

studentPOLL

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MARKET INTELLIGENCE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

College-bound students' strong interest in international education contrasts with actual college experiences.

For two reasons, this issue of *studentPOLL™* marks a milestone in its four years of publication. The research findings reported are the result of collaboration with the American Council on Education forged in connection with the ACE's long-term study, *The Internationalization of U.S. Higher Education*, which is funded by the Ford Foundation.

Second, but perhaps more important, the implications of this study extend far beyond the bounds of undergraduate admissions and student recruitment, which have been the primary focus of *studentPOLL™*. The data reported here, together with other information from the ACE study that has already been made public, have profound implications for the internationalization of higher education in the United States, ranging from the scope and nature of language offerings to the barriers against study abroad that many institutions have erected, often unintentionally.

Our findings, together with other data gathered by ACE from a variety of sources, suggest what could be described as "a frustrated ideal." High school students enter college with a strong interest in almost every element of international learning and experience. A majority want to continue foreign language study, a near-majority intend to participate in study abroad, and a substantial number expect to

experience other dimensions of international learning ranging from internships to courses on international issues. In short, there is a longing to partake of the larger world beyond our own borders.

For many students, that ideal seems to die in the face of realities on America's college campuses. For example, although our study shows that nearly 50 percent of the students entering four-year colleges want to study abroad, according to the best data available, only 3 percent of currently enrolled students actually do. Similarly, our data indicate that nearly 60 percent of students entering college plan to continue foreign language study. Yet, according to college course enrollment data, only 7 percent of enrolled college students are taking foreign language courses.

These patterns of participation in international programs also indicate a serious disjuncture with the attitudes of the general public also reported in the ACE study. Nearly 75 percent of the adult public surveyed by ACE strongly or somewhat agree that college students should have a study abroad experience. And nearly 80 percent strongly or somewhat agree that college students should be required to take courses covering international topics.

Why is the actual college experience of so many students at odds with the expectations they bring to college and

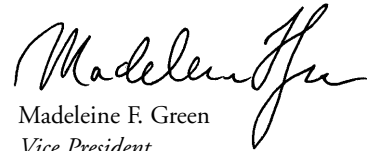
even the desires of the general public? Some of the explanation, of course, has to do with the nature of ideals themselves, which are often formed with a certain naiveté on the part of teenagers. However, much of it is also explained by the policies and priorities of our nation's colleges and universities.

The gap between students' ideals and what they actually do when they get to college is a concern colleges and universities should take very seriously.

What needs to be done? Throughout this publication, we suggest a few small steps that institutions can take to lower some of the more obvious barriers to study abroad and other forms of international education. These are easy to undertake. But a more important undertaking would be an exhaustive consideration of the role of international education in the experience of all students, and the steps that need to be taken to enhance and encourage it.



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Note: To obtain a copy of the ACE report, *The Internationalization of U.S. Higher Education*, by Fred M. Hayward, Senior Associate, American Council on Education, write ACE Fulfillment Service, Dept. 191, Washington, D.C. 20055-0191. The report is also available online at www.acenet.edu

1 A majority of students have had a variety of international experiences before college.

We began our survey by exploring the kinds of international experiences our respondent group of high school seniors might have already had, from studying a foreign language to traveling in another country with a group from their high school. The

results revealed an astonishingly high level of international experience. Virtually every student (98 percent) had studied a foreign language in high school. Perhaps more surprising, 52 percent had traveled in another country with their family, 36 percent had family or close

friends who lived in another country, and more than one in four had traveled in another country with a group from school. (Table 1)

In all, nearly three-quarters of those surveyed reported two or more international experiences, with 51 percent having had two to three experiences, and 47 percent four or more. The mean number of international experiences reported was 2.9. (Table 2)

