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What Are the Benefits of Education Abroad? What Do We Convey to UD Students About This?

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II. What Are the Benefits of Education Abroad? What Do We Convey to UD Students About This?

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Benefits of Education Abroad

Some of the benefits student get by studying abroad include:

- Employability
- Working within a diverse climate
- Experience of the “other” (important given our racial demographics in EA)
- Thinking/acting creatively in a fluctuating environment
- Foreign language skills
- Intercultural development: “Intercultural competence is essential for transcending ethnocentrism and establishing effective, positive relations across cultural boundaries both internationally and domestically” (Mitch Hammer, 2012)

UD’s SAIL Program (Semester Abroad and Intercultural Leadership) is a specific example of how we are being more intentional about intercultural development and positive intercultural engagement within the UD community. SAIL stresses the following:

- Importance of reentry and cohort-style learning
- Intervention and reinforced learning (education abroad provides a set program in which to build critical skills during a set timeframe versus a four-year education)
- Intercultural leadership
- Intercultural development theory
- Community engagement
- Shared learning
- Pivoting to career

What are some personal experiences or stories that illustrate my intercultural development and awareness path? How does this influence my career in international education and executing education abroad programs?

- Answering to American politics while abroad in Europe (e.g. George W. Bush in the 2000s, the Clinton/Lewinsky scandal in 1990s)
- Intercultural conflict in Northern Ireland (neighborhood murals, taxi rides, bars, symbolism)
- Stereotypes while in the Peace Corps (LGBTQ issues in Antigua, sexual harassment almost daily)
- Experience in Uganda with missionary groups (excluded from conversations by American missionaries, employment of HCNs in which “compensated” with prayer)
- Experience in Thailand as student and researcher on what constitutes “internationalization” from a non-Western point of view

Demographic/Diversity Profile of UD Education Abroad

- 800-plus students abroad in 2016–17
- 4,000-plus in past 5 years
- 37% male (vs. 34% nationally)
- 63% female (vs. 66% nationally)
- 57% to Europe (vs. 53% nationally)
- Majority abroad during the summer (when other students work?) (national)
- 85% white and increasing (74% nationally and increasing)
- Latin America destinations are the most popular for African Americans study-abroad students, trending against others in which Europe or Asia are destinations
- Service-learning/mission-based programs are the most popular for African American students (36%), followed by short-term faculty-led programs (25%) and the China Institute (11%)
- Only white and Hispanic students going abroad at higher proportions to UD enrollment

Recommendations Moving Forward

- Marketing: How are we advertising these programs or conveying their real value and inclusiveness?
- Advising: How are we “hooking” students and talking through specific issues with professionalism and trust?

- Employment: How does our staffing in Education Abroad stack up?
- Networking: Who are principal gatekeepers to underrepresented students?
- Research: What does it tell us?
- Affordability: Can we reassess our institutional support and program models?