

***BARRIERS TO BE BROKEN: INTERVIEWS EXPLORING HOW STUDY ABROAD
STAFF CONVINCED U.S. STUDENTS TO LOOK PAST THE REASONS THEY MAY
NOT STUDY ABROAD***

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Abstract

The student choice to study abroad (SA) is one that is commonly considered, amongst a handful of other experiences, when a student first arrives in college. As a result of the growing number of students participating in SA, researchers have become curious as to what makes students choose SA, and more recently, why they may not choose to SA. Little research has been conducted on what SA staff do with the data on students who will not or cannot SA. Therefore, this study aims to answer two questions: (RQ1) why students cannot or will not SA and (RQ2) how SA staff try to convince them otherwise. Data was gathered through semi-structured interviews of four mid-west U.S. university staff members. Thematic analysis produced a number of themes related to issues around cost, sports, academic majors and academic advisors. RQ2 was answered by thoroughly explaining what SA staff are currently doing and what they hope to do in the future to convince students to SA. These results might be useful for future studies that explore the impact universities have on students' choice to SA and to deepen the understanding of reasons to not SA exposed here even further.

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Introduction

As the number of university students choosing to participate in study abroad (SA)¹ increases, so does the research on studying internationally. In the past, research has been produced on many aspects of SA, including reasons why students choose to SA (McKeown, 2009), and more recently, why students may choose not to (Stroud, 2010). Although some research has looked at reasons why students may not SA, little has been researched on what staff in SA offices do to encourage those students to reassess their decision to not SA. Therefore, studies need to be conducted on the perceived barriers of those who choose not to SA, as well as how staff try to encourage students to reassess their choice.

Generally, little research has been done on SA staff. Most research focuses on students' perceptions and opinions by conducting interviews and surveys and analysing statistical data to determine what a student considers when choosing to SA. Past studies have gathered enough data to understand why a student chooses to, and more recently, not to SA, therefore research now needs to focus on how professionals in SA can use this information to help increase student numbers and communication with potential SA students, focusing on those who can/will not SA.

Therefore, this research will look into two valuable parts of SA: 1) the reasons students give that they cannot or will not SA and, 2) what SA staff do to convince students to SA. The study will focus on US students in particular, as the US uses this specific term

¹ Study Abroad (SA) is referred in to this study as both the programme name of 'SA' (otherwise described as the proper noun of 'SA'), as well as the verb 'to study abroad' (SA). SA will be used interchangeably for both of these purposes. The audience should be able to identify which 'SA' the researcher is referring to by the context of the sentence.

of ‘study abroad’ and typically relates to a selection of options that many US institutions offer, but other areas of the world often do not. As SA is a wide, general term used by many institutions, BailyShea (2009) best defines this as institutions managed in a combination of ways: by home and abroad universities, home and partnering university students and students who choose to self-enrol into foreign programmes.²

Research Questions

Research must be done on this topic, as obtaining information in regards to why students choose not to study abroad is useless if there is no follow-up action or development in convincing students to SA. As a result, this study will address the following questions:

RQ1: What are the reasons/perceived barriers students tell SA staff as to why they cannot or will not SA?

RQ2: How might SA staff convince, or hope to soon try to convince, students they can or should SA based on the students’ reasons?

Literature Review

SA is one of the many choices a student will consider when analysing how they wish to spend their time at university, making it necessary for SA to stand out. Previous research has found once a student is aware of the option to SA, they typically make their decision to go, or not to go, on several factors including cost, social, cultural, professional and many other factors (Peterson’s, 2008; Salisbury, Paulsen & Pascarella, 2010). One popularly coined term to describe this reasoning is called the push-pull method, which explains what students perceive as barriers and enablers for SA (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002).

² Appendix A: Quote by BailyShea (2009, p.21).

Push factors are described as negative reinforcement, while pull factors are positive reinforcement (Foster, 2014). For example, a pull factor for a student might be that the host country has a high level of quality education, while a push factor would be that the student's home country does not have a high level (Wilkins, Stephens, Balakrishnan & Huisman, 2012).

