

**Study Abroad
for Graduate Students:
Combining Teaching and Research
in a Cross-Cultural Course
in Public Administration
and Public Policy**

Edited by

**Arno LOESSNER
Călin HINȚEA
Cătălin BABA**

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in Public Administration and Public Policy

A joint program of NISPAcee,
University of Delaware and Babeş-Bolyai University

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Acknowledgements

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Introduction to the Publication

Arno Loessner, Călin Hințea and Cătălin Baba

This volume contains information on organizing and conducting study abroad for graduate students in public administration and public policy, examples of student papers prepared in conjunction with a study abroad trip to Romania, and assessments of the value of the experience to participants and hosts. Study abroad, an established teaching approach for American undergraduates, was extended to graduate students from two public administration programs in ways that proved especially useful. Participant hosts and visiting Masters and Ph.D. graduate students from Romania and America studied together to learn and teach public administration and public policy in a new way by combining classroom instruction with study visits, research and writing by small teams from Babeș-Bolyai University (BBU) and University of Delaware (UD).

The approach to organizing and implementing this inter-institutional graduate course is explained with the hope that others may find it interesting enough to consider adapting it to graduate education in public administration. Selected student papers give an understanding of student work in the course. As noted below, two of the papers were presented to the annual meetings of NISPAcee in Bratislava in May 2008. A reflective paper, written by a student who participated in group-conducted interviews, shows another course output.

Students developed research questions, conducted surveys with well-informed persons, researched applicable literature and databases – the usual things that comprise the applied research program. And, they did something more – they taught each other. There is often no learning experience that is more affirming than teaching someone else.

Professor Arno Loessner, emeritus professor at University of Delaware, and international professor at Babeş-Bolyai University and veteran of study abroad courses for graduate students in public administration and public policy, explains the organization and conduct of the program that brought masters and doctoral students from the University of Delaware and Babeş-Bolyai University together for two weeks of intensive study in Cluj-Napoca, Romania during January 2008.

The student-team papers found here are among several papers written for the study abroad course at UD. Two papers that were subsequently presented by the authors at the NISPAcee annual conference held in Bratislava, Slovakia in May 2008 are reproduced here.¹ Sample research papers show how students produced joint products in small teams. Substantive learning is an important object of the experience, but the primary intent is for students to learn how to work together in a cross-cultural team of professionals. While we believe the papers are informative and thoughtful, they are not presented as being dispositive of the topics they address, nor are they intended to be. It would be difficult under any circumstances to research and write such a paper in two weeks.

1 Budget constraints prevented more University of Delaware students from participating in these meetings.

Students learned that definitions, research methods and “usual practices” of interaction learned at home may need to be adapted to be successful as a member of an intercultural study team working abroad. Anyone who has ever had to work in such a situation will appreciate the importance of these opportunities. As a direct result of the experience of combining study abroad and applied research, one student has changed area of study concentration in the public administration program; another student has written a master’s capstone analytical paper to evaluate this study abroad experience and provided recommendations for future activities (see Ch. VI); and a third student will conduct research in Romania to write a doctoral dissertation on a topic that grew from one of the papers presented here.

Todd Franzen, MPA candidate at the University of Delaware and Christina Haruta, doctoral candidate at Babeş-Bolyai University, examine the strategic plan for Cluj, itself having been prepared as an applied research project by faculty and students at Babeş-Bolyai. They concentrate on the section dealing with urban development and infrastructure. Their analysis of the Cluj strategic plan examines proposals for transportation planning to reduce traffic congestion. The paper examines a significant public administration topic with potential economic and environmental impacts across cultural lines. It includes an overview of the nature of traffic congestion in Cluj-Napoca, approaches under consideration and some that have been taken, opportunities for city-to-city exchange of experience and an assessment of the status to-date. Interviews with well informed persons, including the Mayor, are reported and reinforced with research of local publications, comparative research on potentially transferrable initiatives taken by cities in other countries and recommendations to enhance success.

Public corruption in Romania has been a matter of public interest and concern for years. Ratings by The World Bank rank Romania at the 48th and 49th percentiles respectively². During fall 2007, reports emerged that The European Commission was “... threatening to hold back some 180 million Euros (\$260 million) in farm and rural-aid payments if the Romanian authorities missed a mid-December (2007) deadline for setting up anti-fraud controls”³. The nexus of public policy, public management and the rule of law interests Ann Johnson, a lawyer and doctoral student in public policy at UD and her BBU research partner, Bianca Cobârzan, also a doctoral candidate and a member of staff at Babeş-Bolyai University. Their paper examines public corruption and anticorruption measures in Romania and assesses progress made to date. The authors added a section to update their paper subsequent to its preparation and presentation to NISPACEE in May 2008. Work is expected to continue on this research as Ms. Johnson prepares her doctoral dissertation in Romania during 2009.

UD student Erin McGrath’s paper comments on relationships between universities and NGOs in Romania in a form of paper chosen by some students who recorded impressions and experiences in a “reflective” paper. Erin’s background includes eight years as program director of an American foundation linking U.S. university students with community-based programs. During the study abroad experience, she interviewed leaders of higher education and

2 Kaufmann, D., Kraay, A., and Mastruzzi, M. (2004). Governance Matters IV: Governance Indicators for 1996-2004. www.worldbank.org/wbi/governance, World Bank, Washington, D.C. 2004.

3 The Economist (2007). Charlemagne: A dissertation on Romanian pork. Nov. 17, 2007, p. 63.

the NGO sector in Cluj and reached conclusions that helped her better understand the dimensions of these sectors at home and abroad.

Emily Poag, a student-participant in the course, interviewed UD students to determine what they learned and estimate how it relates to stated educational goals and objectives of the University of Delaware School of Urban Affairs & Public Policy (SUAPP). This paper, extracted from her capstone paper for the MPA degree, contains insights about the study abroad experience as reported by the students who took part, and concludes with recommendations for future efforts of this type.

Finally, Cătălin Baba and Călin Hințea examine the study abroad course from the CEE perspective. What did students and faculty at BBU who participated in the course learn? What might be done differently in future? Would such a course be valuable for BBU students? Under what conditions and how might it be organized and conducted? The authors conclude by suggesting a conference at BBU on study abroad, perhaps organized in cooperation with NISPAcee, to involve social science and PA educators from other institutions in CEE to discuss the organization and conduct of study abroad.

Making Study Abroad Work
for Public Administration Graduate Students:
Examples of Experiences
at Babeş-Bolyai University, Romania

Arno Loessner¹

*“We shall not cease from exploration, and the end of our
exploring will be to arrive where we started, and know
the place for the first time.”²*

1. Abstract

This essay on study abroad as a learning tool for graduate students in public administration, identifies opportunities and obstacles and uses examples from a study abroad trip to Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania in January 2008 to highlight the benefits of such an activity. The trip combined graduate students from Public Administration units in two universities – Babeş-Bolyai University (BBU), Romania and University of Delaware (UD), U.S.A. – in small teams over two weeks to interview, research and write on

1 Arno Loessner is Associate Professor Emeritus, University of Delaware and International Professor of Public Administration, Babeş-Bolyai University.

2 T.S. Eliot, “Four Quarters: Little Gidding” in *The Complete Poems and Plays, 1909-1950* (New York: Harcourt, 1952), 145.

contemporary public administration/public policy (PA) topics of mutual interest. The experience inspired those who participated to encourage others to consider it, hence this publication.

2. Benefits and Challenges of Study Abroad

Given that Americans have many opportunities to interact with students from other countries, it might be argued that it is unnecessary for American students to study abroad. America hosts twenty two percent of all students world-wide who study in other countries (OECD, 2006). Study abroad is primarily an undergraduate activity in American higher education.³ A study comparing more than 2,300 University of Delaware undergraduates studying at home and abroad found that students studying abroad are “more cognizant than their peers at home of varying national and cultural perspectives” (Chieffo and Griffiths, 170) – good reasons to study abroad, even when the study is short term.

2.1. Student Issues

While the University of Delaware study focuses on undergraduates, the benefits of study abroad are not, in my opinion, limited to undergraduates. There may be several reasons that graduate students do not participate in study abroad to the extent that undergraduates do, but lack of pedagogical benefit is not among them. Inadequate

3 University of Delaware led American higher education in study abroad with the first “Junior Year Abroad” program in 1923, and is still “... among the top twenty research institutions in the nation in the number or percentage of students it sends abroad annually ...” (Chieffo and Griffiths, 166), yet it offers only one graduate-level study abroad course for credit.

financial support and scheduling complications are often the deterrent. Work and study responsibilities and curricula filled with required courses make it hard for Graduate students to find time for study abroad trips. In some cases, graduate students find it cost-prohibitive to pay tuition in addition to travel expenses. While not insurmountable, there are financial and scheduling disincentives that work against offering even short-term study abroad programs for graduate students in PA.

To help with financial obstacles, a special program was established at UD in 2006.⁴ In addition, graduate students may gain academic credit for participation by enrolling in a survey course on comparative public administration, usually offered the semester before study abroad, and/or a more individually focused “special problems course” with a professor involving agreed-to readings and a paper for credit in the semester following study abroad.

2.2. Faculty Issues

There are disincentives for faculty to teach a study abroad course. Teaching a course without academic credit (if the institution permits it) normally does not meet departmental teaching load expectations. It may also entail opportunity cost. For example, at my institution, faculty who teach undergraduate study abroad courses for credit receive a

4 A special grant of \$45,000 per academic year was made available by the University Provost in 2006 to allow university assistance for travel-related expenses for graduate students in the School of Urban Affairs & Public Policy (SUAPP). This grant awarded students on trips led by the SUAPP faculty up to two-thirds of the cost of individual travel and living expenses to participate in a study abroad trip.

stipend for teaching as well as expense reimbursement. Faculty who lead graduate students on a noncredit study abroad receive expense reimbursement only. In addition, there are career-related issues. Faculty who use their time to publish articles usually enhance chances for promotion and tenure more than they would by devoting time to develop a study abroad component to their teaching.⁵

Developing and conducting a well organized study abroad trip means time consuming hard work, added responsibility and travel away from home. Teaching the “study abroad course” with or without credit includes pre-departure lectures and briefings as well as teaching on the trip, complicated travel logistics, and planning and budgeting that begin months in advance. In addition, organizing and implementing the study abroad program may require personal and professional contacts abroad who can be called upon to help with scheduling and local arrangements. Having good contacts in the country to be studied is a very important component to success, particularly for graduate student study abroad. Good contacts help in preparing the study abroad agenda with meaningful meetings and tours, social interaction with hosts and workable logistics. The importance of having persons who understand the terms and concepts of public administration serve as translators cannot be understated.⁶

5 In 2007, the SUAPP faculty promotion and tenure criteria were revised to more explicitly recognize study abroad as a teaching activity to be credited for purposes of promotion.

6 During a visit to Italy in 1995, translation from Italian to English was at times by persons not familiar with the field of public administration. In Prague in 1978 full understanding was inhibited by a reluctance of speakers to be fully candid in some matters of public policy.

It is helpful for trip leaders to have some personal experience abroad to rely upon, preferably in the destination country. UD faculty members have said that they would like to lead a study abroad trip, but they lack the contacts to get started. One way to overcome that problem is to join with faculty members who do have contacts, and then later extend their colleagues' trips with trips of their own. Faculty mentoring is an important way to help develop the capacity for study abroad. Why should faculty spend time on these unpaid activities that compete with research productivity and may not be regarded positively by the promotion and tenure criteria?

2.3. Rewards and Benefits

For me personally, the answer is that study abroad teaching is challenging and satisfying. Participating students are excited about learning. Study abroad course experiences are among the best of my teaching career. I hope to encourage faculty to lead study abroad teaching and administrators to insure that appropriate incentives are in place. The benefits to students are too great to do otherwise. Years after receiving their master's degree, former students report that study abroad was an important learning experience that contributed to their careers and lives.

After each study abroad course, student participants give organized presentations to share what they learn with faculty and students in the School, and invariably reveal learning enhancement and personal growth. Some traveled abroad for the first time. They traveled by train, trams, buses and Mercedes taxis! They used another language to communicate. They explained an American practice or policy and thought about things they may have taken for granted. Some say it

was helpful to understand the potential in America for better public goods and services. Almost all say they learned about themselves and gained practical experience and personal confidence. Colleagues report that discussion in their courses is enriched by student interventions containing references to study abroad experiences.

These reports of benefit from study abroad might come from any student who studies abroad. A factor that separates the graduate student experience from that of the undergraduate is the extent to which the former is assigned and takes responsibility for the study trip and his/her learning. Study abroad is an opportunity for graduate students to plan a professional activity and lead a group on their own. The undergraduate is expected to be on time and stay with the group. The graduate student works with the faculty leader to establish times for activities and leads the group. Each participant is assigned responsibility to manage the logistics for the study group for at least one day – planning and leading the program to insure that the group arrives and departs on time, that hosts are thanked and presented with a gift from the group and that discussion is productive.

These assignments have to be taken seriously by faculty trip leaders, integrated into the learning plan and allowed to unfold with students understanding that they are in charge. I have boarded the wrong train or bus and walked in the wrong direction saying nothing because the student in charge had made a mistake. But this happens usually only one time, because once it happens and all understand that they really are in charge, students start scoping out travel schedules, routes, times etc., in advance. Students are asked to lead the group on tours of places they have not previously visited. This gives important lessons not only in map reading, but in

organizing and leading and being able to perform something challenging on relatively short notice.

It is interesting to experience the shift in group dynamics as students, who are accustomed to following the faculty-prepared instructions in course syllabi and asking what they are supposed to do, learn to support each other and work together to manage the learning experience. Students are referred to as colleagues in meetings with hosts. They are prepared in advance to give presentations on conditions and practices at home. On any number of occasions, host presenters have stayed longer with the group than had been scheduled because the discussion was a learning experience for all – a two-way sharing of information.

There are many examples of how well student leadership works as a teaching device. On one occasion, a student who was asked to lead our group on a tour of the center of Bologna, Italy revealed that she can get lost in her home town, but she used her ingenuity, found a city map, got advice from locals and led a tour that all enjoyed. Other students bring along their tour books and contribute to the information the group receives. We could have hired a tour guide, and did so in some situations, but the learning that comes from the experience, the understanding of the power of cooperation and the sense of pride in taking on a complicated activity and doing it well as a group is unparalleled.⁷ Despite the challenges, study abroad can be among the most satisfying teaching experiences most of us will ever know.

7 The student who led the Bologna, Italy city tour called me after she took an important professional position in the housing agency of a large U.S. city to tell me that after completing that tour, she never again doubted her ability to do what she was assigned!

3. Organizing the Study Abroad Course for Graduate Students

Study abroad course designs may range from curriculum-based classroom instruction in a foreign location to specially designed study tours that emphasize immersion in local culture and various combinations of these. The trips I lead for graduate students combine organized visits to local projects and activities with professional meetings/presentations, usually devoting about half the available time to each. Study abroad courses require careful advance preparation to organize a theme of interest to the participants; theme-related meetings and visits abroad that provide a balance of structure and flexibility in content and time; and post-trip organization of activities, e.g. student presentations, papers for credit and individual study courses.

In advance of study abroad, students may be involved in administrative responsibilities for travel, including logistical planning, although the sustained detail required for these activities usually benefits from paid professional staff assistance. Regular monitoring and oversight by professional staff is important to insure that passports and inoculations are in order, collections are made and deposited properly for travel and accommodation expenses and other prepaid outlays, and that an information document is prepared and distributed with details such as telephone numbers of hotels, consulates and airlines. Study abroad leaders need to have potentially confidential student medical information in their possession in sealed envelopes to be opened if needed in an emergency situation. These sensitive administrative responsibilities of a study abroad trip require the attention of professional staff.

Students should use the pre-departure time to learn about the place to be visited so they arrive at the study abroad site

with background on history, culture, government organization and current events. Faculty should be explicit in briefings on cultural norms and rules of common courtesy. Graduate students often prepare in advance short presentations that may be made to hosts during the trip. These presentations may be based on work students are doing in their research assistantships, or students may choose to research a contemporary topic and prepare a short presentation with handouts for hosts who may be interested. Local contacts can advise on this aspect of preparation.

During the study abroad, students are responsible for attending all sessions.⁸ Indeed, as noted above, it is students who make sure that the group arrives at the correct place at the correct time, introduce the group, thank speakers and present small gifts with which we say thank you. And following the trip, students present post-trip reports to faculty and students. On occasion, professional groups outside the University have invited students to report on the experience and lessons learned. Students help prepare and sign thank-you letters to hosts.

All of these things occurred during the trip to BBU. Previous study abroad courses have included meetings at foreign universities that mixed UD and host students in various ways⁹, but this was the first time students from two universities were joined in a sustained program of study and research. Since others may be interested in considering

8 See student commitment form in Appendix.

9 For example, in a study abroad course conducted at Erasmus University, Rotterdam, The Netherlands in 2001, students organized and conducted a two-day professional meeting at which students presented research papers that were critiqued by peers.

adapting this inter-institutional, cross-cultural student study team approach to study abroad to complement graduate study in public administration and public policy, I will explain some of how the trip was organized and conducted and factors that those involved thought were important to success.

4. Study Abroad Course Content

The 2008 study trip to Cluj was organized with meetings and visits (see Appendix 1) plus an important third dimension – participation by visiting and host graduate students in two- and three-person teams to research and write papers together on topics of their choosing. A total of twenty students, eleven from UD and nine from BBU, spent two weeks learning together and from each other. That experience was very special and serves as the incentive to prepare this volume.

These inter-institutional projects work best when cooperative agreements establishing policy and guidelines are reinforced by personal contacts and trust among individuals from both institutions. BBU and UD have agreed formally to cooperate in several ways. Professor Hintea at BBU and I agreed that we wanted to develop a study abroad component to our cooperation. We are considering additional study abroad projects both in Romania and in the U.S., using the format initiated in 2008 as a beginning for these initiatives.

My close association with BBU facilitated the organization of the program and budget for this study experience. Any number of visiting scholars and study abroad groups filter through BBU, but this trip required a different level of commitment that was based upon close association and trust. The January 2008 study abroad visit was my fifth visit to BBU to teach, meet with local elected officials and

senior representatives of BBU and advise. I wish to thank the University of Delaware, Babeş-Bolyai University, Salzburg Global Seminar and Fulbright Senior Specialist grants for making these visits possible.

As a member of the BBU Public Administration International Advisory Board, I have come to know the faculty, the students and the program. BBU colleagues and contacts helped supplement published materials I used to prepare pre-departure orientation and planning lectures. These, in turn, were supplemented by research on the Internet and e-mail exchanges between participating students from both institutions. When the UD study group arrived in Cluj, they felt fairly well oriented as a result of preparation and interactions prior to our departure, but still somewhat apprehensive.¹⁰

Study abroad combines traditional teaching with new experiences –balancing preparation and self-discovery. How much should an instructor tell students in advance? How much can be understood in the absence of experiencing the place first hand? One way to help students prepare was to ask them to prepare questionnaires that could be used in their upcoming meetings in Romania. The process of preparing questions for use in a survey while in Cluj began several months before departure. In addition to getting a draft survey instrument under way before arriving in Cluj, the process was a useful device for honing topics and deciding on relevant questions. Several drafts were exchanged between individual

10 A student member of the group, Emily Poag, surveyed students following the trip and recorded their feelings in her analytical paper written as a capstone piece for the MPA degree she was awarded in May 2008. Her findings are summarized in Chapter VI of this publication.

students and professor, each of which was shared with the full UD group. In the course of this exercise, students came to think carefully about what they wanted to learn, how to clarify questions for use abroad by using words and terms that would be understood by non Americans and to order questions sequentially and logically. It was important to deal with topics that lent themselves to comparative analysis. The survey question exercise helped focus reading and data searches and simplified the explanation of research topics that subsequently helped identify partner students and facilitated communication between students. It also helped build supportive connections between the participating UD students as they shared the several drafts of their survey instruments. Upon arrival in Cluj, students met with their teammates from BBU and, not unexpectedly, revised the questions once again. The lessons learned from that experience convince me that this was a useful activity that would be applied in future courses.

