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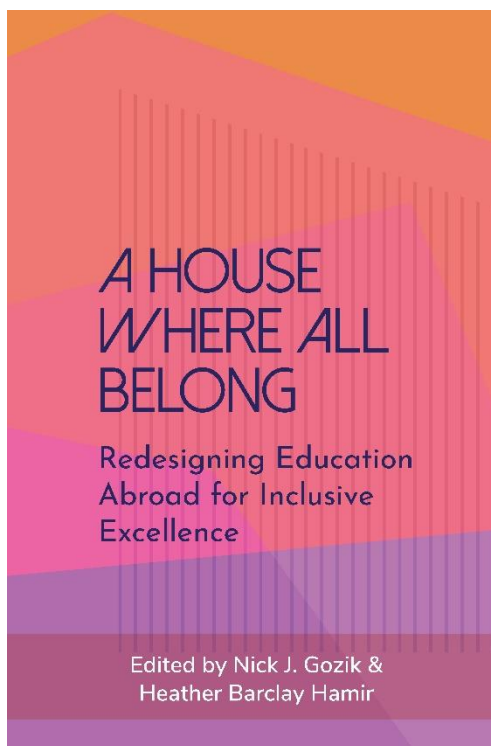
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Unpacking Education Abroad's Invisible Knapsack in the Pursuit of Inclusive Excellence

Nick J. Gozik and Heather Barclay Hamir

When we started working on this book, following the publication of *Promoting Inclusion in Education Abroad: A Handbook of Research and Practice* (Barclay Hamir & Gozik, 2018b), the world was a different place. Over the course of writing, in the U.S. alone, we have experienced a global health pandemic, a highly charged political divide in the run up to the 2020 elections, and the expansion of the Black Lives Matter movement catalyzed by the death of Ahmaud Arbery, George Floyd, and Breonna Taylor at the hands of police. Ongoing discussions and debates have likewise continued to evolve around topics such as gender, sexual orientation, and disabilities, with diverging views informed by various factors including politics, age, faith, and socioeconomic status. Rather than remaining lodged in one moment, this volume has evolved in lockstep with the world around us, and our sincere hope is that it will serve as a guide for those working to affect change in one area within a much broader landscape, that of education abroad.

Study abroad in the U.S. as we know it today emerged in the 1920s largely as an elite endeavor. In recent decades, overseas programming has become much more diverse, with participation of students from various backgrounds and academic interests; a much wider array of destinations; and a greater mix of activities abroad (e.g., study, research, community-based

learning, internships), hence the term “education abroad” in place of “study abroad.” *Promoting Inclusion in Education Abroad* explored strategies to expand participation among underserved groups, including first-generation students, students with disabilities, community college students, students of color, STEM majors/minors, and male-identifying students,¹ among others. At the same time, education abroad remains limited, with less than 3% of U.S. college students going abroad each year (Kim & Lawrence, 2021) and approximately 1 out of 10 who graduate with some sort of study abroad credit (Institute of International Education, 2020b). While few students study abroad overall, even fewer are students of color, as education abroad persistently enrolls a majority of White female students despite efforts toward greater inclusion.

Among the many inequities in the U.S. and other countries, why should we focus on this one? The answer to this question largely depends on how one understands the value of higher education (Barclay Hamir & Gozik, 2018b). When viewed as a public good (even for private institutions), much has to do with providing access to all members of a society, with notable benefits to both the society as a whole and individuals, for example, longer life spans, better access to health care, better dietary and health practices, greater economic stability and security, and more stable employment and greater job satisfaction (United Nations, n.d.). It also means that, once students are admitted, they have access to all programming and services available on a campus. If two students graduate with the same diploma, yet only one is able to participate in activities that enrich learning outside the classroom, technically both have the same degree, yet one is much better positioned for the workforce and civic life. This point is reaffirmed by Kuh’s research on student gains through high-impact practices (HIPs) including education abroad (Kuh, 2008; Kuh et al., 2017).

Equally important to the previous question is an appreciation of what steps need to be taken to address inequities that exist within higher education. Among U.S. scholars, there is a general consensus that change cannot take place without systematic and structural modifications; to simply amend

¹Our preference is to use “male-identifying” and “female-identifying,” with an understanding that gender is fluid and culturally constructed, with some individuals, for example, who may not identify with the gender that they were assigned at birth. For the sake of readability, we use “male” and “female” here. In subsequent chapters, data collection methods and gender response options vary, but are most likely based on self-reporting; accordingly, any time the terms “male” or “female” are used, it assumes male-identifying or female-identifying unless otherwise stated. If authors refer to gender in another way—e.g., when citing specific survey data with known methods—that will be explicitly referenced, e.g., assigned male at birth.

a policy or add a program may only offer a limited solution and not get at the root of the problem. In fact, this book stems from a deep concern that, as a profession, *education abroad has continued to operate largely without challenging the cultural core of who we are and what we do*. This is not because scholars and practitioners do not care. Many are genuinely committed to widening access, and as noted earlier, there has been real success. At the same time, we continue to operate with a dominant narrative written by White (and largely female) participants and a predominantly White profession. The question we must ask ourselves now is: *If education abroad had been originally designed for and by people of color or other minoritized communities, what assumptions would inform programming and how might programming differ from what we know today?*

This book accordingly is intended to move the field ahead, drawing on the momentum and heightened imperative for social change. If our first volume (Barclay Hamir & Gozik, 2018c) examined strategies for increasing participation, this book looks at the *education abroad process*, from the time that students arrive on campus and begin considering going abroad, to when they go overseas, and upon their reentry. By taking a systematic approach, chapter authors critically examine our field's assumptions, policies and procedures, and types of programming to reconsider and reinterpret what the field offers.