Benefits of SA

Students have discovered SA programmes can benefit them in personal, academic, career-focused and global ways (Wright and Clarke, 2010). In fact, most literature reports the benefits of SA, both from staff and students' perspective. Staff and students boast of the skills students' gained through SA to improve their resumes, including skills in teamwork and communication (Potts, 2015; Van Mol, 2017). Students report on their life-changing experience, indicating experience in personal growth and shifts in their identities (Ellwood, 2011). Some students, though, will still see barriers to SA. Although research has started to look at why students don't SA, only recently has this transition been made (Nguyen, 2014). From those who have looked into SA, it appears the common barriers students have reported are financial, relational influences, lack of encouragement and stereotypes (Jackson, 2005).

Cost: the common barrier

The most commonly cited SA barrier is cost (Bell, 2016; Doyle, Gendall & Meyer, 2010). A way universities try to combat this is by offering scholarships. Scholarships can fill a multitude of criteria: they can be from the university, outside the university, for certain degrees or based on financial need (Lukosius & Festervand, 2013). The Gilman

International Scholarship Program, for example, offers five thousand to twelve hundred US dollars to US students who have disadvantaged situations, but want to study abroad (Berdan, Goodman & Taylor, 2013). Students, especially those from underprivileged backgrounds, perceive cost to be too great of a burden on their family, typically basing their choice on SA purely on cost (Netz, 2012). Sometimes, the actual programme cost is not what deters students. Rather, the lack of information in regards to cost deters students, as if they currently do not plan to SA, they will not research what scholarships might be available to them anyway (Presley, Damron-Martinez & Zhang, 2010). This emphasises the need to promote financial opportunities when students first arrive on campus to mitigate financial stereotypes about SA.

Other barriers

Although some assumptions made about SA by students might be true, many students are likely to write off stereotypes about SA as not for them for a host of reasons (Vande Berg, Paige & Lou, 2012). One way authors define this idea is by using the terms ‘perceived’ and ‘actual’ barriers (Salisbury et al., 2008). In this case, students perceive a barrier to be too great to formulate a plan so that they can participate in SA. Relational influences are another factor commonly mentioned. Recommendations by friends, to either study abroad or not to, were a strong influence in students’ decision-making process (Simon & Ainsworth, 2012). Family shaped perceptions as well, often influencing a student through immediate family’s own past experiences or perceptions with SA, are a commonly found relationship that influence students to shy away from SA (Brux & Fry, 2010; Trilokekar & Rasmi, 2011). Lack of encouragement, which can tie into the above two reasons, may come from an individual’s perception or someone close to them, but more

recently, studies have begun to show that universities might be in part to blame (Trooboff, Berg & Ryman, 2007). It is essential that students are awakened to opportunities from SA, otherwise they might assume they can't SA (Evans, Finch & Toncar, 2008). Maringe and Carter (2007), as an example, found that research supervisors encouraged students to go to a particular institution abroad, but career advisors rarely mentioned SA as advantageous.

Research on SA Staff

There's been little research produced on why students choose not to SA and even less research about what SA staff try to do in response to those who say they cannot or will not SA. What little research that has been done focuses on marketing SA to students, based on advertising to a particular demographic that are likely to SA anyway (de Jong, Schunsenberg & Goel, 2010), missing the concept of convincing more students through diligently listening to what attracts more students to SA. More important, little research has been conducted on what faculty hear from students, and as a result of students' dismissal of SA, have or have not done to compensate for students' negative reactions. Authors, such as McLeod and Wainwright (2009), and especially Sachau, Brasher and Fee (2010), have hinted at the importance of implementing more research in regards to faculty in universities. Sachau, Brasher and Fee (2010), for example, wrote their journal as a practical, resourceful guide by applying their findings to real-life scenarios, instead of writing an only theoretical study.

