Underrepresentation in Education Abroad
Newsletter, November 2005

Dawn Anderson, Editor

November 30, 2005
Welcome

We hope that you found the first newsletter useful and apologize for the delay in publishing the second. We received positive and useful feedback from the last issue thanks to active volunteers and the authors who so graciously took the time to submit articles. We hope you will continue to use the newsletter as a vehicle for exchanging information, successes, and challenges associated with promoting international programs to underrepresented students.

Moving forward, it is our aim to publish twice a year and with your help and support, we hope to become a valuable resource to the international education community. Thanks to the many colleagues who have inquired, reached out and offered suggestions and support for this committee effort. Keep’em coming! If you are interested in sharing a project relevant to mission, please notify the Sub-Committee on Underrepresentation regional representative (listed on the last page). For regions without representation and for article submission, please notify me. As always, we look forward to spreading the word about your efforts to remove the barriers that limit the participation of underrepresented groups in international education.

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Northeastern University
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Announcements!

New Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Fellowship Program – In early October 2004, administration and congressional leaders met in Washington DC to select a panel of distinguished international educators. Thanks to the bold vision of the late IL Senator Paul Simon, the primary mission of this new fellowship program is to increase the number of US students studying abroad. The goal is to annually send 500,000 US students abroad with stipends up to $5,000. This is certainly good news for our constituents, since financial barriers continue to be a major obstacle for underrepresented students. For more information visit:

www.nafsa.org/public_policy/sec/commission_on_the_abraham

Project for Learning Abroad, Training and Orientation (PLATO) Project - At the 2003 NAFSA conference in Salt Lake City, the Committee on Underrepsentation in Education Abroad heard a presentation from committee advisor Gary Rhodes. He unveiled a proposal submitted for a FIPSE grant. This integrated study abroad training, certification, and diversity outreach program was accepted, and now this resource is available online to all. Our committee voted to support it resulting in a partnership status. On behalf of our committee, I met with other institution and group representatives in Los Angeles at Loyola Marymount University January 2005 to discuss various issues and challenges to providing sufficient support to underrepresented students and those who advise them. Please visit the Web site to find out more about this exciting new program:

www.lmu.edu/globaled/PLATO

“This path may lead. Go instead where there is no path and leave a trail.”

Emerson
The Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship was established under the International Academic Opportunity Act of 2000 with the specific goal of reaching out to undergraduate students traditionally underrepresented in study abroad and those with high financial need. To this end the Gilman Program has targeted its outreach plan to effectively reach a broad range of underrepresented populations including, but not limited to, community-college students, ethnic minorities, students in the applied sciences and engineering fields, students of non-traditional age and those with disabilities. This program provides awards of up to $5,000 that help assist these students with funding for their study abroad programs. Upon their return from abroad Gilman Scholars are required to carry out a follow-on project on their campus, or in their local community, that helps to promote international education and the Gilman Scholarship.

The leading consideration in all outreach efforts for the Gilman Scholarship has been to increase the diversity of Gilman Scholarship recipients by first increasing the diversity of the applicant pool. To that end the Gilman Scholarship has utilized a broad range of networks to ensure information on this scholarship is disseminated as widely as possible to undergraduate students nationwide. While many students do first learn about the Gilman Scholarship from their study abroad office there is a wide population of students who never consider entering the study abroad office due to financial limitations. Moreover, there are also still a large number of undergraduate institutions nationwide that have not yet established formal offices for study abroad on their campus. Due to these challenges the Gilman Program has had to reach out beyond the traditional study abroad networks, such as NAFSA, to other university administrators and offices.

This method has proved especially effective at reaching out to underrepresented populations. For example, to be eligible to apply for the Gilman Scholarship students must be currently receiving a Federal Pell grant at the time of application. This is a diverse student population that has a high percentage of first-generation college students. Through links with professional organizations such as the National Association of Student Financial Aid Advisors the Gilman Program has been able to share information on this scholarship with financial aid advisors nationwide. Feedback from financial aid advisors has been immensely positive and at many institutions, such as community colleges, the financial aid advisor may be the only resource on campus for students looking for funding for study abroad. As Pam Chisolm from the Community College of Vermont stated:

**Breaking the Barriers to Overseas Study for Students of Color and Minorities**

Marilyn J. Jackson, San Francisco State University

Why don’t students of color and minority students study abroad? Certainly there are very practical reasons including lack of finances and fear of not graduating on time. In his 1998 dissertation on African-American student’s perceptions and attitudes toward study abroad, Donald Washington found that lack of awareness was the greatest contributor to the lack of African-American participation in study abroad programs (Washington, 1998, p. 125.) Angry cries from study abroad advisors fill the air: “What – lack of awareness! We put up flyers and hold informational meetings until we are blue in the face. How could ANYONE on our campus say they are not aware of study abroad opportunities?”

