

2005

Whole World Study

J. L. Buschman

Rebecca Hovey, *World Learning*

G. S. Khalsa

R M de Brito Meyer

M. D. Monahan, et al.



SELECTEDWORKS™

Available at: http://works.bepress.com/rebecca_hovey/2/

Whole-World Study

Contributors: James L. Buschman, Rebecca Hovey, Gurudharm Singh Khalsa,
Rosa Marina de Brito Meyer, Michael D. Monahan, Joan A. Raducha

Whole-world study is a growing trend on U.S. campuses as a growing number of students and faculty look to non-Western nations and societies for international learning experiences. In many ways, this trend reflects the impact of globalization and the understanding that the economic and political realities that shape students' worlds and future careers include the many diverse cultures and nations outside of the traditional U.S.–Europe nexus. Calls within the higher education community to internationalize the curriculum reflect this concern to broaden the scope of academic knowledge in a way that integrates a global understanding of the world, and the myriad interconnections between its peoples and cultures, into the traditional knowledge base of the academic disciplines. The literature on internationalizing the curriculum is vast. See specifically, *Internationalizing the Campus* (NAFSA 2003); the *Journal of Studies in International Education* (Association of International Education Administrators, fall 2002); *A Research Agenda for the Internationalization of Higher Education in the United States* (Burn and Smuckler 1995); and *Internationalizing the Undergraduate Curriculum: A Handbook for Campus Leaders* (Pickert and Turlington 1992).

On some campuses, the goal of internationalizing the curriculum has resulted in revised mission statements that include preparation of a global citizenry as a goal for higher education (Lutterman-Auilar and Gingerich 2002; Edwards and Gaventa 2001).

It is within this context of shifting world geopolitics and an increased emphasis on internationalism within U.S. national education policy that advising for whole-world study assumes a critical role in shaping students' educations.

This discussion intensified in the post–September 11 era, as U.S. policy makers and academics argued that U.S. higher education was not producing a professional workforce adequately prepared with political, historical, cultural, or linguistic knowledge of diverse regions of the world. The challenge has been portrayed as a national security issue in some circles, augmenting an already-existing concern that the United States lacks the human resources needed to compete economically in the global economy of the twenty-first century (American Council on Education 2002). “The nation learned on September 11, 2001, that we must become much more sensitive to the rest of the world. We are four percent of the Earth’s population, yet we are the military and

Part II: Campus Advising

economic giant. We slowly have come to understand that in administrations of both political parties there have been awkward and stumbling moments, caused not by ill intent, but by a lack of understanding both by leaders and the public" (NAFSA 2003, ii).

Advisers who work with students interested in studying in nontraditional locations are in a unique position to contribute to efforts to internationalize the curriculum, to address the national security and human resources issues of national education policymakers, and to help broaden the U.S. worldview through an appreciation of other cultural realities and their accompanying perspectives on the U.S. presence throughout the world. NAFSA and the Alliance for International Education and Cultural Exchange issued a white paper in 2000 and again in 2003 calling for a national international education policy. The objectives included the promotion of diversification of the study abroad experience, including increased study in nontraditional locations. The mission of the Strategic Task Force on Education Abroad, spear-headed by NAFSA, is to "articulate such a policy.... It is a political and educational roadmap of how to get there" (NAFSA 2003, 2). This is an inspiring challenge for advisers, one that ranges from the understanding of the larger policy realm to the day-to-day logistics of safety, travel preparations, predeparture orientation, and support, as students return to the home campus.

ACADEMIC CONTEXT FOR WHOLE-WORLD STUDY

International and Global Studies

At one time, nontraditional locations for study abroad seemed best suited for the nontraditional student, but in 2001–2002, 37 percent of U.S. college

students studying abroad did so outside of Europe. Overall, the number of U.S. university-level students who receive credit for study abroad continues to grow (4.4 percent increase from 2000–2001), as does the number of students studying in less traditional locations. The percentage of all students going to Latin America has more than doubled since 1985 (an increase of 4 percent over 2000–2001). There have also been increases since 2000–2001 in the number of students going to Oceania (up 18 percent), Africa (up 2 percent), and Asia (up 18 percent); however, there has been a decline in the number of students studying in the Middle East (down 21 percent) (*Open Doors* 2003).

Of all U.S. students studying abroad in 1981, those known to be going to destinations other than Europe accounted for only 5 percent of the total. In the post-Vietnam War era, support for Area Studies courses at U.S. universities proliferated, as did awareness of the realities of developing countries and an interest in new nation-building among the postcolonial nations of the third world. In the early 1980s, international educators saw a need for support of nontraditional locations for study abroad (*Frontiers* 2000). In 1984, the Whole World Committee was formed as part of NAFSA, and by 1985, 25 percent of all students studying abroad chose to study in non-European countries (the reported increase was due in part to improved data collection methods) (Sommer 2000).

An awareness of the globalization debates on U.S. campuses is critical for study abroad advisers' roles in helping students and faculty assess their academic options abroad. These debates are reflected in new theories, approaches, and knowledge constructs of the academic disciplines. Kennedy notes that the internationalism associated with the Area Studies period prior to the 1990s is

greatly different from the new Global Studies focus, and sees these as two distinct eras in international studies:

Globalization, as a knowledge culture, is based above all on the decreasing significance of political boundaries and the diversification of knowledge flows around the world. Area Studies was founded in a security culture that emphasized the importance of contextual expertise, and its associated concerns with grounding and translation (Kennedy 2003).

The support of international study, especially in nontraditional locations and cultures, is not just a question of supplementing existing knowledge of the world, but transforming that knowledge through interdisciplinary inquiry, which the knowledge flows noted by Kennedy can foster. Mestenhauser argues that a knowledge gap between “what is known and what needs to be known” (2002) is crucial to the distinction between international education (the Area Studies focus) and internationalization (the Global Studies focus).

...[G]lobal changes are so dramatic that the existing frames of reference are not adequate to respond to them...

