

# DESIGNING AN INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE FOR BUSINESS STUDENTS IN A SMALL COLLEGE

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## Abstract

*The exploding character of business globalization necessitates pedagogical attention from all institutions of higher education regardless of size. Students graduating today need preparation in the various dimensions of international activity or they are doomed to mediocrity. Small colleges encounter difficulties in delivering suitable international experiences that are unique to their size. Furthermore small colleges must resolve many of the same international problems encountered by the largest of institutions. Consequently, appropriately addressing globalization presents a great strain to the small college. This study examines alternate formats that may be adopted by colleges to insure that their graduates are suitably prepared for the global business environment wherein they will spend their professional careers. Focused international courses, exchanges, in-house study abroad programs, internships, and participating in consortia are analyzed along with some creative alternatives. Implications of adopting alternate strategies are examined and suggestions are offered to insure the students graduating from a small college have the necessary preparation to master this dimension of their lives. Alternate programs offered by different colleges are examined and a prototype curriculum designed to suitably prepare students for their global world ahead is offered. Finally, some grant opportunities that may help facilitate such programs are identified.*

## INTRODUCTION

Global knowledge grows increasingly important for college students in every environment. Questions about the content and structure of education at the college level have persisted since the beginning of colleges and are likely to remain unresolved well into the future. Some issues are highly contentious and others less controversial. Socrates was sentenced to death in 399 BC ostensibly in part due to things he was teaching the Athenian youth. Penalties today are less severe, but emotion continues to cloud questions on many issues such as religion wherein advocates promote or discredit topics related to evolution and intelligent design. Political suasion and various attempts at promoting political correctness abound. Some state legislatures explicitly decree requirements in certain areas. This paper attempts no enumeration of the assorted requirements and controversies. Rather, one topic, global or international sophistication is addressed.

## APPROPRIATE INGREDIENTS OF COLLEGE LEVEL EDUCATION

Any question about the need for students to develop a sound global awareness has become passé. In November 2003, the Strategic Task Force on Education Abroad set an objective that 20 percent of American students receiving college degrees should study abroad for credit by 2010 and 50 percent by 2040. At present barely more than 1 percent of the 8 million full-time and 5 million part-time undergraduates attending the 3,400 accredited U. S. colleges and universities study abroad. In recognition of these needs on 10 November 2005 the U.S. Senate unanimously passed S.RES.308, a resolution designating 2006 as the "Year of Study Abroad".<sup>1</sup> The importance of global knowledge is recognized at our countries highest levels.

U. S student participation in study abroad has almost tripled since the mid-1980's, with substantial growth since the mid-1990's. Clearly many students, parents, faculty members and college administrators already recognize this need and have responded to it. Recent estimates are that about 190,000 students study abroad annually.<sup>2</sup>

Proposals have been advanced to help encourage global experiences for American students. A recently completed study notes the importance of these global experiences. The Commission on the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Fellowship Program advocates increasing the number of study abroad participants to 1,000,000 by 2017.<sup>3</sup> That would require approximately a 17% annually compounded growth rate from current levels. They note that, "...most Americans have never been abroad, even on a vacation. Just 20 percent of Americans hold a passport."<sup>4</sup> The preamble of their report clearly states, "What nations don't know can hurt them. The stakes involved in study abroad are that simple, that straightforward, and that important. For their own future and that of the nation, college graduates today must be internationally competent."<sup>5</sup> Furthermore Laura Giovanelli notes,

"Over the next 10 years, the Lincoln Commission wants Congress to allocate \$50 million to \$125 million a year for merit-based grants to help pay for foreign study. The average grant would be \$1,750. The focus would be to interest students in nontraditional destinations.

Those grants would include money for shorter-term stay and would be available to community-college students, too. The hope is that the federal money will become the equivalent of the Fulbright - a federal scholarship for international study created after World War II - for undergraduates."<sup>6</sup>

Traditional schools are taking dramatic steps to promote study abroad. Many schools have a study abroad office, their own international programs or some other effort to encourage internationalization of their student bodies. For example "Harvard University recently announced plans to make study abroad a degree requirement."<sup>7</sup>

The need for internationalization extends beyond the traditional student. A growing fraction of the students attending college at the present are best described as being nontraditional. According to data from the National Center for Education Statistics, in 1999-2000, 73 percent of undergraduate students in the U. S. were minimally nontraditional. They identify a nontraditional student by the presence of one or more of the following seven characteristics: delayed enrollment into postsecondary education, attended part time, financially independent, worked full time while enrolled,

had dependents other than a spouse, was a single parent, or did not obtain a standard high school diploma. Students are considered to be “minimally nontraditional” if they have only one nontraditional characteristic.<sup>8</sup> Even these students need a way to go abroad for a week or two to have a positive experience upon which to grow internationally. Although a semester or year abroad may fit with the schedule of a traditional undergraduate, spending that much time away from a job or family may be impractical for nontraditional students.

