

SHORT-TERM GRANTS, LONG-TERM IMPACT: Creating Institutional Change in Study Abroad

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Executive Summary

PURPOSE OF STUDY

For the last seven years, NAFSA: Association of International Educators has worked with public and private sector partners to implement study abroad grant programs aimed at increasing institutional support for international education. This report is the second in a series that will evaluate the impact of those study abroad grants on the participating higher education institutions. These grants, termed “Innovation Grants,” are designed to help institutions of higher education address the institutional, curricular, and cultural barriers that keep students from studying abroad.

RESULTS

The analysis confirmed the results of the 2016 *Moving the Needle: Leveraging Innovation for Institutional Change in Study Abroad* report that found that “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.” Along with reporting an increase in the number and diversity of students studying abroad and an increase in support for study abroad from campus leadership, the report also found that the impact of the grants went beyond those students who participated in the grant-funded study abroad program. In addition to generating interest and excitement within the broader student community, even those students who didn’t study abroad benefitted from new curricular and research opportunities developed during the grant period. Thus, the Innovation Grants created a ripple effect, expanding awareness and opportunity beyond the specific study abroad or international education office.

The report also explores how a diverse set of higher education institutions defines success and sustainability in assessing study abroad on their campuses. In

addition, the study highlights new curricular models and approaches to faculty engagement in study abroad.

Sustaining the Impact of Innovation Grants

As originally noted in *Moving the Needle*, an institution did not need to win a grant to feel the impact of the Innovation Grant programs. The mere act of applying for an Innovation Grant pushed institutions to develop or deepen partnerships on campus and with international organizations, and although responses from institutions that did not receive funding were limited, some indicated that they continued to pursue their project even without an Innovation Grant. Simply providing study abroad champions an opportunity to build relationships and articulate a vision pushed higher education institutions to do more to provide study abroad opportunities for their students.

The data showed that for the institutions that did receive funding, the impact of the grants was felt for several years after the initial grant expired. Participants in the follow-up survey reported that more than 60 percent of the grant activities were continued two years after the external grant funding ended and at least 50 percent expected the activities to continue in year four. This ongoing commitment is one of the most encouraging findings of the report, and is reflected both in increases in student participation overall as well as in sustained commitments to the targeted study abroad program.

Diverse Institutions, Diverse Approaches

A diverse set of higher education institutions has received Innovation Grants. In 2016, the finalists who received funding represented community colleges, large and small public universities, private institutions, and institutions in Puerto Rico. As noted above, the results of the survey indicate that grant winners across diverse types of institutions have been successful in sustaining

the grant activities. Another important finding from the report is that institutions used the grant to help them achieve their own specific study abroad goals. As one interview participant put it, “Sustainability is relative, and you have to think of all the different ways that that could be considered from the different institutions who have very different perspectives on what sustainability is.” Larger, more well-funded institutions were often able to sustain the program as it was designed in the original

The grant development and implementation leaders saw an opportunity to develop new study abroad models that would not have easily received internal support without the external funding and prestige associated with the granting agencies.

proposal, while schools that were still developing their study abroad strategies were able to take the lessons learned from implementing the grant proposal to advance their broader internationalization goals.

The differences in definition related to sustainability and success of the grant programs are important as they call attention to the varying ways that the Innovation Grants support institutional change. Simply continuing the same program is not necessarily the only marker of success or sustainability. Institutions pointed to changes that continue to support expansion of study abroad, including infrastructure support, community connections, new partnerships, and new curricular models as important indicators of success.

New Study Abroad Models and Faculty Engagement

Colleges and universities found many ways to integrate the one-year grant activities into the institution to maintain the study abroad programs initiated by the grant. Two specific themes emerged that supported sustainability—the creation of new curricular models and faculty engagement in study abroad and research.

The grant development and implementation leaders saw an opportunity to develop new study abroad models that would not have easily received internal support without the external funding and prestige associated with the granting agencies. These new study abroad models allowed institutions to reach new student populations and expand opportunities for students to study abroad. For example, some students at many of the funded institutions are from lower income families, who are working during the academic year and summer to support their educational expenses. To create more diverse study abroad options, many of the funded institutions created programs of varying lengths that were generally shorter duration (two to four weeks). These new successful programs stood in stark contrast to the semester-long programs historically offered at the institutions.

As indicated by survey respondents, faculty engagement is key to ensuring the integration of study abroad into the mission of the universities and to improving sustainability. A majority of participants noted an increase in faculty participation in study abroad as a result of the grant. Grantees frequently engaged faculty members by building international research opportunities into their programs. In fact, 66 percent of survey respondents noted that the grant project led to new research partnerships with foreign institutions.

HISTORY OF THE INNOVATION GRANT MODEL

Innovation Grants provide opportunities and incentives to 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, colleges and universities needed incentives to remove the institutional barriers preventing their students from participating. The Lincoln Commission advocated for a new national study abroad program that would primarily target higher

education institutions, rather than individual students, and Senator Richard Durbin (D-Ill.) and Senator Roger Wicker (R-Miss.) have introduced the Senator Paul Simon Study Abroad Program Act in the U.S. Senate that would create such a federal study abroad program. Over the past seven years, NAFSA has worked with several like-minded organizations to pilot Innovation Grant programs. This report builds on the knowledge gained from the 2016 *Moving the Needle: Leveraging Innovation for Institutional Change in Study Abroad* report and argues that Innovation Grants can be an effective tool to encourage institutions to make a long-term investment in study abroad.

CONCLUSION

Access to study abroad opportunities for all students is essential if the United States hopes to remain globally competitive and culturally literate. The major challenges and opportunities that college students will confront once they graduate are global in nature. Despite an increase in the total number of students studying abroad

each year, the overall percentage of college graduates who go abroad for credit during their college career has been stuck at 10 percent for years.

This report demonstrates that even relatively small incentive grants such as those administered under the Innovation Grants umbrella can have a long-term impact on higher education institutions, encouraging the creation of policies and programs that will benefit students and the community for years to come. In order to significantly increase the number of students who study abroad and to gain the advantages achieved through building global competencies, there must be a national effort to remove the barriers to study abroad as called for by the Lincoln Commission and the Senator Paul Simon Study Abroad Program Act. NAFSA will continue to work with policymakers and private sector allies to build support for study abroad and provide resources for colleges and universities to remove the barriers to study abroad so that it is the norm across U.S. higher education and not the exception.

100,000 STRONG IN THE AMERICAS INNOVATION FUND

The Innovation Fund is a public-private partnership between NAFSA, Partners of the Americas, and the U.S. Department of State. The Innovation Fund raises money primarily from the private sector to provide Innovation Grants to higher education institutions throughout the Western Hemisphere. To date, it has awarded more than \$2.5 million in grants to more than 100 institutions from more than 20 countries and has commitments to provide new Innovation Grants through 2018.

