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Study abroad has high impact on future careers

National statistics and the firsthand experiences of Ohio State alumni show that a strengthened global perspective gained by studying abroad can help students excel in the work force.

Jason Block in Hyde Park, London.

Ohio State graduates who studied abroad during their time at the university said that while some of the most memorable parts of their study abroad experiences were the friendships made, the exploration of unfamiliar cultures and being outside of the United States for the first time, it is the impact on their careers that has provided them with the most tangible, long-term benefit.

“I have never had a job interview where I was not asked about my study
abroad experience. I keep it on my resume because it is such a great conversation starter,” said Jason Block, who studied in England and graduated from Ohio State in 2006 with a degree in accounting.

Kristopher Lucius, a 2004 graduate, said that one of the main reasons he was hired at his first job after graduation was for his "incredibly mature worldview" which was developed during his 18-month tenure studying in Slovenia.

Statistics back up these students’ experiences. According to a study conducted by Global HR News and commissioned by The Scholar Ship, eight in 10 HR executives viewed study abroad experience as a critical factor in job placement overseas and 73 percent said that a study abroad experience was an important aspect in reviewing resumes of job candidates for entry-level positions.

Higher education organizations are pushing lawmakers for a more international education experiences for college students. The National Association for International Educators (NAFSA) and The Alliance for International Education and Cultural Exchange have created the “International Education Policy for U.S. Leadership, Competitiveness, and Security.” This document outlines reasons why the United States needs an international education policy to globally educate its students in order to remain competitive in the global market. One aspect of this policy is to integrate study abroad as a main component into undergraduate education. According to NAFSA, in the 2004-2005 school year, approximately 205,000 American students earned academic credit abroad representing only 1 percent of total enrollment of
students in higher education institutions.

The need for international experiences as part of an academic program is essential now more than ever before because of a globalized society driven by the world economy and technology. Many alumni believe it is a necessity for students to have a broader knowledge of different cultures and societies in order to communicate effectively and to have the ability to solve problems and conflicts on a worldwide scale.

“Without a global perspective, the assumption is that everyone is like you, and that is a guaranteed path to failure,” said Josh Greenburg, an IT consultant for Battelle who studied in England and graduated from Ohio State in 2001.

Noel Coffman, a 2004 graduate studied in England for the 2001-2002 school year. He now works as a field engineer recruiter contacting potential recruits all over the world.

“My company works in over 80 countries and has over 140 different nationalities in our workforce. We never think just locally,” said Coffman. “Therefore, it is very important to be aware of how other cultures work and their similarities and differences. We live and work in a global market, therefore we must think globally.”

Living and learning within a different culture and society also helps students develop important skills that help to shape their career paths. A survey of 3,500 students conducted by the Institute for International Education reported 76 percent of study abroad alumni said they “acquired skill sets that influenced their career path” and 62 percent said that study abroad “ignited an interest in a career direction pursued after the experience.”

Katie Andrews graduated in 2001 with degrees in English and African American Studies. She studied in Bath, England and now works as an administrative coordinator and grants manager for the TEEN (Teen Education and Employment Network) Program within the Godman Guild Association. Her time in England helped shape what she wanted in a career.

“The experience of seeing poverty in many different shapes and sizes has truly led to my career path. I know that I can have an impact globally and therefore I focus my energy on organizations that fight poverty locally and globally,” Andrews said.

$190,000 in grants and scholarships
In the past year the Office of International Affairs has administered and awarded close to $190,000 in scholarships and grants to undergraduate and graduate students as well as members of our faculty, to study, conduct research, attend conferences, make presentations and collaborate with colleagues – in countries all around the world.

Our undergraduate students are traveling to Schwäbisch Gmünd to study design and to Tomsk to study Russian. Graduate students conducting research for their dissertations are going to Krakow to learn more about social welfare in Eastern Europe and to Costa Rica to study land use and climate controls of soil organic carbon. And, our faculty are writing books about Greek tragedy, colonialism, ethnicity, and translation, and arranging a symposium on movies of central and Eastern Europe at The National Film School in Łodz.