Methodology

Data Collection

Although there are multiple ways to collect data for a research topic, semi-structured interviews proved to be an appropriate way to gather data. When collecting

students' views on SA, past studies used questionnaires. Since gathering data from SA staff is an overlooked area, it seemed appropriate to use a methodology that allowed individuals to share their own strategies (Brinkmann, 2007). This enables future scholars to have a tighter grasp on which areas to research further (Pugh, 2012).

Interviews have been praised for many reasons; not only are they a flexible means of gathering data, but they give the subject a chance to come across as 'real' through a conversational tone. This helps the participant not appear as a number or object of inspection in contemporary research (Cohen, Manion & Morrioso, 2013). Potter and Hepburn (2005) discuss the negative qualities of qualitative data, stating that this method is taken less seriously, observations tend to be interpreted by the researcher and the participant may not know the language used by the researcher. However, interviews give participants a chance to express their own ideas free from the constraints of strictly structured, and potentially leading, questions. This allows for authentic content to rise to the surface of a scarcely researched topic area (Kvale, 1996).

Data Analysis

Using thematic analysis will help the researcher determine general themes amongst different SA offices. Thematic analysis, as one of the most popular means to analyse interview data, is useful as its 'rigorous thematic approach can produce an insightful analysis' to answer questions introduced by the researcher (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.97). Although some researchers questioned the validity of thematic analysis, as the method does not follow a strict set of guidelines, Vaismoradi, Turunen and Bondas (2013) see it as a trustworthy aid, especially when used jointly with other ways of analysis.

Research Procedure

Once the interview questions were outlined³, the researcher contacted university staff from state and private universities by e-mail. The participants and interviewer then agreed on a time, date and location for the interview, which were scheduled within a two-week time frame of each other. The beginning of the interviews consisted of the researcher introducing themselves, then the researcher and participant engaging in introductory conversation to make the participant feel more at ease. After a few minutes of conversation, the researcher asked the participant if they were ready to begin the interview and, if the participant was ready, the researcher read the oral consent form out loud to the participant on audio recording.

During the interview, the researcher asked semi-structured, open-ended questions and allowed the participant as much time as they wanted to answer the questions. The researcher clarified some terms during the interview so that the participant and researcher both agreed on a term's definition. For example, the researcher clarified what it meant when a student said they 'can not' or 'will not' not SA⁴. First, participants' demographic information⁵ was collected, followed by the main questions to aid the researcher in answering the two research questions presented in the study.

³ Appendix B: Interview Questions

⁴ The researcher explained a student who claimed they 'can not' SA as 'a student who might like to SA, but for reasons beyond their control, they are unable to,' while a student who 'will not' SA as 'a student who has not considered and does not intend to SA.

⁵ Figure I

Figure 1

Gender	Age	Private or Public?	Years in Office	Job Title	General Job Duties	Education Level
Male	31	Private	2 years	Associate Director	-Recruitment (promotional) -University partnerships -Admissions	Master's Degree
Male	34	Public	2 years	Marketing and Programme Coordinator	-Coordinate European programmes -Advise students -Marketing – print and events	Master's Degree
Male	49	Private	11 years	Director of International Education	-Oversee programmes -Advise -Promote -Applications -Budgeting	Master's - Degree
Female	34	Public	5 years	Senior Advisor and Programme Coordinator	-Experiential Learning students -Faculty-led programmes -Advise Africa & Middle-East	Master's – Degree

Audio recording was used to capture the participant's thoughts and the researcher took notes during the recording. Physically taking notes helped the researcher keep track of the important quotes, as well as information the audio recording may not have captured, such as a visual look or general tone. In the end, each interview took an hour and ten minutes on average to complete.

After all data was gathered, the researcher transcribed each interview using an online transcription service that converted audio into text. The researcher then listened to the recordings and read through the computer-automated transcription to make sure the text was transcribed properly. Once the transcripts had been completed, each one was read over again for common themes, using thematic analysis as mentioned above. Quotes and summarised ideas were then placed into categories as statements that supported the general themes were found. Themes discovered in the findings and discussion sections of the study were chosen, as they were the most commonly mentioned and expanded-upon themes by the participants.

