

**INTERNATIONAL STUDY OPPORTUNITIES  
FOR STUDENTS  
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The role of the United States as a leader among nations is changing rapidly. Despite our position of international leadership for almost fifty years, we are ill prepared for the changes in business, manufacturing, diplomacy, science, and technology that have come with an intensely interdependent world. Effectiveness in such a world requires a citizenry whose knowledge is sufficiently international in scope to cope with global interdependence.

—Advisory Council for International Educational Exchange,  
Educating for Global Competence. 1989

**A CASE FOR STUDY ABROAD EXPERIENCES**

How many years have those of us from the States been talking about “internationalizing” or “globalizing” our campuses? It has clearly been over a decade as indicated by the opening statement. And, the evidence indicates that we have not progressed very far. The report of the National Task Force on Undergraduate Education Abroad included the following paragraph.

“There is abundant evidence that our citizens (students) are not well prepared for the international realities ahead. By any measure, whether it be comparisons of foreign language proficiency, tests of geographic literacy, or availability of specialists to advise

government or business regarding eastern Europe or other distant but important parts of the world, the level of international knowledge and understanding in the United States is wanting. In comparison with others, we as a people are poorly educated to deal with the political, economic and social issues which we will face in a new global era that will not measure strength primarily in terms of military preparedness.”

Our internationalization attempts have included altering our curriculums, adding diversity to our faculty, enrolling international students and supporting study abroad experiences. Most of these activities have met with limited, if any, success. The following is a brief discussion of each of these four approaches.

### **Curriculum Impact:**

The attempts to globalize our institutions through curriculum reform have resulted in little progress. We have changed from American Civilization to World Civilization classes; added courses like Cross Cultural Communication and new majors such as International Studies. We have paid lip service to the globalization effort, but with the exception of some languages these efforts do not require any international experience. Studying another culture is not the same as experiencing it. After returning from a semester in China Ben Roat, one of our students, was asked by a class if he just couldn't have read and studied about that country instead of making the trip. Ben got very animated as he replied; “I didn't just read about the Great Wall. I walked on it! I walked through the Forbidden City! I shared my faith with Chinese people one-on-one.” Our efforts at curriculum reform will never have that kind of impact.

### **Faculty Impact:**

One of my responsibilities at PLNU is to locate and hire faculty. For the past ten years, I have

done everything possible to employ faculty from under-represented groups and from other countries. While I have made some progress, it is clear that if we are depending on that activity to internationalize our campuses we have a long way to go. Even when I find these diverse individuals, they often do not bring a different culture to the campus. In many instances, their graduate study in U.S. universities has thoroughly assimilated them into the culture of the States. These faculty members from under-represented groups provide valuable role models but contribute little to the internationalizing efforts.

### **International Student Impact:**

Clearly, the presence of international students has a very positive influence on our campuses. These students share their customs in some very meaningful ways which are greatly appreciated. At Point Loma, we have a special chapel which is led by internationals. They carry the flags of their countries, lead in the worship and later in the day, the dining hall serves meals representative of the students' homeland. The problem with this effort is that there are so few international students who can afford to attend universities in the States. The twenty to thirty that we have on the PLNU campus can only have so much impact. In addition, these students are trying to understand and succeed in our culture. While they enjoy sharing their own customs, their goal is to obtain a university degree. The pressure they feel to accomplish this task is more than enough to keep them busy.

### **Study Abroad Impact:**

I believe the most effective way to internationalize campuses is to get our students out of our country and into international settings. Currently, five percent of all undergraduates enrolled in U.S. colleges and universities spend a semester in a study abroad setting. Imagine five percent of your student body studying abroad each semester, and think about the impact they would have when they returned. Students who have experienced living and learning on the social and

educational terms of a foreign culture will be broadened in ways impossible to achieve on the home campus. They benefit academically and culturally, and will be better prepared to face the challenges of the globalized future than students who do not have this experience. I believe education abroad generally improves returned student classroom performance, assists student development in positive ways, and makes them more likely to become contributing and empathetic citizens of the world. Their impact on the often narrowing and isolationist strains of traditional American culture cannot be overestimated.

