Student Mobility Final Report to Steering Committee

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I. Data Analysis

Strengths

- UM has sent 1487 students abroad over the past 5 years. Every year, flexible funding through financial aid and external scholarships help students go abroad for short and long trips. Our participation in international education is growing, and is strong relative to other states (NAFSA Study Abroad Participation by State).
- We have strong faculty commitment to international education. Faculty-led programs have enabled 990 students to go abroad over the past 5 years. These programs offer unique experiences keyed to the interests of individual faculty members and their departments.
- Faculty and students consistently report that their international education experiences are very meaningful. Faculty report that students gain knowledge and enrichment abroad that is simply not available in the U.S.
- Many students report the structures and support services in place at UM successfully facilitate international education efforts. These offices help students access funds, transfer credits and set up exchanges with partner institutions all over the world.
- UM’s population of international students is growing rapidly. UM census data shows a 200-student increase between fall 2012 and fall 2014.
- UM offers full immersion study abroad opportunities at little additional cost to students (i.e., same UM tuition/fee rates).
- The risk management strategy that UM is currently developing has been very successful in reducing risk to the university from international study efforts.

Weaknesses

- The university lacks sufficient funding to realize our own ambitions for international education (e.g., staff support, student scholarships, recruiting international students, faculty-led programs).
- There is a clear disconnect between how faculty and staff see international education functioning. Faculty often voiced concern about processes not working well, while staff perceived processes functioning well.
- UM does not have clear data definitions for international and education abroad students. Data is not collected centrally, is often haphazardly collected based on different units’ individual files and varying parameters, or isn’t collected at all due to a lack of response from units.
- UM has a decentralized administrative structure for education abroad. Faculty-led programs and international internships/service are all administered thought different units. Students have difficulty navigating this structure, as do support units, such as Business Services.
- Credit transfer policies and challenges can discourage students from studying abroad and prevents faculty from promoting long-term education abroad experiences.
Opportunities

- Many constituencies stress that UM is losing recruiting opportunities when it comes to international education. Many other universities use their international prowess as a tool to lure ambitious students, and advertise foreign travel as a key feature of the educational experience.
- There was praise for many existing efforts to involve international students in campus life, but more could be done. Faculty advocate requiring all students to have a conversation partner, or participate in the global partner program. At the same time, UM students should be encouraged to interact more with foreign students and scholars.
- UM should develop meaningful data to report education abroad student and international student numbers. If UM creates clear definitions for these populations, then we could increase our reported numbers.
- UM should reward faculty initiative. The work that goes into faculty-led initiatives is neither recognized nor rewarded. Faculty also say they often spend hours helping long-term study abroad students navigate foreign universities’ websites as they search for classes that will fulfill UM requirements.

Challenges

- UM could lose competition with other schools for international students. There is currently little recruitment budget for international recruiting.
- There are certain situations that are out of UM’s control, such as attaining visas for both incoming international students and outgoing study abroad students.
- UM risks focusing on numbers and ignoring the quality of our programing. If student numbers increase, then staff support should increase as well.
- Pressure to graduate in four years could erode study abroad numbers. Students are concerned about a delayed graduation date due to course offering accessibility at foreign institutions and challenges with credit transfer.
- Full-immersion study abroad could be seen as a threat to under enrolled courses. Faculty may be reluctant to encourage study abroad if they feel it undermines enrollment for their courses and could lead to sections being cut.
- Faculty and students struggle to find acceptable courses for study abroad students due to the unpredictability of course offerings as foreign institutions.

Recommendations

Improve UM’s data collection related to student mobility.

UM needs to create better definitions for and processes to collect data on international students and education abroad students. By making these improvements UM could capture data that is not currently being collected, thereby increasing our reported numbers. This would streamline annual data collection processes and establish data integrity.

Gather more information on the role of international students in internationalization.

The majority of questions addressed in this review were focused on education abroad and related academic processes. Likewise, the answers reflected this focus. There is, consequently, little discussion
about the role of international students with regard to services, academics, recruitment, and financial aid.

**Establish a working group to examine faculty-led processes.**
The responses from faculty and staff clearly indicate a need to overhaul processes related to faculty-led study abroad programs. This should be examined and addressed further in a more focused way, utilizing the data from this report.

**Investigate creation of a one-stop shop for all education abroad and related services.**
In order to mitigate the confusion among faculty, staff and students with regard to education abroad, it would be advantageous to put all related services in one location and to create streamlined processes.

**Revisit credit-transfer issues.**
Credit transfer for study abroad was discussed widely among faculty and students. Academic departments and administrative units should work together to create a database that allows students to find pre-approved courses in their field of study at UM’s exchange universities. UM should also examine national best practices for traditional versus pass/fail grading for study abroad transfer credits.

**Provide more training for faulty on integrating international students into the classroom.**
Create training modules which provide faculty with resources to help them integrate international students more effectively into their classrooms.

**Create need-based scholarships for education abroad.**
These scholarships would help serve a number of students who would not otherwise take advantage of education abroad opportunities.

**Build upon existing student integration programs.**
UM’s Global Partners and Conversation Partners programs were widely cited as existing programs that do a great job at integrating domestic and international students, but both programs struggle with domestic student participation. UM should focus on strategies to increase domestic student participation in these programs.
II. Data Collection

How are students financing their education abroad? Is financial aid portable? Can students tap into additional sources of aid? What issues, if any, surround the recognition of credit for study abroad? How effective are the administrative policies and procedures pertaining to education abroad, with regard to financial aid portability and credit transfer?

Units: Enrollment Services (ES), UM Foundation (FOUN), Office of International Programs (OIP), Graduate School (GRAD), Financial Aid (FA), Faculty Open Forums (FAC), Faculty-led Program Directors (FPD), Academic Enrichment (AE), Internship Services (IS)

Summary of findings:

Financing and Financial Aid

• See Appendix A: Focus Group Report for iLab (Domestic Students with Study Abroad)

• Students can use financial aid (loans and scholarships), UM scholarships and external scholarships to finance education abroad. Other funding sources are parents, college fund, earnings from work. Students need to stay enrolled in at least 12 credits to keep their financial aid. Problems arise when they fail a class and drop below 12. (OIP)

• UM Scholarships: Presidential Scholarship, WUE, LAS leadership scholarship, Scott & Farrell Scholarship, Missoula Rotary Scholarship, Jenna Ness scholarship, ISEP scholarships, GLI scholarships, and Dailey Scholarship. Some do not work for IE3 Global Internships. MCLL has some scholarships, but very little. (OIP)

• External scholarships: Gilman scholarships for students receiving a Pell Grant, Boren scholarship, Japanese government scholarships, Bridging scholarships for study in Japan (OIP)

• Partner & ISEP Exchange: Students pay regular UM tuition and fees, UM room and board rates for ISEP programs, and host institution room and board rates for Partner programs. Most UM student loans and scholarships, except work study can be applied. (OIP)

