

Growing Rapidly at Small, Medium, and Large Institutions

WITH EDUCATION ABROAD MORE POPULAR THAN EVER, how are institutions around the country fostering program growth? The experiences of four widely divergent institutions below show how education abroad growth is being driven not only by student demand but also by institutional commitment to policies that facilitate overseas study for a wider swath of students. These schools are extending opportunities to students who have done little travel, who cannot afford to study abroad without financial assistance, or whose majors—science, engineering, business, health and medicine—typically do not grant them time or credit for education abroad.

Stonehill College

EDITOR'S NOTE: This article is meant to provide case-study examples of four institutions that have progressed in education abroad offerings in recent years.

For a Catholic institution of 2,300 students south of Boston, Stonehill's 38 percent growth in education abroad numbers over the last five years is striking. Nearly 35 percent of Stonehill students participate in education abroad in semester-long programs and the remaining 5 percent of students participate in full-year programs; the college does not offer short-term programs. This is even more intriguing in light of its student profile: Many Stonehill students are first-generation college goers who have never left New England, observes Alice Cronin, Stonehill's assistant director of international programs; almost 80 percent of students receive institutional aid.

What's driven the growth? Six years ago, college leaders looked at peer schools and decided to beef up campus global education opportunities, says Cronin. They created a new office in 2001 to centralize the separate education abroad initiatives faculty had been handling on their own. The office was a catalyst for formulating clearer education abroad policies and procedures.

Stonehill has no education abroad programs of its own; students participate in some 100 programs offered by a handful of providers that the college faculty has carefully vetted and with whom Cronin maintains a personal relationship. Most students go to Western Europe. Deliberately reaching out to faculty and department chairs has been key to securing interest and support for education abroad. International program

office staff speak one-on-one with department chairs to discuss how to stir student interest, and send faculty on site visits abroad to evaluate programs. Information about education abroad starts early—student tour guides raise it with visiting students, and administrators stress it at freshmen orientation. Education abroad staff visit first- and second-year classrooms to promote

an overseas experience. "We also do a summer mailing to parents of rising sophomores who meet G.P.A. requirements," says Cronin, referring to a letter that congratulates parents on their child's successful semester, explains their student's eligibility for education abroad, and includes a brochure. One effective way of spreading the word came about spontaneously. In 2007 a group of Stonehill students who had studied abroad

Stonehill College

Small, private, liberal arts college

38 percent increase in education abroad in the last five years

NAFSA's *Strengthening Study Abroad: Recommendations for Effective Institutional Management*, a report released in January 2008, offers campus leaders principles and guidelines to consider as they send growing numbers of U.S. students overseas. It is available online at www.nafsa.org/imsa.

Criteria for the Institutional Management of Study Abroad

Institutional Commitment

1. Institutional planning has established and embedded study abroad as an integral element in the academic offerings of the institution.
2. A financially sustainable plan is in place to support the study abroad office.
3. Study abroad is integrated into the academic life of the institution.
4. Systems and processes are in place to provide institutional oversight.

Study Abroad Infrastructure

5. There is a structured approach to program planning and a faculty-driven process for course approval and credit transfer.
6. Study abroad options are regularly updated to respond to academic opportunity and student need.
7. Clear institutional policies guide study abroad credit transfer.
8. Programs promote the health and safety of students studying abroad, and manage institutional risk.
9. Programs are regularly evaluated, and evaluation leads to improvements.

Adequate Resources

10. The institution actively seeks and retains knowledgeable and experienced personnel to lead and operate the study abroad office.
11. Financial aid policies and fundraising practices encourage student participation in study abroad.
12. Policies and practices are in place that control the costs associated with study abroad programs.

Clarity and Accountability

13. Critical information related to study abroad is communicated to all stakeholders.
14. Clear contracting and auditing procedures exist, including conflict-of-interest

applied for special interest housing under the theme “global awareness.” Their goal has been to share their overseas experiences with other students by holding open houses and visiting dorms to chat up students.

Cronin ascribes the education abroad explosion on her campus to all these factors and to the college’s policy on financial aid portability. Since fall 2004 the college has permitted its many students who receive some form of financial assistance to use it while studying overseas. Students used to forfeit their institutional aid when they went abroad. Stonehill loses money when students use their aid overseas, but usually makes it up through full-paying students. “We’re on that fine line,” says Cronin.