These are just some examples of the academic enterprises that are the result of students and faculty seeking additional financial support for their international studies and research. As more and more students and faculty take advantage of traveling the globe to gain international insight, the need for financial support will grow as well.

The Office of International Affairs has begun organizing a wide variety of scholarship and grant opportunities offered by various colleges and departments across campus at oia.osu.edu. They are categorized by undergraduate, graduate and faculty as well as major and/or area of interest so that the scholarships are easier to sift through. Currently close to 50 scholarship opportunities are listed on the International Affairs website – primarily in the arts and sciences and through the Office of International Affairs – to help fund international opportunities for the Ohio State community. If your
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deptment offers scholarships to study abroad, please send information to oia@oia.osu.edu.

Books come to life on South African tour

Students taking a class in children's literature had a rare chance to compare book learning with real life, thanks to a close view of South Africa.

Observatory Junior School in South Africa.

"It was amazing to go and see a part of the world and a culture so different than our own," said John Foust ('07, '09 MA). While a graduate student in Teaching and Learning in the College of Education and Human Ecology, he was among eight Ohio State and three Ashland University students on a South African study tour that visited four schools. They prepared for the trip by taking a Teaching and Learning course in South African children's literature.

The goal was to give students a cross-cultural perspective through both reading and experiences and to explore the differences in education practices between South Africa and the United States, said Barbara Lehman, professor of Teaching and Learning. She was the tour's co-resident director with her husband, Daniel Lehman, professor of English at Ashland University.

In contrast to the U.S., the nation's 11 languages require a different attitude toward bilingual instruction. "It was enlightening to see how they respect one another and their cultures enough to adapt learning to fit the needs of the children," said Kaylin Williams. In fact, it is mandatory for every school to offer three languages.
"The students were so moved by what they saw that they made two donations," Lehman said. The first was to Biblionef, which prints books in all 11 national languages used in South Africa. The donation went to buy books to help fill bare shelves in the Capricorn Primary library. The second chance to give came at Observatory Junior School, where study tour participants bought children's artwork. The proceeds directly benefited the school's programs.

Williams and Foust urge students and educators to take advantage of international study opportunities.

"If the opportunity to go abroad is available, take the opportunity to experience it. You truly do not understand how big the world really is until you go somewhere where everything is completely different," Foust said.

Williams added, "You will return with memories that will last a lifetime. I feel more blessed and know what is important after seeing what my life could have been like."

Three Students Have Been Awarded Prestigious Fulbright-Hays Grants

Three doctoral candidates from Ohio State have been awarded the prestigious Fulbright-Hays grant by the U.S. Department of Education. Matthew Curtis, department of Slavic and East European Languages and Literatures, Amelia Hubbard, department of Anthropology, and David McLaughlin, department of Spanish and Portuguese, are the recipients of the Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad (DDRA)
These Fulbright-Hays DDRA awards represent over $105,000 in research funding for 2009-2010. There are only approximately 130 Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad awards given annually nationwide.

Curtis will conduct research for his dissertation in Kosovo and Albania for 12 months examining the topic of “Slavic-Albanian Language Contact, Convergence, and Coexistence.” Curtis was inspired by an article by Robert Greenberg which proposed that a handful of overlooked linguistic similarities between the dialects of Western Macedonian and Southwestern Montenegrin were evidence of an older South Slavic dialect that crossed over to the current territory of Albania and Kosovo. He hopes his research uncovers the mystery of South Slavic dialectology and strengthens the understanding of the mutual cultural and linguistic influence that the languages of Slavic and Albanian had on one another.

Amelia Hubbard

Hubbard will travel to Kenya for six months to conduct her dissertation research on the origins and development of regional trading networks along Kenya’s coast. This study will examine dental traits and human DNA in populations residing in Taita (inland) and Swahili (coastal). The purpose of the research is to determine the degree of biological relatedness (biodistance) between these two populations; and re-examine commonly used methods of biodistance analysis to determine whether these methods can accurately assess biodistance among populations. The results of this study will provide a baseline for future comparative archaeological research into long-term changes in the biological relationships between the Taita and
Swahili populations due to the development of regional trading networks.