PARTNERSHIP FOR INNOVATION AND COLLABORATION IN STUDY ABROAD (PICSA)

PICSA is a grant program funded by the Embassy of France as part of the Transatlantic Friendship and Mobility Initiative with a goal of doubling the number of U.S. students studying in France and the number of French students studying in the United States by 2025. NAFSA has partnered with the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities and the Embassy of France to administer the program.

Introduction

Since 2010 NAFSA: Association of International Educators has helped administer a series of Innovation Grant programs designed to increase study abroad opportunities for U.S. college students. These one-time awards ranging from \$25,000 to \$60,000 encourage institutions of all sizes to increase or create study abroad programs that are responsive to unique institutional barriers and student demographics. The grant programs—the U.S. China Education Trust Student Leaders Exchange, the 100,000 Strong in the Americas Innovation Fund, and the Partnership for Innovation and Collaboration in Study Abroad—are based on the recommendations from NAFSA’s Strategic Task Force on Education Abroad¹ and the Commission on the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Fellowship Program.² The Task Force and the Lincoln Commission both recognized the important role that higher education institutions played in encouraging or discouraging students from studying abroad and recommended a national effort to get colleges and universities to prioritize study abroad and remove the barriers that students often encounter. Participation in the Innovation Grant programs have helped numerous institutions create or expand their framework for integrating study abroad more fully into the student experience.

In 2016 NAFSA released *Moving the Needle: Leveraging Innovation for Institutional Change in Study Abroad*,³ which tracked the initial impact of the Innovation Grant programs, finding that despite the relatively small size of the grants, this seed money put the institutions on a path toward long-term institutional change.

1 www.nafsa.org/securingamericasfuture

2 www.nafsa.org/lincolncommission

3 www.nafsa.org/movingtheneedle

Short-term Grants, Long-term Impact reports on the follow-up study NAFSA commissioned to determine whether those initial innovations and programs continued to flourish several years after receipt of an Innovation Grant. This study covers institutions that were awarded Innovation Grants through the 100,000 Strong in the Americas Innovation Fund and the Partnership for Innovation and Collaboration in Study Abroad program during the 2015 calendar year. In addition, the study tracked the impact of the grant application process on those institutions that applied for but did not receive grants in 2015. The study also returned to 2014 grant recipients to determine whether the impact measured in the *Moving the Needle* report had been sustained in the intervening year.

This report confirms the findings of the 2016 *Moving the Needle* report, demonstrating that Innovation Grants are an effective tool for increasing the number and diversity of students studying abroad while helping to integrate study abroad into the core functions of an institution of higher education. The report further explores how different types of institutions have used the grants to achieve their internationalization goals.

Since the release of the 2016 *Moving the Needle* report, Senator Richard Durbin (D-Ill.) and Senator Roger Wicker (R-Miss.) reintroduced the Senator Paul Simon Study Abroad Program Act,⁴ which would create a new federal study abroad program based on the same model as the Innovation Grants. The findings from *Moving the Needle* and *Short-term Grants, Long-term Impacts* should provide additional information and guidance for policymakers as they work toward expanding access to study abroad and ensuring that all students receive an international education.

4 www.nafsa.org/simon

Sustaining the Impact of Innovation Grants

In 2005 the Commission on the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Fellowship Program challenged policymakers and higher education leaders to think boldly and act aggressively to achieve the ambitious goal of sending 1 million U.S. college students abroad every year, leading to at least 50 percent of graduates studying abroad during their college career. The Lincoln Commission understood that this was a matter of national and economic security stating, “On the international stage, what nations don’t know can hurt them.” The Commission believed that this ambitious goal was not only achievable, but that the democratization of study abroad was in line with previous landmark higher education achievements such as the Morrill Act, which created the land-grant university system, and the G.I. Bill.

As the Lincoln Commission noted in its report, leadership from administrators and faculty is “the only way that study abroad will become an integral part of the undergraduate experience.”

Unfortunately, since that time study abroad participation throughout U.S. higher education has remained below 2 percent per year. Yet the necessity of educating a generation of globally engaged students has only continued to increase. As the Lincoln Commission explained, the well-being of the United States turns on our nation’s ability to interact with and understand different nations and cultures. To thrive, the United States needs college graduates who are comfortable living and working with people from around the world; the challenges of the twenty-first century require a global competence that is most easily met through study abroad programs.

To address this critical gap, NAFSA partnered with like-minded organizations to administer study abroad

grant programs based on the recommendations of the Lincoln Commission. The Innovation Grants provided by the 100,000 Strong in the Americas Innovation Fund and the Partnership for Innovation and Collaboration in Study Abroad are designed to encourage higher education institutions to remove the institutional, curricular, and cultural barriers that keep students from studying abroad. This latest study of Innovation Grants largely confirms the results of the 2016 *Moving the Needle* report, finding that the grants have a ripple effect throughout an institution. Simply applying for a grant leads to the creation of new partnerships and the identification of new resources on campus for study abroad. Initial implementation of the grants increased engagement and innovation in study abroad activities across campus, but also led to a deeper commitment to study abroad from the institutions involved. The study indicates that grant recipients actively integrated study abroad into their core curriculums and devoted resources to long-term increases in study abroad participation. In addition, the study places an increased emphasis on the unique ways in which each institution measures and identifies the grant’s impact on campus, especially in program sustainability and success, and in the development of new innovative curricular and faculty-led models of study abroad.

PARTNERSHIP AND RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

As noted in *Moving the Needle*, the act of applying for an Innovation Grant pushed institutions to develop or deepen partnerships within the university or college and with international organizations. Participants across the surveys and interviews identified the grant process as a reason to approach internal and external partners, resulting in a wide range of individuals engaged in the grant process. More than 80 percent of survey participants noted new or strengthened partnerships

outside the college or university, while 96 percent reported strengthening existing partnerships within the institution.

When asked what individuals or groups supported study abroad before and after the grant, survey respondents consistently noted an increase in support from the president, provost, college deans, department chairs, and internationalization leaders. The most notable increase in support was seen in department chairs and internationalization leaders, indicating that participation in the grant process can especially move the needle in this area of the institution. This increased awareness is critical, as all survey participants noted that leadership support is either extremely important (80 percent) or very important (20 percent) to study abroad activities.

