## The Pennsylvania State University

The Graduate School

College of Education

# THE INTERNATIONALIZATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION: AN ANALYSIS OF STUDY ABRAOD PROGRAMMING AT THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY AND THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY

A Thesis in

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by

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## **ABSTRACT**

In the United States the annual rate of participation in study abroad programs have steadily increased over the past two decades with a record number of students studying abroad during the 2014-2015 academic year. However, despite the annual increase in participation, less than 2% of all students enrolled at institutions of higher education and 10% of U.S graduates choose to participate in study abroad opportunities before graduation. This study evaluates trends in U.S. study abroad programming and works to examine the education abroad profile at both The Ohio State University and The Pennsylvania State University, in order to gain a better understanding of student enrollment in study abroad programs and student learning outcomes at each institution. The findings suggest, that while both The Ohio State University and The Pennsylvania State University send a significant number of students abroad annually there is still a need for increased participation and institutional support from both universities.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

In the United States the annual rate of participation in study abroad programs have steadily increased over the past two decades with a record number of students studying abroad during the 2014-2015 academic year (Institute of international Education 2016). According to the latest report by the Institute of International Education (IIE), more than 313,000 U.S. college students received academic credit for study abroad participation during the same year; the rates represent an annual increase in participation of 2.9 %. The growth in study abroad programs in the U.S. reflects a growing consensus that study abroad opportunities help students to develop as global citizens who are able to communicate well, navigate complex issues, and respond effectively to challenges facing the world today.

However, even with the annual rise in study abroad participation, the substantial research on positive learning outcomes, and the growing consensus that study abroad programs are educationally important, less than 2 % of all students enrolled at institutions of higher education and 10 % of U.S. graduates choose to participate in a study abroad opportunity before graduation (Institute of international Education 2016). This means that 90 % of all U.S students will graduate from college without participating in an educational experience abroad (Institute of international Education 2016).

Research shows, that study abroad participants vary by gender, race or ethnicity, and major fields of study, however during the 2014-2015 academic year the diversity of study abroad participants was limited. For instance, during the 2014-2015 academic year over two-thirds of participants were women, while only-one third of them were men (Institute of international Education 2016). Additionally, participants who identified as white represented over 70% of the total number of participants, thus, outnumbering diverse student populations by a margin of

nearly 4-1 (Institute of international Education 2016). Furthermore, more than 55% of all study abroad participants during the same year chose to study abroad in Europe, while less than 3% studied in Sub-Saharan Africa, 2% in the Middle East and North Africa, 4% in Oceania, 11% in Asia, and 16% in Latin America and the Caribbean (Institute of international Education 2016).

It is clear that there is a significant need to further evaluate U.S. study abroad programs and to gain additional insight into how institutions can increase and diversify student participation, bolster student learning outcomes, and work to encourage all students to take part in a study abroad opportunities. Therefore, in an effort to gain additional insight into study abroad programming, this study will evaluate trends in U.S. study abroad education and work to evaluate the education abroad profile of both The Ohio State University and The Pennsylvania State University. Specifically, this study will work to evaluate student enrollment in study abroad programs and student learning outcomes at each university.

#### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In the United States institutions of higher education have increasingly been urged by scholars and observers of education to prepare college students for a rapidly changing society; one that requires students to be global citizens and to navigate issues of social, political, economic, and environmental importance (Horn, Hendel & Fry, 2007; Hser, 2005). In response to this pressure, many colleges and universities in the U.S. have made significant investments to internationalize their institutions and expand opportunities for student learning and engagement (Horn, Hendel & Fry, 2007; Hser, 2005; Page, Fry, Stallman, Josic & Jon, 2009). According to Knight (2004) internationalization refers to, "the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education" (p. 11). In response to the need for internationalization at the collegiate level, many institutions have worked to increase institutional goals regarding international education, allocate additional funding for global programming, and have worked to expand their international offices on campus. Additionally, institutions have increased the number of international experiences available to students, developed internationally focused curriculum, and placed a greater emphasis on study abroad programs (Horn, Hendel & Fry, 2007; Hser, 2005; Page, Fry, Stallman, Josic & Jon, 2009).

As Knight (2004) notes, the international dimension of postsecondary education has become increasingly important and more complex. Therefore, it is the responsibility of institutions of higher education to prepare their students to live and work in a global society (Hser, 2005). According to Nolan (2009), in order for students to be successful in a changing global society educators must be willing help students develop new ways of thinking and acting. This means that new ways of learning also need to be developed and implemented in higher

education. It is no longer enough for students to master the material for their disciple or field of study; students must have a clear sense of what to do with their education in the context of a changing and often contradictory global world (Nolan, 2009).