• Partner & ISEP Direct: Students pay the tuition, room, & board costs directly to the institution abroad, rather than UM. Most student loans and scholarships that are real money can be applied to this program type. Work study, tuition waivers, LAS Awards, Cal Murphy Scholarships, and WUE waivers cannot be applied. (OIP)

• Faculty Directed programs: Students pay a specific program fee that includes UM tuition if it is state supported. For winter-session state-supported programs tuition is part of the spring semester. Students pay a program fee if it’s run through SELL. Students pay summer tuition for state-supported programs run during the summer. (OIP)

• Graduate School provides a list of scholarships and students have to research opportunities. The Dean’s Merit award is a new opportunity. Financial aid can be awarded to graduate students. However, they must have been admitted into a graduate program, must be in a minimum of 6 credits & their only option would be an unsub Stafford loan or a grad plus loan. Need to find external funding to assist domestic graduate students to go abroad. National
Science Foundation has funding. Dual or joint degrees or research collaborations could provide opportunities. (GRAD)

- Federal law allows students to use reasonable costs of study abroad as part of their financial aid such as airline ticket, passport and visa application. OIP prepares a budget for each student who is selected to study abroad though OIP for the financial aid office. Faculty directed program leaders should also be sending their program cost and list of participants to financial aid office. The Study Abroad office often helps the faculty leaders with this. (OIP)

- Many students are unable to increase their financial aid award in order to pay for plane tickets or other expenses. Once they have used the maximum amount of their award, they have to find support on their own. For many students, this means they cannot travel overseas. (FA)

- The Financial Aid office also said that many students cannot give up their apartments in Missoula, so they must pay double rent while they are overseas. The Office cannot pay out additional support for this expense, or for the cost of entertainment and enrichment experiences students incur while studying overseas. The office pointed out that other schools do cover these expenses, and use this fact as a marketing tool to integrate study abroad into their other offerings. (FA)

- The Provost’s lottery for awards does not take need into account, so some students receive support from the lottery even if they are not eligible for financial aid, while others go wanting. They also pointed out that many students must turn to student loans for overseas travel, which adds to the debt burden they carry after graduation. (FA)

- Provost’s Office funding changes each year and they don’t post when the money is no longer available. (FPD)

- Funding through GLI has significantly helped a lot of students. (FPD)

- The UM Foundation has the ability to set up scholarships so they have total portability. This portability needs to be defined within the gift agreement. Most scholarships have broad parameters. Some can be donor specific and pertain only to students studying in specific countries or regions. (FOUN)

- More scholarship money is needed. Foundation should make it a priority to raise scholarships for out-of-classroom experiences. We need a good plan on how to communicate/market this to donors. Need to show donors that we are organized in how students get access to these activities. We need to identify potential donors who have had international experiences. (AE)

- Financial Aid is very difficult to navigate and to obtain. There’s a separate process for getting financial aid for study abroad programs. It’s becoming more difficult. It’s difficult to find resources; needs to be more coordinated. (FPD)

- Financial Aid personnel said that there are many departments and agencies that provide support to students, but there is no coordination of those benefits. As a result, some students miss out on the opportunity to do international work, while others receive multiple awards. (FA)

- There is no centralized place for students to find funding to go abroad. Some scholarships seem to be “hidden” or not well advertised. OIP should house (centrally advertise) all scholarships for abroad opportunities. (FAC)
• Students aren’t applying for scholarships now – need to identify key people (advisors/faculty) in depts/schools/colleges who could be trained on scholarship opportunities. Students don’t know about them and don’t feel they can get funding. (AE, IS)

**Credit Transfer**

• See Appendix A: Focus Group Report for iLab (Domestic Students with Study Abroad)
• Credit transfer only affects exchange programs. It’s not an issue for faculty-led programs. (OIP)
• Faculty aren’t aware of any central place for students/faculty to get assistance with credit transfer issues. (FAC)
• Faculty feel that it’s very time consuming to work with students who want to study abroad for a semester or a year. There are credit transfer issues. The guidelines aren’t clear. Often times credits get preapproved and then the students can’t actually enroll in those classes so the approval process has to happen all over again. (FAC)
• Faculty encourage students to go abroad, but it requires hours of time to navigate foreign universities’ websites trying to help them identify classes that will fulfill UM requirements. There is too little information for making decision and they often have to redo the whole thing when they come back. Some of this is out of OIP’s control, but some things could be done to help streamline this process. (FAC)
• Students often have to do independent study work at UM while they are abroad to have credits that count towards their major/graduation. Some faculty are not supportive of this because independent study credits are more work for faculty without the recognition. (FAC)
• Faculty don’t encourage students to go abroad because the credit process is a nightmare. It shouldn’t be so difficult. The Admissions/Registrar’s offices should make it easier and should trust faculty to determine the number of credits. (FAC)
• Some U.S. universities accept study abroad credits as pass/fail. UM may want to consider this method. (OIP)
• Study Abroad Office does a great job giving students clear directions regarding credit transfer. (ES)
• Enrollment Services gets involved to approve the classes and sign off on Gen. Ed and departmental classes. (ES)
• Students’ classes are approved before they go and paper work is signed stating the credits will transfer. (ES)
• Students need to stay enrolled in at least 12 credits to keep their financial aid. Problems arise when they fail a class and drop below 12. (ES)
• Different cultures have different ways of evaluating students. Sometimes our students struggle with this change. Grading can be a lot harsher in some countries (e.g., France and Spain). There are inconsistencies in workloads between US and, for example, ECTS credits system. One option is to take courses as pass/no pass. UM should revisit this and research what the best practice is. (ES, OIP)
• Students transfer credits appear on their transcript. Foreign grades are converted into U.S. grading system based on the conversion tables that have been created jointly by OIP and Enrollment Services. In order for students to meet their major, minor, or general education requirements with courses taken at a foreign institution, they need to take the courses for a letter grade and earn a minimum of C-. Elective courses can be taken on a pass/fail basis. Grades will appear on their transcript, although they won’t be calculated into students’ GPA, except when applying to graduate with honors or when applying for professional programs (Journalism, Pharmacy). (OIP)

• Graduate School has a procedure in place for credit transfer. Nine credits can be transferred back. A petition can be filed for the Graduate School to accept additional credits. Petition is discussed with the student’s graduate committee. (GRAD)

**What policies or practices related to student mobility hinder internationalization efforts at this institution?**

**Units:** Enrollment Services (ES), Student Affairs (SA), Mansfield Center (MC), Business Services (BS), Office of International Programs (OIP), Administration & Finance (AF), Graduate School (GRAD), School of Extended and Lifelong Learning (SELL), Financial Aid (FA), Faculty Open Forums (FAC), Faculty-led Program Directors (FPD), Academic Enrichment (AE), Internship Services (IS)

**Summary of findings:**

**General**

• Technology can be a hindrance because students do not have access to live streaming throughout campus. (SA)

