

MOVING THE NEEDLE:

Leveraging Innovation for Institutional Change in Study Abroad

NAFSA

Association of
International Educators

© 2016 NAFSA: Association of International Educators, Washington, D.C.
All rights reserved.

This publication is available on the NAFSA website at www.nafsa.org/publications.

MOVING THE NEEDLE:

Leveraging Innovation for Institutional Change in Study Abroad

May 2016



Contents

Acknowledgments	iv
Executive Summary	1
Introduction	3
Moving Toward Study Abroad	5
<i>Prefunding Benefits: Partnership and Resource Development</i>	5
<i>Grant Funding Impacts: Engagement and Innovation</i>	8
<i>Postfunding Outcomes: Integration and Sustainability</i>	11
Conclusion	16
Methods and Study Design	19

Acknowledgments

NAFSA: Association of International Educators is grateful for the cooperation of the many people who assisted in the planning, design, and production of this report. In particular, we would like to acknowledge the support of Partners of the Americas, the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities, the Embassy of France, and the US-China Education Trust (USCET) for their partnership with NAFSA in administering the Innovation Grant competitions described in this report.

NAFSA expresses sincere appreciation to Jaime Lester, PhD, the principal investigator and author, whose extensive

background in organizational change and leadership in higher education was instrumental to this report, and Mark Farmer, NAFSA's director of higher education and public policy, who served as the project lead and provided substantive expertise on the Innovation Grant programs.

NAFSA would also like to thank the individuals at the colleges and universities who generously shared their stories and feedback on the impact of the grants on their institutions, as well as Jill Welch, Lisa Rosenberg, Rebecca Morgan, and Carrie Klein for the constructive guidance, advice, and edits offered throughout the project.

Executive Summary

PURPOSE OF STUDY

NAFSA: Association of International Educators commissioned a study to evaluate the impact of certain institutional grant programs on the support, reach, and sustainability of study abroad at higher education institutions. These grants, termed “Innovation Grants,” are designed to help institutions of higher education address the institutional, curricular, and cultural barriers that are keeping students from studying abroad.

RESULTS

The analysis found that these Innovation Grants can lead to sustainable increases in study abroad by providing institutions with incentives to develop the structures and programs necessary for long-term investment and support for study abroad. Institutions that were awarded Innovation Grants reported an increase in the number and diversity of students studying abroad, greater support for study abroad activities from campus leadership, and new and strengthened relationships across campus. The report found that these benefits occurred in three distinct phases—grant development, grant funding, and, importantly, postfunding, where the impact of the grants proved to be lasting and sustainable.

Proven Benefits During the Grant Development Stage

Moving the Needle: Leveraging Innovation for Institutional Change in Study Abroad determined that the development of institutional grant proposals served as a platform for study abroad administrators to build relationships and increase support for study abroad throughout the institution. In addition, evidence proved that some institutions that did not receive grant funding nevertheless increased their support for study abroad. Nine out of 10 respondents said that support from campus leadership was “extremely or very important”

to the success of study abroad activities. This university-wide support can be critical for removing the recognized barriers for students to study abroad. Regardless of eventual funding status, institutions reported that they experienced immediate benefits as a result of applying for the Innovation Grants, including:

- Establishing engaged collaborative groups;
- Increasing support for study abroad; and
- Developing and enriching external partnerships.

The data show that the grant development process helped to move the conversation from a general sense of support for study abroad to actual commitments of financial resources.

Proven Benefits During the Grant Funding Stage

As a result of receiving funding, recipients of Innovation Grants saw institutional benefits that extend further than just the specific program or project that was funded by the grant. Examples of progress toward systemic growth and sustainability in study abroad include:

- Establishing and growing new study abroad programs;
- Developing study abroad infrastructure;
- Engaging new student populations and developing study abroad in diverse academic majors;
- Engaging new faculty and campus leaders; and
- Elevating the profile and prestige of study abroad.

Importantly, the receipt of a relatively small grant resulted in the creation of new study abroad programs or growth in existing programs. Ninety-six percent of respondents reported that new student populations studied abroad because of the grant, and every respondent indicated that the grants created or strengthened university partnerships for study abroad.

Positive and Sustainable Postfunding Outcomes

An overwhelming majority (more than 85 percent) of the institutions noted that study abroad continued to expand after completion of the grant, indicating that benefits are sustainable even after grant funding has ended. Sustainable outcomes included:

- The continuation of institutional funding and grant activities;
- The development of internal collaborations, leadership support, and external partnerships; and
- Lasting curricular changes and models.

In more than half of the funded institutions, institutional funding continued after the grant was completed, regardless of the type of matching funds provided by the institution—student scholarships, staff or faculty time, or resources for study abroad programs or infrastructure. More than two-thirds of survey respondents said that “the grant helped to develop policies that encourage students to study abroad.”

Not surprisingly, institutions with existing resources for study abroad demonstrated good results in sustaining study abroad participation beyond the life of the grant; however, this does not suggest that sustainability is not possible for less well-funded institutions. Along with financial resources, Innovation Grants were found to provide other benefits, including the integration of study abroad into new curriculum and majors, new internal collaborations and external partners, and new policies and infrastructure to support study abroad.

HISTORY OF THE INNOVATION GRANT MODEL

Innovation Grants were developed to provide opportunities and incentives for higher education institutions to sustainably increase study abroad. The grants are based on the recommendations of the 2003 Strategic Task Force on Education Abroad and the subsequent Commission on the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Fellowship Program. The task force determined

that in order to increase study abroad it would be necessary to incentivize colleges and universities to remove the institutional barriers preventing their students from studying abroad, and the Lincoln Commission advocated for a new national study abroad program that would primarily target higher education institutions, rather than individual students. Over the past six years, NAFSA has worked with three different administration initiatives to pilot Innovation Grant programs. This report analyzes the results of grants given by those programs and argues that they can be an effective motivator to encourage a more long-term investment in study abroad.

CONCLUSION

Far too few students have the opportunity for a meaningful international experience in college. For decades, the percentage of U.S. college students studying abroad for any length of time has remained around 1 percent of total U.S. college student enrollment.

To close this international education gap, higher education institutions must work hand in hand with the government and the private sector to break down the barriers that are keeping students from studying abroad and ensure that many more students have the opportunity and resources to study abroad within their field of study.

Moving the Needle: Leveraging Innovation for Institutional Change in Study Abroad demonstrates that even relatively small, one-year institutional grants can help push an institution to make a more long-term investment in study abroad. This study suggests that it is this increased investment in study abroad from the institution that will lead to lasting change. NAFSA looks forward to continuing to work with the U.S. government, the private sector, and colleges and universities to ensure that U.S. students have the opportunity to study abroad and gain the critical global knowledge and skills that they will need to be competitive in the twenty-first century’s interconnected world.

Introduction

In 2003, NAFSA: Association of International Educators convened a Strategic Task Force on Education Abroad to provide recommendations on how to address the deficit in global competence that was becoming increasingly evident at the turn of the century.¹ The task force warned that Americans' lack of knowledge about the world posed "a national liability" and found that the primary barriers to study abroad are not merely financial, but rather are the result of a lack of focus on and commitment to study abroad by higher education institutions. It proposed a national effort to promote study abroad that included specific recommendations for the federal and state government, colleges and universities, the private sector, and professional licensing and accrediting agencies. The following year, the U.S. Congress took up this effort and formed a bipartisan federal commission to study and recommend how to dramatically increase study abroad participation and to diversify destinations and participants.