Therefore, institutions must prioritize educational experiences that help students to connect what they are learning in the classroom to the larger global world (Clarke, Flaherty, Wright & McMillen, 2009; Knight, 2004; Spiering & Erickson, 2006). According to the literature in the field, one of the most significant ways to extend learning beyond a college campus is through study abroad programming (Clarke, Flaherty, Wright & McMillen, 2009; Knight, 2004; Spiering & Erickson, 2006). Study abroad programing refers to all educational programs that take place outside of a students' country of origin (Clarke, Flaherty, Wright & McMillen, 2009; Kitsantas, 2004; Kitsantas & Meyers, 2001). Study abroad programing includes both programs that are taken for academic credit and those that are a part of an extracurricular experience.

In the United States, study abroad participation rates have steadily risen over the past 20 years and now more than 90% of colleges and universities offer study abroad options to students (Savicki & Brewer, 2012). Therefore, as the rate of participation continues to rise and institutions work to further internationalize their campuses it is important that educators gain a better understanding of study abroad education, factors affecting study abroad programming, and a sense of the learning outcomes associated with participation. This information is important because it could help educators to determine what students are learning while abroad and how effective programs are at preparing students for life after graduation (Deardorff, 2009).

There is a significant body of literature that focuses on student learning and development, with researchers offering an extensive range of ideas on how students do or do not learn and

develop as a result of study abroad experiences (Vande Berg, Paige & Hemming Lou, 2012). According to Vande Berg, Paige & Hemming Lou (2012), there is an optimistic view and a more skeptical view of study abroad programming. The optimistic view supports the idea that students learn a significant amount while abroad and come home transformed, while skeptics question how much students are truly learning and argue that students do not show significant learning outcomes as a result of study abroad participation.

Researchers argue that for many years it was assumed that study abroad participation would lead to positive learning outcomes, and that students would automatically gain knowledge, perspective, and skills as a result of study abroad participation (Savicki & Brewer, 2012; Vande Berg, Paige & Hemming Lou, 2012). However, researchers and others in the field have started to challenge the assumption that students learn effectively while studying abroad. Specifically, many in the field question the extent of learning and development outcomes, the academic rigor of coursework, and the long-term impact of study abroad participation (Hoff & Paige, 2008; Hoffa, 2010; Vande Berg, Paige & Hemming Lou, 2012). Some researchers note that without well-developed programs and on-going support from staff and faculty many students do not fully engage in study abroad opportunities, and maintain distance from physical, social, or intellectual tensions of learning (Passarelli & Kolb, 2012). Others note, that when students do not fully engage in experiential learning students return home unchanged and study abroad programs become little more than a holiday or a break from campus life (Passarelli & Kolb, 2012).

In 2009 Vande Berg, Connor-Linton and Paige published one of the most comprehensive studies on U.S. student learning abroad. The multi-year study was conducted between the years 2003-2007, and data was collected from 1,300 student participants, from 61 study abroad programs, using pre-and post-testing. The primary purpose of the research was to document

language, intercultural, and disciplinary learning of U.S. students participating in study abroad programs and to compare their learning outcomes to students who remained in the U.S. and studied on campus (Vande Berg, Connor-Linton & Paige, 2009). Moreover, the researchers hoped to understand the extent of learning gains, and to gain an understanding of the factors that might impact student learning outcomes (Vande Berg, Connor-Linton & Paige, 2009).

At the outset of the research project, the researchers noted that they believed that too many U.S. students were not learning effectively abroad (Vande Berg, Connor-Linton & Paige, 2009). However, the findings of the study indicate that students are learning abroad, and that students who study abroad show more progress in the areas of intercultural learning and proficiency, than students who remain at their home campuses in the U.S. (Vande Berg, Connor-Linton & Paige, 2009). The researchers also note that while evidence suggests that students are learning as a result of participation in a study abroad programs, there is a need for improving student learning and bolstering student support while aboard.

The findings from the Vande Berg, Connor-Linton, and Paige (2009) study point to a significant finding in the research; those that are skeptical of study abroad programming do not intend to suggest that students are not learning anything while abroad, but they question the extent to which students are learning and recognize that there is a need for additional educational training and support (Hoff & Paige, 2008; Vande Berg, Connor-Linton & Paige, 2009). These finding are consistent with the literature in the field and show that while students are learning through study abroad participation, there is still a need to provide students with additional support and to make sure that students have the necessary skills to get the most out of their study abroad experiences (Hoff & Paige, 2008). Despite skepticism regarding student learning abroad, many scholars extol the positive benefits of study abroad programming and contend that students

who elect to spend a semester or more abroad make significant educational gains. In fact, the majority of the literature in the field reports positive learning outcomes as a result of students participating in study abroad programs (Anderson, Lawton, Rexeisen, & Hubbard, 2006; Horn & Fry, 2013; Li, Guo & You, 2017; Kitsantas, 2004; Kitsantas & Meyers, 2001; Levine & Garland, 2015; Paige, Fry, Stallman, Josic & Jon, 2009; Spiering & Erickson, 2006; Williams, 2005)

A study conducted by Clarke, Flaherty, Wright & McMillen (2009) evaluated the potential influences of a semester abroad for students from the U.S. The study queried 157 undergraduate students and divided them into two groups. The first group consisted of undergraduate students (n=70) who completed a semester of coursework, taught by instructors, on a U.S. college campus. The second group consisted of undergraduate students (n=87) who completed the same coursework, but participated in a study abroad program where the course was held abroad and the course was taught by a host-country instructor. The program abroad included visits to businesses, governmental institutions, and cultural sites. At the end of the semester, students from both sample groups were asked to think retrospectively about their experiences. The responses were then evaluated using a 30-item global-mindedness scale and 22item intercultural sensitivity index. This method allowed Clarke, Flaherty, Wright & McMillen (2009) to assess the potential influences of a semester abroad and to evaluate change. The researchers found the students who had studied abroad had greater intercultural proficiency, increased openness to cultural diversity, and had become increasingly more globally minded as a result of their study abroad experience (Clarke, Flaherty, Wright & McMillen, 2009).