TABLE 1

Previous kinds of international experience

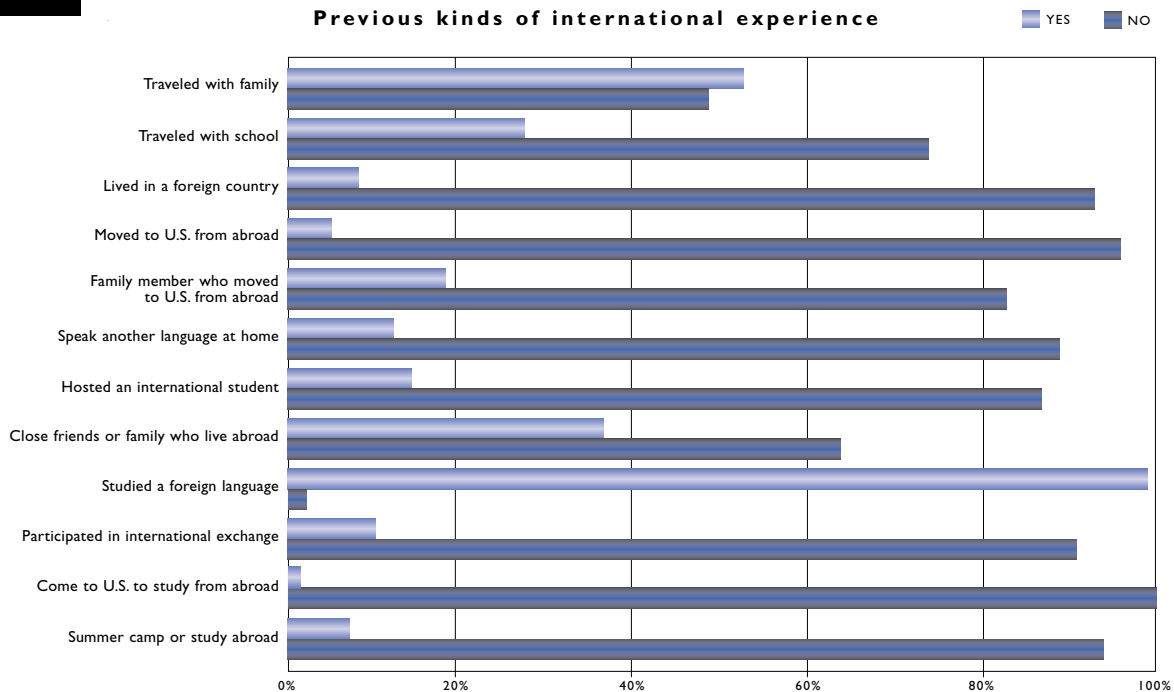
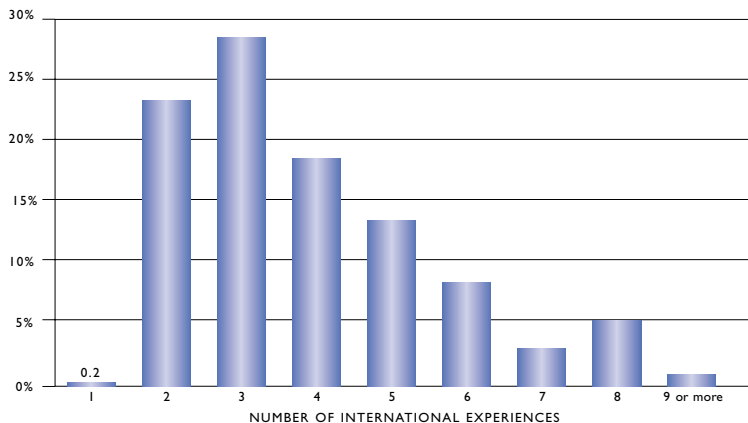


TABLE 2

Students with previous international experiences



ADVISORY

Don't let your foreign language offerings slip. Student interest in language study is high and pervasive. Examine why more students are not enrolling in foreign language courses at your institution.

2 A job or internship rated the most important activity students seek to pursue in college, followed by study abroad.

To learn how students rank study abroad compared to other activities they might pursue in college, we first asked respondents to rate on a scale of 1-10 (with one being the least important and 10 the most important) the importance of intercollegiate sports, community service, job or internship, fraternities or other social groups, and study abroad. At 7.54, a job or internship received the highest overall rating, followed by student organizations at 7.09, community service at 6.65, intramural sports at 6.12, and study abroad

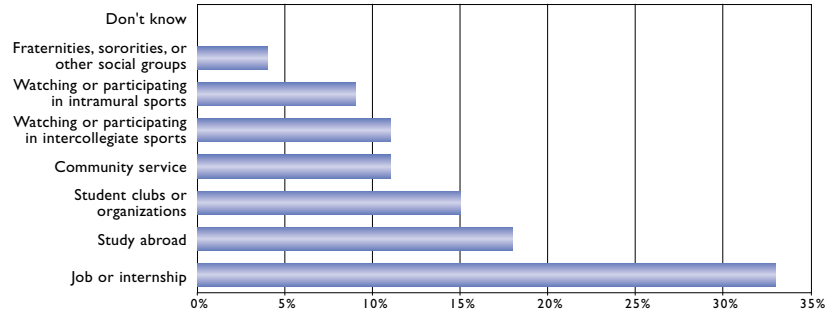
at 5.95. Why did the importance of study abroad leap ahead when we forced respondents to choose a single activity?

The change is explained by the difference in the questions. When respondents are forced to choose a single preference from a list of items instead of ranking the importance of those items, they give more thought to their priorities.

The pattern changed quite dramatically when we asked respondents to choose the one activity that was most important to them. Study abroad was named by 18 percent of those surveyed, second only to internships. (Table 3)

TABLE 3

Most important activity in college



3 The international diversity of an institution's student body is less important than other kinds of diversity.

We next explored the extent to which racial, international, religious, and economic diversity in a college's student body was important to students in their college application decisions. The international diversity of the student body proved less important than the racial and regional diversity of students. However, a large proportion of respondents valued different kinds of student diversity.