This being the first attempt at this format of study abroad for these two institutions, it took some time to organize some of the details. UD and BBU students received student partner e-mail contact information less than a month before departure. UD Student participants felt that more and earlier interaction with BBU study partners would have been helpful (Poag, 2008). Putting the two groups in touch well in advance should help strengthen a successful program. In future, we will try to establish teams and have them be in touch earlier. Reading and data collection assignments and survey instrument design should begin as combined efforts prior to departure.

Upon arrival in Cluj, the group bonded and enjoyed each others' company, thanks to enthusiastic participation by

BBU faculty and students¹¹. The BBU administration and staff seemed to think of and offer every type of assistance. A room was set aside in the housing facility for the group to hold meetings, do research and write drafts using host-provided computers, printers and fast Internet service.

Participation in meetings, lectures and field visits was enthusiastic and thoughtful. These were supplemented by visits to BBU students' homes for dinner and evenings spent in discussion and fellowship in local pubs and clubs. The students also went bowling together! All this helped create a positive environment for thinking about what was learned that extended the hours of work spent each day in preparing for and conducting interviews, and writing reports that represented team opinions.

5. Conclusion

Those who participated confirm that learning was enjoyable and extended well beyond formal outputs. Students and faculty from two academic units located thousands of miles apart worked together to create a unique opportunity for learning and had a lot of fun in the process. The experiment of January 2008 confirmed once again that study abroad is an interesting and useful approach to teaching Public Administration, that it is especially important for graduate students and that combination of

11 On a particularly cold and rainy Sunday, BBU colleagues organized an impromptu visit of all participants to a colorful restaurant in the countryside made possible by faculty taking time away from their weekend and using their personal cars to transport everyone. The students loved the experience and the food, appreciated the kindness displayed and took advantage of the opportunity to discuss questions with staff and compare notes.

students from the United States with students from Central and Eastern Europe can bring gains to both groups. This was a highly successful study abroad experience. I highly recommend to my colleagues in the U.S. and CEE that they consider study abroad, possibly adapting elements of this program and reporting on experiences that may help give students and faculty further opportunity to learn together and from one another.

Appendix 1

Itinerary UD/BBU Study Abroad Program January 2008

Day	Date	MORNING	AFTERNOON	EVENING
1	Jan 11 Friday		Travel to airport	Flight to London
2	Jan 12 Saturday	Flight to Budapest	Flight to Cluj-Napoca, Romania	Group dinner at hotel
3	Jan 13 Sunday	Welcome to BBU & Cluj Dean Cătălin Baba	Orientation on Cluj: City tour, exchange money.	Individual Studies
4	Jan 14 Monday	Breakfast meeting with BBU students Dr. Călin Hîntea –local government & strategic planning in Cluj. Marton Balough on NGOs in Romania	Meeting with of Cluj City on the strategic planning progress in Cluj	Reception by BBU
5	Jan 15 Tuesday	Meeting at PA faculty: Liviu Radu and Dacian Dragoș on PA reform, decentralization, public safety and courts	Meeting with Prefect of Cluj County and Cluj County Council-on county econ. dev., intergovt relations, regional governance and decentralization	Individual Studies
6	Jan 16 Wed	Team meetings (See Note 1)	Individual Studies	Individual Studies
7	Jan 17 Thurs	Excursion to Sibiu (See note 2)	Excursion to Sibiu	Excursion to Sibiu
8	Jan 18 Friday	Excursion to Sibiu	Excursion to Sibiu	Excursion to Sibiu
9	Jan 19 Saturday	Excursion to Sibiu	Excursion to Sibiu	Excursion to Sibiu
10	Jan 20 Sunday	All participants return to Cluj	Individual Studies	Individual Studies
11	Jan 21 Monday	Final organizing of interviews	Interviews	Individual Studies
12	Jan 22 Tuesday	Interviews	Interviews	1800-1900 Status report on Interviews
13	Jan 23 Wed	Partner visits	1400-1700 Group meeting to report on visit experiences	1830 Reception given by SUAPP for our BBU/Cluj colleagues
14	Jan 24 Thurs	Individual Studies	Individual Studies	Individual Studies
15	Jan 25 Friday	Return flight departs Cluj early morning		

Notes: UD/BBU Study travel program January 2008

- Individual studies = time for individuals to do what they wish – unscheduled time
- Interviews = UD and BBU students make visits to schools, NGOs, government agencies to meet staff, examine program activities and develop reports on what they find using agreed-upon study outlines. Subject areas include: Social Services, Health/Environment, Economic Development, Education.
- Note 1: Partner teams to confirm meeting time, name of person(s) to meet with, detailed address.
- Note 2: Group excursion will be by bus to City of Sibiu and other attractions.

Administrative topics to resolve in advance:

- Reserve rooms at hotel and procedure for paying
- Bus for excursion Jan 17-20
- Vans for travel to and from airport
- Group orientation dinner Jan 12 for UD students
- Reception Jan 14 – BBU
- Reception Jan 23 – UD all hosts during the stay
- Mobile phone connections
- Internet access at hotel
- Money exchange on Sunday
- Organizing meetings week 1
- Organizing meetings of teams during week 2
- Preparing a survey instrument to get comparable information
- Afternoon presentations on Jan 23
- Papers prepared by partners for publication
- Academic credit and/or other incentive for students following the trip

Appendix 2

UD School of Urban Affairs & Public Policy Student Application to Participate in Comparative International Public Administration Study Trip January 2008

This trip to Romania will cover the period January 11-25
To be considered for this trip you must:

- 1. Be a current SUAPP student as of Fall 2007 or have permission from the trip leader.**
- 2. Submit an application by September 26, 2007.**
- 3. Obtain signature from the faculty member who supports/supervises your assistantship indicating his/her approval of your absence for the period 11-25 January 2008.**

NAME _____

PROGRAM/DEGREE _____

LOCAL ADDRESS _____

LOCAL PHONE _____

E-MAIL _____

EMERGENCYCONTACTNAME _____

RELATIONSHIP _____

PHONE NUMBER _____

Faculty Supervisor Consent

_____ has informed me of his/
her intent to participate in the UAPP Travel Study Trip to
Romania from 11-25 January 2008 and has my approval to
be absent from the University for this period.

Supervisor Name

Supervisor Signature

Date

Appendix 3

Press Release



**School of Urban affairs & Public Policy
University of Delaware
Newark, Delaware 19716
U.S.A.
<http://www.udel.edu/suapp/>**



**Universitatea Babeş-Bolyai, Cluj-Napoca
Facultatea de Ştiinţe Politice, Administrative şi ale Comunicării
DEPARTAMENTUL DE ADMINISTRAŢIE PUBLICĂ**
**Str. General Traian Moşoiu, nr. 71, 400132, Cluj-Napoca, România
Tel/Fax: 0040-264-431361, Web: www.apubb.ro**

January 23, 2008
Cluj-Napoca, Romania

Twenty graduate students in public administration and public policy from the School of Urban Affairs & Public Policy, University of Delaware and the Faculty of Public Administration, Babeş-Bolyai University have today completed a two-week joint study of governance practices and public services in Transylvania that we believe is unique in higher education. Small teams of students from both universities used survey questionnaires to collect information to be used in jointly prepared research papers. The intent is to report on the current status of governance policy and practice in Romania.

This experience in higher education provided students from different backgrounds and cultures the opportunity to work and learn together in small groups as they conducted more than 40 interviews with public officials, representatives

of NGOs and other well informed persons on a variety of contemporary issues including public education, health care, NGO organization and management, university-community interactions, intergovernmental relations, social service delivery, public corruption, traffic congestion and the urban environment.

Graduates of American public administration programs have the comparative benefit of being able to start professional practice in a society that is relatively wealthy and well organized. Graduates in public administration become specialized fairly quickly. For Americans, the situation in Romania demonstrates the need for a broad understanding of public issues in an emerging society where governments and NGOs must work cooperatively to meet an enormous backlog of needs with very scarce resources. Greater attention to these needs for cooperation across sectors could benefit the practice of public policy in America. Babeş-Bolyai students may view the situation in Romania from a slightly different perspective, as they explain it to inquisitive foreigners and hear from their guests about best practices and failures in America, where the governance system has been trying for many years to address the needs that are the principal topics of this study.

We think that educators in public policy and public administration may be interested in understanding this study experience and the collaborative research that resulted from it.

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An Examination of the Transportation Sector
in Cluj-Napoca, Romania
with Comparisons to Other Efforts to Reduce
Adverse Effects of Traffic Congestion

Todd Franzen and Cristina Haruta¹

1. Abstract

In this paper, we examine traffic congestion factors and related issues in Cluj-Napoca (Cluj), Romania, consider proposed strategies to alleviate traffic congestion in the region and analyze the potential of these strategies to improve the quality of life in Cluj. Experience of other municipal areas is reported for purposes of comparative policy consideration. Finally, we suggest additional steps that Cluj might consider in this area.

2. Background

Cluj is the county seat of Cluj County and is located in the northwestern section of Transylvania, which is located in northwestern Romania. Cluj County has a population of approximately 703,000. The permanent population of the city in 2007 was 318,027, and accounting for the city's University students, the population total was over 400,000

1 Graduate students at University of Delaware and Babeş-Bolyai University, respectively.

(Cluj County Council, 2008). Cluj is referred to by local officials as a service city and an educational city with a strong local economy that has an unemployment rate under 1 percent (Boc, 2008).

Cluj city government released a strategic plan in late 2006 that focused on priorities for the next five to seven years with four main focus areas: economic development and competitiveness, urban development and infrastructure, human resources development and community development. The section focusing on urban development and infrastructure described how the current development of Cluj is negatively impacted by high traffic and insufficient parking (Cluj Strategic Plan, 2006). In this paper, we will discuss in greater detail some of the recommendations that originated from this strategic plan.

The city and county of Cluj are working to create a metropolitan area with a 30-kilometer radius that will bring the city and village governments in the area together, not as a metropolitan government, as that term is used generally, but as an association of interested entities. An important issue for the metropolitan area is to build the infrastructure to support a modern transportation network. The association is expected to address the deficient roadways and public transportation system in order to meet the needs of the expanded metropolitan area and the increasing volume of vehicles in the region.

Public authorities and the majority of people of Cluj believe traffic congestion is a major issue (Boc, 2008). Specifically, the city's road infrastructure can not accommodate the increasing number of vehicles on city streets. Investment in the transportation infrastructure has been a low priority, resulting in Romania's road and rail network being among

the least extensive in Europe (Library of Congress Federal Research Division). Additionally, according to a 2004 report released by the city government, Cluj has the sixth highest number of vehicles per capita in South Central and Eastern Europe, with an average of 325 vehicles per 1,000 residents (Crişan, 2007).

All major roads in the region feed directly into the center of Cluj, contributing to the overall traffic congestion. Currently, there is no bypass around the city; traffic cannot get from one end of the city to the other end of the city without going through the center of Cluj. Fifty percent of vehicles driven through the city are considered transit vehicles traveling to destinations other than the center of Cluj (Search Corporation, Cluj Traffic Study).

Traffic congestion increases levels of air and noise pollution. Cluj County's agency for environmental protection concludes that traffic is the highest air pollutant factor in the city (Agency for Environment Protection Cluj, 2008). This is a stark contrast to the 1980s and early 1990s, when industry was the greatest source of air pollution in the region (Mititean, 2008).

When traffic destined for Cluj arrives in the city center, there are few places to park. Drivers resort to parking their vehicles wherever they can, leaving sidewalks filled with cars, and pedestrians, especially children and the elderly, then must compete with vehicles in the streets. Contributing to the street parking problem is the unconventional use of private garages. Cluj Mayor Emil Boc estimates that over 70 percent of private garages are used for something other than housing a vehicle; some residents use garages for extra storage or living space. Furthermore, most of the housing built during the communist period does not have garages, which forces residents to park on the streets (Boc, 2008).

3. Proposed Solutions for Private Transportation

The authorities in the city and county realize the severity of the traffic problem, and as a result, have developed plans to address several of these major issues. As Mayor Boc has recognized, more city streets alone will not solve the traffic congestion problem. The strategic plan for the city prioritized the construction of a beltway road system to alleviate some of the congestion by allowing through traffic to avoid the city center. In addition, there are plans to construct ring roads to connect the larger neighborhoods. The new roadways will redirect the heavy truck traffic and transit vehicles away from the center of the city. These measures are expected to have a noticeable impact, relieving 50 percent of the traffic that is driving through the center of Cluj on the way to a destination outside the city. The authorities have set an aggressive deadline of 2009 to complete these new roadway projects because the traffic congestion problem is so severe.

Construction has already begun on beltways to divert traffic around the center of the city. Construction began in 2006 on the first two sections of the beltway, from north to east and from south to east. The lengths of the two segments are 8.2 kilometers and 24 kilometers, respectively. The other two segments of the beltway are still in the planning stages (Popa, 2007). Authorities are currently in the process of acquiring the property necessary for the other sections of the beltway.

Land to construct the beltways is acquired by eminent domain. Through this process, authorities assess and assign a value to the land, offer landowners a price and negotiate the sale. Landowners have the opportunity to sue the government if they do not agree to the offered price. The purpose for the

land acquisition is explained as being a national project and in the best interest of the public and the region. The entire process is time consuming.

The beltways will connect with European and national roads outside of the city. In addition, connections will be constructed between the beltways and the ring roads, which will tie together neighborhoods of the city. The beltway will also connect the new Cluj business park, improving access for employees.

The city contracted for an environmental impact study to determine the effect the beltway project will have on air quality in the region. The study focused on 18 heavily traveled streets in Cluj and analyzed six different pollutant factors. The predicted outcomes were very positive. After the construction of the beltway, all 18 streets will show marked improvement in air quality; in some cases the level of harmful emissions will decline by 78 percent (Search Corporation, Cluj Traffic Study). Only one street, Muncii Boulevard, will not show a drastic improvement in the six pollutant categories, likely because it will connect the city to the beltway. The street is located in an industrial area, though, so the expected impact will not be as severe as if it were in a residential area, since there are fewer people living in the immediate area.

In addition to air quality, the study also measured the expected impact on sound pollution. Of the streets in the study, 12 of the 18 streets are expected to show decreased levels of sound pollution of approximately 10 percent to 12 percent. The other streets in the study are located in the most central part of the city; therefore, they will likely not show as much of a decrease in sound pollution due to the comparably higher traffic levels. Overall, the study predicts that the beltway project will not only reduce traffic

congestion in the center of the city but also will positively impact air and sound pollution factors. With these expected positive results, the beltway project will clearly benefit the city of Cluj.

One proposal that aims to improve the movement of traffic consists in implementing the Green Line project. This project will use timed traffic lights to keep traffic moving through the city's core. The Green Line will eliminate the continual stopping and starting of traffic, providing better flow through the city. Moreover, to improve traffic movement through intersections, seven additional roundabouts will be constructed throughout the city in 2008, doubling the existing number of roundabouts. The city hall traffic study estimated that implementation of the Green Line and the improvement of traffic flow at intersections will increase the average speed of vehicles in the city center from two kilometers per hour to five kilometers per hour (Search Corporation, Cluj Traffic Study).

Nearly one-third of all streets in the city are unpaved (Mititean, 2008). The city began working on modernizing the 884 city streets in 2005. Through this modernization project, 288 of these streets will be renewed, with 47 streets currently under construction. The modernization process includes paving, repaving, or widening the streets, depending on the situation. In addition, several new streets have been constructed to provide access to the city's new business parks (Boc, 2006).

To address the parking shortage, the city is building new parking structures. Construction was recently completed on two parking garages, and construction on another five garages is planned for 2008. In addition, a surface parking lot near the city center recently opened. Because city

planning officials realize that more parking spots will not completely eliminate parking issues for Cluj, the strategic plan recommends discouraging the use of parking places in the central part of the city. More specifically, building owners will be limited to a certain number of parking spots per building, with the allotted number based on the type of business in the building. The city has formed Public-Private Partnership agreements to finance several of the parking garages. Once all of the new parking structures are finished, there will be an additional 1,169 parking spots in the city. To put that figure into context, in 2007 the city had 26,352 parking spots (Popa, 2007).

4. Proposed Solutions for Public Transportation

Regia Autonoma a Transportului Urban in Comun (RATUC) is the public transportation authority that services the city of Cluj and the immediate surrounding area. The overall area of Cluj is 178 square kilometers, and the service area of RATUC covers approximately 160 square kilometers of that area. In the current public transportation system, RATUC uses buses, trolley-buses and trams. Of the approximately 350,000 year-round residents in Cluj, 300,000 ride public transportation at some point during the year. (Regia Autonoma a Transportului Urban in Comun).

Breakdown of RATUC Public Transit System

Mode of Transportation	Number of Lines	Length of Service	Percent of Total Ridership
Bus	26	305.2 km	43%
Trolley-bus	8	98.8 km	38%
Tram	3	52.8 km	19%

The transportation infrastructure issues discussed above also impact public transportation. Beyond traffic congestion problems, one issue that directly affects the public transportation system in Cluj is the poor street conditions. Since many streets are unpaved or are in very poor condition, public transportation can only use certain roads. As road conditions improve, the movement of public transportation systems would be further improved through the widespread use of intelligent transportation systems (ITS). The United States Department of Transportation, Research and Innovative Technology Administration states that “ITS improves transportation safety and mobility and enhances productivity through the use of advanced information and communications technologies” (U.S Department of Transportation, 2008). Several public transit lines in Cluj already employ ITS as a means to improve efficiency. RATUC has 11 display panels that indicate bus arrival times, and RATUC hopes to expand its usage of ITS in the future.

Of all existing buses, 50 percent are equipped with a Global Positioning System (GPS) for tracking purposes. GPS technology improves the efficiency of public transportation because the agency can track the progress of buses along the routes and share the information with riders through the information panels. According to an interview with RATUC, the GPS and ITS technologies are rather expensive, thereby delaying the agency from replicating the program across its entire system (Marius, 2008).

The traffic study recently completed by city hall prioritized the modernization of the 30 kilometers of tram lines in the city. Although trams are the least frequently used mode of public transportation in Cluj, there are distinct advantages to upgrading this mode of transport. In comparison to other existing modes, trams cost 30 percent

less to maintain than buses and trolley-buses. Trams also are more environmentally responsible, using 56 percent less energy than buses and trolley-buses. In addition, trams meet European Union standards for air quality and produce fewer accidents. The tram line rehabilitation project is currently delayed due to a lack of funding, but it was scheduled to be completed from 2007 through 2009. The estimated cost of the project is €20 million (\$35 million) (Search Corporation, Traffic Study).

Additionally, Mayor Boc is considering conducting a study to analyze the feasibility of implementing a surface metro for the city in order to move people throughout the city more efficiently. The city has ruled out building an underground subway system because of the presence of underground utilities. Also, much of the city is built on top of Roman ruins, some of which are only three meters below the current city. Disturbing those ruins by building a new transit system is not desirable.

