

Global Education Research Reports



Faculty and Education Abroad

The Role of Faculty in Promoting Global Learning on U.S. Campuses



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Foreword

We are encouraged to see the thoughtful measures that many U.S. institutions are taking to prepare students for our rapidly globalizing era. Through the creation of innovative education abroad programs, encompassing the full gamut of study, research, volunteer or work opportunities, colleges and universities have opened up worlds of new possibility for U.S. students to take part in education abroad. There are many players who deserve recognition for this work, but one group in particular deserves special recognition for their unique role in supporting education abroad on U.S. campuses: the faculty.

When faculty have the opportunity to be engaged with education abroad, the benefits are manifold. Their knowledge and connections – so often built upon years of thoughtful study and research – support the creation of dynamic education abroad opportunities. Whether they are incorporating global learning into the classroom, serving as an advisor or mentor to students interested in pursuing research or their studies abroad, or directly leading a trip abroad, faculty have much to contribute. Students benefit from their knowledge and expertise, and faculty similarly have much to gain from the experience. Teaching, researching, or leading a trip abroad expands faculty members' knowledge base, leads to dialogue with possible new collaborators, or generates new research opportunities.

Though not all faculty have the time or resources to be engaged with education abroad, we know that with institutional support and the right resources, they can be strong advocates of education abroad at institutions, driving student participation in many direct and indirect ways. In this paper, IIE and the AIFS Foundation examine more closely the faculty role in this area, along with incentives for faculty to be more engaged in education abroad, the implications education abroad has for the tenure and promotion process, along with other opportunities for strengthening the link between faculty and education abroad.

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Introduction

In our increasingly interconnected world, institutions face pressure to both grow their global footprint and prepare students to succeed in the global economy after graduation. U.S. higher education's internationalization imperative has been a driving force for many colleges and universities since the early 2000s. Institutions have taken varied and innovative paths to infuse global learning into the classroom and ensure that all students are equipped with the competencies and critical skills necessary to succeed in a global environment.

Faculty are at the heart of the academic enterprise, and as such, it is no surprise that they also have a role to play in ensuring that education abroad opportunities are robust, dynamic, and accessible. Investigating the link between faculty and education abroad—and specific examples of institutions that have made considerable progress in expanding access to global learning and education abroad opportunities on campus—sheds light on opportunities and challenges that faculty face when engaging with education abroad, both as campus champions and leaders.

As a result of the nature of their work, faculty are ideally positioned to communicate directly with students about the inherent benefits of education abroad. Faculty can weave global learning into the fabric of campus learning, through curriculum development and design. Faculty-led study abroad programs are often popular among students and give faculty the chance to build on their subject matter expertise and global connections to create specialized and dynamic global learning opportunities for students. Although international offices and administrators may be tasked with implementing the overall vision of an individual campus' global strategy, faculty have much to contribute in terms of providing support to students, curriculum development, trip implementation, knowledge, and other resources.

Faculty are proven innovators and drivers of education abroad programs and early proponents of the concept. The University of Delaware's Junior Year Abroad, one of the earliest study abroad programs in the United States, was founded in 1923 at the suggestion of Professor Raymond W. Kirkbride, a veteran of World War I. After witnessing how the conflict devastated France, Dr. Kirkbride concluded that better understanding among nations would lead to more peaceful global relations. In its first year, the Junior Year Abroad sent eight students to study in France for one year and proved to be highly successful for many years after.

Over the years, many similarly visionary faculty leaders have stepped forward to propose and promote new global learning programs. As institutions seek to increase global learning opportunities for students of all backgrounds, new insights into the role of faculty in developing education abroad opportunities will play an important role in helping more institutions achieve their goals.