Internationalization involves not just a simple transfer of knowledge from one country to another, but the use of that knowledge to produce new knowledge (Mestenhauser 2002, 170–171).

(See also the special issue “The Meanings of Globalization for Educational Change” *Comparative Education Review* 2002; 46:1, and the editorial essay by guest editors Martin Carnoy and Diana Rhoten.)

Witnessing this change in forms of academic knowledge and disciplines is exciting and

stimulating, but it does ask that the study abroad adviser be able to set aside his or her own preconceptions of the key issues or subjects for a given major. Relationships with faculty are important and students may sometimes need to be encouraged to visit several different faculty members to determine the merits of a given program. For example, a faculty member who holds a more conservative view on international relations may not be supportive of a program with courses such as “The Politics of Transnational Identity in South Asia,” whereas a different faculty member who has recently taught or conducted research in the region may see the value of such a program to the students’ overall degree goals.

Along with an awareness of the changing dimensions of international and global studies, understanding aspects of non-Western educational practices and approaches aids educators in both advising and preparing students for the different learning processes they will encounter in these locations. The most critical distinction made between Western and non-Western views on education is that whereas Westerners typically equate education with schooling, other cultures tend to view cultural practices and community and family life as important forms of social learning in addition to schooling. The ability to value the learning that takes place outside the classroom is not just a question of developing appropriate cultural sensitivities (although this is a desired outcome). The appreciation of oral traditions or the structures of extended family networks also gives the U.S. student an understanding of how knowledge is transmitted, shared, and validated within the host culture (Reagan 2000).

As education abroad offices provide detailed information on curriculum offerings in non-European countries and themes relevant to those cultures and regions, the education abroad staff can

Part II: Campus Advising

play a valuable intermediary role in bringing together faculty, lecturers, study abroad representatives, and returning students to share the new areas of knowledge emerging from whole-world study. In the end, these are academic decisions approved by the campus international education or study abroad committee, faculty, and department chairs. However, this critical role offers study abroad advisers an exciting opportunity to take part in the internationalization of the curriculum debates and initiatives.

College policies, albeit often unconsciously, discourage study abroad more than they encourage it. Colleges must take a hard look at the possible institutional barriers that stand in the way of study abroad, which may include: a lack of leadership on the part of senior campus officials, faculty indifference, rigidities in the curriculum, anachronistic rules, ineffective enrollment management, program designs that are inaccessible for nontraditional students, and a lack of predeparture and preparation and reentry assistance (NAFSA 2003, 8).

Mestenhauser's work on systems and structures of internationalization in higher education is a helpful guide in thinking about how to assume this role in promoting nontraditional international study (2002). He describes seven learning domains with the university:

- international studies or international relations,
- area studies,
- foreign languages,
- international dimensions of academic disciplines,

- student and scholar educational exchanges,
- intrauniversity development contracts, and
- university organization, policies, administration, and governance.

Education abroad advisers are key stakeholders within this system perspective, and by learning to operate within these structures and systems, they and the education abroad office can promote whole-world study and provide the support needed to ensure students' success in what can often be an extremely challenging learning experience.

Nontraditional Destinations

Education abroad programs in nontraditional destinations include programs in modern cities with rich histories stretching back to antiquity, such as Cairo, Jerusalem, Beijing, and Bangkok. They also take place in regions inhabited by ethnic or linguistic groups considered minorities by a country's dominant culture. Although stereotypical thinking often labels such locations as third world, many countries—Brazil, Thailand, and Indonesia are prime examples—are highly sophisticated and developed societies in terms of urbanization, industrial output, and technology. In other nontraditional education abroad locations, millennia-old subsistence farming practices continue virtually unchanged. Opportunities exist for students to study in rural Kenyan villages, modern, skyscraper-filled Singapore, and many other areas exhibiting a range of development.

Study abroad in any country challenges students to learn about themselves. In non-Western cultural settings, however, everyday life is likely to be radically different from anything a native-born U.S.

student will have experienced. Such differences, small and big, nuanced and dramatic, create a multifaceted learning environment that stimulates intellectual and personal growth of an order different from what is often possible in more culturally congruent surroundings. Academic learning in such sites can be greatly enhanced by daily recognitions of cultural difference, as well as by unexpected similarities in values and behavior. This is a point made by almost every student returning from a nontraditional study abroad experience.

Whole-World Issues for Study Abroad

As the range of possible study destinations widens, so too does the range of topics that can be appropriately studied in classes abroad. In addition to the study of languages, a number of critical world issues are particularly well suited to studies in sites outside Western Europe, including biodiversity, environmental studies, global communications, international finance, migration and refugee issues, natural resource management, non-Western religions and cultures, peace studies and conflict resolution, public health and epidemiology, social movements, sustainable development, transfer of technology, women's studies, and world trade.

Certain sites offer unique experiences for particular majors. For example, a political science major may have the opportunity in Accra or Delhi to view institution building firsthand or observe how a government deals with issues pertaining to globalization, such as the migration of minority groups. Students may have the opportunity to meet leaders, visit political institutions, attend relevant conferences, and see change in the making. Students in Cairo or Hanoi can explore the effects of development on a society or explore specific linguistic, historical, or cultural interests.

Language Study

The American Council on Education (ACE) reports in *Mapping Internationalization on U.S. Campuses* that:

Collectively, U.S. colleges and universities reported teaching more than 40 languages, including courses in Asian and Middle Eastern languages. Very few offered any African languages....Spanish was by far the most commonly offered language, with French and German second and third, respectively. The fact that Japanese was the fourth ranked language and that Chinese was the sixth suggests that Asian languages are not being neglected. The percentage of institutions offering Arabic was about seven percent; African languages were available at only 1.5 percent of the institutions surveyed (ACE 2003, 22).

ACE also suggests that "While student attitudes about the importance of foreign language were positive, actual foreign language study at higher education institutions presented a different picture. These data suggest that without a major push by institutions, the percentage of students taking languages will remain low and constant at about 8 percent of total course enrollments—as it has for the last 25 years" (ACE 2003, 23).