• There are many strategic “silos” on campus based on department strategy. This creates independence and flexibility and some units support that independence. (MC)

• Lack of resources as well as the culture at the institution. Some people really value international experiences and others think there is nothing beyond Missoula Montana. (AF)

• Lack of funding impacts staffing and scholarships. (AE, IS)

• Faculty perceptions on importance of international education create a lack of interest in promoting more opportunities. (AE, IS)

• Perception that OIP is only study abroad. Campus isn’t well informed OIP’s other functions. (AE, IS)

• There should be a central location for ALL education abroad experiences (exchanges, faculty-led, internships, service, research), which could serve as a resource for faculty and students. Student ambassador program could have a wider focus. (AE, IS)

**Study abroad**

• The Financial Aid Office said that UM’s bureaucracy makes it confusing for students and faculty trying to navigate an international experience. They pointed in particular to the fact that FSSS reports to student affairs, but OIP reports to the provost. One financial aid officer who had worked at other schools said, in his experience, UM has a very disjuncted message when it
comes to internationalization. He said other schools make the experience easier, and are consistent in their efforts to encourage students to study abroad. (FA)

- Enrollment Services believes that UM does not struggle with outgoing student policies or practices. Study Abroad Office has created a smooth procedure. (ES)
- There are significant tax implications for students in regard to their participation in study abroad programs – paid tuition can be counted towards a tax credit. This information is reflected in the 1098T form. (BS)
- Financial Aid personnel spoke in favor of having all overseas opportunities go through one office, such as OIP, to ensure consistency and to make sure all students are aware of these options. (FA)
- For some majors it is difficult for students to meet their degree requirements if they participate in full-immersion study abroad programs. (OIP)
- Representatives from SELL said that OIP’s risk management plan was helpful because this area is outside the expertise of most members of the faculty. (SELL)
- Members of SELL said that many students choose to go to English speaking countries. UM needs to encourage students to look to other countries where English is not the primary language. (SELL)
- Not that many graduate students go abroad. It is hard for graduate students to go abroad because of research. There can be specific field research or field camps. It is specific to department and field such as Forestry and Global Youth Development program. Some departments have a collaboration. Graduate students will often register for research credits. Nature of graduate education depends on the details of the program, transferring credits are not a problem. Another impediment is being unaware of the leave of absence program/enrollment: students have to have one credit to continue registration or otherwise they are dropped. (GRAD)
- If there is an emergency that might impact a study abroad program let Business Services know as that information might be necessary to modify a student’s financial aid package and refunds. (BS)
- Faculty pointed specifically to the huge challenge of getting general education credits for overseas work, saying they told students to assume their requests for a waiver would be turned down. Study abroad, faculty said, will almost never be counted for fulfillment of gen ed requirements. Many wished that students could submit their study plan in advance, and get their courses recognized. Instead, they said that students had to battle for recognition after the fact, and that they usually lose that battle. (FAC)
- Faculty complained that students find the same confusion when they look for overseas opportunities. (FAC)
- Travel contributes to carbon footprint in a huge way. As an institution we should take responsibility for how to address that. (FPD)
- When students go abroad the course enrollment numbers decrease and this creates issues with the budget cuts. This creates disincentive for faculty to encourage students. (FPD)
- ISEP and Partner are options, but many departments don’t encourage students to go abroad for a semester or year. (FPD)
- A lot of students use ISEP which takes away from the enrollment back at UM. This isn’t being acknowledged in dean’s office. (FPD)
- Faculty-led Study Abroad Programs have a unique set of challenges, including:
  - ASCRC creates barriers for faculty-led programs (e.g., not allowing cross-listing for these courses, making the credit calculation and contact hours difficult, trying to apply for permanent course numbers, only allowed to use bag numbers). There is a lack of embracing the value of these experiences. (FPD)
  - Faculty said the ASCRC creates a lot of resistance and has very rigid templates for counting credit hours. One professor said he had to document every hour of a four-week course to receive credit, and finished by saying he “won’t do it any more” because of the onerous requirements. (FAC)
  - There has been so much resistance at ASCRC related to credits. Experimental is fine, but once permanent it becomes difficult. Rules for time make no sense for study abroad. (FAC)
  - Recruitment is a big issue for faculty-led programs. It takes a lot of effort to go to classes, etc. Programs like the Vietnam trip support the Climate Change Studies minor and that helps with recruitment. This get back to the course numbering (course title is important). Institutionally the university could find a better way to showcase these opportunities. These programs could be a big recruitment tool for UM. (FLD)
  - Business Services needs access to or periodic reports on information related to study abroad programs. Information should include: program name, program dates, credits, cost, detailed budget, participant list. Business Services has a fiduciary responsibility to students. These programs can impact students’ bills and financial aid packages. (BS)
  - Business Services needs to know how faculty are supported to administer the program – how program fees and/or tuition are redirected to pay for faculty administration of the program (BS)
  - There does not seem to be any coordination between what students are paying for in regard to study abroad programs and registration. (BS)
  - Students sometimes come to Business Services to pay their bills but there is little context about the specific bill that they’re paying for. (BS)
  - Business Services has the ability to wire funds at a lower rate than through a bank. (BS)
  - The study abroad office or faculty leading study abroad trips should tell students to contact Business Services prior to their trip – not immediately before but weeks before. This is important to make sure their bills are paid and their financial aid packages are updated. (BS)
  - Lack of seed funding for faculty to create and lead faculty directed programs (MC)
  - Faculty directed programs are expensive programs to run. Winter session programs are the best. In summer running through the SELL is the cleanest. However, if the course is run through the SELL faculty does not get the FTE recognition for the course. (AF)
o The challenge with the faculty directed study abroad programs is that a special study abroad fee is charged on some programs but not on all of them (i.e., not consistent). Also, there should be a process established to consistently assess a special fee for students who participate in faculty directed programs, and that charge should appear on the student registration bill. Currently, a special study abroad fee is not charged to a student’s account through Banner. (AF)

o Lack of salary structure for faculty leading study abroad programs. The entrepreneurial aspect is great, but faculty need to be adequately compensated for running these programs. Winter-session faculty are not allowed to get additional salary for directing faculty-led programs, even though they are hugely demanding and require a lot of work both ahead of time and during. Lack of consistency across campus on how faculty get paid for these. (FPD)

o The change in per diem receipt rules creates hardship and takes away the little incentive that existed when faculty and staff don’t get a salary for running faculty-led programs. (FPD)

o Faculty-led programs have challenges with Business Services’ procedures, direction and understanding. Very difficult to work with Business Services. Challenges with paying providers, which can hurt relationships. Very bureaucratic instead of allowing for entrepreneurial speeds. (FPD)

o Incredible amount of sweat equity goes into faculty-led programs which aren’t contracted out to a provider. It helps keep costs down for students, but it’s challenging. (FPD)