5. Case Studies

Transportation issues are problematic all over the world, and metropolitan areas are using varied approaches to solve the issues. For example, London, England took a drastic approach to alleviate traffic congestion in the city center. In February 2003, the city implemented a congestion-charging scheme to combat its severe congestion problem in the city center. Under this scheme, vehicles driving through the center of London are charged a daily flat fee of £8 (\$16) between 7:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The project has had a marked impact since its implementation. In the first year alone, average traffic speeds rose by 37 percent and congestion fell 40 percent (Deloitte Research Public Sector Study, 2003). Traffic levels

have stayed at a 30 percent reduction since the implementation of the congestion fees. Before the project, 334,000 vehicles entered the city center each day, but in 2006, 70,000 fewer vehicles entered the same area. Conversely, there has been a 43 percent increase in cycling within the zone. The congestion charge has also benefited the city financially. In 2006 and 2007, the net income from congestion fees totaled £123 million, which will be used to finance additional transportation improvements (Transport for London).

The London congestion-pricing example is a demand-side strategy toward relieving traffic congestion. Rather than expanding the road network in the center of the city, and in turn increasing the supply, the pricing approach has focused on limiting demand. By implementing the pricing scheme, drivers are faced with a higher price of driving through the city of London, which, as results have demonstrated, has reduced demand. As Cluj applies methods to expand road capacity on the outer parts of the city, congestion pricing, otherwise known as demand management, offers a possibility of reducing traffic within the city center.

With the vast expansion of transportation infrastructure projects currently underway, satisfying the substantial financial obligations must be considered. Investing in additional highway infrastructure is timely and expensive. As a remedy, Cluj should consider a variety of possible funding sources, similar to how other European countries have financed large transportation infrastructure projects. Akin to the financial relationship developed to help finance the new parking structures, Cluj should pursue funding partnerships with private businesses.

These partnerships are referred to as Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs). PPPs are formed when a private entity

takes on the financial, and often management, responsibility of projects from a public entity. The United States Federal Highway Administration describes PPPs as “contractual agreements formed between a public agency and private sector entity that allow for greater private-sector participation in the delivery of transportation projects” (U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration). These partnerships have become more common in recent years in both Europe and the United States. In Europe, recent PPP projects include the 72.5 kilometer, €1.2 billion Athens Ring Road in Greece; the 58.6 kilometer, €412 million M6 motorway in Hungary; and the 6 kilometer, €46.3 million Hvalfjordur Tunnel in Iceland. In the United States, the use of PPPs is less advanced but is rapidly developing. Twenty-one states and one U.S. territory have passed legislation, primarily in the past five years, to allow the use of PPPs for the creation of transportation infrastructure projects. Beyond the financial aspects, these partnerships are attractive because they can utilize private sector innovation while often improving overall development efficiency (Perez and March, 2006). Using what other cities and countries are doing, such as congestion pricing and forming PPPs as guidance, authorities in Cluj can implement best practice strategies to make transportation development more feasible, efficient and cost effective.

6. Recommendations

While the aggressiveness of the proposed plans for Cluj should be commended, we caution using additional road capacity as the only solution to traffic congestion. In the United States, a common solution to traffic congestion is to expand roadway capacity through construction. As shown by the increasing gridlock on America’s highways, this approach alone is not

suitable to manage increasing congestion. Newly expanded roadways often attract additional users, when otherwise the users would avoid the previously congested conditions or use alternative modes of transportation to reach their destinations. Consequently, adding capacity to over-traveled highways encourages more vehicle traffic, increasing the problems over the long term. Also, increasing highway capacity comes with other complications. Environmental restrictions, right-of-way constraints and community opposition all can make highway expansion tenuous. As a result, we recommend a diverse, comprehensive approach to not only increase road capacity, but also to improve the public transit system as well as better manage the current transportation system.

Despite the prevalence of transportation issues in Cluj, there is no one central body to manage transportation concerns. Responsibilities are currently shared among various institutions, complicating the management process and making overall coordination difficult. In the city hall traffic study, one identified issue was the creation of a Department of Transportation for the city to be directly responsible for transportation issues. Resolving this issue and implementing a central transportation agency should be a priority.

A well-managed public transit operation will provide safe, reliable, and frequent transportation to users. Increasing available transportation choices for commuters through public transportation can ease many of problems current vehicle commuters face. Efficient public transportation makes commuting times more reliable, eases environmental impact, and reduces commuting frustrations.

Residents of Cluj frequently ride existing public transportation modes, but despite the large ridership, RATUC has

issues that still need to be addressed. First, RATUC needs to develop a strategic plan and be proactive instead of reactive. For example, current route changes are usually made on recommendation of citizens. If RATUC were proactive, the agency would anticipate ridership and transportation changes and implement these changes based on reasoned research instead of reacting primarily to customer requests. Further, RATUC should implement regular customer satisfaction surveys, rather than solely relying on feedback e-mailed to the company through its Web site (Marius, 2008).

There is a great opportunity for the public transportation agency in Cluj to further improve service and increase ridership. As traffic corridors become more congested, the importance for public transportation as a means to provide travel capacity will continue to grow. Public transportation becomes a more attractive alternative to driving personal vehicles by reducing delays commuters face. Fewer vehicles will be on the roads when commuters who typically travel by vehicle switch their mode of transportation to public transit. If enough people change to public transit, a noticeable positive impact on traffic volume will be realized. The problem with using public transportation as a solution to traffic congestion is not due to the public's refusal to use public transportation, but it is a result of the low capacity of service. Thus, more public transportation services are needed.

If the metropolitan area is expanded as proposed, RATUC will also have the opportunity to expand. Our research demonstrates that city hall's expansion plans and the agency's expansion plans do not conform. Having a unified plan, or, at a minimum, plans that complement each other, is vital to successfully addressing Cluj's transportation issues. Second, the quality and consistency of service must be improved in

order to make public transportation more attractive to the public. Buses frequently do not run according to schedule, forcing riders to adjust their schedules based on the late arrivals. Increased use of ITS would remedy this problem. Finally, bus stops do not provide any shelter for customers waiting for the bus. A simple overhang to provide protection from weather elements would provide greater comfort to customers and ensure consistent ridership in all kinds of weather. With these improvements, public transportation ridership will increase even more, reducing the number of vehicles on the streets as a result.

Dedicated lanes for public transportation would further increase the overall efficiency and movement throughout the city. Buses and trolley-buses also get bogged down in the auto traffic, decreasing overall reliability due to the unpredictable schedules. Unfortunately, the existing traffic congestion makes it difficult to convince the public of the benefits of dedicating lanes to public transportation. The streets are so overburdened by traffic now that it is not currently feasible to dedicate lanes to transit, but the issue should be considered in the future.

While not all solutions are inexpensive or easy to implement, some simple solutions can have immense impacts. For example, in the United States, public transportation buses in Minneapolis, Minnesota use approximately 250 miles of freeway shoulder to bypass stalled traffic. Passengers responded to this innovative approach through drastic ridership increases. Over a two-year period, routes using the shoulder bypass approach had a 9.2 percent increase in riders, a stark contrast to the overall system ridership decrease of 6.5 percent during the same period. (Schrank and Lomax, 26).

The parking situation should also be improved. Once the parking garages in Cluj are complete, there should be a second phase to improve parking. For example, existing street parking should be patrolled more closely to determine when there are violations. Imposing fines for improper parking would discourage residents from driving into the city and parking illegally. Furthermore, parking management could be improved by bringing the police department under the jurisdiction of the mayor. The mayor has authority over cars parked on sidewalks, but not on the streets because the mayor has no authority over the police for the city. Giving the mayor complete authority over all parking issues would allow for better consistency and overall efficiency (Boc, 2008).

Again, transportation infrastructure projects are costly. Looking at innovative approaches like PPPs would reduce the financial burden on the government. Moreover, the region should pursue additional European Union funding for transportation related projects. With the recent admission of Romania into the European Union, Romania has the right to access structural funds. Although we are unaware of the specifics, those funds could possibly be used to support necessary infrastructure projects to resolve traffic congestion and air quality issues.

7. Conclusion

In conclusion, the future vitality of the region of Cluj is directly related to its transportation network. Realizing the need for drastic changes, authorities are taking a proactive approach to mitigate transportation problems. Projects such as the beltway, ring roads and Green Lines will all have positive impacts. As we have outlined, there are further opportunities to implement improvements. Using models

from other cities as a guide, Cluj can turn the current transportation problem into a strength.

A certain amount of congestion will likely always be present in Cluj and the surrounding region. As population and the number of vehicles increase, traffic congestion will also escalate. Authorities must continue to target innovative and comprehensive solutions to ease the gridlock on roads. A comprehensive approach should include better utilization of current highway and public transit infrastructure, planning for a suitable expansion of those areas and decreasing highway demand. Addressing the range of traffic issues with an all-inclusive approach provides the best opportunity to mitigate congestion in and around Cluj. Finally, realistic expectations are also part of the solution. Traffic congestion will not be eliminated overnight. To ensure an appropriate response to existing and imminent challenges, any response must be approached with patience and foresight.

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Public Corruption and Anti-Corruption
Measures in Romania:
an Assessment of Progress

Ann Johnson and Bianca Cobârzan¹

1. Abstract

This research focuses on corruption in public administration in Romania in the post-communist era. Our objectives include examining A) what problems exist with corruption in Romania, B) what is being done to combat corruption, and C) how knowledgeable persons involved in the anti-corruption process view the success of these anti-corruption measures. Corruption is defined by the World Bank as “the abuse of public office for private gain” (Anti-corruption, 1997). The Asian Development Bank states that “Corruption involves behavior on the part of officials in the public and private sectors, in which they improperly and unlawfully enrich themselves and/ or those close to them, or induce others to do so, by misusing the position in which they are placed”. (Kotkin, 2002, p. 352).

2. Methodology

This paper is a collaborative effort between Bianca Cobarzan, a member of the faculty and a Ph.D. student at

1 Graduate students at University of Delaware and Babeş-Bolyai University, respectively.

Babeş-Bolyai University, and Ann Johnson, a Ph.D. student at the University of Delaware.

The primary research consists of interviews with well informed individuals involved in anti-corruption policy in Romania, including Liviu Radu, Romanian Secretary of State for Reforming Public Administration; Iulia Georgescu, Director of ProDemocracy Association, Cluj-Napoca branch, a non-governmental organization (NGO) ensuring integrity in elections and transparency of government; Dacian Dragoş, a lawyer largely responsible for drafting the administrative code for Romania and a professor in administrative law at Babeş-Bolyai University; Dan Şandor, a professor of qualitative research methods in the Public Administration Department of Babeş-Bolyai University; Ana Luduşan, from the League for Protecting Human Rights, Cluj-Napoca branch; and Adrian Marian, from the Cluj-Napoca police training academy and a former police spokesman. Furthermore, some information was gathered through meetings with Emil Boc, Mayor of Cluj-Napoca and staff from the Mayor's office.

The interviews took place in Cluj-Napoca in January 2008, and the authors were able to have access to these informed persons because of their relationship to Babeş-Bolyai University's public administration program and a partnership set up with the University of Delaware's program in Urban Affairs and Public Policy. In *Making Sense of Governance*, Hyden et al. argue the value of methodological approach of using well informed individuals to understand the depth of the subject matter (Hyden, 2004, p. 4-5).

3. Problems of Corruption in Romania in Public Administration

Integrity and the efficiency of the bureaucracy is of vital importance because according to the Economic Intelligence

Unit, the efficiency of the bureaucracy has been associated with “better rates of investment and growth, whereas corruption was negatively related”. (Hyden, 2004, p. 123-124 citing Mauro, 1995, p. 681-712). Moreover, foreign perception of corruption is particularly important because if business people and financial organizations such as the International Monetary Fund and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development have a less than favorable view of the level of corruption in a particular country, they may not want to invest or they may refuse to provide economic development loans (Holmes, 2006, p. 156).

Romania, particularly the city of Cluj-Napoca, is working hard to encourage foreign investment. Recently Ericksons, Nokia and several large department stores and malls have moved operations to the city (Boc and staff, personal communication, January 16, 2008).

3.1. Recent History of Corruption in Romania

Initially after the 1989 revolution many of those involved in the second power tier of the prior government gained control (Transparency International, National Integrity System, 2005, p. 11). For approximately seven years after the fall of communism, Romania experienced economic stagnation. The initial lack of reform created an environment of “poor rule of law, widespread corruption, societal frustration, conflicts and distrust in state institutions”. (Transparency International, National Integrity System, 2005, p. 11). Integrity efforts have become more of a focal point as Romania has increased relationships with international organizations. In 1996 a new government was elected. Since this time, Romania has become a more integrated member of the international community, and Romania joined NATO in 2004 (Transparency International, National Integrity System

2005, p. 10). In 1999 when Romania began accession talks with the EU, Romania became under pressure to reduce corruption. An anti-corruption strategy was formed in 2001 (Transparency International, National Integrity System, 2005, p. 8). In the past several years, anticorruption measures have been an even stronger area of focus in Romania because compliance with anti-corruption laws and institutions were a requirement for succession into the European Union in 2006 (L. Radu, personal communication, January 13, 2008). By joining the EU, Romania gained \$31 billion and direct access to EU markets (Radu, personal communication, January 13, 2008). Romanian citizens also gained the ability to work in other countries and send a significant amount of money back to Romania. This phenomenon is particularly true of Romanians working in Spain and Italy.

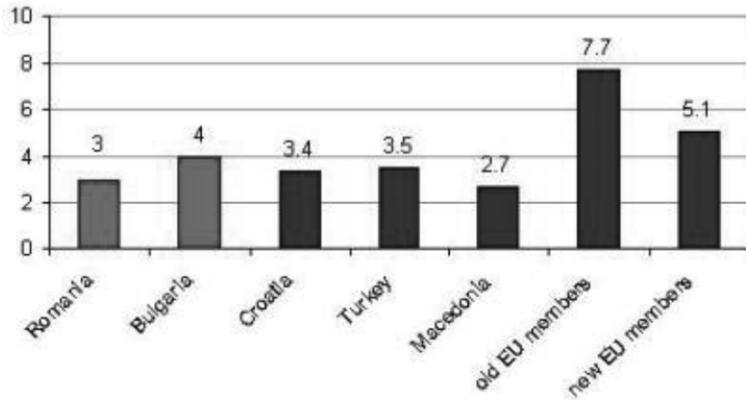
Because of a lack of preparedness due to corruption in the areas of judiciary and administration, Romania and Bulgaria missed joining the EU in 2004 (Gallu, 2006). Consequently, as part of the succession to the EU in 2007 the European Commission issued a moratorium on corruption. If Romania does not comply with this moratorium the Commission can use special safeguards included in the Accession Treaties which could lead to a refusal to recognize court decisions or cuts to EU funds. The safeguard clause will remain in effect in Romania and Bulgaria for the first three years of EU membership (Bulgaria, June 28, 2007).

3.2. Current Situation

According to a September 2007 study by Transparency International of perceived corruption and trust in European Union countries, Romania received a score of approximately three on a ten point scale (with 10 being the most clean and 0 being the most corrupt). This score is the lowest

of the EU countries. Bulgaria, which was admitted to the EU at the same time as Romania, received a rating of four. The other countries that have been recently brought into the EU, primarily in Central and Eastern Europe, have consistently ranked at approximately a five, and the EU countries in general averaged above a seven on the perceived trustworthiness scale over the last several years. Romania ranked 69 out of 180 countries rated globally (Corruption Perception Index, 2007).

Figure 1. Corruption Perception Index Selected Countries 2007



Source: Transparency International http://www.transparency.org/news_room/in_focus/2006/eu_accession

However, some experts argue that these results may not show an entirely accurate picture. Şandor warned that it is notable that corruption has been discussed so much in the media with the accession to the EU that perception may be skewed (D. Şandor, personal communication, January 21, 2008). Radu agrees that corruption in Romania is a problem, but the degree of corruption in the survey may have been

exaggerated. He feels the rate of corruption in Bulgaria, for instance, is much higher than the rate of corruption in Romania despite the fact that Transparency International Ranks Romania as three out of ten and ranked Bulgaria as four out of ten on the integrity scale in 2007. This difference is particularly acute in the area of officials receiving bribes for travelers to have safe passage through the country (Radu personal communication, January 13, 2008). Furthermore, Mikos Marschall, Transparency International's regional director for Europe and Central Asia, stated that after a study in 2006 that the 2006 report did not show the amount of progress in Romania had been making. "The reality in the country is less corrupt than perceived" (Romania, 2007). Also, the report certifies "significant improvement" for Bulgaria and Romania. Mikos Marschall stated that foreign investment is on the rise in Romania largely as a result of anti-corruption measures that have been taken (Romania, 2007). The World Bank has also praised Romania for its transparency laws (EuropeBG, 2007). This desire of many Romanians to address the corruption issue is demonstrated by signs on the doors of city hall stating "nu se ia mita" "no bribes will be taken here".

The National Corruption Report of 2006 from Transparency International stated that although 2007 was the appropriate time for Romanian accession to the EU, continued pressure should be applied to the government in the areas of integrity and fighting corruption (Transparency International, 2006). The World Bank has also called for greater integrity in judicial reform, public management and enforcement (Romania Makes Important Strides, 2006).

In order to have greater integrity, a report by the European Commission stated that Romania should particularly work on more "transparent and efficient judicial

process; establish an agency to check conflicts of interest; and take more effective action against high-level corruption”. A full report of this progress will be issued June 2008 (Bulgaria, June 28, 2007). The “Co-operation and Verification Mechanism” will examine progress made in the areas of judicial reform, organized crime and the fight against corruption (Bulgaria, June 28, 2007).

4. Sectors Where Corruption Exists in Public Administration

Corruption is often classified in two main areas. State capture refers to actions taken by individuals or groups to influence the formation of laws, regulations and other government policies. “Administrative corruption refers to the intentional imposition of distortions in the prescribed implementation of existing laws, rules, and regulations to provide advantages to either state or non-state actors as a result of the illicit and non-transparent provision of private gain to public officials” (Anti-corruption, 2000).

Initially after the fall of communism, state capture was a problem because legislation in Romania was not well developed and the process of achieving stable workable legislation involved a period of trial and error (A. Marian, personal communication, January 23, 2008). Romania went through a transitional phase of modeling laws after other countries but putting these laws in the context to fit into the needs of Romanian society (A. Marian, personal communication, January 23, 2008). During this transitional period, many gained unfair advantages due to the lack of development in legislation. Luduşan stated that in 1990 many of the laws were formulated to favor particular special interests (A. Luduşan, personal communication, January 22, 2008).

For example when properties seized as collective property under the communist regime were given back to former owners, these laws were written in a vague way to satisfy particular interests. The law did not state who would be held accountable if the law was not implemented. Because the law was not properly administered, 1,600,000 claims have been filed in Romanian Courts and the European Union Court of Justice (A. Luduşan, personal communication, January 22, 2008). Another one of these areas, privatization, is discussed below. Now the relevant legislation in Romania is more fully developed.

Moreover, in Romania a degree of progress has been made in how public officials are elected. Georgescu felt that election fraud problems had been greatly reduced in the last several years and that along this dimension Romania was faring well compared to many other countries (I. Georgescu, personal communication, January 14, 2008). However, according to Georgescu, one problem that still remains and needs to be addressed is the ability of parties in control to change the elections law prior to elections for political gain (I. Georgescu, personal communication, January 14, 2008).

Generally, it was agreed amongst those interviewed that although simple, clear laws are important for transparency, the laws themselves are not as problematic as the implementation and a lack of accountability. (L. Radu, personal communication, January 13, 2008, D. Dragoş, personal communication, January 21, 2008).