Specifically, over half rated the racial and regional diversity of an institution's student body as somewhat or very important (60 and 59 percent, respectively). Forty-nine percent believed that religious diversity was very or somewhat important. Forty-seven percent rated having students from countries around the world as somewhat or very important while 41 percent rated economic diversity as somewhat or very important. Conversely, one-fifth to one-quarter

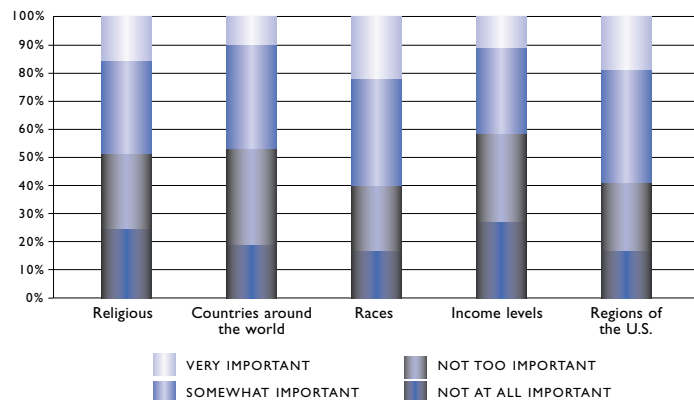
of students viewed the racial, regional, religious, economic, and international diversity of a college's student body as not at all important in deciding where to apply to college. (Table 4)

Among subgroups, women and minorities were more likely to place importance on the diversity of a college's student body.

What explains the relative unimportance of international diversity on campus in college choice for a segment of students? Although we have no direct evidence, our sense of what happens on many campuses is that the presence of international students is simply not an important factor in the learning process of campus life.

TABLE 4

Importance of different kinds of student diversity



4 A majority of students plan to pursue international experiences in college: nearly half want to study abroad.

We asked students whether they planned to pursue international studies and programs in college, including taking a foreign language, international business or other courses, studying abroad or participating in an internship in another country.

More than half of respondents (57 percent) plan to take a foreign language in college. In contrast, national data show that less than 8 percent of college students actually take a foreign language.

Nearly half (48 percent) of the students we interviewed plan to participate in study abroad. In light of the finding reported below about the positive effect of a language requirement on participation in study abroad, this high interest in study abroad also has important implications for foreign language offerings on college campuses.

Other forms of international study also have high appeal. Fifty percent of respondents plan to take college courses focused on the history or culture of other countries, 37 percent plan to take international studies or international business courses, and 28 percent intend to participate in an internship program abroad. (Table 5)

More specifically, 23 percent intend to participate in only one of the experiences cited above; 25 percent, two experiences; 14 percent, three and four experiences respectively; and 10 percent intend to participate in all five of these experiences. (Table 6) Given all the public attention on global issues and concerns and the recognition that students need greater understanding and appreciation of other nations, cultures, and people to fully participate in a global society, it is perhaps not surprising that only 10 percent of students surveyed indicated that they do not intend to participate in any of the five

TABLE 5

Students planning to participate in internationally-related courses and programs

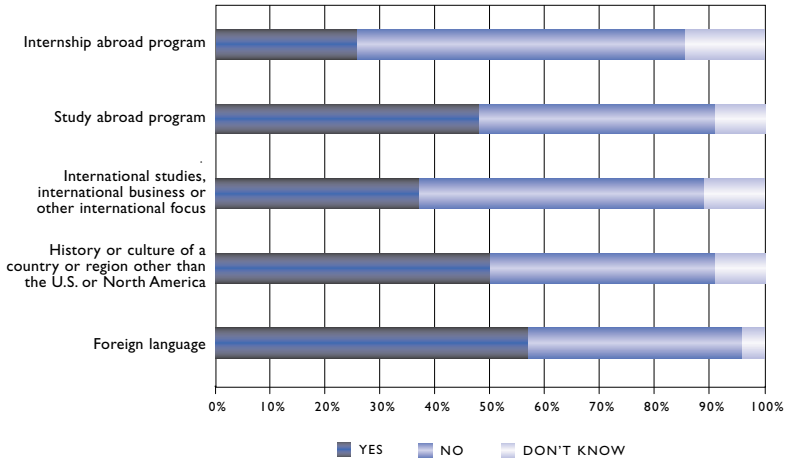
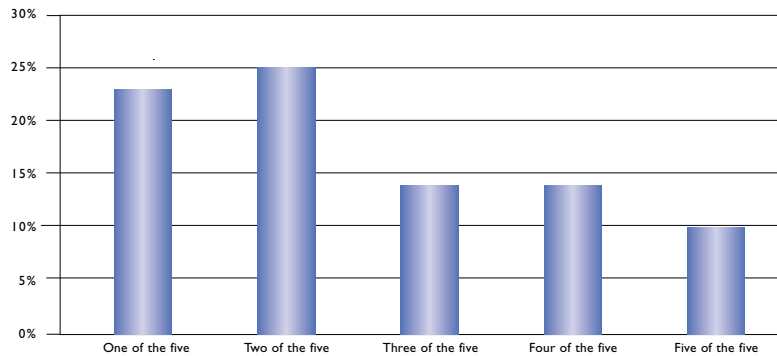


TABLE 6

Students planning to participate in one or more international experiences



international experiences we tested.