The education abroad field should carefully assess the relationship between language classes offered on the home campus (and enrollments in those classes) and student choices for study abroad. Institutions need to determine ways to address the fact that students recognize the importance of studying another language, but in reality choose to do so in small numbers. For those students who do

Part II: Campus Advising

choose to study in less traditional locations, programs should provide (if not require) the opportunity for students to pursue local languages while abroad. It is ideal if the students have the opportunity to begin that language study on their home campuses prior to study abroad, and if possible, students should be offered the opportunity to continue the study of these less commonly taught languages after returning to the home campus.

INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHS AND GOALS

A critical issue to the success of developing education abroad opportunities for students in nontraditional locations or encouraging students to attend programs sponsored by other institutions, is how study in nontraditional destinations fits into an institution's goals. One approach is to very directly and deliberately link the institutional mission to study abroad in nontraditional destinations. In practice, this may require a careful review of what the institution aims to accomplish through internationalism. It may mean an emphasis on medical research in developing countries, a stress on understanding the development process, or on teaching students to learn "in the field" about cultures that are radically different from their own. Some institutional missions may focus on foreign language and area studies or stress an intellectual effort to understand and analyze globalization or environmental sustainability.

In any case, institutions interested in study abroad in nontraditional destinations may do well to "build by strength" rather than to encourage student participation or program development in areas where the home campus has no interest or expertise. The rationale for this approach is to strengthen learning in a more cohesive, sustainable, and in-

depth way by linking study abroad curricula and learning to on-campus education. Study abroad should build upon on-campus learning, rather than provide a hiatus from it.

Education abroad professionals must therefore be intimately familiar with the academic and cross-cultural strengths of their institutions. This often involves compiling an inventory of international expertise and interests, assessing the inventory in light of the institution's education abroad needs, and strategically targeting priority interests. It also involves building incentives for faculty to become more directly involved in education abroad, often through professional development, contacts with counterparts abroad, and opportunities to enhance teaching and research.

There are more than 100 campus-based Title VI National Resource Centers located around the country. A primary mission of these centers is to establish, strengthen, and operate undergraduate and graduate centers in a particular region of the world, focusing on language and area or international studies. Most of the centers also have an outreach mission, so education abroad professionals are encouraged to consult the centers for advice on orientation programming or on ways to establish contact with specific faculty experts. Some of the resource centers are located at universities that operate study abroad programs in nontraditional study destinations, and which are open to qualified students from other campuses. A list of the Title VI centers can be obtained from the Center for Education of the U.S. Department of Education.

Education abroad professionals may not realize the resources available to them right at their own institutions. Individual academic departments, area studies programs, and other thematic or interdisciplinary programs are excellent places to

search for information on appropriate study sites and foreign universities for direct enrollment. International studies, foreign language, and area studies faculty are often deeply familiar with universities abroad and can offer both general guidance and specific suggestions on courses of study.

PROGRAM SELECTION AND ADVISING

Adviser Knowledge

Education abroad advisers have an important role to play in providing the information and encouragement needed by students who are considering study abroad in an unfamiliar location. It is very hard to be able to paint a picture of the sights and sounds, program or university, educational system, and people of a nontraditional location if the adviser has not visited the location. Additionally, advisers should have knowledge of the culture or cultures, the religions, and the social, economic, political, and environmental conditions of the region, particularly those that may directly impact the student. When hiring new advisers and program managers, directors should consider the diversity of staff in terms of the languages they speak, the countries where they have lived and studied, their academic disciplines, and their prior work-related experience.

Education abroad offices should budget for their staff to visit sites where their students currently study, as well as locations where they would like their students to go. To gain experience, advisers should consider participating in site visits sponsored by education abroad programs. Advisers benefit from an arranged visit, and some of the travel expenses may be covered or subsidized. Another long-term

benefit of making site visits is the development of relationships among the site-visit participants, who can then serve as resources for one another when advising students. Faculty and other university staff who might travel independently to the education abroad locations should be encouraged to add a site visit to their travel plans.

Advisers should link up with the faculty and staff at their institutions with members of the local community, and with education abroad advisers at other institutions who also have an interest in a particular geographic area or university abroad. Institutions can form consortia to conduct education abroad programs jointly, share other resources such as host family coordinators, or collaborate on the organization of excursions for participants or the joint purchase of computer equipment.

For educators and advisers who are interested in gaining in-depth experience in a particular region of the world, the Fulbright Scholars Program, administered through the Institute for International Education (IIE), offers lecturing, researching, or consulting awards in 140 countries. Traditional Fulbright awards are available for a period of two months to an academic year and longer. The Fulbright Senior Specialists Program offers grants for opportunities that range from two to six weeks in duration. The Fulbright International Education Administrators Program invites applications for summer seminars of two or three weeks in Germany, Japan, or Korea. (See Part I, Chapter 2, "The Profession of Education Abroad.")

Advisers can participate in a number of workshops sponsored by NAFSA and other organizations. Every year, NAFSA's Education Abroad Knowledge Community's (formerly known as SECUSSA) Whole World Committee offers a workshop at the NAFSA national conference

Part II: Campus Advising

specifically designed to address the issues associated with study in nontraditional locations. NAFSA offers country- and culture-specific workshops that may relate to nontraditional destinations.

Advising Practices

Students may sometimes be unintentionally discouraged from pursuing study in nontraditional locations. Education abroad advisers should review their advising practices, and those of their campus colleagues who advise students:

- Are students receiving adequate information about education abroad opportunities?
- Are students receiving reliable information about health, safety, and security?
- Are new concepts introduced to students, or are students simply advised about the program or programs they ask about?
- Does the education abroad office possess and make available to students photos, student evaluations and testimonials, videos, and travel literature related to less traveled program sites?
- Does the university offer less commonly taught languages and if so, are students encouraged to learn them?
- Are students who have returned from study abroad encouraged to pursue higher-level courses in the language or languages that they studied abroad?
- Are students offered the opportunity to connect with past participants;

international students, faculty, and staff; or other members of the college community who are from or who have an interest in regions not typically chosen for study abroad?