Easy. If I am a student who has a place to live, I can walk around campus all day and not see the thousands of flyers advertising rooms for rent, because they don’t apply to me. I don’t care about renting a room, so I screen out this information and go about my business. The same may be true about studying abroad information. If students don’t think the information applies to them, they may not even see it and can honestly say that they are not aware that their campus offers study abroad programs. I like to call this the “not-for-me” syndrome. While this is a complex issue, I propose that two of the main reasons for this lack of awareness are historical exclusion from and media images of study abroad programs.

In regards to historical exclusion, due to numerous economic and socio-political reasons, minority families do not have a history of sending young people abroad for the purposes of education. In contrast, many upper-middleclass, predominately white families- especially on the east coast- have a long established tradition of sending young people- especially women- to Europe for “finishing.” Back in the 1800s in some circles the travel abroad experience was preferable to college for marriage preparation. (Solomon, 1985) Traveling abroad for privileged women is considered a rite of passage in many families. Even in this day and age it is relatively unlikely that a minority student will have had a family member or peer who has studied abroad. Even the people who traditionally mentor minority students may not have studied abroad and may not even see the value in it. (Monaghan, 1994) So for an average minority student there is very little “word of mouth” information about the program from the sources close to them.

Media has a huge influence on all of us and can influence what we wear, which politician we support and which cola we drink. There is no shortage of media images that depict study abroad or travel abroad experiences; on the contrary, there is practically a whole genre of light-hearted “fish out of water” movies. From Sabrina (1954) and Gidget Goes to Rome (1963) through the Mary-Kate and Ashley movies (they go to Paris, London, Australia), the Lizzie McGuire movie (2003) and the more infamous Eurotrip (2004), literally entire generations of young people have been entertained by these kinds of stories. However, movies that depict minority students and students of color in similar situations are almost impossible to find. So in addition to having few real life role models who have studied abroad, students of color don’t have many virtual role models either. The combination of these factors supports the tendency toward the “not-for-me” syndrome. People don’t think that study abroad is right for them and consequently filter out or ignore information about study abroad.
Legal Interpretation of Section 504 for Students with Disabilities Abroad
Steve McEvoy

Students with disabilities have begun participating in study abroad programs. This reality is forcing schools to confront whether section 504 (Section 504 is a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities) applies outside America, and whether the host university must provide accommodations. Through researching the two most recent cases (2001 and 2002) regarding the issue, this author found a troubling answer.

In each case the regional Office of Civil Rights (OCR) denied services if the home and host institutions were considered separate institutions, and extended services if the hostel university and home university were considered one in the same. However, as demonstrated in the two cases, OCR has made little effort to codify this policy. Therefore, the decision to extend services has been based on the opinion of the individual OCR office, and not an established OCR policy. As with everyone, study abroad offers people with disabilities a very good method to gain life skills. However, if OCR does not clearly enforce its policies, students and professionals will not know if their services will transfer, thus discouraging students with disabilities to study abroad. Given OCR’s rulings, study abroad personnel and college administrators must ensure that agreements exist between the home and host institutions whereby the host institution is considered an extension of the home university. If this does not occur, students with disabilities will lose an integral tool for future success.

In the first instance, a student from Arizona State University (ASU) who was deaf was accepted to study at University College Cork (UCC) in Cork, Ireland. The student requested that UCC provide him with an ASL interpreter. UCC agreed to do so on condition that the student pay for the service.

The student sued ASU and filed a complaint with OCR, claiming that under Section 504, ASU was obligated to provide him with an interpreter. The regional OCR office in Denver dismissed the complaint in December 2001, stating, “It is OCR’s determination that Section 504 does not extend extraterritorially.” (L. Thomas Close, personal communication, December 3, 2001.) According to The Presumption Against Extraterritoriality As Applied to Disability Discrimination Laws by A. Kanter (2003), OCR made no attempt to learn whether there was, in fact, any link between the two schools. Consequently, the student decided not to study abroad.

The Denver OCR office based its ruling on the Supreme Courts’ verdict in Aramco in 1991. In Aramco, a naturalized U.S. citizen working in Saudi Arabia claimed his employer discriminated against him. In response, the Supreme Court ruled that U.S. law could not be applied extraterritorially, and the case was dismissed.

