



Sharpening Our Edge: Enhancing U.S. Competitiveness THROUGH STUDY ABROAD AND FOREIGN LANGUAGE AND AREA STUDIES

Nearly three-quarters of American college students want to study abroad.¹ Yet only 10 percent² do so before they graduate, largely due to the real or perceived cost of studying abroad.³ This hurts American competitiveness, workforce development, and global standing. Federal funding for study abroad and foreign language learning contributes to a more secure and prosperous United States.

Studying Abroad Boosts U.S. Students' Success and Careers

90 percent of study abroad alumni say that it helped them build job skills, including critical thinking, adaptability, and cross-cultural communication.⁴

Alumni who studied abroad **take on more leadership roles** more than their peers in the fields of IT, education, healthcare, and finance.⁵

Business students who studied abroad **earned \$4,000 more in their first job** than peers who did not, helping to **add \$1.8 billion in income** to the U.S. economy in 2024.⁶

Four-year graduation rates are 15 percent higher for students who study abroad.⁷

Global Experience Strengthens the U.S. Workforce and Economy

Studying abroad cultivates a **greater appreciation of American culture and values** and less fear of others.⁸

96 percent of U.S. business leaders surveyed said their **business would grow** with more globally experienced staff and 84 percent will prioritize international competence even more over the next decade.⁹

In the United States, **more than 41 million jobs are tied to international trade.**¹⁰

Global Students Shape U.S. Business, Culture, and Government



Robert Gates
Former U.S. Secretary of Defense and
Central Intelligence Agency Director



Catherine "Cady" Coleman
NASA Astronaut
high school exchange student in Norway



David Muir
Journalist, ABC News
college semester abroad in Spain



Reed Hastings
Founder and CEO, Netflix
Returned Peace Corps Volunteer