- Do the education abroad programs include independent study or research options, or internships, and does the institution award credit for these options?
- Does the education abroad office link its Web site to the Web sites of appropriate majors and minors on campus (and vice versa)?
- Are students encouraged (both before and after studying abroad) to participate in internationally oriented extracurricular activities (either on campus or in the community), such as buddy or language partner programs? Does the education abroad office contribute to the development of such programs?

Academic Standards

Respect for U.S. higher education can frequently mean that study abroad programs are welcomed into the best universities, particularly those in the developing world. U.S. institutions that seek to establish programs abroad may have access to brilliant faculty with international reputations and to qualified, bilingual, cross-culturally experienced staff. Advisers should determine whether the programs they investigate rise to such standards. They should cultivate a network of knowledgeable faculty and administrators at their own institutions, or at other institutions in their region.

Program Assessment

There are a variety of issues to keep in mind when assessing overseas programs, depending on the location and type of program. (See Part III, Chapter 5, “Program Assessment and Evaluation.”) Consider the following:

- What are the academic and cross-cultural strengths of the program?
- What unique study, field research, or internship opportunities does the program offer?
- What kind of orientation is provided by the program?
- Do students receive adequate information concerning local health, safety, and security issues?
- Does the program have the faculty and staff expertise to deal with rapidly changing situations?
- If classes at a local university are canceled, is the program prepared to organize special classes or develop special project opportunities so that students do not lose academic credit?
- What is the nature of the health support infrastructure?
- Does the program have a plan for evacuating a seriously ill student if necessary?
- Does the program make sure that students are registered at the U.S. embassy and that the program is included as part of the warden system, so that staff and students will receive any

notices the embassy wants to convey to U.S. citizens?

- Are there any particular issues related to course registration or the timely issuance of transcripts?

To help assure the quality of a direct enrollment study abroad experience, and the safety of U.S. students who participate in direct enrollment opportunities without a third-party provider resident director, education abroad advisers should consider the adequacy of the local support infrastructure:

- Does the university have a foreign student office? If so, what services are provided there?
- Does the university have a history of closing due to student, faculty, or staff strikes, or government-imposed closures?
- Does the city or region where the university is located have a local group or center that can act as a contact for U.S. students on nonacademic areas of the experience? There are many cultural learning centers around the world that are staffed by local people or expatriates, who have long grappled with cultural learning issues.

Factors that Contribute to Program Selection and Participation

While some students enter the education abroad adviser's office still open to a range of possibilities for study abroad, many others have already decided on their destination. Their selection of a specific program may hinge on course offerings or program reputation, or on less academic factors such as cost

Part II: Campus Advising

or the recommendation of fellow students. Increasingly, undergraduates may possess previous international experience through high school programs or from traveling or living abroad with their parents. Some students who seek to study in Africa, Asia, Latin America, or the Middle East are looking for a heritage experience, the chance to explore a culture and a people related to their own ethnic origins. (See Part II, Chapter 3, "Reaching Underrepresented Constituencies.") Students who seek to study in non-Western parts of the world are often experiential learners who prefer tactile, field-based programs that present significant cultural challenges.

"Is it Right for Me?"

The following advice for students who ask, "Is it for me?" is available on the Education Abroad Knowledge Community Whole World Web site:

In deciding if studying abroad at a less traveled destination is for you, you must review your objectives for your semester abroad, your sense of adventure, your ability to deal with ambiguity, and how open minded you are. If you are a person who must have every detail laid out ahead of time, an experience in a less developed world may not be for you. Circumstances of infrastructure development and poor communications systems may mean that things that would be easy to accomplish here may not be done so easily while abroad. The degree to which these traits are necessary is dependent on the program model. Stand-alone programs or those with less reliance on the local structures will be less impacted by outside influences and so the need to be flexible and patient may be less important.

Programs where students are joining locals in their schooling may require more. It should be understood, however, that regardless of program model, daily life could be very difficult and tax the most patient among us. It is important to remember that a stranger to our ways may feel the same when confronted with similar issues in the United States (Vande Berg and Leonard 2003).

Advisers should ask students use the following questions to evaluate their motivation for non-traditional study abroad:

Personal

- How flexible can I be, and in what aspects of life?
- Do I find new and different types of food interesting? (A student who is a vegetarian may have no problem studying in India in a Hindu community, but may find it difficult to manage food preferences in a Muslim setting unless he or she is willing to compromise on diet for the duration of the program.)
- What are my everyday necessities and what can be forgone? (Students may need to do without creature comforts such as toilet paper, or they may have to do without regular electricity or work supplies.)
- What are my needs related to privacy? (In some cultures, young people who want or need privacy may find themselves ostracized and labeled "antisocial.")

- How accepting can I be with regard to different gender role expectations?

Academic

- What is it, precisely, that can best be learned at this particular site?
- How well can I adjust to classes, learning a new language or languages, and possibly conducting research? (Classes may meet for a longer period of time, and may feature less discussion and more lecture, as is typical in many non-U.S. academic institutions.)
- How will I adjust if computer facilities, e-mail and phone access, the library system, availability of books, and other learning resources are inferior to those on the home campus?
- Will I be able to focus on my academic work while adjusting to different ways of living, transportation challenges, a different diet, and an unfamiliar housing situation? (See Part II, Chapter 1, "Advising Principles and Strategies.")

Negative Stereotypes

Regardless of the reasoning behind their selection, many students are powerfully influenced by the stereotypes they hold. Negative stereotypes may lead students or parents to rule out study in certain countries or parts of the world; for example, the Middle East is violent and dangerous; Africa is disease-ridden and primitive. Other stereotypes may

actually influence a student to select a particular site, yet the stereotypes must be confronted as false and misleading if the student is to maximize his or her in-country experience: for example, every Brazilian loves samba and soccer; every Chinese is hard-working and smart. Advisers need to point students to accurate information about the culture or cultures of their destination, and if possible to host-country informants. This can be a tricky venture, since naive student questions, asked out of ignorance, for example, "Does your family have electricity?" can come across as insensitive and offensive in certain situations. The education abroad adviser should seek ways to prepare students and informants for such encounters. Advisers should invest time in their own education as a means of overcoming their own knowledge gaps.