The importance of strong relationships on campus and with outside partners cannot be overstated. As the Lincoln Commission noted in its report, leadership from administrators and faculty is “the only way that study abroad will become an integral part of the undergraduate experience.”⁵

Institutions also benefited from conversations about the need to provide matching funds and additional infrastructure, including financial and human resources, to support study abroad activities. In preparing the grant proposal, many different offices across the institutions showed a willingness to provide financial support for the grant including student scholarships, staff or faculty time, and general resources for study abroad. More than 85 percent of

FIGURE 1 How grants impacted partnerships

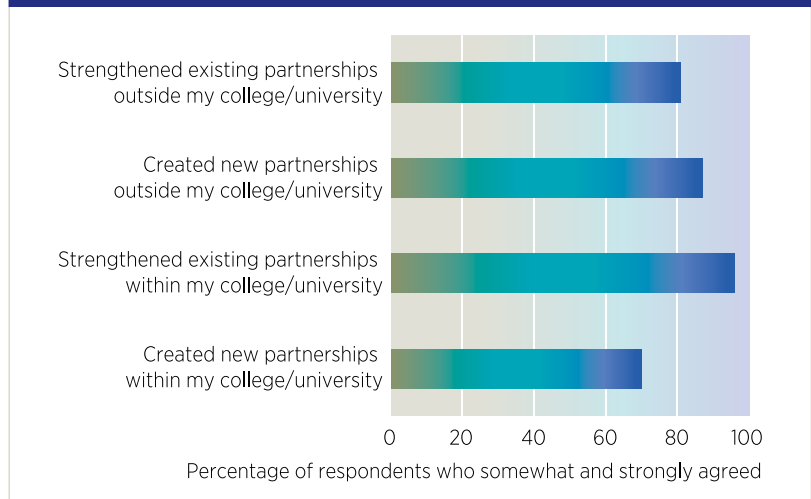
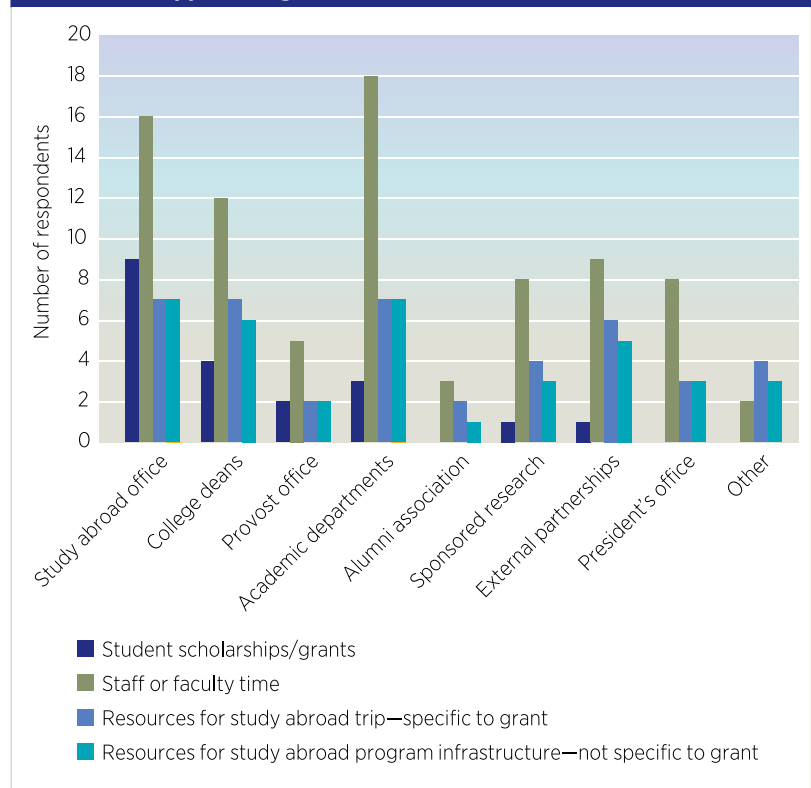


FIGURE 2 Did the following groups provide financial resources to support the grant activities?



those who completed the survey noted a high level of importance of these resources to the grant activity.

Discussions during the grant development stage increased the value of study abroad across campuses. Although responses from institutions that did not receive grants were limited, at least some continued to pursue their proposed project even without an Innovation Grant.

5 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

This suggests that the process of grant development, regardless of funding outcomes, has the potential to influence campus study abroad activities.

Innovation Grants provided higher education institutions the opportunity to engage new stakeholders on campus, in the community, and internationally to support study abroad activities and allowed study abroad champions to secure concrete financial commitments that are largely maintained even after the initial grant funding has ended (See Figure 5).

ENGAGEMENT AND INNOVATION

All of the institutions that received an Innovation Grant sent students abroad and many received students from international partner institutions. However, while direct impact can be measured by an increase in the number of students participating in the grant year, the indirect impact of the grants is even more striking. Consistent with the findings of the 2016 study, the grants stimulated institutions to continue to create or expand study abroad programs, engage new student populations, and build study abroad infrastructure that elevated the prestige of study abroad across their campuses.

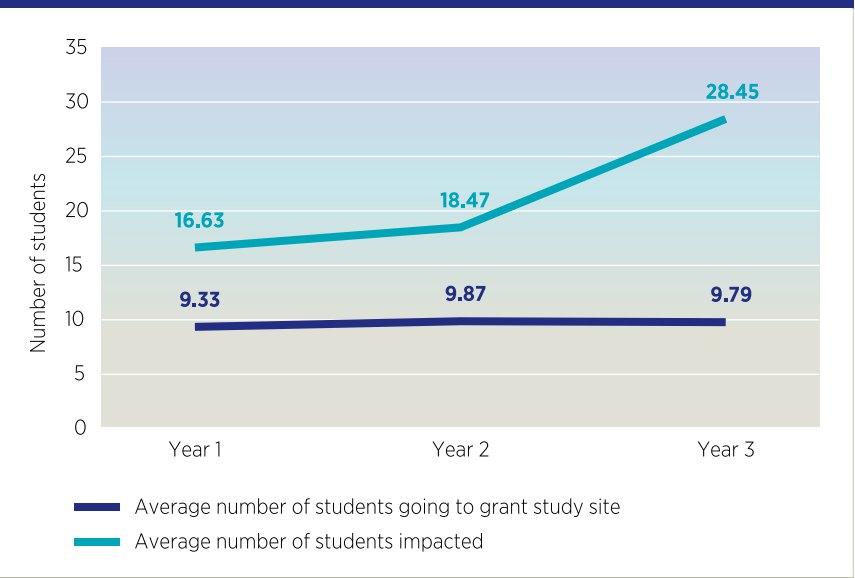
The number of students who benefitted from the grant continued to grow, even two years after the grant period had ended.