One of the most commonly recognized needs among American students is improvement in their math and science skills. These needs have been addressed in many ways. But Kaufman and Johnson recognize that global awareness merits similar attention. They argue, “Improving science and math education is only part of the ‘basic training’ our young people need to compete successfully in a global marketplace. They also need international knowledge, language abilities, and intercultural communications skills.”<sup>9</sup>

## **ALTERNATE PATHS TO GLOBAL SOPHISTICATION**

The remaining relevant question is how to best equip students to function within the global economy they will experience over their professional careers and personal lives. The ultimate goal of graduating students suitably skilled with the apparatus needed to function in a global environment may be accomplished through various paths. The longstanding academic practice upon identifying an important area of knowledge is to offer a course in it. Consequently, today American colleges offer an abundance of international business courses or international studies courses. A second option for developing knowledge and skills in an area is to experience it. Foreign exposure thus may be realized by studying in a foreign country. Exchange programs and various other study abroad opportunities fit this mold. Third, some colleges choose to develop and offer their own program in an international environment. Fourth, student internships and work experiences in foreign lands are possible. Finally, it is possible to participate with a consortium of colleges to take advantage of economies of scale and expertise. The following enumeration examines these alternatives and compares their relative merits.

### **International business courses**

Seeking erudition is perhaps the easiest first step to fully learning anything new. Students can read about most anything, including international affairs and learn considerable fundamentals. Most business programs offer a course in international business, and many offer more targeted courses in functional areas including finance, marketing, and other topics to prepare students with relevant material. Such a course may serve as a prelude to an international episode or it may be the entire global experience for some students. Although the awareness and knowledge gained by students in an international business course may be invaluable, this structure is fraught with limitations. The global environment is enormous and attempting to condense its myriad of characteristics into a three credit hour course may be impractical. The magnitude of that effort may be comparable to teaching the entire history of the world in a single course.

## **Study at a foreign university**

Foreign college attendance involves students matriculating at another institution. This process generally requires the students to complete an elaborate process of application and qualification to gain admission to the selected foreign institution. Local language skills are crucial for studying in most foreign universities. This requirement presents a major hurdle to the overwhelming majority of American students. The remoteness of most locations where languages other than English is spoken for students in the U.S. precludes much experience with other languages. Growing Spanish speaking populations in many U.S. regions may change this characteristic in the future.

Another problem that American students often encounter in foreign institutions is the cultural difference present abroad. This difference is manifest in several ways. In many countries higher education is available to only the most academically select individuals. After years of competing for admission to the next higher level institution, foreign students have often been whittled to a small number of highly competitive individuals. If only the brightest 10% of a society attend its institutions of higher learning, the average student from a country where over half of the comparable pool attends college a disparity is likely to exist. Commonly the structure of courses in foreign colleges differs from the typical American form. Overwhelming emphasis is often placed upon a single final exam in foreign schools and few continuing assignments occur throughout the semester. Some countries follow a tradition of oral exams. Although foreign students are familiar with these structures and have developed skill at cramming for the final, many American students find the transition difficult.

A recent estimate by the Lincoln Commission indicates that about 17% of American students abroad are business and management students.<sup>10</sup> The number of business students is second only to the social sciences which constitutes 22%. Clearly there is ample interest and experience among business students to justify efforts to provide them with international opportunities.

One of the simplest ways to promote international experiences for students is to provide easy access to alternate programs. Many schools develop web pages within their home sites with ample listings of available study abroad programs. These pages reasonably offer links to pages on these various foreign university web sites describing their programs. For example the University of Akron provides links to over 30 such programs with semester, year long, summer and special interval programs.<sup>11</sup>

One of the challenging aspects of directly enrolling in a foreign university is obtaining suitable recognition for a student's efforts. In non English speaking countries transcripts are understandably provided in their local language. Such transcripts present problems to American registrars who typically require professional translations. Fortunately many foreign universities are equipped to support such translations. Often the problem is more complex than a simple language translation. Identifying the significance of effort or credit hour worth of academic courses taken abroad is not a simple issue. Resolution of these issues is sometimes accomplished through programs that are integrated with the home university.

