

LEARNING ABROAD CENTER

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA



Annual Report

Academic Year 2019–20



Message from Martha

Dear Friends,

In an era of divisions, polarization, social injustice, and global crisis, the imperative for intercultural connection has never been greater. We, at the Learning Abroad Center, are proud to act as a catalyst for internationalization at the University of Minnesota. The following annual report summarizes our efforts over the last year. We strive to hold ourselves accountable to both quantitative and qualitative metrics. Hopefully this report helps tell the story of the successes and challenges in learning abroad efforts at the UofM, as well as the many campus collaborations that deserve recognition.

Sincerely,
Martha Johnson
Assistant Dean, Learning Abroad



About the Learning Abroad Center

The Learning Abroad Center (LAC) in the Global Programs and Strategy Alliance is the University of Minnesota's comprehensive resource for study, intern, community engagement, research, and volunteer experiences worldwide.

The LAC is a leader in providing innovative international learning experiences that expand and redefine the world for a diverse population of students, colleagues, and staff. LAC staff and University of Minnesota faculty and staff participate in numerous leadership opportunities and serve on the advisory boards of organizations that provide and/or support education abroad programs. Through collaboration and individual attention, the LAC continues to promote empowerment, development, understanding, and responsibility in the global community.

The LAC creates a learning climate that respects and celebrates diversity. We are committed to and accountable for strategically addressing barriers affecting marginalized groups by providing inclusive advising, program and curriculum design, global faculty and staff recruitment and training, and campus stakeholder engagement.

Student Participation

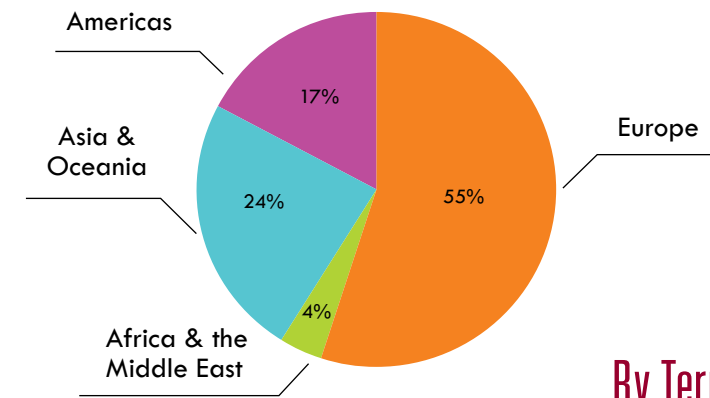
Open Doors is an annual report that provides statistics on study abroad participation by US students and international student enrollment at US institutions. The report is published by the Institute of International Education (IIE) in New York, with support from the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs at the US Department of State.

Twin Cities campus ranking (in number of students sent abroad on credit-bearing programs):

1. **8th among doctorate-granting universities** with **2,971**.
2. **5th in the Big Ten**.

We're thrilled to be **ranked #18** in the US News and World Report's **Best Study Abroad** category. As a large, land-grant public institution and national program provider, it's an honor to be surrounded by these schools and be nominated and positively perceived by the public in this qualitative study. We're collectively committed to constantly improving our work and offering high-quality programs. Only one public institution, Michigan State University, is ranked above us.

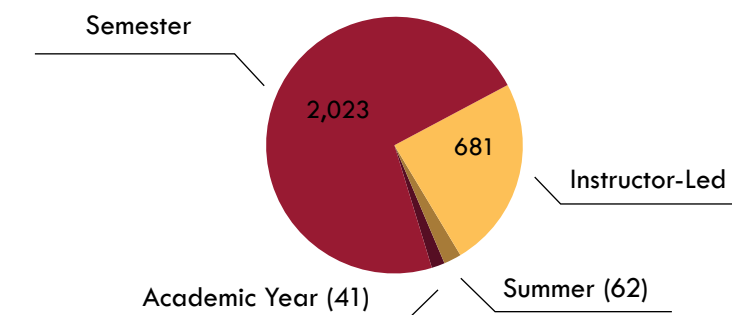
Where Do Gophers Go?



Top 10 Destinations

- | | |
|------------------|-------------|
| 1 Spain | 6 Australia |
| 2 Italy | 7 Denmark |
| 3 United Kingdom | 8 Germany |
| 4 Ireland | 9 Argentina |
| 5 China | 10 France |

By Term



COVID-19 Response

Thanks to our diligent staff, global on-site staff, campus partners, and affiliate partners, **we were able to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic in an extraordinary and swift manner**, prioritizing students' health and safety and maintaining their academics to every degree possible.