This approach aligns with The Forum on Education Abroad's (The Forum) latest version of the *Standards of Good Practice for Education Abroad* (The Forum on Education Abroad, 2020), which includes a Guiding Principle on equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI). While the focus is largely on U.S. institutions and practices, it is written for anyone—including overseas resident staff and colleagues at global institutions—who works with students from U.S. universities and colleges engaged in education abroad. It also comes with an understanding that many of the themes explored here go well beyond U.S. borders and deal more generally with the universal question of how students from all backgrounds can best be supported.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

Amid a sea of terminology, it may seem that the words we use in talking about differences and how to negotiate them are unimportant. In fact, this could not be further from the truth. Words do matter and especially those we explore in this volume related to EDI. Here, we use terminology as developed by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), which has been adopted by a number of institutions, including The Forum. Falling

within the broader initiative of “Making Excellence Inclusive,” the AAC&U has defined these three terms, each of which stands on its own, while also coming together to form a whole:

Diversity: Individual differences (e.g., personality, prior knowledge, and life experiences) and group/social differences (e.g., race/ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, country of origin, and ability as well as cultural, political, religious, or other affiliations).

Inclusion: The active, intentional, and ongoing engagement with diversity—in the curriculum, in the co-curriculum, and in communities (intellectual, social, cultural, geographical) with which individuals might connect—in ways that increase awareness, content knowledge, cognitive sophistication, and empathic understanding of the complex ways individuals interact within systems and institutions.

Equity: The creation of opportunities for historically underserved populations to have equal access to and participate in educational programs that are capable of closing the achievement gaps in student success and completion. (Association of American Colleges & Universities, n.d.)

A simple way of understanding this terminology comes from the chief diversity officer at the University of Michigan, Robert Sellers, who uses the metaphor of a dance to explain that: “diversity is where everyone is invited to the party; equity means that everyone gets to contribute the playlist; and inclusion means that everyone has the opportunity to dance” (University of Michigan, n.d.). Within higher education, it becomes clear that one cannot have inclusion or equity without also making sure that there are diverse faculty, staff, and students. At the same time, it is not sufficient to only hire diverse recruits or admit a diverse group of students; students need support and opportunities for inclusion once they are on campus, and campus or organizational culture must foster a sense of belonging for faculty and staff as well.

Among the three terms, equity is likely the most elusive and difficult to achieve. It is not necessarily the result of a simple equation, that is, “Diversity + Inclusion \neq Equity” (Joyce, 2020). In addition, some specialists have expressed concern with the merging of “equity, diversity, and inclusion” within the “EDI” acronym, as it is easy to focus more on diversity and inclusion and overlook equity. To achieve equity, organizations must begin with an understanding that the very structures with which they operate are not equitable by nature and that, “it is necessary to move beyond just having people in the room” (YW Boston, 2019). It also means questioning and making changes to core values and policies, including around hiring, the assignment of tasks, evaluation, and promotion. Advocates of gender parity, for example, note that women are often penalized for taking time off for maternity leave or in aligning their work schedules around childcare

needs (*The New York Times*, 2019). In this case, retooling for equity requires a readjustment in the assumptions around what constitutes attributes such as “loyalty,” “hard work,” and “dedication,” while also making it easier for parents to establish a work–life balance.

Equity may be more difficult precisely because it suggests a need for some members of an organization to acknowledge and cede the privileges that they enjoy—a seemingly tall task, even for faculty and staff who in principle are supportive of diversity and inclusion initiatives. Those who have been successful may balk at the idea of giving up what they feel they have rightly achieved and earned. At the same time, it behooves leaders to create inclusive environments where members of an organization feel welcomed and do not see a need to leave, thus taking away valuable skills, creativity, and expertise. As President and CEO of Living Cities Ben Hecht notes, “organizations cannot afford *not* to do this work, but they also can’t enter into it lightly, under the misconception that a training or workshop checks the box” (Hecht, 2020). This sort of change does not happen overnight and requires a long-term strategy and buy-in at all levels, starting at the top.

When combined as a joint concept, the order of the three terms explored thus far—equity, diversity, and inclusion—varies in use, with “DEI” and “EDI” being most prevalent. We believe that it is important to have all three included and not to truncate the terminology to “diversity and inclusion,” for instance. At the same time, we have intentionally chosen to use “EDI” in this publication, following the lead of The Forum and other organizations, with a belief that if equity is not placed in front, it is easy to omit. Much of this volume is precisely dedicated to strategies and activities designed to achieve equity and so this ordering aligns well.

As noted earlier, EDI falls under the umbrella of the AAC&U’s “Making Excellence Inclusive” initiative, leading to the widespread use of “inclusive excellence.” Begun in the mid-2000s, inclusive excellence was conceived in the wake of legal challenges to affirmative action (Milem et al., 2005), specifically the use of race in admissions decisions, as a way to strengthen the integration of diversity efforts within the larger assessment and improvement structures of institutions. This project has changed the landscape of higher education by offering a framework that positions educational excellence and diversity as intertwined and mutually reinforcing facets of campus activity for the first time. The original definition by the AAC&U (Milem et al., 2005) applies a strength-based perspective, with the goal that inclusive excellence addresses the social inequities that exist both for the benefit of those who have been marginalized and—critically—for *all* students. If students are to be prepared for an increasingly diverse world, it is imperative that those

with limited exposure to difference—or a low societal imperative to adapt to others’ cultural preferences, as with majority culture individuals—learn to understand and communicate effectively with people who are different from themselves. Education abroad can play a vital role in exposing students to new cultures and peoples, though here too we contend that such programming must be undertaken with EDI in mind (Barclay Hamir & Gozik, 2018b).