## **In house study abroad programs**

Some colleges have developed international programs by utilizing their own resources, faculty and personnel. An obvious benefit of this approach is the quality control that is automatically built into the system. Faculty members delivering the courses are well known and enrolled students logically earn credits that are incorporated into their grade point averages. Consequently, students have a powerful incentive to maintain their academic integrity. Clearly some critical size is required to succeed with such an approach. The cost of living in popular destinations often makes this approach impractical. Some schools have acquired facilities of their own in locations they frequent. For example, the University of Evansville acquired Harlaxton Manor near Grantham England in 1971.<sup>12</sup> This is a magnificent facility, but obviously the cost of maintaining such an edifice is burdensome. Even the super rich schools sometimes find foreign facilities burdensome. For example Johns Hopkins with an endowment exceeding two billion dollars "...is considering selling the Villa Spelman, a valuable but down-at-the-heels property in Florence, Italy, that is the home of an Italian-studies program."<sup>13</sup> Annual costs of maintaining and running that facility have been estimated at \$600,000.<sup>14</sup> Schools at the other end of the financial spectrum use less grandiose structures such as the bland London row house owned by Eckerd College.<sup>15</sup> An extensive in-house international program run by Bradley University simply rents rooms and classroom space in modest hotels.

## **Internships abroad**

Work experience is often one of the most difficult things to accomplish outside of a student's home country. Populations jealously guard the working environment to the best of their ability and generally exclude non-nationals from paying jobs. Obtaining permission to work in a foreign country generally requires an elaborate process of bureaucratic perseverance. Frequently it is impossible for individuals to succeed at this task on their own. The only resolution available is to work with somebody within that bureaucracy who knows how to manage it. Such an opportunity necessitates that person to have a strong desire to hire a foreign national. Quite simply, the process is not easy for them either, so they need a powerful incentive to jump through all of the necessary hoops. Not many corporations are willing to exert that much effort in order to briefly hire an inexperienced college age student for a short interval.

In summary, unpaid internships are often tasks of less interest to locals, and are consequently the only opportunities available. This characteristic, of course, adds to a student's out-of-pocket expenses. One possibility for international internships is with American Embassies. Generally, students can obtain opportunities in some of the larger Embassies with the help of their local congressman.

## **International consortium participation**

Given the commonality of the problem small colleges face in placing students into a foreign environment it is not surprising that joint efforts have emerged. Several of these consortia and schools that have developed joint efforts are listed below:

A diversified assortment of classes and programs are provided by the CCIS – College Consortium for International Studies. 135 schools are members of this group. Semester long programs are offered in 30 countries and summer programs in 24. The CIEE – Council on International Education Exchange is involved in an assortment of international activities that transcend university education. Opportunities are made available for faculty, high school students, business people and others for international experiences. Syracuse University Study Abroad offers one of the most extensive international programs of any university. Butler University’s Institute for Study Abroad provides students with opportunities at more than 80 universities in 12 different countries.<sup>16</sup> Central College in Pella, Iowa leads a consortium that many colleges enjoy.<sup>17</sup> AHA International, a program administered at the University of Oregon offers interesting alternatives to schools interested in developing study abroad activities at various levels. One of their more creative ideas is assisting schools in facilitating different consortia. Present affiliated consortia include the Northwest Council on Study Abroad (NCSA), the Midwest Consortium for Study Abroad (MCSA), the Independent Liberal Arts Colleges Abroad (ILACA) and the Pennsylvania Colleges in Cologne (PCIC).<sup>18</sup>

### **Other possibilities**

One of the historic tried and true approaches for students to gain experience abroad is through their own adventure travel. Taking a grand tour of identified sites can be particularly beneficial. The notion of a “Grand Tour” actually dates to the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>19</sup> After completing a university education and before entering professional careers wealthy British students would set out to explore Europe. Given the faster travel of today, many students elect to conduct such a tour during one of their summer breaks. A number of contemporary universities have attempted to recapture some of the romance offered by such tours.

### **THE BENEFITS OF INTERNATIONAL SKILLS**

An eternal question related to international interactions revolves around the question of using multiple languages. Foreign language study by American students has declined for decades. The difficulty of learning a second language in the U.S. may be greater than it is in some other countries. Most Americans need to travel a great distance before entering a region where a different language is spoken. The growing presence of a large Spanish speaking minority in the U.S. may be in the process of changing this pattern. A recent study of elementary and secondary education reports, “Between 1979 and 2003, the number of school-age children (ages 5–17) who spoke a language other than English at home grew from 3.8 million to 9.9 million, or from 9 percent to 19 percent of all children in the age group.”<sup>20</sup> Indeed, there has been some movement toward greater language diversity in the U.S. but we lag behind many countries. In contrast, people living in the Netherlands, Belgium and many other small countries need travel but a short distance to encounter vastly different languages. For example, a child growing up in Switzerland might find everybody in the neighborhood speaking a different language from home when he or she goes to visit grandparents. Spending time

in a country with non-English speakers introduces students to an environment that acquaints them with the challenge of communicating in another language. Awareness of this challenge may be the first step in motivating students to study a foreign language.