Participants

SA staff were selected based on their job title and descriptors listed online indicating what they might do in this role. The staff members chosen typically acted as advisors to students or were the only SA staff suitable to answer the questions asked in the interview as indicated by the theme of the study.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted across four universities located in the mid-west U.S. Half of the institutions were private universities, while the other half were public universities. Even though the sample was small, it was important to have data from both public and private universities, as their differences and similarities in SA are valuable

pieces of comparable information. Along with this, the small sample size of participants allowed the researcher to develop a study based on depth, not breadth, so that SA staffs' thoughts could be thoroughly investigated through their own experiences and words (Bateman, 2002).

Findings and Discussion

Although many student barriers were mentioned in participant interviews, the most commonly mentioned barriers, with a wealth of detail given, were cost, sports, academic majors and academic advisors. As a result, each theme will mention the common findings and discuss how SA staff are trying to convince students to overcome these barriers and the researcher's suggestions on how to approach different students' perspectives and barriers.

Cost

Cost, in terms of the SA programme and the loans a student accrues after the programme, is the most mentioned barrier within this study and previous literature. This stereotype of SA being exclusively for those in the upper-middle class with a higher income (Simon & Ainsworth, 2012) is perpetuated in the study and has thus formed the idea that SA is a costly endeavour. All interviewed staff agree that the cost of programmes are widely assumed to be a hurdle which cannot be passed. Staff are indeed frustrated by this stereotype that SA is expensive, as this led students to simply assume they could not SA. One staff member said the 'financial' excuse for SA could be used as a 'cop out', explaining that:

'We actually have a variety of programs and... program fees and we have programs that are competitive with in-state tuition here... and the fact that scholarships are mobile, it [cost] is a reason that... some students give just to give a reason.'

That cost is brought up many times alludes to the fact that SA staff members must keep promoting and educating students on the options available to them (Chen, 2008). SA staff members urge students to go into their office and have a face-to-face conversation with them about their financial situation, as finances differ vastly amongst students and some students are more likely to assume they cannot afford a programme because of the initial 'sticker shock.' Then, SA staff members can outline the financial assistance offered to students.

Scholarships, financial aid and loans are answers SA staff commonly give when students cite cost as a barrier. Most schools cited the Gilman Scholarship as a way to finance students with fewer advantages. Several other scholarships that were on both a need and merit basis are also available. One staff member mentioned that their university might switch all of their scholarships to 'a need basis only' as those who didn't need financial assistance would likely SA. Re-evaluating who needs scholarships, and educating those students on the options available, might encourage disadvantaged students to SA. However, if universities choose to focus on financial need scholarships, they will also need to reflect on the potential backlash from merit-based scholarships. SA offices will also need to determine how to disperse scholarship money. For instance, will the universities decide to have fewer full-ride scholarships or many scholarships in smaller amounts?

One university pointed out that they were unique compared to many universities as they allow students to have their full financial aid follow them abroad, including scholarships and other awards, for up to one full academic year for SA. This is one avenue other universities might consider taking, but would require a bigger commitment in encouraging all students to SA. If this is a route a university considers taking, it might require the university as a whole to shift around their financial regulations.

Another university mentioned paying for students' passports as a different avenue they took to mitigate the cost barrier. Engaging in campus activities, such as one university's event where they paid for the student's passport, helped students see that the university was willing to help students meet their financial needs. This SA staff found their passport event to be successful as it helped dismantle the 'expensive SA' stereotype. These findings indicate that students might benefit from both large and small expenses covered for them so that they are able to see cost is a smaller barrier than it may appear. Therefore, if a university is unable to completely re-do their financial scheme to aid students in their endeavour to SA, events that cover smaller amounts of financial burdens can suffice.