The following table shows the increase in the average number of students benefitting from the grant programs, either through direct study abroad experiences or through curricular changes related to the grant work. The number of students who benefitted from the grant continued to grow, even two years after the grant period

had ended. And importantly, the students participating in study abroad programs to the funded site stayed fairly consistent through the first years of the program, despite only receiving funding for the initial year of the program.

New student populations were able to study abroad due to the grant activities. When asked to indicate level of agreement, 86 percent of respondents agreed to the statement: “More students are interested in studying abroad due to the grant” and “New student populations

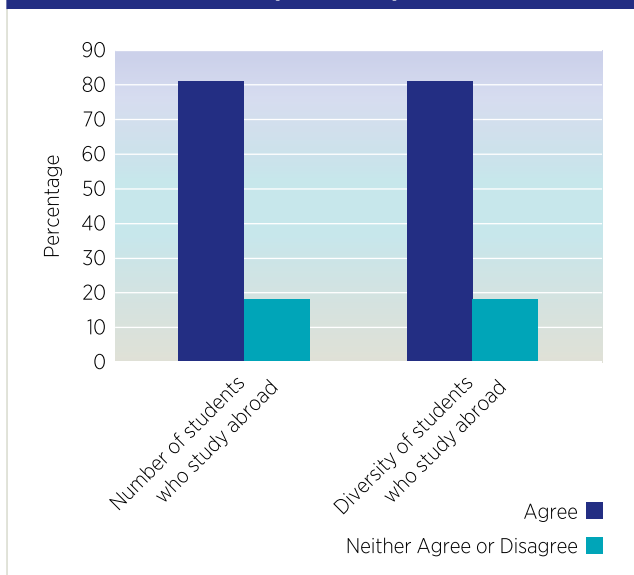
FIGURE 3 Student benefits from grant during and after grant period



studied abroad due to the grant funding.” The new type of student engaged was specific to the grant goals but generally fell into the categories of diversity by academic discipline and socioeconomic status.

One survey respondent noted, “There is now a higher number of underrepresented students in engineering who are applying for study abroad programs, due to the recruitment of students from this population for this grant.” It should be noted that although groups of students participating were somewhat dependent on institutional type (noted in the next section), at each funded institution a new group of students engaged in study abroad activities.

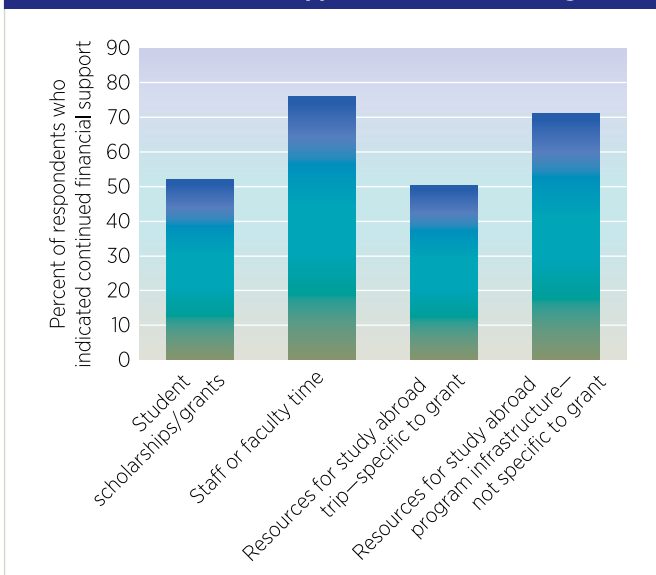
During grant implementation, grant winners engaged new student populations and created innovative new

FIGURE 4 Grant had a positive impact on . . .

programs to increase study abroad participation. The excitement generated by these programs may account for the continued participation even after the end of grant funding. Notably, the broader impact of the grant activities on students, whether they participated in the specific program or not, grew in the years following the grant period.

INTEGRATION AND SUSTAINABILITY

A major challenge in any externally funded grant program is sustainability beyond the funding period. The Innovation Grants are designed to help institutions integrate study abroad into the functions of the institution so that going abroad becomes the norm on campus, instead of the exception. The survey found that institutions generally noted a continuation of the institutional funds and grant activities, including internal collaboration, external partnerships, and leadership support. When asked if the grant activities continued beyond the year of funding, 26 of the 29 respondents indicated continuation of grant activities and expansion of study abroad. In addition, nearly all survey respondents noted that study abroad across campus continued to grow or stayed at elevated levels after grant completion. Of the 10 institutions in the follow-up survey, eight had continued the grant activities, including

FIGURE 5 Did financial support continue after the grant?

courses designed for study abroad, faculty mobility, and funding, and indicated that study abroad continued to grow or expand in year two. And all respondents to the follow-up study agreed that new and existing internal collaborations and external partnerships remained strong. This is noteworthy as the follow-up study participants are at least two years post grant period.

