

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA SURVEY
Study Abroad Curriculum Integration
Adviser and Faculty Survey
Baseline Data 2001-2002

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In August 2001, the Office of Measurement Services collaborated with the University's Study Abroad Curriculum Integration team to complete the development of an adviser and faculty survey of study abroad. The purpose of the survey was to gather information on advisers' views of study abroad opportunities on campus, advisers' experiences working with students studying abroad, and background information. This document summarizes 2001-2002 baseline data of the perceptions of faculty and advisers from the University of Minnesota who responded to the Study Abroad Faculty and Adviser Survey.

METHOD

Initially, a set of twenty-two items was developed as part of the Study Abroad Curriculum Integration's Bush Foundation and FIPSE grants process. Items were revised by the Office of Measurement Services and further reviewed by an outside evaluator selected to evaluate the FIPSE and Bush Foundation grants. After several revisions, the survey was pilot-tested from August 6 to August 11, 2001 by members of the Study Abroad Curriculum Integration team.

On August 13 approximately 130 advisers and faculty members were invited to participate in the grant project's start up event. Completion of the survey was required by those who agreed to participate in the grant project. By September 17, 2001, 88 advisers had responded to the survey. Another 33 faculty and advisers took the survey as a requirement for participating in the October event.

In January 2002 faculty, advisers, directors and department heads were invited to attend a one day, campus wide conference on the Study Abroad Curriculum Integration initiative that was hosted on the Twin Cities campus on February 28, 2002. All invitees were asked to complete the online Faculty and Adviser Survey of Study Abroad. Data were collected and summarized on 136 faculty and advisers who completed the online survey from January, 2002 to March 4, 2002.

RESULTS

These findings summarize the perceptions of 224 faculty, advisers, department directors and department heads at the University of Minnesota on their views of undergraduate study abroad.

Views of Study Abroad

- Sixty-two percent of these respondents believe study abroad is a desirable and realistic part of the educational experience. Twenty-one percent see study abroad as an essential part of the educational experience and 8% think it should be required. Eleven percent believe it is not an option in their department or is unrealistic for students.
- Advisers and faculty were asked to rate seven statements about study abroad's relationship to students' learning on a six-point scale, with '1' meaning 'very important' and '6' meaning 'not at all important.' In order of importance, 66% believe it is very important for students to have the ability to work with persons whose beliefs and cultures differ from one's own, 62% believe it is very important for students to have an awareness and understanding of cultural differences and 32% believe it is important for persons to function effectively in another culture within their profession and to have a knowledge of current international issues and affairs. In contrast, only 6% view skills gained from an international work experience as very important to professionals working in their fields. Sixteen percent place a very high importance on second language competency.
- Advisers and faculty were asked to rate six additional statements on study abroad. Sixty percent strongly agree that study abroad is important to a student's personal development, 51% strongly agreed that study abroad enhances a student's ability to think critically and solve problems, and 37% strongly agree that study abroad enhances an undergraduate's lifelong career opportunities.

Opportunities for Study Abroad

- Of the 16 potential services offered by the campus study abroad office, participants believe that services most frequently available are study abroad catalogues, brochures, websites (50%), advising for study abroad selection (52%), information on study abroad grants / scholarships (52%), administration of study abroad programs (50%), and information on financial aid (52%.) Thirty-five percent of the respondents say they are unfamiliar with current study abroad services.
- Fifty-nine percent of the respondents say a student can use credit earned through study abroad towards requirements in their department. Forty-four percent say students can apply credits to major electives and 36% say credits earned through abroad can be applied to required major courses. However, only 14% say credits

earned though study abroad can apply to a senior or honors' thesis or to the honors program (13%). Twenty-seven percent can apply credit earned abroad to prerequisites for the major while 21% can apply credit earned abroad to internship requirements.

- Reasons advisers hear most frequently given by students who do not consider study abroad are: cost (56%), delay of graduation (19%), concerns about applying credits to requirements (15%) and time away from studies (13%.) Reasons cited as seldom given by students are opposition by faculty (28%) and racism (44%.)

Your International Experiences

- As undergraduates, only 27% of the respondents studied abroad. Fifty-three percent studied abroad for 3 months or less, and the countries they studied in ranged from Ghana to Russia.
- Thirty-four percent studied abroad as graduate students, with 40% studying 3 months or less and 33% studying more than 12 months. Countries of study ranged from Chile to Canada.
- Aside from studying abroad, 62% of the respondents say they have lived or worked outside of their home country. Thirty-three percent lived or worked abroad for 3 months or less, while 47% worked in the country for more than 12 months.
- Ninety-eight percent say they traveled outside of their home country sometime in their life. Fifty-five percent traveled for three months or less.
- Sixty-three percent have been involved in some type of international activity. Most have hosted / sponsored a student in their homes from another country or tutored a child in ESL.
- Seventeen percent claim they have an excellent knowledge of study abroad.
- Seventy-one percent have a working knowledge of more than one language and 27% believe they are very proficient in more than one language.

Background

- Eighty-four percent of the respondents are from the Twin Cities campus, 6 % are from Duluth and the rest are from Crookston or Morris.
- Seventy-one percent are faculty and 20% are professional advisers Sixty-seven percent teach undergraduate classes.

- Sixty-two percent are assigned to undergraduate advising responsibilities. Forty-three percent have worked in their positions for 5 years or less, while 47% have worked in their positions for more than 10 years.
- The number of students advised ranges from one to more than 500.
- The percentages of students advisers encourage to study abroad ranges from 0% to 100%.
- The percentages of students who ask about studying abroad without the prompting of advisers or faculty generally ranges from 0% to 50%, though it can be as high as 100% for several of the majors.
- Other comments from advisers and faculty are mixed. Some advisers and faculty are very interested but have limited experience. Others counsel non-traditional students who have families and these students are often less likely to inquire about study abroad.