How Faculty Can Support Education Abroad on Campus

Faculty have a key role to play in expanding access to education abroad even if they do not lead education abroad or study abroad trips themselves. Leaders in the field credit faculty as significant sources of expansion or renewal of study abroad programs.ⁱ

Faculty engagement with education abroad begins at the curricular and departmental levels, supporting or designing courses and departmental processes that incorporate global learning and study abroad directly into the curriculum, or assigning academic credit for education abroad. Engaged faculty might also encourage other faculty to direct study abroad programs, and create departmental structures that support their colleagues leading study abroad programs, either by building international experiences into course curricula or by granting faculty the time off to lead trips.

With their close connections to students as teachers, advisors, and mentors, faculty play a significant role in encouraging—or not encouraging—students to participate in education abroad. This support can take the form of sharing information about education abroad opportunities with students, designing departmental curricula that facilitate education abroad, and creating academic advising guides or informational materials that highlight education

Faculty help expand or renew study abroad programs

When I reviewed the growth of study abroad participation and opportunities during this period, I discovered that in virtually every case, the growth was centered in particular departments and could be traced to the efforts of one and sometimes two faculty members.

Dr. Michael Stohl on his decade of service as former Dean of International Programs at Purdue University.

abroad opportunities embedded within major or minor course sequences.

In addition, faculty can be an important part of students' support system as they go through the process of deciding whether education abroad is right for them. Faculty have many possible roles to play, advising students formally or informally as they think about where they might want to go abroad, what activities or research they might pursue, and which programs or opportunities would be best suited to

their needs and interests. Faculty can write letters of recommendation for student education abroad applications, and participate as reviewers for study abroad scholarships, including national scholarships such as Gilman and Fulbright. Working with international offices is also key, as faculty must be aware of the most current education abroad opportunities available to best advise students.

Faculty have a role in supporting student transitions to and from education abroad, developing re-entry programs and encouraging students to participate in these re-entry programs once they return. As many students can attest, the benefits of going abroad continue long after the

conclusion of the program. There are many ways to continue to incorporate the lessons learned from education abroad into academic work and in the workforce. Students might also choose to become alumni ambassadors for study abroad programs. Faculty can support students by encouraging them to share the benefits of their experience with others, reflect on the lessons they learned while abroad, and develop strategies for maintaining an intercultural perspective in the classroom and beyond.

Faculty-Led Programs

In addition to supporting education abroad through their work on campus, faculty have the option of taking part even more directly: developing and leading trips themselves. Faculty-led study abroad programs offer many benefits to students and faculty alike, enabling faculty to draw on their subject matter expertise and their connections abroad. Among many benefits, leading a trip abroad can help faculty generate new research ideas and create connections with academics and other important contacts abroad.

Yet leading a trip requires more than enthusiasm and subject matter expertise. Coordinating the logistics of a trip poses several challenges. Once on the ground, faculty must shepherd students through any difficulties that arise while on the trip and be on hand to respond effectively and proactively to crises. As a result, they are best positioned to succeed with support from a strong coordinating office in their home campus that provides logistics and support, from training and information pre-departure, to crisis coordination while overseas, and support with re-entry.

Students are drawn to faculty-led programs at Texas A&M University (TAMU)

We found that out of our plethora of study abroad opportunities, Aggies tend to prefer faculty-led programs. Partly, this is because our faculty who lead study abroad programs love what they do. It's often their enthusiasm for this model—and their connections with foreign institutions—that makes these programs a success.

Pascale Parker, Associate Director, TAMU Study Abroad Programs Office

The expansion of faculty-led study abroad programming at Texas A&M University (TAMU) provides insights into how strong administrative support and a coordinating office can lead to a significant growth in student mobility and provide faculty with the resources they need to successfully lead trips. Pascale Parker, associate director of TAMU's Study Abroad Programs Office, manages the institution's faculty-led programs. When she first arrived at TAMU in 2007, there were just 35 faculty-led programs. Today, the institution offers 125 faculty-led programs throughout the year. Parker credits

the jump in faculty-led programming to TAMU's Vision 2020, which includes diversifying and

globalizing the TAMU community as one of its 12 imperatives. This institutional commitment helped catalyze the expansion in opportunities.