Additional research in the field presents similar findings on student learning outcomes and reflects the widely held view that students who participate in study abroad programs develop in meaningful ways. Specifically, the research shows that students who participate in study

abroad programs develop a deeper understanding and respect for global issues (Douglas & Jones-Rikkers, 2001), show a greater increase in intercultural communications skills (Bakalis & Joiner, 2004; Williams, 2005), improve cultural sensitivity (Anderson, Lawton, Rexeisen & Hubbard, 2006; Bakalis & Joiner, 2004; Clarke, Flaherty, Wright & McMillen, 2009; Lindsey, 2005), gain foreign language proficiency (Diao & Freed, 2011; Engle, 2013), develop multicultural competences (Lindsey, 2005) and acquire important life skills, including maturity and confidence as a result of participating in a study abroad program (Bakalis & Joiner, 2004).

Furthermore, a study conducted by Clarke, Flaherty, Wright & McMillen (2009) found that study abroad programming positively influences global engagement in five key areas; these areas included civic engagement, knowledge production, philanthropy, social entrepreneurship, and voluntary simplicity. Moreover, the researchers noted that study abroad experiences can have a profound impact on how students view their undergraduate experiences and what they choose to pursue after the completion of their undergraduate degree. As Clarke, Flaherty, Wright & McMillen (2009) note, study abroad experiences were viewed by students as one of the most impactful experiences during their undergraduate education.

The literature suggests that students do learn and develop as a result of participation in study abroad programs. However, the extent of learning and development is still in question although it appears that programs that appropriately scaffold learning produce better results. As institutions work to further internationalize their campuses and add opportunities for experiential learning, it is important that they also develop strong measures to assess program outcomes. As Salisbury (2012) notes, "similar to learning assessment in higher education, study abroad assessment has experienced twists and turns that continue to influence the degree to which current assessment practices produce useful, or even valid results or contribute to the educational

improvement of study abroad" (p.15). Therefore, it is important that scholars and others continue to develop assessment tools and work to evaluate study aboard programs in order to help explain variables that affect student learning and development, increase participation rates, foster best practices, and shape the future of internationalization on U.S college campuses.

## **CURRENT STUDY**

In the United States the number of U.S. students studying abroad during college has steadily increased over the past decade. During the 2014-2015 academic year over 313,000 students participated in study abroad programs; this figure represents a 2.9% increase in participation from the previous year (Institute of international Education 2016). However, despite the steady increase in student participation less than 2% of enrolled U.S. college students and approximately 10% U.S. college graduates participate in study abroad programs (Institute of international Education 2016).

Annually the Institute of International Education (IIE) publishes the Open Doors Report and lists institutions of higher education that send the most significant number of students abroad. For more than a decade both The Ohio State University and The Pennsylvania State University have ranked in the top 40 as leading institutions by institutional type (Institute of international Education 2016). Specifically, both universities have been recognized as top 40 doctoral granting institutions for the total number of U.S. students participating in study abroad programs. However, over the past five years the total number of student participants from the Pennsylvania State University has dropped, while The Ohio State University has increased student participation in study abroad programs, and has increased their institutional ranking as reported by IIE in the Open Doors Report.

The purpose of this study is to evaluate trends in U.S. study abroad programming and to examine the education abroad profile of both The Ohio State University and The Pennsylvania State University. Specifically, this study will work to evaluate student enrollment in study abroad programs and student learning outcomes in order to gain a better understanding of study abroad programming at each university.

### **METHODS**

#### Data

The data was collected from the annual Open Doors Report, published by the Institute of International Education (IIE). The data presented in the annual report are obtained each year through surveys sent to nearly 3,000 accredited U.S. institutions of higher education. Institutions are asked to report on enrolled international students, visiting international scholars, and U.S. students who participate in study abroad programming. IIE has been conducting its annual statistical survey on foreign student populations in the U.S. since 1949. In 1985 IIE began collecting data specifically on U.S. students participating in study abroad programs.

Until, 2013 IIE only collected data on students who participated in study abroad experiences for academic credit. However, now, data reported in the Open Doors Report includes data on students who go abroad for both academic credit and non-credit experiences. The Open Doors survey, which is funded by the U.S. Department of State, is the only reporting system that annually collects national data on U.S. study abroad programming.