Fundamental knowledge about the world is often lacking among American students. For some years the study of geography in the U.S. has been pushed aside. A study by National Geographic ranked Americans second to last among nine countries regarding geographic knowledge.<sup>21</sup> Stories of American student inability to identify countries of the world from unlabeled maps abound. One frightening statistic reports that, “a National Geographic global literacy survey found that 87 percent of students in the United States between the ages of 18 and 24 cannot locate Iraq on a world map, 83 percent cannot find Afghanistan, 58 percent cannot find Japan, and 11 percent cannot even find the United States;”<sup>22</sup> Clearly, more knowledge about the world is in order for today’s student.

Cultural differences among countries experienced within the educational environment helps prepare students for international activity in professional careers. Modest infractions of certain cultural norms are widely known to destroy interactions that could otherwise be beneficial in business. The simple act of giving or receiving a business card can prove offensive if done improperly.

Art appreciation is often taken as an “on campus” class wherein students learn to recognize, understand and perhaps interpret the works of great masters. An opportunity to visit Britain’s National Gallery, the Louvre, Florence’s Uffizi and countless other bastions of great art equips today’s student with live experiences. Most countries of the world offer visiting students an opportunity to extend their repertory of artistic knowledge.

It is clearly in a college’s self interest to prepare students for every dimension of their professional lives. As globalization increases, the need for international skills can only be expected to grow. Any college that fails to address this need will certainly marginalize its ability to suitably prepare students.

A benefit to the college provided by offering a sound international experience is the potential to use study abroad as a recruitment tool. Parents and students who recognize the benefits of global knowledge and skill will be guided toward colleges offering worthwhile international experiences. Frequently, parents recognize the need for students to develop global sophistication and actively promote international study for their students.

## **RELATIVE MERITS OF ALTERNATE INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM DESIGNS**

Each of the alternatives for educating students about globalization presents merits that should be evaluated. Those merits are enumerated and evaluated below.

On campus classes are inexpensive and allow vast diversity of coverage. These are easier to establish than are international experiences. A primary limitation of such classes is the pedestrian notion of their coverage. It is a considerable challenge for a professor to make such a classroom experience as stimulating and exciting as is an actual visit to an exotic foreign land. Given the dismal international experience among

Americans, the challenge of finding a professor with extensive international experience to effectively teach such a course is great.

Exchange programs with foreign universities offer students an opportunity for an outstanding experience. New professors, procedures, colleagues and expectations are realized within an exchange program. Students can be immersed within a new culture, using a new language in an exciting location with countless possibilities. Although all these features provide great benefits, they also impose great challenges. Professors may be hard to understand. The procedures followed may take longer than a semester or academic year to master. The culture may prove too frustrating to enjoy. Perhaps most tricky of all is dealing with the language. Even accomplished foreign language speakers by American standards may be unable to sustain the pace of colleagues in another language.

Study travel programs have grown immensely in popularity during recent years. Some American universities have established extensive programs of this sort to insure that many or all of their students study abroad. Typically professors from the home university travel along and provide guidance. Such supervision provides a degree of consistency with on-campus offerings. Naturally, local professors in locations visited have more extensive insight, but arranging for suitable locals can be challenging.

International intern opportunities approximate work experiences. These can be highly beneficial to participants and give them preparation for later jobs. Perhaps their greatest limitation is their infrequency.

Faculty exchanges take professors to foreign lands wherein they gain benefits of international travel. Although this does not immediately benefit students, eventually the professor's experience and knowledge gained abroad manifests itself within classroom exchanges.

## **POTENTIAL RESOURCES FOR INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM DELIVERY**

The Federal Government has actively encouraged curriculum internationalization. Related agencies of the government have promoted international dimensions. Accreditation agencies such as the AACSB offer opportunities to increase globalization. Multinational corporations that have some connection with a college can be most helpful.<sup>23</sup> Alumni with international experience are generally willing to share that experience and promote activities for the college in some international dimension.

Faculty contacts and experience contribute to the potential for internationalizing programs. Some schools attempt to draw upon faculty from different countries to provide a foundation for an international program. A considerable fraction of the people earning advanced degrees in business were born and raised in foreign countries and only arrived in the U.S. when they entered graduate school.