The Commission on the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Fellowship Program released its recommendations in November 2005 and set an ambitious goal of sending 1 million students abroad annually by 2016–17 (10 years after the release of the report).² This bold goal represented a four-fold increase in the number of students who would study abroad annually, and would result in at least half of all college students graduating with knowledge of another world area and culture through study abroad. Following the findings of the Strategic Task Force on Education Abroad, the commission's final report proposed a new national

study abroad grant program that would primarily target higher education institutions, rather than individual students, in order to incentivize colleges and universities to remove the institutional barriers preventing their students from studying abroad. Federal legislation, the Senator Paul Simon Study Abroad Act,³ has since been introduced in multiple congresses to enact such a program.

When U.S. President Barack Obama was elected in 2008, his administration prioritized education diplomacy as a vital national security and foreign policy tool and announced a series of initiatives to increase academic exchange between the United States and different regions of the world. Starting in 2010,

NAFSA has worked with three different administration initiatives to enact a version of the Senator Paul Simon Study Abroad Program to test the idea that higher education institutions can be incentivized to increase their commitment to study abroad through institutional Innovation Grants.

NAFSA has worked with three different administration initiatives to enact a version of the Senator Paul Simon Study Abroad Program—100,000 Strong China, 100,000 Strong in the Americas, and the Transatlantic Friendship and Mobility Initiative—to test the idea that higher education institutions can be incentivized to increase their commitment to study abroad through institutional Innovation Grants.

100,000 Strong China: In 2010, NAFSA partnered with the US-China Education Trust to facilitate the Student Leaders Exchange Program. This program provided four \$20,000 grants to higher education institutions throughout the United States.

1 Strategic Task Force on Education Abroad. 2003. *Securing America's Future: Global Education for a Global Age*. Washington, D.C.: NAFSA: Association of International Educators. www.nafsa.org/securingamericasfuture.

2 Commission on the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Fellowship Program. 2005. *Global Competency and National Needs: One Million Americans Studying Abroad*. Washington, D.C.: Commission on the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Fellowship Program. www.nafsa.org/lincolncommission.

3 www.nafsa.org/simon

100,000 Strong in the Americas: Following the success of the USCET Student Leaders Exchange Program, NAFSA partnered with Partners of the Americas, the U.S. State Department, and the White House to create the 100,000 Strong in the Americas Innovation Fund. The Innovation Fund is an ongoing public-private partnership to raise money primarily from the private

This report demonstrates that Innovation Grants can increase the number and diversity of students studying abroad.

sector to provide Innovation Grants to higher education institutions throughout the United States, Latin America, the Caribbean, and Canada. The Innovation Fund has awarded nearly \$2 million in grants to 70 institutions throughout the Americas, and has commitments to run additional grant competitions at least through 2017.

The Transatlantic Friendship and Mobility Initiative:

This initiative was announced by the United States and France in 2014 and represents a commitment to

double the number of students studying abroad to both countries by 2025. NAFSA has partnered with the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities and the Embassy of France to implement the Partnership for Innovation and Collaboration in Study Abroad grant program, which awarded four grants in 2014 and seven grants in 2015.

Through all three programs, the Innovation Grants have been relatively small, one-time grants ranging in size from \$20,000 to \$60,000, and were designed to encourage universities and colleges to leverage the promise of grant funding in order to secure institutional funding, to change institutional practices and culture, and to increase support and momentum for study abroad across campus.

Moving the Needle demonstrates that Innovation Grants can increase the number and diversity of students studying abroad, lead to greater support for study abroad activities from campus leadership, and create new and strengthen existing relationships across campus.

Moving Toward Study Abroad

During the 2013–14 academic year, only 1.6 percent of U.S. college students studied abroad for any length of time.⁴ For a variety of reasons, colleges and universities have erected barriers, often unknowingly, that are keeping their students from participating in this increasingly valuable educational experience.

This international educational divide is detrimental to the national and economic security of the United States. The cross-cultural understanding that results from study abroad makes us better able to persuade, negotiate, and partner with others on the common goal of a safer world. Study abroad is equally important for our economic security. Ninety-five percent of the world's consumers live outside of the United States. Without cross-cultural literacy, we limit our ability to compete in the global marketplace and will lose out to other countries who put a premium on learning the language and culture of global consumers.

Unfortunately, many higher education institutions have not prioritized study abroad, and as a result they have neither provided the necessary resources nor enacted policies that encourage students to pursue part of their education overseas. Because our education system is highly decentralized, it is a challenge for policymakers in the United States to determine how best to influence higher education institutions to advance study abroad. The Innovation Grants described above are designed to encourage institutions to increase their commitment to study abroad not just by funding specific projects, but also by empowering champions on campus to build relationships, increase resources, and embed study abroad into the curriculum across academic fields and departments. The grants aim to create long-term, sustainable change that will lead to greater access to

study abroad opportunities and broader exposure to international education for all students.

When surveying the outcome of the Innovation Grant process, we found that there were positive benefits for institutions during three distinct phases: first, during the development of the grant proposal; second, while implementing the grant activities; and finally, as a result of the policies, programs, and infrastructure that the grant activities left behind. Each of these phases provided unique opportunities to increase the emphasis on study abroad across campus, create or strengthen internal and external partnerships, and eventually support new study abroad programs. Importantly, many of the elements of the grant-funded activities were sustainable even after the grant period ended, identifying the promise of Innovation Grants at institutions of higher education.

Prefunding Benefits: Partnership and Resource Development

It is natural to assume that the positive impact of Innovation Grants on study abroad would come as a result of winning and implementing a grant. However, we found that the act of simply applying for the grant resulted in many benefits for the institution. This finding substantiates one of the assumptions made by the Lincoln Commission: in order to grow study abroad exponentially rather than incrementally, it is best to create competition among higher education institutions for grants, rather than issuing scholarships from a central agency to individual students. The commission believed that the conversations and planning required to apply for a grant would cause some campuses to follow through on their plans to facilitate study abroad for students, even if they did not win the grant award. Interview respondents consistently indicated that

⁴ Institute of International Education. 2015. "Host Regions and Destinations of U.S. Study Abroad Students, 2012/13 - 2013/14." In *Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange*. New York: Institute of International Education. Retrieved from www.iie.org/opendoors.

reviewing a request for proposals and the subsequent grant development provided an opportunity to elevate the conversation about study abroad across campus, particularly with campus leadership. Grant development served as a platform to introduce or deepen collaborations with or across academic departments. Regardless of eventual funding status, all institutions reported that they experienced the immediate benefits reaped through the process of applying for the Innovation Grants, including:

- Establishing engaged collaborative groups;
- Increasing support for study abroad; and
- Developing and enriching external partnerships.

