

Journal of Legal Studies Education
Volume 36, Issue 1, 83–102, Winter 2019

Study Abroad on the Résumé

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I. INTRODUCTION

Business law professors with teaching responsibilities in undergraduate business programs generally are asked to advise and mentor students, both formally and informally, on academic and career development matters. Students may choose among a myriad of opportunities, all of which may have a positive impact on their academic experiences and ultimate career opportunities. Among those opportunities, the Lacy School of Business at Butler University has long encouraged its undergraduate students to study abroad. The societal,¹ institutional,² and individual developmental benefits to students of studying abroad³ have been explored and endorsed by previous studies. Society and businesses are increasingly global in nature and educational institutions need to reflect these changes in order to prepare their students

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¹*E.g.*, Mark H. Salisbury et al., *Going Global: Understanding the Choice Process of the Intent to Study Abroad*, 50 RES. HIGHER EDUC. 119, 120 (2009) (arguing that study abroad promotes student understanding and respect for global issues and increases the nation's security, economic prosperity, and global leadership).

²*E.g.*, Tammy Orahod et al., *Study Abroad and Career Paths of Business Students*, 17 FRONTIERS 133, 133–35 (2008) (arguing that “Increasingly, being a corporate leader demands an international background”). *Id.* at 133. The authors discuss the attempt of the Kelley School of Business to respond to the need for international experiences for its students.

³*E.g.*, Mary M. Dwyer & Courtney K. Peters, *The Benefits of Study Abroad*, IES ABROAD, <https://www.iesabroad.org/study-abroad/news/benefits-study-abroad#sthash.dXUNP0JX.dpbs> (last visited July 17, 2018); and Pankaj Ghemawat & Phillip Bastian, *Anti-Globalization and Higher Education*, BIZED, at 41 (July 3, 2017), <http://bized.aacsb.edu/articles/2017/07/anti-globalization-and-higher-education> (citing various personal development benefits including increased cross-cultural skills).

to meet the demands of a global marketplace.⁴ The student developmental benefits include such qualities as adaptability and willingness to take risks. They also include skills such as working under pressure and operating well in intercultural situations,⁵ not to mention the opportunity to learn or develop foreign language skills. Business students would do well to develop these qualities and skills.

On a recent study trip, Lacy School students were guests at the London office of Ernst & Young Global Limited (E&Y), where a manager informed them that the number one quality the E&Y CEO values in new hires is a “global mindset.”⁶ An E&Y Director noted the absolute necessity for employees to be able to work effectively in teams with others from diverse national, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds.⁷ Similarly, at a recent conference of the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) International, the top accrediting body for business schools, an executive from another top, multinational professional services firm cited international experience as one of the most desired qualities in those seeking strategy roles with his company.⁸ If these examples are at all representative of the business world, many more students should include a study abroad experience in their undergraduate business education.

While a number of formats are available to Lacy School students, faculty advisors have particularly endorsed semester-long study abroad experiences. Efforts to encourage study abroad have been successful by many measures. For example, nationwide, less than two percent of students enrolled in institutions of higher education studied abroad in the 2009–10 academic year.

⁴Salisbury et al., *supra* note 1, at 120.

⁵Joanna Elizabeth Crossman & Marilyn Clarke, *International Experience and Graduate Employability: Stakeholder Perceptions on the Connection*, 59 HIGHER EDUC. 599 (2010), <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10734-009-9268-z>.

⁶Remarks of Kashif Khanani, Manager—Technology, Media and Telecommunications, Ernst & Young Global Limited, London Office (May 18, 2017) (notes on file with the authors). Among his recommendations for developing a global mindset were to “get to know international students on campus;” “work, study or travel abroad;” and “learn another language.”

⁷Remarks of Maria Kepa, Audit Director, Ernst & Young Global Limited, London Office (May 18, 2017) (notes on file with the authors).

⁸Max Carrier, KPMG Global Delivery Center and Audit Data & Analytics, Speech at the AACSB Co-Lab: Connecting Business Schools with Practice Conference, Berkeley, CA (June 26, 2017).

Only twenty percent of study abroad students were business majors.⁹ The Lacy School has enjoyed a participation rate closer to forty percent with the majority of those being semester-long experiences, which the school encourages, consistent with a “more is better” philosophy.¹⁰ Still, when faculty advisors encourage students to study abroad, they often find students reluctant to participate because of other priorities. For example, roughly thirty-five to forty percent of Lacy School graduates complete multiple business majors and sometimes decline a study abroad experience because of the perceived difficulty in completing both the multiple majors and the international experience. Students also are required to complete two internship experiences as a condition of graduation and they often forego a study abroad experience, they say, in order to accept an internship or to make a domestic internship more convenient. Although these obstacles are program specific, previous research suggests that work and academic commitments along with the perceived expense of study abroad are frequently mentioned by students as impediments to study abroad.¹¹

Implied in these decisions to forego study abroad experiences is the students’ belief that a second business major, a particular domestic internship experience, or perhaps some extracurricular campus activity will do more for their education and career prospects than a study abroad experience. Although advisors might differ with respect to whether future employability should be the primary factor in student decision making in this regard, it is clear that students—and their parents—increasingly factor pragmatic employment considerations into virtually every academic decision.¹² In this

⁹Zahir A. Quraeshi et al., *Advancing the Participation of Business Students in Study Abroad Programs*, 12 GLOBAL J. MGMT. & BUS. RES. 81, 82 (2012), https://globaljournals.org/GJMBR_Volume12/9-Advancing-the-Participation-of-Business.pdf.