o The various ways of setting up accounts for faculty-led programs and the different policies that go with each can create confusion and hardship in restricting how programs can pragmatically be run. (FPD)

o Support staffing is needed for faculty-led programs. It requires an enormous amount of work (recruiting, application, funding for students, logistics for trip, paperwork for OIP, teaching, etc.). The Mansfield Center has support staff for the Vietnam program and it helps the faculty focus on teaching. OIP doesn’t provide that kind of support. (FAC)

o Faculty-led programs are decentralized and students have a hard time with that. OIP isn’t well informed about these programs. They have a lot of requirements, but provide little support. (FAC)

o UM has no administrative support for faculty-led programs. The faculty member does all the logistical work from hotel booking to accounting to teaching. The lack of support limits the number of students a professor can take. (FPD)

o Lack of support staff for faculty-led programs (except in CFC and Mansfield Center) (FPD)

o Some faculty spoke positively of their experiences with the Mansfield Center, saying the Center was the one place they could go for help with paperwork and planning for faculty-led programs. They wished they could find the same support in other offices on campus. (FAC)
Faculty said that arranging overseas opportunities for students requires a lot of additional advising work, for which they receive little support. In addition, they said that the bureaucratic burden is growing because, in their view, the Office of International Program is demanding more paperwork to guard against liability and health issues. (FAC)

There doesn’t seem to be any standardization of how study abroad is administered – it seems to be very reactionary/rushed. (BS)

No policy on faculty-directed programs (we have international travel policy). No policy determining if the faculty directed programs should be run as state supported programs or through SELL. (OIP)

Faculty directed programs have been very decentralized, which is not the best practice nationwide. (OIP)

OIP has applications on the website and the Dean’s office in the College of Humanities and Sciences requires that the applications are completed and approved by the Chair and Dean before the program can be advertised. The applications include budget and Risk Management Plan. OIP reviews the Risk Management Plan. Policies are needed on the following topics: application process for leading a faculty directed programs, budgets, orientation requirements for faculty and students on cultural preparation, behavioral expectations, and most importantly, on health and safety (OIP)

Faculty directed program processes should be standardized. However, we have to be careful that we do not kill the creativity through the standardization. All faculty directed programs should be run through the Office of International Programs. (AF)

The amount of paperwork OIP requires is ridiculous. Faculty understand the risk management issues, but the paperwork is cumbersome. Even registering for work-related travel is really cumbersome. Too much bureaucracy. All the work is put on faculty. (FAC)

Too much bureaucracy exists around faculty-led programs. Policies change often (esp. Business Services). (FPD)

Historic background: faculty-led programs and OIP were completely separated, with OIP often not being informed about programs. Now OIP asks faculty to give them information (e.g., insurance forms, risk management plans). (FPD)

OIPs faculty-led forms have compatibility issues and have character limits so they are difficult to complete electronically. (FPD)

UM doesn’t have a clear policy for student insurance and faculty are asked to interpret coverage. We need a straightforward policy. (FPD)

It would be nice to have more cross-departmental collaborations for faculty-led study abroad programs (e.g., MCLL and PSCI - Paul Haber to Mexico). When we take students on our programs, they might want to do an independent study with a professor back at UM while they are abroad and these students have not had a good reception from other professors. (FPD)

Personnel issues are a huge issue for MCLL study abroad programs. MCLL needs to offer long-term programs in order to offer real language immersion opportunities. (FPD)
- Winter-session being shortened will create a barrier for short-term programs. (FPD)
- There has been a lot of resistance from UM faculty to have mandated policies from OIP, Business Services, and/or the Administration. (FPD)
- It is very challenging to accommodate students with disabilities. (FPD)
- There’s a feeling that the University’s policies hamper what Business Services can do (e.g., group travel) (FPD)
- Recommendation that OIP be the central office for faculty-led programs when it comes to creating or co-creating definitions, processes, policies, structures, and support. (FPD)
- We need to have some flexibility within schools. If we have a set policy then it may tank our opportunities to lead faculty-directed programs. (FPD)
- Competition has cropped up with faculty-led programs. 3-4 trips to Ireland now, multiple trips to India, etc. No coordination. (FPD)
- Faculty-led program directors provide OIP with information, OIP helps coordinate 2 study abroad fairs and provides risk management follow up. Marja’s job is the exchange programs. There needs to be someone at the university level that coordinates study abroad programs. Other institutions have a staff member in OIP who walks a faculty member through the whole process. OIP needs additional staffing for this. The StudioAbroad database is costly and clunky. It is challenges for faculty to access. It’s not set up for faculty-led programs. OIP is oriented toward exchange programs and UM has a huge number of faculty-led programs which need coordination. (FPD)
- There is a high burnout rate for running faculty-led programs because they are so much work. It works well to take turns with other faculty so you don’t have to lead a program every year. (FPD)
- Faculty who have been doing study abroad programs for years have decided not to continue because it’s too much work and bureaucracy and not enough support. They find the experience fulfilling, but it’s the teaching they care most about and the other issues take over. (FPD, FAC)

**Incoming students and scholars**

- Training needs to be initiated on cultural sensitivity. (SA)
- UM could do a much better job reaching out to foreign students. The university should try harder to connect these students with the campus community at large. (SELL)
- UM needs to work on outreach to attract international students. UM attends the International Transfer Fair in Seattle, but is not well known. (ES)
- When students go to ELI they have to get a certain score and prove they can perform at a specific level before they can take certain classes. This is frustrating for the students many of whom feel they should be able to take said classes. Students generally want to get into the classes before they are ready. (SA)
- Financial aid is limited. (SA)
- Crossover for curriculum sometimes does not work. Often they can’t bring credits home. (SA)
- 2+2 does not equal four. Meaning they might have taken a class at their home institution that does not transfer here so they have to repeat similar course material. (SA)
• Students have limited language immersion. (SA)
• Ensuring places are available for students to pray and having gender specific restrooms. (SA)
• It’s problematic when international students get denied their F1 Visa, but it’s not something UM can control. (ES)
• Business Services believes there is good coordination between FSSS and OIP in regard to incoming international students. (BS)
• Shelly Hiniker is recognized as the most appropriate point-of-contact in regard to immigration issues and related tax implications. (BS)
• Business Services needs to have more information about the particular visas that international students and scholars are coming in on – that information will help to determine things like an individual’s eligibility to work, withholding rates, and which tax treaties the University needs to follow. (BS)
• Business Services believes 3rd party billing works pretty smoothly, communication with FSSS and OIP is good. (BS)
• It is important to communicate to students to hit the “pay” button in Cyberbear! (BS)
• Fee Waivers for international students: fee waivers have a place at UM. They come into play as a recruiting tool. Maybe UM should have an international tuition rate which is higher than out of state but then fee waivers come into play. Maybe we can give $1000 waiver. Challenge is that UM is still one of the low cost institutions. (AF)
• If more resources were made available (to the graduate school) they’d be used for purposes such as enhancing collaboration for international student recruitment. The graduate school is understaffed for any duties other than admission and graduation. (GRAD)
• Some graduate programs are more efficient than others in regard to making admissions decisions. There is a “low acceptance rate” of international students even though there are a lot of applications from international students. Finances are a challenge since there are only a limited number of assistantships that are available. (GRAD)
• Business Services indicated that it would be helpful to submit sponsored programs’ billing information upfront (BS)

What opportunities exist for education abroad (study abroad, internships, field work, research, service learning)?