McLaughlin’s research will take him to Brazil where he will spend nine months researching the topic: Sampling Hip Hop and Making Noise: Transcultural Flows, Citizenship, Identity in Brazilian Hip Hop. This project will examine Brazilian hip hop as a space of contestation in which marginalized Brazilians of all ethnicities lay claims to citizenship and identity, pursue social justice, and contest economic dislocation. It will examine the transnational flow of hip hop and the use of foreign art forms to address local and national issues, thereby situating hip hop within the Brazilian (anthropophagi/cultural cannibalization) and Latin American (transculturation) traditions of hybridity.

David McLaughlin

The Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad (DDRA) Fellowship Program provides opportunities to doctoral candidates to engage in full-time dissertation research abroad in modern foreign languages and area studies. The program is designed to contribute to the development and improvement of the study of modern foreign languages and area studies in the United States

The Office of International Affairs administers the Fulbright-Hays program for Ohio State. Grant competitions are held annually. Doctoral candidates interested in applying for the FY 2010 award, should contact Joanna Kukielka-Blaser (kukielka-blaser.1@osu.edu). For more information, visit Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad.
Former Mershon fellow helps commanders plan strategy

Imagine a world in which military commanders at the highest levels have access to the latest research to help them prioritize objectives, assess risk, and devise strategies to reduce that risk.

That world is at hand, thanks to work by former Mershon Center fellow and Ohio State alumnus Michael Fischerkeller.

Fischerkeller is Director of Combatant Command Program at the Institute for Defense Analyses (IDA), a non-profit organization that administers research and development to assist the United States government in addressing important national security issues. For his work, Fischerkeller is winner of IDA's Andrew J. Goodpaster Award for Excellence in Research.

Fischerkeller's project began in 2004, when IDA assigned him as part of a pilot program to provide onsite analytical support to the U.S. Pacific Command, one of the Defense Department's 10 joint combatant commands.

To improve the process by which the command identified and set priorities for its resource needs, Fischerkeller developed a process and methodology called Linking Plans to Resources (LPTR).

Among the steps in LPTR are:
Identifying the operational objectives or effects for each phase of a mission and mapping capabilities to achieve those objectives or effects.

Conducting capability assessments to assess risk.

Identifying mitigating strategies for capability gaps.

LPTR was so successful in helping U.S. Pacific Command identify capability needs linked to ongoing and assigned missions that soon other combatant commanders began adopting the methodology as well. By 2006, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff encouraged all combatant commanders to use LPTR to perform capability assessments, identify gaps, and decide where to accept increased risk.

With this support, IDA expanded its combatant command program and appointed Fischerkeller as director. He recruited and trained IDA researchers for the assignments, established communications among them to share ideas, and traveled frequently among the commands to facilitate the reception and implementation of the LPTR process and methodology.

In 2008, Fischerkeller deployed to the headquarters of the Multi-National Force-Iraq in Baghdad. Over a four-month period, he developed a methodology for assessing the success of ongoing operations to inform command decisions on troop strength, missions and roles and responsibilities.

Gen. David Petraeus, the U.S. commander in Iraq, supported this approach, and elements of Fischerkeller's methodology were introduced into his monthly updates. After Petraeus became commander of U.S. Central Command, Fischerkeller was asked to participate in drafting a strategy for this area of responsibility.

In just a few years, Fischerkeller's idea has evolved from a concept to an experiment to an accepted practice that is changing the way in which the Department of Defense identifies, compares, prioritizes and addresses Combatant Command needs in the resource allocation process.

International Student Profile
Ed Nangle in the greenhouse.

Name: Edward Nangle

City and home country: Enniscorthy, County Wexford, Ireland

Year in school: Second year of PhD program

Major/minor: Horticulture and Crop Science

What are your career plans after college? Teaching somewhere in the world.

How long have you been in the United States/Columbus? 4 and a half years. I arrived from Australia in October of 2004.

Why did you choose Ohio State? Its reputation is world renowned within my industry and I had done an international internship through OSU in 1999 which introduced me to campus which I immediately decided that I wanted to study on.

What has most surprised you about your experience in Columbus and the United States? The options to do so many things whether it is involving travel, lifestyle or education. The intensity with which people follow college sports was also very surprising.