In terms of subgroup differences, women were more likely than men to plan to study a foreign language in college (62 versus 48 percent) as were students with SAT I and ACT scores of above 1100 or 24 (61 compared to 47 percent for students reporting SAT I and ACT scores of less than 1100 or 24).

ADVISORY

Review academic policies and requirements department by department to determine which ones may be barriers to student interest and participation in study abroad programs.

5 Lack of interest and cost primary reasons students not interested in study abroad.

More than half (52 percent) of the respondents we interviewed reported that they did not want to or were unsure about whether to study abroad. Among these students, 34 percent said they had no interest in participating in a study abroad program or simply did not want to leave the United States. Much smaller fractions cited cost and academic reasons: 11 percent were worried about the cost; 8 percent said they wouldn't be able to pursue their major; 8 percent reported it would distract from their career goals; and 5 percent indicated it would take too much time from their academic goals. By calculating the net proportion of students citing cost or academic factors as the primary reason they are unsure about or do not want to study abroad, we found that 12 percent cited cost and 11 percent academic reasons.

Our hunch is that students may simply lack understanding about how or what portion of tuition costs typically

finance study abroad programs, and about the kinds of study abroad opportunities and options available to them. Clearly, if students find themselves in a supportive environment that encourages study abroad and makes it affordable, they may change their minds about pursuing it.

We also asked the total population of students if they planned to participate in an internship abroad program. Almost three-quarters (72 percent) indicated that they were unsure about or did not want to intern abroad.

Among our interesting subgroup findings: students with SAT I and ACT scores of less than 1100 or 24 were less likely to plan to study abroad, 28 percent compared to 57 percent for students with SAT I and ACT scores above 1100 or 24; and male respondents were less likely to plan to study abroad than female students, 42 to 52 percent, respectively.

ADVISORY

Make sure your financial aid and tuition pricing policies do not discourage or penalize students who want to study abroad. To the extent possible, make financial aid awards "portable" and avoid extra charges or financial burdens that make study abroad more financially onerous.

Some comparative data* on international learning

Percent of U.S. students intending to pursue a foreign language in college	57	Percent of U.S. students that actually take a language course in college	7.9
Percent of students planning to study abroad as undergraduate	48	Percent of undergraduates that actually participate in study abroad	3
Percent of U.S. students' mastery of foreign language <i>Elementary level in some language</i>	40	Percent of German students' mastery of foreign language <i>Competent in English</i>	85
<i>Basic competence</i>	18	<i>Good or very good in several languages</i>	10
Percent of students who would study abroad if it was required	65	Percent of general public favoring a study abroad requirement	75
Number of U.S. students studying abroad during college (1998-1999)	129,770	Number of foreign students studying in the U.S. (1998-1999)	490,933
Percent of U.S. students receiving financial aid to study abroad	30	Percent of international students receiving financial aid to study in the U.S.	38
Percent of high school seniors who see cost as a major obstacle to study abroad	12	Percent decrease in Federal appropriations for international educational and cultural exchanges (1994-2000)	24

* *studentPOLL™* findings based on survey of high school seniors intending to enroll in a four-year college or university in Fall, 2000; other data from *Internationalization of U.S. Higher Education: Preliminary Status Report 2000*, (Washington DC, ACE, 2000) and *ACE Survey of International Attitudes and Knowledge*, September 2000.

6 While a majority of students are interested in European cultures, a significant proportion are interested in other cultures.

We asked respondents planning to participate in some form of study abroad to indicate the country and region of the world where they would prefer to study or intern. Sixty-two percent cited a preference for Europe, 9 percent South or Central America, 8 percent Asia, and 10 percent other countries. In terms of specific countries: 14 percent cited Spain and 14 percent cited England, 13 percent France, 11 percent Italy, 7 percent Germany, 6 percent Australia, and 5 percent Mexico. These findings support data released by the Institute of International Education in its annual report, *Open Doors*, which reports that while Europe remains the most popular destination for Americans, a sizable number are traveling to other parts of the world, particularly Latin America. According to *Open Doors*' data

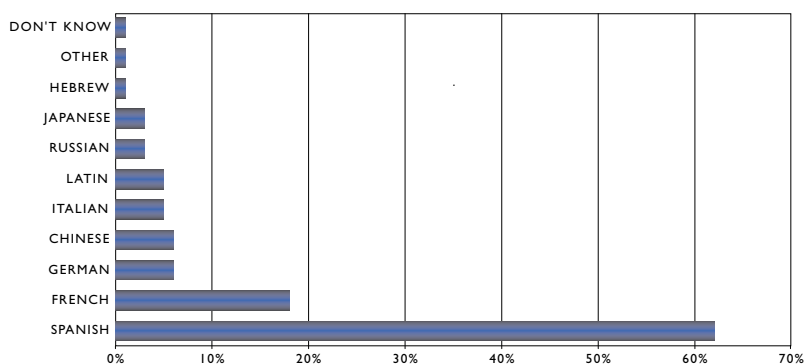
from 1985-86, 80 percent of Americans went to European countries. By 1997-98, the proportion of Americans studying in Europe fell by 18 percent, while the number of students going to Latin America more than doubled.