Units: Faculty-led Program Directors (FPD), Academic Enrichment (AE), Internship Services (IS), Office of International Programs (OIP)

Summary of findings:
• MCLL faculty-led study abroad programs: Spanish (every other year, semester-long program); German (had a semester-long program for 40 years, but spring 2014 was last program because the section doesn’t have enough faculty now. This will impact the numbers of German majors. A summer program is going to be attempted in future.); Classics (short winter-session open to all majors); Italian (program hasn’t been offered for at least 6 years.); French (used to offer a semester-long study abroad, winter-session was just offered this year.); Russian (short-term
program with some language, but it’s mostly culture; *Japanese* (no faculty-led. In past they have helped coordinate internships.) (FPD)

- UM has a partnership with IE3 Global Internships (IS)
- Academic Enrichment and Internship Services helps students identify non-UM opportunities. (AE)
- Study abroad (year, semester, summer) in over 50 countries through 2 different programs:
  - Partner Universities Programs and International Student Exchange Programs (ISEP). (OIP)
    - 60 UM partner universities 55 countries. Partner Exchange: students pay tuition to UM and room & board usually to the host institution. Partner Direct: students pay tuition, room, & board all to the host institution.
    - 162 ISEP member institutions in 55 countries. ISEP is a worldwide organization UM works with to offer international education opportunities at over. ISEP Exchange: students pay tuition and room & board costs to UM. ISEP Direct: students pay tuition, room, & board costs set by the host institution.
- UM also offers many faculty directed programs. UM Faculty take groups of students to explore specific topics while earning credit. Program costs and lengths vary depending on the location and time of year of each program. (OIP)
- Student Teaching Abroad; UM Office of Field Experiences offers International Student Teaching Opportunities through partnerships with the following: Kodaikanal International School in India; HANGZHOU NEW CENTURY FOREIGN LANGUAGE SCHOOL IN CHINA; GUIYANG NO. 4 EXPERIMENTAL PRIMARY SCHOOL IN CHINA; Indiana University Global Gateway for Teachers; Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA). (OIP)
- Global Grizzlies; An ASUM student organization based in the Davidson Honors College. The purpose of this organization is to bring aid to developing countries of the world as humanitarian ambassadors from the University of Montana. Every summer Global Grizzlies have embark on an international service learning program in which students have the opportunity to combine their classroom education with the real-world experience of a lifetime. (OIP)

What are the trends for student participation in these programs during the past five to 10 years? How many students participate? What are their destinations? How much time do they spend abroad—two weeks? A summer? A semester? A year? What is the distribution of students who engage in education abroad by gender and race/ethnicity? What is the distribution of students by discipline?

**Units:** Graduate School (GRAD); Office of International Programs (OIP); Faculty-led program directors (FPD), Office of Planning, Budget and Analysis (OPBA)

**Summary of findings:**
- Graduate School indicated that this information is not currently centrally tracked at the graduate student level. However, this is something that should be worked on in the future. (Marja’s note: Travel registration can help with this.) (GRAD)
- See Appendix B. Note: there are discrepancies between these total numbers and the numbers that were reported to OPBA in past years. The large discrepancies are mostly due to different
response patterns from faculty-led program directors and in how international internships are defined and reported. The SRAS and Student Teaching data were not included in this report. (OIP, AE, OPBA)

- See **Data Concerns section below. (AE, OPBA)

**How are students prepared for education abroad experiences—a pre-departure orientation? A specific orientation course?**

**Units:** Faculty-led Program Directors (FPD), Internship Services (IS), Office of International Programs (OIP)

**Summary of findings:**
- See Appendix A: Focus Group Report for iLab (Domestic Students with Study Abroad)
- Faculty-led programs have a variety of pre-departure structures: culture shock preparation, build group dynamics, content preparation, UM policies, risk management paperwork. This ranges from 1 meeting to a full credit-bearing course. (FPD)
- Returning: dinners, presentations, sustainability fellows have course (FPD)
- IE3 students receive an online orientation (in person if there are enough students). Non IE3 internships typically receive an orientation if they go through an organization. Orientations are extremely important to set them up for success, but there is no way to do it centrally for international internships because programs are so diverse. (IS)
- OIP Exchange Programs. Every student who goes abroad through OIP for a semester or year is required to take this course. Every student who goes abroad through OIP for summer is required to participate in a 3-hour pre-departure orientation workshop. The course covers cultural adjustment, student visas, health and safety, registration at UM and abroad, credit transfer. It includes a panel discussion and small group discussions with UM returned study abroad students and international students from those countries. The summer orientation is a condensed version of the one credit course. (OIP)
- Faculty Directed Programs: OIP conducts a health and safety orientation for most faculty directed program participants. Normally cultural preparation done by the program director. (OIP)

**To what extent does the institution integrate students into the host country? To what extent are students in “island” programs?**

**Units:** Office of International Programs (OIP), Faculty-led Program Directors (FPD), Internship Services (IS)

**Summary of findings:**
- *Partner University and ISEP programs* are full immersion programs. Students are studying like regular students on the campus of the host university. The level of students’ cultural integration is very high. Students meet local students in classes, housing facilities, at orientations, and through student activities. (OIP)
• *Faculty directed programs* are island programs so students stay as a group. The integration level to the host country is less and depends on how many opportunities has the program leader created for integration. (OIP)

• MCCL’s semester-long programs are well integrated and often have host family opportunities. (FPD)

• IE3 students are well integrated into the host country. (IS)

**What effect do education abroad students have on the home campus upon their return? Upon residence life? Upon curriculum content and classroom practice? To what extent is education abroad integrated with the curriculum on campus?**

**Units:** Student Affairs (SA), Office of International Programs (OIP), Faculty-led Program Directors (FPD), Faculty Open Forums (FAC)