Parents

The student and the adviser must involve parents in the beginning stages of program selection, and in all subsequent phases of the program. While some parents are knowledgeable and supportive of their son's or daughter's decision to study in a nontraditional location, many others are lacking in knowledge and are likely to have the same stereotypes as their children. Unless parents can be brought on board early in the selection process, the student may face so much resistance to their plans that they may ultimately have to eliminate certain program sites from consideration.

The images Americans have of nontraditional destinations are based to some extent on the media coverage of such regions: spectacular natural disasters, major health crises, and political instability. Little news space in the U.S. press is devoted to the broader context and history of these problems, and they are often generalized to include whole countries or even continents, even when the

actual impact is limited to a specific geographical location. It is therefore not surprising that the general public in the United States, including many parents of prospective study abroad participants, have a less-than-positive reaction to the thought of their child living in a nontraditional study abroad location.

There are, of course, real challenges in developing countries, including, for example, shortages of food, water, and electricity, and bona fide concerns about health care. However, well-constructed study abroad programs address these issues and create a healthy working environment for participants. Students and their families should be made aware that some less traditional sites offer all of the conveniences to which students and their families are accustomed.

It is important to have information available for parents who are concerned about their child studying in a part of the world that may seem (and be) so remote from their own experiences. There are several ways to address parental concerns. Advisers can make themselves available to answer questions; organize an information session on study abroad designed specifically for visiting parents; provide accurate and well-written materials on programs in nontraditional locations; and establish a database of former students and their parents whose phone numbers and e-mail addresses can be shared. Carefully prepared information can address the concerns of many parents. Providing information to parents establishes a line of communication that may be very helpful in case of a real or perceived crisis concerning their son or daughter.

Impact on Career

Given the recognized need for college graduates to have global competency skills, including the direct knowledge of other cultures and languages, an

overseas educational experience is a great enhancement to a student's application to graduate school or for employment. Fewer students choose to study in nontraditional locations; therefore, the ones who do are of interest to employers who seek to recruit individuals who are flexible, willing to take risks, adapt to new work environments, deal with ambiguity, and have complex problem-solving skills.

Financial Issues

Although many of the financial questions about study abroad in nontraditional destinations are similar to those regarding study abroad elsewhere, there are a few special concerns and opportunities education abroad advisers may wish to highlight when advising students interested in nontraditional study destinations. For example, immunization and international travel costs may be higher for students heading to nontraditional sites, whereas daily living expenses (e.g., room, board, local commuting) may be lower. Educational costs vary greatly, depending on, among other factors, whether the selected program's fees are based on local or U.S. tuition and administrative expenses. As with any study abroad program, a comprehensive budget and cost analysis should be made available to prospective participants.

With regard to special funding opportunities, students should be encouraged to consider scholarships and grants designated for the study of "critical" languages and study in less traditional locations. Students should also be encouraged to research study abroad programs that offer scholarship opportunities. Some countries have developed scholarship programs to encourage U.S. students to study in their countries. Students should also review community resources. In some instances, emigre communities may offer financial support for students to study in their countries of origin.

Education abroad advisers can refer students to funding opportunities such as those offered by the Freeman-ASIA Program, whose primary mission is to increase the number of U.S. undergraduates who study in East and Southeast Asia. Awardees are expected to share their experiences with their home campus, to encourage study abroad by others and to spread understanding of Asia in their home communities. For information on the David L. Boren Undergraduate Scholarships for Study Abroad, the Gilman International Scholarship Program, and the Rotary Foundation, all of which offer grants and funding for students to study in nontraditional destinations, see Part I, Chapter 7, "Financial Aid and Funding Study Abroad."

It is important that the education abroad office work creatively to secure special funding for study in nontraditional destinations. This might include, for example, a strategic focus on direct reciprocal exchanges with selected universities beyond the common destinations, scholarships for the study of less commonly taught languages, or other grants strategically committed to building incentives for study in underrepresented areas of the world. The selection criteria of existing scholarships might also be reevaluated to include a preference for nontraditional destinations.

Types of Programs

Direct Enrollment in a University

One of the most stimulating forms of study abroad is to become a student in a university in another country. Ideally, this involves living among local students in a residence hall, or in a home with a local family. Students typically select their courses from the regular university offerings, sit alongside the local students, and compete directly with them. This is an enormous challenge, even more so when the

university's instruction is in a language other than English. Many U.S. students, even those raised speaking another language at home, will need special preparation to confront such an environment. The academic culture of the university can be equally daunting. Students who are used to small classes, clear and explicit directives from the professor, and earning all As and Bs, may need to develop a very different set of expectations. Classes in a foreign university may be in the form of a lecture to 100 or more students; the professor may offer little or nothing in writing as a syllabus to guide the student; and the average grade may be the equivalent of a C in the United States.

Reciprocal Exchanges

Exchange programs represent a commitment between two universities, and may include any of the following: exchange of undergraduate or graduate students, staff, or faculty; joint research efforts; or other types of collaboration. Student participants benefit from the wealth of information about the host institution built up over time at the home institution (and vice versa), and from the relationships between faculty and staff that contribute to sound advising, support, and often, academic and extracurricular opportunities that might not be available otherwise. Exchange programs are very rewarding but are also very demanding in terms of the commitment of time and resources of faculty and staff at both institutions. Colleges and universities that choose to develop exchanges need to make sure that there is sufficient commitment among the faculty and administration, that the exchange supports the educational mission of the institution, and that there is an appropriate infrastructure in the education abroad office to support the activities of the exchange.