ESTABLISHING ENGAGED COLLABORATIVE GROUPS

Survey and interview responses from the funded institutions identified a deep, collaborative commitment to study abroad, attributable to the opportunity to engage with other interested groups via the grant development process. At each institution, representatives from faculty groups, campus administrators, and international education professionals engaged in grant development. In addition, the respondents indicated that a diverse constituent group ranging from faculty to college deans to campus presidents advocated for the grant application. This diversity speaks to the range of individuals involved in both the grant process and in study abroad, generally, and the subsequent opportunities for collaboration with interested parties on their campuses.

The need for engagement from across campus constituent groups was consistently noted as essential both for successful grant development and for future study abroad programs. Study abroad requires support at multiple levels of the institution and connections among multiple stakeholders. Having collaboration, advocacy, and support during grant development can assist the long-term success of the study abroad programs.

Even for those institutions that did not receive funding, the opportunity to engage in the grant development and

application process proved to have a lasting impact. One survey respondent explained that an unanticipated benefit of the grant application process was that, “It help[ed] to bring together faculty and staff to mobilize potential opportunities and to forge some new relationships” including “cross-campus collaboration between [the] school of education and arts and science and the campus

The grant development process helped to move the conversation from a general sense of support for study abroad to actual commitments of financial resources.

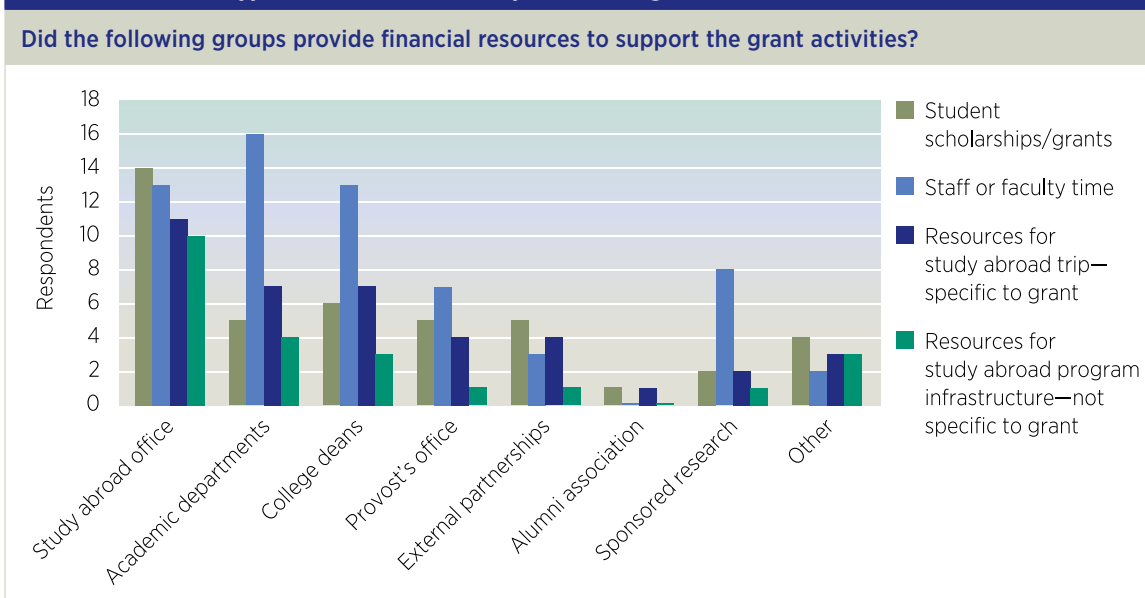
international office.” Participation in the grant application process, regardless of outcome, can help improve partnerships, connections, and support of study abroad and internationalization efforts on campus. Further, these improved collaborations are often connected with improved resources related to study abroad initiatives.

INCREASING FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Another indication of the commitment to and engagement in study abroad development is demonstrated by the financial resources provided to support the study abroad activities outlined in the grant proposal. The grant development process helped to move the conversation from a general sense of support for study abroad to actual commitments of financial resources. When asked which groups provided financial resources to support the grant, the responses noted high levels of support from the study abroad office, of course, but also from college deans and academic departments and some support from the provost’s office (see Figure 1, page 7), signaling an intentional commitment by the broader campus community to create or expand study abroad experiences and integrate them into curricula.

In the category of “other,” respondents noted a wide range of groups, including the president’s office, the Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity, the Office of Global Initiatives, career development offices, and donors that were willing to support grant activities.

FIGURE 1 Level of type of financial resources provided for grant activities



The diverse source of resources suggests that grant development provided a forum for increased collaboration, and a way to show financial support through means such as student scholarships, faculty release time from teaching, or staff time dedicated to the specific project. One interview participant explained how the process of developing the grant helped to secure funds: “I can say, I have a very good chance of bringing in \$20,000 external dollars if you give me the matching funds and additional support. Then, I can promote the program and make my proposal really convincing.”

Of those institutions that did not receive grant funding, one-third nonetheless continued to develop the study abroad program, with at least one of the institutions securing additional institutional funds to implement the proposal for increasing study abroad. Securing a commitment of financial support in the grant-writing

Of those institutions that did not receive grant funding, one-third nonetheless continued to develop the study abroad program.

process, while not guaranteed if the institution is not awarded the grant, does have the potential to create awareness of study abroad opportunities and the possibility of financial support for projects regardless of

the external funding status. One survey respondent that did not receive funds noted that, having been through the grant development process, there was a greater awareness at his institution of the need for programs in South America. Another respondent stated that his institution did move forward with the project on a smaller scale, despite not being funded.

DEVELOPING AND ENRICHING EXTERNAL PARTNERSHIPS

External partnerships were also part of the grant development process and were viewed as crucial to the success of study abroad programs and internationalization. In some cases, new partnerships were created, and in others, existing partnerships continued to thrive or grow as a consequence of the coordination required to develop and submit the grant proposal.

For example, two of the institutions that did not receive funding noted that the grant development process still led to new opportunities with their international partners. They described continued interactions with graduate students at one external partner institution and travel to the college of agricultural sciences of another institution to explore semester-long opportunities for dual-degree graduate programs.

The opportunities created by the request for proposals and grant development catalyzed or deepened new or existing collaborations and partnerships, both internal and external to the campus. Study abroad professionals, faculty, and campus leaders were able to explore new areas of focus that would seem difficult without the potential for financial support or for a platform to begin dialogue with new partners and groups at the institution. Securing the funding did guarantee that the project would move forward and the institutions would experience additional benefits described in the next section; however, even without that guarantee, institutions that participated in the application process still reaped substantial and important benefits.

Grant Funding Impacts: Engagement and Innovation

As a result of the funding, recipients of Innovation Grants saw institutional benefits that reach further than just the specific program or project that was funded by the grant, creating progress toward systemic growth and sustainability in study abroad.

These positive impacts of the grants include:

- Establishing and growing new study abroad programs;
- Developing study abroad infrastructure;
- Engaging new student populations and developing study abroad in diverse academic majors;
- Engaging new faculty and campus leaders; and
- Elevating the profile and prestige of study abroad.

Some of the immediate benefits of implementing the grant continued well after the grant was completed. In other cases, such as student scholarships, the benefits were strongest during the grant period when funding was allotted specifically for that purpose. Regardless of duration, core to all of these benefits is the opportunity the grant funding provided the institutions to better engage its stakeholders, partners, and participants in innovative study abroad and internationalization opportunities.