**Summary of findings:**

- See Appendix A: Focus Group Report for iLab (Domestic Students with Study Abroad)
- The Global Partnership Veterans Program and the Intercultural Living Learning Community are two examples of integration. (SA)
- Some classes lend more towards students being able to interact. This seems to happen more often in activity-based classes or intramural sports. Identify classes in which students interact more, as this is where students can get to know each other and truly engage. (SA)
- Suggestion that schools and colleges have non-work study positions available which would enable international students to be hired. (SA)
- Students have an opportunity to become study abroad ambassadors or to intern for the Office of International Programs for credit. OIP’s Study Abroad section has about 10-15 active study abroad ambassadors and 5-6 interns per semester. Peer Advisor interns perform study abroad advising and Marketing and Photo and Social Media interns market study abroad especially through social media and create promotional materials. Outreach Intern arranges events to connect local students with international students. Ambassadors and interns do presentations in the dormitories about study abroad opportunities. Re-entry workshop shares how to get involved with international students on campus, including the global partners program. Faculty-directed program students are also invited to the re-entry program. (OIP)
- Model for sustainability fellows: they participate in different programs and come together to present and share about experiences. OIP could play a role in the post experience. Students are great ambassadors. (FPD)
- All faculty agreed the impact of overseas programs on the home campus is very positive. Students came back with experiences they never could have achieved at UM or elsewhere in the US. One example cited: seeing first-hand how IMF program are administered in Argentina. (FAC)
- We received little input from our faculty meeting on the impact of international program on curriculum content and classroom practice. (FAC)
- There are no majors where study abroad is required. Many majors strongly encourage it such as foreign language majors. (OIP)
What is the composition of the student body? To what extent does it affect the institution’s internationalization strategy?

Units: Foreign Student and Scholar Services (FSSS), Office of International Programs (OIP), Office of Budget, Planning and Analysis (OBPA)

Summary of findings:

- See census reports in Appendix C: Fall2012 census; Fall 2013 int’l students at UM report; Fall2014 census; Fall 14 International student report (OIP, FSSS)
- See **Data Concerns section below. (AE, OPBA)
- The internationalization strategy question wasn’t asked at any meetings. OPBA tries to stay objective and responds to demands of leadership. If leadership designates international education as a priority it will respond accordingly. (OPBA)

Does the institution collect information on the international interests, experiences, and attitudes of students? If so, how is this information used?

Units: Foreign Student and Scholar Services (FSSS)

Summary of findings:

- FSSS conducts a survey of foreign students every 2 years to determine needs and satisfaction of services. Results are analyzed and recommendations are shared with pertinent service providers. Upon completion of their studies at UM, international students complete an Exit/Departure form and are asked about their experiences during their time here. Feedback influences the type of activities and services FSSS offers to students: e.g., updating orientation programs; consulting with phone and health insurance services; recommended fieldtrips; etc. (FSSS)
- FSSS also concludes each program they offer with a short evaluation. For instance, this year FSSS revamped the whole tax return workshop. (FSSS)

What are the enrollment trends of international students? How are international students distributed among schools and colleges? Between undergraduate and graduate programs? How are international students integrated into campus life?

Units: Student Affairs (SA), Foreign Student and Scholar Services (FSSS), Office of International Programs (OIP), Faculty Open Forum (FAC)

Summary of findings:

- See census reports in Appendix C: Fall2012 census; Fall 2013 int’l students at UM report; Fall2014 census; Fall 14 International student report (OIP, FSSS)
- See **Data Concerns section below. (AE, OPBA)
- International students are paired up with U.S. students for housing. (SA)
- Events are held in dorms and throughout campus that celebrate holidays and cultural events. Resident Assistants try to give the international students a role in these events. (SA)
• Many international students work on campus. Dining Services specifically hires international students. (SA)
• There should be a campus-wide mechanism or strategy to require all students to engage in programs like the conversation partner and global partners programs. We should have an Initiative to bring our students together with international students. Force students to interact. (FAC)
• When we talk about internationalization it goes in both directions – in the classroom no one interacts with international students. We should respect our international students more and integrate their cultural experiences into their courses more. Faculty could be educated on how to integrate international students in class. (FAC)
• OIP seems to only focus on outgoing students and incoming are important too. (FAC)
• People in depts. are ignorant on how to deal with international students and faculty. (FAC)
• FSSS provides support: (FSSS)
  o Pre-Arrival and Arrival: visa information; temporary and permanent housing information; travel information to Missoula; welcome and transportation to UM from airport and bus depot; orientation programs to UM and Missoula; shuttle-van service and assistance with banking, shopping, Social Security cards, tours and socials; coordination with UM Residence Life and Curry Health Center for room check-in and immunizations; Global Partners Program (peer mentoring for new foreign students with American students); Missoula International Friendship Program (matches new foreign students with community hosts)
  o Personal Advising: academic and cultural adjustment; emergency situations; married student and dependent needs; roommate concerns; liaison with UM services such as counseling, career & academic advising etc.
  o Financial: short-term emergency loans; sources of financial aid for foreign students; budgeting and banking; financial certifications for foreign currency exchange.
  o Immigration Regulations and Federal/State/Local Laws: tracking and reporting scholar/student events through SEVIS; extension of stay; maintaining or changing visa status; on-campus and off-campus employment benefits; exchange visitor program for students and scholars; state and federal income tax laws and tax treaties; landlord/tenant rights & responsibilities; state driver’s license requirements; Social Security card application
  o Community Connections: Speakers’ Bureau (foreign students as resources in classroom and community organizations); community and cultural information (shopping, recreation, community resources); medical/health insurance information; liaison with Missoula International Friendship Program and other community organizations
  o Programming: on-going orientation on relevant topics; educational field trips to local points of interest; Winter and Summer break activities; International Culture and Food Festival; direct and on-going coordination with campus departments and community organizations or programs and activities; management of UM’s International House, an intercultural activity center; co-sponsor events with ISA & nationality clubs
**Data Concerns:**

**Units:** Academic Enrichment (AE), Office of Planning, Budget and Analysis (OPBA)

**Summary of findings:**

- **Study abroad data:** 103 student ID numbers are missing from the data which means we were not able to collect demographic data for these students. These missing numbers are mostly related to a lack of records from faculty-directed programs. OPBA indicated that even with the 790 number, there are some people they could only get partial information on. There were a very small handful who don’t actually seem to have ever been enrolled. Then there was a somewhat larger collection who appear to only ever have enrolled as CE students, and so they frequently will have registered at times that made them miss our census extracts entirely. (OBPA)

- **Kevin Hood, International Internships:** As Kevin visits with students who want to intern, work or volunteer abroad, many students elect not to get credit. Two main reasons: 1) credit is too expensive (tuition and program fee), and 2) students don’t need the credit. (AE)

- **There is currently not a way to capture service abroad, research abroad (unless it comes through as an internship through the Online Learning Agreement process).** We are capturing data for UM students taking UM credit while interning abroad using the Online Learning Agreement process through Internship Services. (AE)

- **Sometimes students go abroad taking Independent Study credit.** Tracking and differentiating, research, service, and internships, of independent study credit, can only be done through a manual process at this time. We can track independent study credit courses through Banner. We cannot track what the student has done in the independent study course through Banner. (AE)
  - Student takes independent study credit to go abroad and do service
  - Student takes independent study credit to go abroad and do research
  - Student takes independent study credit to go abroad and do an internship

- **Students get credit from another university or college while doing an internship/service/research abroad and then transfer those credits back to UM.** We don’t capture that abroad experience data, but we could, if we had a process and we decided we wanted that information. (AE)