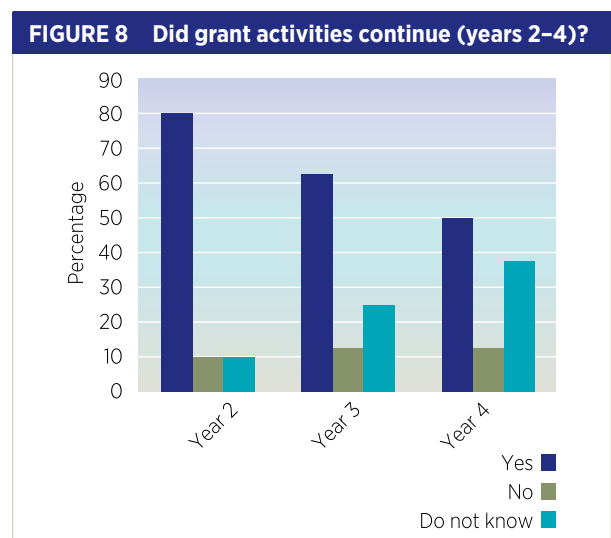
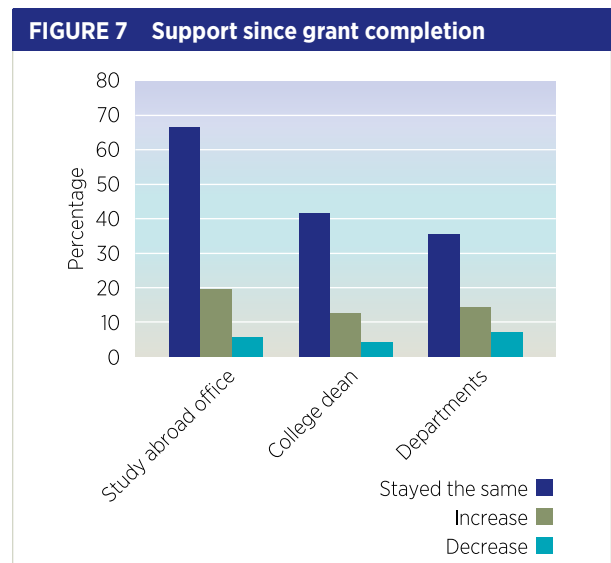
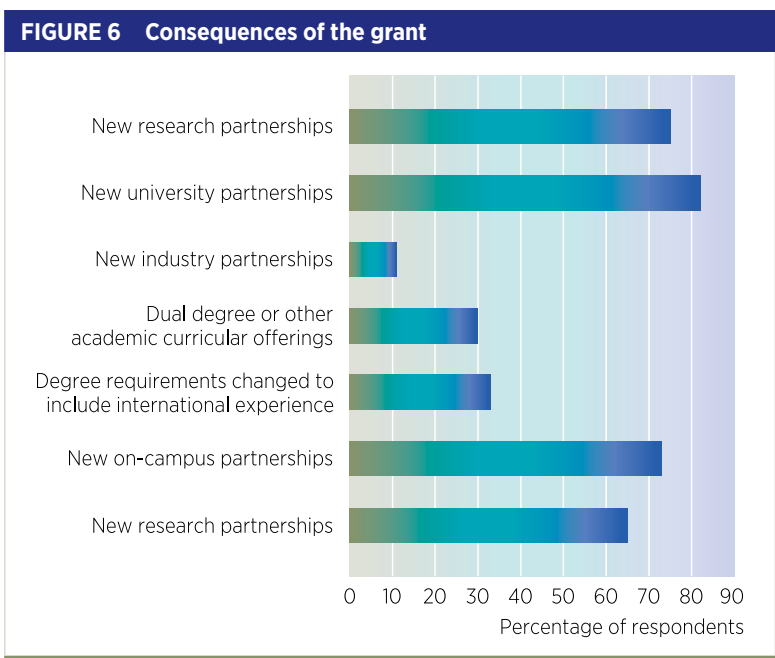
When asked if financial support continued after the grant, a majority of participants noted continuation of student scholarships, institutional resources, and staff and faculty time.

Of the 10 institutions in the follow-up survey, eight had continued the grant activities, including courses designed for study abroad, faculty mobility, and funding, and indicated that study abroad continued to grow or expand in year two.

Beyond resources, many new activities related to grant funding emerged. Survey respondents overwhelmingly noted that new study abroad programs, university partnerships (external), and other on-campus (internal) partnerships were triggered by the grant process and continued after the expiration of the grant period.

More generally, the grants have led to more awareness and support for study abroad across campus. Most survey respondents agreed that grant activities generated a broader awareness of study abroad, more support within the institutions, and more support from campus leadership. One survey respondent provided an excellent example of how the grant further integrated study abroad into the institution: “I attribute the creation of my position (as faculty director for internationalization) to the awareness of the grant by administrators, which led to awareness of me and my internationalization ‘agenda.’ I was able to secure funding from two places on campus to allow me to develop a Faculty Learning Community on how to develop faculty-led programs for first-generation students in 2016–17, and this will occur again in 2017–18 as a way to increase the number of faculty-led programs. I also was able to secure funding for student assistants to help with program development and outreach.”

The follow-up survey of institutions that engaged in the 2016 study reveals that support for study abroad activities did not fall after the grant period ended and, in some cases, support continued to increase. For more than half of those institutions, grant activities are expected to continue 3 years after the initial grant period has expired. But even for those institutions that don’t continue the specific grant activities it does not necessarily mean that study abroad activities will decline. Study abroad programs react to the changing needs of students, faculty, and institutions and evolve over time to meet those needs. At the 3-year mark, the continuation of specific activities may not be the most telling measure of impact; instead, subsequent studies may require analyzing the ripple effects and overall increases in study abroad attributed to the initial grant.



Diverse Institutions, Diverse Approaches

A range of higher education institutions have applied for the Innovation Grants since their inception. The 2016 recipients included institutions in Puerto Rico, community colleges, large and small public universities, and private institutions located in urban, suburban, and rural areas. Each institution, however, reflected a unique history of study abroad programming with a variety of funding streams. While some institutions support study abroad through dedicated institutional funds, others rely on external grant dollars and student fees. Results from this study reveal important ways that institutional histories, cultures, student populations, and funding structures affect study abroad program infrastructure, support, and participation.

DEFINITIONS OF SUCCESS AND SUSTAINABILITY

The results of the survey indicate that grant winners have been successful in sustaining the grant activities, even after the grant expired. More than 80 percent indicated that they were continuing their grant activities after the grant period (Figure 8), and the follow-up survey noted a high number of institutions continued the grant activities 2 years after the funding period with similar levels of funding. Interviews and open-ended questions on the survey revealed nuances and variations in the definition of sustainability and success that aligned with institutional context. Institutions with higher historical levels of financial support and with established infrastructures for study abroad often defined sustainability as continuing the program outlined and implemented as part of the grant process. An interview participant at a well-funded large public university explained how commitments from across the campus facilitated the grant:

HAND-HOLDING AT SNOW COLLEGE

Prior to its Innovation Grant award, Snow College in rural Utah had only sent students to study abroad in Japan, and the college has few institutional resources or personnel to support study abroad. One of the major challenges for smaller institutions that are beginning to establish study abroad programming, like Snow College, is organizational infrastructure and capacity. In particular, there is often a lack of personnel with knowledge of travel requirements, institutional funding, and other important administrative processes that affect study abroad programming and services. The Innovation Grant offered an opportunity to develop new partnerships and programming in Colombia through a large Colombian-based organization, and engaged new faculty members who effectively planned and ran the program. The interview participant explained the need for additional support: “If we were a university and we had a full-time study abroad office and we had all of these connections around, and all this experience with writing MOUs and doing this ... it would have been pretty smooth sailing.” He noted that institutions like his need additional support or “hand-holding” as they begin to understand how to run study abroad programs. Snow College’s experience is not unique. In the cases where institutions were expanding very limited offerings, the support provided via the grant—the “hand-holding”—allowed the institutions to begin to put into place needed infrastructure to support successful future programs. At Snow, the exact study abroad trip has not occurred again, but similar models have been employed for other programs with institutional support, and the college remains in contact with the Colombian partner for potential future visits.