Along with EDI has been the inclusion of a “J” for justice, often as part of “social justice” and/or “racial justice.” The language around social and racial justice has been long present in the U.S., though has been connected more recently with international education in *Social Justice and International Education: Research, Practice, and Perspectives* (2020) edited by LaNitra Berger. In Berger’s edited volume, social justice is defined differently by individual contributors, yet together they provide a framework that addresses three essential themes:

- (1) identifying and challenging institutional structures that perpetuate social inequality using a critical theoretical lens; (2) embracing a “bottom up” approach to thinking about how specific marginalized groups are affected by their relationships to power and privilege; and (3) developing processes and exercises that seek to analyze and interrogate individual and group biases. (p. 3)

The additive value of justice to EDI work emphasizes the need to rethink all aspects of the educational experience and environment taking into consideration that these environments were not originally designed for marginalized groups. Several of the chapters in this volume directly apply a social justice approach (e.g., Chapter 8 on inclusive application design, Chapter 9 on decolonizing education abroad, and Chapter 12 on Fulbright Noir) and all are informed on some level by the social justice work that has taken place over decades. While “justice” is not explicitly named in a number of chapters, the premise of this volume aligns with the intent of this construct: We must redesign education abroad by engaging communities who were not originally part of the creation and expansion of these opportunities, thereby creating room for different perspectives and priorities than tradition may suggest. Global educators must move beyond past efforts that merely attempt to reframe the same programs and services to appeal to a more diverse audience, particularly where this work occurs in the absence of input from the groups we intend to serve. Only through our willingness to reconsider every aspect of the education abroad journey will we uncover the design flaws in our “house” that have prevented greater equity of participation and lived experience abroad.

Lastly, we recognize that the terminology outlined here is U.S. centric, given our intended audience of those working with U.S. students, domestically or abroad (Gozik, 2018). Given the genesis of inclusive excellence, research and writing on this topic often focuses on EDI related to marginalized racial and ethnic identities in the U.S. context. Whereas race is especially salient in the U.S., other categories, for example, religion, ethnicity, gender, and disability, may be more prevalent in discourse and action in another setting. The definitions here allow for a shared language for the authors of this volume to employ, if also with a recognition that they are socially constructed and have a different meaning in other contexts.

EDI and Education Abroad

Advancing EDI in education abroad begins by taking stock of our current state. As we noted in 2018, the disparity between who is enrolled in postsecondary education and who goes abroad remains noticeable. As an example, racial and ethnic minority participation in study abroad increased almost 3% since 2018, reaching 31.3% in the 2020 *Open Doors* report (Institute of International Education, 2020a). However, participation still lags well behind overall trends in higher education, where racial and ethnic minority students represented 44% of postsecondary enrollments in 2017 with continuous growth projected through 2028 as the U.S. population becomes increasingly diverse (Snyder et al., 2019, p. 257). A similar pattern exists with respect to students with disabilities, whose participation in education abroad increased 2% over the same period to 10.5%, yet 19.1% of undergraduates reported disabilities in 2015–2016, the most recent reporting year (Snyder et al., 2019, p. 268).

The story these data tell over the three years since publication of *Promoting Inclusion in Education Abroad* does not fully represent the challenges that we face in our EDI efforts. As Figure 1.1 illustrates, over the past 20 years, the progress in diversifying education abroad participation is not closing the gap with respect to overall demographic change in higher education enrollment.

In the past decade, the field has indeed made progress, closing the gap in participation to 12.8%, yet that improvement merely returned participation rates of racial/ethnic minority students to levels already seen in the prior decade. With the magnitude of disruption in the U.S. and globally due to economic fallout and social and political instability, there are significant concerns that these same students will be the hardest hit, and we will once again lose ground in our collective efforts to promote inclusion in education abroad participation.

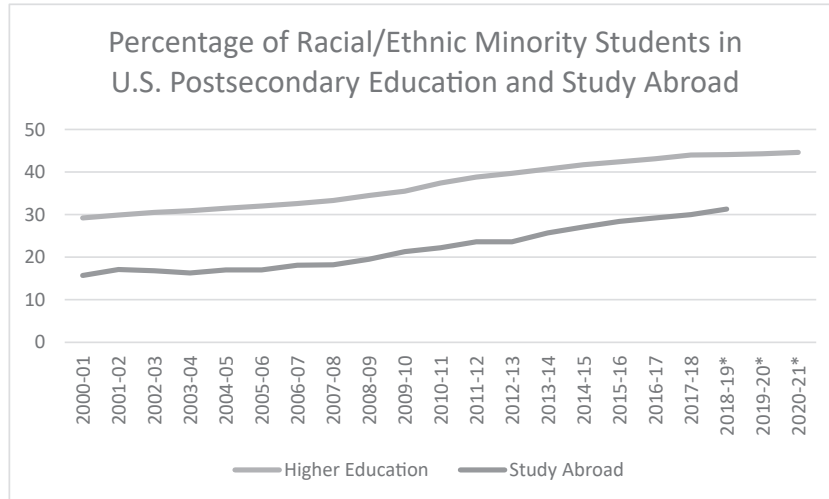


Fig. 1.1 Source: Chart by authors, using data from the Institute of International Education (2020a) and the Digest of Education Statistics (Snyder et al., 2019).

The larger trend of educational disparity remains the backdrop for any discussion of who does or does not participate in education abroad. Rather than being discouraged by these trends, we see them as a sobering wakeup call regarding our assumptions about how to advance EDI within education abroad, a microcosm of the same concerns within the college-going experience. As with higher education itself, education abroad metrics tend to over-rely on representational data as a measure of success. We previously noted that significant attention has been paid to those who have access to the experience of education abroad—what we think of as opening the door to these opportunities. Yet, greater attention must be focused on inclusion beyond mere access, “applying this lens to inform pre-departure preparation, program design, and training for faculty and staff” (Barclay Hamir & Gozik, 2018a, p. 203). Representation does matter, but it is not the entire story, and the failure to look beyond it may be part of the reason participation rates are not changing faster.