- **We are not capturing all the data we could about how many students are going abroad and having amazing experiences.** We need to determine what data we want to collect and find the best way to capture it. Some considerations include methodology for capturing non-credit abroad experiences; abroad experiences that students bring credit back to UM with them; and abroad experiences within independent study credits. (AE)

- **OBPA is official source on data, but they work closely with OIP and FSSS on internationally-related data.** These offices worked closely to create definitions for international students and have trained Banner entry people to ensure Banner fields are being used in the correct way. (OPBA)

- **We need to work on data integrity by creating definitions that can be used to guide coding/values in Banner.** (OPBA)

- **OPBA can produce international data, but often doesn’t publish it because there might be a large discrepancy in how units/depts. “count” numbers (i.e., using paper and e-files) and what OPBA can “pull” data from Banner.** In future, OBPA will produce the official census and then OIP/FSSS will...
create a supplemental report which will include others who can’t be including in the official census (e.g., permanent residents, affiliates, scholars). (OPBA)

- International Student Affiliates aren’t in official census numbers because they aren’t necessarily enrolled in credits. We can work with the Registrar’s Office (Bonnie) to see if there’s a way to ID affiliates as international. (OPBA)

- Other data categories that could be addressed (e.g., create definitions, define values) include: study abroad, international faculty and employees, internationally-related curriculum and program/course enrollment. (OPBA)

- Without a data governance system in place, data requests are prioritized as requests are submitted. OPBA tries to stay objective and responds to demands of leadership. If leadership designates international education as a priority it will respond accordingly. (OPBA)

- Efforts are underway to create a “data governance process” and four committees have been established (IT Senate site). The governance policy should be finished late summer or early fall. (OPBA)
Appendix A
Focus Group Report for iLab (Domestic Students with Study Abroad)
(See following page)
ILab Focus Group Report: Students with study abroad experience

Jake Jorgenson, M.S.
5/12/2015
Theme 1: Study abroad is a positive experience and exceeds initial expectations

The first emergent theme is related to the overall study abroad experience for students and their motivations for participating. Overall, the experience is perceived as positive, despite the destination of study. In addition, students tend to possess a variety of reasons for participating, but they focus around personal growth and a want to see other places and cultures. Furthermore, the experience as a whole surpassed many expectations students had prior to leaving. Some students had high expectations that were met while others had no/low expectations that were exceeded. While this theme is rather general, it is important to capture the overarching feeling regarding the focus group discussion. This theme is important as participants stressed that their study abroad experience was meaningful and added to their college career. There did not seem to be any difference between countries visited and perception of the study abroad experience. All students expressed how their time spent abroad seemed to encourage personal growth. A sample of the benefits received from study abroad includes:

- Gaining new perspectives
- A sense of humility
- Expanding personal knowledge of the world
- A sense of independence

Example Quotes about their interest in study abroad:
“I wanted to become more a part of a global community.”

“I love to travel and wanted to gain a better understanding of the language.”

“I had never spent a lot of time living outside of the U.S., or Montana. I was looking to gain new perspectives.”

“I didn’t expect to learn more about another culture, but it surpassed my expectations by a long ways.”

“The best way to do it is to have no expectations and then you’re pleasantly surprised at what you learn.”

Theme 2: Perceptions vary between students on pre-trip and post-trip experiences of study abroad programs

Pre-trip experience:
One area discussed in-depth during the focus group was the pre-trip planning process that accompanies a student traveling to study abroad. Students were asked to describe their preparation they received and how faculty members/student advisors influenced their choice of studying abroad.
Pre-trip experiences include course registration, logistics, and overall preparation prior to leaving the U.S. One emerging aspect was that the structure of the study abroad program appears to influence the perception of the pre-trip experience. Students who participated in a faculty-led program perceive the pre-trip experience as “easy” where logistics are taken care of for them. The only negative comment is that students on faculty-led trips would have enjoyed more “freedom” in regards to the types of activities they participated in.

Students who participated in self-led programs have divergent views. Overall, their pre-trip experiences in relation to planning, course registration, and logistics took more effort by the students. They discussed in detail about the additional steps necessary when a student is traveling by themselves to a foreign country. While the study abroad office and institutions dedicated to study abroad were indicated as “very helpful” by all, many students still ran into unexpected issues (finding their way once in country; foreign visas; contacting host university) that were potentially stressful. Specifically, obtaining visas to travel abroad was mentioned as a difficult task. One student had issues with obtaining a student visa to their foreign country. These issues persisted until time of departure. This is reaffirmed by at least two others who ran into similar problems prior to leaving, albeit separate countries. Furthermore, some students feel a lack of support from their academic advisors to study abroad. One student in pre-med stated their advisor was “discouraging” because they may not graduate on-time.

More examples of pre-trip experience include:

- Students felt the on-campus services were extremely helpful
- Many students ran into logistical problems (e.g. finding their university once in-country, language barriers) upon entering the country
- Certain academic advisors in time-sensitive programs were discouraging for studying abroad
- Students felt it was easy to find a program that interested them

Example Quotes from faculty-led programs:
“We rented out a room where the students spoke English. We had classes at the university and it was like being back at UM. It was nice.”

“My program was faculty-led so we had our activities and everything set up when we got there.”

“I didn’t really have to do anything before leaving. Our faculty member had quite a bit of it figured out already.”

Example Quotes from non-faculty led programs:
“The biggest help for me was people at my host university because visas [this country] were very hard to get. I had to have the embassy phone number and there were many issues trying to get them to issue my visa on time.”

“These faculty-led programs, there are fliers all over the place. The faculty is the advocate for the program! The ones where you chose the country and the school and you’re like “I’m going!” But there’s a lot more that you have to do on your own end and then you’re the only advocate.”

“No professor along the way really helped me, but it was fine. My program was like “alright do what you want”.”

Post-trip experiences:
The format of the study abroad program does not seem to affect the post-trip experience. Post-trip experiences were discussed as participation in international events in Missoula, academic readjustment, and credit transferring. The overall shared feeling is that students “wanted to go back” or “stay longer than before”. In some cases, the students returned back to UM and soon after enrolled in another study abroad program. Most students in the focus group had recently returned and were still in the process of transitioning back to UM and the U.S. in general. In addition, many students shared that they will return to their country of study at some point in the future. As for inclusion in local, international events, many students feel a responsibility to advocate once they returned home. Thus, they continually seek out international events that may relate to their country of study. They feel more comfortable interacting with international students and want to help others who share the same interests to study abroad.

Overall, the post-trip experience was overwhelmingly positive, except for one primary issue. Credit transfers, for students that attended a university, appear to be a problem for many. One student stated they completed a course at the foreign college that was worth five credits, whereas UM only honored the course as 2.5 credits. Thus, this forced the student to attend an additional semester at UM and ultimately delayed graduation. Similar stories were brought up by four to five other students as well. In fact, almost all students who attempted to transfer credits ran into problems once they returned to UM.