¹⁰Mary M. Dwyer, *More Is Better: The Impact of Study Abroad Program Duration*, 10 FRONTIERS 151 (2004), <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ891454.pdf>. Based upon alumni surveys, the author concluded that there were significant benefits to a study abroad experience, that were more significant and enduring the longer the study abroad experience, but acknowledged that “well-planned, intensive summer programs of at least 6 weeks duration can have a significant impact on student growth across a variety of important outcomes.” *Id.* at 161.

¹¹Quraeshi et al., *supra* note 9, at 83.

¹²For example, a survey of prospective college students found that the three leading reasons students go to college are “To improve employment opportunities . . . [t]o make more money . . . and . . . [t]o get a good job.” Rachel Fishman, *College Decisions Survey: Deciding to Go to College*, NEW AMERICA (May 28, 2015), <https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/edcentral/collegedecisions/>. See also Colleen Flaherty, *Liberal Arts College Students*

study, we explore the relative potential initial career advantage of a study abroad experience compared to other choices business students often make. It is unclear, for example, whether adding a Marketing major to a Finance major does more for business students' initial career prospects than a study abroad experience.

II. EXISTING LITERATURE

Researchers have explored the issue of study abroad participation from a number of perspectives. For example, Deviney et al.,¹³ explore which personality and behavior characteristics influence students to participate in study abroad. They found that students who indicate a willingness to participate in study abroad programs display

- A people orientation rather than a task orientation
- A preference for planning
- A desire to analyze data prior to making decisions
- A willingness to seek out win-win results, and
- A preference for working with diverse people.

Students may indicate, for example, that they will not study abroad because of academic concerns when the real reason lies with their personality or personal attitudes about living abroad. Still, if the career benefits were apparent, some students who do not display these personality characteristics may still opt to study abroad.

Along these same lines, researchers have explored other factors that influence a student's decision to study abroad. Salisbury et al., find that

Are Getting Less Artsy: At Colleges Proud of Attracting Students Who Want a Broad-Based Non-Vocational Education, Numbers of Majors in Arts and Humanities Are Falling, INSIDE HIGHER EDUC., Feb. 21, 2017, <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2017/02/21/liberal-arts-students-fears-about-job-market-upon-graduation-are-increasingly> (noting that student anxieties about the job market are affecting student choices at liberal arts schools and quoting William Deresiewicz about the trend away from the humanities: "It's a terrible thing, and it bespeaks the destructive attitude that is ubiquitous in education today, which is that the sole purpose of education is to set you up for job and career and that you should therefore study something practical, understood in the narrowest terms.").

¹³David Deviney et al., *Why Some Students Study Abroad and Others Stay*, 25 RES. HIGHER EDUC. J. 1, 14 (2014).

socioeconomic status and cultural capital (information and attitudes about international people and experiences learned in the family and school) can significantly influence whether a student studies abroad.¹⁴ Paus and Robinson add to these factors the importance of college-related variables of major and grade point average as well as the extent of parent and faculty encouragement.¹⁵ For example, they note that students in some majors face hurdles studying abroad as a result of course sequencing issues, while in contrast students with language majors may be expected to study abroad. Also students with lower GPAs might be less secure in studying abroad or may feel pressure to stay home and try to raise their GPAs. Likewise, athletes might feel that they unable to study abroad. Significantly, they found that among students who received strong faculty encouragement, more than seventy-five percent ended up studying abroad, compared to only a little more than twenty-five percent who received no such encouragement.¹⁶ This information supports the critical importance of faculty advising as a part of the process. While the present study focuses on the advantage of study abroad from the perspective of employers, it is apparent that other factors will significantly influence whether a student chooses to participate in a study abroad experience.

A number of studies have explored the developmental benefits of a study abroad experience. Lee et al., suggest “that cultural experiences from living abroad have wide reaching benefits on students’ creativity, including the facilitation of complex cognitive processes that promote creative thinking in multiple settings.”¹⁷ Potts has surveyed employees who studied abroad as undergraduate students to learn what benefits they believe the experience had for their early career. The results show that young professionals believe a study abroad experience enhanced a number of the so-called soft skills. They report improvement in interpersonal and communication skills, teamwork, and problem-solving skills.¹⁸ Incidentally, these skills correspond to

¹⁴Salisbury et al., *supra* note 1, at 133–35.

