

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
Study Abroad Curriculum Integration

International Education for Undergraduates

Students of Color and Study Abroad

2001-2002

submitted April 4, 2002

From the September 2001 study abroad retreat for the Freshman/Sophomore Advising group, interest emerged regarding the participation of students of color in study abroad programs. The Multicultural Study Abroad Group (MSAG), with representatives from all four campuses, was formed to explore this aspect of study abroad. Additional members joined after the Freshman/Sophomore Advising group meeting in April 2002. Working group members include:

Selina Allen, Twin Cities	Joe Hoff, Twin Cities	Jeanie Stumne, Twin Cities
Mark Bellcourt, Twin Cities	Rickey Hall, Morris	Rachel Sullivan-Nightengale, Twin Cities
Cedric Bolton, Twin Cities	Rudy Hernandez, Twin Cities	Ellen Sunshine, Twin Cities
Thuy Doan, Twin Cities	Tex Ostvig, Twin Cities	Carol Threinen, Duluth
Roxanne Gould, Twin Cities	Mario Prada, Crookston	Gayle Woodruff, Twin Cities
Amy Greeley, Twin Cities		

Initially, the group corresponded by email to discuss the issues and concerns regarding students of color participation in study abroad. A list was compiled that was both general in nature and specific to students of color. The issues and concerns were categorized into six categories: financial concerns, family considerations, fear, cultural barriers and concerns, academic concerns, and marketing of programs/recruitment of students of color.

The group met for the first time in January 2002. During that meeting, it was decided that the best way to approach the topic was to gather data regarding students' participation in study abroad. The members agreed that there is only anecdotal data at the University of Minnesota on students of color and study abroad. Besides looking at literal participation numbers, the group agreed that more information should be obtained directly from students both through surveys and focus groups. The data should focus on students' perceptions of study abroad including the barriers they perceive to study abroad.

PARTICIPATION RATES

Currently, data are only available from the Morris and Twin Cities campuses regarding students of color who study abroad. The Duluth campus will begin to collect data on students of color

with the next round of study abroad applications. Crookston reports only one African American student studying abroad several years ago, and will begin to collect ethnicity data also.

The charts below indicate the participation rates over the past several years.

University of Minnesota-Morris	1997-1998	1998-1999	1999-2000	2000-2001
African American	1	2	1	0
American Indian/Alaskan	8	2	4	10
Asian American or Pacific Islander	2	1	5	1
Chicano/Latino	2	1	0	2
<i>Total Undergraduate Students of Color to Study Abroad</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Total Undergraduate Students of Color Enrolled</i>	<i>287</i>	<i>303</i>	<i>291</i>	<i>284</i>

University of Minnesota-Twin Cities	1997-1998	1998-1999	1999-2000	2000-2001
African American	12	8	16	13
American Indian/Alaskan	0	1	3	0
Asian American or Pacific Islander	69	42	43	50
Chicano/Latino	17	21	18	21
Multiracial	7	19	18	28
<i>Total Undergraduate Students of Color to Study Abroad</i>	<i>105</i>	<i>91</i>	<i>98</i>	<i>112</i>
<i>Total Undergraduate Students of Color Enrolled</i>	<i>3647</i>	<i>3862</i>	<i>3946</i>	<i>4018</i>

General study abroad statistics for Duluth, Morris, and Twin Cities can be found at www.UMabroad.umn.edu/curriculum/resources/. Race and Ethnicity categories above are consistent with University of Minnesota Office of Institutional Research and Reporting.

FOCUS GROUPS AND SURVEYS

The Twin Cities campus piloted focus groups with students of color on April 11, 12, and 15. Thuy Doan facilitated and students who participated received a \$10 bookstore gift certificate. MSAG members in the General College, Learning Resource Centers, and Martin Luther King program in the UMTC College of Liberal Arts advising office helped to recruit students. The questions are available for other campuses to use with their students of color. It is anticipated that coordinate campuses will do focus groups in the fall of 2002. Focus group summaries are posted to our web site (www.umabroad.umn.edu/curriculum)

In addition, the general Student Survey of Study Abroad that was administered to sophomores in spring 2002 as a part of the Bush Foundation and FIPSE grants oversampled for students of color in the hope of representative data. More information about this survey's results will be available in summer 2002.

We will use the qualitative data from the Spring 2002 pilot focus groups, Thuy Doan's research (abstract attached as appendix), the general Study Abroad Survey, and other findings to develop a survey to be administered to first-year students in fall 2002 on all four campuses. For more information, please contact Gayle Woodruff at 612.625.6065.