Part II: Campus Advising

Hybrid Model

Some study abroad programs offer a sort of interface between the directly enrolled U.S. student and the foreign university. Small, interactive seminars may supplement the lectures and some professors may be encouraged to provide American-style syllabi. Special courses may be organized for the participants for language study or on special topics, often designed to encourage discussion and to provide an ongoing venue in which students can process the learning that takes place both inside and outside the classroom.

Island Programs

U.S. students may know shockingly little about the environment in which they choose to study. Sometimes, specially designed programs offer a more realistic academic experience for such students than direct enrollment in a university, since the content of a specially designed class can be tailored to the background of the target group. For example, in a university class in Hong Kong covering the history of China, the instructor might presume that students have learned the basics of this subject in earlier schooling. Such a presumption would probably not be valid for U.S. students enrolled in the class. Those students may be better off in a specially taught class that includes an introduction to the basics of Chinese history. Island programs can structure portions of many courses to be taught in situ, in settings ranging from art museums to battlefields and other historic locations. Such programs need to overcome a natural isolation of their students from the local culture. This can be accomplished through forging contacts with local residents, especially local students, and by ensuring that students live in home-stays rather than as a U.S. group. Students should also be encouraged to take

part in local activities. In this way, island programs can establish links to the cultural mainland and might be more accurately described as “peninsula” programs.

Independent Study and Research

Programs at foreign universities may include a field work component or independent research project as part of the academic program. Students can expect to interact with the local community to a greater degree than they would in a traditional program. There may also be potential for contact with authors, community workers, and government leaders. Conducting research in another country is very challenging for a student who is likely to have little to no experience with field work methodologies. There may also be barriers related to the lack of knowledge of the local language or languages, not to mention cultural differences. Some U.S. institutions provide training for their students before the students leave for direct enrollment study abroad, and some programs offer on-site training, which may include course work on field work methodologies. Some students may continue with the research that they started abroad as part of their senior thesis after their return.

Short-Term Programs

More than 50 percent of undergraduate and master's degree candidates who studied abroad in 2002–2003 participated in programs of eight weeks or less duration (i.e., summer, January term, internship, and other short-term programs) (*Open Doors* 2004). Some students and their families are more willing to consider studying abroad in a destination that is unfamiliar to them if it is for a relatively short period of time. Short-term programs to less traditional locations provide a variety of opportunities and

challenges. When there is a great contrast between the U.S. culture and that of the host country, as is often the case with less traditional locations, there is great potential for students to be able to discern and therefore start to contemplate and absorb information about the host culture. As is the case with all short-term programs, it is extremely important that the program design allow for a maximum amount of interaction with students and other host-country nationals, to avoid academic tourism. (See Part III, Chapter 2, "Short-Term Programs Abroad.")

PREPARING FOR WHOLE-WORLD STUDY

Predeparture orientation sessions present an opportunity for students and parents to confront any remaining fears regarding traveling to and living at the program site. Orientations conducted by knowledgeable staff can provide reassurance that all necessary steps are being taken to ensure a successful semester abroad. Some programs provide orientations in the United States prior to departure, some provide orientation upon arrival in the host country, and some provide an orientation in both locations. Minimally, orientations should include past participants, international students, and other resource people who have spent time in the region, and will include a discussion of health, safety and security issues, how to handle emergencies, and basic information on academics and appropriate cultural behavior. In addition to the information provided in Part II, Chapter 7, "Predeparture Orientation and Reentry Programming," the subjects discussed in the following paragraphs may be particularly applicable to students who study in less traditional locations.

Advisers need to confront students who have been accepted into less traditional programs with the need to learn more about the place where they are going. Select internet resources can provide extensive and multidimensional information. Advisers should guide students through a systematic review of their destination country's significant events and resources. This review can involve English-language sites for better understanding, but should also include resources in the destination country's language, as students learn to master it. Internet resources published by the U.S. government should be required reading for all participants, including the country-specific U.S. Department of State Consular Information Sheets and relevant public announcements and travel warnings. In cases where the home campus imposes travel restrictions based on advisories issued by the U.S. Department of State, education abroad advisers need to be sure that the information they give to students is consistent with the institution's policies. Another invaluable internet resource is the Travelers' Health portion of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Web site, which features destination-specific information on how travelers can stay healthy.

Americans Abroad

It is often observed that many U.S. students become a minority for the first time when they study abroad. In the case of study in less developed countries, students frequently find themselves members of a privileged, envied, and sometimes-resented elite. As citizens and representatives of the world's only remaining superpower, U.S. students in such countries may encounter local fascination with American culture and prominence. In many cases, students' hard currency U.S. dollars, when

Part II: Campus Advising

exchanged, will give them buying power well beyond the local currency. Students often interact with local elites or even with members of the international diplomatic community, an irony since many students choose such countries expressly to learn more about poverty and underdevelopment. Relatively wealthy families often volunteer as home-stay hosts, granting students immediate entrée into their social circles. Often, the student's first encounter with the poor is through interaction with the domestic servants of a home-stay family, where rigid but unspoken class expectations govern the relationship and create confusion for inexperienced students. Resolving this rich-poor paradox can be one of the most powerful and insightful experiences of the abroad experience. In caste societies, students may have severe adjustment issues. Local administrators should be alert to the adjustment issues experienced by these students, and be available to help them cope. At times of medical or police emergency, the "elite" status of students can be a distinct advantage to them and to administrators, as it may grant them access to scarce resources not available to the average local citizen, thus bringing some program sites closer to the home university's health and safety standards.

A distinct advantage of many sites in Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, and Asia, especially university environments, is the relative ease of interaction with local students. In contrast to Western Europe, where U.S. students frequently encounter difficulties in establishing friendships with their peers, students in developing countries are often quite eager to meet Americans. On-site staff can take advantage of the situation as a means of immersing U.S. students into the local culture. However, students should be cautioned that just as in the United States, particularly in urban environments, not everyone who is friendly to them

is to be trusted. Students should be wary of people who may want to exploit them by attracting them into inappropriate relationships (e.g., marriage proposals for the sake of getting a visa to the United States are not uncommon in some sites).