Student contacts can be helpful directly to those seeking global knowledge. In some instances, students directly or indirectly know people living in other countries. These contacts can assist them in locating beneficial opportunities. The assortment of possibilities ranges from merely knowing somebody and getting information from them to actually arranging opportunities that might otherwise remain unavailable.



## **ASSESSING THE OUTCOMES OF ALTERNATE GLOBAL EXPERIENCES**

Eventually it becomes crucial to measure the relative merits of global experiences. It makes little sense to follow a practice that is costly and fails to provide adequate justification for those expenses. Surveys offer one methodology for assessment. Student placement and career paths offer yet another avenue for assessment. An extension of simple placements would be starting salaries earned by those who completed an international experience in comparison to those without a similar experience.

## **PROTOTYPE CURRICULUM**

The underlying presumption in designing an international business curriculum is that a traditional business core program already exists. Thus, the focus here is the marginal adjustment needed to implement the international dimension. Specific selections are highly dependant upon existing institutional strengths. Logically, curriculum adjustments outside the business program are likely along with those made within the business program. Attempting to add something outside the business area that is initially absent from the college's offerings would have the potential to complicate the successful implementation of an international business experience. External areas likely to offer fruitful additions include languages, geography, political science, regional history classes, cultural awareness classes and others.

The overarching constraint on adding more requirements to a major is the practical limit of hours that students can complete within the traditional four year baccalaureate program. Intelligent redirection among non-business courses should help students to develop relevant skills for international study. Some areas such as mathematics, information system usage, writing, and speech have little in the way of an alternate international emphasis. However history, political science, sociology, economics, fine and performing arts might allow for an international emphasis. With luck existing non-business courses could be incorporated directly into a new international business program. Courses within functional areas of business could be modified to include specific international dimensions. Developing, integrating and harmonizing international dimensions into all of the functional topics would be a Herculean task. Many of the faculty would need to be educated in the relevant material, and extensive work would be needed to insure suitable coverage. Although the challenge would be great, for a small college this approach may be the best.

Perhaps the most substantial extension of an academic program into the international arena would be the addition of an international business major. Many colleges have already added that area to their offerings and some standards have been suggested.

## **International business major curriculum standards**

Although no widely accepted standards fully describe the international business major, several interested parties have developed useful prototypes. Peterson's College Search returns over 700 pointers in response to a search for "international business" under their find a school option.<sup>24</sup> They offer a description of the IB Major as,

”providing a broad-based program of language and culture, history, geography, and political science and including a solid foundation of business and economics. Many schools recommend study in an international country for at least a semester and require foreign language study.” The Princeton Review suggests a sample undergraduate curriculum consisting of the following.

- Comparative Economic Systems
- Multinational Corporate Management
- International Accounting
- Organizational Behavior
- Small Business Policy
- International Policy
- International Economics
- International Tourism
- Business Skills and Environment
- Economic Development and Growth
- International Business Finance
- Multinational Marketing
- Decision Theory
- Law of International Trade
- Statistics
- Comparative Management

The National Business Education Association (NBEA) describes an “overview of the achievement standards for the international business content area” as the following:

- Foundations of International Business
- The Global Business Environment
- International Business Communication
- Global Business Ethics
- Organizational Structures for International Business Activities
- International Trade Relations
- International Management
- International Marketing
- International Finance

Hypothetical additions to an existing core business curriculum are suggested below. An obvious starting point is foreign language proficiency. Typical international business programs with some foreign language requirement specify that students achieve some significant level of sophistication in one foreign language. Such a requirement is commendable and certainly should be acceptable as one part of an international business program.

A look at the bigger picture may suggest an alternative. English is the unequivocal language of international business. The overwhelming majority of interactions conducted in international business are done in English. Few people engaged in significant international business activities do not speak English. Quite simply, to properly prepare students for international business activity the most important language for them to master is English. However, international business graduates who have entered professional careers will undoubtedly spend time in foreign countries. Outside the business environment local languages will be encountered. Graduates who have

mastered high levels of proficiency in one language will find it unlikely to work exclusively with foreign nationals who speak that language. Even the simple task of counting low numbers can be formidable. For example you can find on the Internet “Numbers from 1 to 10 in Over 5,000 Languages.”<sup>25</sup> Given such a proliferation of languages, the futility of trying to educate American students even in the handful they might be able to use beneficially is apparent. Ethnologue: Statistical Summaries identifies 6,912 living languages. Over 2,000 of the languages are in Africa, over 2,000 of them are in Asia, and even Europe has over 200.<sup>26</sup> Students in nearly every other country in the world have a much simpler choice to make regarding what foreign language to learn, English.

