

# Deep Dive: Education Abroad Advocacy in the Time of COVID-19

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NAFSA: ASSOCIATION OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATORS



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# Today's Panelists



- **LaNitra Berger, PhD.**, Senior Director of Fellowships, George Mason University, NAFSA Vice President for Public Policy and Practice
- **Mark Farmer**, Director, Higher Education and Public Policy, NAFSA
- **Rebecca Morgan**, Senior Director, Media Communications & Advocacy, NAFSA

## **Moderator**

- **Erica Stewart**, Director, Advocacy & Media Outreach, NAFSA



**LaNitra Berger, PhD.**  
Senior Director of Fellowships,  
George Mason University;  
NAFSA Vice President for Public  
Policy and Practice



**Mark Farmer**  
Director, Higher  
Education and Public  
Policy, NAFSA



## U.S. Study Abroad

- Spring and summer programs cut short or cancelled
- Over \$1 billion in losses to higher education institutions
- Possibility of significant reduction in staff hours, furloughed staff, or eliminated positions
- Increased adoption of virtual exchange

## Outstanding questions:

- What is the capacity of our international partners to receive U.S. students?
- What will the interest in study abroad be from students? Parents? Faculty? Staff?
- How do we avoid retrenchment in equality and equity in education abroad?



## U.S. Study Abroad

# Congressional Asks

## Issue Brief:

- [Revive and Restore International Education Impacted by COVID-19](#)
- Urges Congress to provide critical financial resources, oversight, and policy changes to restore international education impacted by COVID-19
- Available on NAFSA's website: ["COVID-19 Legislation and Policy Resources"](#)

## Issue Brief



### Revive and Restore International Education Impacted by COVID-19

#### Executive Summary

NAFSA urges Congress to provide critical financial resources, oversight, and policy changes in order to revive and restore international student enrollment and study abroad programs at U.S. colleges and universities impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and the global response to it.

International student enrollment is critical to U.S. higher education institutions' financial well-being. Many international students pay full tuition, providing a key revenue stream (nearly [\\$41 billion and 458,000 jobs during the 2018-2019 academic year](#)) that supports operating expenses, including financial aid programs for many U.S. students. New international student enrollment was already down before the coronavirus pandemic, and it will most certainly be exacerbated now. An estimated 25% decline in international student enrollment for fall 2020 would translate to a loss of approximately \$10 billion and 114,000 jobs to our nation's economy. If U.S. higher education institutions are forced to downsize or close due to enrollment declines, that would have a major multiplier effect as many of these institutions serve as key economic engines and job-creators in their communities.

Study abroad programs run by U.S. college and universities and private-sector providers equip American students with the essential global competencies and experiences needed to succeed in today's global workforce and are important employers in their own right. Already a number of major study abroad providers have had to lay off over 50% of their staff while higher education institutions across the country have reported that they are reducing hours, furloughing employees, and eliminating positions, which will result in thousands of job losses. Without these programs, students are losing a key component of their education and colleges and universities are losing an important source of revenue.

However, 2020 could turn into the year without study abroad, with spring semester study abroad programs cancelled or cut short and the likelihood that all summer programs (and possibly even fall programs) will be cancelled. Absent additional financial support, it could take years for study abroad to recover.

To this end, NAFSA requests that Congress implement the following stimulus and policy changes:

1. Direct emergency aid to support education abroad, specifically supporting virtual exchanges, the Increasing and Diversifying Education Abroad for U.S. Students (IDEAS) Program and the Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education (FIPSE).
2. Ensure that international students and scholars are able to return to U.S. institutions of higher education when in-person classes resume and mitigate continued decline in international student enrollment by exercising oversight of visa and immigration policies.
3. Direct \$46.6 billion in aid to students and higher education institutions with flexibility to support study abroad and international offices.





# Congressional Asks

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## **1. Direct emergency aid to support education abroad:**

- a) Increase or newly establish funding for virtual exchange programs, such as the Stevens Initiative
- b) Increase funding for State Department's Increasing and Diversifying Education Abroad for U.S. Students (IDEAS) Program (formerly Capacity Building in Study Abroad Grant Program; run by ECA's USA Study Abroad Office)
  - i. FY2019 22 grant applications funded

The logo for the Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education (FIPSE) is displayed in a large, dark blue, stylized font. The letters are bold and blocky, with a unique design for the 'P' and 'S'. The logo is centered within a white circular area that has a dark blue, hand-painted border.

## Congressional Asks

### **Direct emergency aid to support education abroad:**

- c) Establish grant funding in the U.S. Department of Education's Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education (FIPSE) to support innovation in study abroad post-COVID-19 consistent with the Senator Paul Simon Study Abroad Program

# Congressional Asks

## **3. Direct \$46.6 billion in aid to students and higher education institutions with flexibility to support international offices.**

- a) International offices on U.S. campuses are particularly impacted by the cancellation of programs and the shift to online, distance, or virtual education platforms.
- b) Sufficient funding is essential for restoring institutions, including campus international offices, to normal operations.



## Congressional Asks



**4. Make technical changes to the Small Business Administration's Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) to ensure eligibility of international education providers and smaller private higher education institutions.**

- a) Clarify that smaller, private higher education institutions should not count students participating in work-study programs as employees
- b) Clarify that international education providers need only count their U.S.-based employees



**Rebecca Morgan**  
Senior Director, Media  
Communications and  
Advocacy



# Advocacy Engagement

**Advocacy is KEY in today's hectic political climate**

- Every interest group is working to make their wants noted by policymakers
- International Education, especially Study Abroad, will be missed if constituents don't make their voices heard.
- Lawmakers need to hear from their constituents, not lobbyists

# CONNECTING OUR WORLD

## TAKE ACTION!

1. Email your  
Members of Congress



## 2. Introduce (or reintroduce) yourself to their education staff

### Urge Congress to Direct Covid-19 Resources to Support Education Abroad

Reach out to the education staff supporting your elected officials.



Submit the form below and we will respond within 2-3 days with the education staffers' names, email addresses, and a sample message you may use to urge your lawmakers' support for COVID-19 resources for education abroad.

First Name

Last Name

Address Line 1



## Future COVID-19 Policy & Advocacy Webinars

- **Monday, May 11** – Deep Dive: International Student & Scholars, 2:00 to 2:30 pm EDT
- **Monday, May 18** – Deep Dive: Federal Financial Assistance, 2:00 to 2:30 pm EDT
- **Register at** [nafsa.org/deepdive](https://nafsa.org/deepdive)



# Questions?

Email: [grassroots@nafsa.org](mailto:grassroots@nafsa.org)

# NAFSA Resources



- [Education Abroad Knowledge Community Network](#)
- [Resources for Health and Safety in Education Abroad](#)
- [COVID-19 Legislation and Policy Resources](#)
- [Issue Brief: Revive and Restore International Education Impacted by COVID-19](#)
- [Take Action: Introduce Yourself to Your Lawmakers' Education Staff](#)
- [2020 NAFSA eConnection](#)
- [NAFSA "Deep Dive" Advocacy Webinars](#) - May 11 and 18 @ 2 pm EDT
- Today's presentation will be made available at [nafsa.org/deepdive](https://nafsa.org/deepdive)