Additional examples of post-trip experience include:

- A desire to help new students find study abroad programs
- Share their experience with other potential study abroad participants
- Students felt a connection to the place they studied and wished to return

Example Quotes:
- “I had met other international students that influenced me to want to study abroad where they were from.”
- “We have an expiration date (e.g. graduation) for when we leave. We have to become the advocate for the entire country to study abroad at once we get back.”
- “I wish I stayed longer. I wish I was still there.”

Theme 3: Becoming Globally Competent through Study Abroad

One desired outcome of many study abroad programs is to produce more “globally competent” or internationally aware students. Becoming globally competent is stressed both in the classroom in the U.S. and appears to be strengthened through a study abroad experience. Students were asked to describe the traits of a “globally competent” university student. They were not given an official definition of “globally competent” and were asked to define the term on their own. Student responses generated the following traits:

- Open minded,
- Respectful of other cultures
- Willing to learn about other countries/traditions/ways of life
- Knowledge or initiative to learn a foreign language
It appears as though the students may have possessed these traits before their trip. They note that some students thought “they were there to party and have fun”, which is resented by those interested in learning about the area. Although social gatherings are important for integration into local culture, it’s stressed that it should not be the primary interest of abroad students.

Example Quotes:
“I think open mindedness is the best trait. When I got there, many of the American students were somewhat cliquish and kept to themselves. They didn’t want to assimilate with the locals which kind of annoyed me.”

“The ideal globally aware student would be respectful of all cultures. Not just being open-minded, but being respectful of their traditions and their culture.”

“It’s great to be proud of your own country, but realize that other countries are great too and they are just as proud.”

“I saw one student who went in with the opinion of “America’s the best”. He went on study abroad and had a totally different perspective when he returned. He actually apologized once he came back and said how he now saw how wrong he was.”

“Learning a language is an important part of being globally aware. We need to make a push to require foreign languages even more. I think at a liberal arts institution that wants to create global leaders, we need to have a mandatory foreign language requirement.”

**Theme 4: Preparing students for global experiences**

A final key theme revolves around a long discussion about the preparation students receive prior to traveling abroad. This discussion was different than their “pre-trip experience”, but it is more so related to orientation that the students are required to attend prior to leaving. Essentially, the focus group had a split opinion on whether the orientation was too in-depth, lacking in some areas, or necessary for all students. In part, there was debate whether required orientations decreased the likelihood of becoming globally aware. Two viewpoints are presented: students who thought the orientation was too much and those who thought it was needed and necessary for all students.

Roughly half of the students in the focus group thought that the orientation they received “took the learning away” from the student. They state “on-the-ground experience” should be necessary for all students. Many believe that students should take personal initiative to be aware of what is needed to live and travel in a new country. They further stress that the orientation would better prepare them to become globally competent if there was a more specialized focus on the country they were traveling to at the time, instead of a broad general orientation. For instance, the students stated that they would have been more prepared to adapt to cultural norms if more in-depth discussion was had with them from either a native of the area or someone who visited the same region.

Example Quotes:
“I think it was overkill. Meeting once a week for a semester seems to be a bit much. When we did it was a 5 hour meeting in the U.C. and two different sessions. I think that’s fine, but a lot of the things they talk about, “this is what you should be aware of; this is what you shouldn’t eat.” That’s good, but I think we need to focus on our specific countries instead of “don’t go into the world and get hurt.””
One student said they “totally agreed” with this statement afterwards.

“If you have more an individualized approach (to orientation), that would be great. I googled my university, turns out it wasn’t the right university. I walked around forever asking if they spoke English. I wasn’t aware of these country-specific things.”

On the other hand, some students thought the required orientation is necessary and better prepares all study abroad students, regardless of previous comfort levels. While they perceived themselves as not needing this extra preparation, they saw the value it provided to the larger whole. However, they still did note that having specialized sessions where the student gets an “in-depth” look at the country they are visiting would be helpful.

Example Quotes:
“Our preparation (orientation) was kind of the perfect, happy medium.”

“People have varying levels of being able to deal with these things themselves. Some people may need it.”

“Here’s what I found out about American students, we, on average, don’t know jack about other countries. More importantly, we don’t take the initiative to learn it... No one takes their own initiative.”

Findings Discussion and Recommendations

The focus group of students who have study abroad experience provided useful and interesting information regarding their experiences, the preparation they receive, and the outcomes upon returning. I want to stress again that the group felt that the abroad experience was overwhelmingly positive. There were a few key areas that may need some attention, but this cannot be generalized to the entire study abroad population. The experience tends to differ between those who participated in a faculty-led program versus those who chose to do a long-term stay, but only before traveling abroad. It appears those who were abroad for at least one semester had to adapt to situations that they did not expect, but felt these events encourage personal growth.

In regards to pre-trip planning, the study abroad office and program advocates appear to be extremely useful for students looking to study abroad. Awareness of study abroad programs came from multiple sources: in-class visits, UM websites, and other students. Those who were specialized in assisting potential study abroad students are intricate in relieving stress and helping students. At the same time, there are differences in the ways students perceive the orientation process. This may need to be further looked at to understand if alternative orientation options are available for some students.

The post-trip experience is difficult to sum up in one phrase because many participants are just beginning that process. Students feel a responsibility to become advocates for their specific program and enjoy sharing their experiences with others who were interested. However, there are issues with many who were in the process of transferring their credits back to UM. This may need to be an area that needs to be considered on a campus-wide level and specific to certain programs.

Finally, study abroad experiences appear to help achieve the goal of global competency. Students feel “humbled” by their time spent in foreign countries and found new respect for other cultures. There may be a segment of the study abroad population that do not have these same goals and
see the experience as a “long-term vacation”. It again was stressed that this did take away from their experience to some degree.

Recommendations

- Consider providing more specialized orientations for specific countries. Students want to talk about the country they have chosen to visit.

- Continue to encourage returning students to advocate for their program and share their stories with potential participants.

- Consider reevaluating credit transfers in order to avoid delayed graduation dates.

- Streamline the planning process for students who may feel comfortable traveling to foreign countries while still providing in-depth information for those who may need extra assistance.

- Encourage faculty from departments that do not advocate for study abroad to become more involved and accepting. Despite the student’s major degree program, benefits are found by choosing to study abroad.

- Continue to push foreign language programs as a necessary requirement as it benefits students who wish to visit other countries.

- Institutions that specialize in assisting study abroad participants are doing excellent work and should continue to aid students who are in need of help.
Appendix B
5-YR OVERVIEW EDUCATION ABROAD STUDENT NUMBERS

(See following page)
## 5-YR OVERVIEW EDUCATION ABROAD STUDENT NUMBERS

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Appendix C
Fall 2012 Census; Fall 2013 International Students at UM Report; Fall 2014 Census; Fall 2014 International Student Report

(See following page)