“Funding at any state institution—or any institution to be honest—is always difficult, but there was enough support for this program internally, that when it came to asking for funding, typically people (were) very open to helping support on the inbound side. We were able to make this program run, we really wanted to see this program run. So, difficulty still existed, but not in actually gaining the financial support for the program. So, I felt very supported in the funding side of it.”

As with several well-funded institutions, the funding associated with the grant was only one of the many benefits and often not the primary catalyst for writing and implementing the grant activities. Having the opportunity to bring new internal collaborators into dialogue around new study abroad programs was the primary goal and benefit of the grant. Creating new study abroad programs with other areas of the university, such as with new academic units and faculty, offered opportunities for sustainability and defined success over and above securing the grant funds. Well-funded institutions can more easily continue the funding beyond the grant period but are often looking for new partners, particularly academic partners, to establish more cocurricular and sustainable programs.

Other participants defined sustainability beyond simply continuing the specific grant activities after the funding period. Rather, they viewed sustainability as continuing the model and practices embedded in the grant activity and using that model and associated practices to create innovative new models and approaches to study abroad. For example, one interview participant explained that the college was unable to continue the study abroad program funded by the specific partner but was able to take the success of the grant and create two new programs:

“So [our Colombian partner] might not feel like this grant was sustainable because we haven’t done anything this year...but it also helped the Guatemala trip this year. Even though we didn’t get that same partnership in the same project that we

had really been planning on, we had another really cool service-learning trip that was funded with money that had been promised because of the first grant that happened. Sustainability is relative, and you have to think of all the different ways that that could be considered from the different institutions who have very different perspectives on what sustainability is.”

Another definition of success and sustainability is the direct impact on the students themselves, including increased access to study abroad generally and continued participation in international research, travel, and other forms of professional development. At most of the institutions, the grant funding provided scholarships directly to students to offset the cost of the study abroad program. Many interview participants noted the funds as being essential to allowing students from diverse racial or ethnic backgrounds, lower socioeconomic status, and nontraditional academic disciplines to participate. One participant explained:

“I think [the grant] helped me to send students who wouldn’t have been able to afford it, for sure. I’m not sure that without funding, if I’m going to have that same audience. I think I’m going to go back to having the students that can afford it only. You know what I mean? That’s fine, because they’re great, too, but that’s going to change the whole game a little bit in terms of that diversity factor. So, if anything, I do think that [the grant] has really helped to move that agenda forward of making sure we don’t leave anyone out of this type of amazing experience. Because otherwise, that’s what would likely happen.”

Many participants shared similar sentiments, noting that having just a few students from nontraditional backgrounds study abroad has led to increased interest from those student demographics. Institutions have sought different funding sources to support those students such as fundraising, additional external grants, and internal collaborations.

A hallmark of success for the Innovation Grants beyond the grant period is related to the experience that students gained and how they translated those experiences to future endeavors. Each of the interview participants noted examples of students who were profoundly influenced by the study abroad program. One participant stated, “So I think that’s also very, very important when you’re looking at a program like [this] and measuring the success and the outcomes is to take those indirect factors into account of how the experience enabled these students to succeed in their own personal lives.” In one case, students attended a program in Colombia related to food studies and returned to write a proposal for a business venture. The interview participant noted, “Students will continue their communication with the professor, or the faculty who traveled with them. And some of them are developing these amazing proposals for actual businesses they want to put together.” Students also obtained jobs and other professional opportunities because of the study abroad experience.

“It’s not just the students that do the traveling. It’s the entire communities around where those people are.”

Another important indicator of success is related to the communities in which these colleges, especially small, rural community colleges, and students reside. One of the colleges brought in students from Colombia who interacted with community members. The interview participant told a story of a long, productive

conversation with a community member about the Colombian students participating in the program. The interviewer explained:

“Those students that came for the two weeks, and the two students that came for a semester, had such a powerful impact on the local people, too, and the students that are here. The lady in the coffee shop, we sat down, we had coffee. We talked about it for like 30 minutes. She said that she had seen *Narcos* on Netflix, and that’s the only thing she knew about Colombia. She said, ‘These guys seem really nice.’ I know that that seems kind of cliché, but to see that impact her, I don’t think that grant people realize how far, sometimes, something like this grant can reach. It’s not just the students that do the traveling. It’s the entire communities around where those people are.”

The differences in definition related to sustainability and success of the grant programs are important as they call attention to the varying ways that the Innovation Grants support institutional change. Moreover, it is important to acknowledge the variety of impacts and successes that these grant programs have beyond the organization itself, to include the communities of partnering locations. Simply continuing the same program is not necessarily the only marker of success or sustainability; rather, changes that continue to support expansion of study abroad, including infrastructure support, community connections, new partnerships, and new curricular models discussed later in the report are significant outcomes worth acknowledging.

New Study Abroad Models and Faculty Engagement

Colleges and universities found many ways to integrate the 1-year grant activities into the institution to maintain the study abroad programs initiated by the grant. Survey and interview respondents described collaboration and integration of faculty and curricula as essential to sustainability. Essentially, international education professionals expressed an awareness of the need to integrate study abroad into the main missions of the institution—teaching, learning, and research. By creating academic partnerships, courses with cocurricular study abroad experiences, and faculty-led programs, study abroad had a less centralized and more expansive and diffused role in the institution. An interview participant explained: “Sustainability has always been about teaching people—you know, my belief, of course, is that you really can’t have a good education without a study abroad experience, a good liberal arts education.”

Although sustainability is institutionally defined by the varying organizational contexts of the colleges participating in Innovation Grant activities, two specific themes emerged that supported sustainability, namely the creation of new curricular models and faculty engagement in study abroad and research.

NEW CURRICULAR MODELS

Across the survey and interviews, participants described the Innovation Grants as an opportunity to develop new study abroad models that differed from their typical programs and offerings. Innovation was dependent on the institutional context but generally referred to new curricular models, study abroad experiences of different durations, and programs to new areas of the world. The grant development and implementation leaders

ENGAGING STEM FACULTY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS-AUSTIN

The University of Texas-Austin developed a new partnership in the emerging academic field of intelligent systems in geoscience. The university had a goal of connecting and engaging undergraduate students in interdisciplinary STEM programs and used the Innovation Grant to help them achieve that goal. The grant created an opportunity to bring together two separate academic departments – geoscience and computer science – in shared coursework and to create a faculty-led study abroad experience in partnership with a Mexican university. The new interdisciplinary study abroad program is defined as “a new model of faculty engagement” that also includes faculty collaborating on research projects and faculty guest lecturing across institutions.

saw an opportunity to develop new models that would not easily receive support without the external funding and prestige associated with the granting agencies. Of the survey respondents, approximately half indicated that curricular change occurred due to the grant, which included creating new courses, introducing a new research focus for students, and engaging in curricular redesign to integrate study abroad in individual courses.