ESTABLISHING AND GROWING STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS

The most prevalent impact of the grants was the creation of new study abroad programs or growth in existing programs. For each funded institution, the grant funds and the matching institutional support generated new opportunities for students to learn abroad that would not exist otherwise. For example, as a result of the grant, one institution, with little institutional funding and support for study abroad, was able to increase the number of students that went to Peru. Prior to receiving the grant, the college sent a small number of students to Peru for a one-time program. To make the program sustainable, the college needed to build on the partnerships and develop a stronger infrastructure around the program. During

For each funded institution, the grant funds and the matching institutional support generated new opportunities for students to learn abroad that would not exist otherwise.

the interview, the primary applicant said: “We used [the grant] to help us build that infrastructure.” This incredible opportunity was due, in large part, to the integration of partnerships and financial resources made possible via grant participation.

Several other institutions used the grant opportunity to explore new models for study abroad at their institutions, recognizing that student populations and needs are changing. Their students are increasingly interested in shorter-term, credit-bearing programs and in more research-intensive study abroad experiences that can help with graduation, graduate school applications, or résumé building. To address these needs, one institution developed a shorter-term study abroad opportunity that was directly connected to individual faculty research projects in partnership with the office of undergraduate research opportunities.

In another example, an institution created a new curricular model in which, during a 10-month-long study abroad program in France, the students would

participate in research, receive a diploma, and produce a paper that would have the possibility of being published. The extra month—one month more than a typical academic year—assisted students in getting acclimated to the new university. The program included the study abroad office, an interdisciplinary degree program, a foreign language academic department, and the undergraduate research office. Collaboration among all of these units helped to facilitate each of the innovative aspects of the program, from receiving degree credit for courses to language acquisition to working with faculty on a research project.

Importantly, the grant funds helped “test out” more experimental programs and provided examples of new successful models to promote to campus leadership and other academic programs. Several participants stated that without the grant, the new models would not be possible because the institution and, in some cases, the study abroad offices, were either reluctant or did not have the funds to dedicate to the more experimental models that were made possible via the grant funds. Further, the grant also allowed these experimental models to be experienced by a broader range of students than previous programs.

DEVELOPING STUDY ABROAD INFRASTRUCTURE

The development of study abroad program infrastructure was also noted as a key benefit of grant funding. More than two-thirds of survey respondents said that “the grant helped to develop policies that encourage students to study abroad.” Those policies are likely to last beyond the grant period, supporting growth in study abroad in the future.

Several of the institutions either directly used grant funds or leveraged institutional matching funds to support infrastructure. Funds were used, for example, for short-term, part-time positions to develop documents and draft policies for study abroad. In the open-ended responses on the survey, one participant explained: “The grant provided justification for hiring a graduate

assistant (GA) for the study abroad office, and, once we had the position, it was not hard to justify why we needed to maintain it. It started as a nine-month GA

Importantly, the grant funds helped “test out” more experimental programs and provided examples of new successful models to promote to campus leadership and other academic programs.

and is now a 12-month GA. This was by far the greatest outcome of the grant for us.” At several institutions, short-term positions were eventually converted to full-time, permanent positions providing ongoing support for study abroad on that campus. Similarly, another participant noted the impact of infrastructure in terms of policy: “Our legal team drafted a smart policy for travel to countries with travel warnings.”

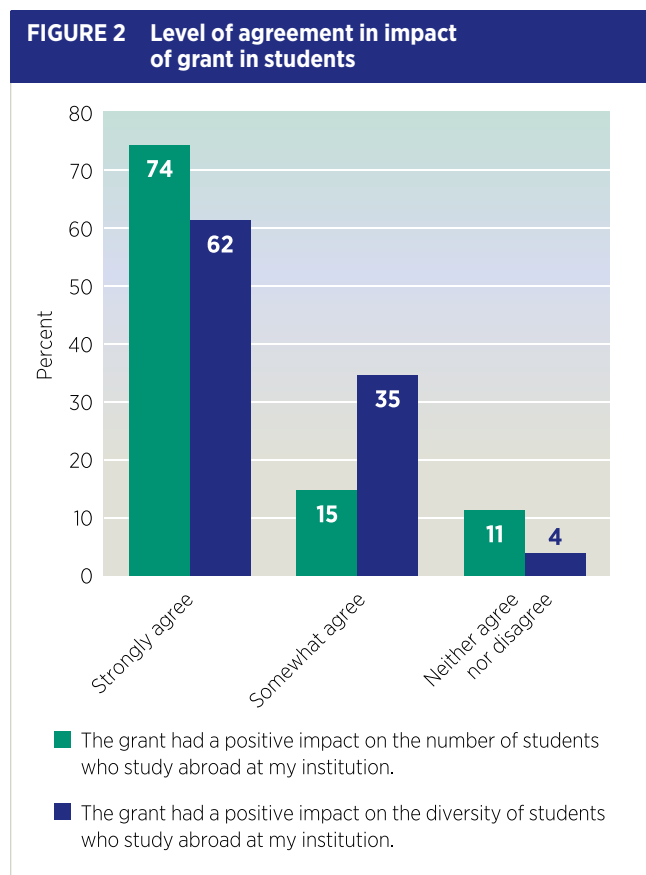
Other institutions developed marketing materials to build and maintain student demand. As noted under the Postfunding Outcomes section, developing infrastructure is an important mechanism to ensure the future expansion of study abroad.

ENGAGING NEW STUDENT POPULATIONS AND DEVELOPING STUDY ABROAD IN DIVERSE ACADEMIC MAJORS

The grants helped to diversify study abroad participation. This is a particularly important finding because as the demographics of students in higher education have shifted overall, study abroad participation remains primarily for a privileged few.⁵ The vast majority of the institutions responding to our survey indicated that a major benefit of the grants was the opportunity to engage new and more diverse groups of students in study abroad. Ninety percent of survey respondents *strongly agree* or *somewhat agree* with the statement that, “More students are interested in studying abroad due to the grant.” An even larger percentage, 96 percent, indicated that they *strongly agree* or

⁵ www.nafsa.org/whostudiesabroad

somewhat agree that, “New student populations studied abroad due to the grant funding.” Corroborating these statements, nearly every institution agreed that the grant had a positive impact on the number and diversity of students going abroad (see Figure 2). Note that no institution indicated that they *somewhat disagree* or *strongly disagree* with these statements.



Newly engaged diverse student populations included students from lower-income populations, historically underrepresented racial/ethnic groups, and students in specific majors previously under- or unrepresented in study abroad programs. Several institutions that serve students from lower-income populations noted the difficulty in recruiting students without the financial means to spend additional funds on study abroad. A participant explained: “Enough money has to be available to subsidize the full cost for students who work nearly full-time to pay their way through school. They lose their jobs when they do study abroad and lose that income during the time away and after they

return.” To help defray any additional costs and to make up for potential lost income, many of the institutions used funds for student scholarships to reduce the cost of the study abroad trips to just a fraction of the total cost. And remarkably, a majority of institutions that offered student scholarships or grants as part of their matching funds continued to offer those scholarships after the grant funding expired (see Figure 3, page 12).

