Learning from faculty
A Scholarship of Teaching & Learning (SoTL) approach to understanding study away/study abroad program leaders

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Identifying Faculty Perceptions
Numerous studies have sought to measure the impact of study abroad on student outcomes, but relatively little attention has been paid to the corresponding faculty members.

We are at the mid-point of a three-year, electronic survey of 223 faculty members at 28 private liberal arts colleges to determine how leading a study abroad/study away (SA/SA) impacts teaching, research, service and well-being.

Participants are affiliated with the Associated Colleges of the Midwest, the Associated Colleges of the South, and Elon University.

PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS
Phase I Survey -- n=223

Academic Discipline

- 83% identified as White
- 53% are female
- 35% have children (under age 18)
- 77% have tenure
- 59% age 50 or older

- STEM (12.56%)
- Arts & Humanities (39.01%)
- Social Science (18.83%)
- Pre-Professional (9.42%)
- Interdisciplinary (13%)
- Other/Missing (7.17%)
We found no statistically significant relationships between the following factors and outcomes (at the p = .05 level) -- this suggests that differences in behavioral and attitudinal outcomes are not the result of personal characteristics.

Factors
- Tenure Status
- Academic Rank
- Sex
- Marital Status
- Parental Status
- Program Destination
- Academic Discipline
- Amount of leadership and administrative responsibilities for SA/SA program

Outcomes
- Teaching Outcomes
- Research Outcomes
- Service Outcomes
- Composite "Transformation" Score
- Positive Feelings
- Negative Feelings

When asked whether the following was a top priority for their institution, participants identified the following "to a great extent."

59% vs. 22%

"Global Learning is a priority for my institution."

"Supporting faculty members who lead global programs is a priority for my institution."

The majority of participants reported that these topics received no attention at all or less than 30 minutes of consideration in pre-departure faculty development.
5 QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS & IMPLICATIONS

The following findings were found at the p=.05 level.

Participants who reported that their institutions offered a high amount of support for global learning were more likely to experience positive feelings post-SA/SA.

- Institutional support was defined as: Training, Compensation, Recognition, and Staff Support
- Positive feelings included: Willingness to lead another SA/SA program; Felt more more connected to their institution; Increased a sense of renewal; and Improved relationships with professional colleagues.

Participants who spoke the language of the SA/SA destination reported higher rates of negative feelings upon their return.

- Issues of stress and burn-out may be particularly acute for this population.
- The effects of leading a SA/SA program continued after one returns to work -- impacting teaching, research, attitudes, and relationships.

Participants who led a SA/SA program that was more than 30 days in length reported higher rates of negative feelings upon their return.

- Institutions should provide additional forms of support of faculty who lead programs longer than one month.
- Faculty members who lead month-long programs are likely to encounter considerable “re-entry” challenges at both home and at work.
IN THEIR OWN WORDS...

Several respondents noted both positive and negative aspects of leading SA/SA programs:

"SA teaching has, without doubt, invigorated my classroom performance and it always energizes me intellectually. But, in fact, over the years, it has also taken time that I might have devoted to research. [...]"

In short, I believe the if I had done fewer such programs, I would have had a stronger research portfolio and (perhaps) a better pay grade."

"I’m not sure that it advanced my research agenda all that much (in terms of quantity or depth in my field), but it certainly made me focus more on pedagogy, make new connections, and work better with students.

In other words, it helped what we should think of as a liberal arts career, it hurt what should be considered an RT (research) career."

QUALITATIVE FINDINGS & NEXT STEPS

The team is currently analyzing responses to our Phase II Survey (n=91)

8-open-ended, qualitative questions to consider evidence of faculty, student, and institutional transformation.

We plan to share findings in multiple formats, including a White Paper with specific recommendations for faculty development and campus policies.

We hope to continue to explore the link between our findings and how faculty learning impacts student learning.

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