Institutions also created new models in previously unexplored academic disciplines, developed cocurricular experiences, engaged new forms of technology, and focused on faculty-led programs. One survey respondent explains curricular integration and the relationship to sustainability: “We are now working to develop an accelerated master’s degree and dual degree as a result of the grant. Additionally, the study abroad program is

still supported financially by the partner along with being partially subsidized. STEM students continue to be highly engaged and interested in this newly created pathway facilitated by the seed funding from the grant.” Another interview participant noted: “We are creating a new structure of collaboration that is based on program to program model support for funding student exchanges to help subsidized student short-term exchanges.”

Importantly, the curricular change continued after the grant period. This suggests that, in fact, sustainability and change is supported through curricular integration. More than half of the follow-up survey respondents indicated that there had been new or additional curricular changes since the grant ended. A participant noted: “We plan to continue to offer the course yearly and to develop other courses with other countries in the region... and to continue collaboration with relevant academic departments on curricular matches.”

STUDY ABROAD EXPERIENCES OF DIFFERENT DURATIONS

Multiple interview participants noted the challenge of recruiting students for semester or year-long study abroad programs. Students at many of the funded institutions are from lower income families, who are working during the academic year and summer to support their educational expenses. As one interview participant noted, “[A] lot of our students... because of their socioeconomic background, have never even considered the possibility of engaging in some type of semester abroad or even a short-term.” To create more diverse study abroad options, many of the funded institutions created programs of varying lengths that were generally shorter duration (2–4 weeks). These new successful programs stood in contrast to the semester-long programs historically offered at the institutions.

Figure 9 Faculty engagement in grant development/implementation

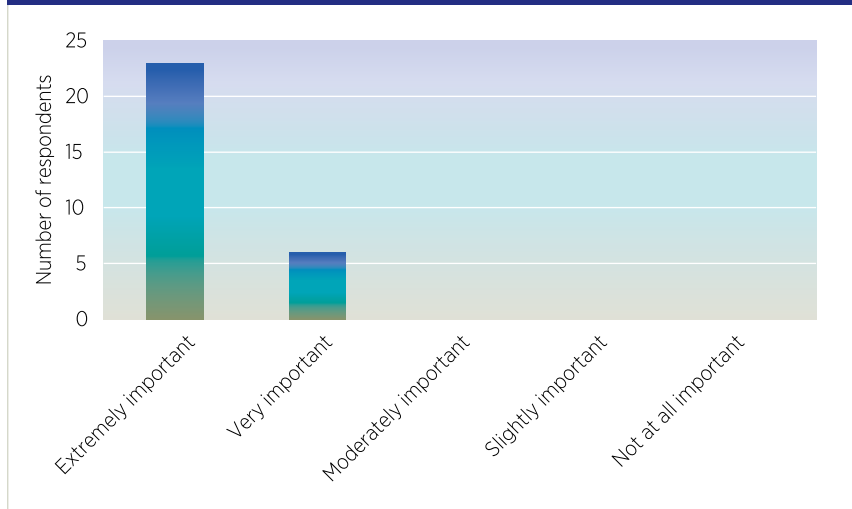
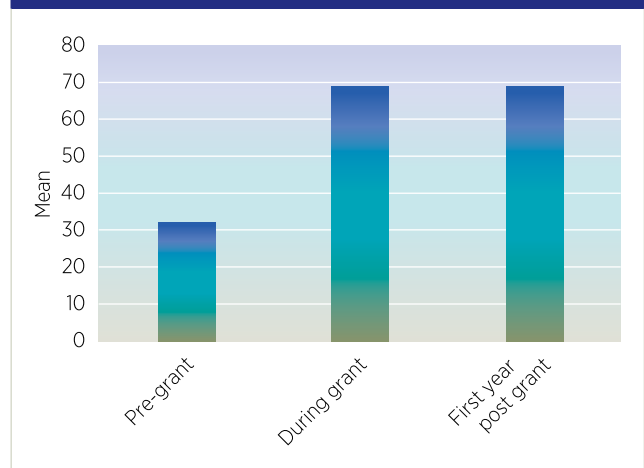


Figure 10 Level of faculty engagement in study abroad



FACULTY RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES

Increased faculty engagement was a result of grant development and implementation. Survey respondents generally stated that faculty participation in grant development and implementation was extremely important, with a majority of participants noting an increase in faculty participation as a result of the grant.

In addition, the follow-up survey respondents noted that the increase in faculty engagement during the grant period was sustained within the first year after the granting period ceased.

While not the stated intention of the Innovation Grants, many of the funded institutions developed new

research and industry partnerships that resulted in opportunities for faculty to engage in interdisciplinary and international research collaborations and research for undergraduate students. Of the survey respondents, 66 percent noted that new research partnerships and 33 percent noted that new industry partnerships developed as a consequence of the grant. One survey respondent explained: “Feedback regarding the exposure for undergraduate students in premiere research labs in France is not an opportunity many students are able to obtain outside this program. The ability to do high-level research greatly impacted the students’

academics and ability to have access to graduate school and their research focus.” One institution developed a three-country collaboration to research the quality of drinking water in their respective countries. In each case, the research opportunities supported continued engagement of faculty, development of new faculty-led programs, and research opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students. As indicated by survey respondents, faculty engagement is highly desirable as it helps to ensure integration of study abroad into the multiple missions of the universities and improve sustainability.

Conclusion

The Innovation Grants continue to empower individuals and departments in higher education to expand study abroad opportunities for undergraduate students. By providing a platform to create new internal and external partnerships and engaging institutional constituents (i.e., faculty and campus leaders) and international partners, the Innovation Grants help to support the development and implementation of new study abroad models on college campuses. The new models differ in their length, integration of curricula, and content to appeal to the changing needs of faculty and students on college campuses today. For example, international education professionals and faculty recognize that many new student populations are more interested in shorter-term (i.e., 2–4 weeks) as opposed to semester-long programs and in more interdisciplinary and academic credit-bearing programs. Participants across the surveys and interviews consistently noted that the Innovation Grants had a positive impact on how many students went abroad and engaged students from different demographic backgrounds and academic majors.

Success and sustainability of the Innovation Grants is found not in the simple question of whether or not students continued to participate in the specific study abroad program, but how the institution now engages in study abroad activities across campus.