Creating more equitable access to education abroad participation—opening the door—is only the beginning of EDI work in this space. Students’ experiences and well-being are affected by what happens when they go *through* the door, meaning their experiences prearrival, on-site, and upon return. The metaphorical “house” of education abroad emerged out of a long history of work with groups of students, destinations, and program models that informed and then formed the principal structures of our work, from

application processes to reentry. As the world changes, and more importantly the students within our educational system change, the assumptions embedded within all aspects of our work must also keep up. In this sense, we must redesign the metaphorical education abroad “house” we collectively inhabit to ensure that it is ready for and welcoming of the students we actually intend to serve; that it is, in fact, a house where all belong. This entails more than just cosmetic changes that are the equivalent of putting up new wallpaper and buying new furniture. Instead, we must be open to examining the very foundation and frame, to rebuild and reimagine its structure (e.g., walls, windows, openings) and systems (e.g., plumbing, electrical, and HVAC) as we seek to welcome and authentically engage all students.

Efforts to create educational equity within higher education have typically started without a parallel examination of the assumptions and biases embedded in higher education itself. That failure to support the whole student ultimately leads to inequities of experience, as higher education attrition and degree completion trends continue to demonstrate (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019). Beyond the numbers, the experience of past participants informs the decisions of future students, with the potential to create counternarratives if those who participated found that staff throughout the process were not prepared to answer their specific questions or create an environment where students with different backgrounds and experiences all felt a sense of belonging.

To achieve different outcomes requires us first to review critically the role we play in the enrollment patterns we see, which sounds easier than it is. As noted earlier, the history and norms of education abroad have been largely shaped by predominantly White and often female students and practitioners. Given that international experience is often required or strongly preferred to be hired into education abroad positions, there is a natural pathway for social reproduction à la Bourdieu (1986): The experience of the student participant becomes the “normal” for new practitioners, reinforcing assumptions that are often unexamined. These assumptions can be surfaced through engagement with invested colleagues on campus who themselves are committed to EDI, or by changing hiring norms to include more individuals who represent underserved identities and those who are passionate about EDI, bringing new perspectives to office policies and practices. Yet ultimately, rethinking our roles in the inequities we see requires systematically rethinking policies, practices, and the underlying assumptions and biases that form them, from our beliefs about what constitutes a “good” education abroad candidate to our understanding of the needs and interests of students who are abroad.

Education Abroad's Invisible Knapsack

When we are in the midst of the norms we have created, it can be challenging to untangle the assumptions and unconscious biases that may contribute to differential outcomes for our students, whether in terms of who goes abroad or how they experience their time abroad. That process of identifying, defining, and naming cultural phenomena underpins every effort to unmake the influence of power, privilege, and marginalization in society, from White privilege to heteronormativity to critical race theory. To progress, we must also name the norms and assumptions that lead to recurring enrollment patterns in education abroad and then we must work actively to undo them.

For those of us who are White, including both editors of this volume, White privilege as a construct serves as a useful lens through which to begin this discussion, particularly given the cultural influences that shape U.S. education and education abroad as we know it. In the late 1980s, Peggy McIntosh translated her research on male privilege to the idea that White individuals in the U.S. enjoy similar types of privileges compared to those who identify as Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC). In her seminal essay, "White privilege: Unpacking the invisible Knapsack" (1989), she describes the unearned advantages enjoyed by White people in the U.S. due to the color of their skin, advantages received in nearly every aspect of their lives and of which they are largely unaware. In describing why this phenomenon is invisible and pervasive, McIntosh states:

As a white person, I realized I had been taught about racism as something which puts others at a disadvantage, but had been taught not to see one of its corollary aspects, white privilege, which puts me at an advantage. (p. 10)

It is disturbing to realize the continued, critical relevance of the concept and the specific examples provided in the essay. As this volume is being published, more than three decades after McIntosh's article first came out, most of the advantages described remain true for White individuals, ranging from assumptions that a White person will not be followed in a store, to continuing representations of White people as the driving force behind "civilization" and the history of the U.S. (p. 10). For all the discourse at national and local levels, the fundamental structures of White privilege remain largely undisturbed, which cannot help but ripple through our work as international educators if left undisrupted.

Not all individuals will experience White privilege the same way. In a *Washington Post* opinion piece, for example, Steve Majors (Majors, 2020) explains that, within the same family, having lighter or darker skin can significantly impact how one navigates the world. As a Black man who passes

for White, he does not have the same fear of interacting with police as do his brothers with darker skin. Similarly, he recognizes the favors that he likely received from White faculty who treated him differently from fellow Students of Color. So, White privilege is not just about a self-defined racial identity; it is just as much about the perception of others. Moreover, it may be that the concept of White privilege feels less applicable to some, even if there is an agreement that discrimination and racism are real and endemic.

Dialogue on how to promote EDI in education abroad has expanded significantly over the past decade, with substantially more complex exploration of this topic at conferences and a broad range of professional development opportunities to help practitioners advance in their work. It is common now to find EDI highlighted in office resources and mission statements, all of which takes us in a positive direction. To McIntosh's point though, educators need to focus on identifying the corollary assumptions embedded in our policies, practices, and beliefs as a foundational step to understanding how to make meaningful progress in our EDI efforts. Given its endemic nature within U.S. culture, it follows that White privilege must also be ingrained in our collective practices, beliefs, and policies within higher education and, therefore, within education abroad. Viewed from this perspective, it is not difficult to unpack elements of education abroad's invisible knapsack of advantages for White students.

As an illustration, here are a few examples of White privilege that we have observed relative to White students studying in the top three study abroad destinations for U.S. students—the United Kingdom, Italy, and Spain—which collectively enrolled nearly one-third of all participants in 2018–2019 (Institute of International Education, 2020a). As a White student,

- I will commonly see people with my skin color in promotional materials, individually and in groups.
- People in my host country are unlikely to be surprised when they learn that I am U.S. American.
- People in my host country are also unlikely to assume that stereotypical media or entertainment portrayals of people who look like me may be true of me.
- I am likely to find that most information shared to prepare me for my program answers my main questions about how I may experience the culture of my host country.
- Resident staff are probably prepared to answer most of my questions and understand my experience in the local context based on their history with other students like me.