¹⁵Eva Paus & Michael Robinson, *Increasing Study Abroad Participation: The Faculty Make a Difference*, 17 FRONTIERS 33, 42, 45–47 (2008).

¹⁶*Id.* at 42.

¹⁷Christine S. Lee et al., *On the Cognitive Benefits of Cultural Experience: Exploring the Relationship Between Studying Abroad and Creative Thinking*, 26 APPLIED COGNITIVE PSYCHOL. 768, 774–75 (2012).

¹⁸Davina Potts, *Understanding the Early Career Benefits of Learning Abroad Programs*, 19 (5) J. STUD. INT’L EDUC. 1, 9–16 (2015).

three of the top five core competencies sought by internship employers as reported in the National Association of Colleges and Employers survey each of the past three years.¹⁹ The match between study abroad learning outcomes and employers' needs is also noted by others.²⁰ Potts also reports that her subjects tend to believe that the study abroad experience helped increase their motivation and passion for their careers and generally enhanced their career prospects.²¹ A survey of 712 University of Minnesota alumni who had studied abroad produced comparable results. Respondents overwhelmingly perceived that the experience had contributed to their maturity and personal development, self-confidence, appreciation and interaction with individuals who were different from themselves and interpersonal and communication skills.²² DeGraaf et al., surveyed alumni from a small midwestern university and asked them to assess the impact on their civic engagement and the long-term personal and professional impacts of a semester abroad. The vast majority of the respondents reported increased intellectual curiosity, greater appreciation of other cultures, increased language skills, increased sense of adventure/daring, increased interactive/social skills, and increased knowledge related to their majors or disciplines resulting from their study abroad experience. A minority reported other positive impacts like deepened relationships with foreign nationals, spiritual growth, and increased appreciation for their home culture.²³

Franklin shifts the perspective from early career to the long-term career impact of study abroad experiences. She finds that a study abroad

¹⁹National Association of Colleges and Employers, *Competencies Employers Seek in Internship/Co-op Hires* (July 19, 2017), <https://www.naceweb.org/talent-acquisition/internships/competencies-employers-seek-in-internship-co-op-hires/> [hereinafter *Competencies*].

²⁰E.g., Martha Johnson & Kim Hindbjorgen, *Why Career Integration?*, in *CAREER INTEGRATION: REVIEWING THE IMPACT OF EXPERIENCE ABROAD ON EMPLOYMENT* 14, 17 (Christine Anderson et al. eds., 2015); and Brian Rashid, *Record Number of Students Going Abroad Despite Anti-Global Rhetoric in Recent Elections*, *FORBES* (Feb. 27, 2017), <https://www.forbes.com/forbes/welcome/?toURL=https://www.forbes.com/sites/brianrashid/2017/02/22/record-number-of-students-going-abroad-despite-anti-global-rhetoric-in-recent-elections/&refURL=https://www.google.com/&referrer=https://www.google.com/>.

²¹Potts, *supra* note 18, at 9–10.

²²Christine Anderson, *The Impact of Study Abroad on Career Skill and Job Attainment for the University of Michigan Alumni*, in *CAREER INTEGRATION: REVIEWING THE IMPACT OF EXPERIENCE ABROAD ON EMPLOYMENT* 53, 54–55 (Christine Anderson et al. eds., 2015).

²³Don DeGraaf et al., *The Long-Term Personal and Professional Impacts of Participating in a Study Abroad Program*, 23 *FRONTIERS* 42, 47–52 (2013).

experience influences participants to engage in work that has an international or multicultural component. Ultimately, though, the study suggests more that the experience influenced participants to seek such positions rather than influencing employers to hire such participants.²⁴ Similar results were reported in a survey of 6391 study abroad participants by Paige et al., in which respondents ranked study abroad first in a list of college experiences in impact on their subsequent lives across multiple dimensions.²⁵

As is evident, most of the previous research looked at study abroad experience from the perspective of the students and their perceptions about their development and the influence on their careers. Few studies look at the study abroad experience from the perspective of prospective employers and the results of those studies are a little less sanguine. Even though employers say that they are looking for the skills that study abroad fosters, the evidence from the existing research is more ambiguous with respect to whether they actually do value study abroad experiences when making hiring decisions. One large global survey reported on by Molony et al., found that about sixty percent of respondents answered affirmatively to the question “Do you actively seek or attribute value to an international study abroad experience when recruiting?” Only fifty-four percent of U.S. respondents answered the question positively,²⁶ and we note that “[t]his result is significantly more positive for the United States than previous studies on the same topic . . .”²⁷ However, Johnson and Hindbjorgen, authors of another study note skeptically,

Having been involved in two rounds of massive employer surveys, we are consistently disappointed by the lack of recognition that the same skills employers identify as being valued are not correlated to the activities designed to foster those skills. Education abroad naturally tends to develop those skills employers are seeking, including communication, learning new ideas, creative thinking, and, of course, interacting with individuals from a variety of backgrounds. Paradoxically, while interpersonal communication and ability to work with diverse

²⁴Kimberly Franklin, *Long-Term Career Impact and Professional Applicability of the Study Abroad Experience*, 19 *FRONTIERS* 169, 176–86 (2010).