In 2002, a deaf student from St. Scholastica, a private college in Minnesota, was also accepted to study at an Irish University. As in the previous case, the student was not granted free use of an interpreter. The student filed a complaint with the OCR’s Chicago office. In a complete reversal of the first case, the Chicago office found the student to be worthy of the same services as “a qualified individual with a disability in the United States” (Kanter, 2003). According to Kanter, “This is the first case in which OCR explicitly recognized the extraterritorial application of section 504.” While agreeing with the sentiment of the decision, I find this reversal in policy gives troubling messages to study abroad professionals and students.

If OCR does not make its decisions in a more codified manner, the extension of necessary services will rest not on a demonstrable need, but the opinion of an outside individual as to the affiliation of the school. According to Kanter, “Study abroad programs are not a passing fad. They have become an integral part of the mission and curriculum of higher education. All students, including those with disabilities, may be viewed as prospective students and participants in such programs.”

When I returned from a year abroad in Ireland, I had confidence, poise, and life skills that I did not possess when I left. For the first time, I felt free from my disability, and confident that I could live on my own. Studying abroad was the catalyst for this change. Without this experience in Ireland, this author would not have the skills to navigate a city, become employed, and participate in graduate study.

Simply put, If OCR does not make a greater effort to ensure that the decisions of its offices are based on more than the opinions of regional offices, the phenomenon of students with disabilities studying abroad will become a passing fad. Without a more structured system for determining accommodations, study abroad professionals will have little idea whether students with disabilities will receive the accommodations they need. Consequently, it will become increasingly difficult for study abroad personnel to recruit students with disabilities, and students with disabilities will be less likely to go abroad.

Sadly, though, it is highly doubtful that OCR will change its policies. Therefore, study abroad professionals and college administrators must ensure that agreements between their home universities are written so that the host institution is considered an extension of the home university. If this does not occur, students with disabilities may lose what this author feels is the best method for giving students the skills necessary for success as an adult, a fact affirmed by Kanter. “Unlike other cases in which the extraterritorial application of federal laws could pose an economic risk to the United States, affording protection under our disability discrimination laws to students studying abroad would be good, not harmful, for the U.S. economy.”

References
Changing people’s minds about study abroad is not easy, but there are a few things that study abroad advisors can do to try to raise the awareness of study abroad among students of color and minorities. Fortunately, many of them do not take a lot of time or money.

Create a Welcoming Atmosphere for All Students

If your office is a shrine to the European location where you studied abroad, change the decorations to reflect a plethora of cultures. If possible, consider diversifying your staff and your student assistants or volunteer pool.

Create Visuals

Photo boards of a variety of students who have studied abroad displayed prominently in a well-trafficked place, like the library or student center, is a start. Over time, more students will see people with whom they identify who have had an experience of studying abroad.

Create Materials

Make sure you have booklets, handouts and information that addresses the needs of minority populations and cover a variety of topics from hair care to racism to heritage travel issues. This information can be in the form of student reports or articles about students of color studying abroad or preferably both. Create a lending library with books about the travel abroad experiences of minorities (e.g. Elaine Lee’s (Ed.) Go Girl, Maya Angelou’s All God’s Children Need Traveling Shoes).

Develop Role Models

Of course, it would be best to work with alumni of study abroad programs, but even applicants to study abroad programs can serve as role models. They are going through the application process and can help guide others. Sometimes just having a student of color passing out flyers will help others become aware of the information or at least see that it might be something to look into.

If you do have student alumni, ask them to make class presentations and serve as peer mentors. Ask them if they can act as “spokes models” and see if you can put their picture and a statement about their study abroad experience on your Web site.

Create Virtual Roles Models by looking at History

Many famous African-Americans studied or lived abroad, including W.E.B. Du Bois, James Baldwin, Angela Davis, and Maya Angelou. Create a display during Black History Month (or sooner, why wait!) honoring these people and linking them to the concept of study abroad. Again, be sure your display is somewhere where students go, like the library or the student center.

Create Support System

Advise in groups during a general informational meeting as opposed to a one-on-one basis. Ask an alumnus to speak at the information meetings. Encourage all interested students to bring a friend to the meetings. Don’t be afraid to talk to established groups of students in the student center. Ask to speak at the meetings of as many student groups as possible.

Create Mentor Programs

Start a club for incoming exchange students, outgoing domestic students and returning study abroad alumni. This creates a social outlet for students to get to know each other and it also provides you with a group you can mobilize to get the word out about study abroad. It takes a while to get it off the ground, but once it gets going the students really run with it. Over the years International Education Exchange Council at San Francisco State has done a tremendous job to increase the awareness of study abroad on campus and bring U.S. and international students together. Both international students and domestic students have expressed that participating in club activities was a high point of their campus experience.

