

Post-Learning Abroad Survey 2013 Summer

Brief description of program / project:

The Learning Abroad Office facilitates opportunities for students to participate in a wide variety of opportunities across the disciplines and across the globe. This survey measures the effectiveness of our office's ability to market these programs as well as to provide the information necessary for success abroad. Since our office staff is not on-site during the programs, this survey also aids us in evaluating the role of the faculty directors and the students' overall academic and personal experience.

Who was asked to complete the survey:

Students who participated on a faculty-directed Learning Abroad Program during Summer 2013.

Response Rate: 24.94 % (109 of 437)

Administration Type: Email sent through Campus Labs

Summary of Key Findings:

Students learned about learning abroad opportunities at the University of Utah through a variety of mediums though those with the highest frequency were the Learning Abroad fair, Learning Abroad website, classrooms visits, and program promotion by faculty members.

Support Services

40.12% of respondents reported that they utilized Learning Abroad support services for assistance with program selection and program applications. 22.75% of respondents reported receiving advising for scholarships or Financial Aid.

Satisfaction

75.92% of respondents were satisfied or extremely satisfied with the services they received from Learning Abroad. The most frequent comments left by respondents talked about the Learning Abroad staff being available, willing to help, knowledgeable, and friendly. The second most frequent comment was that students appreciated having a wide variety of programs to choose from.

The majority of the suggested improvement comments referred to the website application process. Respondents found it difficult to navigate.

Faculty Directors

For these categories, over 45% of respondents found faculty directors to be extremely effective: academic counseling, personal assistance, out of class activities/excursions, and cultural appreciation.

Excursions and activities included in the program

91.18% of respondents were either satisfied or extremely satisfied. Responses for areas of improvement were varied and surrounded personal preference for free-time activities.

Course/Workload

Approximately 50% of respondents found the courses/workload to be similar to that on campus at the University of Utah. While respondents were generally pleased with the amount of coursework and the level of difficulty, others commented that they would have preferred to spend less time in-class or studying so that they had more time to engage those at home or in the community.

International Setting

Students found the international setting to be extremely beneficial to the learning experience. Respondents reported that cultural immersion and interacting first-hand with local people impacted their learning. In addition, students reported that being forced to use the language helped them build language skills faster.

Housing

77.6% of respondents were either satisfied or very satisfied with the in-country housing. Many respondents pointed out differences between the United States their host country. Some felt that accommodations could be improved while others expressed that the difference was a learning opportunity for them. The positive comments were enthusiastic mostly about the welcoming people or the location.

Overall Experience

Over 91% of respondents reported that their cultural competency skills increased as a result of the experience. Over 84% reported that their understanding of course content increased as a result of the experience and 87% reported that they experienced personal growth.

Actions Taken:

The pre-departure orientation program was changed to being given on-line in 2013. 83.5% of respondents felt that it was well organized. Over 65% of respondents felt that the orientation was informative, helpful, and that the cultural information was valuable. They also felt that they understood the behavioral expectations and that the safety tips prepared them.

Marketing efforts were bolstered to increase awareness across campus by holding information sessions addressing specific aspects of studying abroad (i.e. money matters, safety and security, exchange programs, etc.) Learning Abroad Coordinators and Peer Advisors also participated in new student orientation, conducted classroom visits, and collaborated with departments across campus by providing financial and staff support. Additionally, the Learning Abroad Office created supplemental marketing materials such as brochures, bookmarks, and general information flyers to distribute at events occurring throughout the year.

To meet the demands of the diverse student population, the pre-departure orientation was moved from in-person sessions to on-line modules through Canvas. This allows students to complete orientation as their schedule allows and presents the information and policies in a matter this is easier to navigate and maintain.

Which Student Affairs goals does this project align with?

This project supports global citizenship, develops strategies for continuity planning, increases assessment methods and usage of data for strategic planning and research/development opportunities, and develops formal and informal reciprocal partnerships with campus and community constituents.