All staff members agree that cost can be a very real barrier. This is easily identifiable when students speak of the burden cost has on their personal or familial financial situation. Although staff members agree that cost is one area where students underestimate how much help is given, finances can be a barrier that means the student truly cannot afford to SA. When this happens, students are given other options of how they can have similar experiences to SA. Short-term travelling, volunteering abroad and obtaining further education abroad are a few options staff cited they would mention to

students who could not afford SA during college. Ultimately, staff say it is vital to be aware and understand students who are unable to study abroad as cost can be a very real barrier.

Sports

The strong team bonds that appear in sports appear to dampen the desire to SA. When asked which student demographics typically do not SA, all SA staff mentioned student athletes as one of the biggest groups of those who either would or could not SA. One staff member reconstructed common dialogue from student athletes when they explained why they wouldn't go abroad:

'Yeah, well, I don't want to study abroad in the fall because that's in-season, and I don't want to study abroad in the spring because we have our off-season workouts and I don't want to miss out on that.'

The staff member then reflected on his personal thoughts by explaining:

'I don't know how to respond to that student: they're making a choice. They're choosing football over study abroad; I understand that. But that's again a perceived barrier; that's what they want to do.'

Once a student explained her/his decision, staff felt at a loss for how to convince students to SA, as it is their choice as to how they want to spend their four years in college.

Staff members reported a slang word acronym, FOMO (Fear of Missing Out), which students would use when reasoning to not forgo a season. Students feared they would

miss out on a particularly good season, on being recruited for further professional play, training in the off-season or making connections with their teammates. This showed that students were more scared of missing out on a great season or time with their friends, rather than the experiences they could gain through SA. To combat this fear, one staff member mentions that SA is what students should have FOMO for. When students mention FOMO, he tells them of the individuals he knows from college who did not SA, but regret missing out on SA now.

SA staff didn't expect students to give up their sport or preparing for the next season. Staff would connect with resident directors on SA programmes and determine where local gyms were, talk to host families about athletes' diets and encouraging/scheduling Skype sessions with coaches to make sure training and dieting requirements were being followed. Ultimately, staff stressed that student athletes could SA as long as they were willing to maintain communication with their coaches and mentors back home so that they could successfully train and enjoy their time in SA. One tactic SA staff mentioned was telling students to play their sport at their host university while abroad. This would allow students to reach a 'middle ground' between being immersed in a new culture and not giving up a sport they love.

If athletes are unwilling to SA for an extended time, SA staff mention short programme alternatives that still allow athletes the chance to be immersed in a culture (Mills, Deviney & Ball, 2010). All the universities interviewed offer summer programmes that give semester-long athletes the option to spend a month or two in SA, instead of an entire semester or year. Another option universities have begun exploring is a team SA programme as athletes may be more inclined to SA if they are able to go with their

teammates. Although this a valid option, SA staff suggest athletes spend most of their time on these trips practicing, playing a game, eating, sleeping and potentially some quick sight-seeing opportunities, indicating that these athletes miss out on the true cultural aspect of SA if they travel with only their team.

Academic Majors

‘Certain majors may feel that the opportunities... abroad don't benefit them... There may be some truth to that. We have, for example, limited options in major courses in chemistry abroad that are... gen[eral] ed[ucation]s or prereq[uisite]s, so by the time a student is a junior in studying chemistry, which is a traditional time to study abroad, they don't benefit in their major classes by that semester abroad. We have ways of talking to them about that, but that doesn't change the fact that's a barrier for them.’

Statements similar to this were heard from SA staff, as they all mentioned specific majors had a more ‘real’ barrier in SA. The academic majors most affected by course-requirement barriers tend to be science degrees, such as engineering, math and pre-health, while other degrees, specifically social sciences, were found to be the easiest majors for SA (He & Chen, 2010). These strict majors are a result of professors desiring students to be the best in their career field. One SA staff member, though, said that she was unable to think of a major that couldn't SA, even if their programme and semester options might be limited.