²⁵Gerald W. Paige et al., *Study Abroad for Global Engagement: The Long-Term Impact of Mobility Experiences*, 20 *INTERCULTURAL EDUC.* 29 (2009).

²⁶JOHN MOLONY ET AL., *QS GLOBAL EMPLOYER SURVEY REPORT 2011: HOW EMPLOYERS VALUE AN INTERNATIONAL STUDY EXPERIENCE* 10 (2011), <http://content.qs.com/qs/qs-global-employer-survey-2011.pdf>.

²⁷*Id.* at 16.

teams is highly valued by employers, experience abroad is not necessarily recognized as connected to the development of those skills.²⁸

This skepticism seems to be shared by Hall who suggests that “employers do not place importance on study abroad participation in and of itself as a hiring criteria,” even though they may “place value on the skills gained and enhanced through learning abroad”²⁹ Similarly, Orahood et al. note that even though employers claim to value interpersonal skills that students gain from study abroad experiences, “. . . they do not specifically seek out candidates with study abroad experience unless they are hiring for a job which requires cross-cultural skills.”³⁰ Moreover, they find, ironically, that the number of the alumni of the Kelley School of Business who found work with international companies was greater for those who did not study abroad than those who did.

Trooboff et al. address a question similar to that of the present study. They survey employers to determine if undergraduate students who have completed a study abroad experience have an advantage over those who do not. They approach the issue by asking respondents to their online survey to rate the relative importance of various types of international experiences along with having a relevant major for the position. The focus of the study is entirely on what type of international experiences employers value. Trooboff et al. find that employers do value study abroad compared to other international education experiences. Furthermore, they value longer experiences over shorter ones and those that involve internships over those that involve only classes.³¹

The present study differs from the study conducted by Trooboff et al. in that we ask employers to compare a study abroad experience to noninternational experiences or activities that are arguably more likely to be the competitors for student time and attention. These experiences might include participation in campus activities, completion of an honors program, a second major either in a business subject or nonbusiness subject, or an additional internship experience. If business students are convinced that a study

²⁸Johnson & Hindbjorgen, *supra* note 20, at 17.

²⁹Becky Hall, *Employer Perceptions of Education Abroad*, in CAREER INTEGRATION: REVIEWING THE IMPACT OF EXPERIENCE ABROAD ON EMPLOYMENT 43, 43 (Christine Anderson et al. eds., 2015).

³⁰Orahood et al., *supra* note 2, at 134.

³¹Stevan Trooboff et al., *Employer Attitudes Toward Study Abroad*, 15 FRONTIERS 17, 22–25 (2007).

abroad experience will have a more positive impact on their careers than these other experiences, then they may be more eager to participate. This study focuses specifically on the candidate's likelihood to survive a résumé screen by a potential employer, in other words, the likelihood that the candidate will "get in the door," if he has a study abroad experience on the résumé compared to other undergraduate experiences. Commentators often sagely advise students to be prepared to articulate the contributions of their study abroad experience.³² To do so, they must survive the initial résumé screen and make it to the interview stage. There, employers often bring up the study abroad experience and candidates can do so if the employer does not.³³

III. STUDY AND METHODOLOGY

We constructed an online survey using *Qualtrics* to address how professionals involved in hiring business school undergraduates for entry-level positions view study abroad experiences relative to other activities and qualifications that might appear on the candidates' résumés. The survey was sent to professionals from an array of industries, both in human resources and line managers responsible for hiring. We identified potential survey respondents by using the database of employers who hire Lacy School students. The school requires each student to complete two internships as a requirement of graduation and, of course, students also seek first destination positions through the Career Development Office. Thus, even though the Lacy School is of medium size, we were able to identify over 2000 potential respondents. To encourage participation, we offered to enter respondents in a blind drawing for a \$100 gift card at the Butler University Bookstore. We received 236 usable responses.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The first item on the survey asked respondents to review and evaluate a sample résumé of a candidate for an entry-level business position. Respondents were

³²E.g., Martin Tillman, *On the Linkage of International Experience and Student Employability*, in *CAREER INTEGRATION: REVIEWING THE IMPACT OF EXPERIENCE ABROAD ON EMPLOYMENT* 28, 29 (Christine Anderson et al. eds., 2015).

³³Tammy Orahood et al., *The Impact of Study Abroad on Business Students' Career Goals*, 10 *FRONTIERS* 117, 122–28 (2004).