In addition to engaging underserved students, the grants allowed for more multidisciplinary collaborations that engaged students in science and engineering degrees. Many of the grantees focused their efforts on new study abroad programs in areas that have rigid degree requirements and, on some campuses, less awareness of the value of study abroad. One survey participant noted that one of the benefits of the grant was that, “New student audiences were identified in engineering that had previously not been noticed.”

Many academic majors are governed by accreditation groups that have established degree requirements (e.g., engineering, nursing, and teaching). While important to these areas of study, these requirements can create rigid curricula with few opportunities for student choice in the form of course electives or substitutions, often preventing students in those majors from being able to take advantage of educational opportunities abroad. The interview participants noted that they targeted these sorts of degree programs, particularly teacher education, nursing, and engineering, and used grant funds to develop academic credit-bearing study abroad activities in these majors. For example, one of the institutions that developed multidisciplinary courses in engineering had to get support from individual department chairs. The participant explains: “Usually our engineering students, because of the curricula, can only take 1-2 courses that are not part of their major. It is very challenging for engineering students to take some of the [study abroad] courses. We have to talk to all the [department] chairs . . . to let the engineering students travel abroad.” The grant helped the institution get buy-in from the department chairs to make it easier for engineering students to study abroad.

Establishing study abroad programs in these majors required the engagement and education of academic advisers and faculty on ways to create credit-bearing study abroad activities. A highly beneficial outcome of the grant was the platform to educate individuals and units across campus on study abroad and, in some cases, to create successful programs that can serve as models to other academic majors in similar disciplines. This education extended to campus leaders and, as a result, increased their interest in and support of study abroad and internationalization.

ENGAGING FACULTY AND CAMPUS LEADERS

The grant award also led to increased engagement by faculty and campus administrators who may otherwise not have been engaged in study abroad. As noted above, during grant development, faculty and study abroad professionals reached out to college deans for financial support for matching funds or faculty release time. After the grant was awarded, faculty reached out across

An overwhelming majority (more than 85 percent) of the institutions noted that study abroad continued to expand after completion of the grant.

colleges to find other faculty partners to create more multidisciplinary programs. For example, one institution's study abroad office engaged all engineering departments to educate the department chairs about the need for students to engage in sustainability-related issues connected to courses with academic credit while abroad. Another institution was able to engage a dozen faculty in study abroad to China: "We . . . [had] three to four faculty return to China to lead another program in following years and venture out to other cities. . . . I [now] have a group of 10-12 faculty who all have been teaching abroad in China. That is something we would otherwise not have."

These cases and additional survey responses show that engagement in study abroad activities increased

after receiving the grant, indicating that once faculty are exposed to the benefits of study abroad courses and experiences, they are more likely to continue to participate and encourage their students to participate in study abroad activities.

ELEVATING THE PROFILE AND PRESTIGE OF STUDY ABROAD

Another benefit of the grant was the continued opportunity to elevate study abroad and internationalization efforts across campus due to the prestige of the granting agency. With one of the grant programs, recipients were invited to the White House for a celebration ceremony. This event brought the institution's president to Washington, D.C., in a highly visible ceremony symbolizing national and international investment in study abroad and internationalization. One interview participant explained, "This is a high-profile program that got the attention of everybody on campus and in the community. We got the grant from the vice president. The publicity around it was phenomenal. In fact, a local woman saw it and met with the students and is endowing a scholarship for it." He added that other faculty are now excited about study abroad and are developing proposals for new programs. The increase in publicity called attention to the potential of study abroad leading to more value and engagement from the campus, and in some cases the community.

Postfunding Outcomes: Integration and Sustainability

Survey results and interviews suggest that the benefits of relatively small Innovation Grants, including innovative programming, collaborative partnerships, and stakeholder engagement can be integrated and sustained after the grant period. An overwhelming majority (more than 85 percent) of the institutions noted that study abroad continued to expand after completion of the grant (see Figure 4, page 13). Arguably, the expansion may not be attributed entirely to the grant funding; yet, open-ended responses indicated that the grant contributed

to sustained improvements in study abroad at multiple institutions. Positive funding outcomes included:

- The continuation of institutional funding and grant activities;
- The development of internal collaborations, leadership support, and external partnerships; and
- Lasting curricular changes and models.

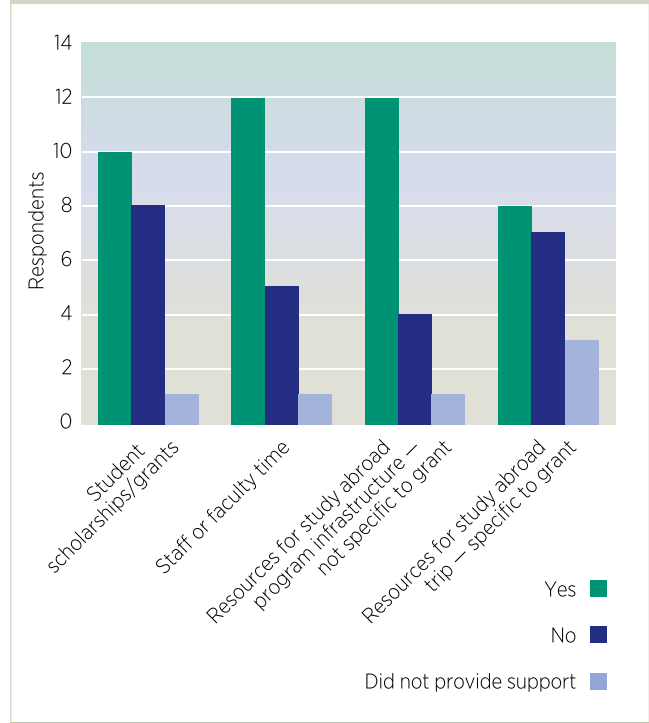
Importantly, there were challenges related to sustaining the grant activity and increasing an institution’s commitment to study abroad, such as the ability to continue student scholarships. Not surprisingly, institutions with existing resources for study abroad demonstrated good results in sustaining study abroad participation beyond the life of the grant; however, this does not suggest that sustainability is not possible for other less well-funded institutions. And even though the grant may not always catalyze the continuation of student scholarships, it does provide other benefits, including the integration of study abroad into new curriculum and majors, new internal collaborations and external partners, and new policies and infrastructure to support study abroad.

CONTINUATION OF INSTITUTIONAL FUNDING AND GRANT ACTIVITIES

The survey asked participants about sustained program funding, growth, and participation. As noted in Figure 3 above, in more than half of the funded institutions, the funding continued after the grant was completed, regardless of the type of matching funds provided by the institution—student scholarships, staff or faculty time, or resources for study abroad programs or infrastructure. The importance of continued funding cannot be overstated. The overwhelming majority of institutions reported that the matching funds had a high level of importance to the grant activity. This indicates that the Innovation Grant increased the institutional support and commitment to the grant activity and study abroad in general, even after the grant funds expired.

FIGURE 3 Financial support from institutions after completion of grant

Did the financial support continue after the grant completed?