To combat this, SA staff have created major-specific brochures and hung them up in specific majors' buildings. SA staff also recruit past students from those majors to write or tell their stories to perspective students. The biggest strategy staff are using is to create programmes that do not interrupt the degree, but rather are built around them (Donnelly-Smith, 2009). For example, staff members have found universities or courses that have been pre-approved by home professors so that students can easily transfer credits back to their home institution. Universities have also tried to shift the traditional idea of the 'junior year SA.' While some universities tried pushing sophomore year as the optimal time to SA, others indicated that students could go at anytime. Finally, staff highlighted the importance of talking to academic advisors during their first semester of college so that SA could be a possibility. Sadly, SA staff said many students would have those conversations with academic advisors when it was too late to work through their heavy academic schedule.

If a student is not able to SA because of their course requirements or required semesters on campus, SA staff mentioned it as challenging to change the mindset of the student, as it is not always the student's decision to make. The responsibility then lands on professors and other academic staff who have the power to change course requirements and the perspective of how SA can benefit their students in the future. This mindset may need to change so that professors can see the potential SA has in allowing students the more communicative and personal side of their degree, as most technical learning will happen in the classroom. Even though this ideology spans across many universities in the US, if universities implement the idea that all majors can SA, more students might switch their 'cannot' SA mindset. This is a pinnacle point of the study as an unexpected theme is uncovered: how the university and academia can contribute to the reason a student cannot

SA. This university and academic theme continues as the final findings category, academic advisors, is explored.

Academic Advisors

Academic advisors' opinions play a vital role in whether a student chooses to SA or not. (Ungar, 2016). For example, if an academic advisor feels that a student shouldn't spend an extra semester on SA, they might discourage or not mention SA. If the university has instructed an academic advisor not to promote staying for an extra semester, then the advisor would feel obligated to abide by the university's wishes.

One SA staff explained how advantageous it was to have 'faculty allies' who support study abroad. Academic advisors who were knowledgeable and encouraging of SA would work with students, making SA staff feel like they had more university staff on their side and made the SA process easier for students. SA staff have also mentioned how detrimental it can be to have academic advisors who do not encourage SA. An academic advisor who never mentions SA to their students, or tells them it is not possible in their major, may not help those students become aware of the options when it comes to SA (Lo, 2006). One SA staff member said on academic advisors:

'I think that the academic side...they [students] may or may not be able to... recognise that there are barriers in that way. They may not necessarily understand that their advisor is kind of steering them away from study abroad because they're choosing this major and it requires more... The[re is a] story of the education professor who said, "I could never advise a student to study abroad... because it would involve... another semester!" No students are going to know... that's the...

thinking... [of] why this professor is not encouraging you to study abroad and they can't decide for themselves and so it is helpful to get that perspective.'

As mentioned in the previous section, all SA staff said students were encouraged to talk to their academic advisors in their first semester to plan out their four years. If this doesn't happen, SA staff feel it is harder to advise students on how to make SA work in their schedule. Although encouraging a student to speak with an academic advisor in a student's first semester is wise and should continue to be encouraged, it might be beneficial to have SA staff play a larger role when speaking to perspective SA students. This recommendation has not come from a lack of trust from academic advisors, but rather the fact that advisors might be too busy or might not be as informed as SA staff on SA opportunities. It is important to keep in mind, as one SA staff member mentioned, that academic advisors may not be trying to deter someone from SA. SA staff agreed academic advisors are typically overworked and understaffed, as advisors are given a large amount of students' schedules to configure. However, placing the responsibility of advising students on SA staff could also cause strain on those SA staff, shifting the stress to another academic staff member. With regard to SA staffs' time and availability, this may be hard for SA staff to take part of an academic advisor's role to help configure a student's schedule. SA staff don't have the information academic advisors do for the student's majors, are pressed for time and academic advisors are the staff members who approve students to SA.

As a result, perhaps the most effective way to encourage and reassure students that they can SA is to either increase the number of academic advisors or SA staff. Many SA

staff mentioned that this was not an option in their university. However, if universities want to see more students SA, it is evident that more advisors need to be hired. Either aligned with this increase in staff or just an implementation on it's own, universities should consider their overall long-term and short-term goals in regards to how SA will fit into their university.