TAMU's faculty-led programs vary considerably in size and focus, with the majority taking place over the summer. Some programs, for example, have as few as 10 students, while another takes 80 to 90 students on a marketing course traveling to different European destinations. Programs also vary widely in length with some lasting 2 weeks and others lasting 18.

Faculty who lead study abroad programs often think outside the box, Parker notes. In many ways, they are visionaries and have a good sense of the possible opportunities that can arise from collaboration with institutions outside of the United States. They also have close connections with institutions and companies overseas that lead to successful partnerships. Such collaboration helps them expand experiential learning options they offer to students, such as developing hybrid programs and reciprocal exchanges.

Institutions can also offer faculty-led programs in partnership with third-party study abroad providers. American Institute For Foreign Study (AIFS) Customized Faculty-Led programs allow colleges and universities the ability to create and conduct their own academic programs abroad with faculty teaching their own curriculum. These partnerships are formal arrangements in which AIFS provides logistical support, student services, classrooms, housing facilities and cultural activities. AIFS also offers programs that enable institutions to send their faculty to teach courses at an overseas campus with students taking additional courses at the local university.ⁱⁱ

Short-term study abroad programs have become increasingly popular over the past decade, allowing students to go abroad without interrupting their academic, athletic, or work schedules unduly. According to the Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange, in 2016/2017, 64.6 percent of U.S. student studying abroad took part in a short-term study abroad program, defined as a summer program or a program lasting eight weeks or less.ⁱⁱⁱ For similar reasons, short-term programs tend to be less of a burden on faculty schedules.

At Atlanta-based Spelman College, faculty-led programs underpin the institution's considerable success in promoting a culture of international education on campus. Spelman is a national leader in study abroad, sending more Black students to study abroad than any

Faculty-led programs encourage more students to go abroad from Spelman College

Faculty are the main drivers of internationalization at Spelman College, and faculty-led programs have proven to be particularly popular among students. Whenever there is a bump in study abroad numbers, it often occurs after new faculty-led programs are introduced.

Dr. 'Dmeji Togunde, Associate Provost for Global Education, Spelman College

other baccalaureate institution in the United States.

Dr. Togunde joined Spelman in 2011 to helm the then newly created Gordon-Zeto Center for Global Education, Spelman's hub of internationalization initiatives. Spelman's short-term programs on intercultural engagement, leadership studies, and classes in globalization developed in partnership with CIEE, DIS, IES, and CAPA, have proven to be highly effective in encouraging faculty and students alike to take part in study abroad. When the program started six years ago, eight faculty participated in four trips to four countries with 100 students. In summer 2019, 20 faculty will be travelling to 11 locations with 250 students, an average of 22 per location.

Short-term study abroad programs taking place for two weeks in the summer help introduce Spelman faculty and students to the study abroad experience. Faculty participate in an assessment capacity and serve as co-directors working with study abroad professionals, giving them the chance to see how impactful study abroad can be for students and for their own professional goals. Their brevity, Dr. Togunde notes, helps both students and faculty avoid conflicts with the demands of the academic year.

Institutional Support

For global learning and education abroad to truly take hold as an institutional commitment, many stakeholders, in addition to the faculty, must buy into the process. These include higher education presidents, provosts, administrators, and alumni, who can help support study abroad scholarships and programs. A strong international office or senior international officer are an integral part of shaping campus vision and mission for global learning as well as centralizing disparate faculty-led or -initiated programs. According to the American Council on Education report, internationalization is "increasingly an administrative-intensive endeavor, coordinated by a single office and/or a senior international officer."^{iv}

At Agnes Scott College, a private liberal arts women's college located in metro Atlanta, Georgia, the case for centralized institutional support to integrate global learning throughout the academic experience is clear. Agnes Scott's Center for Global Learning coordinates the first-year SUMMIT curriculum, study abroad and faculty-led opportunities, and provides services to the college's international student population.