Additional data for this study was collected from both The Ohio State University and The Pennsylvania State University. Specifically, the data was collected from the respective institutional websites, and by direct contact with staff members from the Office of International Affairs at The Ohio State University, and the Office of Global Programs at The Pennsylvania State University. The present study restricts the sample to data that is most pertinent to a comparative study evaluating study abroad programming at The Ohio State University and The Pennsylvania State University. Therefore, the selected data includes information on (a.) annual study abroad participation figures from each institution; (b.) national study abroad statistics; (c.) student profile information; (d.) top program destinations; and (e.) student learning outcomes.

## RESULTS

The following tables present selected data on The Ohio State University and The Pennsylvania State University. The data is organized into tables in order to compare the selected institutions to each other, and to data gathered on national study abroad participation. The data used in this study is the most current data that is available.

## Study Abroad Participation by State

Table 1 shows that during the 2014-2015 academic year 313,406 students, from the United States, participated in study abroad programs. The total number of participants represents students who participated in study abroad programs for credit and those who participated in non-credit programs. Of the 313,406 students 12,868 students (1.89%) participated in study abroad programs from an institution of higher education within the state of Ohio. Additionally, 18,927 students (2.52%) participated in study abroad programs from an institution of higher education within the state of Pennsylvania.

These findings also indicate that during the 2014-2015 academic year significantly more students were enrolled in higher education in Pennsylvania, than in the state of Ohio. The difference in enrollment between the two states was 70,413 students. Moreover, the findings indicate that more students from Pennsylvania participated in study abroad experiences than students from institutions in Ohio. Additionally, the findings show that 6,059 more students traveled abroad from Pennsylvania during the 2014-2015 academic year.

Further findings indicate that while more students participated in study abroad programs from the state of Pennsylvania, The Pennsylvania State University sent less students abroad than The Ohio State University. During the 2014-2015 academic year The Pennsylvania State

University sent 1,889 students abroad while The Ohio State University sent 2,603 students abroad. Therefore, over 700 more students participated in study abroad programming from The Ohio State University during the 2014-2015 academic year. It is important to note that during the same academic year students traveling abroad from The Ohio State University represented 20.22% of the total number of students traveling abroad from the state of Ohio, while students studying abroad from The Pennsylvania State University represented only 9.98% of the total number of study abroad participants in the state.

Additionally, the findings in table 1 show the national total of student participation in study abroad programs. This is important because it shows how many students went abroad during the 2014-2015 academic year and provides a sense of how many U.S. students take advantage of study abroad experiences, and how many students choose not to participate in study abroad opportunities. Specifically, the total figure shows that during the 2014-2015 academic year only 313,406 students out of 20,192,635 nationwide participated in study abroad programming. This finding indicates that the total number of student participants in study abroad programming in relatively small, with less than 1.55% of all college students going abroad annually. Therefore, while it may seem impressive to send 313,406 U.S. students abroad the annual rate of participation is actually very low.

Table 1. Study Abroad Participation by State

State	Study Abroad Participation	Total Fall Enrollment in Degree Granting Institutions	Percentage of Students Studying Abroad-Nationwide
Ohio	12, 868	680, 238	1.89%
Pennsylvania	18, 927	750, 651	2.52%
National Total	313,406	20,192, 635	1.55%

Academic Year 2014-2015 \* The most current data available from NAFSA and the U.S. Department of Education National Center for Education Statistics

## Institutional Sketch and Ranking

Tables 2 and 3 present institutional data on The Ohio State University and The Pennsylvania State University. The purpose of the tables is to briefly show the similarities and differences between the two institutions. It is important to note that while the institutions are similar in founding, type, and educational offerings The Pennsylvania State University enrolled over 30,000 more students in the fall of 2016 and boasts a larger statewide presence as indicated by the number of branch campuses (table 2). This is significant to note because while The Pennsylvania State University has arguably larger enrollment numbers the institution sends fewer students abroad annually than The Ohio State University (table 2 & 3).

The data presented tables 2 and 3 represents total figures of enrollment and study abroad participation at both The Ohio State University and The Pennsylvania State University. It is also of note, that the figures represent total enrollment and participation rates which include the main campus for each institution and the branch campuses associated with each institution. While the

majority of study aboard participants come from the main campuses at each institution, the branch campuses do send a negligible number of participants abroad annually.

The data in table 3 specifically shows the academic year, rank, and total number of students abroad for both institutions over a ten-year period as reported in the Open Doors Report. The Open Doors Report published annually by the Institute of International Education (IIE) publishes the total number of study abroad students at top forty doctoral-granting universities. The data represents the leading institutions by institutional type for study abroad programs and ranks top universities 1-40. The university type varies, but the majority of universities ranked in the top 40 are large institutions (New York University, Texas A&M University-College Station, University of Texas, University of Southern California, University of Michigan-Ann Arbor, Indiana University-Bloomington, etc.) with significantly populace student bodies.