Some of the forms of corruption occurring in implementing laws by the civil service and police are accepting bribes to ignore crimes, assigning cases and problems higher priority, issuing permits, using information to gain advantage in the business world and having witnesses lie (falsifications) (A. Marian, personal communication, January 23, 2007,

M. Luduşan, personal communication, January 22, 2008). Additional forms of corruption include construction of regulations to benefit powerful people in the private sector. Şandor mentioned the example of a tax being placed on cars bought elsewhere in the EU in order to benefit those who import cars to Romania (D. Şandor, personal communication, January 21, 2008).

How the civil service operates is of particular importance because often people's perceptions of how the bureaucracy operates determines how people believe the state operates (Hyden, 1995, p. 122). Hyden et al. examine several factors to determine whether progress is being made toward integrity in the civil service including accountability, transparency, meritocracy (including recruitment) and professionalism of the civil service. This study used several of these factors in framing the research. The authors examined the data with a focus of the current status of perceived corruption in Romania, what measures have been taken to improve the situation, and the success of these measures.

4.1. Assessment of Corruption by Civil Servants

As part of a 2005 study conducted by League for the Protection of Human Rights Cluj-Napoca branch, funded by the U.S. Embassy in Bucharest, a survey was distributed to civil servants who worked at the Cluj-Napoca City Government. The survey was conducted immediately after the election of Mayor Emil Boc, the current mayor of Cluj-Napoca. When asked if citizens have to give a bribe to receive services that they already have the right to receive, 20 percent said yes. When asked if a problem is solved faster for someone the civil servant knows or if the civil servant receives something from this person, 20 percent said yes, 28 percent said sometimes and 3 percent did not

want to answer. The civil servants were asked: when giving a benefit to civil servants, what are the benefits that are most successful in obtaining these services? The answers were 38 percent influence of a powerful person or from a person of a higher command, 11 percent were motivated by money, and 10 percent wanted to get a promotion within the public institution. Luduşan stated that her organization receives seven to ten complaints of corruption by the police and the civil service and human rights violations weekly (A. Luduşan, personal communication, January 22, 2008).

4.2. Organization Structure of Civil Service

Hyden recommends hiring a professional, nonpolitical civil service as a means of combating corruption (2004, p. 133-134). Romania has recently enacted laws such that political figures will be able to have a cabinet at the local level so that they will not have to change civil servants when administrations change (D. Dragoş, personal communication, January 21, 2008). This process already occurs at the central level. Şandor opined that if the civil servants are removed from the political sphere they can be more neutral (D. Şandor, personal communication, January 21, 2008). The success of this measure may take sometime to determine as it was enacted after the election, thus many political employees were already in place. In 2004 Gallup Organization, Romania took a poll of 993 Romanian civil servants. This poll was funded by USAID and published by Institute for Public Policy in Bucharest. In this poll, 36 percent of civil servants said they desired having a civil service separate from the political structure (Moraru, 2004).

4.3. Recruitment of Civil Service

Hyden states that the level of professionalism of the civil service largely determines how well it functions (2004, p.

133-134). Previously civil service jobs were attractive when the unemployment rate was higher. However, now that private sector wages are higher, there is more difficulty with recruitment.

Although a similar office to the U.S. Office of Personnel Management and specific hiring rules exists, job descriptions are often tailored to preselected candidates. Therefore many outside applicants do not apply. In the poll, mentioned above, 40 percent of civil servants say that personal connections with leaders of a public institution was the most important factor in getting a job in the civil service (Moraru, 2004).

4.4. Training of the Civil Servants

Many efforts have also been made to reform the civil service. A law was passed in 2004 entitled 7/2004 regarding the code of ethics for civil servants. Furthermore a code entitled 477/2004 was passed explaining the code of conduct for those who work in short term contracts for the civil service but are not direct civil service employees.

The goal of a project by the League for Protecting Human Rights, Cluj-Napoca branch was to train 88 workers from Cluj-Napoca city in how to comply with the 7/2004 law. During the training many civil servants complained that they were often afraid to disclose problems implementing the law despite the fact that compliance with the EU requirements mandates reporting corruption and because they were afraid of losing their jobs or being penalized (A. Luduşan, personal communication, January 22, 2008).

The civil service and the police are going through the process of changing the mindset of treatments toward citizens.

During the communist era, civil servants treated citizens in an authoritarian manner and did not use a customer

service/problem solving approach (A. Luduşan, personal communication, January 22, 2008). During this time the police were associated with the army and were often used as a political tool and directed to commit actions to control the population, such as following women seeking abortions, forcing people to follow social norms, prohibiting political resistance and committing other acts that in no way furthered legitimate law enforcement (Moraru, 2004). As a consequence many young people avoided joining the police. Now, more young people are being recruited and the police are trained to better interact with the public. Trainers and consultants from the United Kingdom and the Netherlands have been especially involved with training police.

Furthermore, a telephone number has been established where citizens can call in to disclose cases of corruption by the police. Marian stated that this number is often used. Police are required to report corruption and part of the evaluation of police involves whether they have taken anticorruption measures (A. Marian, personal communication, January 23, 2008).

4.5. Salaries

Although there is some variety of opinions regarding the effect of salaries on corrupt practices, many point to low wages in the public sector as a contributing factor for corruption (Hyden, 1995, p. 363). The explanation behind this philosophy is if government officials make a high enough salary they won't need extra money and they would not want to risk their jobs by accepting a bribe.

Of those surveyed in the civil service in Romania, 87 percent stated that the civil service needs higher wages according to Şandor in his discussion of the Transparency International Report from 2006 (D. Şandor, personal

communication, January 21, 2008). The wages of the civil servants in Romania have risen 43 percent in the last several years according to Mr. Radu. (L. Radu, personal communication, January 13, 2008). However, this increase must be put in context with the rise in private sector salaries (70 percent).

It is notable, however, that the police director disagreed in part with this philosophy because many people in judicial offices are well paid but are still corrupt (A. Marian, personal communication, January 23, 2008). However, lawyers and judges are not considered civil servants in Romania.

4.6. Culture

Although all those interviewed attributed different factors to creating Romanian culture, all agreed that culture is an important factor in corruption. The notion of “social capital” involves personal relationships and networks being necessary to achieve goals. (Coleman, 1990). However, these social networks have drawbacks as payback favors are often required to be returned (Kotkin, 2002, p. 367). The public attitude toward this network of social capital in many cultures can be seen as tolerable (Kotkin, 2002, p. 368). For example, many people do not think that giving a bribe is wrong and they do not think of using family networks in politics to help people is inappropriate (D. Șandor, personal communication, January 21, 2008).

Furthermore, under communism networks were a way of getting necessities. These networks remained and flourished after the fall of communism (D. Dragoș, personal communication, January 21, 2008). Ludușan commented that the communist regime affects all aspects of people’s lives (A. Ludușan, personal communication, January 22, 2008).

Şandor and Dragoş also attribute some of this practice to an occurrence in Latin cultures, where social networks are particularly important (D. Dragoş, personal communication, January 21, 2008, D. Şandor, personal communication, January 21, 2008). Mr. Radu commented that there is a cultural heritage of corruption which is part of the legacy of the Ottoman Empire and people have not historically seen this as a problem (L. Radu, personal communication, January 13, 2008). Marian further explained that under the Ottoman Empire there was a lack of consistency in administration in the area of collecting taxes and other government procedures which has led to a culture of more informal government (A. Marian, personal communication, January 23, 2008).

Those interviewed had differing opinions regarding the ability to change these cultural practices regarding corruption. Georgescu stated that to some extent among the Romanian people corruption is business as usual, and it may take 20 years before this mindset changes (I. Georgescu, personal communication, January 14, 2008). Luduşan states that many older people do not believe that the system will change, but there is progress among the younger people. However, Dragoş believes that to some extent this mindset is changing as the administrative procedures have become more transparent.

5. Successful Anti-Corruption Strategies

Factors that affect the level of integrity in Romania include the degree of simplification, clarity and uniformity of laws, transparency, decentralization and the privatization process. How the government handles these areas will determine the level progress toward greater integrity. Certain conditions will need to be resolved before significant changes in the

level of corruption are possible. The extent of accountability and enforcement in addition to how the judiciary functions are paramount.

5.1. Simplification, Clarity and Uniformity

Historically Romania has a complicated system of legislation which has enabled corruption to continue. The more complex the laws, the more people can hide their actions. Uniformity and clarity in the anti-corruption arena follow the philosophy that if everyone receives the same uncomplicated services, there will be no incentive to offer bribes. This uniformity reduced discretion in certain areas. Authorizations, licensing and permits necessary to carry out activities are areas where those in public administration have had some control and discretion and have traditionally been areas in which abuse can occur (Kotkin, 2002, p. 362).

One area where an anti-corruption strategy has been successful is in the issuance of passports. In the past it would take at least 30 days to get a passport and bribes were often given. The government made the requirement that passports were to be issued in two hours. Thus if the system is efficient for everyone, there is no advantage to offering bribes or attempting to go through backdoor channels (L. Radu, personal communication, January 13, 2008).

One problematic area is authorization for construction, a big issue for growing cities. Many of these cities do not have zoning regulations or they are not respected. The construction industry is an industry which has been known for offering bribes. One anti-corruption strategy has been to simplify administrative procedures such as shortening and simplifying the procedures to receive construction permits (L. Radu, personal communication, January 13, 2008).

In the past, one could pay the police to get out of a speeding ticket. However now there is a monitoring system for how police give tickets which prevents this practice (L. Radu, personal communication, January 13, 2008). This procedure has reduced street level corruption by the police.

5.2. Decentralization

Romania is in the process of decentralization where local governments are being given responsibilities previously held by the central government and local institutions receive more powers. Many functions of the central government are being delegated to the county and regional governments. Although with decentralization, concerns regarding a lack of transparency may arise as more people make decisions and handle money, Mr. Radu felt that in Romania decentralization helps reduce corruption because the local ministers come into contact with smaller amounts of money and have less discretion and power (L. Radu, personal communication, January 13, 2008). Also supervisors have more direct control of employees, and employees have access to smaller amounts of money. Consequently, in some cases fewer resources at any one person's disposal can result in less corruption.

Additionally, Georgescu asserted that decentralization is helpful at the local level because there is more independence in how to manage staff and resources (I. Georgescu, personal communication, January 14, 2008). Georgescu further opined that it is easier to make changes at the local than the national level because the administration (political personnel) changes at the national level (I. Georgescu, personal communication, January 14, 2008).

Consistent with this philosophy, Mayor Emil Boc recommended that police functions currently under the direction

of the central government should be decentralized to the municipal levels in the areas of traffic and public safety (E. Boc, personal communication, January 16, 2008). Thus mayors would have the power to respond to local citizens' complaints regarding these issues.

5.3. Privatization

During the communist period everything was owned by the state. Following the Revolution, government owned enterprises were sold, many to people who were well connected to the government and often at very favorable (cheap) amounts. As of this writing, only 20 percent of industry is nationalized (A. Luduşan, personal communication, January 22, 2008), but the process of reducing government presence in the ownership of the business sector and the means by which it was done left some people disadvantaged. An example of how the privatization process of publicly owned goods has negatively impacted Romanian citizens is in the area of housing, where apartments that were set aside for the poor are now being used to make a profit rather than to offer this service. Luduşan asserted that this process could have been managed better. However, because the privatization process involved corrupt practices, needs of the population were not taken into consideration (A. Luduşan, personal communication, January 22, 2008).

Some of the companies could have been sold for much higher prices so the state lost money (Radu, personal communication, January 13, 2008). The oil company Petrom, for example, was sold for \$500 million Euros and has made 10 times the profit. The steel companies have a similar situation. However, with increased foreign investment in Romania, this problem is lessening. It is thought, however, that despite problems with how privatization initially occurred, now many of these companies are being operated

much more efficiently than under the communist system (L. Radu, personal communication, January 13, 2008).

5.4. Transparency

All those interviewed agreed that simplicity and efficiency in laws and procedures strengthen transparency and help ensure equal access to government services. However, problems occur because government is often resistant to simplicity and efficiency and streamlining processes because it means that government officials have to give up control (D. Șandor, personal communication, January 21, 2008).

- **Transparency Laws**

In 2001 the Romanian Freedom of Information Act (RFOIA) was passed to ensure transparency in governmental activities as part of democratic governance. This act has been widely utilized particularly by NGOs. Georgescu opined that non-governmental organizations have had a greater deal of success obtaining information than citizens because NGOs are more likely to inform the media if they do not receive the information requested (I. Georgescu, personal communication, January 14, 2008). Also in 2003 a transparency law was passed mandating that no public decision could be made without public information.

- **Transparency Strategies by NGOs**

Georgescu stated that the government needs more people who are trained in the areas of RFOIA and transparency (I. Georgescu, personal communication, January 14, 2008). In particular, Dragoș noted that smaller, more rural areas are having a greater degree of difficulty following this law due to a lack of expertise in transparency by local governments (D. Dragoș, personal communication, January 21, 2008). To this end, Pro Democracy Association has conducted training on provisions of RFOIA and the transparency law, including

instruction on how to work with others in the community to ensure transparency.

In 2004-2006 Pro Democracy Association issued reports regarding corruption (government performance) that were released before elections to encourage transparency and to ensure all citizens gained a lot of information regarding how government operates. During this process Pro Democracy Association discovered ways of more effectively working with government officials. For instance, Georgescu stated that by using the word “integrity” rather than “corruption” civil servants were much more cooperative (I. Georgescu, personal communication, January 14, 2008). Pro Democracy Association also changed its method of releasing reports to the press by allowing government officials to view the reports prior to the press release. This approach seemed to cause the officials to feel less ambushed and to be more likely to cooperate in strategic anti-corruption planning after the release of the report (I. Georgescu, personal communication, January 14, 2008).

An additional part of the project conducted by League of Human Rights mentioned above involved transparency. Directors of municipal departments were asked about improvements that needed to be made in the government. Sessions where the directors would answer these questions were to be televised every other week for six months. At first, the directors were not forthcoming about problems and stated that everything was going well. However, to combat this lack of candor, the League for Protecting Human Rights issued a press release informing the public of the true status of many of the issues the directors had discussed in a less than forthcoming manner. Initially the directors were defensive. However, over time the directors began to acknowledge and discuss these problems in a more professional way (A. Luduşan, personal communication, January 22, 2008).

5.5. Oversight from the Judicial Branch

Those interviewed agreed one of the highest levels of corruption is in the legal system. Prosecutors are bribed and influenced in both the civil and criminal systems. They are not often caught and prosecuted (Radu, personal communication, January 13, 2008). Furthermore, family and personal connections are frequently used in the judicial system. Moreover corruption problems have been exacerbated because due to political conflicts, the position Minister of Justice in Romania has remained vacant for the last month (I. Georgescu, personal communication, January 14, 2008). This lack of appointment further contributes to the conception of the judicial branch as corrupt and ineffective.

The central government officially has no power over the courts. Thus the courts are autonomous from the other branches to make decisions. The court is managed and evaluated by the Supreme Magistrate Counsel. However, political allegiances cause the courts not to be totally independent (Radu, personal communication, January 13, 2008).

Radu noted that in the criminal justice area there is now less corruption because of oversight by the EU (L. Radu, personal communication, January 13, 2008). When cases are appealed to the European Union Courts, the judges are able to determine if an inappropriate sentence has been issued. However there is still the situation where prosecutors receive bribes.

Dragoş believes in order to help reduce corruption court systems should be more active in holding public institutions accountable. Courts are now looking at abuse of discretion of public officials; a new statute was passed in 2004. However,

in determining whether government officials went beyond the scope of their duties to the point of abusing their discretion, courts are still having some trouble interpreting the statute (D. Dragoș, personal communication, January 21, 2008).

5.6. Accountability

Many accountability mechanisms exist but they are often under utilized. Law allows citizens to sue due to corruption by civil servants. It is similar to private sector laws. However, in reality this never happens (D. Șandor, personal communication, January 21, 2008).

The Ministry of Finance may find wrong doing of agencies in general but do not attribute the conduct to particular persons. Employment law allows for disciplinary procedures of civil servants. However, those political figures at the top who are making the decision are immune from disciplinary procedures that only apply to civil servants. In the Gallup Poll, 62 percent of the civil servants stated that corruption occurs and up to 57 percent think the authorities in Romania have taken little or no action to reduce corruption in Romania (Moraru 2004).

5.7. Enforcement

Enforcement was agreed by those interviewed to be the most problematic area for anti-corruption reform. The laws will not be effective unless people are convicted, but there have been only a small number of convictions. Georgescu felt that there has been more talk than actual facts (more rhetoric than reality) about reducing corruption as a result of the admission into the EU (I. Georgescu, personal communication, January 14, 2008). Also Șandor believes that

there is little real progress in enforcement of anticorruption provisions over the last five years (D. Șandor, personal communication, January 21, 2008). Furthermore, people are devising new, more sophisticated ways of bribing by using new technology (D. Șandor, personal communication, January 21, 2008).

Overall, Ludușan stated that many politicians are not ready to put into place the radical changes which will make society function well (A. Ludușan, personal communication, January 22, 2008). Ludușan observed in many cases the heads of departments are not making honest efforts to implement the laws and provide services (A. Ludușan, personal communication, January 22, 2008). In the Gallup Poll, 70 percent of civil servants stated that their colleagues and managers were resistant to change (Moraru, 2004). Thus it appears that empowerment of the public to apply greater pressure on the government is required to force these changes. This level of empowerment is likely connected to transparency and civil education.

6. Assessment

Figure 2 below is to assist the reader to gain a more comprehensive overview of the challenges occurring and improvements that have been made in the area of integrity with positive and negative factors for corruption in Romania. However, the significance of these factors may vary.

Figure 2.
Assessment of Integrity
Romania

Positives Include	Negatives Include
Oversight by the Prefect (1)	Cultural/Historical Legacies
Transparency laws and the Romanian	Lack of Accountability
Freedom of Information Act	Lack of Enforcement
Training of Civil Service	Judicial Corruption
Training of Police	History of Complex Laws
Uniformity and clarity of procedures (including passports and licenses)	Lack of Personnel Laws for Political Appointees
Higher Salaries for Civil Servants	
Greater Meritocracy in Civil Service	
EU Court Appellate System	
Oversight	

Source: Author's Summary

Note: (1) In the Romanian governmental structure, the Prefect is the representative of the government at the county level. The Prefect ensures the compliance of city/county council decisions with national law. The city councils are autonomous (they are not subordinated to the Prefect or to the County President), but the Prefect is entitled to check whether the local council decisions are legal. The Prefect can raise claims in court that officials have not followed the law, but the courts, rather than the Prefect, make the final determination of legality of acts and laws.

7. Conclusion

On balance it appears that the corruption situation is improving in Romania. Measures involving simplicity, uniformity and clarity have had the greatest effect. These measures have taken away much of the incentive to bribe officials. Also through a collective process involving NGOs and policymakers, progress has been made in the areas of efficiency and transparency. NGOs are becoming more adept at forcing officials to reveal actions taken by the government.

NGOs are also facilitating the release of information to the citizens, causing citizens to be aware of the specific action taken by the government and a greater understanding of the democratic process in general.

Furthermore changes in the civil service structure that provide for a more professional service based on a meritocracy rather than a spoils system allows for greater neutrality. However, creating a civil service of this type is a process that is still being completed.

Training of police and public administration to interact with the public in manner focused on service is a move in the right direction. However, civil servants and police follow orders from superiors who are not always held accountable. Furthermore, accountability and enforcement are lacking. A greater emphasis in this area would require the cooperation of officials who seem reluctant to change. Thus the population would need to be empowered to demand greater action in this area. Some problems with this scenario may involve cultural practices, historical legacies and a general acceptance of corruption as business as usual.

