

***Faculty as Global Learners:
Investigating the Impact of Leading Study Away Programs***
Forum on Education Abroad Annual Conference
March 21-23, 2018

Overview of the Study

Numerous studies have sought to measure the impact of study abroad on student outcomes, but relatively little attention has been paid to the corresponding faculty members who lead such programs. Given that global programs are of high strategic value, costly, and exact a heavy opportunity cost; it is critical to understand all facets of global programs. Researchers completed a multi-year, multi-institution study to investigate the experiences of more than 220 faculty members who led short-term global programs at selective private liberal arts colleges. Our study sought to understand the motivations and experiences of global program faculty and gather data to inform university policies and professional development support.

Between 2015-2016, researchers conducted a two-part electronic survey of faculty members at private liberal arts colleges who have led at least one study away or study abroad (SA/SA) program. While geographically disparate, the institutions share many common traits, including low faculty to student ratios, residential campuses, liberal arts curricula, moderate to high student selectivity, and small undergraduate enrollments (1,000 to 5,000 students).

- **Phase I** consisted of an electronic survey that was distributed broadly to more than 800 faculty members at 31 private liberal arts colleges: the 16 member institutions of the Associated Colleges of the South (ACS), the 14 member institutions of the Associated Colleges of the Midwest (ACM), and Elon University. [223 responses received, 28 institutions represented]
- For the **Phase II** survey, the researchers contacted only the willing Phase participants—providing a link to a follow-up survey with eight open-ended questions focusing on personal experiences and pedagogical practices. These colleges share many similar educational values, such as stated commitments to the liberal arts and global learning. [72 completed responses received]

Preliminary Findings from the Study:

1. Faculty members at liberal arts colleges reported benefitting from consistent, strong institutional support across the entire SA/SA experience (from proposal to re-entry).
2. Faculty who led SA/SA programs reported a variety of positive changes.
3. Faculty reported that their institutions do not support the things they say they value in global learning.
4. Demographic variables--such as tenure-status, discipline, and gender--did not differentiate between more and less successful SA/SA program leaders.
5. Faculty members integrated many AAC&U recognized High-Impact Practices into their SA/SA programs.

Discussion Questions:

1. What are the implications of the findings regarding faculty development and institutional policies on your campus?
2. How do your (personal) experiences leading study away and study abroad programs compare to the findings?
3. Does your campus articulate the relationship between support for faculty global learning and support for student global learning?
4. How do the findings of the survey challenge you to rethink your beliefs and assumptions about study abroad/study away?

Contact us:

- Joan Gillespie, Vice President, Associated Colleges of the Midwest, jgillespie@acm.edu
- Sarah Glasco, Associate Professor of French, Elon University, sglasco@elon.edu
- Dana Gross, Associate Dean for Interdisciplinary and General Studies and Professor of Psychology at St. Olaf College, grossd@stolaf.edu
- Lisa Jasinski, Special Assistant to the Vice President for Academic Affairs, Trinity University; ljasinsk@trinity.edu
- Prudence Layne, Associate Professor of English, Elon University, playne@elon.edu

This study was conducted in conjunction with research seminar “Integrating Global Learning with the University Experience: Higher-Impact Study Abroad and Domestic Off-Campus Study” hosted by the Center for Engaged Learning at Elon University.