Santa Clara University

A mid-size Jesuit-run Catholic school in California’s Silicon Valley, Santa Clara has more than doubled its education abroad student numbers in the last four years, from 250 to 650. Since 2005 Santa Clara’s enrollees also have been given the green light to take their institutional aid abroad. This policy change is behind 20 to 30 percent of the jump in education abroad numbers, figures Barbara Colyar, director of study abroad. The school’s board of trustees approved this and other changes aimed at making education abroad more affordable for all students. Coffers suffer when students apply their financial aid abroad, but a significantly increased university endowment over the last ten years has enabled the new policy. In its quest to be “as fair as possible,” says Colyar, the university also has a multi-tier fee structure for its education abroad programs, directly tied to costs. A \$5,000 increase occurs between fees for its service missions to developing world countries and those for its more costly affiliated provider programs.

The Ward Building at the Feinberg School of Medicine, Northwestern University, downtown Chicago campus

Showing his support, every fall at university expense the president sends faculty and administrators to El Salvador to witness “how the [service mission] program changes lives,” says Colyar. Seeing the Santa Clara-run program for themselves helps garner faculty support for spending time abroad, she says.

More undergraduate business and science students are heading overseas because the university has expanded overseas options for these majors. Popular among business students are the IES programs in Barcelona and Freiburg (Germany) and Syracuse Madrid, which offer internships and core business classes. Business faculty have facilitated education abroad by rearranging some of their course timing around overseas offerings.

Engineering students are now going to England, Scotland, and Australia, where they receive course credits. “Encouragement from faculty has helped,” according to Colyar. Most of the school’s science students who go abroad attend the Danish Institute for Study Abroad (DIS). “A number of our faculty in biochemistry fall in love with this program,” she says, referring to DIS’s biotech and biomedicine and medical practice and policy programs, which are especially attractive to students. Boston University’s Dresden program for science students mirrors Santa Clara’s sophomore requirements. “We are using the same book being used in this program, so faculty are willing to let this count for our courses with the same title,” notes Colyar. Often students only get upper division major elective credit abroad, but with this program they can fulfill major core requirements.

Colyar’s office is also trying to recruit campus athletes for education abroad. Some sports break for the winter quarter, and coaches with whom she’s spoken are not against their athletes leaving campus then. She is also looking at ways for athletes to participate in short-term overseas trips.

University of Georgia

This state university tripled its education abroad participation in the last decade. The main reason? Kasee Laster, director of study abroad, points to a campus-wide commitment to provide assistance for students who want to study abroad. “There aren’t many other units on campus that have a development office and development goals that haven’t included study abroad in those priorities,” she says. The president speaks of education abroad at every opportunity, “before the legislature, everywhere”—and faculty and staff embrace it.

About \$60,000 a year of support for overseas study is channeled to students through the office of international education. Laster ticks off the names of more than a half-dozen scholarships from the statewide university system, the alumni association, and several private foundations. But education abroad at the 32,000-student university is decentralized, and individual colleges also provide their own funds for these endeavors. The school’s honors program alone issues a whopping \$326,000 a year. Georgia’s 2,500 undergraduate honors students can request education abroad assistance, and the elite “foundation fellows” among them receive additional funds.

Private support to go abroad contributes to individual students’ ability to study overseas, but Laster says the university’s numbers would be high anyway because many students can afford education abroad without such help. “A large portion of our students’ parents know study abroad is important. Even after 9/11

we didn’t dip, we just didn’t grow as much as we had previously.”

Part of what makes education abroad affordable is the fact that the majority of University of Georgia students pay no college tuition. These students receive the state’s unique HOPE scholarship. Funded by the Georgia Lottery for Education, it grants free tuition to state high school graduates who are legal residents and maintain a 3.0 grade point average.

The university has expanded education abroad participation by increasing its faculty-led resident credit programs and its exchange partners, but heightened interest in education abroad among law and business students has also sparked some

of the growth. The American Bar Association’s recent approval of education abroad programs in law has inspired more options, says Laster. Georgia offers several programs for law students abroad including a semester at Oxford University and a “Maymester” in China with the option of clerking in Chinese firms. The business school has created appealing short-term options: micro-lending in Costa Rica, and a popular program in China in which Georgia faculty accompany students to meet local Chinese and Western executives. Education abroad will become very common for law and M.B.A. students, predicts Laster, who projects growth in the overall graduate student population going abroad.

Northwestern University

The doubling of education abroad numbers that Northwestern has seen in the last seven years occurred spontaneously. “We didn’t have time to do much marketing,” says assistant director of the school’s study abroad office, Dana Bumpus. Many students arrive on this