Our journey began in late January and early February with the cancellations of programs in China and Korea. An eight-person team started a daily "situation room" model meeting in late February; by mid-March, the meeting also involved Twin Cities campus partners and University of Minnesota system campuses. As information and policies changed, **we made hard decisions in real time and sent weekly messages to our students abroad.**

Vital Stats



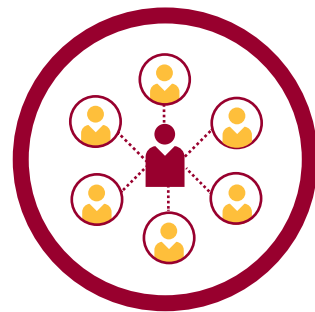
Issued \$2M in refunds to students in 15 days



Safely evacuated 1,200 students
(including 900 in 12 days)



Moved 109 in-person courses online



Hosted situation room meetings that included
44 campus and system partners



Evacuated students from
65 countries

The last few months have reminded us of the truly global nature of humanity. **Our resolve and commitment to students' safe, successful study abroad experiences has never been greater.**

Student Advising & Support Services

We offer a full range of advising and support services to students, including program selection, academic planning, financial planning, registration, credit, cultural adjustment, and re-entry.

Advising is a critical part of supporting students through the program selection process and helping them prepare to go abroad once they have applied for a program. Our 25 full-time advisers meet individually with students to answer their questions about study abroad and guide them through the application and enrollment process.

2019–20 Highlights

- **90+** students attended a financial aid information session to learn about how financial aid can be applied to study abroad, available scholarship opportunities, and how to write a strong scholarship application essay.
- **1,300+** students met one-on-one with an adviser in the LAC for a Program Selection Advising meeting to discuss program options that fit their academic, career, personal, and financial goals and needs.
- **2,100+** students completed a First Step session online or in person to learn the basics about choosing a study abroad program, academic planning, and financial aid and scholarship opportunities.
- **134,718** unique users visited **UMabroad.umn.edu**.

Resources & Events for Returned Students

We provide opportunities for students to reflect on their time abroad, connect with peers, and share their experience with prospective study abroad students.

- In fall 2019, more than **150 students** attended the Welcome Back event for an evening of socializing with other returnees, sharing their stories, and learning about additional opportunities and resources to help them build on the skills and experiences they gained abroad.
- In 2019–20, **57 students** participated in the Global Leaders Internship, a paid internship program. Through weekly discussions, classroom visits, and participation in an outreach and research team project, Global Leader Interns gained market research experience, exposure to the field of international education, and stronger public speaking and cross-cultural skills.

Program Offerings

We have developed a variety of program options—**more than 200 programs in 60 countries**—to address the diverse needs of students. Programs vary in length, level, academic focus, teaching format, language requirements, cost, and degree of independence required.

New Programs

Cross-Cultural Health in Spain

This program is geared toward students in the health fields, including pre-med, pre-nursing, public health, health services management, and more, who already have a background in Spanish and are interested in studying a cross-cultural view of health care. Students can choose from multiple health-related courses, such as *Medical Spanish*, *Comparative Public Health*, *Diversity in Global Health*, and more. They can also intern in the health field and take other topics courses taught in Spanish.

Study Comparative Health Care & Intern in London

This program offers students who intend to work in the health care professions an opportunity to study and compare US and UK health care systems and participate in a uniquely focused internship in the health care field with an observational component.

New Courses

Global Identity

In 2005, in collaboration with the College of Education and Human Development, we launched *Maximizing Study Abroad*, one of the first online, culture learning courses mentoring and teaching students who are studying abroad. Today it has evolved into *Global Identity: Connecting Your International Experience to Your Future* and includes career skill building as well as culture learning. In addition to the regular course, there are four slightly modified versions designed for these student populations: College of Liberal Arts, University Honors Program, Carlson School of Management, and the Leadership Minor.

New Program Model

Virtual Internships

The Virtual International Internship is a four-credit internship opportunity where students work on projects from the US for an international organization in Argentina, Australia, Ecuador, France, Ireland, Italy, Kenya, Senegal, Spain, Thailand, or the United Kingdom, while adding a global perspective to their professional work experience. Students apply their in-class knowledge to real-world meaningful work, gain experience, and expand their skill set.