Despite the fact that corruption is a problem deep within the society and not to be understated, the success that has occurred in the areas of transparency and efficiency are likely to create a change in public expectations. As these gradual changes take hold and expectations become demands, greater changes will become possible. Thus when viewed in its entirety, the action taken by policy makers and NGOs in Romania have put the country on a gradual yet consistent trajectory toward greater integrity and all the benefits that accompany it.

8. Updates that have occurred since the time of writing this paper²

Even though several anticorruption measures were adopted in the first half of the year 2008, the positive feedback given by the international organizations with regard to the fight against corruption shows the results of the changes that took place in the previous years. Despite the positive evaluation, corruption is still an issue for several fields of public administration.

In 2008 two important anticorruption measures have been adopted. In the first half of the year, Romania established the National Integrity Agency to monitor financial asset flows, detect and sanction unjustified increases in assets and regulate conflicts of interest. This body still has to demonstrate that it can work and that it can act independently from the political influences. Also, in June 2008 a national strategy to combat corruption and to enhance transparency of local public administration was adopted. According to the European Commission, even though the legislative measures have been adopted, the institutional framework is still fragile.

According to data released by Transparency International Romania in September 2008, the Corruption Perception Index for Romania increased to 3.8 points on the 10 points scale (with 10 being the most clean and 0 being the most corrupt) (Transparency International Romania, 2008). Even though Romania surpassed Bulgaria in the corruption

2 Editor's Note: Since the writing of this paper and its presentation at the NISPAcee meetings in Bratislava in May 2008, the authors acquired additional information which is added to the paper in this section.

ranking system, the score is still very low comparatively with the scores received by other EU member states. However, the score shows the first results of the institutional and procedural anticorruption changes adopted in the previous years, especially those regarding the simplification of the administrative procedures and the improvement of public services, thus reducing the opportunities for corruption.

The Country Report released in July 2008 by the Commission of the European Communities also acknowledged the progresses that Romania made on eradicating corruption. According to this report, the Government has managed to restore “a relative stability in the legal and institutional framework for the fight against corruption”. Some progresses are reflected in the judicial system, which is “moving ahead, but the progress is uneven”. The European Commission particularly analyzed the activity of National Anticorruption Directorate that gathered positive track record for prosecution of high level corruption cases, but these cases have been delayed or have not been launched. This is considered to be due to Parliament that blocked the investigation, especially of those cases in which former ministries were involved, and to dismissal of the cases by the High Court of Cassation and Justice, which overturned previous decisions. After the country report was released and in the context of general discussion of it, the Parliament authorized the investigation of a former minister and of a member of the Government, who was immediately after that dismissed by the prime minister.

However, there are many areas of activity of public administration in which corruption still cause serious challenges. For example, during summer 2008, several corruption cases were brought to public discussion by mass media with regard to the issuance of driving licenses. As

a consequence, a computer-based test was introduced to reduce the contact of the civil servants with the citizens in order to reduce their discretionary power and to reduce the opportunities for corruption.

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Strategies for University
and NGO Partnerships
in Romania

*Erin McGrath*¹

1. Introduction

The 2008 academic exchange between The University of Delaware's School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy and Babeş-Bolyai University's (BBU) Faculty of Public Administration offered participants a unique and valuable experience. Twenty graduate students from both institutions spent two weeks examining Romanian public policies by attending lectures given by BBU scholars and practitioners and presentations by government officials. Extensive research was also conducted through interviews and surveys of stakeholders from county and city government, the health care sector, academia and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). Romania's communist history, ongoing transition and reform and recent accession to the European Union provides an exciting context in which to study public affairs. As a Master of Arts student of Urban Affairs and Public Policy at the University of Delaware and a fortunate participant of this study abroad program, I found that an exchange of this nature revealed complexities and subtleties of Romania's

1 Master of Arts in Urban Affairs student, University of Delaware.

transitioning economy, reform movement and young NGO sector that would have been missed had I only read about it.

My particular area of interest lies in the intersection of the research and teaching mission of higher education with the NGO sector. This study abroad offered an opportunity to examine existing and potential partnerships between BBU's Public Administration Faculty with community-based organizations. Specifically, I was interested in looking at how such partnerships serve to build the capacity of the NGO sector while at the same time advance the research and teaching mission of the university. In what is essentially a reflection piece, this paper discusses my findings and observations. It concludes with recommendations about the nature of programs that engage students, for potential university NGO research partnerships, and for the Public Administration Faculty at BBU.

2. Background

In the semester leading up to the study abroad, I researched background information on Romania's social, political and economic situation. I gained a basic understanding of Romania's history with communist dictator Nicolae Ceaușescu, the revolution of 1989, some of the challenges in transitioning to democracy, the challenges of an emerging NGO sector and the country's path toward joining the European Union. After meeting with the team of student participants and my faculty advisor, Dr. Arno Loessner, I decided to focus my research on the intersection of higher education and the NGO sector. I was interested in looking at potential approaches or programs that could be implemented

2 Master of Arts in Urban Affairs student, University of Delaware.

or expanded in order to facilitate effective partnerships between universities and community-based organizations.

This topic seemed ideal given my professional background and area of interest. For nearly eight years I worked with the Bonner Foundation based in Princeton, New Jersey, U.S.A. As Director of the Bonner Leader Program I worked with a network of more than 75 colleges and universities throughout the United States to design and implement programs that connected the energy and talent of university students and the professional expertise of the faculty with community-based organizations. These partnerships not only strengthen communities, but enhance the educational experience of students and the research of faculty. After having met with administrators, faculty, students and community partners throughout the United States, I was eager to see which, if any, of the model practices might be applicable in Romania.

This exchange was designed to partner students from BBU and the University of Delaware to work together on the research areas selected by students. Through a selection process completed by BBU faculty, I was assigned to partner with Bogdana Neamțu. Bogdana is an Assistant Professor with the Department of Public Administration. Her background is in Public Administration and Urban Planning, and she is currently working on her PhD. thesis³. Her knowledge of local practices and mastery of English proved helpful in the interview process. She translated for several of our interviews.

As a participant, I was able to gather information through several avenues. Lectures from prominent Babeș-Bolyai

3 Editor's note: Bogdana Neamțu holds the M.P.A. degree with a concentration in Urban Planning from Michigan State University. She completed the Ph.D. at Babeș-Bolyai University in 2008.

University scholars and presentations by practitioners organized by the study abroad program allowed participants to gain a more complete understanding of over-arching issues of Romania's transition to democracy, reform movement, economic development strategies, socio-political context and accession to the European Union. Through meetings, interviews and surveys of county and city government officials, participants were also able to investigate public administration practices and the complexities of implementing reform. The third avenue was the opportunity to meet with stake-holders in the NGO sector and to tour the facilities of organizations providing direct social service delivery, advocacy, community development and health care.

Conclusions and findings of this paper are based primarily on the information collected from the interactions mentioned above. Each of the interviews was conducted in the presence of two other University of Delaware students who were investigating related topics, including barriers to college access and the development of civics education in secondary education. Interviews were conducted with individuals listed in Appendix 1.

3. The Higher Education Sector

In Romania, Universities have gone and continue to go through significant transitions. As a result, many are facing great challenges. One of the most significant transitions is the so-called "Bologna Process" that, among other things, requires European Union members to standardize aspects of Higher Education. For example, accredited undergraduate programs are compressed to three years from four. As a result, curriculum has been condensed, thereby reducing program flexibility and adding a more intense course load for

students with less room for interdisciplinary study. Not all universities have made the transition as smoothly as might have been expected. In some places, the transition focused on theoretical courses, while other programs eliminated components that provided students with relevant knowledge and practical experience (C. Baba & L. Salat, personal communication January 2008).

Other challenges result from the change in fee structure for students. For years, the university admitted all students for tuition free positions subsidized by the government. In 1998 the fee structure shifted, and the number of tuition free positions – which are awarded at a national level – was significantly reduced. A tuition fee structure was established. While some tuition-free positions remain, the majority of students are paying a fee. (In the United States, this fee is called “tuition”.) These fees are not usually sufficient to adequately cover the costs of the growing academy.

With less income from subsidized tuition, universities have enrolled a greater number of students to raise revenue, reducing enrollment standards in the process to ensure a greater enrollment yield. The result has been intense competition among universities for students. This competition is further exacerbated by the influx of private universities into the market. The growing number of students is putting additional stress on university infrastructures and resources that are already stretched thin (C. Baba, B. Neamțu, & L. Salat, personal communication January 2008).

This change toward a tuition structure has become an obstacle for some students, who compare the cost of attendance to the short-term benefit of entering employment – a barrier that inhibits enrollment. This is particularly true in Cluj-Napoca, which has a very strong job market in

which many employers do not require a university degree. Young people are increasingly more likely to be drawn to employment than to university or to pursue part-time study. Several faculty members expressed a sense that young people do not see higher education as a priority or as means to a better life.

These factors also impact student retention. Universities are finding that many of their top performing students are aggressively recruited by employers to leave university before completing their degree program. There are also challenges associated with retention of lower performing students. Many students were admitted because they met the minimal admission standards (lowered to increase yield) and therefore struggle to keep up with the academic rigor of their programs of study. Unfortunately, many students who struggle to meet academic standards are from the rural areas which have extremely under-resourced schools. This is further widening the achievement gap between those who can afford a private primary and secondary education and those who cannot, as well as between the urban and rural populations (C. Baba, B. Neamțu, & L. Salat, personal communication January 2008).

Universities not only compete for students, but also have limited resources to fund research and co-curricular initiatives. In fact, universities compete with one another, and there is often competition among faculties within any given institution. This reality can make collaboration difficult. It may also heighten the risks associated with implementing innovative and new approaches, as the price of failure may be considered too great.

Institutions of higher education confront these challenges each in their own context. Babeș-Bolyai University's Faculty

of Public Administration has a unique history. After the revolution, many of the social sciences had to reinvent themselves as disciplines. This young faculty took the opportunity to design a social science curriculum that uses an empirical and practical approach. They have been intentionally developing initiatives and approaches that model the principles of exchange, dialogue and critical thinking designed to equip students with decision-making skills necessary for academic and professional success.

4. The NGO Sector

Within the NGO sector, I identified five primary challenges: planning capacity, partnerships within the sector, partnerships across sectors, human resources and, lack of consultation with beneficiaries about program delivery.

Newly established NGOs are typically consumed by managing daily operations and have a weak capacity for strategic planning. Demands of program delivery and administrative management leave little space for long term planning. Given the transitioning nature of Romania's political, social and economic climate, organizations would benefit from going through an internal process that would allow them to refine their mission and articulate responses and plans.

The strategic planning process would position NGOs to be able to better respond to the changes in the management environment. Unfortunately, few funders are willing to support evaluation and strategic planning despite an increased emphasis on accountability and performance measurement. Limited funding is already stretched to meet the demands of providing direct services and to meet staff and facility expenses.

The second challenge facing NGOs is that partnerships within the sector are not well formed. While there may be occasional project based collaborations, there are no formal mechanisms for organizations to work in partnership or network. In part, this may be due to the fact that there is a strong sense of competition for funding as access to funding and community level support is limited. There is also no systematic way for organizations that provide social services to make referrals to other organizations, leaving clients to navigate services on their own. While the City is reportedly working at developing a database of direct social service providers, it is not clear that there will be a convenient way for programs and organizations to know each other's area of focus.

Partnerships beyond the NGO sector are no more well formed than those that cut across sectors. This becomes the third challenge. Most collaboration depends on the entrepreneurship of the staff and the relationships they are able to cultivate. Given the demands on staff, maintaining these relationship-building efforts may be difficult.

For example, there are missed opportunities for enhancing the work of public administration as well as NGOs. Partnerships between public administrative entities and the NGO sector seem to exist in rhetoric but not always in practice. In part, this may be due to the fact that public administration entities have expressed that the current priority is to build the internal administrative capacity and physical infrastructure and are embroiled in their own political battles. The implication is that many of the underlying issues – the quality of life issues associated with poverty, health, environment and education – are put “on the back burner”. As a result, the interests of the NGO sector and their clients are not represented in the public decision making process.

The fourth challenge facing the NGO sector is a matter of human resources. Young people, new to the job market, are attracted to the sector as many organizations are willing to accept those with little or no related job experience. For many, it is an entry-level position into a job market that will provide the experience needed to gain entry to the for-profit sector. As a result, the NGO sector has a high turnover rate which creates additional pressure for the sector. The limited pay scale also makes it difficult for NGOs to attract a more highly qualified and experienced work force into the sector.

Another challenge for many Romanian NGOs centers on their programmatic activity. For many of these organizations, it is the priorities of the funders that set the agenda for their programs. There is little space for consultation with the beneficiaries. In some instances, an organization may opt to address a “secondary” community need because funding is not available for the most needed, or “primary” need.

5. Higher Education and NGO Partnerships

Certainly, the NGO sector and institutions of higher education have their share of challenges. However, they each also hold valuable resources. While these sectors may seem worlds apart, I argue that strategic partnerships between them could serve to leverage their resources and strengthen one another. It would be advantageous for higher education to build partnerships with NGOs in the areas of both student (undergraduate and graduate level) and faculty engagement.

Partnerships have the potential to expand the academic experience beyond the walls of the classroom. Partnerships will connect students with NGOs and provide students with the opportunity to provide valued and meaningful service and support to organizations. This may happen through

internships, service expectations within coursework or through co-curricular programming. The NGO sector is an exciting place for students to gain experience. It provides the students with the opportunity to take what they are learning in the classroom and see it applied in “real world” settings. Experiences such as these will also make these students more competitive when entering the job market. Tapping into the energy and talent through a student’s service will allow organizations to expand their capacity.

In the United States, this type of student engagement has predominately happened at the undergraduate level. Many universities have found that established programs that provide students the opportunity to work at the community level are valuable yield and retention tools. As competition for students is fierce in Romania, service programs may prove to be an important strategy.

Any service initiatives would be well served by considering the following:

- The opportunities for students should vary in the topic or issue area they address. It is important for students to have experiences that allow them to find out an area of work that is meaningful to them.
- The opportunities for students should vary in required levels of expertise. Students should have experiences that are challenging but not beyond their capacity. They also should have opportunities to take on additional levels of leadership and responsibility.
- The opportunities provided for students should vary in terms of the time commitment required. Not all students will be able to serve the type of hours an internship might expect. Offering one-time events will allow more students to participate. They often serve as gateway experiences to more intensive engagement.

Beyond student engagement is the opportunity for faculty members to collaborate with the NGO sector. Faculty members are engaged in research with the expectation that it will be relevant and useful. NGOs offer a rich environment for the study of multiple disciplines. The opportunities to engage in research that addresses the needs of the NGO sector are countless. NGOs are in need of capacity building research that informs and evaluates their work at all levels. Research partnerships of this nature simultaneously enhance the work of the faculty and build the capacity of NGOs.

Research partnerships should consider the following:

- Long-term partnerships allow the work to build upon itself, thus reaching new levels of understanding and exploring issues more deeply.
- Research done with organizations is more relevant and effective as compared to research on an organization. Negotiating the terms of such partnerships – including identifying the questions, timeline and method – can be awkward and difficult. It is important to make sure that both groups agree to the terms.
- The final products will need to be completed in a format that is useful to the organizations as well as to the academic community.

6. Conclusions

Members of the Public Administration Faculty at BBU have good relationships with the NGO sector. Their experience in building networks, dialoging across sectors, placing students in internships, facilitating strategic planning processes and providing training and technical assistance puts them in a position to potentially become a national model. As such,

it might be beneficial to consider:

- Incorporating the scholarship of community engagement as expectation into the promotion and tenure process
- Developing an intentional track and path for student development through service and related academics for undergraduates as well as at the graduate level
- Convening an advisory board that mixes students, faculty and stakeholders from the NGO sector to coordinate efforts
- Documenting the evolution, outcomes, principles and practices as a resource for institutions looking to develop similar initiatives
- Continuing and expanding opportunities for NGOs, beneficiaries and citizens to participate in forums and programs that facilitate dialogue, networking, information sharing, training and technical assistance.

Highly functioning university-community partnerships are complex in the best of circumstances. Certainly, there are many moving parts to Romania's transition and reform movement. The conclusions and findings outlined here are done so with the understanding that the road to these partnerships may be difficult and long. However, the potential to more positively impact Romania is valuable enough to make the journey.

Appendix 1

Interviews with Well Informed Persons

Cluj-Napoca, Romania

January 2008

Organization	Name & Position
BBU Faculty of Political, Public Administration, & Communication Sciences	Cătălin Baba: Dean of the Faculty
BBU Faculty of Political, Public Administration, & Communication Sciences	Levente Salat: Vice Dean of Faculty
Civitas Foundation	Program Staff
Ministry of Education	Coordinator Civic Education*
Ministry of Education	Daniela Sălăgean: VP for Extra Curricular Activities*
Pro Democracy Association	Iulia Manolache: Director, Cluj Branch Office
Racovita High School	Nicolata Goleo: Social Worker & Career Counselor and Asst. Prof BBU Psychology*
Romanian Foundation for Children, Community & Family	Mihai Florin Roșca: Director and other members of staff.

Note: * indicates Bogdana Neamțu acted as interpreter from Romanian to English.

An Analysis of the Study Abroad Experience
in the Context of National Standards
and Institutional Goals
for Public Administration Education

*Emily Poag*¹

1. Abstract

This Chapter provides a program assessment of a University of Delaware study abroad program to Babeş-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca, Romania. The conceptual framework for this qualitative study was based on learning outcomes for the Master of Public Administration program at University of Delaware. Findings yielded a positive impact on learning for University of Delaware students who engaged in joint research with a partner from Babeş-Bolyai University.

2. Introduction

The basis for this program assessment was a two-week educational experience that allowed eleven graduate students from the University of Delaware (UD) to work with students from Babeş-Bolyai University (BBU) in Cluj-Napoca, Romania. Students from similar academic programs, but different cultures, were paired to complete joint research projects in the context of public administration. A review of

the relevant literature did not identify a similar approach to study abroad by graduate student partnerships.

This program assessment seeks to determine the extent to which graduate student partner interaction during the UD/BBU 2008 study abroad program impacted student learning.

Romania was selected as a study abroad destination for several reasons: an established relationship between the institutions and individual members of faculty²; Romania offers an interesting comparison to the United States' model of public administration; the public sector is in transition from a system of central control to democracy; an accredited Public Administration program³ and well-connected faculty members⁴; and BBU's Public Administration Master's English language program⁵.

1 Alumna and former graduate student participant in the UD/BBU study abroad program.

2 Dr. Arno Loessner, an emeritus professor at SUAPP and international professor at BBU, led the study abroad program to Romania after many years of experience with study abroad and with BBU. He is a member of the International Advisory Board for the Public Administration Department, teaches economics and financial management and has been recognized for his service to BBU. (C. Baba, personal communication, May 8, 2008).

3 BBU Public Administration program is one of very few that is accredited by the European Group of Public Administration (EGPA) in Central and Eastern Europe.

4 Faculty members and alumni are well connected with nongovernmental organizations, local authorities, and government officials. For example, the Mayor of Cluj-Napoca and the Director of Civitas, a leading NGO, are members of the faculty and the Public Administration Department consults and offers expertise to organizations within the public sector.

5 Babeş-Bolyai University is located in the multi-cultural region of Transylvania. Due to a long history of three nationalities residing

Discussions began one year in advance of the program. BBU professors selected students to partner with SUAPP students as research partners based on criteria that included: academic performance, time availability, English language proficiency, knowledge of and/or interest in American culture.