Perhaps universities should consider strategies for promoting SA as a whole. One SA staff in particular mentioned how their university was unique in the way that all departments agreed on finding a semester to SA for students in all majors, determining SA as a priority at their university. This not only eliminated the excuse that students could not SA because of their academic major, but also encouraged academic advisors to have discussions about SA with their students because the university as a whole had agreed to promote SA.

If the entire university has conversations about internationalisation, curricular-integration and SA, then academic advisors, professors and other SA staff can work together to best encourage students to SA (Gieser, 2015). Students' opportunities could be confusing if staff members were not consistent in the information and experiences they outline to their students. Therefore, the best way to encourage students to SA might begin with the university determining what SA means for them. Once these conversations happen, the university will begin to notice in what ways students are less likely to SA and what might stand in their way.

Conclusion

SA is becoming seen as a necessary step in preparing young adults to enter into an increasingly global society (Altbach & Knight, 2007). The more popular SA becomes, the

more important it becomes to understand why others believe they will not or cannot SA. Previous research has touched on the reasons students may not be going, but it is vital that universities learn how to convince students to change their minds about SA, whether this be through promotional material, altering stereotypes on SA or restructuring the university's goals and mindset. Therefore, this study aimed to find common barriers which made students believe they could not SA through RQ1 and RQ2.⁶ A quick summary of these findings can be found in Figure 3.⁷

To summarise, this study re-affirmed that stereotypes, especially in finances, are still generated among students today. With the proper promotion and deliberate re-thinking of scholarship distribution, students may begin to realise this barrier is more perceived than they thought. Student athletes, although busy with both their studies and a sport, would benefit from playing their sport abroad or participating in SA in their off-season. Coaches and high decision-makers in universities should begin to formulate more options for student athletes, including team trips and short-term trips.

SA staff have been working with the home university and professors in conjunction with SA universities and professors to find suitable course equivalents for majors who have traditionally been unable to SA. For degrees where logging volunteer hours are required, programmes are being created to specifically cater to those required hours, such as education majors logging hours in a classroom abroad.

Although not explicitly named by students as a reason why they can or will not SA, SA staff reported academic advisors had an impact on a student's decision to SA. Ideally,

⁶ To review RQ1 and RQ2, refer back to page 5

⁷ Appendix D: Figure 3

all academic advisors would inform students of their options during university, but this would be nearly impossible for academic advisors to manage as advisors being short-staffed is a reoccurring theme. One way SA staff are trying to combat this is by initiating conversations about the university's long term goals and how internationalisation and curriculum-integration fit into the university's plan. However, if SA is not a priority for the university, SA staff can communicate with advisors on how to promote SA and SA staff can speak directly with students about SA in case academic advisors do not mention it.

Universities disregarding SA as an important aspect to their institute has been mentioned throughout this study. To explain this reasoning, universities may not prioritise SA because there tends to be a focus on classroom learning, a more traditional style of learning, than experiential learning, a more contemporary style of learning. Although some experiential learning is being pushed in current universities, namely internships, student teaching and clinical hours, SA is still seen as simply an 'addition' to a student's experience. Pushing for a SA mindset should be considered by universities, as experiential learning, and especially SA, can enhance a student's communication, teamwork, problem-solving and a host of other skills which may not be as easily achievable in the classroom (Peacock, 2005).

Staff are aware that SA is a choice that each student must make for themselves and, sometimes, the barriers which present themselves to an individual might be too great to overcome. However, these staff members also know many of the barriers presented by students are perceived. Surprisingly, some of the situations, such as the influence of academic advisors, were situations outside of a student's control. The university, then, proved to be a key player in determining if a student can SA or not. Therefore, universities

need to step back and see how they can change the mindset of SA and the impacts it has on every student, regardless of their barriers.