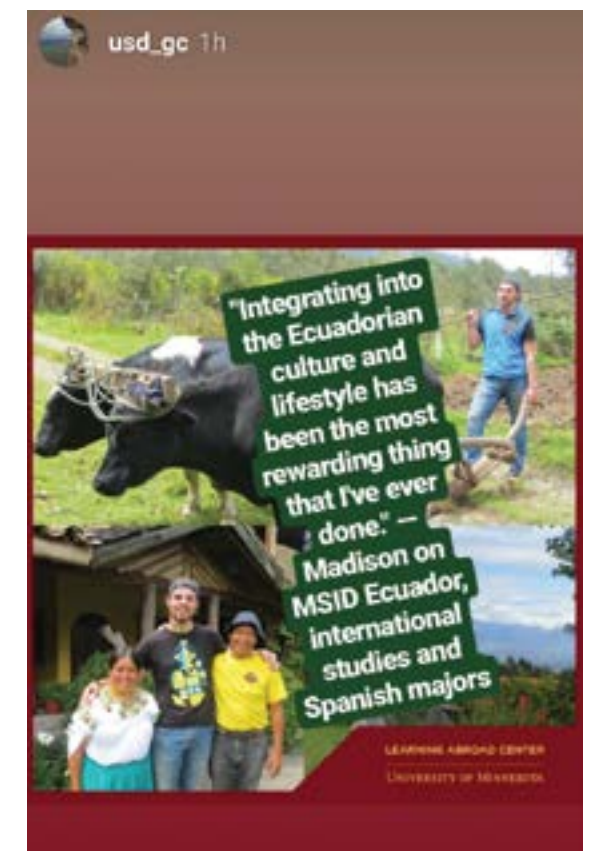
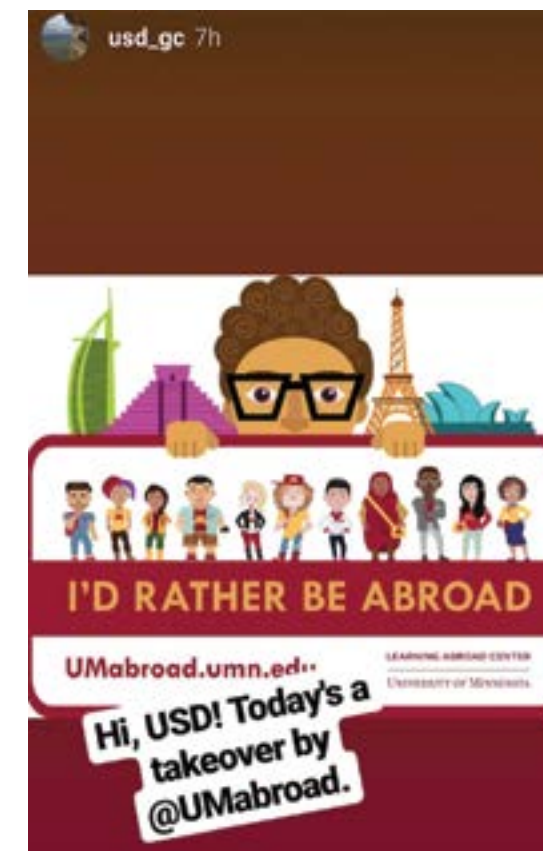
Institutional Relations

We recruit undergraduate students from around the US for 20+ learning abroad programs. The addition of students from other institutions creates a more diverse and better learning environment for UofM students. With the addition of these non-UofM students, we run more programs and add more courses to our existing programs, thereby creating more opportunities for UofM students. To date, we have more than **125 affiliate partnerships**.

Social Media Takeovers

In January 2020, we took over the University of South Dakota's Instagram stories for the day. In the stories, we featured information about scholarships, financial aid, and housing; quotes from students studying abroad on our programs in Ecuador and Ireland; and more.

That same month, we participated in the University of North Dakota (UND)'s spring fair, appearing on their social media pages. We highlighted our MSID programs in Ecuador, Kenya, Senegal, and Thailand; our Teaching Practicum in France program; our Language & Culture in Southern France program; and our Study & Intern in Toledo program. We also encouraged UND students to follow us on Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, Twitter, and YouTube.



Scholarships & Funding

- **1,477** applications were submitted by 987 students, of which 193 (20%) were awarded a scholarship.
- **55** students participated in the Bridging Loan program and were able to defer the cost of their program deposit and international airfare until their financial aid was disbursed.
- **22** students' semester abroad was supported by the President's Emerging Scholarships Program Fund the Gap scholarship in 2019–20, and **24** PES students were awarded the scholarship to study abroad for a future term.
- **More than 100** advisers, faculty, and staff from across the UMTC campus helped review study abroad scholarship applications and select award recipients.
- Our students benefited from the additional support of **more than \$420,000** in pre-negotiated fee reductions with our affiliate partners.