The question American students and colleges must answer is “...how should we resolve this dilemma.” A challenging, but potentially rewarding alternative to seeking high level mastery of one foreign language could be a well designed assortment of language components to master. Although it behooves foreign students to avidly study one language, English, the reciprocal may not make sense for American students. Americans cannot simply select one language and know that it is worth the effort of learning it in depth. Foreign students already know the one new language they must learn and they will be able to employ it widely. For American students the ideal foreign language is yet to be revealed.

Since business transactions and negotiations will be conducted in English, the remaining need for other language skills among Americans abroad is to deal with pleasantries. Greetings such as hello, goodbye, pardon me, thank you and casual interactions may well demand modest fluency in foreign languages. Given the multiplicity of languages that Americans abroad might encounter, the ability to handle these pleasantries in a number of them would be vastly superior to great proficiency in merely one language.

Selecting specific history, political science, sociology, economics, fine and performing arts classes to incorporate into an international business program is dependant upon availability. Each college is likely to have developed its own unique set of such courses that might fit.

The major functional areas presenting an opportunity for substantial international extensions to the curriculum include finance, marketing, economics and management. Quantitative components of the curriculum have fewer elements that might be unique to an international environment. International financial management addresses multiple currencies, exchange rates, interest rates, markets, instruments and interactions. International marketing deals with cultural differences, country specific channels of distribution, and alternate promotional opportunities. International economics deals with supranational theories of production and monetary systems. Management perhaps offers the least differences among functional areas, but it still must cope with cultural and behavioral patterns that differ among countries.

In summary, to adequately prepare students with a sound international business foundation, an assortment of existing useful courses from outside the business area should be selected. To that several functional area courses explicitly dealing with relevant international business characteristics must be added. Perhaps not all of the functional areas need be covered. For example, some marketing, management and

perhaps even economics topics could be subsumed into a general international business course.

## THE CHOICE FOR A SMALL COLLEGE

Although large multi-campus universities are able to adopt multiple avenues to introduce their students to global concepts, small colleges need to better focus their efforts. Furthermore, limited resources available to small colleges restrict the ability to experiment with alternatives. Thus, it is important that a focused decision be made.

A first step in developing a focused program for a small college could be to look at the big picture and identify the fields of study of all students who study abroad, the top destinations of those students, and the colleges and universities that have a high percentage of students that study abroad.

The fields of study, internationally, are social sciences (21.9%), business and management (17.6%), humanities (13.8%), fine or applied arts (8.5%) and foreign languages (8.5%).

Top destinations are the U.K., Spain, Italy and France. About 39 percent go for one semester while 34.4 percent go for a summer term. Only 7.3 percent study fewer than 8 weeks abroad. Junior year is the most popular time at 40.7 percent.

For 2006 U. S. News & World Report lists the top three U. S. undergraduate international business programs at the following schools:

The University of South Carolina at Columbia (Moore)

New York University (Stern)

University of Michigan-Ann Arbor

These schools have undergraduate enrollments ranging from 17,690 at USC to 20,212 at NYC to 24,828 at the U. of Michigan-Ann Arbor. USC has a long standing reputation for international activity. They claim that students from any major can participate.<sup>27</sup> Although the focus of this paper is to design an international experience for business students in a small college, but we can learn from our colleagues at larger schools.

## OTHER SCHOOLS WITH SIGNIFICANT PROGRAMS

Many colleges and universities have significant international business programs and 487 U. S. colleges offer an IB major. The following list ranks colleges and universities by the proportion of their undergraduate students who participate in study abroad.

INSTITUTIONS BY UNDERGRADUATE PARTICIPATION IN STUDY ABROAD:<sup>28</sup>

TOP 20 BACCALAUREATE INSTITUTIONS, 2003/04

Rank	Institution	City	State	Study abroad students	Total UG Degrees conferred IPEDS 2003	Estimated % participation in Study Abroad
1	Lee University	Cleveland	TN	725	642	112.93
2	Wofford College	Spartanburg	SC	277	247	112.15

3	St. Olaf College	Northfield	MN	771	708	108.90
4	Eckerd College	St. Petersburg	FL	310	329	94.22
5	Illinois Wesleyan University	Bloomington	IL	433	462	93.72
6	Earlham College	Richmond	IN	226	249	90.76
7	Centre College	Danville	KY	227	258	87.98
8	Lewis & Clark College	Portland	OR	323	371	87.06
9	DePauw University	Greencastle	IN	446	522	85.44
10	Kalamazoo College	Kalamazoo	MI	238	285	83.51
11	Dickinson College	Carlisle	PA	419	512	81.84
12	Colgate University	Hamilton	NY	524	646	81.11
13	Colby College	Waterville	ME	392	486	80.66
14	Carleton College	Northfield	MN	359	455	78.90
15	Austin College	Sherman	TX	237	310	76.13
16	University of Dallas	Irving	TX	184	248	74.19
17	Goucher College	Baltimore	MD	200	272	73.53
18	Colorado College	Colorado Springs	CO	384	523	73.42
19	Concordia College - Moorhead	Moorhead	MN	411	583	70.50
20	Davidson College	Davidson	NC	290	426	68.08

