

Agricultural Students' Perspectives of International Experiences: Opportunities and Challenges to Meeting Students' Needs

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Why International Experiences?

"International experiences have the potential to drastically impact students both personally and professionally."

- Critical to undergraduate education
- Language attainment
- Globalize higher education
- Provide knowledge for global competence
- Necessary for future global leaders
- Essential to national security

Why International Experiences?

- Valuable skills for the workforce
 - Interpersonal skills
 - Intercultural sensitivity
 - Cultural acceptance
- Empower next generation for global society

Study Purpose

The development of effective international experiences requires an understanding of students' perspectives.

- Goal: Document agricultural students' perspectives of international experiences.

Study Design

- Online Survey
- Distributed to undergraduate students enrolled in selected courses within the Department.
- Courses selected in an effort to solicit responses from all three areas of the Department:
 - Agricultural Science (31),
 - Agricultural Leadership (58), and
 - Agricultural Communications (55).

194 students completed the instrument

Program Characteristics

- Type
- Length
- Location
- Language
- Time of year

Program Type

- Faculty-led Study Abroad
- Reciprocal Exchange
- Internship
- Service-learning/ Volunteer
- Non-Academic/ Group Field Trips
- Combination Programs
- Direct enrollment at Foreign University
- Work Abroad

Program Length

- 1 – 2 weeks
- 3 – 6 weeks
- 7 – 10 weeks
- 11 – 14 weeks
- 15+ weeks

Program Characteristics

- Type
- Length
- Location
- Language
- Time of year

Findings

- 119 of the 194 students (61%) had participated in an international experience.
- 75 students without an international experience; only 19 had no interest in pursuing an opportunity abroad.

Findings (continued)

- Students preferred study programs facilitated by their home university and international internship opportunities.
- Students favored service learning and non-academic field trips hosted by their home institution.

Findings (continued)

- Students preferred programs lasting three to six weeks in length.
- Italy and Australia were cited by more than 70 students as a highly desired country to visit.

Motivators for Participating

- Enhanced life experience
- Increased employability
- Improved resume

Factors Influencing Participation

- Cost was the most dominant factor related to program selection.
- Country, subject matter, and cultural attractions in the area also considered important.

Things to Think About

- As educators strive to provide international opportunities for students, it is important to be aware of students' perspectives.

What do the findings tell us?

- The need exists for colleges of agriculture to provide their own study abroad and internship programs for students.
- Careful attention must be paid to program cost and destination.

What needs to be researched?

- • Factors that influence students' choices regarding IE participation (Bunch, Lamm, Israel, Edwards, 2013)
- • Best way to prepare students for IE (McGowan, 2007)
- • Students' perception of IE (Harder, Bruening, 2008)
- • Students' attitudes toward destinations (Nyaupane, Paris, Teye, 2010)
- • Making an IE a social/group norm (Bunch, Lamm, Israel, Edwards, 2013)
- • Effect of IE on student's career choice (Orashood, Woolf, Kruze, 2008)
- • Effective measurement of IE outcomes (Russell, Morris, 2008)



Questions & Comments

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