International Educator Outreach Events & Training

UMTC Education Abroad Network

The UofM Twin Cities Education Abroad Network (EAN) includes and serves professional advisers, faculty members, administrators, and others involved with education abroad. The EAN meeting session focused on awareness of group dynamics and student behavior on learning abroad programs.

Excellence in Leading Learning Abroad Series

We hosted sessions with discussion topics relevant to current and past learning abroad program leaders as well as those interested in leading a program in the future. All highly interactive sessions were facilitated by current or past program leaders or campus experts. Due to COVID-19, we postponed the scheduled spring 2020 sessions and rescheduled them as virtual sessions during summer or fall 2020.



Publications

Chapter in Higher Education Book

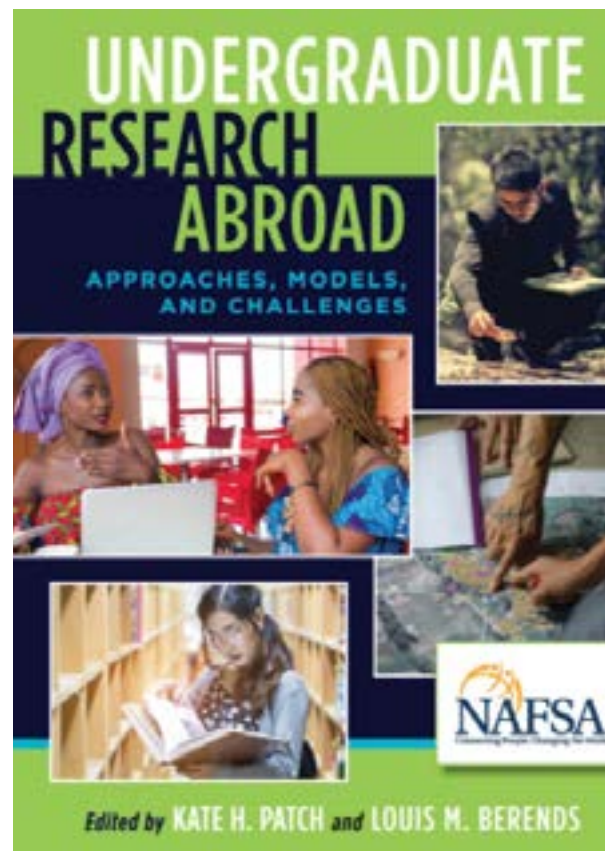
Martha Johnson and Christine Anderson published a chapter in the book “Internationalization and Employability in Higher Education.”
Published July 2019.

Chapter in NAFSA Book

Martha Johnson and Christine Anderson published a chapter in the NAFSA book “Undergraduate Research Abroad: Approaches, Models, and Challenges.”
Published May 2020.

Career Integration Publication

We partnered with CAPA The Global Education Network to publish “Career Integration: Reviewing the Impact of Experience Abroad on Employment, No. 3.” The journal highlights information and sessions from conferences as well as essays that further illuminate the impact of experiences abroad on careers. Employability is no longer incidental or secondary to the agenda of study abroad, and the theoretical and practical implications of career integration are educational, political, social, economic, and trans-national.
Published March 2020.



Curriculum & Program Oversight

Learning Abroad Center Advisory Committee (LACAC)

LACAC was established with the specific responsibility of assisting the Learning Abroad Center with program and curriculum oversight and review, as well as assisting with program development and school of record mechanisms with a focus on undergraduate education. This committee meets 2–4 times annually and comprises 5–7 faculty and/or administrative staff. The committee membership is designed to provide a breadth of guidance from across the University.

Responsibilities

- Assist with program and curriculum oversight
- Assist with academic policy
- Assist with program development
- Assist with school of record mechanisms
- Participate on program reviews
- Participate on occasional task forces
- Assist with Global Seminar proposals
- Engage with affiliate and university partners

2019–20 Members

Chair: **Christine Anderson**—Learning Abroad Center, Academic Director

Pamela Baker—Associate Director, University Honors Program

Kirsten Canterbury—Carlson Global Institute, Director, Education Abroad

Sauman Chu—College of Design, Associate Dean

Nanette Hanks—College of Liberal Arts, Assistant Dean

Kim Hindbjorgen—Learning Abroad Center, Assistant Director

Martha Johnson—Learning Abroad Center, Assistant Dean

Susan Kubitschek—College of Science and Engineering, Assistant Dean, Collegiate Life

Nikki Letawsky Shultz—College of Biological Sciences, Assistant Dean for Student Affairs and International Programs

Zach Mohs—Learning Abroad Center, Associate Director

Tricia Todd—Pre-Health Student Resource Center, Director

Michael White—College of Food, Agricultural, and Natural Resource Sciences, Associate Dean

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