Of those planning to take a foreign language, 62 percent indicated that they intended to study Spanish and 18 percent French. Students planning to study Chinese, German, Latin, and Italian accounted for only a very small segment of respondents. (Table 8)

Among those intending to take courses focusing on history of the culture of a nation or region outside the United States, 52 percent wanted to focus their studies on Europe, 19 percent Asia, 10 percent Central and South America, and 5 percent Africa.

TABLE 8

Foreign languages students intend to take



7 One semester is the preferred duration of a study abroad experience.

Fifty-nine percent of respondents indicated that they would like to study or intern abroad for a semester while only 11 percent indicated they wanted to do so for an entire year. Moreover, 18 percent want to study

abroad for a summer while 9 percent prefer only a few weeks. Clearly, only a small fraction of students are interested in making a year-long commitment to study abroad.

ADVISORY

Develop more study abroad programs that suit the budgets and academic schedules of students. Consider creating more programs that occur over a semester, several weeks or during the summer. Don't eliminate year-long study abroad programs, but make sure your institution offers other programs tailored to students unable or unwilling (for academic or financial reasons) to devote a full year to study abroad.

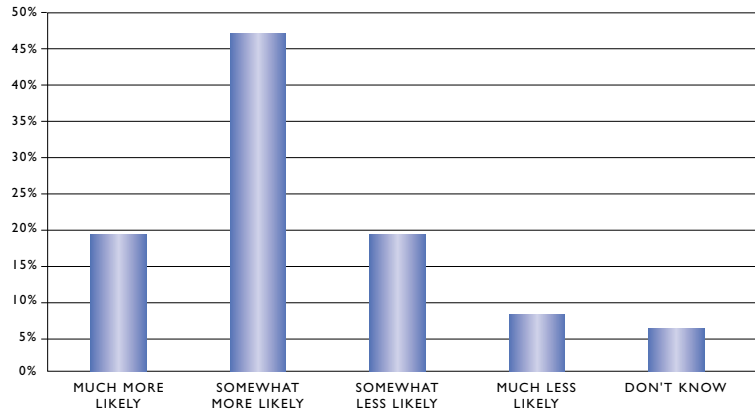
8 A foreign language requirement strengthens student interest in study abroad programs.

Surprisingly, we found that a language requirement would boost study abroad participation. An overwhelming two-thirds of respondents said they would be somewhat or much more likely to participate in a study abroad program if participation required foreign language study. At the same time, 27 percent indicated they would be somewhat less likely or much less likely to take part in a study abroad program if the college they attended had a foreign language requirement. In sum, the effect of a language requirement for study abroad would be a net gain of 39 percent in interest in study abroad. (Table 9)

These findings seem to suggest that students without some level of language proficiency may be reluctant to live and study in another country if they are concerned or anxious about their ability

TABLE 9

Effect of foreign language requirement on student interest in study abroad



to speak the language. A mandatory language requirement may provide the combination of language skills and confidence they need to pursue study abroad.

ADVISORY

Consider linking a language requirement and/or strong language training to study abroad offerings, if your institution is seeking to expand or encourage student participation in study abroad programs. In reality, a mandatory language requirement is likely to promote student interest in living and studying abroad.

9 A study abroad requirement has a neutral to positive influence on student interest in a college.

We probed students to determine how a study abroad requirement might affect interest in attending a specific college or university. Our hunch was that such a requirement would, in fact, diminish interest. We guessed wrong. A total of 65 percent of those interviewed said that mandatory study abroad would make no difference or would make them more interested in attending the institution. Of this group, 24 percent said that a study abroad

requirement would make them much more likely or somewhat more likely to attend a college. Twenty-seven percent of those polled reported that they would be somewhat less or much less likely to attend an institution that required study abroad. In other words, a study abroad requirement would “twin off” only 11 percent of the college-bound high school population.

10 Student motivations for international study center around expansion of cultural horizons.

In all, 86 percent of respondents indicated an interest in study abroad, internships, or other international programs of study. Our next questions focused on their motivations.