I have had the opportunity to travel and study in several countries, and these experiences have changed me profoundly. I will never be the same since my visit to Kenya. I saw the beauty of the Serengeti Plain and all the animals that live there, I marveled at the wonderful scientific work taking place the research labs and I sat in two mission works in the slums of Nairobi where I cried for two hours. I will never be able to look at that country through the same eyes. I have a new understanding of the difficulty of bringing the various tribes of Kenya together to form a government. The problems are huge, but the people are industrious and determined. They are God's people.

My international trips have also taken me to Russia. I grew up fearing that country. I will never forget the atomic bomb drills while I was in elementary school or the inter-continental ballistic missiles rolling through Red Square on May Day with the Communist leaders sitting on Lenin's tomb. Russia was the godless enemy. But six months ago I walked through Red Square and toured the Moscow Kremlin. I worshipped with Russian Christians. I ate in their homes. I observed the election of their president. My image and preconceived ideas of that country were shattered. The blinders were removed, and now I have a new understanding of that land—a land with as many deep needs and issues as Kenya. These too are God's people.

I want every student to have experiences like I have had. I want their eyes opened to the realities of this world, and I am convinced that cannot happen through course work or interaction with just a few people from other countries. It has the best chance of happening in a study abroad experience.

As a brief aside, PLNU has a very meaningful short-term mission program called LoveWorks. Each year between 100 and 200 students raise their own funds to participate in a mission experience in some location throughout the world. This program has been very effective at opening students to missions. It has given them a new perspective on that ministry. Having observed and participated in a LoveWorks mission trip, I don't believe they have the same impact as a study abroad experience. The two goals, going to minister or going to study and learn, are distinct, and the impact on the participants is different.

Well, that is a long introduction to get to my main point, the international study opportunities that are open to U.S. college students. But, this introduction should help you understand the motivation for the work taking place on the PLNU campus and why I feel so passionate about it. I will discuss the various study abroad opportunities available to students by describing what we are doing at Point Loma. Please don't assume that I believe everyone should use our model, but it is working for us.

## **THE POINT LOMA MODEL**

### **Campus Climate:**

To understand what we are doing at Point Loma Nazarene University it will be beneficial to

understand the climate related to study abroad. The University operates under a city imposed enrollment cap of two thousand full-time students. We reached the cap three years ago. Since that time, we have had to turn away several hundred students each year. In the spring of '98, the Provost asked me to take leadership in creating a study abroad program. We both believed this was a valuable experience and with a “*surplus*” of students the institution would not lose revenue or have empty beds in the dormitories if some of them left for a semester. In addition, there was strong support of a study abroad program from all parts of the institution. This support is critical! Without institutional commitment and administrative support at all levels, from the president down to the individuals in the registrar’s office, it is unlikely that a strong international program can be developed and maintained. With the Provost’s urging we began a program that has grown to the point that 85 students spent a semester abroad this past year and another 28 enrolled in an academic course with an international component this summer. Fifty students have enrolled in international programs this fall and it is our goal to have 100 students studying abroad in the spring. All of these students return to the university as changed individuals.

### **Study Abroad Programs:**

There are several different approaches to providing study abroad opportunities. These range from the one extreme of developing branch campuses in other countries to the extreme of urging students to direct enroll in international universities. In the first case, the home institution has complete control over the curriculum, staffing, facilities, and admission standards. With this control also comes all of the responsibility. An example of this branch campus model is Eastern Nazarene College’s program in Romania. The other extreme, direct enrollment avoids all of the responsibilities but also relinquishes all of the control of the program. Which, if either, of these approaches an institution selects will depend on the amount of control and responsibility they are willing to accept. At PLNU, we have made the decision not to go in either of these directions but

to adopt a hybrid of the two. We are offering, essentially, two types of programs, PLNU courses with an international component and cooperative programs with other colleges and universities.