The last three statements apply equally well to students in other marginalized groups. Similarly, other examples illustrate further embedded assumptions that may affect LGBTQ+ students or students who have a visible or invisible disability:

- I know that my sexual preferences and practices are generally legal and accepted by members of the community where I am studying abroad.
- I do not fear being asked questions, receiving ridicule or criticism, or being the victim of violence based on how I present my gender identity in a classroom or while walking down the street.
- When I apply to study abroad, faculty and administrators guiding me through the process generally understand my abilities and can offer advice and support catered to my needs.

It was disturbingly easy to create these lists, and many other privileges inherent to White, heteronormative participants without visible or hidden disability could just as easily be listed here. So, why is this exercise not a common practice in our field? Why have we not unpacked and remade our knapsack to make education abroad truly inclusive?

The answer to these questions stems in part from the fact that education abroad as a profession and an educational activity has been structured around certain forms of privilege, certainly including race and ethnicity as we have thus explored, yet also around socioeconomic status, students' areas of study, sexual orientation/gender identity, and parents' educational status, among others. If the first education abroad program developed in the U.S. at the University of Delaware in 1923 (n.d.) was designed for and composed solely of males, helping them to develop greater business acumen, over time, it evolved into the demographic trends the field has experienced for decades, where roughly two-thirds of participants are female, and a significant majority of participants are White. The evolution of study abroad from that first business-focused program included shifting toward an emphasis on language and centers of Western culture; such programs made sense in the locations that continue to remain popular in education abroad, including Italy, France, the United Kingdom, and Spain. Although much has changed, many of the suppositions around where students should go and who is deemed a good fit are deeply embedded within an intersection of privileged identities that cannot be boiled down to just one, that is, race or gender or socioeconomic class. Identity is far more complicated and nuanced, as is education abroad's "invisible knapsack" of today. However, complexity is not an excuse for inaction; if we

do not interrogate our assumptions and privileges, it will be impossible to truly (re)design a house where all belong, as we advocate for in this volume.

The traditions of the profession continue to create implicit advantages and disadvantages based on how similar or dissimilar one is from assumed norms. To move forward, it is necessary to deconstruct the privileges and advantages embedded in our practice; our failure to do so is in part why we struggle to move the needle regarding who we serve and how we serve them. To paraphrase Kendi (2019), there is no neutral, there is only racist or antiracist, a construct that can be extrapolated to all the -isms, for example, sexism, heterosexism, and ableism. If we are not deliberately evaluating “neutral” policies and practices, then we are most certainly perpetuating inequities in access to education abroad, advising, and the in-country experience.

Our Own Positionality

As editors and authors, we come with our own perspectives and assumptions. While both editors have experienced some aspect of underrepresentation, for example, first-generation status, gender, and sexual orientation, the reality is that we also enjoy considerable privilege as individuals who are White, cis-gendered, educated, and upper-middle class by birth or upward social mobility. Some of our identities that might mark us as different are invisible, allowing us to blend easily, revealing only what and when we want to share. So, despite years of work on EDI issues, we have also come to acknowledge our own “invisible knapsacks.”

With these limitations in mind, we have intentionally sought out authors and peer reviewers with a wide range of identities. More than 50 authors and peer reviewers who have contributed to this volume currently live in five world regions and have origins in six continents. The authors work in different types of institutions and organizations, from nonprofit and for-profit entities (including program providers and funding organizations), government agencies, and private and public colleges and universities. Many grew up speaking languages other than English at home, ascribe to varying faiths and beliefs, and have lived and studied overseas. They are faculty, practitioners, and scholar-practitioners, including those not in education abroad, who can offer new ideas from outside the field.

Of course, we have wanted to stay clear of tokenism; instead, from the beginning of the project, the goal has been to draw from a rich and diverse community of colleagues, to make sure that we represent the profession to

the greatest extent possible. This latter point squares with the vision and mission of The Forum.

Moving the Needle: Reenvisioning the Education Abroad Process

If it is necessary to recognize the privilege and assumptions embedded in education abroad, it is just as critical that we apply that lens to interrogate and overhaul existing practices and policies. This involves moving beyond the strategies employed to date, which have often been done piecemeal, tackling one stage of the overall education abroad process at a time rather than taking a holistic and systematic approach. Many offices, for example, have done a good job of making marketing more inclusive through images and testimonials of diverse students on their websites and in publications. This has not rested at what one might call the “Benetton approach,” as simply a marketing ploy that embraces the full spectrum of skin color (Giroux, 1993); there has been a genuine desire to ensure that a wide range of students see themselves authentically represented in marketing materials.

What often misses the mark, however, are the other stages of the process through which students learn about, apply for, and ultimately engage in education abroad. What happens when the male, first-generation, Mexican American, engineering student walks in the door? How do advisors engage him to uncover and address his questions or concerns? Is the application process so long and cumbersome that it inadvertently serves as a barrier, or overtly serves to screen students out? What does funding look like, and how is it explained? Are the specific needs of this student and others addressed in predeparture and on-site orientations? Are on-site staff prepared to address any microaggressions or identity-based concerns that may occur within the program and the host society? Does the student feel fully supported upon reentry? The fact that many have addressed just one aspect of the education abroad process and not all of the others is cause for optimism that meaningful change is possible.

Within each of the stages of the education abroad process, there is an opportunity and need to question one’s assumptions. Coming back to the terminology around EDI, here we seek to focus on not just getting students “in the door” of the education abroad house we are living in, our intention is to ensure that everyone may contribute fully—something that, in turn, pushes us to question notions of “fairness” and what is “right.” Taking the application process, for instance, we still speak about GPA minimums for education abroad as a fact, when in reality, they are a construct developed

by individuals who were trying to create a structure to exchange students and needed some markers to set the parameters for comfort on each side. If good academic standing is acceptable to receive a degree from a U.S. institution, why is it not the default for education abroad, instead of lower GPA requirements requiring justification? What elements of the education abroad application are the most useful in evaluating students, and why? Do those assumptions bear out in the experience or behavior of students abroad?