STUDENTS' MAJORS

College/campus representatives are asked to help gather data about the academic majors of students of color. Because the work of Study Abroad Curriculum Integration is by academic major or discipline, it would help recruitment and advising if we knew what majors the students of color tended toward. For example, Rickey Hall at Morris has indicated that students of color on their campus tend to major in the following programs: Asian Americans--Sciences (Biology and Chemistry), Sociology; African Americans--Sociology, Speech, English; Hispanic/Latino--Spanish; and American Indian--Elementary Education, Sociology, English, Management.

If you are able to help collect data on students' of color majors, please contact Rickey Hall at (320.589.4803) or Gayle Woodruff.

STUDY ABROAD INITIATIVES

➤ The University of Minnesota-Morris has formed a special task force as part of the Bush Foundation grant process to address students of color participation in study abroad, specifically on the Morris campus. Rickey Hall is facilitating the work of this group. Additional group members include: Solomon Gashaw, Associate Professor in Sociology, Jeff Ratliff-Crain, Associate Professor in Psychology, and Tom McRoberts, Director of the Center for International Programs (ex-officio). The Morris group has identified the goal of increasing the participation of students of color in study abroad to be consistent with the entire Morris student body. This goal will be addressed specifically by developing an action plan regarding financing study abroad and promoting study abroad. Morris wants to:

- Identify and publicize study abroad scholarship opportunities designed for students of color
- Target at least 3 Morris scholarships annually for students of color to study abroad
- Make students of color aware of other financial aid opportunities for study abroad

Additionally, with regard to the promotion of study abroad, Morris wants to:

- Develop a "first year to graduation" publicity plan aimed at study abroad for students of color. The plan would include group orientation and individual advising sessions exploring study abroad options. It would also include sessions on access to financial aid

and value of study abroad for careers. Focus groups with students of color would help develop the plan.

- Identify programs that might be of special interest to students of color. This could include programs that are financially less expensive, programs that have proven especially receptive to students of color, or those that fit best with majors frequently pursued by students of color.
 - Develop on-going peer advising and activities that feature students of color returning from study abroad in the newspaper or at other campus events. The point is to highlight study abroad success stories from students of color.
- Several students attended Intercultural Bridges, a new diversity program piloted by the Diversity Institute on the Twin Cities campus. It was designed to prepare outbound study abroad students for the cultural challenges that they might face abroad. Training ran March 28-April 25 and was free to students. Low attendance was attributed to several factors: information was sent to students at the wrong point in the study abroad application process, too many sessions were offered and competed with students time, students did not see relevant value of training. Discussions have begun with Diversity Institute director, Newrhr Abdul-Wahid, about others ways that the Institute can participate in study abroad.
- Roxanne Gould, director of the American Indian Learning Resource Center on the Twin Cities campus, visited the Cuernavaca, Mexico study abroad site in January. She and her colleagues in the Office for Multicultural and Academic Affairs (OMAA) put together a special option for OMAA students to study civic engagement through the Cuernavaca program and students participated on this option in May Session, 2002. OMAA provided selected students with travel grants for this study abroad experience.
- The University of Minnesota-Duluth (UMD) sponsors a unique three-week May term study abroad exchange between students and faculty interested in American Indian-focused studies and students and faculty studying at the Center for Aboriginal Studies at Curtin University in Perth, Western Australia. Four American Indian students participated in the first exchange in May 2002. The program of study in Australia involves visits to various Aboriginal communities and their significant cultural and historical sites. These visits are led by Aboriginal faculty from the center for Aboriginal Studies and by Aboriginal community elders.
- In addition, Center for Aboriginal Studies students will visit UMD in July 2002. For the first week, they will tour spiritual sites and visit American Indian reservations in Northern Minnesota, Michigan, and Wisconsin, as well as in the Dakotas. They will spend another week immersing in woodland culture by observing various language and culture immersion programs offered in Minnesota and Wisconsin in July. During this time they will also participate in ceremonies at Fond du Lac and other nearby reservations. During the final week they will work with faculty from the various UMD disciplines focusing on American Indian studies and issues (Education, Social Work, American Indian Studies, and American Indian and Minority Health). Throughout this program Aboriginal students will be paired with American Indian students who participated in the May program in Australia. Much of

the focus of the program will be on finding commonalities as well as uniqueness in the indigenous experience of the Aboriginal and American Indian groups involved. A detailed program description can be found at www.d.umn.edu/ieo/australia_indigenous.htm.

DEVELOPMENT OF RESOURCES FOR ADVISERS

From the first MSAG meeting, the group agreed that advisers need more resources on students of color and study abroad. Thuy Doan and Joe Hoff, both from the Global Campus, are collecting basic advising resources and have placed them in the Global Campus advising center. All resources will be available to study abroad offices on all campuses. Please contact Thuy Doan at 612.626.8686 or Gayle Woodruff for more information. As new material is added, a bibliography will eventually be available for all four campuses.