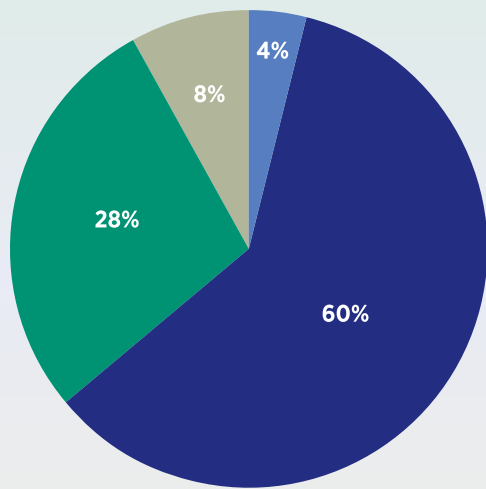


Importantly, the survey found that study abroad at the grant-funded study site continued to grow after the grant period. Figure 4 (page 13) shows that 60 percent of institutions continued to increase the number of students at those study abroad sites after grant completion. Even more impressive, no institution indicated that students visiting the study site decreased and only a small percentage (4 percent) noted that they returned to pre-grant levels. Clearly, the grants had a lasting impact on the programs they funded.

These findings are supported by additional analysis of growth in study abroad overall. Approximately 71 percent of respondents indicated that study abroad in general continued to grow after the grant period, with 25 percent noting that it stayed at an elevated level. Continued support for the specific study abroad program, growth in study abroad overall, and continued financial commitment all play a role in solidifying institutional commitment.

FIGURE 4 Number of students visiting site after grant completion

With completion of the grant, the number of students visiting the study site has:



- Continued to grow
- Stayed at an elevated level
- Stayed at the same level (did not increase due to grant)
- Returned to pre-grant levels

It would be an overstatement to note that colleges or universities were transformed due to the grant activities; rather, the grant provided new opportunities to support an ongoing conversation on the commitment to global education on an individual campus. In this regard, the grant was another data point for advocates to identify and leverage the essential nature of study abroad to the college student experience, to their institution members, and to their external stakeholders.

DEVELOPMENT OF INTERNAL COLLABORATIONS, LEADERSHIP SUPPORT, AND EXTERNAL PARTNERSHIPS

One of the long-term impacts of the grants is the development and sustainability of partnerships within the college or university during and after the grant process. Each of the institutions noted that collaborations were either created or strengthened due to the grant activities. More than 82 percent of survey respondents

indicated that they strongly agree or somewhat agree that “The grant helped to create new partnerships within my college/university.” Nearly 90 percent had similar responses to the statement, “The grant helped to strengthen existing partnerships within my college or university.” As noted earlier, as a part of the grant, some institutions developed new internal partnerships with academic programs or colleges that were ripe for synergy but had not previously had a strong reason to connect. The grant funding provided that reason and acted to integrate study abroad in new and innovative ways that can have long-term implications at the institutions.

Survey results identify an increase in support from department chairs, college deans, and internationalization leaders after the grant is completed. For example, high support among department chairs increased from nine respondents to 13 after the grant completed. Illustrating the increased support across an institution, one respondent noted: “As a result of the [US-China] Education Trust grants, more than seven departments have sponsored China study abroad programs. The faculty and student interest in China study abroad has been continuing to grow several years after the grant ended.”

In addition to collaborations across academic units and colleges, campus leadership support continued after grant completion. This continued support was noted by survey respondents as highly important to the continued success of study abroad on campus. At

The faculty and student interest in China study abroad has been continuing to grow several years after the grant ended.

one institution, global education became a part of the college strategic plan and mission, which helped with additional funding. An interview participant explains: “I got an assistant director. We got some extra funding for recruiting. Extra funding for another project. We are not just a step-child anymore.” As a further example, at another institution, a college dean helped to create a global studies degree, provided funds for the study

abroad office, and helped to apply for a grant to establish more foreign language courses on campus.

The increase in support for study abroad activities by department chairs, college deans, and internationalization leaders is significant, with 90 percent of respondents saying that support from campus leadership was “extremely or very important” to the success of study abroad activities. Survey respondents also noted that the grant supported institutional awareness and commitment to study abroad. When asked if there is a broader awareness of study abroad across campus due to the grant, 82 percent of respondents *strongly agree* or *somewhat agree*. Similarly, 64 percent of respondents *strongly agree* or *somewhat agree* to the statement, “My university/college is more supportive of study abroad activities due to the grant.”

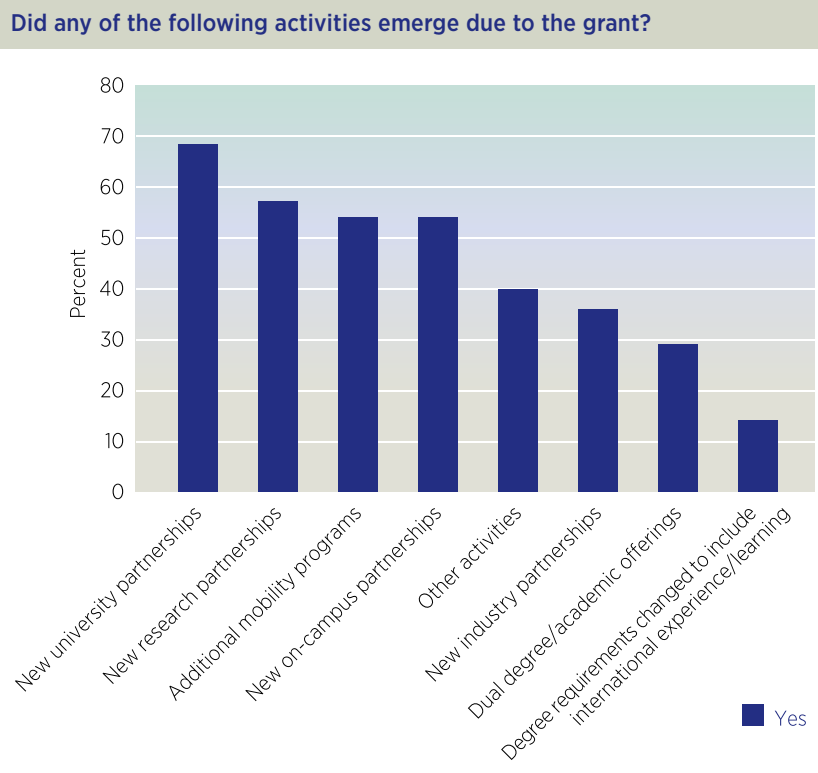
Nearly 70 percent of survey responses indicated that new university partnerships were created due to the grant (see Figure 5 at right). In addition, about half identified the creation of additional mobility programs and new on-campus partnerships. Open-ended responses noted that more cooperation between different cocurricular units was established and more departments began to offer study abroad opportunities to specific countries. Faculty at the institutions in the United States and abroad also became more engaged as a result of the lasting effects of the grant funding.

As well as supporting internal collaborations for the continuation of study abroad, several of the institutions developed new partnerships with other institutions of higher education, local businesses, or research projects. Figure 5 identifies that more than 60 percent of respondents created new research partnerships and more than 30 percent created new industry partnerships as part of the grant activities.