Table 1: Sample Résumé Features

<i>Sample Résumé</i>	<i>Major</i>	<i>Study Abroad</i>
1	Finance	Yes—one semester in France
2	Marketing	Yes—one semester in France
3	Finance and Marketing	No
4	Marketing and Finance	No

Table 2: Results for Full Sample to the Survey Item—“Please provide an overall rating of the content of the résumé you just reviewed. Your rating should be based on your enthusiasm for interviewing the candidate and reflect the likelihood that you would pursue the candidate further”

	<i>N</i>	<i>Sample Résumés</i>	<i>Extremely Likely</i>	<i>Somewhat Likely</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Somewhat Unlikely</i>	<i>Extremely Unlikely</i>	<i>No Answer</i>
Study Abroad Résumés	128	1,2	55	56	11	3	1	2
Double Major Résumés	108	3,4	37	54	8	6	1	2

requested to assess the résumé based on their enthusiasm for interviewing the candidate and the likelihood that they would pursue the candidate further. The responses were based on a five-point Likert scale between “Extremely Likely” and “Extremely Unlikely.” The survey was set to select one of four résumés randomly. Each respondent reviewed and rated just one résumé.

Other than the factors listed in Table 1, the résumés were identical and gender neutral. The résumés (available from the authors upon request) indicated a B+ average, and showed good internship experiences, campus activities, and leadership. Thus, one would expect a generally positive reaction to all four sample résumés. Table 2 shows results for the entire usable sample.

Respondents had no indication about the objective of the study when they reviewed a randomly assigned sample résumé. As expected, the responses are mostly positive, which is understandable given the quality of the common experiences and attributes. Still, there seems to be more enthusiasm for the study abroad résumés, as forty-three percent of the responses for the study abroad résumés were in the “Extremely Likely” category compared to thirty-four percent for the double major résumés. Respondents were also asked to provide comments on what they found attractive about the sample résumé.

Most of the comments related to format, wording, and specific internship, volunteer, or leadership experiences that were common to all four sample résumés. Still, on 10.2% (13 of 128) of responses for the study abroad résumés, the respondent volunteered something specific about the attractiveness of the study abroad experience. For the double major résumé responses, 7.5% (8 of 108) specifically mentioned the double major. Without putting the matter directly to them (as we do in the subsequent survey questions), the respondents generally reacted more positively to the combination of a business major and a semester-long study abroad experience than they did to a student with a double business major.

The next set of questions asked respondents about specific items and experiences that might be found on résumés and whether those items would make them more likely to want to interview the candidate. Table 3 contains results for the overall sample. Table 4 lists those same items in a forced ranking from survey respondents.

Employers are most enthusiastic about internships and leadership experience, which they rank first and second in terms of granting students interviews. These results are consistent with the findings from the NACE surveys, which show employers prefer the kind of relevant work experience gained in internships and value leadership experience right after factors such as major and grade point average.³⁴ The study abroad items, both short term and full academic term, rank lower relative to other items.

To explore the issue more deeply, we created a subsample of “International” respondents. We defined an international set by including all respondents who have either studied abroad themselves or who have spent time abroad for professional reasons. Just over half of the full sample of 236 usable responses qualified as “International.” Table 5 shows the results for the 122 respondents in the subsample.

As with the entire sample, the blind evaluation of sample résumés, with no indication of the motivation for this study, showed more enthusiasm for the study abroad résumés compared to the double major résumés. In fact, a comparison of the tabular data suggests that this is the group driving the results for the full sample. Since most responses were in the top two categories and it appears there is a proportional preference for the Study Abroad résumés, we conducted a Z-test for difference in proportions looking only at the proportion of responses in the “Extremely Likely” category. The

³⁴ *Competencies*, *supra* note 19.

Table 3: Results for Full Sample to the Survey Item - “Below is a list of items or experiences that might appear on the résumé of an entry-level candidate for a business position. Please assume that the candidate has completed an appropriate first major in business. How likely is each item or experience to help gain the candidate an interview?”

	<i>Extremely Likely</i>	<i>Somewhat Likely</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Somewhat Unlikely</i>	<i>Extremely Unlikely</i>	<i>No Answer</i>
Internship in a field related to business	193	30	4	0	3	6
A leadership position on campus in clubs or residence life	116	97	11	6	1	5
International internship in a field related to business	100	79	40	8	3	6
Completion of an honors program or thesis	63	115	45	3	4	6
Community volunteer work	54	128	42	7	0	5
A second business major besides the primary business major	53	115	52	9	1	6
Fluency in a foreign language	32	86	93	12	7	6
Study abroad for a full academic term	28	68	114	16	5	5
Participation in campus clubs (nonleadership)	27	119	64	14	6	6
A second major in the arts or sciences besides the primary business major	23	96	91	16	5	5
Study abroad for a short-term 2–5 weeks	6	65	128	21	7	9

results were $Z = 1.73$ which is significant at an $\alpha = 0.10$.³⁵ The suggestion here is that interviewers with international experience are more likely to rate