The data gathered from the Open Doors report reveals how study abroad programs at both The Ohio State University and The Pennsylvania State University have fluctuated over the past decade. Specifically, the findings indicate that over the past five years The Pennsylvania State University has experienced a decrease in the total number of students participating in study abroad programs, and the institutions ranking as a leading institution in study abroad programming, has also decreased. It is important to note that over the past decade The Pennsylvania State University has experienced a fair amount fluctuation in program rank; most noticeably in 2006, 2011, and 2014 (table 3). However, as the data indicates The Ohio State University has annually increased their institutional ranking, with the exception of the 2010-2011 academic year, over the past decade, and they have increased their participation rates annually since 2012. An important finding from this data shows that until the 2012-2013 academic year

The Pennsylvania State University was ranked higher than The Ohio State University, and sent more students abroad annually.

Table 2. Institutional Sketch

	The Ohio State University	The Pennsylvania State University
Founded	1870	1855
Institution Type	Public Land-Grant Institution	Public Land-Grant Institution
Institutional Ranking	#16 Top Public Schools *	#14 Top Public Schools *
Institution Location —Main Campus	Columbus, OH	State College, PA
<b>Branch Campuses</b>	5	24
Total Enrollment Fall 2016	66,046	99,133
Total Undergraduate Enrollment Fall 2016	52,349	84,686
Number Undergraduate Degree Programs	>200	>160
Number of Graduate Degree Programs	>190	>160
In-state Tuition & Fees	\$10,591 (Columbus Campus)	\$18,436 (University Park Campus)
Out-of-State Tuition & Fees**	\$29,659 (Columbus Campus)	\$33,664 (University Park Campus)
2017 Operating Budget	\$6.2 billion	\$5.7 billion
Total Abroad Participation 2015-2016	3,072	2,580
Abroad Participation as a Percent of Enrollment	4.6%	2.6%

<sup>\*</sup>U.S. News & World Report 2018 "Top Public Universities"

\*\* Fees vary by campus location; therefore, the main campus was selected to represent each university.

Table 3. Annual Enrollment and Rank of Study Abroad Participation, 2004-2015\*

The Oh	io State Ui	niversity	The Pen	nsylvania S	State University
Academic Year	Rank	Total Number of Students Abroad	Year	Rank	Total Number of Students Abroad
2014-2015	8	2,603	2014-2015	26	1,889
2013-2014	7	2,539	2013-2014	20	1,971
2012-2013	7	2,255	2012-2013	23	1,787
2011-2012	25	1,716	2011-2012	19	1,926
2010-2011	14	1,993	2010-2011	11	2,087
2009-2010	18	1,945	2009-2010	7	2,212
2008-2009	20	1,758	2008-2009	9	2,181
2007-2008	20	1,704	2007-2008	8	2,101
2006-2007	25	1,501	2006-2007	12	1,830
2005-2006	22	1,477	2005-2006	4	2,618
2004-2005	14	1,580	2004-2005	4	2,084

<sup>\*</sup> IIE Annual Leading Institutions by Institutional Type Data 2004-2015
Institute of International Education. (2016). "Institutions by Total Number of Study Abroad Students, 2014/15." *Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange*. Retrieved from http://www.iie.org/opendoors

## Student Profile Information

The following tables (table 4 & table 5) present profile information on U.S. college students who participated in study abroad programs between 2014-2016. Specifically, table 4 shows data from the 2015-2016 academic year, and focuses on student participants who either attended The Ohio State University or The Pennsylvania State University. The data presented in table 4 shows the total number of students abroad from each university, the percentage of students abroad, and notes the gender, ethnicity, and academic classification of participants.

Table 5 presents student profile data on all U.S. students who participated in a study abroad programs during the 2014-2015 academic year, and includes data on gender, ethnicity, and academic classifications. It is important to note, the 2014-2015 nationwide data (presented in table 5) is the most current data that is available.

The findings from table 4 show a side-by-side comparison of student profile information at both institutions. While the findings are fairly similar in regards to rates of gendered participation the findings indicate that there is a significant difference in the ethnicity of student participants from both universities. During the 2015-2016 academic year 9.8% of study abroad participants from The Ohio State University identified as Asian, while only 4.6% of students at The Pennsylvania State University identified as Asian. Additionally, while 4.6% of students identified as Black or African American from The Ohio State University only 3.0% of students identified as Black or African American at The Pennsylvania State University. Also noteworthy is that at The Ohio State University only 2.1% of student participants identified as Hispanic, while 6.6% of students from The Pennsylvania State University identified as Hispanic. At both institutions students who identified as White represented 70% of the total study abroad participants. These finding are significant because it provides insight into who is participating in study abroad programs and who is not.

When the institutional data (table 4) is compared to national study abroad profile information (table 5) is it clear that both institutions are falling behind and the total percentage of diverse student populations including students who identify as American Indian, Alaskan Native, Asian, Black, African, or Hispanic fall behind the total national percentage of students going abroad. Additionally, the side-by-side comparison confirms that the majority of students going abroad identify as white (70%). While these findings are not surprising, they do confirm that there is a significant need to encourage diverse student populations to pursue study abroad opportunities.