These partnerships supported and enhanced the grant activities and assisted in the sustainability of the study abroad programs. One survey respondent explained: “We were able to partner with two Mexican university partners instead of one, as well as two U.S. higher education institutions with programming in Mexico. So, the study abroad grant brought together strengths from experts and faculty from five universities, providing an experience of exceptional quality. I fully expect that we will be able to develop binational research programs between partners to promote health in the coming years.” Another participant reported that he “established a strong collaboration with [a local company]” because of the grant and hopes that the company will contribute with funding to the program in the near future.

Each of these partnerships created new ways of sustaining the study abroad experience. Whether by supporting students, by engaging in business and industry, by supporting faculty research at the outbound location, or by providing new internal partnerships to create a pipeline of faculty engaged in study

FIGURE 5 Academic activities that emerged as part of the grant



abroad, each of these outcomes helps to provide new opportunities to sustain the project over time. Without new internal partnerships, for example, there may not be faculty or student scholarships to continue the project. One of the faculty at a funded institution noted that the ability to go abroad each year for multiple weeks was becoming a burden now that she and her partner have children. A pipeline of faculty allows the opportunity for others to take over the travel responsibilities as faculty lives change and new demands on time emerge. The flexibility and innovation that emerge as a result of the grant-funded programs allow for better sustainability of partnerships that promote faculty involvement and integration of those programs into curricula.

LASTING CURRICULAR CHANGES AND MODELS

One of the more important changes catalyzed by the grants was the engagement of faculty in supporting the integration of study abroad into degree program requirements. Sustainability can be achieved through multiple means, including curricular development. Survey results indicate that integrating study abroad into curricula and having faculty engagement is *highly important*. More than 85 percent of survey respondents indicated that faculty engagement in study abroad increased because of the grant. About half of respondents indicated that there were curricular changes because of the grant.

At most of the institutions, the grant projects included some form of curricular change or integration to allow students to count their study abroad experience toward their degree requirements. As noted, institutions often used the grant as a platform to develop new curricular models and/or engage in more complicated curricular programs, such as those in science and engineering. Sustainability came in the form of multidisciplinary courses with a study abroad component. For example, faculty in a college of engineering at one institution had already created three new courses for all engineering students. The topics included sustainability engineering

on climate analysis, carbon footprint analysis, and climate change variability. They had enrollments from across all engineering majors and were asked by the engineering college dean to develop a study abroad component that was funded by the Innovation Grant. These courses and the corresponding study abroad program were the first integration of curricula and study abroad of this kind

Further, this innovative programming allowed students, who would not normally be able to participate in study abroad, to integrate that experience into their degree program.

in the college of engineering. Further, this innovative programming allowed students, who would not normally be able to participate in study abroad, to integrate that experience into their degree program.

Other study abroad programs integrated more research experience into the trip. At one institution, the research experience was formed in collaboration with an office dedicated to undergraduate research, thus integrating the trip into not just one, but two internal units. In other cases, the research experience helped to justify and meet the learning requirements required by external accreditors, such as the Accrediting Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET).

In all of these cases, the curricular changes required the development of relationships with more open communication that facilitated the education of multiple units and offices about study abroad. Many of the interview participants spoke about the misconceptions that units and offices have about study abroad and the relationship between study abroad and curricular requirements or financial aid. By engaging in the dialogues and building relationships to explore and ultimately create new curricular offerings, individuals and units were broadly educated about study abroad. Further, future complexities, issues, and opportunities related to study abroad and internationalization are more easily facilitated due to more knowledgeable staff across the campus.

Conclusion

The stated intent of the Innovation Grants is to help support the commitment to study abroad on individual campuses by providing competitive grants that empower individuals, departments, and international educators to identify and remove barriers for greater access to study abroad and other internationalization efforts. The hope is that the efforts of the grant activity lead to sustainable programs and institutional change. While the institutions in this study are more recently funded and, therefore, have yet to establish evidence of lasting change, there was ample evidence of sustainability in the study abroad efforts, demonstrating the importance of the Innovation Grant. Essentially, the grant application and funding process places institutions on a pathway toward long-term institutional change.

How do the Innovation Grants support study abroad and remain sustainable? The Innovation Grants provide occasions to increase and eventually sustain study abroad programs by providing learning and evaluation opportunities for institutions and their members that can inform future practice. Evidence from the study identifies important benefits beyond the funding of the study abroad program articulated in the institutions' grant proposal to study abroad and internationalization efforts, more generally. The institutions included in the study did have successful study abroad programs in which they engaged new student populations from historically underrepresented groups and students across academic majors. Students who would not otherwise have an opportunity (due to lack of financial resources or fit with academic major) were able to study abroad. Perhaps less obvious are the benefits that allowed institutions to leverage the grant funds to secure institutional matching funds to build infrastructure supporting study abroad long term through the establishment of policies, more permanent human resources, and workshops. These efforts extended benefits to all study abroad programs

at those institutions and awareness from campus leadership and faculty grew, creating more individuals who value and support study abroad across campus.

The benefits of grant participation create opportunities for new and innovative programs to be developed. An example of this is the opportunity Innovation Grants provide to engage in partnership and relationship building. The increased awareness of study abroad generated via these collaborations helps individuals and groups imagine new possibilities, whether they be growing existing or creating new programs. Individuals and groups engage in new, or deepen existing, collaborations that support the

The Innovation Grants act as catalysts for the sustainability of study abroad and internationalization.

current grant proposal process and articulate the value of study abroad to leaders as they seek institutional match funds or other forms of support. The process of forming and writing the grant is the platform to begin the change process—the establishing of relationships, values, and funding for study abroad.

Further, the Innovation Grants act as catalysts for the sustainability of study abroad and internationalization, as institutions often continued funding, experienced an overall increase in students going abroad and in students going to the specific study sites, and benefitted from sustained levels of leadership and faculty support. This sustainability was achieved in large part through the grant process, as institutions created systems by which they could continue their work in innovative ways. In turn, these innovative practices allowed institutions to reach broader student populations and led to more students gaining international skills, knowledge, and experiences in the long term. New ways of working included integrating

study abroad in curricula with a pipeline of faculty support. These programs were innovative and spoke to an acknowledgment of the need to create new models with faculty, department chairs, and campus leadership. Institutions recognized the importance of deepening internal and external partnerships by cultivating a diverse group of collaborators. And they made efforts to market their successful study abroad programs to create new opportunities in the future. These efforts improved integration of study abroad into the fabric of the institutions, making sustained programming and eventual long-term institutional change viable.

Organizational change in higher education is rife with difficulties.⁶ Large, bureaucratic, and decentralized

⁶ Kezar, Adrianna. 2013. *How Colleges Change: Understanding, Leading, and Enacting Change*. New York: Routledge.

structures, limited resources, and diverse constituent groups create significant barriers to change. Yet, higher education institutions do change and innovate, often as a result of the intentional collaborative efforts of campus groups from across the institutional hierarchy.

The Innovation Grants are a platform of opportunity to support the increased dialogue with campus constituents, the collaboration of groups internal and external to the institution, and the building of infrastructure to support the sustainability of new models of study abroad. With time and attention, participating institutions have an opportunity to engage in organizational learning, diffusion of new models and partnerships, and the institutionalization of study abroad and internationalization as a part of the mission, strategies, and values of the institution.