³⁵For the international subsample, 41% (48 of 118) of the résumés received a rating of “extremely likely” to pursue the candidate further. But there seems to be a difference between those subjects reviewing a study abroad résumé compared to those reviewing a double major résumé. For those reviewing a study abroad résumé, 33 of the 70 subjects indicated they were “extremely likely” to pursue the candidate further. That is a proportion of 47%. On the other hand, only 15 of the 48 subjects in the subsample reviewing a double major résumé indicated they were “extremely likely” to pursue the candidate further. That is a proportion of just 31%. The Z-score provides an indication of how likely this difference in proportions is just chance. A Z-score close to zero

Table 4: Results for Full Sample to the Survey Item—“Now, please rank those same items or experiences from most important to least important in terms of gaining the candidate an interview. You can click and drag items to put them in your preferred rank order”

<i>Résumé Item</i>	<i>Average Rank</i>
Internship in a field related to business	1.683
A leadership position on campus in clubs or residence life	3.687
International internship in a field related to business	4.978
A second business major besides the primary business major	5.009
Completion of an honors program or thesis	5.767
Community volunteer work	6.000
A second major in the arts or sciences besides the primary business major	6.855
Participation in campus clubs (non-leadership)	7.264
Study abroad for a full academic term	7.674
Fluency in a foreign language	8.093
Study abroad for a short term 2–5 weeks	8.991

Table 5: Results for the International Subsample to the Survey Item—“Please provide an overall rating of the content of the résumé you just reviewed. Your rating should be based on your enthusiasm for interviewing the candidate and reflect the likelihood that you would pursue the candidate further”

	<i>N</i>	<i>Sample Résumés</i>	<i>Extremely Likely</i>	<i>Somewhat Likely</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Somewhat Unlikely</i>	<i>Extremely Unlikely</i>	<i>No Answer</i>
Study Abroad Résumés	72	1,2	33	31	4	2	0	2
Double Major Résumés	50	3,4	15	29	2	2	0	2

a résumé in the highest category if it contains a study abroad experience rather than a double business major. The results for the non-International subsample (not shown here) suggest no significant difference in enthusiasm for the study abroad and double major résumés.

indicates there is no difference in the proportions. The score of 1.73 suggests that there is less than a 10% chance that the difference in the proportions is a random occurrence. Thus, we conclude that the international subsample rates study abroad résumés higher than double major résumés with less than a 10% chance of error. NEIL J. SALKIND, *EXPLORING RESEARCH* 162–64 (5th ed. 2003).

Table 6: Results for the International Subsample to the Survey Item—“Now, please rank those same items or experiences from most important to least important in terms of gaining the candidate an interview. You can click and drag items to put them in your preferred rank order”

<i>Résumé Item</i>	<i>Average Rank</i>
Internship in a field related to business	1.748
A leadership position on campus in clubs or residence life	4.043
International internship in a field related to business	4.626
A second business major besides the primary business major	5.217
Completion of an honors program or thesis	5.704
Community volunteer work	6.391
Study abroad for a full academic term	6.896
A second major in the arts or sciences besides the primary business major	6.922
Participation in campus clubs (non-leadership)	7.757
Fluency in a foreign language	7.948
Study abroad for a short term 2–5 weeks	8.748

The ranking of items by their importance in securing candidates an interview changes in just one way for the International subsample (see Table 6). The full academic term study abroad experience moves up two spots in the rankings but still ranks below such items as a second business major, community volunteer work, and completion of an honors program or thesis.

To address the issue a little differently, we also asked respondents which résumé items they would likely ask questions about or follow up on during an interview. In Table 7, we report the results of the “Extremely Likely” category for both the full sample and the International subsample. The study abroad experience ranks in the top three experiences that employers would be extremely likely to pursue in an interview along with internships (both domestic and international) and leadership experience. It receives more “Extremely Likely” ratings than second business major, community volunteer work, and completion of an honors program or thesis even though those items were higher in Table 4 and Table 6. These results conform closely to our experience in advising returning study abroad students who report consistent interest in their global experiences from interviewers.

Among the final questions on the survey, respondents were asked in a series of three dyadic questions whether they would prefer a double major in business subjects, a double major including an arts or sciences major in addition to a business major, or a leadership position compared to a semester-long study abroad experience. Table 8 displays the results for the sample as a whole side by side with the International subsample.

Table 7: Results for the Survey Item—“Finally, **during an interview**, how likely would you be to ask questions or follow-up on these items or experiences that might appear on a résumé?” The table shows only the number that responded “Extremely Likely”

	<i>Full Sample</i>	<i>International Subsample</i>
Internship in a field related to business	208	107
International internship in a field related to business	165	87
A leadership position on campus in clubs or residence life	153	71
Study abroad for a full academic term	79	50
A second business major besides the primary business major	75	43
Community volunteer work	67	24
Completion of an honors program or thesis	58	34
Participation in campus clubs (nonleadership)	48	19
A second major in the arts or sciences besides the primary business major	41	20
Fluency in a foreign language	31	31
Study abroad for a short term 2–5 weeks	26	15

Table 8: “Very specifically, when it comes to making decisions on whether to interview or ultimately hire a candidate, and assuming all else equal, in which candidate would you have more interest?”