In addition to gender and ethnicity, tables 4 & 5 present data on academic classification.

A surprising finding is that at both institutions the highest percentage of students are seniors

when they participate in a study abroad programs. At the Ohio State University seniors represent 41% of the total number of students abroad, while seniors at The Pennsylvania State University represent 52% of the students that go abroad. According to the national data (table 5) juniors represent the largest percentage 33% of students that go abroad, with senior participation falling behind at 22%. Furthermore, the findings indicate that due to the low participation rate, there is an opportunity to support freshman and sophomores who are interested in participating in study abroad opportunities.

Table 4. Student Profile Information

		The Ohio State University		The Pennsyl Unive	
		Total Number of Students Abroad	% of Students Abroad	Total Number of Students Abroad	% of Students Abroad
Total		3,072		2,580	
Male	Gender	1,184	38.5%	905	35.0%
Female		1,888	61.4%	1,675	64.9%
	Ethnicity				
American Indian or Alaskan Native		3	0.0%	2	0.0%
Asian		302	9.8%	120	4.6%
Black or African American		141	4.6%	79	3.0%
Hispanic		66	2.1%	172	6.6%
Multiple Races		186	6.0%	82	3.1%
Unknown		157	5.1%	55	2.1%
White		2,217	72.1%	1,869	72.4%
	Academic Classification				
Freshman		99	3.2%	11	0.4%
Sophomore		317	10.3%	181	7.0%
Junior		748	24.3%	703	27.2%
Senior		1,277	41.6%	1,346	52.2%
Graduate		579	18.8%	284	8.1%
Data represents t	the $2015-2016$ a	cademic year			

Table 5. Profile of U.S. Study Abroad Students, 2014/2015\*

		% of Students Abroad
	Gender	
Male		33.4%
Female		66.6%
	Ethnicity	
American Indian or Alaskan Native	J	0.5%
Asian, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander		8.1%
Black or African- American		5.6%
Hispanic or Latino(a)		8.8%
Multiracial		4.1%
White		72.9%
	Academic	
	Classification	
Freshman		3.9%
Sophomore		13.1%
Junior		33.1%
Senior		26.4%
Graduate		12.1%

<sup>\*</sup> Represents the most current data available. Institute of International Education. (2016). "Host Regions and Destinations of U.S. Study Abroad Students, 2013/14 - 2014/15." *Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange*. Retrieved from http://www.iie.org/opendoors

## Fields of Study

The following tables (table 6 & table 7) present data on the top major fields of study of U.S. study abroad students. Specifically, table 6 emphasizes the top fields of study pursued by study abroad participants at both The Ohio State University and The Pennsylvania State University during the 2015-2016 academic year. The top fields of study at The Ohio State University and The Pennsylvania State University are represented by college. It is important to note that while both institutions have additional colleges within the university the colleges

represented in table 6 are the colleges responsible for sending the most students abroad annually. Additionally, table 6 presents data on the total number of participants from each college and the total percentage of participation. Table 7 presents the five most popular fields of study pursued by all U.S. college students. While the data is not representative of a specific college, it is representative of a field of study, which is comparable to college disciplines. The data in table 7 represents national findings of all college-age study abroad participants, and emphasizes the rank and total percentage of participants. The data that is presented in table 7 is the most current data available on the top five major fields of study for U.S. study abroad participants.

The findings indicate that at The Ohio State University, colleges within the university sending the most students abroad are Arts & Sciences (34.0%), Fisher College of Business (14.4%), the Graduate School (13.1%), Engineering (13.0%), and Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences (7.6%). At the Pennsylvania State University, the colleges sending the most students abroad include the Smeal College of Business (20.40%), The Liberal Arts (14.97%), Engineering (12.02%), Health and Human Development (11.5%) and Communications (10.27%). These findings are significant because they show who is participating and where to focus efforts to increase participation.

The findings also indicate that while student participation from business and STEM (specifically engineering) programs rank high at both institutions, the rate of participation falls behind compared to the national findings (tables 6 & 7). Nationally, students from STEM programs (23.9%) and Business programs (20.1%) participate in study abroad opportunities at the highest rate. Over the past decade the national rates of participation from STEM fields have steadily increased while the participation rates of students from humanities has steadily decreased (Institute of International Education, 2016). This is important to note because one of

the most significant misconceptions about study abroad programming is that the majority of students who participate in study abroad programs come from social science, foreign language, and international studies programs.