SUMMIT is the cornerstone of the college's efforts to introduce students to global learning, and is intended to cultivate a global mindset in students that will travel with them throughout the rest of their careers at Agnes Scott. Through SUMMIT, first-year Agnes Scott students take a foundational global learning course, Gateways, that introduces them to key global issues. In their second semester, they build on the lessons of their first semester with the Global Journeys course. During Journeys, each section has a unique, faculty-led focus, and participates in a week-long trip to a new country or city. The majority of the destinations are outside the United States.

Building global learning into the first year of college gives students an experience that will shape their education over the next three years, says Gundolf Graml, Professor and Assistant Dean for Global Learning. Guided by college-wide global learning goals, faculty from across the college and across disciplines collaborate to make SUMMIT a success. Every year starts out with a call for faculty volunteers to design and lead a global learning course, ensuring a constant rotation of new course offerings and giving new faculty and disciplines a chance to take part in the program. A faculty committee works with the SUMMIT director to oversee the curriculum so that all changes occur with the faculty in the driver's seat.

Education abroad opportunities can help inform students' academic interests and pursuits on campus

Faculty see SUMMIT as an opportunity to engage with first-year students who have not yet decided on their concentration, to highlight their unique disciplinary approaches and their thinking.

Gundolf Graml, Professor and Assistant Dean for Global Learning, Agnes Scott College

A report from the American University Spring 2018 School of International Service Practicum Program examined 29 institutions that successfully expanded study abroad participation, underscoring the central role that faculty have in generating momentum around education abroad. In this study, “faculty engagement and development” emerged as the most commonly cited factor leading to institutional success in meeting targets.^v

The report identified three key channels through which faculty can support their institutions' Generation Study Abroad (GSA) commitment goals, including faculty-led programming, student outreach, international program design and creation, and curriculum integration. As the authors note, creating successful study abroad programs requires taking stock of input from stakeholders across the institution as well as student interests and needs.^{vi}

To ensure quality programs, it is beneficial that creation is demand driven, not arbitrarily decided. As one community college noted, they don't say, “Hey, we want to do a program in India ... who wants to go there,” but rather allow faculty to deliver proposals through a streamlined process that aligns new programming with strengths and interests of the faculty as well as the curriculum.^{vii}

How to Support Faculty and Education Abroad

Faculty have many priorities, including but not limited to teaching, conducting research, sitting on committees, attending conferences, and publishing articles and books. Tenure track faculty members in particular face tremendous pressure to publish, present at conferences, and bring in

funding to support their work. Leading a trip abroad or even prioritizing supporting students interested in going abroad simply may not be compatible with their preexisting commitments.

International engagement is a limited consideration in the tenure and promotion process

Ultimately, the ideal of truly comprehensive internationalization will be out of reach for most institutions if international engagement isn't considered in the promotion and tenure process. Faculty are tasked with many different responsibilities and have to prioritize what is rewarded. When it comes to study abroad, even if they have the desire to lead a trip, they may feel they can't direct the required time and energy away from research and other activities.

Robin Matross Helms, Director of the American Council on Education's Center for Internationalization and Global Engagement

In short, even though global learning may be a prominent part of an institution's strategic thinking, if it is not a significant part of its reward system, then faculty may be hesitant to dedicate the bulk of their time and energy to engaging with education abroad. The challenge institutions must tackle is how to properly recognize and ultimately reward faculty for furthering their engagement with education abroad.