Tiny colleges can and should participate; for example Betheny College in Betheny, West Virginia with 900 undergraduates and an IB major reports sending students to Argentina, Puerto Rico, Japan, Sweden and Canada.

## **WHAT IS REQUIRED FOR A SUCCESSFUL STUDY ABROAD PROGRAM?**

There is little debate about what is necessary to have a successful international program, an enumeration follows:

Strong support from the college leadership is perhaps the crucial ingredient. Support and encouragement from the top is essential or efforts by constituencies of faculty and students will be doomed to failure.

Incentives are needed for faculty to teach courses overseas or even promote opportunities for students to travel abroad. It can be stressful to plan and implement a site specific course, and to travel with students.

Involve faculty in designing and teaching in study abroad programs or the programs are likely to omit key ingredients that are needed on campus.

Keep students on track to graduation by carefully choosing overseas courses that fit into their programs. A curriculum based program – one that is study abroad friendly and an integrated part of the student's education helps the fit.

When possible, financial barriers should be lowered with grants, scholarships, fellowships, and even corporate internships.

Pre-trip orientations are needed for students and faculty alike. With a modest introduction students can be directed toward a vast reservoir of information readily available to them on the Internet.

Consider use of a combination of your own college-conducted programs and those of several consortia. Reinventing the wheel is an all too common phenomenon. When other colleges have already found or have the potential to find beneficial opportunities it is foolish to ignore their expertise.

Research and doctoral institutions account for nearly 45% of American students studying abroad. Two and one half percent of American colleges send 50% of the students who study abroad.<sup>29</sup> This distribution gives a tacit illustration of the challenge faced by small colleges who strive to give students an international experience.

## **RANKING OF BUSINESS PROGRAMS INTERNATIONALLY**

Identifying the relative merits of competing international programs is more difficult than merely ranking schools. Consequently, it is unlikely to find commonly accepted rankings. Furthermore, the extensive assortment of worldwide alternatives makes the task nearly insurmountable. A focused program with an International Business Major and opportunities to study in one of three geographic regions (Europe with emphasis on the European Union, Asia/Pacific possibly Japan, China or Australia, and Central and South America) makes sense and would provide a strong international experience.

### **Europe**

Many European schools offer international business courses only at the MBA level; however, *The Financial Times* has ranked the top three business school undergraduate programs in the UK as follows:

UMIST – University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology  
University of Warwick in Coventry, England  
London, LSE – London School of Economics

Other **European Union** undergraduate programs that are noteworthy, and somewhat affordable, include:

The Central and Eastern European Studies Program at Prague University of Economics  
DIS – a Danish Study Abroad program at Copenhagen University  
Institute for American Universities, Provence, France  
Richmond – The American International University in London  
Schiller International University – Heidelberg, Germany  
Université Paris Sorbonne - Paris IV  
University of Stirling, Stirling, Scotland  
University of Seville in Spain  
Umea University in Sweden – Although they have no tuition in Sweden, it can be expensive to live there

### **Asia/Pacific**

Sofia University in Japan  
Melbourne Business School - Australia  
International University of Japan

## Central and South America

Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores do Monterrey, Queretaro,  
Mexico campus  
Universidad Nacional Autónoma, Costa Rico  
University of Bio-Bio, Concepcion, Chile

## GRANT OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDY ABROAD

The obvious source of grants for academic activities is the federal government. Access to these sources has been unified with the introduction of a new web site intended to improve interactions. This web site can be reached at the URL: [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov).

One of the easy sources for study abroad help can be found at [studyabroad.com](http://studyabroad.com) where a listing of alternatives is maintained.<sup>30</sup> Over thirty information sources are available there.

The Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship program offers benefits to undergraduates who have been accepted into semester long study abroad programs worldwide. Awards of up to \$5,000 are made for U.S. citizen undergraduates. Award amounts vary depending on the length of study and student need with the average award being \$4,000. Students who are receiving federal Pell Grant funding at 2-year or 4-year undergraduate colleges or universities are eligible to apply.<sup>31</sup>

## CONCLUSIONS

It's not where students study abroad that is of paramount importance. It's that students do study abroad! Colleges and universities of all sizes have a responsibility to offer a curriculum that includes an international study opportunity. Failure to recognize this need implies blindness to one of the world's most overwhelming trends currently existent. Smaller colleges and universities can offer a unique program without committing major additional resources. Incorporating an international component in existing curriculum and developing an International Business major are just a beginning. As a program grows opportunities for cooperative agreements and exchange of students may be possible and smaller colleges, especially, may find recruitment and retention rates strengthened.

## ENDNOTES

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<sup>1</sup> The Library of Congress, <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d109:SE00308:@@L&summ2=m&>

<sup>2</sup> Institute of International Education, "Open doors 2004 fast facts"

<sup>3</sup> Commission on the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Fellowship Program, "Global competencies and national needs," <http://www.lincolncommission.org/report.html>

<sup>4</sup> Ibid p. 8

<sup>5</sup> Ibid p. iv

<sup>6</sup> Laura Giovanelli, "Students Encouraged to Broaden Horizons," Winston-Salem Journal, Nov 26, 2005 [http://www.journalnow.com/servlet/Satellite?pagename=WSJ%2FMSGArticle%2FWSJ\\_BasicArticle&c=MSGArticle&cid=1128768369861&path=!localnews!education!&s=1037645509111](http://www.journalnow.com/servlet/Satellite?pagename=WSJ%2FMSGArticle%2FWSJ_BasicArticle&c=MSGArticle&cid=1128768369861&path=!localnews!education!&s=1037645509111)

<sup>7</sup> Commission on the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Fellowship Program, p vii

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- <sup>8</sup> National Center for Education Statistics, "Nontraditional Undergraduates" 2002
- <sup>9</sup> Henry Kaufman and Thomas S. Johnson, Send future US business leaders abroad, *the Christian Science Monitor* December 8, 2005 <http://www.csmonitor.com/2005/1208/p09s01-coop.html>
- <sup>10</sup> Lincoln Commission p 16
- <sup>11</sup> University of Akron study abroad programs, <http://www3.uakron.edu/oip/sabroad/syabroad.html>
- <sup>12</sup> Harlaxton College, <http://www.ueharlax.ac.uk/harlaxton/briefj.htm>
- <sup>13</sup> Strout, Erin. "Johns Hopkins U. Draws Fire From Scholars and Students Over Possible Sale of Property in Italy," *the Chronicle of Higher Education* March 2, 2006
- <sup>14</sup> Ibid
- <sup>15</sup> Eckerd College, <http://www.eckerd.edu/internationale/index.php?f=london>
- <sup>16</sup> Institute for Study Abroad, <http://www.ifsabutler.org/>
- <sup>17</sup> Central College Abroad, <http://www.central.edu/abroad/>
- <sup>18</sup> AHA international, [http://www.aha-intl.org/gen\\_partnerwithaha.php](http://www.aha-intl.org/gen_partnerwithaha.php) accessed 2/23/06
- <sup>19</sup> History of the Grand Tour
- <sup>20</sup> Participation in Education, <http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/2005/section1/indicator05.asp>
- <sup>21</sup> Lincoln Report p 8
- <sup>22</sup> DESIGNATING 2006 AS THE ``YEAR OF STUDY ABROAD" -- (Senate - November 10, 2005)<http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/D?r109:1:/temp/~r109uW72pq::>
- <sup>23</sup> Rubash, Arlyn R. "International Finance in an International Environment,"
- <sup>24</sup> College and University Name, Keyword and Detailed Searches, <http://www.petersons.com/ugchannel/code/searches/srchCrit1.asp?path=ug.fas.college> accessed 2/26/06
- <sup>25</sup> Numbers from 1 to 10 in Over 5000 Languages. <http://www.zompist.com/numbers.shtml>
- <sup>26</sup> Ethnologue: Statistical Summaries. Languages. [http://www.ethnologue.com/ethno\\_docs/distribution.asp?by=area](http://www.ethnologue.com/ethno_docs/distribution.asp?by=area)
- <sup>27</sup> USC Study Abroad, <http://www.sa.sc.edu/sa/>
- <sup>28</sup> International Institute of Educators, <http://opendoors.iienetwork.org/?p=70974>
- <sup>29</sup> Lincoln Report p 15
- <sup>30</sup> Study abroad scholarships, [http://www.studyabroad.com/forum/financial\\_aid.html](http://www.studyabroad.com/forum/financial_aid.html)
- <sup>31</sup> Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship, <http://www.ieg.org/programs/gilman/index.html>

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