In addition, Joe Hoff is investigating how to pilot a Minnesota survey of Diversity in Study Abroad, similar to the one he administered at Brown University. Initial thoughts are to have the diversity survey attached to study abroad evaluations in order for students to complete it at the end of a study abroad program. A copy of the Brown University results can be found at www.brown.edu/Administration/OIP/faq/DiversityBook.pdf

Information from all these resources, in addition to knowledge gained through the focus groups and student survey, will help to create more resources and tools for both the academic advisers and the study abroad offices to use.

From Thuy Doan's master's research (see attached abstract), we learn that parents are frequently involved with students' decision-making about study abroad and this is sometimes a barrier. Developing an advising tool for parents in their native language might be a good first step toward helping parents understand the rationale for their child's interest in study abroad, clarify financial assistance for study abroad and the curricular fit of study abroad.

Submitted by Rickey Hall, Morris and Gayle Woodruff, Twin Cities. March 27, 2002

ABSTRACT

Asian American Students:
Study Abroad Participation, Perspectives and Experiences
Thúy M. Doàn

This study examines factors influencing study abroad participation among Asian American students at the University of Minnesota, particularly focusing on the possible ways a student's cultural and immigration background can impact her/his decision and experience while abroad. In addition to looking at Asian Americans as a whole, this study also examines disparities that may exist among various communities of Asian American students in the context of study abroad.

Currently, Asian Americans make up approximately 7% of the undergraduate student population at the University of Minnesota, but only 4.2% of study abroad participants in 2000-01 are Asian American.

Questionnaires were mailed out to a random sampling of 500 Asian American University of Minnesota students in Fall 1999, and 95 were returned completed. Nine of the respondents were then interviewed in Spring 2000. The results of the survey were divided by students who did not study abroad (referred to in the study as Non-Study Abroad, or Non-SA), and those who did or had concrete plans to study abroad (Study Abroad, or SA). The data were also divided whenever possible by ethnicity, but due to the low number of respondents, generalizations from these results should be made with caution.

Some of the findings did not come as a surprise. Finances and academic fit were the top two perceived factors affecting participation, which is consistent across all student populations at public universities. From more detailed explanations given by the students interviewed and from the literature review about traditional Asian cultural values, the reasons behind finances and academics may differ from their non-Asian American student peers, such as cultural views on debt and higher education. The lack of family support was the sixth most frequently cited reason for students' decision against studying abroad, with Indian and Vietnamese listing it most frequently. Several students indicated that study abroad is culturally inappropriate, meaning that either they had too many family obligations at home to leave for a significant amount of time, or that gender expectations of their culture prohibited such an experience. A significant number of students stated that they feared language differences, which is common among all students. For these students, given their family's immigration background, such fears may be impacted by their own or their family's struggles with acquiring a new language and culture as an immigrant to the U.S. Perhaps the most interesting findings revealed that there is a great disparity among the various ethnic communities when inquired about their parents' reaction to study abroad, with a major division among the Vietnamese, Indian and Hmong students and the adoptee, Amerasian, Filipino and Korean students. The comments shared by the students about their parents' reactions give more cultural insight to their reasoning.

Even among certain ethnic communities, particularly the Hmong student community, there was great disparity among the responses. Some students expressed great resistance on the part of their community to the idea of studying abroad, especially for females, but others felt encouraged and supported by their families.

Other factors to consider when discussing Asian Americans and study abroad are the sites offered. The impact of war and colonialism as well as politics may influence a student's desire

to visit certain countries or cities. Some students (and their parents) feared they would be detained or viewed suspiciously because of their ethnicity if they went to certain countries (particularly to China or Vietnam). Offering programs to parts of the country where overseas relatives are not living may also affect interest in the program, as in the case of one program that is offered in Hanoi. Most Vietnamese students have relatives in Ho Chi Minh City, and would rather study there than in Hanoi. Hanoi may also hold bad memories or associations for these students and their parents, who left to escape the communist government, as it is the Communist government-declared capital and the historic “home-base” of the communist government.

Several respondents who did study abroad expressed that they felt an increased sense of their Asian or American identities after their overseas experience. Some blended well into their host cultures because they were studying in other Asian countries, or that the host nationals were more accepting toward Asians in general. Others felt ignored by their hosts because they did not fit into their hosts’ image of the “typical” American, and thus were not interested in meeting these students (as in the case of some students who studied in Japan).

Although on the surface it may seem that Asian American students view and experience study abroad similarly to the general student population, the results of this study highlight how these same factors have a different significance to an Asian American student due to her/his cultural background and immigration history. Results from this study may be used to better understand other ethnic groups in the context of study abroad participation as well, particularly groups with similar immigration histories and strict cultural expectations of women or children, such as the recent Somali and Chicano communities.