Consult Experts

In addition to a student club, create an advisory council of faculty and staff to help with recruitment issues. Challenge those who voice concerns over minority participation to join your efforts to make a difference. Often study abroad advisors are asked, “Why don’t you send more students of color abroad?” or express that they think study abroad is an elitist endeavor. If such a person approaches you, enlist his/her help in changing the status quo.

Be Yourself/Be Sincere

Don’t try to patronize or overcompensate. Minority students are not a monolithic block of people with the same issues and interests. Try to meet the students where they are and let them ask the questions before you supply the answers. Even the best study abroad advisor can’t be all things to all people. Be honest- if you don’t have the answer to a question refer the student to someone who does. Then check back in with the student to see if he got the help he needed.

Study abroad may not be right for everyone, but everyone should have the opportunity to make an informed choice. It is our job as international educators to continue to give students a chance to evaluate how study abroad can fit into their education and, if only for a moment, live free of the monolithic block of people with the same issues and interests. Try to meet the students where they are and let them ask the questions before you supply the answers. Even the best study abroad advisor can’t be all things to all people. Be honest- if you don’t have the answer to a question refer the student to someone who does. Then check back in with the student to see if he got the help he needed.

Study abroad may not be right for everyone, but everyone should have the opportunity to make an informed choice. It is our job as international educators to continue to give students a chance to evaluate how study abroad can fit into their education and, if only for a moment, live free of the constraints and oblivion caused by the “not-for-me” syndrome.

References

“For institutions such as ours, a community college serving many first generation college students, programs such as Gilman provide exciting opportunities for our students to take advantage of our courses that include travel and coursework in another country and culture. Given that we have limited institutional financial aid funds and are trying to keep our students’ borrowing to a minimum, the Gilman International Scholarship provides valuable assistance.”

Many study abroad offices nationwide have also utilized their financial aid office to reach out to Pell Grant students on their campus. They indicate this is often a population they find hard to reach out to but one that they would like to encourage to study abroad. By working with their financial aid office advisors can generally obtain a list of Pell Grant recipients on their campus and e-mail them an invitation to attend an informational session on study abroad where scholarships, such as the Gilman Program, are highlighted. In this way advisors are addressing the primary concern of these students, funding for their study abroad experience. This in turn helps them see study abroad opportunities as viable options that are truly open to all students.

However, financial aid offices and advisors are not the only avenue for outreach to underrepresented groups on your campus. The Gilman Scholarship has had success in reaching out to minority students by reaching them where they are. Through working with minority serving institutions, diversity/minority offices, area studies departments, and by encouraging returned Gilman Scholars to conduct outreach to minority student organizations on campus the Gilman Scholarship has been highly successful at increasing applications from these groups. In the 2003-2004 academic year 12.9% of Gilman recipients self-reported their ethnicity as African-American compared to 3.5% African-American participation in study abroad nationwide as reported in 2003 by Open Doors. As Betty Aikens from Howard University, a Historically Black University located in Washington, DC, has stated:

“The Benjamin A. Gilman Scholarship Program provides minority and economically disadvantaged students opportunities to broaden their horizons through study abroad experiences. Such opportunities are extremely important, for, as America’s population becomes more diverse and the world more competitive and complex, it is imperative that the talents of all Americans be enhanced and enriched. Study abroad is indeed an enhancing and enriching experience and one which the Benjamin A. Gilman Scholarship Program seeks to make available to wider audience of talented and gifted students.”

By no means are these the only two categories of underrepresented students that the Gilman Scholarship is reaching out to and encouraging to apply. One area that the Gilman Program is particularly seeking to encourage participation in is study outside of Western Europe, Australia and New Zealand. In the 2003-2004 academic year 56.7% of applications were for Western Europe but only 36.4% of Gilman recipients were awarded to study in this region. Many of those awarded to study in Western Europe were community college students or students that fell into other underrepresented categories. Academically in the 2003-2004 academic year 4.1% of Gilman Scholars were Engineering majors compared with the 2.9% reported in Open Doors 2003 for national study abroad participation. Through reaching out directly to academic departments and programs targeted to specific majors, such as student teaching abroad programs, the Gilman Scholarship helps to ensure that professors have the ability to share information on this program with students in their classes and departments. The Gilman Program is also initiating increased efforts to reach out to students of non-traditional age and those with disabilities. Through working with organization such as Mobility International and the National Clearinghouse on Disability and Exchange this program hopes to reach an increasing number of advisors who can then share information on the Gilman Scholarship with their students.