Table 6. Education Abroad by College\*

Ohio S	State Unive	rsity	The Pennsylv	vania State	University
Colleges	Number of Students	% of Total Participation	Colleges	Number of Students	% of Total Participation
Arts & Sciences	1045	34.0%	Smeal College of Business	421	20.4%
Fisher College of Business	443	14.4%	The Liberal Arts	309	14.9%
Graduate School	403	13.1%	Engineering	248	12.0%
Engineering	400	13.0%	Health and Human Development	239	11.5%
Food, Agricultural, &Environmental Sciences	236	7.6%	Communications	212	10.2%

Data represents the 2015-2016 academic year

<sup>\*</sup>Colleges within each university sending the largest numbers of students to study abroad

Table 7. Top Five Fields of Study U.S. Students

Rank	Fields	Total % of U.S. Students
1	STEM Fields	23.9%
2	Business	20.1%
3	Social Science	17.3%
4	Foreign Language and International Studies	7.7%
5	Fine and Applied Arts	6.9%

<sup>\*</sup> Represents the most current data available. Institute of International Education. (2016). "Host Regions and Destinations of U.S. Study Abroad Students, 2013/14 - 2014/15." *Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange*. Retrieved from http://www.iie.org/opendoors

#### Destination

The following tables (tables 8, 9 & 10) show the most popular destinations for U.S. college-age students participating in study abroad programs. The tables include data on The Ohio State University and The Pennsylvania State University, as well as national data on leading U.S. destinations. It is important to note that while only a select number of countries are represented in tables 8 & 9 both The Ohio State University and The Pennsylvania State University send students abroad to more than 60 countries annually.

The data presented in table 8 shows the top destinations, number of students, and the total percentage of students to each destination during the 2015-2016 academic year for both institutions. The findings indicate that for both The Ohio State University and The Pennsylvania State University European countries as well as China ranked highly for study abroad programming. Similar to table 8 the data presented in table 9 shows the leading destinations for all U.S. study abroad participants, and includes data on rank, total number of students, and total

percentage of students. The findings in table 8 also indicate that the leading destination for all U.S students participating in study abroad programs are also in Europe or China.

Similar to tables 8 & 9, table 10 presents data on the leading destinations of U.S. study abroad participants. However, table 10 groups country locations into regions (Africa, Saharan, Asia, Europe, Latin America, Caribbean, Middle East, North Africa, North America, Oceania, Antarctica, and multiple destinations). The "multiple destinations" category includes participants who travel to more than one destination during a single study abroad program. Table 10 also includes data on the total number of U.S students to each region and the total percentage of students to each region. The findings of table 10 indicate that during the 2014-2015 academic year the highest percentage of U.S. study abroad participants traveled to Europe (54.5%), Latin America and the Caribbean (16.0%) and Asia (11.4%). These findings are significant because they show that a substantial number of students (50, 298) traveled in Latin America and the Caribbean, which is not reflected in the leading destinations at The Ohio State University or The Pennsylvania State University (table 10).

The data from table 10 also indicates that during the 2014-2015 academic year only 2.2% of students studied in the Middle East and North America, and only 3.4% of students studied in Sub-Saharan Africa. These national findings are similar to the findings at The Ohio State University and The Pennsylvania State University. Altogether, these findings indicate that there is an opportunity to expand study abroad participation outside of Europe, and a need to encourage institutions and study abroad participants to seek out opportunities to travel to less popular regions of the world.

Table 8. The Five Most Popular Study Abroad Destinations

The O	hio State Unive	rsity	The Penns	The Pennsylvania State University		
Top Destinations	Number of Students	% of Students	Top Destinations	Number of Students	% of Students	
United Kingdom	593	19.3%	Italy	435	16.9%	
Multiple Countries *	319	10.4%	Spain	297	11.5%	
Spain	179	5.8%	United Kingdom	204	7.9%	
China	119	3.9%	China	122	4.7%	
Australia	116	3.8%	France	120	4.7%	

Data represents the 2015-2016 academic year

Table 9. Leading Destinations of U.S. Study Abroad Students, 2014/2015\*

Rank	Destination	Total Number of U.S. Students	Total % of U.S. Students
1	United Kingdom	38,189	12.2%
2	Italy	33,768	10.7%
3	Spain	28,325	9.0%
4	France	18,198	5.8%
5	China	12,790	4.1%
6	Germany	11,010	3.5%
7	Ireland	10,230	3.3%
8	Costa Rica	9,305	3.0%
9	Australia	8,810	2.8%
10	Japan	6,053	1.9%
	World Total	313,415	

<sup>\*</sup> Represents the most current data available.

Institute of International Education. (2016). "Host Regions and Destinations of U.S. Study Abroad Students, 2013/14 - 2014/15." *Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange*. Retrieved from http://www.iie.org/opendoors

<sup>\*</sup>Programs that include travel to more than one country

Table 10. Destinations of U.S. Study Abroad Students, 2014/2015\*

Destination	Total Number of U.S. Students	% of U.S. Students
Africa, Sub-Saharan	10,647	3.4%
Asia	35,713	11.4%
Europe	170,879	54.5%
Latin America & Caribbean	50,298	16.0%
Middle East & North Africa	6,844	2.2%
North America	1,569	0.5%
Oceania	12, 614	4.0%
Antarctica	64	0.0%
Multiple Destinations	24,787	7.9%
World Total	313, 415	

<sup>\*</sup> Represents the most current data available.