Academic Resources

Advisers need to alert potential participants to the lack of certain resources at universities in developing countries, notably library collections, science facilities, and computer networks. In many cases, however, the opportunity to experience a country's educational system or cultural traditions may make up for inadequate resources.

Strikes and Political Instability

A particular problem in some countries in Africa and elsewhere (strikes also take place in Western European countries) is the possibility of university shutdown. Regular university operations, including classes, may be halted by student strikes, discontented faculty, or governments seeking to stifle university-based dissent. Experienced programs have contingency plans that may involve independent studies, classes for U.S. students taught away from the campus, and other options designed to safeguard the U.S. students' course credit. In turbulent political and social contexts or in areas of potential environmental disturbance, some programs also prepare alternate study sites, where an entire program might be continued on short notice, rather than be forced to suspend operations.

Health, Safety, and Security

At a time when concerns of health, safety, and security abroad are high, students and parents with limited information often conclude that study

destinations in less developed world regions must be risky and unwise. Such a conclusion is unwarranted. Experienced advisers know that all forms of study, including those on the home campus, involve risks that must be calculated and managed. The situation in the resource-poor areas of the world is no different. The experience of U.S. students in these regions can be quite different from what they would experience in Western Europe, however, as are the strategies for developing and maintaining high-quality academic programs that place student welfare as a top priority.

Health

It is absolutely indispensable to have qualified medical personnel provide health orientation to education abroad participants. Most program managers with experience in programs in the developing world say that students who follow health guidelines provided by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the program administration rarely become seriously ill. It is not uncommon for students to experience simple diarrhea while adjusting to a new diet and the local water, but it need not lead to anything more than a few days of mild discomfort.

Prevention of illness should start before the students leave home. Students should obtain the appropriate immunizations and learn about prophylactic drugs, such as medication for malaria. Although use of prophylactics does not ensure that students won't contract malaria, students should be informed of all precautions that might lessen the likelihood of contracting the disease.

Once abroad, students may be able to avoid many of the ailments often encountered in developing countries, by following guidelines regarding drinking water and food, and by using preventive measures such as sleeping under a

mosquito net and applying insect repellent. Students can, and regularly do, return from programs in nontraditional locations as healthy as they were when they left. (See Part II, Chapter 5, "Health Issues and Advising Responsibilities.")

Emergencies

On-site orientation should include information on what to do in various kinds of emergency situations, particularly those situations that are known to be potentially volatile (e.g., natural disasters, health crises, university and labor strikes, political turmoil, or real or threatened terrorism).

Travel Safety

More U.S. citizens are harmed in road accidents than in any other way while living abroad. Factors leading to road accidents include different driving styles, poor road infrastructure, and poor maintenance of vehicles. Students should be cautioned about driving in countries where traffic travels in the lane opposite to where it travels in the United States. Some programs specifically forbid students to rent or purchase vehicles while they are studying abroad. Detailed information about general and country-specific road safety is available to students, advisers, and program administrators through the Association for Safe International Road Travel (ASIRT). (See Part II, Chapter 6, "Advising Students on Safety and Security Issues.")

Crime

Petty theft is a problem that students will often encounter, particularly if they are studying in a relatively poor country. Prevention can go a long way toward avoiding being the victim of a crime. Students can help to ensure the security of their

Part II: Campus Advising

belongings by storing valuables in a locked cabinet, not wearing jewelry when traveling, and carrying wallets where they are not visible or easily reached in a crowded area such as on a bus or train. Other preventative measures are traveling in pairs and learning about the city or town so as to identify areas to avoid. Personal crimes are usually no more common in poor countries than in many U.S. cities, but since U.S. students are more visibly foreign, particularly right after arrival, they may be especially vulnerable. Predeparture and on-site orientations should provide information on the level of crime in the area, any known incidents that affected prior participants, known places to avoid, and any other site-specific information related to avoiding being the victim of a crime.

Security

Program administrators should provide students with information about how to register at the U.S. embassy or consulate in charge of U.S. citizens in the program region, or they should facilitate students' registrations. Students should be advised about how to obtain, on an ongoing basis, local and international news. In the event of a security situation that affects people residing in the area where the program is located (or in locations where program-related travel or activities will take place), students should follow the advice of their program or local university, as well as information that is given by the local government to everyone residing in the area affected by the security situation. There should also be a plan for how students are kept apprised of general notices issued by the U.S. Department of State concerning the well-being of U.S. citizens throughout the world and what security precautions they are expected to take. (See Part II, Chapter 6, "Advising Students on Safety and Security Issues.")

Program administrators should clearly state their expectations for students' behavior, monitoring of news, and handling of any health, safety, or security matters while students are traveling independently on weekends or during breaks.

Communication

Following years of technological development, communications systems are now greatly improved in many countries of the world. Most regions have reasonable phone, fax, and e-mail service, and courier-packet facilities. Nevertheless, programs and administrators vary considerably in the nature and frequency of their communication with the home campus or office. Regular office-to-office communication prior to the semester's start helps ensure the availability of appropriate housing, awareness of special medical or dietary needs, and a good match between available classes and students' intended enrollment selections. During the semester abroad, regular communication keeps the home office informed on student progress and any special situations. In crises and emergencies, good communication plans keep students, parents, administrators, and other concerned individuals fully aware of the nature of and developments in the situation. Programs that employ only sporadic communication with the home campus force students to be more reliant on themselves and on local resources. Education abroad advisers need to consider the appropriateness of the communication networks in place at the program locations under consideration by their students.

Students should be informed of their level of access to resources such as e-mail and cell phones. In many sites, students have more than sufficient access to these resources, and in other locations, access is limited. Depending on the philosophy of the program, students may find that e-mail and cell

phone use may be actively discouraged or actively encouraged. (See Part I, Chapter 8, "Technology and Education Abroad," and Part III, Chapter 6, "Maximizing Safety and Security and Minimizing Risk in Education Abroad Programs.")