### **A) PLNU Courses With an International Component**

PLNU courses with an international component fall into two categories. In the first category, we teach one of our courses entirely in an international setting. Courses of this type are offered during the summer and usually involve one faculty member and up to 15 students. An example of such an offering would be the art history course that was offered during a four week European study trip during the summer of 1999.

Courses in the second category involve class work on the PLNU campus as well as an international travel component. Courses of this type are more popular than those of the first category and have several advantages for students, faculty, and the institution. A regular PLNU class is offered during the fall or spring semester with some reduction in the classroom hours. At the conclusion of the semester the class participates in a two to four week travel component, which is a requirement of the course. The majority of the reading and testing for the class is completed prior to the travel component. Students usually keep a journal and are required to write a paper, which integrates the travel component into the course content. The cost of the travel is collected as a fee for the class and therefore becomes part of the student's financial need package supported with financial aid. During the past two academic years, the University has offered the following courses, each of which requires international travel and study.

#### **Course**

Environmental Biology

Renaissance/Reformation

History of Germany and Austria

#### **International Trip**

Kenya

England

Germany and Austria

World Capitals  
Sociology of Religion  
Special Studies in Bible  
History of Mathematics  
Christian Tradition

Seven country trip  
Israel  
Israel  
England  
Kenya

While planning and leading these courses is very demanding, we have had success in recruiting both faculty and students. This type of experience also has no financial downside for the home institution. Students pay their regular tuition, room and board charges are collected as normal and the faculty salary is a part of the regular contract. All travel expenses are collected from student fees.

### **B) Joint Programs with Other Colleges and Universities**

By far, the most common study abroad program in which our students enroll is a cooperative program with another educational provider. This alternative offers many of the advantages of branch campuses and direct enrollment while minimizing the negatives of those options.

We have a partnership with the schools in the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities in their student programs. These programs offer students opportunities to study in Egypt, Costa Rica, Russia, and China. Along with the other CCCU institutions, we share in the cost, work, and responsibilities for these programs. The CCCU member institutions share jointly in hiring the director, securing the facilities, establishing the curriculum and hiring the faculty. The key words here are “share jointly.” We have some control but not all of the responsibility or risk related to these programs. Point Loma could not offer even one of these programs on our own. Together with the partner institutions, we can offer all of them. These programs are not sufficient for us,

however. The problem we are facing is that with the rapid growth in the number of students wishing to study internationally it is more and more difficult for a student to be accepted into one of the CCCU options. There are too many students for the number of openings.

Most of our students study in cooperative settings sponsored by other colleges and universities – both Christian and secular. In the International Studies office on the campus, we help students locate the program that most directly fits their needs and desires. Since PLNU has minimal if any control in these programs, they must be carefully evaluated. It is our responsibility to be sure that the program is accredited and that the courses are acceptable to us. We must also be confident that the setting is one in which the student will be safe and will receive the necessary support.

Programs sponsored by other Christian Colleges and Universities include:

- ENC's program in Romania

- ENBC in Switzerland

- ANU in Kenya

- EduVenture in Indonesia

The EduVenture program deserves some comment. This program is not the creation of a college or university. Dr. Tom Wisley, a missionary and educator, had a vision of spreading the gospel in remote areas of the world and at the same time drawing North American college students into the effort. He and his two sons have established a “campus” in the high country of Irian Jaya, Indonesia among one of the most primitive tribes left in the world. Several of our students have participated in this strong academic program and have probably been changed more than students in any other program. They have been impacted physically, academically, socially and spiritually. Like the CCCU, EduVenture is not a credit granting institution. Therefore, students

enroll in PLNU courses that are offered in the Indonesia setting.