With any phase of the education abroad process, we might ask a set of simple questions: If we invented study abroad today within the cultural context and values we espouse, what would that look like? Would it be the same as or different than what we see as the “ideal”? And, to get to this ideal, it may help to ask: If education abroad as we know it in the U.S. had been developed by minoritized groups in the first place, what would it look like and how would it operate? It is hard to imagine that the program models, procedures, and policies would be exactly the same. The aim of this book is precisely to reexamine each stage of the education abroad process, with the goal of systematically and holistically shifting how we work with students.

Overview of Subsequent Chapters

Subsequent chapters expand upon the themes that we have raised here and allow for a more in-depth analysis of the context and process of education abroad, with the goal of creating a more holistic and systematic set of changes for promoting inclusive excellence. The volume is organized into three parts: Framing the Discussion, Lessons Learned, and Next Steps.

In the first section, the authors provide additional context for work on EDI in education abroad. In Chapter 2, “Advancing Inclusive Excellence in Education Abroad,” Alma Clayton-Pedersen, Thandi Dinani, Kevin Hovland, and Nick J. Gozik return to the original concept of AAC&U’s “Inclusive Excellence,” of which Clayton-Pedersen was a chief architect. Noting areas where more work needs to be done, particularly in terms of intercultural and global learning, they offer a model by which leaders and practitioners can move forward in meaningful and sustainable ways. Chapter 3, “The Promise of Equity-Minded Practice: Lessons Learned From Higher Education for Education Abroad,” by Eduardo Contreras, Asabe Poloma, and Ana M. Martínez Alemán, continues where Clayton-Pedersen et al. leave off by exploring the history of EDI efforts in U.S. higher education over the past several decades, while drawing on concrete examples from other fields that can be applied to education abroad.

The second and largest section reviews the phases of the education abroad process and organizational factors that shape it. Before students even step foot on campus, the authors of Chapters 4 and 5 make the argument that much is necessary to ensure that staff and programs, respectively, are adequately prepared. Chapter 4 “Inclusive Excellence Begins With Us: Developing Inclusive Organizational Cultures and Hiring Practices,” by Heather Barclay Hamir, Aileen Bumphus, Patricia Izek, and Betty Jeanne Taylor, draws on literature and best practices from the fields of human resources and leadership studies to demonstrate the need for more diverse staffing, as well as the ways in which institutions and organizations can retool their practices around recruitment, hiring, onboarding, and retaining staff. For their part, Malaika Serrano, David Wick, and Devin Walker in Chapter 5, “Equity-Minded Program Design for Inclusive Excellence,” apply backward design to lay out methods for developing more inclusive programming, beginning with learning objectives and including all program components.

Once students arrive on campus, Brett Berquist, Shelley Jessee, and Jennifer Calvert Hall in Chapter 6, “Passing the Mic: The Role of Outreach, Messaging, and Marketing in Building Inclusive Excellence in Education Abroad,” offer illustrations from the U.S. and New Zealand for how best to reach out to historically underrepresented students and encourage participation. As is the case in other chapters (e.g., 12, 13), they recommend collaborating with returning students, understanding that word of mouth and student-to-student communication is often far more powerful than any single marketing campaign. Chapter 7, “Advancing Inclusive Practices Through Appreciative Advising in Education Abroad” by Nikki Bruckmann, Opal Lee-man Bartzis, and Chris Van Velzer, describes the power of appreciative advising, an asset-based approach that focuses on students’ strengths and realization of their self-identified goals. The authors of Chapter 8 “Dismantling Exclusive Practices: Applications as Tools for Inclusion,” Taylor Woodman, Jeremy Gombin-Sperling, and Qimmah Najeeullah, similarly point out that it is equally important to reduce barriers to entry, including around the selection of students. This includes understanding how such practices are often guided by a skewed understanding of “fairness,” missing the mark entirely on equity.

Chapters 9 and 10 look more closely at students’ academic experiences. Chapter 9, “Decolonizing Education Abroad: Grounding Theory in Practice” by Santiago Castiello-Gutiérrez and Nick J. Gozik, explores education abroad through the prism of decolonization, borrowing from approaches introduced

in South Africa and stemming from a history of postcolonial thinking and activism. Similarly, Neriko Musha Doerr and Yuri Kumagai present case studies in Chapter 10, “Flickers of Difference: Living and Learning With Others Through Inclusive Classroom Projects,” which offer collaborative learning projects that can be applied on the home campus or abroad, helping students understand others’ viewpoints through dialogue, examine their own assumptions, and learn to relate to diverse individuals.

Chapters 11 and 12 focus on the program abroad, where on-the-ground staff play a key role in students’ experiences. Chapter 11, “Training “American” Identity: Engaging On-Site Staff in Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Work,” by Martha Johnson, Bradley Titus, and Mariarosa Mettifogo, illustrates a training program developed for resident staff on diversity and the historical context of “American” identity(ies). The modules are adaptable to different country sites, demonstrating the need to modify content based on varying cultural and linguistic factors. In Chapter 12, “Fulbright Noir: Race, Identity, and Empowerment in the Fulbright U.S. Student Program,” LaNitra Berger, Lee Rivers, Erica Lutes, and Marie-Aimee Ntawukulityayo offer the perspective of overseas staff, responding to the needs of diverse U.S. students through Fulbright programming in Europe and globally.