2.1. Pre-Departure: Orientation and Preparation

Of the eleven graduate students participating in the study abroad experience, nine were MPA candidates, one was a Master of Arts in Public Policy candidate, and one was a candidate for a Ph.D. in Urban Affairs and Public Policy. One program participant was an exchange student from BBU, studying at SUAPP; that student is referred to as a SUAPP student throughout the paper.

Before the study abroad program, content was delivered in a variety of ways, both through lecture and individual study. Students attended two lectures, which included background information regarding history and culture of Romania, as well as specific policy issues related to government structure and NGOs. At these meetings, students guided by the faculty leader chose research topics for their time in Romania. Students had individual assignments including pre-departure reading, background research about their topic of study, and the creation of a questionnaire for interviews they would conduct while in Romania. After completing a draft of their questionnaire, students were encouraged to e-mail the faculty leader and their SUAPP peers for feedback. Students were also encouraged to contact their BBU partners

the in the region, the university offers all courses of study in Hungarian, German, and Romanian. In addition, there are some courses in Hebrew and English.

before departure, but communication was limited since UD students received their partners' contact information just days before departing for Romania (A. Loessner, personal communication, January 8, 2008). SUAPP students had a range of prior experiences regarding travel, familiarity with Eastern Europe, and research skills. Through this series of pre-departure activities, students were able to gain some knowledge that would be relevant to their study abroad experience.

2.2. Study Abroad Experience in Romania

Content was delivered in a variety of ways while in Romania. Students participated in lectures given by the faculty of BBU and other local experts. These meetings varied in content, but always included question and answer sessions. In most cases, the content was delivered in English. In some cases, a Romanian faculty member or student translated the lectures and questions. Each SUAPP student was paired with a student or faculty member from BBU. Together, these pairs of students participated in partner research in a particular topic area. BBU students and faculty facilitated access to individual interviews, provided context for the research topic, and offered translation when needed. The BBU students and faculty offered informal opinions and content knowledge to accompany formal lectures and interviews. In addition, Dr. Loessner, who referred to himself as a colleague of the graduate students, answered questions at daily breakfast meetings and informally throughout the program. He also facilitated learning through introducing students to his colleagues and contacts in Romania.

Students from UD and BBU learned from each other's experience in Romania by offering informal and semi-formal reports on knowledge they had gained on their research

topics. During a two-hour session near the end of the second week of study, each SUAPP student presented their research experience and findings with the group of students and faculty from SUAPP and BBU.

2.3. Return to the University of Delaware

After returning to UD, students were required to present their experiences to staff and students from SUAPP. In addition to this presentation, several students submitted papers based on their partner research and were eligible to receive academic credit for their work. Some students completed additional research after returning to the U.S., and/or continued to collaborate with their BBU partner. Some presented their papers to the NISPAcee conference in Bratislava, Slovak Republic in May 2008.

3. Methodology, Data Collection and Analysis

This study explored the extent to which the technique of partnering graduate students for research impacted learning outcomes. Nine students and one professor⁶ participated in the survey. Names of School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy (SUAPP) students were changed to ensure anonymity. The professor's name was not changed because he would be identifiable as the only SUAPP faculty member leading this study abroad program.

To gain a deeper perspective about the participants "thoughts, feelings, beliefs, values and assumptive worlds"

6 Ten students and one professor were issued invitations via e-mail to participate in the research for this paper. Research subjects were students who participated in the 2008 Romania study abroad program and the faculty leader. One student participant declined to be interviewed, so research participants included nine students and one professor.

(Marshall and Rossman, 2006, p. 53), a qualitative research methodology and open-ended questions were used to examine student perceptions of learning. The interview protocol included nine questions including one question for each learning outcome and a general question about learning on this study abroad program (See Appendix A).⁷ The researcher explored participants' responses with appropriate follow-up questions.

4. Conceptual Framework: Generating Learning Outcomes

"The University of Delaware School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy has developed a model of public administration education that seeks to build upon the student's total experience in such a way that theory and practice are fully integrated" (MPA, SUAPP, 2003).

In order to integrate theory and practice, as the statement above about the Master of Public Administration program suggests, a student in the field of public administration must acquire and enhance certain skills such as critical thinking, interview technique, and the ability to conduct a literature search as well as acquiring content knowledge regarding policy. Study abroad experiences add another layer of competencies (Ingraham, 2003; Lewis & Niesenbaum, 2005; Yershova, DeJaegbere, & Mestenbauser, 2000), because

7 Before conducting interviews, the research methods and interview protocol were approved by the University of Delaware Human Subjects Board. Since the focus of inquiry was the individual, semi-structured, in-depth interviews were used to generate data (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). These interviews were audiotaped, with the consent of participants. Interviews were transcribed and coded using an open-coding system (Caudle, 2004).

these skills are practiced in the context of another culture as students seek to gain a comparative policy perspective. Opportunities for learning abound on study abroad programs (Chieffo & Griffiths, 2004; Vande Berg, 2007; Williams, 2005).

This paper uses the stated goals of the MPA program at the University of Delaware prepared as part of a self-study for the National Association of Schools of Public Administration/Affairs (NASPAA), conducted in 2003, as a framework for analysis. The goals are as follows:

1. Emphasize the values of the profession in coursework, publications, and professional activities.
2. Continue to enhance the excellence and diversity of our student body through recruiting efforts at colleges and universities in the region.
3. Maintain and continue to enhance a set of core courses that require students to master essential knowledge, skills, and values.
4. Maintain and continue to enhance a set of areas of specialization that include courses requiring students to master the essential knowledge, skills, and values of the field. Academic areas of specialization will be based upon active research, public service, and professional achievements of the faculty.
5. Provide students with experiential learning through the research and service centers of the College, especially as research assistants in the Institute for Public Administration, Center for Community Research and Service, Health Policy Research Group, and Center for Applied Demography and Survey Research.
6. Develop and maintain a nationally recognized internship program, integrated in and supported by the Institute for Public Administration.

7. Maintain and establish relationships with government and nonprofit organizations that contribute to the mission of the program.
8. Encourage faculty and students to conduct applied research and public service, and to communicate the results of this research to both the practitioner and academic communities (MPA, SUAPP, 2003).

Three of the eight goals were chosen to examine this study abroad experience:

- 1. Emphasize values of the profession:** Emphasize the values of the profession in coursework, publications, and professional activities.
- 2. Enhance areas of specialization:** Maintain and continue to enhance a set of areas of specialization that include courses requiring students to master the essential knowledge, skills, and values of the field. Academic areas will be based upon active research, public service, and professional achievements of the faculty.
- 3. Conduct applied research:** Encourage faculty and students to conduct applied research and public service, and to communicate the results of this research to both the practitioner and academic communities.

Several learning outcomes were determined from each of these goals based upon knowledge of the MPA program. Figure 1 lists learning outcomes associated with each goal.

Figure 1: Goals and Learning Outcomes

Goal	Learning Outcome
1. Emphasize values of the profession	1A. Demonstrate professionalism through actions and interpersonal skills.
	1B. Act culturally sensitive when interacting with members of the host country.
2. Enhance areas of specialization	2A. Complete research reflecting your area of specialization.
	2B. Incorporate a global perspective into a SUAPP course.
3. Conduct applied research	3A. Collaboratively participate in research projects.
	3B. Explain ideas you have for policy reform based upon your research.
	3C. Contribute to knowledge in your field of interest through research experience.

5. Limitations

This research is admittedly limited by the fact that it is based upon post-program analysis applied only to UD participants. Future study abroad projects of this type should include pre- and post-program data analysis and examine learning outcomes of both groups of students. In this case, a conceptual framework including expected learning outcomes was developed after the program without pre-program surveys and a control group of non-participants, making it difficult to assign the learning identified in this study abroad program to the professor, students, content, and/or context of the 2008 Romania study abroad experience. In addition, due to limitations of access and time, student and faculty members from the Romanian side of the partnership were not interviewed. As noted in Chapter II, resources and time are limited for study abroad, including program evaluations. Therefore, anecdotal evidence collected and reported on is imperfect, but serves to inform and encourage future research to determine learning outcomes of all participants and to guide the direction of future programs.

6. Literature Review:

Study Abroad Learning Activities

Research concludes that learning is enhanced in study abroad programs by interaction with representatives of the host country (Chieffo & Griffiths, 2004; Vande Berg, 2007; Williams, 2005), and that the type of learning varies according to program design and implementation (Gillespie, Braskamp & Braskamp, 1999; Williams, 2005). Gains in intercultural communication skills are greater for students studying abroad with immersion in another culture than for students who remained on their home campus (Williams, 2005), suggesting that study abroad programs “... need to find ways to facilitate their interaction with the people of their host culture” (Williams, p. 370).

Gillespie et al. (1999) describe the importance of “engaging and challenging country-specific learning environments for students”. They state,

The quality of the experiences available to students is dependent on the structure and effectiveness of courses, out-of-classroom experiences including field study and field trips that are organized as part of the program, engagement in cultural activities, and relationships with the faculty, staff members, and other representatives of the host culture, such as host families. In a study abroad setting, the location itself is one of the most valuable resources, and the program’s ties with partner universities, academic, business, and art groups, host families, and internships sites that support a student’s cultural interactions likewise are part of the student-learning environment (p. 106).

6.1. Completing Research while Studying Abroad and Partner Research

One example of an international research experience among students of different countries is provided by Miller-Millesen and Mould (2004), who describe a cross-cultural, collaborative learning experience between nonprofit management students at Ohio University and the American University in Kyrgyzstan in which students communicated virtually (by e-mail and phone) during a semester-long project conducting research for NGOs in Kyrgyzstan. While the course provided an opportunity for students to work together on a project with persons of another country, it lacked the immersion characteristic that participants on our study abroad in Romania felt was so important.

6.2. Learner-Centered Instruction

“I thought this group of students was particularly engaged, and I think one of the reasons for it is that they took a certain personal responsibility for what they learned.” – Dr. Loessner

There is a trend of faculty members actively engaging students in their learning on study abroad programs (Vande Berg, 2007, p. 396). During the Romania study abroad program, students had the opportunity to develop research projects and work in tandem with a graduate student or faculty member from another institution, while being advised by the study abroad course faculty leader – learner-centered instruction, versus instructor-centered instruction (Halonen, 2006). “Learner-centered teachers embrace the responsibility for fostering changes in students’ thinking skills. They believe that students’ grappling with ideas will lead to more meaningful and enduring learning” (Halonen, 2006, p. 319).

6.3. Learning Outcomes Assessment

Researchers recommend evaluating study abroad programs to make improvements for future programs (Lewis & Niesenbaum, 2005; NAFSA, 2008). Vande Berg (2003) notes that assessment of study abroad programs tends to measure student satisfaction. He states, “In evaluating programs, we have in the past all too often designed instruments that, in measuring student satisfaction instead of student learning, have failed to address ...questions related to learning outcomes” (p. 30). The lack of assessments on learning outcomes in study abroad is striking; a study of U.S. study abroad programs demonstrated that 96% of post-program evaluations measure student satisfaction (Vande Berg, 2003).

While researchers agree that study abroad programs should be assessed for student learning (Gillespie et al., 1999; Vande Berg, 2003), as discussed in Chapter 2, faculty members find that the press of other responsibilities makes it difficult to find time to devote to study abroad. Vande Berg (2007) suggests that learning outcomes should be defined prior to departure. Gillespie et al. (2005) identifies four reasons for evaluating study abroad programs. They include, “assisting the prospective student in identifying an acceptable program, assisting institutions in determining the acceptability of transfer credits, creating goals for the improvement of programs, and involving faculty and staff in institutional evaluation and planning” (p. 102). Vande Berg (2003) differentiates among study abroad programs (i.e. short-term study abroad versus junior year abroad) and believes that they require appropriate and different student learning outcomes. He stresses that different competencies should be expected from different programs.

Some researchers have looked at student learning outcomes as they relate to “internationalizing” the curriculum. Study

abroad learning outcomes include a range of topics to include “... intercultural competence, second language acquisition, and learning in the disciplines” (Paige, Cohen & Shively, p. 253); and “... attitudes, e.g. tolerance towards others, self-confidence, cultural attitudes, skills, e.g. foreign language proficiency, coping with ambiguity, critical thinking, understanding and appreciation of the world and one’s place in it, e.g. reflection on other and one’s own cultures, perspectives on the role played by politics and the arts in the human condition, effect on one’s place in society, e.g. employment opportunities, ability to do job. (Ingraham, 2003, p. 8).

Business students from the University of Southern Mississippi studying abroad in London were assessed through a final exam and research paper to assess progress in becoming more cross-culturally tolerant and empathetic, and more self-confident and independent” (Black and Duhon, 2006, p. 141), but it was not possible to evaluate learning outcomes of the 2008 Romania study abroad program in this manner, because while some students chose to extend the experience writing papers for academic credit, the study abroad program was not initially organized as a credit course.⁸ While some students opted to write a paper for academic credit, there was not a pre-existing, uniform method to measure learning outcomes

7. Learning Outcomes

Due to the unique nature of cross-cultural partner research on this study abroad program, it is expected that students will have learned a variety of things that could complement or enhance their graduate program. For the purpose of this

8 See explanation for this in Chapter 2.

analysis, the conceptual framework again refers to student-learning outcomes, contained in general goals of the Master of Public Administration (MPA) program at University of Delaware (See Figure 1). Evidence of meeting a learning outcome was perceptual.

7.1. Emphasize Values of the Profession

One goal of the MPA program states: “Emphasize values of the profession in coursework, publications, and professional activities”. The learning outcomes related to this goal center around the American Society for Public Administration’s (ASPA) *Code of Ethics*. The two learning outcomes in this section are specifically related to item III.4, which states, “Respect superiors, subordinates, colleagues, and the public” (ASPA, 2007). Learning outcomes for this goal necessitate respect for all whom one encounters on a study abroad program:

- 1A. *Demonstrate professionalism through actions and interpersonal skills.*
- 1B. *Act culturally sensitive when interacting with members of the host country.*

Professionalism (Learning Outcome 1A) relates to appropriate dress, timeliness, and preparation. Students have the opportunity to exhibit these skills in the United States; however, their importance intensifies while traveling in a group of eleven students in another culture. Cultural sensitivity (Learning Outcome 1B) relates to the ability of a student to learn about and respect the culture, history, and social norms of another culture. Again, students have the opportunity to act culturally sensitive as students in SUAPP’s graduate programs, which include peers of many cultures. As guests in another country, students have an even greater opportunity to act in a culturally sensitive manner.

7.2. Enhance Areas of Specialization

Another goal of the SUAPP MPA program states:

Maintain and continue to enhance a set of areas of specialization that include courses requiring students to master the essential knowledge, skills, and values of the field. Academic areas will be based upon active research, public service, and professional achievements of the faculty.

The MPA program has five areas of academic specialization: Community Development and Nonprofit Leadership, Financial Management, Health Policy and Management, Organizational Leadership, State and Government Local Management. Students may design their own specialization based on their interest and approval from their academic advisor and program director. Learning outcomes for this goal include opportunities for students to enhance their specialization through research and an international perspective:

2A. Complete research reflecting your area of specialization.

2B. Incorporate a global perspective into a SUAPP course.

The learning outcome regarding research in an area of specialization (2A) refers to the opportunity to gain an international perspective on a topic of study, which is relevant to a student's academic work. Students each chose a study abroad research topic. The topic did not have to be based on a student's area of specialization, but for the purposes of this study, it was hypothesized to be. The second learning outcome in this category refers to the opportunity and ability to incorporate a global perspective into a course (2B). The word "incorporate" was used to suggest that students could apply their learning to a course

through a variety of means, including written assignments, presentations, and/or conversations in class.

7.3. Conduct Applied Research

The MPA program encourages knowledge gain through research and sharing those ideas with others. The goal related to this concept states: “Encourage faculty and students to conduct applied research and public service, and to communicate the results of this research to both the practitioner and academic communities”. Learning outcomes associated with this goal include:

- 3A. Collaboratively participate in a research project.*
- 3B. Explain ideas for policy reform based upon your research.*
- 3C. Contribute to knowledge in your field of interest through research experience.*

The first learning outcome (3A) describes the ability to work with a partner from another country to complete a research project. Each student was paired with a student or faculty member from BBU. This learning outcome measures the extent to which they collaborated on a research project. The second learning outcome (3B) addresses synthesis and critical thinking skills. After completing research, were SUAPP students able to explain ideas for policy reform? This learning outcome assesses students’ ability to critically think about a topic or issue in another culture and suggest recommendations for change. The last learning outcome (3C) deals with the idea of sharing knowledge. What do students plan to do with the knowledge they gained? Will they present their research at a conference? Will an individual or the pair publish a paper? Since this is cross-cultural research, will both Romanian and American public administrators and academics have access to this work?

8. Findings

Students had a great deal of exposure to Romanian culture, professionals in the public sector, and students and faculty from BBU. Overall, the findings demonstrate that this program was a powerful learning experience for SUAPP students.

Figure 2 provides an overview to the extent that partner research on the 2008 Romania study abroad program impacted perceived student learning, as reported by the professor and participating students. This figure reports the number of students who believe their learning matched a certain learning outcome.

8.1. Emphasize Values of the Profession

Students had a variety of opportunities to emphasize values of the profession while in Romania. For the purposes of this research, values of the profession were drawn from the American Society for Public Administration's (ASPA) *Code of Ethics*. Item III.4 of the Code states, "Respect superiors, subordinates, colleagues, and the public" (ASPA, 2007). Students on the Romania study abroad program interacted with faculty and students from Babeş-Bolyai University (BBU), faculty and students from the School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy (SUAPP), employees of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and government agencies, politicians and Romanian citizens. These interactions occurred in a variety of settings including formal group meetings, individual interviews, lectures, social gatherings, and informal travels throughout Romania. The survey results indicate that students demonstrated professionalism (Learning Outcome 1A) and acted in a culturally sensitive manner (Learning Outcome 1B) while in Romania. Data explaining each learning outcome is described in detail below.

Figure 2: Overview of Findings

	<i>To what extent did partner research on the Romania 2008 study abroad program impact student learning?</i>		
	7-9 students	4-6 students	1-3 students
Emphasize values of the profession			
1A. <i>Demonstrate professionalism through actions and interpersonal skills.</i>	X		
1B. <i>Act culturally sensitive when interacting with members of the host country.</i>	X		
Enhance areas of specialization			
2A. <i>Complete research reflecting your area of specialization.</i>		X	
2B. <i>Incorporate a global perspective into a SUAPP course.</i>		X	
Conduct applied research			
3A. <i>Collaboratively participate in a research project.</i>	X		
3B. <i>Explain ideas for policy reform based upon your research.</i>	X		
3C. <i>Contribute to knowledge in your field of interest through research experience.</i>			X

8.2. Demonstrate professionalism through actions and interpersonal skills – Learning Outcome 1A

The data showed several trends related to professionalism. Students and Dr. Loessner made statements about professional dress, preparation for research, and engagement in learning.

Participants agreed that in order to act in a professional manner, it is important to be dressed appropriately. Two-thirds of student participants explicitly noted the importance of appropriate dress. Elaine stated, “In terms of acting professionally, I think first coming in dressed professionally ... changes the way you act as well as the way people perceive you”. All students who mentioned attire as an aspect of professionalism, echoed this idea of perception mentioned by Elaine. Students stated that not only does appropriate dress allow others to view you as a professional, it also makes students feel more professional.