A major challenge in higher education is sustainability of externally funded programs and initiatives after the grant period. Evidence from this study reveals an important relationship between institutional missions of teaching and learning and study abroad sustainability. Many study abroad professionals and faculty recognized that the grant activities needed to be integrated into

the institutional mission to remain supported after the grant period. New curricular models, academic partnerships, and faculty research development created opportunities to institutionalize the grant into university/college practices and financial models. Moreover, faculty-led study abroad was noted as a desirable, but challenging, goal for many of the study participants. The Innovation Grant allowed for faculty to experiment with integration of study abroad into their curricula and to create new interdisciplinary efforts that were once seen as untenable. Faculty international experiences also have a spillover effect on research partnerships and internationalization efforts across campus. Several faculty participants rethought their research agendas to include a more international component and developed subsequent research grants and projects with the international partners. These projects led to new undergraduate and graduate research opportunities.

How does institutional change differ across institutional types? The institutions funded under the Innovation Grants are diverse in geographic location, public or private status, and institutional funding for study abroad. The institutions have distinct climates for study abroad programming and cultures for internationalization activities. Results from this study provide additional evidence of the importance of institutional diversity in defining sustainability and success. Institutions with long histories and funding structures to support study abroad were able to develop new models for study abroad and use the success of the grant to promote the extension of the model to other programs. Institutions with less funding and established structures for study abroad built on the grant activities to create more infrastructure and show proof of student interest and institutional capacity to support more study abroad programming. In both cases, the interview and survey participants described resounding success from the grant activities regardless

of whether or not the specific grant funded study abroad program continued. Success and sustainability of the Innovation Grants is found not in the simple question of whether or not students continued to participate in the specific study abroad program but how the institution now engages in study abroad activities across campus.

The Innovation Grants support institutional change in study abroad on college campuses. Two years of evaluation provide evidence that the grants create new opportunities to develop, rethink, implement, and sustain new models for study abroad. The details of each successful grant differ as related to institutional type and culture, but changes in number of partnerships (internal and external), number of students, types of students, and engagement of academic departments and faculty is evident. However, the potential of the Innovation

The Innovation Grant allowed for faculty to experiment with integration of study abroad into their curricula and to create new interdisciplinary efforts that were once seen as untenable.

Grants to truly transform U.S. higher education is hindered by the limited scope of the current grant programs. To reach the goals set forth by the Lincoln Commission, dedicated and consistent funding, such as that proposed in the Senator Paul Simon Study Abroad Program Act, is essential. As the Innovation Grant programs demonstrate, even relatively small investments provide significant dividends for individuals, for campus communities, and for the future.

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. This research project is a follow-up study to the one conducted in 2016 and summarized in the *Moving the Needle* report. Included in the 2017 study is the new cohort of institutions that received and those that did not receive funding, but applied for the Innovation Grants. We also conducted a new follow-up survey of the 2015 grantees.

Following the study from 2016, 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 programs 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 and implementation of the grants, 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.

TABLE 1 Participating institutions and Associated Participant Roles

INSTITUTION	ROLE OF PARTICIPANTS
Flathead Valley Community College	International Educator
Miami Dade College	International Educator Coordinator
Snow College	International Educator
California State University-Los Angeles	Faculty Member & International Educator
Northeastern Illinois University	International Educator
Northwestern University	University Administrator
Western Michigan University	Faculty Member
The University of Pittsburgh	International Educator
The University of Texas at Austin	International Educator
Pontificia Universidad Católica de Puerto Rico	International Educator
Universidad del Este Puerto Rico	International Educator
Appalachian State University	Faculty Member
CUNY-College of Staten Island	International Educator
University of South Florida	Faculty Member
University of Texas El Paso	Faculty Member

Data collection began in February 2017 with a series of interviews of one campus representative on each of the funded campuses selected for this study. We selected campuses to achieve representation across the five 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 two campuses did not respond. We interviewed 16 individuals for approximately one hour each. One institution had two people present during the interview. All interview participants played a significant role in the grant and in most cases served as the principal investigator. Analyses of the interviews were formally conducted to identify relevant themes.

The two surveys designed in 2016 for the *Moving the Needle* report were disseminated to 34 grant-funded institutions, as well as a group of 20 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. Each of the two surveys had slight modifications to improve specificity related to the themes found in the 2016 project.

A survey was developed to query the respondents from 2016 that we termed the follow-up survey. To develop the survey, we shortened the funded institution survey and modified the questions to reflect changes that could occur post the funding period. The survey was sent to 26 institutions.

NAFSA and its partners conducted recruitment of survey respondents via e-mail during early April 2017. E-mails were sent to approximately 34 funded and 20 nonfunded institutions. For the follow-up survey, 26 institutions were sent an e-mail. The survey remained open for two weeks with multiple e-mail prompts to attempt to secure an adequate response rate. Of the funded institutions, 28 institutions responded for an institutional response rate of 82 percent. Conversely, we received very few responses on the nonfunded survey, only 10 total institutions with four indicating that they had received funding. The final number of responses was six. The follow-up survey also had few responses

at 13. Consequently, data provided in this report on the nonfunded and follow-up 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.

Table 2 Funded institutions That Responded to Funded Survey	
INSTITUTION	# OF RESPONSES
Texas State University	1
The University of Texas at Austin	1
Central New Mexico Community College	1
Inter-American University of Puerto Rico – San German Campus	1
University of Pittsburgh	1
Flathead Valley Community College	1
Snow College	1
West Virginia University	1
Virginia Commonwealth University	1
Fox Valley Technical College	1
Northwestern University	1
Miami Dade College	1
University of Texas at El Paso	1
Universidad Politecnica de Puerto Rico	1
Clemson University	1
Cal State University, LA	1
Universidad Autonoma del Estado de Mexico	1
Ana G. Mendez University System	2
Northern Arizona University	1
University of Arizona	1
Pontifical Catholic University	3
University of New Mexico	1
Inter-American University of Puerto Rico – School of Law	1
University of California-San Diego	2
San Francisco State	1
Inter American University, Metro-Campus	1
Appalachian State University	1
Universidad del Este	1
Total Responses	32

Survey responses among the five grant programs included: 2 (6 percent) Partnership for Innovation and Collaboration on Study Abroad (France); 8 (25 percent) 100,000 Strong in the Americas Innovation Fund – Santander Bank; 10 (31 percent) 100,000 Strong in the Americas Innovation Fund – Puerto Rico; 5 (16 percent) 100,000 Strong in the Americas Innovation Fund – SENA/CAF; and 5 (16 percent) 100,000 Strong in the Americas Innovation Fund – ExxonMobil. Two institutions did not indicate their respective program.

Among the 32 responses on the survey, nearly half (14 or 44 percent) indicated a role or title of campus administrator with a third (12 or 28 percent) as faculty.

A total of 10 individuals indicated a role of international education professional.

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.

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