Limitations and Future Research

One limitation of the study is the gap between student and SA staff knowledge. A student may explain to a SA staff member why they are not going to, or are unable to, SA, but SA staff need to take the student's answer at face-value. Although this student may be telling the truth, the student may not have explained themselves fully. Future studies should consider speaking with the students directly as to why they chose not to study abroad and then focus on what staff have done to combat this. A second limitation of the study is that most universities did not have physical records of why students said they cannot or will not SA. This lack of data is understandable as SA staff have a smaller chance of interacting with students who have no interest in pursuing SA.

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Appendices

Appendix A

BailyShea SA Definition

This quote, written by BailyShea, describes how vast the term ‘SA’ can be and what it means across institutions. The definition of this term as outlined by this author reflects and covers all universities’ programmes that were interviewed in this study. The quote is as follows describing what the definition of SA can encompass:

- ‘1) Institutionally managed international courses which are populated exclusively by their own students;
- 2) Institutionally run international programs or courses that are attended by a mixture of their own students and students from other colleges;
- 3) Institutionally chosen foreign programs, which have their students exclusively attend other schools or study abroad organizations programs that are not institutionally run or affiliated;
- 4) Institutionally approved combination of the two (students may choose to go on home-institution run international course or program, if available, or on other approved affiliated programs); or
- 5) Student directed whereby he/she enrolls himself/herself in a foreign institution outside of the US’ (BailyShea, 2009, p.21).

Appendix B

Interview questions

Introductory Questions

1. Biodata
 - a. What is your age?
 - b. What is your level of education?
 - c. What is your official title and what do you typically do in this role?
2. How long have you been working in study abroad / this office specifically?
3. What led you to work for a study abroad office?

Main Questions

4. Do you have a rough estimate as to what percentage of students from this university say they will not study abroad?
 - a. If so, Roughly, what percentage of students from your university say they will not study abroad?
 - b. If not, (question 5)
5. What reasons have these students given for not wanting to study abroad?
6. What are the most common answers students give out of the answers you have listed?
7. Which answers are most common for those who choose to not study abroad because of their own choice? (not financial or situational)
 - a. What strategies/ techniques have the university has used to change their minds?
 - b. What student reason for not going abroad is the most difficult to respond to convince them otherwise?
 - c. How could your university, or universities in general, better approach the students when trying to persuade them to study abroad?
 - d. What would you say is the overall success rate of convincing these students to go abroad?
8. Which answers are most common for those who do not study abroad, although they want to? (financial, etc.)

- a. What strategies/ techniques have the university has used to change their minds?
 - i. Finances – loans?
- b. What student reason for not going abroad is the most difficult to respond to convince them otherwise?
- c. How could your university, or universities in general, better approach the students when trying to persuade them to study abroad?
- d. What would you say is the overall success rate of convincing these students to go abroad?

Partnering Universities

9. If you have partnering universities, especially in Europe, do these universities visit the US to help recruit students for the programme?
 - a. If so, have they mentioned similar reasons / difficulties?
 - b. If so, what are the reasons/difficulties?

Appendix C

Figure 2

RQ1 Themes	RQ2 Strategies and Suggestions
Cost	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue promotion of financial options <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Face to Face conversations of individual student finances • Switch scholarship from merit and need basis, to need basis only • Allow students’ full financial aid abroad • Universities pay for smaller expenses (i.e. – passports) • Other experiential learning opportunities are given (i.e. – volunteering abroad)
Sports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reverse the scrip – students will have FOMO from not joining SA • SA staff aid in keeping athlete’s diet and exercise regulations while the student is abroad • Play sport abroad • Short-term programmes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Summer ○ Sport team SA
Academic Majors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting to specific majors • Previous students in majors talk and write about their experiences in SA

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Programmes that work with majors<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Pre-approved courses○ Volunteer hours abroad (i.e.- for pre-med)• Change ‘junior year’ SA to sophomore year or any other year• Speak with academic advisors in first semester
Academic Advisors	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ‘Faculty Allies’• SA staff advise students• Increase academic advisors or SA staff numbers• Promote SA as a whole across the university