Students acknowledged the importance of preparation for the research component of the program. Several students noted that they prepared themselves to conduct research on a particular topic in Romania. Marsha stated, “I think I was a good representative of SUAPP in that I knew the topic fairly well when I went because I’d researched it, obviously not as well as when I came back”. Elaine referenced the idea of “coming as an informed learner”. Janet noted,

And no matter what your topic was, I think [our BBU partners] kind of wanted to see, do you really know what you’re talking about? Did you think about [your topic] at all before you got here, because you should have? We were definitely warned to.

These students demonstrated that they felt preparation is important to show professionalism. Three other students noted that they wished they had been more prepared for their time in Romania; however, they did not feel that they had proper guidance about the experience. Peter stated,

In some aspects, I really think I was under-prepared ... It was something I should have done on my own, but I didn’t really take the time to. I was busy with my

assistantship ... and trying to get home for Christmas ... I would say I should have been more prepared than I was, but I didn't feel like I knew what I needed to do.

Peter's statement reflects a lack of preparation, but also confusion about expectations for the program. Jami's statement contributes to an idea of con-fusion, which was reflected in several students' statements.

I knew we had to do some background research, but I didn't really know to the depth that we'd be doing individual interviews. So, to me that was kind of confusing, besides the fact that it was my first semester in grad school and I was trying to get through finals and worry about things here and not so much worrying about what I had to do over there.

Dr. Loessner recognized that some students did not feel prepared; however, he believes that questions lead to greater learning experiences. He stated,

I think we tend to handhold too much with graduate students, and I think it's important to have some self-discovery, particularly in study abroad. If somebody tells you every step to take, I don't think you learn as much.

This comment demonstrates that Dr. Loessner facilitated a learner-centered approach to learning throughout the program (Halonen, 2006).

Though students felt prepared for the study abroad program in varying degrees, many mentioned they were engaged in learning while in Romania. Students demonstrated professionalism by participating in discussions with a variety of individuals in the public administration sector.

Caroline valued engagement as a way to connect with people of another culture.

I think actually being engaged is really important, and participating in the meetings and the discussion and connecting with people. Making an effort to not just spend time with the folks in our program, but the people that we're partnered with, the professionals we got to meet, kind of communicating a genuine interest in their work, even if not necessarily related to my ... paper topic or area of interest.

Overall, four students commented on the importance of engagement.

Since students were participating in partner research, they had many opportunities to act in a professional manner. They had ample opportunities to dress professionally, prepare to conduct research, and remain engaged. The data showed that in almost all cases, students respected their Romanian hosts. There were only a few cases where students did not adequately prepare for the research project. Those situations became opportunities for improvement for students, since that in retrospect they mentioned they should have been more prepared. As a result, partner research did impact learning since students demonstrated professionalism through actions and interpersonal skills.

8.3. Act culturally sensitive when interacting with members of the host country – Learning Outcome 1B

Interviewees mentioned acts of cultural sensitivity including asking their partners questions about Romania, learning about their partners' backgrounds (some were from other countries such as Nigeria and Moldova; others were Hungarian), phrasing questions in an appropriate manner

during interviews, and remaining patient. All students referenced cultural sensitivity in Romania during their interview.

Students described their partners as a source of information about appropriate content and questions before conducting interviews with professionals. Students noted that BBU partners were open about their culture, which allowed students to ask candid questions and receive honest answers. Elaine stated, “We had people who were Romanian, but also people who were Hungarian ... So, just understanding the difference in the culture and explaining the history behind that ... My Hungarian partner, and other people’s Hungarian partner were able to educate everyone else”. Other students mentioned the interesting history of Romania, specifically drawing attention to the Communist era and subsequent Revolution. Caroline stated, “I think [my partner] was very candid about her own experience as ... a citizen in Romania ... And I think I can recall specific conversations around her own experience of the Revolution that was particularly interesting”. Jami echoes these ideas, stating,

They are still recovering from a Communist era and I don’t know very much about that era, but to me, just that aspect and what we were able to learn as we develop these relationships and were comfortable asking them questions and talking about that serious of a topic ... I think was part of the big learning picture there.

Students noted throughout their interviews that their learning extended past academic boundaries. These quotations demonstrate that students acted in a culturally sensitive manner during informal time with their BBU

partners. Students spoke about conversations that took place on the way to or from interviews, in cafes, and while traveling to other cities. These statements demonstrate that conversations with partners both required cultural sensitivity, and also informed students' thinking about cultural sensitivity when interacting with others in Romania.

Eight students discussed cultural sensitivity as it related to their interviews with Romanian professionals. Seven students noted that due to conversations with their partner and/or information gained from large-group meetings or individual interviews, they made changes to their interview questionnaire. Students were then able to ask appropriate questions during their interviews with Romanian professionals. Marsha understood that interview questions must be considered in a cultural context. She stated, I met with my partner and went over the questions that I had written to [make sure they] weren't offensive ... For example, in Romania, lots of people like to talk about integrity, but they don't like to talk about anti-corruption. Word choice was referenced by another student, who said,

I'm always cognizant of differences in cultural norms. I didn't want to say or behave in a manner that would offend people of the Romanian culture ... Sometimes I ... asked [my partner], is it ok to ask this question, or should I reword it in a certain way?

The actions taken by these two students to rephrase their questions to act culturally sensitive were related to differences in both language and perspective. In adding to the idea of language differences, one student thought patience was a key to being culturally sensitive. He stated,

I guess another thing would be, especially since there was a language barrier, is being patient. Sometimes

when somebody would say something, it would take [my partner] a couple minutes to kind of think of, how do I put this in English? It's not necessarily a one-to-one translation. There might be phrases or expressions that people don't understand, people don't know, and that's what they're trying to think in their mind. So, I think patience is a key thing.

All participants mentioned cultural sensitivity in terms of questions they asked of their partners and/or of Romanian professionals. Data demonstrated change in students' interview protocol based on their learning in Romania. Therefore, this learning outcome impacted student learning for all nine student participants.

8.4. Enhance Areas of Specialization

Areas of specialization refer to the focus of students' MPA program (i.e. Community Development and Nonprofit Leadership, Financial Management, Health Policy and Management, Organizational Leadership, or State and Local Government). Since two participants were not MPA students, their area of specialization refers to their area of focus within their degree program. This learning outcome measures the extent to which students enhanced their area of specialization through partner research in Romania.

8.5. Complete research reflecting your area of specialization – Learning Outcome 2A

The data demonstrates a variety of responses to this learning outcome. Five students stated that their research reflected their area of specialization. Some of these students claimed their research complemented their area of specialization, while others thought that it was somewhat relevant. Marsha's comments demonstrate that her area of research was a perfect match for her area of specialization.

For me it was a pretty good match because I wanted to do legal reform in Eastern Europe ... I had a ... general idea of what I wanted to do, but this kind of narrowed it down and so I'm aware of the different issues with it, and the different ways you can take the topic, and I guess, different country approaches ...

Caroline's comments reflected that part of her research was relevant to NGOs and part of it related to other interests.

The part of me that got to spend time with specific NGOs ... was definitely helpful in terms of my specialization. The time I spent talking about higher education was more of a hobby ... [It] pertained less to ... my specific area of study, but it was also something I'm interested in.

Three students stated that they were unsure if the research reflected their area of specialization. Pete's topic did not reflect his area of specialization; however, he viewed his research as a learning experience to understand another sector.

When I came into this program I wanted to do governmental work, and when I'm leaving this program, I want to do governmental work ... But I think [studying nonprofits] definitely helped me understand the trials and tribulations ... that they go through ... Maybe it didn't help my specialization, but it helped give me a better understanding of the wider scope of nonprofits.

One student stated that his research in Romania helped define his area of specialization.

I thought it was really beneficial because while I had an interest in transportation, I hadn't done much

research beyond ... my research assistantship, as to different ... systems worldwide or differing ways of solving problems with transportation issues. And I think the research we did in Romania was kind of a kick start for me ...

Owen's comments suggested that learning more about a topic can be a useful way for students to determine their interests.

Two-thirds of the students claimed their partner research enhanced their specialization or prompted the selection of a specialization. This part of the data is surprising since students chose their own topic, with the assistance of Dr. Loessner. Since students chose their own topic, it logically follows that all students' research would have reflected their specialization. A full review of the data demonstrates that though partner research impacted student learning to a moderate extent, it supported or enhanced students' academic life in aspects such as research assistantships, analytical papers⁹, and career goals. Analytical papers will be discussed in relation to a different learning outcome (3B). However, since not all students' research topics reflect their specialization, perhaps future research of study abroad programs should include outcomes related to research assistantships, career goals, and analytical papers.

8.6. Incorporate a global perspective into a SUAPP course – Learning Outcome 2B

Interview participants were asked about this learning outcome to demonstrate if their learning impacted their

9 An analytical paper, also referred to as an AP, is a capstone project written to satisfy the UD requirements for the degree of Master of Public Administration.

SUAPP course work. There are many ways to incorporate a global perspective into a course. Some students mentioned conversations in class, while others mentioned graded assessments. Responses regarding incorporating a global perspective into a SUAPP course could be placed along a continuum, since students incorporated a global perspective into their coursework to varying degrees.

Four students could not recall a specific instance when they applied what they learned in class. For example, Owen stated,

It wasn't overly applicable to some of my classes. I mean there's been mention of it, about our study process. My specific research, no, just because there's not many transportation-related classes in SUAPP. However, all of those students mentioned that what they learned in Romania influenced their thinking about their fields of interest. Caroline explained, I think it's certainly influenced my conversation. In particular, I think the more complete understanding I got about how policies and policy decisions that are made at the government level and the realities of people and residents and communities that the NGOs are more closely connected to, and really how they, a lot of times, don't work so well together.

Three students commented that they mentioned what they learned in class. For example, Jami compared health care spending in Romania and the U.S. in one course. The stat I threw out earlier, how we spend thousands of dollars per capita and they spend like a hundred dollars per capita, being able to just make that comparison, when people are like, oh America. Well look how fortunate we are compared

to other countries. So, it's good just to have that different perspective...

Two students mentioned that they applied their research to course assignments. Elizabeth stated, "I think there are two classes where I use actually information that we got in Romania ... I actually have to analyze the external context of my organization for building a capacity-building plan for my organization".

The extent to which this learning outcome reflects student learning must take into account the courses that students were taking and the timing of this study. For example, two-thirds of students conducted research in their area of specialization (see 2A). If students were not taking courses in their area of specialization this semester, they may not have had an opportunity to bring an international perspective into their class. Students may bring their Romanian experiences into their coursework later this semester, or in future classes. Students were on different areas of a continuum regarding their ability to incorporate a global perspective into a SUAPP course. Some students demonstrated learning as a result of this learning outcome and some did not.

8.7. Conduct Applied Research

The central component of the 2008 Romania study abroad program was the educational experience of conducting partner research. Graduate students from different countries had the unique opportunity to participate in joint research projects. The following learning outcomes describe the extent to which UD students perceived that they collaborated with their BBU partners, increased their content knowledge, and contributed to the field of public administration.

8.8. Collaboratively participate in a research project – Learning Outcome 3A

Students spoke at length about their experience participating in a research project in Romania. Since students commented on their partner research project in a variety of ways, the following categories will be addressed in this section:

- Topic determination
- Research and question preparation
- Interviews with Romanian professionals
- Partner involvement

All students, with the advisement of Dr. Loessner, determined their topics before leaving for Romania. Seven students determined their research topic without the help of their BBU partners. The two students who worked together on their topic were in a unique partnership; the team consisted of a SUAPP student and an exchange student from BBU currently studying at SUAPP. In the context of this study abroad experience, they were a discrepant case, because they had an unusual opportunity to work together before arriving in Romania. Bridget claimed, “I think I kind of had an advantage ... because I knew her from classes before. So, we were really able to talk about what we wanted to cover ...”. However, in general, students felt like there was a lack of pre-departure communication with BBU. Elaine said,

[W]e talked to our partners kind of late, so that’s something I would like to change – talk to them earlier and have more frequent correspondence with them. Because we really just came with our own questions and then told our questions to them. And I would like for us to actually work with our partners to develop questions together so it’s more of a partnership.

Caroline said, “We didn’t communicate our expectations well, so the folks they had set up interviews with were interesting, but it wasn’t exactly what I had in mind”. Dr. Loessner went on to discuss potential benefits of earlier and more frequent e-mail communication.

I think if I were to do this again, I think ... I’d be a bit more insistent, because I had asked that we be in e-mail contact with our Romanian partners as early as October. And I think there was perhaps, not a complete understanding of the importance of that on the part of our Romanian colleagues because, in fact, we didn’t really get e-mail contact with our partners until a week or two before we left to go on the trip. Now, I think if you’d had an opportunity to discuss the topics and the questions, they could say, well why don’t you think about asking that and this and the other, we could have gotten a richer sort of interaction...

Another student described the importance of in-person collaboration to refine their topic. Jami said,

And then getting to discuss with my partner once I got [to Romania] and ... seeing the direction we both wanted to take that paper helps in formulating who we should interview, what we were trying to find in interviews, and what kind of questions we were going to ask.

Comments made by students and Dr. Loessner regarding topic definition demonstrate that some students saw potential or actual benefits for working with their partner at this stage.

Students began an exercise of preparing and editing questions for individual interviews related to their research topics before departing for Romania. All students noted that they edited and adapted their questions after e-mail contact

with SUAPP peers and professor, discussions (e-mail or in person) with BBU partners, participation in large group meetings, and/or information gained from interviews. All students noted some change in their questions. Dr. Loessner said,

[Changes to questions] would happen if they were doing interviews in Dover¹⁰. That's the nature of any kind of a survey-research project. You develop the questionnaire based upon your best information and then you pre-test it and you change it nine times out of ten. As soon as they pre-tested with our colleagues from Babeş-Bolyai, they started changing them.

Dr. Loessner does not attribute this learning outcome to a cultural competency; instead he believes it is a research skill. However, some students had a different perspective on this issue believing that their questions changed as a result of learning in terms of increased knowledge of content and Romanian culture. For example, Marsha changed her questions based upon knowledge gained in interviews.

We went and saw [the] Minister of the Interior. We went and saw the police chief, people from NGOs, professors, people who had written the laws. And we would revamp the questions if we felt the questions weren't getting us where we wanted to go, or if we felt a person would have different, specific knowledge.

Janet recalled changing her questions due to content knowledge from her partner.

... I started out beforehand and I sent questions that
... I had been asking internship supervisors here in

¹⁰ Dover, Delaware's state capital is located approximately 72 km (45 miles) from the University of Delaware.

the U.S. I sent those to my partner first ... And then he sent me that back saying ... we really don't have a program like you guys do and pretty much all these questions are going to be irrelevant ... So I had to kind of rethink the questions and back into [them] a different way”.

Reasons for changing questions varied among students; however, all discussed the role of their partner in this step of the research process.

A theme of access emerged from the data and contributed to the ability of students to conduct research in another country. Students spoke about gaining access to language, information, and people due to partnerships with BBU. BBU students and faculty members scheduled both large-group interviews and individual interviews for SUAPP students. Owen said, “I have to attribute that [access] to respect for the university ... in the community and in the country”. BBU students translated for SUAPP students when interviews occurred in Romanian, and they also located and translated research materials for SUAPP students. Caroline stated, “I definitely wouldn't have been able to get as much out of the interviews if she weren't there to translate”. Jami said,

My partner was actually able to provide me with a lot of articles and reference information ... [H]e actually translated a lot of Romanian articles to English for me, which actually provided a lot more background information regarding the history of their health care system.

Owen echoed Jami's comments that partners provided access to research and content knowledge.

I've had to rely on her heavily because a lot of the websites that we used for post-trip research were in

Romanian ... She sent me a ton of information that was all in Romanian translated to English. From a comprehensive plan, from different newspaper articles, press releases, she did research for me. She was absolutely phenomenal.

Four students noted that they accessed content knowledge through their partner. Janet commented that her partner was an expert on her research topic. Marsha also gained content knowledge from her partner

[S]he had published as a Master's student on it, or maybe after her Master's degree ... I would say she had some expertise on it. And she'd also worked for one of the NGOs that we interviewed, too.

Dr. Loessner agreed that students received quality information from their partners. He said, "I watched two or three [BBU students] actually sit with our students and go over how things actually work in Romania, and provide that data and good information, from what I could tell".

At different stages of partner research, students collaborated to varying degrees. For example, when selecting a topic, two SUAPP students collaborated with each other since they were partners. However, all students worked with their partners to conduct interviews in Romania. The Overview of Findings (Table 4.1) reflects that all students mentioned that collaboration with their partner impact their learning to some extent.

8.9. Explain ideas for policy reform based upon your research – Learning Outcome 3B.

All students demonstrated increased content knowledge in their interviews by explaining ideas for policy reform based upon their research. Since each student had a different

research topic, these policy reforms ranged in content and scope. Students included implications for the public sector (government and NGOs), Babeş-Bolyai University, and the private sector. Dr. Loessner reflected on students' ideas of policy reform, stating,

I actually have notes on what the students said, because I thought their insights were really important. This was a session of maybe two hours, in which each of the Delaware participants reported on their teamwork with a person from Babeş-Bolyai ... And it was clear that in addition to understanding some of the basic things that you would learn about governance in Romania, there were second and third order levels of understanding, that some of my colleagues from Babeş-Bolyai found impressive.

Coding indicates six students' policy suggestions reflected their understanding of Romanian culture. Elizabeth stated,

But because I had [my partner] with me and she was asking different kinds of questions that I never thought about, we got information, new information, that I didn't expect to get from those people. And I think we learned that actually you cannot get all the nonprofit associations together as I was expecting that we can get. I finally understood that it's not really a choice for Romanian nonprofit sector, like getting all the foundations together and collaborate and trying to collaborate also with the public sector.

One student linked ideas for policy reform in Romania to education policy in the United States.

And I think it's a lesson to be learned in terms of their circumstances in comparison to ours. And realize that

we can't have overnight solutions to education, which we try to do all the time. You really need to give things time to work itself out.

In sum, all students were able to synthesize what they learned and determine recommendations for policy reform.

8.10. Contribute to knowledge in your field of interest through research experience – Learning Outcome 3C

This learning outcome measures students' contribution to academia based upon published works and conference presentations. When asked about plans for their research, students commented on academic credit and capstone papers (i.e. analytical papers, theses, dissertations), so those elements will also be discussed in this section.

Students were encouraged to submit their paper for presentation at The Network of Institutes and Schools of Public Administration in Central and Eastern Europe (NISPAcee) conference in Bratislava, Slovak Republic. Three papers will be presented at the NISPAcee conference. In two cases, graduate students from SUAPP will collaboratively present their work with their BBU partner. In one case, the BBU partner will present on behalf of the SUAPP student. Owen stated,

[My partner and I are] on probably the 5th or 6th draft that we've submitted to Dr. Loessner so far. But we're presenting it in May at NISPAcee ... at one of the sessions that they designed for us. So, we're going to be there talking about our research.

Marsha spoke about her excitement to present her research at this international conference, and also the opportunities this conference will bring for future research.

So, I'll be presenting on that paper. And then I'm also hoping through that conference to maybe make some more Eastern European contacts because I would have like to do some sort of comparative study with Romania and maybe countries that got into the European Union three years earlier to see ... if these mandates have actually worked.

Dr. Loessner said,

Some students really formed working relationships with the Romanians. The two that are going to NISPAcee are in that category, where you get the sense that both the Romanian and the American authors are equally putting their thumbprints on these papers.

The three students whose work will be presented at the NISPAcee conference were the only students counted as meeting this learning outcome. Since this study does not measure future learning outcomes, other students' potential contributions to the field were not analyzed as having met the learning outcome.

