly, faculty travel registration systems are a benefit to everyone involved. "Simply put, they protect our students and our faculty," says Connerty. "People are our most important resource, so we want to be able to help them in emergencies. And we have the tools to do that, but only if we know where people are."

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