According to the 2017 ACE report, Mapping Internationalization on U.S. Campuses, only 10 percent of U.S. institutions recognize international work or experience as a consideration in faculty promotion and tenure decisions. International background also has a limited impact on tenure and promotion decisions: Just less than half of responding institutions said that they "occasionally" or "frequently" give

preference to candidates with international background, experience, or interests when hiring faculty in fields that are not explicitly international [or] global, compared to 40 percent in 2011."^{viii}

Faculty who are interested in leading a trip abroad may be discouraged from doing so for a number of reasons. Without strong institutional support, they might lack the resources necessary to successfully plan a trip and manage logistics when abroad. Faculty are not necessarily event planners, and can benefit from support with logistics so that they can focus on developing a successful curriculum and agenda. Faculty may need training in areas such as emergency protocols and how to support student needs abroad outside of the purely academic. Finally, compensation for leading a trip abroad can be low, although the amount varies from institution to institution.

Generally speaking, if the incentives are lacking—no formal recognition in the tenure process, limited compensation, and limited logistical support—faculty may be discouraged from engaging with education abroad. Considering and addressing these barriers may help institutions generate more enthusiasm and engagement with education abroad among their faculty.^{ix}

One of the fundamental challenges facing faculty

[Institutions] create the reward structure and vote on who is deserving and why—in short, they decide what counts as professional achievement. The reward structure includes not only salary but tenure. If the [institution] does not value international learning, international research, international research collaboration, international development work, or international service, it will not be rewarded.

Dr. Michael Stohl on his decade of service as former Dean of International Programs at Purdue University

Despite these barriers, experts say that faculty are key to building a successful culture of global learning on campus and helping motivate students to go abroad. Beth Laux, Director of Learning Abroad at the University of Utah, says, “What we found is that without faculty who champion study abroad, it is very hard for students to imagine themselves going abroad.”

The University of Utah is home to a large non-traditional student population, or students who might be working full-time, have a family to support, or be 25 years or older. As a result of these many competing commitments, Laux says that without faculty members willing to encourage students to apply and go abroad, there would be much less participation in study abroad.

“In the typical graduate student population, work and children might get in the way of going abroad,” Laux explains. “At the University of Utah, these barriers apply to the undergraduate population as well, so our programs are designed to accommodate students at every level of the academy.”

Approximately 70 percent of students who go abroad participate in faculty-led programs, according to Laux. Another key innovation is the Global U Program, an optional program within the Learning Abroad office. The Global U program is designed to highlight the transferable skills that students learn while studying abroad. It’s based on four badges: research experience, career development, language immersion, and community engagement.

Many of the arguments for study abroad center around its ability to build students’ capacity for cultural competence, soft skills, problem-solving abilities, and the like. By contrast, Laux said, “Our students are very focused on getting a return for the investment.” In other words, if they are going to make a sacrifice to go abroad, they want to see concrete value from it. “Shifting to

the badge model changed students' mindsets about study abroad, and we really began to see the participation rates go up," Laux says.

Developing the badge system also required a new level of engagement from stakeholders across the university. Faculty played a key role in the development and integration of these programs in the curriculum. "We are lucky to have a culture of faculty engagement with study abroad on campus—it has made developing and implementing our programs a much smoother process," Laux comments.

Summary

Institutional support can have a transformative effect on faculty and their ability to engage with education abroad, whether they are interested in supporting education abroad in more indirect ways or by leading a trip themselves. Each institution is different and as a result will best succeed in supporting faculty engagement with education abroad by developing solutions, practices, and processes best adapted to the individual needs of the institution.

Clear communication and structure can help ensure that the administration and faculty are on the same page as they engage with education abroad. Without institutional backing, faculty are much more likely to have to go it alone, and engagement with education abroad will remain something that faculty do out of their own personal or academic interests.

Many institutions have goals to engage students with education abroad, but less so for their faculty, targeting recruiting international students. Other institutions, notably GSA Commitment Partners, are also focused on increasing student participation in study abroad on campus. Yet engaging faculty in education abroad promises to deliver benefits to faculty too, and by extension, the institution at large. Engaging with education abroad introduces faculty to new ideas, perspectives, and people, and energizes their thinking and creates new ideas and possibilities for research.

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