Chapters 13 and 14 follow the return of students back to the U.S. Chapter 13, “Reentry Strategies to Apply Lessons Learned From Abroad,” by Maraina Montgomery, Neal McKinney, Jane Nzomo, Angela Manginelli and Lily López-McGee provides case studies from four institutions that have been successful in developing reentry programs tailored to the needs of diverse students, helping the latter to reintegrate on campus, while also encouraging peers to engage in overseas experiences. Closing out the education abroad process and bringing us back to the beginning of the planning cycle, Katherine Yngve and Elizabeth Brewer explore innovative outcomes assessment efforts in Chapter 14, “Alignment, Belongingness, and Social Justice: Using Assessment to Advance Inclusive Excellence in Education Abroad,” with the goal of instilling a sense of belongingness in all students, and especially those who have historically been underrepresented.

Lastly, in Conclusion, “Acting With Courage: Charting a Path Forward for Education Abroad,” we return with a synthesis of key themes and recommendations to guide efforts in redesigning education abroad to advance inclusive excellence. Given the need for strong models with proven success in this area, organizations outside education abroad serve to illustrate how goals related to EDI are served within the larger educational space, suggesting strategies for practitioners and institutions to consider. Taken as a whole, the range of

chapters outlines concrete strategies that can be applied across an array of institutions and organizations, in the U.S. and abroad. Rather than simply addressing one stage of the education abroad process, we advocate for a holistic and systematic approach, which can move the needle to realize goals around inclusive excellence.

Variations in Terminology and Capitalization

As we have noted, words matter and particularly in discussing politically and emotionally charged topics like EDI. In this and the concluding chapter, we have made a conscious decision, for example, to capitalize “White” in referring to race and ethnicity, along with other racial descriptors such as Black, Brown, and Indigenous, in accordance with the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (American Psychological Association, 2020) and the guidance of the National Association of Black Journalists (2020). Doing so ensures that each of these identities—including those that have been historically marginalized—is fully recognized. It also acknowledges the ways in which Whiteness functions in institutions and communities, while not permitting those who identify as White to sit out of conversations related to race (Mack & Palfrey, 2020), with an assumption that they are exempt. At the same time, other authors have not chosen to capitalize, and as editors, we support the individual decisions of all author teams to express these complex topics in accordance with their own views and values.

Similarly, readers will note that in some chapters authors have employed terminology such as BIPOC, going beyond the earlier term “People of Color,” which has existed since colonial times, to something that is more inclusive (Garcia, 2020). Adding “Black” and “Indigenous” can also be a way of recognizing that not all people of color face equal levels of injustice (Clarke, 2020). Others take issue with this term, feeling that they do not want to be lumped in with other groups or that they do not agree with the formation of the group. Accordingly, within this volume, some authors instead have employed “People of Color” or referred to individual groups, rather than a broader amalgamation.

Rather than impose one style guide for this terminology and capitalization, we have encouraged individual authors to determine what is most appropriate for their respective chapters, based in many instances on individual subjects and case studies. The one exception is that we have asked all to refer to “EDI” as in “equity, diversity, and inclusion” rather than “DEI,” per the discussion earlier, with a goal of foregrounding equity within this book. Such nomenclature also aligns with the stylistic choice of The Forum.

Concluding Thoughts

In the usual course of our lives, if we intend to redesign something—whether it is a house, a process, an office, or an organization—we would first ensure that we had thought through the plan for that redesign to make sure the end result served the intended purpose. However, we often have ideas in mind of what we hope to accomplish, and that makes the design process easier. With respect to EDI work in education abroad, or even in higher education, our vision of a redesigned system suffers from the lack of clear models of practice to follow. The piecemeal approach so often implemented in the profession contributes to the hazy sense of what holistic good practices looks like, and in the United States, this is further compounded by the widespread and ongoing struggle for equity and justice across multiple marginalized communities. This intersection of societal, institutional, and individual factors means that in our efforts to redesign education abroad, we perhaps need to think less in terms of incremental change and more in terms of truly rethinking what it is we do and why we do it. Given that we are not, in fact, dealing with a physical structure, where errors could be costly and potentially render a house unlivable, we encourage readers to view the advice and practical examples provided throughout this book as permission to explore, dream, and be bold in how we rethink our work. If we do so with inclusive excellence as our guiding principle, with a self-reflective and self-aware mindset focused on what is best for all students, we cannot help but improve from where we are now. We hope that readers will find inspiration, insights, and practical steps throughout this volume to inform their work in education abroad, and that as a collective, we will learn even more through iterative improvement across the field.

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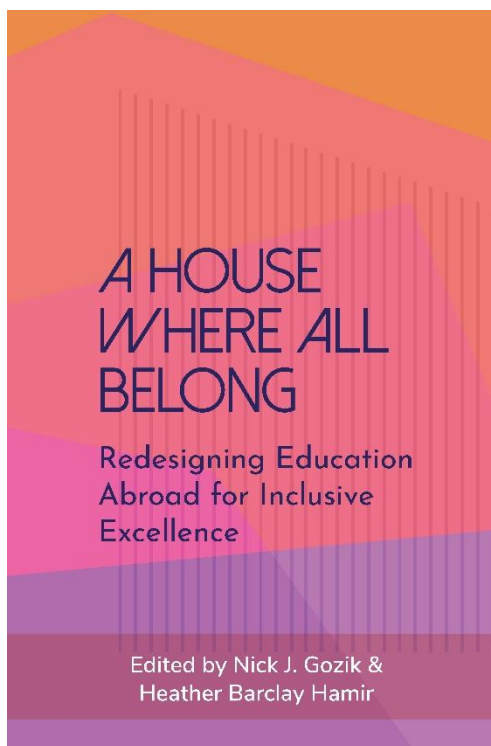
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12

Fulbright Noir: Race, Identity, and Empowerment in the Fulbright U.S. Student Program

LaNitra Berger, Lee Rivers and Erica Lutes

Postgraduate fellowships, such as the Fulbright U.S. Student Program, are an important aspect of education abroad that deserve more study. These fellowships serve students and alumni who have recently completed a bachelor's degree and may or may not be enrolled in graduate school. Participants often have the chance to live abroad for a more extended period (e.g., up to an academic year or longer for the Fulbright U.S. Student Program) to do research, internships, or teach English, which gives them more time to engage in their host country, travel, and deepen their academic study. Such an opportunity can be transformative academically, professionally, and personally for participants as it gives them the chance to think deeply about their interests, goals, and values, including their beliefs, identities, and relationship to a broader society.