Students mentioned how they used or plan to use their research for other academic work. Six students mentioned that their research in Romania has influenced thinking around their capstone projects for their programs, either an analytical paper or doctoral dissertation. Elaine said,

[And it gives you the context when you look at high school graduation requirements, which is part of my AP now, where we're looking at core requirements and we shut doors to people before they even get to college, and we're doing that over here as well, where people may not be able to go to a four-year college because they didn't do a college preparatory track, and that's

because people get automatically placed into other programs or some Vo-tech schools don't have a college preparatory program automatically. So, I think that understanding that in Romania, you can always bring it back here and it gives you a better understanding of it in our own context.

In addition, five students completed a research paper for academic credit. Four students did not complete a research paper for credit. Several students mentioned feeling unprepared to complete a research paper either due to confusion about the research project, lack of personal preparation, lack of methodology, or lack of time. For example, Elizabeth stated,

[My partner and I] just decided that actually we don't have a lot of information to call it as a research paper. We learned a lot. We have all those interviews, like six or seven interviews ... and all the information ... We can offer recommendations and conclusions, but we are not really confident in the methodology that we used, and we do not have enough information ... In Cluj, there are probably 2000 nonprofit[s], and we talked with five ... It cannot be considered representative for all the nonprofit sector.

Caroline stated,

I felt a little unprepared in going, in terms of my expectations ... I felt like if I were going to be engaging in the rigorous research that would result in a submission to a journal, I would have needed to prepare more, or to have a more explicit research topic and question. And have a little bit more control over who I interviewed ... [I]f the goal was to ... allow me

to research in a kind of professionally significant way, I would prefer to have other pieces in place before I went.

Students completed their research project for academic credit and/or the NISPAcee conference to a varying extent. Though many students wish to publish their work, at the current time three students' papers will be presented at a conference. Hopefully these works will make a large impact since they reflect a unique international project completed by partnering graduate students.

As demonstrated by the number of students exhibiting each outcome (Figure 2) and supporting exemplars from participants, it is clear that partner research did impact learning.

9. Conclusions

The 2008 study abroad program in Romania was a unique model for many reasons including:

- Graduate students from the United States and Romania completed empirical research in cross-cultural teams
- Pairs of students wrote papers based on their research
- Papers were evaluated, and the best papers will be presented at the NISPAcee conference

This study abroad program embraced a focus on learning through partner research and application of new knowledge. As a result, research completed has implications for both the academic world and the "real world" of public administration practice.

Student learning was impacted because of partner research that was completed with BBU students and faculty members. Qualitative analysis yielded results of students who met

each learning outcome for this program. The Overview of Findings (Table 5) shows the general conclusion, reflecting the number of students who demonstrated each learning outcome. Each learning outcome had nuances related to students' perceptions of the outcomes, which were described by assertions and supporting quotations. Further conclusions will be discussed following the table.

This overview of findings demonstrates that seven to nine students demonstrated professionalism through actions and interpersonal skills, acted culturally sensitive when interacting with members of the host country, collaboratively participated in a research project, and explained ideas for policy reform based on their research. Four to six students completed research reflecting their area of specialization and incorporated a global perspective into a SUAPP course. Three students contributed to knowledge in their field of interest through research experience.

Based on a review of all the data, students seem to believe that their learning was limited by a lack of preparation (i.e. lack of e-mail contact before departure, lack of methodology). In addition, students and Dr. Loessner discussed the one-sided nature of certain parts of the process. At different stages of the process, participants varied in their amount of collaboration. In order to prepare for this type of experience, the hosts set up large-group meetings and scheduled individual interviews. However, in most cases, topics were determined by SUAPP students alone. A longer partner relationship may increase some of the outcomes. For example, if students began working on their topics, questions, and methodology with their partners before arriving in Romania, there may have been more research papers completed.

Analysis of student perception data yielded many positive findings that should be continued and enhanced in future study abroad programs.

- Allow students to collaborate with an international partner on research (3A). Partner relationships were viewed by students, and the researcher, as the cornerstone of this study abroad program.
- Students should be encouraged to represent SUAPP in a professional manner. Student comments about appropriate dress and preparation (1A) reflected confidence in themselves as researchers and of SUAPP.
- Students should engage in their own learning. There was a value in engaging with members of the host country in a culturally sensitive manner (1A, 1B).
- The study abroad and partner research experience facilitated critical thinking about policy reforms for Cluj-Napoca, Romania (3B).
- Several students and their BBU partners are presenting their research at an international conference (3C).

9.1. Recommendations for Future Study Abroad Experiences

Since partner research impacted student learning, this experience should be repeated. The style of the program should continue, with modest improvements based on student and professor comments. Several suggestions were generated by students and Dr. Loessner. They include:

- Match UD student with BBU partners earlier so the pair can develop a research project together (3A).
- Encourage e-mail interaction among partners at an earlier date (3A).

Analysis of the research led to additional ideas for program improvements. They were:

- Encourage students to determine a topic that will either enhance their specialization (2A) or contribute to choosing a specialization.
- Encourage students to apply knowledge gained on study abroad to their coursework (2B); encourage professors to request students' examples from study abroad in class discussions and assignments.
- Determine learning outcomes in advance of departure. This will help SUAPP assess the study abroad program.
- Require a paper written for academic credit. Student learning and suggestions for policy reform (3B) were evident upon analysis of interviews. This knowledge could be useful for practitioners in Romania and the United States.

9.2. Recommendations for Future Research

This study begs for a companion study about student learning from the BBU student and faculty perspective. Surveying members of the host country would demonstrate if the partner research model led to student learning in Romania. In addition, a follow-up survey of SUAPP students would strengthen the research. Since students were interviewed approximately two to three months after returning from Romania, their answers do not include long-term learning assessment. It would be interesting to survey these students in another year to see if they have been able to apply what they learned in Romania. As study abroad programs continue and evolve in SUAPP, they should be assessed to determine best practices, where students are gaining the most from their experience abroad.

Assessments of the School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy's study abroad programs could contribute to the

field of public administration, as graduate programs move in a direction of teaching cultural competency. In addition, such assessments could also contribute to the field of study abroad, since so far, there is little to no research on graduate study abroad.

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Appendix 1

Interview Protocol

To set the stage for the interview and focus the participant on their experience in Romania.

1. What kinds of stories have you told your friends and family about Romania?

Explanation of research question. Grand tour question.

My AP seeks to determine what students learned through partner research on the Romania study abroad program.

2. Can you talk about what you learned through your experience in Romania?

Questions specific to learning outcomes.

3. Tell me about your experiences preparing and interviewing professionals in Romania.
Probe: How did the questions you prepared for these interviews differ from the questions you asked?
4. What kind of representative of SUAPP do you think you were?
Probe: What are some important components of acting in a professional manner when traveling?
5. Do you think the research you conducted enhanced your area of specialization?
Probe: If yes, how?
Probe: If no, why not?
6. Have you had an opportunity to incorporate a global perspective into a SUAPP course this semester as a result of your experience in Romania?
7. How did your partner contribute to your learning on the trip?

8. What ideas do you have for policy reform in Romania based on your research?
9. Do you have plans to contribute your research to your field of interest?
Probe: If yes, how will you disseminate this knowledge?

The Study Abroad Experience
as Seen from the Perspective
of Public Administration Education
in Central and Eastern Europe:
Lessons Learned and Future Prospects

Călin Hințea, Cătălin Baba¹

1. Abstract

The experience gained in participating with a partner university in a study abroad program that involved students and faculty from both universities was extremely important for the two universities. From the standpoint of the Public Administration Department at Babeș-Bolyai University this program showed:

- The importance of developing international cooperation programs. It is important that the relationship between the two universities brings innovative and motivating methods for the implementation of joint academic programs that go beyond traditional partnerships.
- The importance of developing internationally-oriented research programs for CEE students who have to work

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in mixed teams is twofold: as substantive research and also as cooperation and cultural exchange.

- These types of programs help students develop abilities that are highly valued by any MPA program: creativity, team work, capacity to interact with people from different cultural backgrounds etc. – all of which are important to success in cross-cultural work.
- The possibility to develop such joint cooperation programs with limited resources doubled by the mutual commitment of the partners.

2. Background

2.1. Pre-Revolution in Romania

Prior to the revolution in Romania in 1989, the topic of governance was not a subject for higher education. NGOs were not functioning, at least not as they are today, and the orientation of higher education toward government was based in communist ideology with existing legal considerations driving the curriculum.

After 1989 Romanian universities have also undergone significant changes. During the communist era there were few of them, having a reduced capacity to attract and train students. During this period there were public universities, all of which were subordinated from a political, financial and operational standpoint to the communist regime. Some of the mechanisms of that era are still visible today at the functional level. The communist period should not be overlooked and one needs to understand its complexity, due to the effect it continues to produce upon the effective functioning of the Romanian higher education system. From deviant characteristics (deciding that some specialization are “dangerous” therefore their functioning should be forbidden)

to managerial mechanisms (money should always come from the state) universities were highly influenced by the totalitarian system they operated in.

2.2. Post-Revolution Experience

Immediately following the revolution, the concept of governance became better understood and higher education (through some difficulty)² gradually transitioned from the traditional legal approach to a more analytical orientation to the study of governance, political science and public administration.

In 1989, public administration higher education was non-existent in Romania. Developing such a program presented a number of significant challenges:

2.2(a). *The development of a distinct identity of schools in public administration.* Given that these schools were developed in absence of a tradition in the field, they seemed at the beginning as “annexes” of departments of law, political sciences, economics etc. This fact slowed the development of a personal identity, and made it a very lengthy process.

2.2(b). *The promotion of an interdisciplinary model.* Initially, higher education in the field of public administration was considered as being only a form of administrative law. The attitude displayed by CNEAA (National Evaluation and Accreditation Counsel) in the 90’s was primarily directed that way, and it managed to be overcome only in the second part of the decade. The interdisciplinary approach for public administration is, perhaps, the most important common characteristic in all democratic countries. The diversity of curricula, which can focus on various broad areas, depending

2 Refer to other work by Prof. Hîncea that covers these difficulties.

upon the specific orientation of the school, is a normal and logical consequence.

2.2(c). Relationship between theory and practice. Very often universities are viewed as being unable to overcome a very theoretical general framework. This distinction between theory and practice is very dangerous, because it fuels a conservatory administrative mentality, based upon the proverb “theory as theory, but implementation kills us”, and leads to a costly ignoring of administrative models and experiences already validated in practice.

2.2(d). Changing the teaching process/educational experiences. Public administration schools in Romanian universities must provide a teaching process/educational experience which goes beyond mere transmission of information towards developing skills and abilities. Using modern teaching methods (case studies, simulations, internships, etc) is essential in this regard.

2.2(e). Promoting quality standards. In the context of a very active market for the provision of education and training by an important number of providers, the issue of quality standards becomes essential. In the case when universities are unable to promote and respect these quality standards, both in terms of teaching and of research, the impact upon academic and administrative systems can be huge.

2.2(f). Internationalization of programs. Globalization and European integration are two major factors showing that public administration schools must focus on “internationalization”. The lack of this component can be extremely dangerous when they get into competition with Western universities in a very active market. Joint and/or dual degrees with international partners, offering degrees in international languages represent possible solutions.

2.2(g). *Involvement in continuous learning programs.*

Academic programs of public administration, together with other public/private actors have major capacities, both quantitatively and qualitatively, regarding continuous training, and they should seriously and vigorously pursue it.

2.2(h). *Development of research/consulting activities.*

The traditional model of discourse and behavior which favors the isolation in the “ivory tower” of the university still offers an attraction for many academics, and for many civil servants and politicians. This model must be replaced with one of involvement in community, in the schools of PA through preparation programs, applied research, debates on public interest issues etc. In addition, it is very important for PA programs to promote research, as well as teaching, which is a very important component of any modern university. Another issue is related to the necessity of developing a strong relationship with the “beneficiaries” of public administration, which allows a better adaptation of the programs to the requirements of the market.

2.2(i). *Development of a new type of relationship with the students.* Students must become increasingly attentive to the quality of the programs, infrastructure available, extracurricular activities, relationship with faculty members. Many of them now have the possibility to travel and they make comparisons. Moreover, they represent the image of the program upon graduation, and provide a very active component in terms of positive and negative publicity. The students no longer represent only a “subject” or “object” but also a “client” and “participant”, in the full meaning of the terms.

3. Next Steps in the Evolution of Public Administration Education in Romania

3.1. Program evaluation. Program evaluation represents a very important part in the functioning of the PA programs. Without it, we will never know the true impact of PA institutions upon the various levels, fields and structures of administration that require improvement, nor the actual results of the programs. The evaluation process should not stop at the quantitative level, but should also include a qualitative component and goes toward international recognition/standards.

3.2. The development of a modern academic management, based upon efficiency and effectiveness and on a strategic approach to development. It is difficult to teach others management courses in public administration if the university itself is not capable to function according to the principles it preaches.

3.3. Internationalizing the Program Using Partnerships. PA program at Babeş-Bolyai University decided at that point to try to address these challenges by means of the structured use of the resources offered by the cooperation with international partners (American and European). Considering international cooperation as a strategic instrument for developing a competitive program in public administration, the Public Administration Department has taken advantage every opportunity that occurred in this field: involvement in teaching and research of a growing number of international professors, the extensive use of international grants, the motivation of the Romanian professors toward applying to fellowships abroad at partner universities, the enhancement of the research capacity, the development of community outreach programs, the development of a journal

in the field of public administration *Transylvanian Review of Administrative Sciences*³.

The resources used in this process have varied: from the use of the department's budget to grants and other support programs (a good example in this sense is Fulbright Romania which has financed over the time 7 visiting American professors). Another strategic way in which the international expertise was used is the active involvement and membership in the professional organizations in the field of public administration, which have offered extensive support for the development of the program and the construction of the curricula (NASPAA, EGPA, NISPAcee, EAPAA).

3.4. International Advisory Board

A very important instrument, with a constant role over the years, was the International Advisory Board (IAB), in fact a body of experts, actively involved in the development and the assessment of the evolution of the PAD in Cluj. IAB usually meets every two years in order to complete an evaluation of the progress undertaken by the Department, to draft a SWOT analysis, with an emphasis on identifying the challenges ahead and making recommendations for improving the activity of the program.

During the 2008 IAB meeting several recommendations were made regarding the strategic priorities for the timeframe 2008-2010:

- enhancing the program of research in public administration;
- developing a PhD degree program in public administration at Babeş-Bolyai University;

3 The journal is currently listed in ISI.

- achieving accreditation of the program of public administration education at Babeş-Bolyai University:
 - national standards (the program is accredited in Romania)
 - international standards (in 2008 the PAD was the first Romanian program to receive the EAPAA accreditation for the master program);
- strengthening community service and outreach activities and integrating these activities in the program of public administration higher education;
- developing a plan for funding the Public Administration Department at Babeş-Bolyai University to accomplish stated strategic goals.

4. Study Abroad as a Means of Strengthening Public Administration Education

The idea of organizing a joint, applied research program for the American and Romania students from the University of Delaware and respectively Babeş-Bolyai in the frame of a study abroad program meshed very well with the IAB's recommendations and the PAD's strategy. The development of the research capacity, the establishment of a new type of relationships with the student body, as well as the enhancement of the capacity to get involved in activities that are international in scope were all reasons underlying this initiative. Special thanks to the Fulbright Commission for supporting visits by both of us to University of Delaware that helped give the initiative an opportunity to be realized.

4.1. Romanian Students Pursue Degrees Abroad. The combination of information received from the advisory board and subsequent opportunities for Babeş-Bolyai students to study abroad to get a master's degree came together with

support from Fulbright to provide a critical core of senior students the opportunity to receive American MPA degrees. These persons subsequently became junior members of the faculty and several are now working on or have received doctoral degrees. They will become the core of the BBU public administration faculty of the future. That is a good model that will be continued for the foreseeable future, if adequate funding is available. It confirmed how much could be learned by studying public administration in another cultural context and how valuable this could be for the few students who were able to pursue it, as well as for the future development of the Public Administration Faculty at BBU.

4.2. Short-Term Study Abroad. Could more students obtain some of the same cross-cultural opportunities at a lower cost per student by using the American-style short term study abroad concept? This question was at the center of the development of a study abroad visit by graduate students from the University of Delaware in January 2008 (See Chapter I). It has to be mentioned that the two programs already had a common history together regarding the collaboration for teaching and research; this collaboration also materialized in short study trips for both American and Romanian faculty and students.

4.3. The First Short-Term Study Abroad Initiative.

Babeş-Bolyai University became part of this initiative started by Professor Arno Loessner from the University of Delaware. The organization of the stay and research was not easy mainly due to the novelty of the concept which had more ambitious goals than those usually associated with a study abroad program. BBU played the role of the local organizer of this joint research effort being involved in all sorts of activities from merely logistic – setting up hostel

arrangements to preparing the interviews necessary for the research projects undertaken by students.

4.3(a). *Selecting Students to Participate.* Another important task prior to the beginning of the program was the selection of the Romanian students to get involved in this program. The idea was to partner each American student with a Romanian one and to make them draft a joint final research paper. It was difficult to partner these students as each of them were coming from different cultural backgrounds, had different expectations and different academic achievements. In the end there were more students from Cluj than the program could accommodate, therefore a selection interview was conducted. The selection tried to identify the most qualified students from an academic and research standpoint but also the students who were motivated to work with American partners and commit a significant part of their time to this project without any financial gain. At the end of the program the selection criteria proved to be reliable since all of the students were pleased with their partners.

4.3(b). *Babeş-Bolyai Student Evaluations.* Based on the evaluations following the joint research program, it was observed that the Romanian students are highly satisfied with this program; they positively value the research activity, the opportunity to have their research paper published, but mostly the opportunity to develop their skills regarding joint collaboration efforts. The whole experience – from the first days during which both the Romanian and American students have had many relevant experiences which led to the “loss” of some of the prejudices they had and until the last days when the group was acting as a whole – was much more complex than a simple research project.

4.3(c). Students Present Research at NISPAcee Meeting.

The participation of some of the Romanian and American students who were part of the project to an international conference – NISPAcee – In Bratislava (2008) was another opportunity for them to share with other academics not only the results of their research but also their cultural experience.

5. Next Steps in Study Abroad – Lessons Learned

5.1(a). Study Abroad in Romania. Based on the January 2008 experience Babeş-Bolyai would repeat the program with some changes based upon lessons learned from the first experience. Earlier and more directed contact between students using e-mail in advance of the arrival of the American students would help establish relationships and develop research topics that could be mutually agreed upon. The research topics in 2008 were defined by the American students. We hope that in the next year more students will be involved and possibly a reward to the best students in the program would be awarded.

During week one of the two-week program all students will take classes together and use time out of class to develop “research plans”. In week two, research teams would fan out to do interviews and site visits that the Babeş-Bolyai staff had organized previously. A student conference held all-day on the last day of the two-week visit would permit shared learning and would be followed with a social occasion.

In the two months following the visit of the American students, papers would be co-authored by US and BBU students, possibly under the supervision of UD and Babeş-Bolyai faculty. These papers would become what we hope will be an annual issue of the Babeş-Bolyai Public Administration Journal (Transylvanian Review of Administrative Sciences)

entirely containing articles written by students, some of which would be the best of the papers developed during study abroad program.

5.1(b). Study Abroad Outside Romania. A second study abroad model is under consideration in which students from Babeş-Bolyai will travel to the United States for 10 days to visit the United Nations, World Bank, the U.S. central government in Washington and state, county and city governments as well as international and local NGOs. Following that visit, papers will again be prepared jointly with American students for the purpose of academic credit and possible publication.

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