What has been the hardest thing to adapt to since you’ve come to Columbus? Not too much – coming from an English speaking country made it very easy to find where things were and it was very easy to get
around once I bought a car.

What have you done to keep yourself busy? Played a lot of sports, soccer, Australian rules football and traveling as much as possible to see the country. I made it to Phoenix for the football championship game and really enjoyed the experience out there.

What is the most fun/exciting thing you’ve done since you’ve arrived at Ohio State? Meeting all the people and making friends for life who have become part of how I look at life, and the buildup to football season and how the atmosphere changes on campus - it is as if you can taste the sense of excitement every year.

How has the Office of International Affairs helped you adapt to campus life? They helped me to understand the system and how to work within it. They also showed me a range of options while quickly helping me to feel comfortable with the sheer size of the university and how the lifestyle is here compared to Ireland.

Geneva internships a first at Ohio State

A group of 19 students will begin laying the ground work for their future careers working at international agencies when they leave in September for Geneva, Switzerland as part of the Office of International Affairs’ newest study abroad program.

The Geneva Internship is a quarter-long program which allows students to intern at international agencies, earn academic credit and gain international work experience. The program works in conjunction with EUSA, an internship provider that places students with European organizations.

Stephen Pytlik, a sophomore in international studies and political science, hopes the program will be a stepping stone into a possible career with the state department, justice department or in intelligence.

“The program was really a perfect representation of everything I wanted in a study abroad experience. It represented a tangible working experience, but even more, it represented an international working experience. As someone who wants to pursue a job that allows me to travel and work internationally, I believed this would be a perfect first step,” Pytlik said.

“Internships are big. We definitely want to offer that for our students,” said Leslie Anderson, program coordinator for the Geneva
program. Providing students with international internships, as well as offering more programs in Switzerland were two primary reasons for developing this program.

The development of the program began last summer when Tony Mughan, a political science professor and director of the International Studies Program, was approached by the Office of International Affairs after learning about the EUSA program. Mughan said the international studies program had been searching for an international internship program for which students could earn academic credit. In the past, the department created individual programs for students. Mughan traveled to Geneva to learn more about the specifics of the program.

Mughan said he feels that the program will be an asset to Ohio State’s study abroad program. It is the only OSU-sponsored international internship program and there is a wide variety of international agencies located in Geneva. While EUSA does offer internship programs in other major foreign cities such as Dublin, Madrid or London, Mughan said that internships in those cities would be more domestically focused.

“Geneva is probably the archetypal international city in the world,” Mughan said.

Students from other universities who have participated in this program have been placed with agencies such as Swiss Style Magazine, the U.N., the International AIDS Society and Allied International. Ohio State students who participate in this program will receive a total of 15 graded credits at the completion of the program. Students will intern Monday through Thursday for 32 hours a week and also complete a five credit-hour course on Swiss life and culture. Both the course and the internship are in English, however, some students are anxious about language barriers while on the job.

“For me, I am most nervous about the language barrier,” said Kelly Davis, a junior in political science and economics, who hopes to intern with a non-government organization. Davis studied German but is worried she will find herself in a situation where she needs to know French, the primary language spoken in Geneva.

After the students were accepted into the program, a representative from EUSA came to Ohio State to conduct personal interviews with the students for the internship placement process. EUSA works with agencies to place students based on their majors and career goals. However, EUSA cannot guarantee that the agency they are placed with will completely match up to the students’ preferences or when the students will be placed. Students might be placed as late as two weeks...
before their departure.

Mughan said he anticipates the experience will enable students to gain a better understanding of the many problems facing the world as an entity and to not only identify themselves as American citizens, but as citizens of the world. The experience also will help students decide whether the level of work at an international agency is something that students will want to pursue in their future careers. Mughan said the internship experience in Geneva also will make students more attractive for graduate and law school programs. However, thoughts of how the international working experience will benefit students’ future careers should not be the primary focus of the study abroad experience.

“While it is important to get this type of experience if students want to work internationally, what is more important is that students study abroad to have a well-rounded undergraduate education,” Mughan said.