Methods and Study Design

To better understand the impact of the Innovation Grant programs facilitated by NAFSA: Association of International Educators on increasing university or college commitment to study abroad, we conducted a mixed-methods study design with qualitative interviews and a quantitative survey. The qualitative and quantitative portions of the project were designed after a thorough review of the literature in organizational studies and higher education. This review identified previous research studies that inform institutional change efforts related to smaller scale externally funded Innovation Grants and study abroad and helped focus the project on several major areas related to grant programs: internal collaborations, external partnerships, institutional climate, leadership, and sustainability.

Our goal was to uncover the potential impact of Innovation Grants, looking beyond the traditional measures identified in institutional progress reports, such as the number of students going abroad to specific regions. We sought to understand if and how the process of applying for the grants and their implementation, in the case of the funded institutions, impacted the development of new opportunities related to current and future study abroad or internationalization efforts. Therefore, interview and survey questions included the following topics: development and importance of internal collaborations and external partnerships; role(s) of campus leadership; activities that emerged from the grant; major goals of the grant; institutional practices and climate; unanticipated outcomes; student mobility and engagement; and sustainability.

Data collection began in March 2016 with a series of interviews of two campus representatives on each of the nine funded campuses selected for this study. We selected campuses to achieve representation across the seven grant programs and different institutional

types (e.g., private vs. public, size of student enrollment, etc.). To select individuals to recruit for the interviews, NAFSA and partners contacted the grant principal investigators or other primary contacts at the institution who had significant involvement in the grant, indicating that the NAFSA researcher would be following up for an interview. Only one campus did not respond, which resulted in replacing that campus with another funded institution. To identify the second individual for interview, we used a snowball-sampling technique by querying initial participants.⁷ We interviewed 17 individuals for approximately one hour each. Only one campus had one representative; however, this individual served as the project initiator, project principal investigator, and went on the study abroad trip. In addition, she served as a dean on the campus; thus, she had a comprehensive understanding of the nuances related to the various issues involved with the grant program on her campus and at the study abroad site.

INSTITUTION	ROLE OF PARTICIPANTS
California State University–Monterrey Bay	College Dean
Georgetown University	International Educator (2)
New Mexico State University	Campus Administrator Science Faculty
Northampton Community College	International Educator Grant Writer
University of Arizona	Science Faculty International Educator
University of Arkansas	International Educator Science Faculty
University of Minnesota	International Educator Dean
University of North Alabama	Campus Administrator Business Faculty
University of Texas–El Paso	Engineering Faculty (2)

⁷ Creswell, John W. 2008. *Educational Research: Planning, Conducting, and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc.

Analyses of the interviews were formally conducted to identify relevant themes. We used these themes to create a survey that we disseminated to all 32 grant-funded institutions, as well as a group of 39 institutions that did not receive, but applied for, grant funding. The survey of funded institutions consisted of 41 questions, which were organized around the following categories: grant development and implementation; impact on student mobility; activities that emerged as part of grant; grant sustainability; faculty engagement and curricular development; leadership support; study abroad program information; and participant role information. We asked respondents to identify the grant program they applied to or received funding from and their role—faculty, campus administrator, or international education professional. It became clear in the interviews that the grant process was initiated by one of these three role groups. This finding suggested that we needed a survey that would capture their role and its impacts with questions that would be relevant only to those specific roles. All respondents were asked the majority of questions with a few role-specific sections. For example, only faculty were asked to indicate their tenure status and only international educators were asked questions regarding budgets and number of students going abroad.

The survey of nonfunded institutions emerged from the funded institutions survey, with attention to shortening the number of items and rewording statements to reflect the fact that these institutions did not receive funding. For example, we changed the question on the funded survey: “Did any of the following activities emerge as a consequence of the grant?” to “Did any of the following activities emerge as a consequence of applying for the grant?”

NAFSA and its partners conducted recruitment of survey respondents via e-mail during early April 2016. E-mails were sent to approximately 32 funded and 39 nonfunded institutions. The survey remained open for two weeks with multiple e-mail prompts to attempt to secure an adequate response rate. Of the funded

institutions, 25 institutions responded for a response rate of 78 percent. Conversely, we received very few responses on the nonfunded survey, just 10 institutions total. Consequently, data provided in this report on the nonfunded institutions should be read with some caution, as the numbers are not necessarily reflective of all of the institutions that applied for but did not receive funding. The institutions that responded to the survey are included in Table 2 below.

TABLE 2 Funded institutions that responded to funded survey	
INSTITUTION	# OF RESPONSES
Arizona State University	1
Boston University	1
California State University–Long Beach	1
California State University–Monterrey Bay	1
Consortium for North American Higher Education Collaboration – University of Arizona	1
Edgewood College	1
Georgetown University	1
Georgia Southern University	1
Lamar University	1
Montclair State University	3
North Carolina State University	2
Northampton Community College	1
Northwestern University	1
Oregon Health & Science University	1
San Francisco State University	1
State University of New York–Oswego	1
Texas A&M University–Texarkana	1
University of Arizona	1
University of Arkansas	2
University of Minnesota	1
University of North Alabama	1
University of North Texas	1
University of Rhode Island	1
University of South Dakota	1
The University of Texas–El Paso	2
Total Responses	30

Survey responses among the seven grant programs included: 4 (13.8 percent) US-China Education Trust Student Leaders Exchange; 5 (17.2 percent) Partnership for Innovation and Collaboration on Study Abroad (France); 2 (6.9 percent) 100,000 Strong in the Americas

Innovation Fund – Freeport McMoRan; 7 (24.1 percent) 100,000 Strong in the Americas Innovation Fund – Santander Bank; 6 (20.7 percent) 100,000 Strong in the Americas Innovation Fund – ExxonMobil; and 5 (17.2 percent) 100,000 Strong in the Americas Innovation Fund – Coca-Cola Foundation.

Among the 30 responses on the survey, nearly half (14 or 46.7 percent) indicated a role or title of international education professional with one-third (10 or 33.3 percent) indicating a role of faculty. Among the faculty respondents, eight indicated that they are tenured, with one who is tenure track. One faculty respondent did not

complete these items. A total of six individuals indicated a role of campus administrator.

We conducted descriptive analysis of the survey data to examine the impact of the grants, funded or nonfunded, on institutional efforts. The data were examined for differences across grant-funded programs and institutional types, although the smaller sample size does not allow for statistical comparisons across those groups. Open-ended responses were particularly valuable, as they provided additional insight into the activities promoted via the grants and confirmed the themes derived from the interview analysis.

ABOUT NAFSA

NAFSA is the largest association of professionals committed exclusively to advancing international higher education. The association provides leadership to its diverse constituencies through establishing principles of good practice and providing professional development opportunities. NAFSA encourages networking among professionals, convenes conferences and collaborative dialogues, and promotes research and knowledge creation to strengthen and serve the field. We lead the way in advocating for a better world through international education.

ACCEPTABLE USE GUIDELINES

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning, or otherwise, except as permitted under Section 107 or 108 of the United States Copyright Act, without the prior written permission of the publisher. Requests to the publisher for permission should be addressed to Publications@nafsa.org.