The number of secular settings open to college students is mind-boggling. All you need to do is pick up a copy of *Peterson's Guide to Study Abroad* to realize the wide array of programs open to U.S. students. One publication indicates that there are over 4000 international opportunities available. Our students have participated in many different programs including:

- John Cabot University in London
- St. Louis University-Madrid Campus
- U. of Pittsburgh's Semester At Sea
- Butler University
- Beaver University

Finally, we have placed students in agency consortia programs. While these are not directly sponsored by a single U.S. institution they offer many advantages to students. Such programs include:

- International Education of Students
- American International University
- Council on International Educational Exchange.

### **Program Advantages and Disadvantages**

There are advantages and disadvantages to each of these types of programs. Ideally, we would like our own programs over which we have total control. The disadvantages associated with such programs are many. As indicated earlier they include the cost of staffing, enrollment issues, and curriculum and facility issues to mention just a few. We cannot afford to put a program in place to service a small group of our students, and if the program were designed to meet our particular needs it would probably not appeal to students from other institutions.

We urge students to participate in programs offered by Christian institutions—programs such as the Romania Semester offered by Eastern Nazarene College and the CCCU student programs. While these programs are very attractive to some, the fact that the course offerings are narrow makes them unacceptable to most of our student body. Unless the student has a particular major or at just the right point in her studies, the courses will not transfer back to the home institution to meet specific graduation requirements.

Programs such as Saint Louis University’s Madrid Campus have broad appeal to many students. This program offers a full university curriculum, which is taught in English. While the university offers special student services for U.S. students, it makes no pretense of being Christian. Students enrolling in programs such as this are stepping into a secular university with all of the issues that involves.

At PLNU, we are using this broad variety of opportunities to fit the many needs of our students. Some of these students do not have enough self-confidence to step into an international program without a great deal of support. For these students we encourage them to consider the CCCU programs or other “island” programs designed specifically for a group of U.S. students from Christian institutions of higher education. Other students are ready and are looking for an opportunity to step out of a very sheltered environment and “test their wings.” Programs such as the Madrid campus are ideal for them.

### **Christian vs. Secular Programs**

One of the questions we must address related to study abroad experiences is whether or not we should support students who wish to study in a secular institution. Or, if you want to get more

particular, should we support students who wish to study in a non-Wesleyan Christian program? It is my impression, for example, that most of the CCCU programs are run by Christians with a Reformed background. Their concept of a “Christian World View” would generally not conform with a Wesleyan’s. How do we justify encouraging our students to step from our campuses into these other settings?

Well, my early statements indicated that we are trying to broaden our campus with a global perspective. Unless we are willing to look at the world and selectively participate in it we will never be able to comprehend it. We will not understand what is necessary to be salt and light nor will we understand how we can join hands with our brothers and sisters in Christ to extend his love. Like it or not, at some point our students will leave the sheltered environment of our campuses and walk into the world. Providing some insight into that journey before they make the trip is not a bad idea.

At PLNU, we carefully interview each student interested in studying abroad. We talk about their career goals, their college experience, and their Christian values. Based upon this interview we assist them in selecting programs, which might be a good fit. There are some students I would never recommend to enroll in a program like the University of Pittsburgh’s Semester-At-Sea. There are others I have advised not to consider European Nazarene Bible College. It is the responsibility of International Studies office to know the programs and to advise students regarding their choices.

## **STUDY ABROAD ISSUES**

### **Student Concerns**

Students generally have three concerns related to study abroad experiences. If these can be

resolved to their satisfaction, they are ready to move forward.

The first relates to whether the experience will delay their graduation. With the information related to their selected major and the courses they have already completed we can usually find programs which will assist them toward their graduation without causing any delay. Clearly, the second semester senior has more difficulty finding an acceptable program than does a first semester sophomore. But, we have even been able to find programs for those seniors who wait until their last semester to study abroad.

The second concern is the cost of the program. Students are paying a large tuition to attend a private college or university. Most of them are not ready to take on another large debt to study abroad. Again, in most instances we are able to direct students to programs that will fit their budget. At PLNU, the largest financial drawback is that our institutional scholarships do not apply toward study abroad programs. After two years of work, we have finally established the first endowed scholarship which will provide support to students who are accepted into a study abroad program. With the variety of programs now available, however, we have been able to help students find programs that are no more expensive than a semester at PLNU.