First, we wanted to know students' primary reason for wanting to study abroad. Forty-seven percent cited expanding their cultural horizons as

their chief motivation; 24 percent cited travel and seeing other parts of the world; and 11 percent cited improving job prospects. Three percent, respectively, cited learning another language and studying things you can't in the U.S., while 1 percent cited promoting world peace. (Table 10)

Next, to gauge the reasons for students' interest in various dimensions of international education, we tested a number of motivations ranging from gaining exposure to another culture and proficiency in another language to taking courses on international issues at their college in the U.S. and acquiring career-related work experience in another country. High proportions of students reported that they were very interested in: gaining exposure to another culture (45 percent); studying with an internationally diverse student body (27 percent); and acquiring career-related experience (21 percent). A smaller segment of students reported they were very interested in: learning from an international faculty and taking courses on international issues at their college in the U.S. (18 percent, respectively); and having an international student as a roommate (14 percent). (Table 11)

TABLE 10

Primary reasons for study abroad

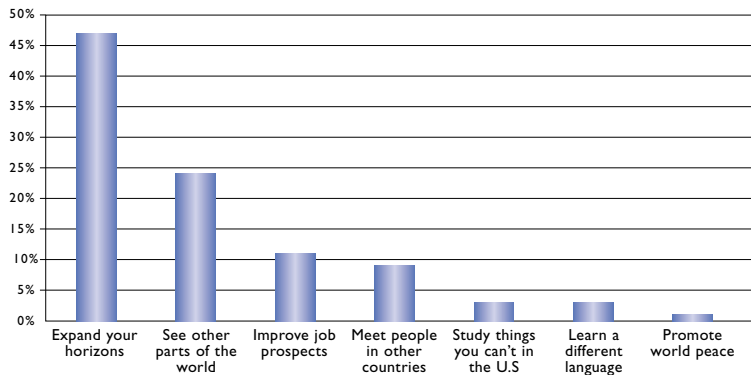
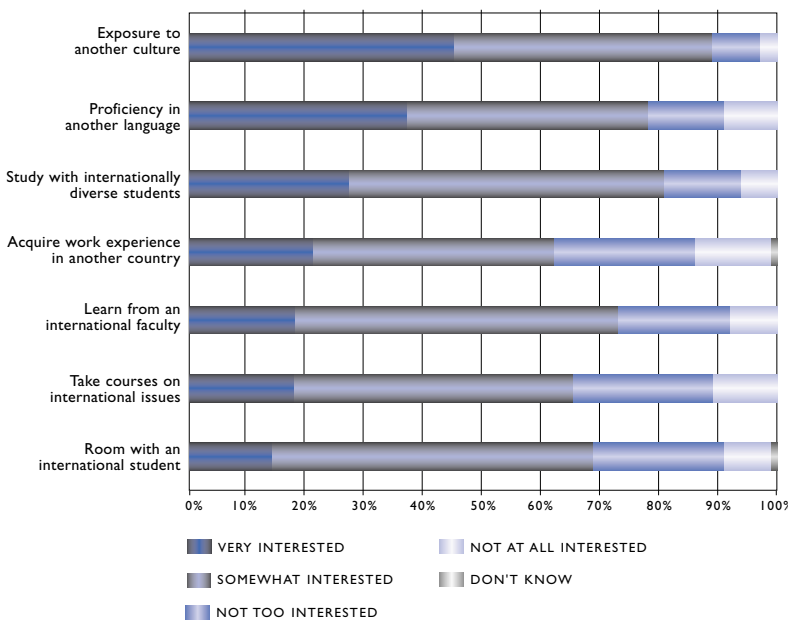


TABLE 11

Student interest in dimensions of international education



ADVISORY

Don't assume safety is not a major concern of parents. Go out of your way to verify and publicize the safety of your institution's study abroad programs. Provide both students and parents detailed guidelines that spell out the issues to be aware of and precautions to take in different countries and regions of the world.

11 A majority strongly agree that international education offers many personal and professional benefits.

While only half of those surveyed plan to study abroad, a majority strongly agree that there are a wide range of benefits to be gained through international study—from learning things you can't learn in your own country to gaining proficiency in another language.

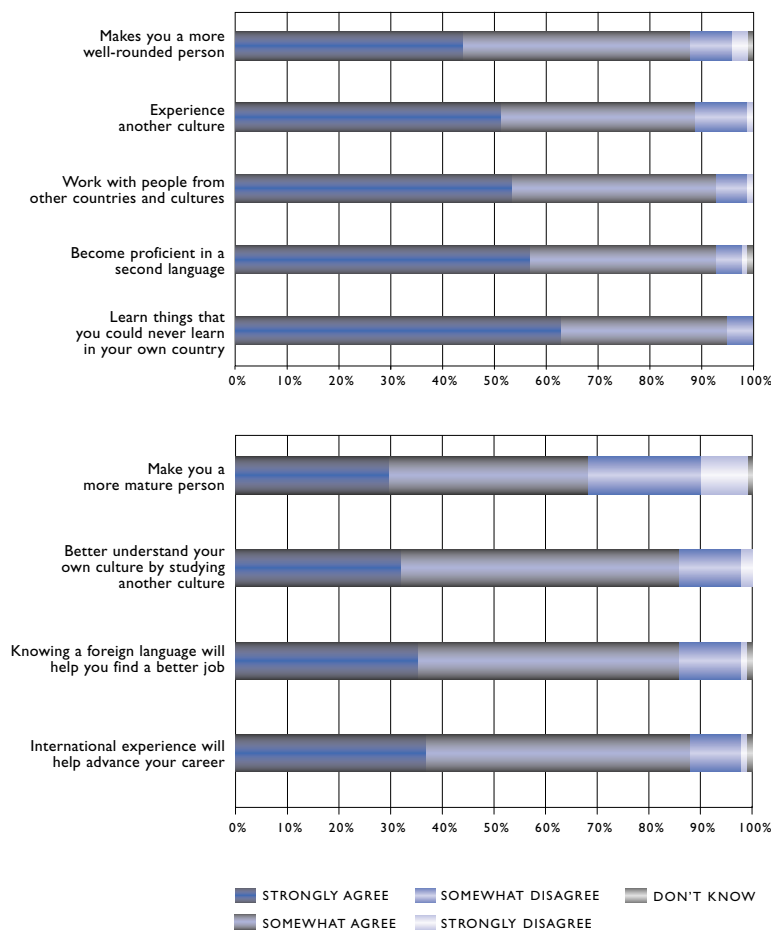
In particular, a majority of students strongly agreed that the benefits of