Living Arrangements

Programs in nontraditional destinations offer housing choices that run the gamut from home-stays, to apartment living, to dormitories, just like study abroad programs in other parts of the world. Many students have relished the relationships they developed with other students in dormitory situations, or getting to know the local food vendors and marketplaces when they lived independently. Home-stays are often encouraged in nontraditional program locations, at least at the start of the program. Students who are accustomed to independence may balk at the expectations of a host family, whether the issue is curfew, neatness, or attendance at meals. Most students who live with a family for at least part of the time they are abroad find that the cultural benefits, the language-learning opportunity, and having the necessities of life managed by someone else, are reasonable trade-offs for any limits on their freedom. In urban areas, getting to know a family often offers students an opportunity to understand the relationship between rural and urban segments of society. Students often meet visiting relatives and sometimes meet household help who have relocated to make a living wage.

Gender Issues

Gender- and age-specific behaviors are defined differently by various cultures. Some students may be concerned about how they will be treated in a nontraditional program location, and in what ways

they will be expected to alter their behavior to comply with cultural or societal norms. Experiencing differences in norms is an important source of learning in the study abroad experience. Before they depart the United States, students should be encouraged to read novels and newspapers and view films about the program region, to identify local norms they may encounter and find unsettling. Students should find opportunities to meet with past program participants, and with exchange students, international students and scholars, faculty, staff, or members of the community who are either from the region or have direct knowledge of it. This knowledge will help students adjust their expectations so that they can derive maximum benefit from their time abroad. Students must be prepared to be sensitive to different cultural norms (e.g., those concerning dress and behavior) as well as stereotypes of or past experiences with Americans that may impact how U.S. students are viewed and received by people in the program region.

Pace of Life

Students can expect the pace of life to be different than what they are used to in the United States. Life may be much more hectic for a student from a rural or suburban U.S. town who has chosen to study in a densely populated major urban center. On the other hand, students may find themselves in a much quieter or slower situation than they are used to, requiring that they place a high emphasis on developing relationships with their fellow students, people in the community, and with their host families.

Arrival Adjustment

Some students' first reaction to the overseas site may be negative, and it is important for such

students to know that the situation can be managed and can be enriching if they are prepared to be open-minded and adaptable. Students may need to be encouraged to give themselves time to put their initial experiences into context. What may seem like an insurmountable problem on the first day, when the student is recovering from jet-lag, can soon become a humorous memory.

Languages

Many nontraditional program destinations use a European language as the language of instruction. Students should be encouraged, however, to study a local language. Such study can open whole worlds of culture and ideas. In some countries such as India, multiple languages (e.g., Hindi, Gujarati, and Punjabi) are spoken among the local population. In a country where English is not the language of instruction, students may find themselves studying in one language and speaking outside the classroom in another (e.g., in Senegal, instruction may be in French and students may learn to speak Wolof or another local language outside of the classroom). These multilingual environments are both challenging and stimulating, and are often more representative of the world than are monolingual environments. Local inhabitants are unlikely to think that their native language will be mastered by short-term visitors, but they do appreciate visitors' attempts to learn the language.

Students with Disabilities

Students should consult carefully with the education abroad office and the particular program in which they are interested, to determine if the program and the program site have appropriate resources and can adequately accommodate their special needs. (See

Part II, Chapter 3, "Reaching Underrepresented Constituencies.")

Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgendered (GLBT) Students

GLBT students may face greater challenges in less traditional education abroad destinations, or, conversely, they may find that there is a particularly welcoming community in some program locations. Students should be aware of the host-country laws concerning homosexuality, and they should be provided with information about how accepting or restrictive the host culture might be. Information on these topics and on GLBT organizations and support resources, norms and styles of behavior, GLBT media, and so on, can be found on NAFSA's Rainbow Special Interest Group (SIG) on U.S. Students Abroad Web site. (See also Part II, Chapter 3, "Reaching Underrepresented Constituencies.")

REENTRY

Returning students are usually the best advocates for study in less traditional locations. Advisers should organize reentry activities that give the students who have studied in nontraditional locations the opportunity to talk about their experiences. The students should be asked to serve as spokespersons at study abroad fairs, information sessions for prospective participants, and at orientation sessions. Advisers should look for ways to connect these students with other people and units on campus (such as the Area Studies program, the special events office, guest lecturers, and international students) that are relevant to their particular area of study. Returned students should be asked to

complete a program evaluation, review program literature and handbooks for accuracy, and for suggestions. After being immersed in a new culture, students may be interested to find resources back on their home campus that will further their academic goals, and they may be interested in how they can return overseas to work, study, volunteer, teach, or travel.

Advisers should also research additional opportunities for students to integrate their experiences after their return. One potential resource is the NAFSA Cooperative Grant Program. This program offers grants that may aid in developing new outreach efforts between the campus and the greater community. In some cases, returned students may have the opportunity to connect with people from the region of the world where they studied, and there may be opportunities for students to volunteer with these groups, enabling them to put their newly developed cross-cultural skills to work, or to apply their language skills in their home community.

SUMMARY

Today's increasingly interconnected world requires an educated citizenry prepared to live and work in complicated multicultural and multinational environments. The gradually increasing number of

students who choose to study abroad in non-Western nations and societies represent both opportunities and challenges to education abroad advisers and program providers.

We are unnecessarily putting ourselves at risk because of our stubborn monolingualism and ignorance of the world. As strong as our country and economy are, we cannot remain prosperous and secure if we do not understand the words and actions of our international neighbors. We need soldiers, diplomats, and business executives who speak Arabic, just as we need speakers of French, Spanish, Chinese, Swahili, Russian, Korean, Farsi, Hindi, and dozens of other languages. To successfully navigate the new millennium, we will need leaders who are able to understand global crises not only from an American vantage point, but also from those of our allies and our adversaries (NAFSA 2003, 2).