Ultimately the greatest achievement of the Gilman Scholarship are the over 1,200 students this program has already served. Gilman Scholars have gone on to receive Fulbright Awards to study in India, Iceland and South Korea; have received prestigious national scholarships to fund graduate study in the United States and abroad; are currently working or teaching English abroad; and are successfully pursuing teaching and other careers here in the United States. The Gilman Scholarship will continue to reach out to a broad range of students nationwide and encourage them to pursue study abroad opportunities by addressing their concern of financing this dream. As JEB Thronton of The Evergreen State College in Washington has stated:

“I serve first-generation and low-income students who struggle to hold the vision of completing a four-year degree. They rarely have the image of actually being able to travel abroad as part of their education. The Benjamin A Gilman International Scholarships offers these students two powerful gifts. The first is the dream of study abroad and the second is the ability to realize this dream. Many of the students I work with do not receive the Gilman scholarships, yet they continue to hold the dream of travel. For those that do receive the Gilman scholarship, their lives are changed forever.”

For more information on the Gilman International Scholarship please access the Gilman Web site at www.iie.org/gilman or contact Sarah Phillips directly at spillows@iie.org or (713) 621-6300 x 12.
Underrepresentation in Education Abroad

Comparative Data on Race and Ethnicity

The following data tables were prepared to provide basic demographic data on the U.S. population, U.S. higher education enrollment and U.S. student participation in education abroad for comparative purposes.

Comparative data by percentage

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<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
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<td>1.8%</td>
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* U.S. Census data provides separate data on Hispanic/Latino populations
** Includes Hawaiian/Pacific Islander populations

Comparative data by number

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</tbody>
</table>

* U.S. Census data provides separate data on Hispanic/Latino populations
** Includes American Indian/Alaska Native populations

Sources:

- U.S. Census 2000, censtats.census.gov/data/US/101000.pdf
- Open Doors 2004, opendoors.iienetwork.org/?p=49953

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Study Abroad Tuition Program Reaches Out to Latinos

In an effort to encourage Latinos to study abroad, the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities and Laureate International Universities, a NAFSA Global Partner, have created one of the largest study abroad scholarship programs. The program will award more than $8 million in study abroad tuition scholarships.

Additional information can be found on HACU’s Web site:
www.hacu.net/hacu/MA_Laureate_Scholarships_EN.asp?SnID=1591852420
NAFSA's membership in the United States is organized into 11 geographic regions, which provide the all-important grass roots strength of the association.

**Region I** (AK, WA, OR, ID)
Tami Scheibach
tscheibach@cityu.edu
Regional Conference - Eugene, OR: October 19-22, 2005

**Region II** (MT, WY, UT, CO, NE, KS, AZ, NM) Rep needed
Regional Conference (with Region III) - Colorado Springs, CO: November 8-11, 2005

**Region III** (OK, AR, LA, TX)
Michelle Pickard
mpickard@iie.org
Regional Conference (with Region II) - Colorado Springs, CO: November 8-11, 2005

**Region IV** (ND, SD, MN, IA, MO)
Cathy Huber
huberc@arcadia.edu
Regional Conference - Des Moines, IA: November 9-11, 2005

**Region V** (WI, MI, IL)
Chris Bragdon
cbragdon@butler.edu
Regional Conference - Springfield, IL: November 6–8, 2005

**Region VI** (IN, OK, KY)
Yating Chang
yating.chang@wku.edu
Regional Conference - Louisville, KY: November 6–8, 2005

**Region VII** (TN, NC, SC, GA, AL, MS, FL, PR, VI)
Malaika Marable Serrano
malaikam@utk.edu
Regional Conference - Birmingham, AL: November 6-8, 2005

**Region VIII** (PA, WV, VA, DE, MD, DC)
Carol Larson
larson@ucis.pitt.edu
Regional Conference (with Region X) - Atlantic City, NJ: November 7-10, 2005

**Region X** (NY, NJ) Rep needed
Regional Conference (with Region VIII) - Atlantic City, NJ: November 7-10, 2005

**Region XI** (VT, NH, MA, RI, CT)
Dawn Anderson
da.anderson@neu.edu
Regional Conference - Sugarloaf, ME: November 7-9, 2005

**Region XII** (HI, CA, NV)
Kebokil Dengu-Zvobgo
kebokil_dengu-zvobgo@pitzer.edu
Regional Conference - Anaheim, CA: October 10-13, 2005