international education, include learning things you can never learn in your own country (63 percent); studying abroad as the best way to become proficient in another language or experience another culture (57 and 51 percent, respectively); being able to work with people from other cultures (53 percent); and making a person more well-rounded (44 percent).

In addition, over one-third of respondents also strongly agreed that international education offers career-related benefits, such as helping you find a better job because you have proficiency in a foreign language (35 percent) and giving you a competitive advantage (37 percent). Because of the increasingly global nature of any economy, it is our hunch that student interest in and appreciation for the career-related benefits and advantages of studying abroad represents a sea change compared to student attitudes only a few years ago. (Table 12)

TABLE 12

Benefits of study abroad and international study



ADVISORY

Students and parents are paying greater attention to an institution's programs and offerings in international education. Make sure your print and electronic communications strongly promote these offerings to prospective students and parents.

12 Many students want to be immersed in the language and culture of another country.

We also asked those students planning to study abroad in a non-English speaking country whether they preferred a program run and taught by faculty from U.S. colleges or courses taught by faculty from the college or university in the country where they plan to study. Students were evenly divided on this question: 48 percent preferred that courses be taught by faculty from U.S. colleges while 46 percent preferred that faculty from the foreign country teach the courses.

On a related topic, we asked these same students whether they preferred that courses be taught in English or the language of their host country. It is noteworthy that 56 percent of these students indicated a preference for some or all courses taught in the language of the foreign country where they planned to study. Among this group, 41 percent

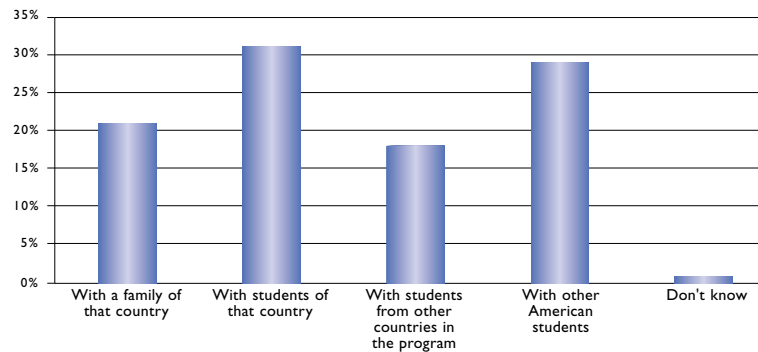
preferred English, 36 percent, the language of the host country, and 20 percent wanted courses taught in both English and the language of the host country.

Our study revealed further evidence of students' willingness to immerse themselves in the culture and language

of other countries. Among students planning to study or intern abroad, an overwhelming majority of students (71 percent) indicated a preference for living with students or families of the host country or with foreign students participating in the same program. Specifically, 32 percent preferred living with students of the host country, 21 percent with families in that country, and 18 percent with foreign students in the same program. On the other hand, 29 percent expressed a preference for living with American students studying in that country. (Table 13)

TABLE 13

Preferred living arrangements



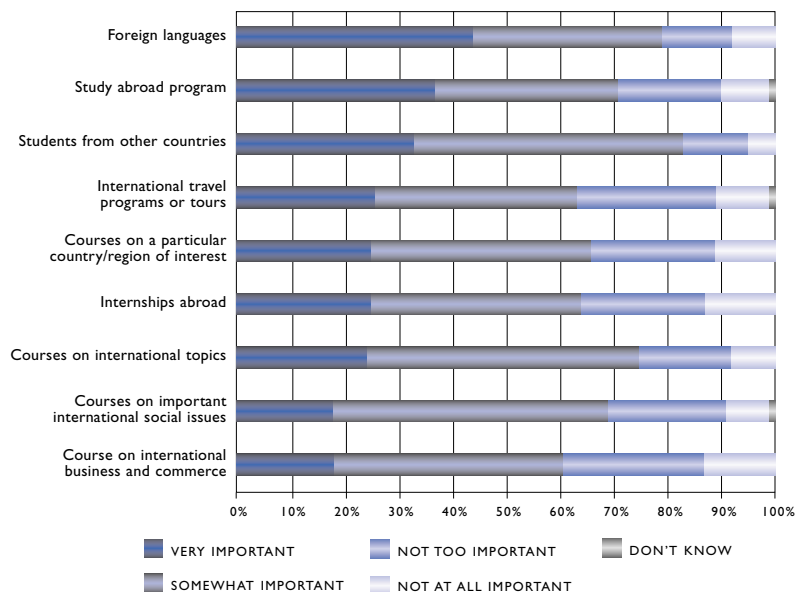
13 Students expect the college they choose to offer international experiences and opportunities.