	<i>Entire Sample</i>	<i>International Subsample</i>
A candidate with both a first and second major in business disciplines	144	60
A candidate with one relevant business major and a study abroad experience	87	57
A candidate with one relevant business major and a second major in the arts or sciences	124	58
A candidate with one relevant business major and a study abroad experience	108	60
A candidate with one relevant business major and a campus leadership position	191	82
A candidate with one relevant business major and a study abroad experience	40	35

When asked explicitly, the entire sample preferred a double major to a study abroad experience. The situation is much less decisive for the subsample of the 122 respondents who either studied abroad themselves or have worked abroad. The results are close to even with the study abroad semester experience generating more interest about as frequently as the second major. The leadership position is preferred to a study abroad experience by the International subsample and overwhelmingly so by the balance of the sample.

V. IMPLICATIONS FOR ADVISORS

Business schools expect faculty members to advise and mentor students on academic and career choices. In the case of small- and medium-sized schools, this might be a formal responsibility, but even faculty members at larger schools often feel an informal obligation to work with students in this way. This study has implications for advisors and mentors. First, as the literature review suggests, study abroad experiences appear to develop and enhance many of the soft skills that make graduates more engaging and more effective in their professional lives. Employers claim to be searching for graduates displaying these skills that include multicultural awareness, adaptability, and communication. This study suggests that study abroad on the résumé may be attractive to potential employers, presumably because it implies these skills. It also suggests that a study abroad experience on the résumé may be a particular advantage if the recruiting professional either studied or worked abroad. Let us examine how faculty advisors might use these results.

Each fall, faculty members at the Lacy School make a presentation to all first-year business students regarding study abroad. The opening of the presentation focuses on why students should consider such an experience. A key point is how the experience helps students to grow and develop personally, particularly in their soft skills. Second, the faculty make the case that study abroad may provide a boost to student résumés and may help them gain an interview, especially if the reader has international experience. In addition, they note that interviewers almost certainly will ask about their study abroad experiences providing the candidate an opportunity to explain how the experience helped them develop the skills that are sought for the available position. The annual presentations to first-year students have been a key element in boosting study abroad participation to the forty percent level

cited earlier. The results of this study provide empirical evidence to support these arguments.

Once students have participated in study abroad and are at the point of seeking employment, academic and career advisors must help students use the experience to their greatest advantage. Advisors should encourage students to place the study abroad experience prominently on the résumé and include an indication of why the experience is professionally relevant. Again, brief résumé mention of a global perspective, improved cultural intelligence and enhanced communication skills are good examples.

Once students gain an interview, advisors can help them to prepare properly. Students may need help to articulate the personal and professional benefits of study abroad participation. First, advisors should encourage students to do background research on interviewers in order to frame responses and to form thoughtful questions. If a student learns that an interviewer has lived abroad, the student might build rapport by mentioning their common or similar experiences and asking about the interviewer's time in the country. A student might ask the interviewer, "I am curious, when you worked in Germany, what were the major differences you noticed in how your German teammates conducted business?" or "What surprised you the most about the influence of business law on business practice in France versus the U.S.?", thereby demonstrating that the student has gained a similar understanding from his experience. If dealing with an interviewer who has neither lived nor worked abroad, there are still potential connections the student might identify. Perhaps the interviewer has experience with a global team or global clients. Students can direct their comments and questions to these situations instead. Regardless of the interviewer's background, students should try to match their skills, experiences, achievements, and interests to the requirements outlined in the job description and from intelligence gained from other sources (e.g., informational interviews with employees of the company). For example, when asked an interview question such as "Why did you choose to study abroad?" or "What benefit did you derive from studying abroad?," students should try to match their responses to the criteria employers seek and that are derived from a study abroad experience (adaptability, teamwork, problem solving, multicultural sensitivity, interpersonal, and communication skills). The student might respond to such a question by answering, "I grew tremendously in my three months in Shanghai in many ways, but there are three main ways that I know will serve me well in any professional endeavor. I have a greater appreciation for a diverse team and the ability to work with colleagues from different cultures; an ability to adapt to changing or new environments; and

an increased ability to solve problems.” With every interview response, the student can provide an example or tell a story to demonstrate mastery of skills.

One popular framework for teaching students to tell a story in an interview is the “CAR” method (Context, Action, Result). Using the CAR method of storytelling, the student in the example above might tell a story of working with international teammates on a class project and the difficulties they were having in agreeing on an approach, tell what she did to better understand her teammates and to work through the problem, and the result (e.g., “We went from a being a dysfunctional group that could not agree on a direction to winning the case competition”).