The third issue is how the study abroad course grades will impact their grade point average. The students who want to study abroad are generally the better students academically. Many receive PLNU academic scholarships based on their G.P.A. They are not interested in participating in a program that is so difficult that they might jeopardize their academic standing. On the other hand, the faculty is not interested in having students go to a very easy program and inflate their grade point average. To deal with this concern PLNU records all grades received in study abroad programs on the student's transcript but does not use those grades to calculate the student's

G.P.A. In this way the units count toward graduation and can be seen by anyone looking at the transcript, but they do not impact the grade point or the student's eligibility for an academic award.

### **Campus Concerns**

I indicated earlier that there must be broad campus support if study abroad programs are to be successful. It seems that these programs and their associated requirements impact every office on campus. For example: It takes more work to handle the financial aid for a student studying abroad than for five students studying on the home campus, advising is more difficult, courses never match exactly and faculty must be willing to make some compromises with the belief that the experience is more valuable than the specific course content, the finance officers must determine the "lost" revenue if students leave the home campus for these programs, quality control must be considered for the various programs, and liability issues must be addressed. To be frank, there are enough sticky issues to cause many campus communities not to pursue study abroad as an organized effort. Still, I contend, the response back from students who have attended will be worth every inconvenience endured on the campus, and this may be the only realistic way to internationalize our campuses. I know the arguments against international study and have outlined some of them. I also believe there will be an associated cost if we do not move in this direction.

### **Conclusion:**

The focus of this conference is international education. That surely means, among other things, understanding and supporting the efforts of our sister institutions around the world. For me, that too often is translated as, "give me your surplus resources." I realize that by the world's standards those of us in the States are very rich. At the same time, I know what it takes to operate one of our institutions. We are using every resource we can get just to keep our educational

efforts at the level required by our constituents. So, if not by providing our surplus resources, how do we participate in this internationalization of not only our campuses but also our denomination's efforts? I come back to my original premise. We can work on this by providing our students with experiences that will open their eyes and hearts to the world community. And, I believe this can be done most effectively and efficiently through study abroad experiences.

I have recently been reminded that Moses as God's chosen leader of the Israelites, was not allowed to enter the Promised Land. God took him to the top of a mountain and let him look at all of the land that the Israelites would possess, but it was Joshua who led the people into that land. Now here is the interesting piece of the story. Joshua had been there before! He had met the people, observed their culture, and seen the bounty of the land. He was not entering the land as a stranger. He had had a study abroad experience!

Maybe one of our tasks is to look into the promises of international education, help set the course and direction and then turn the task over to the Joshuas of the world to "take the land." If there is any truth here, wouldn't it be wise to send these individuals into the land to learn all that they can before we expect them to lead others?

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## WORLD WIDE WEB SITES

<http://www.iie.org>

Institute of International Education.

<http://www.nafsa.org>

National Association of Foreign Student Advisors.

<http://www.cie.uci.edu/~cie/iop/>

U. of California-Irvine International Opportunities Program.

[http://www.istc.umn.edu!](http://www.istc.umn.edu)

U. of Minnesota, International Study and Travel Center.

<http://www.ciee.org/>

Council on International Educational Exchange.

<http://www.petersons.com/>

Peterson's Exchange Center, Study Abroad Sector.

<http://www.studyabroad.com/>

Commercial listing of study abroad programs.

<http://www.cccu.org/students/>

Council for Christian Colleges & Universities.

<http://www.beaver.edu/ceal>

Fifty programs sponsored by Beaver College.

<http://www.butler.edu/www/isa>

Butler College programs in England, Australia, New Zealand and Ireland.

<http://www.iesabroad.org>

Institute for the International Education of Students

<http://www.aifs.com>

American Institute for Foreign Study

<http://www.studvabroad.aiuniv.edu>

American InterContinental University