To understand the extent to which international programs and other experiences factor into students' college decisions, we asked respondents to tell us the importance of each offered by the college they ultimately selected. Clearly, many students expect the college they choose to offer a wide range of international experiences and programs.

A sizable segment of students indicated that it was very important for the college they choose to offer: foreign languages (44 percent); study abroad programs (37 percent); and opportunities to interact with students from other countries. Smaller segments of students cited courses on international topics (24 percent); courses which focus on another country (25 percent); internships abroad (25 percent); and international travel programs or tours (26 percent) as very important. (Table 14)

TABLE 14

Importance of international experiences and opportunities in college choice



ABOUT ART & SCIENCE GROUP

studentPOLL™ is published by Art & Science Group, Inc., a national leader in providing market intelligence to higher education and the non-profit sector. The firm provides services in the following areas:

- Student recruitment marketing and enrollment management
- Tuition pricing, financial aid, and net tuition revenue management
- Planning and communications for capital campaigns, other large fundraising efforts, and alumni relations programs
- Overall institutional advancement and marketing

Within these broad areas, the firm provides a number of supporting services:

- Strategic marketing and communications planning
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- Econometric analysis of financial aid awards
- Predictive mathematical modeling of student and prospect behavior
- Operations assessment and re-engineering
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EMBARK Embark became the exclusive corporate sponsor of *studentPOLL™* in April 2000 to help increase the repository of knowledge surrounding the college admissions process. A leading technology company, Embark helps institutions of higher learning run more efficiently and effectively in an increasingly competitive environment. The company's web-based tools enable universities to recruit students over the Internet, process applications electronically, and automate a wide range of manual admissions processes.

As a result of Embark's sponsorship, each quarterly issue of *studentPOLL™*, formerly available only by paid subscription, will be mailed free of charge to the senior administrative officers of all four-year colleges and universities nationwide. In addition, the research design has been enhanced so that survey results are a truly representative national sample of the college-bound high school population.

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ABOUT *studentPOLL*™

Since its assessment of the influence of the *US News and World Report* rankings on college choice was published in the fall of 1995, *studentPOLL*™ has become the authoritative national source for market intelligence about critical issues in student recruitment and financial aid. It provides reliable answers to questions about student and parent attitudes and behavior that many college administrators could only answer with guesses, anecdotes, and hunches.

Published four times a year, *studentPOLL*™ provides in-depth market data, rigorously conducted and analyzed to inform the strategic and tactical decisions institutional leaders and managers make about student recruitment and financial aid.

studentPOLL™ has been a widely quoted media resource and has been cited in the *New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Chronicle of Higher Education*, *Christian Science Monitor*, *Washington Post*, *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, *US News and World Report*, and many other newspapers and magazines.

Printed copies of each *studentPOLL*™ report are mailed free to college and university administrators and faculty, the media, and to others by special request. Current issues, as well as back issues, and an executable, animated presentation file on key findings from each issue, are also available on the Art & Science Group web site, www.artsci.com, and the web site of *studentPOLL*™'s exclusive corporate sponsor, Embark, www.embark.com.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

Findings reported in *studentPOLL*™ are based on in-depth telephone interviews with a random national sample of high school seniors who plan to enroll in four-year colleges the following fall. To qualify for an interview respondents must have achieved a combined SAT I score of 800 or higher and/or a composite ACT score of 17 or more. Previously, *studentPOLL*™ only surveyed high-ability high school seniors with a minimum SAT I score of 1050. The study sample is drawn and/or weighted to represent a national distribution of students with qualifying SAT I or ACT scores by geography, gender, intended major, and income. Surveys are conducted in the fall and/or spring of each year, with a sample size of 500 or more. The sampling margin-of-error is plus or minus 4 percent at a 95 percent confidence level.

Findings reported in this issue are based on research fielded in April, 2000. The table below provides an overview of the key demographic characteristics of the students interviewed.

DEMOGRAPHICS OF SAMPLE				
Income	<\$50,000	\$50,000 TO \$99,000	\$100,000+	DK
	22%	34%	18%	26%
Test Taken	JUST SAT I	JUST ACT	BOTH	
	30%	22%	48%	
Race	MINORITY	CAUCASIAN		
	14%	85%		
HS Type	PUBLIC	PRIVATE		
	83%	16%		
HS Size	<500	500 TO 999	1000 TO 1999	2000 TO 4999
	15%	27%	34%	22%
Gender	MALE	FEMALE		
	45%	55%		