Students might also inject humor in order to show the benefits derived. When asked what she gained from her study abroad experience, one student replied, “I gained a greater appreciation for the conveniences of home, that people are more alike than they are different, and that if I can get from the south of France to the north of France without a cell phone, I can do anything.” Lastly, students should be advised to draw upon their study abroad experiences, even if the interviewer does not ask directly, if doing so adds support to their fit for the particular role. Advisors and mentors may find the handout in Appendix A useful in advising students on how to articulate their study abroad experience in an interview.

VI. CONCLUSION

The objective of this study was to gain perspective on how recruiters and hiring managers of business school undergraduates view study abroad experiences relative to other experiences that might appear on résumés so that faculty advisors can better advise their students in their consideration of an array of available experiences. One clear implication of the study is the strong positive influence of internships and leadership experiences on employers reviewing résumés. Beyond those two features, preferences are less clear. When asked explicitly to rank candidate experiences, short-term study abroad experiences rank low and even the full academic term abroad experience ranks below such pursuits as a second major. Interestingly though, the results of the résumé rating exercise show a more favorable reaction to résumés with a study abroad experience compared to a double major in business subjects. The members of the non-International subsample were equally impressed by the study abroad résumés and the double major résumés. For the International subsample, there was more enthusiasm for

the study abroad résumés. Recall that the résumé-rating exercise was the first question in the survey and, at that point, respondents had no indication that study abroad was a focus of the survey. The fact that recruiters showed as much or more enthusiasm for the study abroad résumés as for the double major résumés in this blind test may indicate that recruiters have a subconscious bias in favor of a study abroad experience. As the résumé is often the recruiter's first introduction to a candidate, this would suggest that students may be more likely to gain an interview by choosing the study abroad experience over completion of a second major, if a choice must be made. Once students receive an interview invitation, advisors can help them prepare for the questions that will nearly inevitably arise about the student's study abroad experience and how it contributed to the student's development.

APPENDIX A: ARTICULATING THE STUDY ABROAD EXPERIENCE IN THE INTERVIEW

A study abroad experience requires a certain amount of risk taking and curiosity about the world, offers unique experiences, and develops skills that employers seek. It is up to you to help the employer see why your study abroad experience should matter to them and why it contributes to making you an attractive candidate for the particular position. Be prepared to draw upon your study abroad experiences even if the interviewer does not ask directly, if doing so adds support to your fit for the particular role.

❖ Know What Is Important to Employers

Employers rank the following among top skills they seek in candidates:

- Teamwork
- Interpersonal/Communication Skills
- Problem Solving
- Leadership

*Employers also value **adaptability** and an **appreciation for other cultures** (whether teammates are from different countries or the same country) **and how those cultural differences impact a team.***

❖ Know What Is Important for the Position

From what you know about the position from the job description and other research, jot down key qualities and skills the employer seeks for the position.

❖ How Do Your Study Abroad Experiences Match Up?

List key things you learned and skills gained from your study abroad experience.

❖ Prepare to Articulate It

- *Brainstorm memorable stories from your study abroad experience that demonstrate that you gained or improved upon those skills.*
- *Practice telling a few of those most salient stories. A good framework is CAR (Circumstance, Action, Result: Tell the circumstance, what action you took, and the result).*

❖ Know What Is Important to the Interviewer

Research the interviewer. Have they worked abroad, or have they managed/worked with global teams? If so, consider relevant questions you may want to ask. This offers a chance to build rapport and to demonstrate an appreciation of a global experience. For example, you might ask, “I am curious, when you worked in Germany, what were the major differences you noticed in how your German teammates conducted business?” or “What surprised you the most about how business law is practiced in France versus the U.S.?”

❖ Sample Interview Questions and Responses

- *“Why did you choose to study abroad?”*

“I specifically wanted to study International Business Law in China given China’s impact on the global economy, recent trade talks between the U.S. and China, and that China is making a big push in the artificial intelligence space, which interests me.”

- *“What benefit did you derive from studying abroad?”*

“I grew tremendously in my three months in China in so many ways, but there are three main ways that I grew that I know I will serve me well in any professional endeavor I take on: a greater appreciation for a diverse team and the ability to work with styles from different cultures, whether my teammates are from another country or have had very different experiences from me in the U.S.; an ability to adapt to change or new environments; and an increased ability to solve problems.

Here is a story that explains what I mean about learning to work with a diverse team: I was with a team on a project where we had to develop a strategy for a U.S. startup seeking to do business in China and we were having difficulty agreeing on an approach. Once I realized how my Chinese teammates brought unique perspectives to the problem because of their culture, I suggested we each play “devil’s advocate” for the other side. Doing so really highlighted for all of us the biases we were bringing to the table and helped us to incorporate all of those ideas into a more holistic strategy. We ended up going from being a very dysfunctional group that could not agree on a direction to earning the top grade on the assignment.”

- *Consider using humor in your response: “I gained a greater appreciation for the conveniences of home, that people are more alike than they are different, and that if I can get from the south of France to the north of France without a cell phone, I can do anything.”*