Institute of International Education. (2016). "Host Regions and Destinations of U.S. Study Abroad Students, 2013/14 - 2014/15." *Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange*. Retrieved from http://www.iie.org/opendoors

## **Learning Outcomes**

In addition to evaluating data specific to study abroad participation, destination, and student profile information it is important to examine learning outcomes related to study abroad participation. It is clear from the literature that students do learn while participating in study abroad programs and that the learning can have a significant impact on student development and future pursuits. While a large impact study on international learning is outside the scope of this project it is important to think about learning outcomes at The Ohio State University and The Pennsylvania State University as a way to gain a better understanding of study abroad programming at both institutions.

Data on learning outcomes was collected from both The Ohio State University and The Pennsylvania State University. Specifically, the data was collected from the respective institutional websites, and by direct contact with staff members from the Office of International Affairs at The Ohio State University, and the Office of Global Programs at The Pennsylvania State University. Although students take program surveys to assess study abroad experiences at both institutions, after returning from study abroad programs, the data for this study was collected primarily from the publically available study abroad profiles featured on both The Ohio State University and The Pennsylvania State University websites. The profiles feature students who have returned from study abroad programs and have written publically about their experiences.

At The Ohio State University students reported that their study abroad experiences helped them to become more adaptable and to increase their own personal sense of awareness. Students also noted the importance of the global connections that they were able to establish as a result of participation and the opportunity to improve language abilities. One of the most prevalent findings among students was that they reported an increase in global awareness and a better understanding of significant issues facing the global community. Additionally, many students reported that their experiences abroad were the most beneficial of their college experience or that their experiences abroad were life-changing.

At The Pennsylvania State University students reported that their study abroad experiences helped them to become more open-minded, develop a greater appreciation for global diversity, establish new personal and professional relationships, gain independence, confidence, and emotional intelligence, and develop new critical thinking skills. Additionally, students reported having developed new perspectives and changed worldviews. One of the most

significant findings was that students reported returning with a greater respect for diversity and culture, and with a sense of improved cultural understanding. A majority of students also reported significant gains in language learning abilities including confidence in their ability to communicate.

The findings on learning outcomes at both The Ohio State University and The Pennsylvania State University are very similar. The findings indicate that students are learning abroad and that their experiences have a profound impact on both their education and their personal growth. The findings from both institutions are comparable to the findings in the literature which also report similar outcomes of study abroad experiences. As noted in the literature, there is still significant need for research on assessment measures and the ability to measure the long-term impact of study abroad programs.

#### **DISCUSSION**

## **Implications**

The findings of this study show that while both The Ohio State University and The Pennsylvania State University send a significant number of students abroad annually there is still a need for increased participation and support from both universities. As noted in the findings, during the 2015- 2016 academic year, both The Ohio State University and The Pennsylvania State University sent nearly 3,000 students abroad from each institution, however, the total number of participants represents 4% or less of the total enrollment at both institutions. Therefore, there is a clear need to increase participation numbers and make study abroad opportunities more accessible to enrolled students. Additionally, as the findings indicate the rates of annual participation in study abroad programming at The Pennsylvania State University have decreased significantly since 2006 with only marginal increases in participation over the past decade, while rates of participation continue to rise at The Ohio State University; therefore, it is in the best interest of The Pennsylvania State University to evaluate current programming practices in order to determine why participation rates have not increased significantly over the years.

In addition to increasing rates of participation there is a clear need for both institutions to further evaluate barriers that may keep students from participating in study abroad opportunities. As the research indicates diverse student populations, freshmen, sophomores, males, and students majoring in a discipline outside of the top five fields of study (STEM Fields, Business, Social Science, Foreign Language, and International Studies and Art) are less likely to participate in study abroad opportunities. Therefore, there is a significant need at both The Ohio

State University and The Pennsylvania State University to evaluate potential barriers that keep students from participating. Additionally, there is a need for both institutions to further support and encourage their students to seek out opportunities and make study abroad programming a priority during college.

#### Limitations and Future Research

The findings of this study provide a constructive starting point for further examination of study abroad programming in the United States. While the scope of the study is limited, the findings do suggest important implications for U.S. study abroad programming and for programs at The Ohio State University and The Pennsylvania State University. However, due to the limited data that was publically available, it was not possible with this project to further examine study abroad programming in the U.S. or programming at either institution. Therefore, further research is need to examine gender-gap disparities, minority participation, learning outcomes, the long-term impact of participation, institutional support, and the barriers that keep students from participating in study abroad opportunities.

## **CONCLUSION**

In order to prepare college students for a rapidly changing society, one that requires students to be global citizens and to navigate issues of social, political, economic, and environmental importance U.S. institutions of higher education must prioritize study abroad programming and work to further internationalize their universities. It is clear from the research that the annual rate of participation in study abroad programs is increasing. However, even with the steady increase in participation far too many U.S. students will graduate from college without ever participating in a study abroad program.

Therefore, U.S. institutions, specifically The Ohio State University and The Pennsylvania State University, must continue to increase institutional goals regarding international education, allocate additional funding for study abroad opportunities, work to remove barriers that keep students from participating in programs, and continue to expand their internationalization efforts on campus. Additional research is also needed to further evaluate study abroad programming and to gain added knowledge of best practices.

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