For grantees of color, specifically those who identify as Black or African American grantees, the postgraduate experience abroad provides a unique opportunity to interrogate their own understanding of race, as well as how they understand the connection between their own racial identity and society. This process can fundamentally alter a participant's view of the world,

unlocking new avenues of thought, social activism, and academic or professional pursuits. However, this process is not always straightforward or positive. Many Black students encounter racism or discrimination abroad. They can be stereotyped in public spaces, treated differently in the classroom, or excluded from social life and activities (Cole, 1991, pp. 4–5). In addition, fellow grantees may dismiss their experiences with discrimination, compounding the problem.

Although enriching, competitive, and usually life changing, postgraduate fellowships can also expose participants to racism and discrimination in their host countries. Because grantees already hold a bachelor's degree and may be viewed as more independent, participants may not have access to the same support services and resources that a traditional education abroad program might offer.

This chapter focuses specifically on the Fulbright U.S. Student Program and the work of formal and grassroots mechanisms leveraged by program alumni, to recruit, support and empower Black program participants to have a successful experience abroad and to serve as mentors to future applicants. Using the case study of the Fulbright Noir affinity group that was incubated by the Belgium Fulbright Commission, we examine how an awareness of the challenges Black participants face abroad can help commissions and other education abroad practitioners who work with Black participants identify strategies to assist students in facing discrimination abroad, while also cultivating strong relationships with other Black students around issues of race, identity, and social justice. In addition, we explore how the influence of peer-to-peer initiatives, like the Fulbright Alumni Ambassador Program, Fulbright Affinity Groups, and social media platforms, such as Instagram and the Fulbrighter App, are used to inspire participation in and navigation through one's Fulbright experience.

As one of the U.S. oldest and largest cultural exchange programs, Fulbright's expansive reach permits students, recent graduates, and young professionals to conduct research, study, teach English, and build cross-cultural relationships around the world. Program alumni often describe their Fulbright year abroad as pivotal in their development as professionals and leaders. Thus, it is important to understand how Fulbright engages with participants during and after the program. More broadly, the case described here offers examples for other areas of education abroad, and particularly the ways in which program leaders can more effectively foster a culture of inclusion, community engagement, and peer leadership.

It is important to note that we are practitioners, not scholars, in the field of international education, and we approached the writing of this chapter

through that lens. We each work with students, alumni, faculty, and administrators to support Fulbright grantees during and after their participation in the program. Although we have attempted to ground our discussion in the current scholarship, this chapter draws from our observations and direct experiences as frontline advisors, program administrators, and social justice international educators (Berger, 2020).

The Fulbright Program: 75 Years of Cultural Exchange

The principles that led to the establishment of the Fulbright Program 75 years ago are still relevant today, including the desire to foster mutual understanding between the United States and partner nations, share knowledge across communities, and improve lives around the world. The Fulbright Program is the U.S. State Departments' (DOS) flagship educational and cultural exchange program and is sponsored by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA). In its long history, the program has had more than 400,000 participants worldwide. Each year, approximately 8,000 grants are awarded to study, teach, or conduct research, in most academic fields in over 160 countries.

The Fulbright Program has a strong track record of supporting grantees who go on to become leaders in their respective fields. For example, Fulbright alumni include 61 Nobel Prize recipients, 89 Pulitzer Prize winners, 16 U.S. Presidential Medal of Freedom recipients, and over 75 MacArthur Foundation Fellows (U.S. DOS, n.d.-b). The HBCU & HSI Institutional Leader Initiatives are recent efforts to support and recognize noteworthy Fulbright engagement at select institutions. With an increased focus on diversity and reaching out to underserved communities within the U.S. educational systems, Fulbright has proven itself an effective vehicle for supporting both individual and institutional growth.

The Fulbright Program is made up of a wide range of activities that include exchanges for U.S. and international students, scholars, and administrators. As one element within the Fulbright portfolio, the Fulbright U.S. Student Program offers grants for 1 academic year to U.S. graduating college seniors, graduate students, early-career professionals, and artists. Participants pursue graduate or professional study, advanced research, or English teaching in elementary and secondary schools or colleges and universities. Each year, over 2,200 Americans receive grants from the Fulbright U.S. Student Program to travel to more than 140 countries.

As an exchange between the United States and partnering host countries, the Fulbright U.S. Student Program operates through a network of 49 bilateral commissions that match funds from the U.S. government to

develop programming, events, and in-country support to Fulbright grantees. These commissions also usually manage the finalist selection process for grantees. For countries that do not have a bilateral commission, grantee selection and support are conducted at the respective U.S. embassy. Each commission is led by an executive director, who can be a U.S. citizen or a citizen of that country. Commission directors report to the Director, Office of Academic Exchange Programs at the ECA who oversees the Fulbright Program at the DOS.

Fulbright Diversity and Inclusion Efforts

As with many organizations, achieving representational and demographic diversity in the Fulbright Program has not always been easy or straightforward. Early reports describe the low numbers of selected grantees in the program's early years. In 1950, for instance, a total of 10 out of 548 grantees were Black according to the Institute of International Education (IIE) report published in the same year (*The Indiana Recorder*, 1950).

At the same time, the Fulbright Program has had a longstanding commitment to engage students, scholars, professionals, and artists from all walks of life to play an active role in fostering mutual understanding and building lasting connections with people from other nations. For example, the Fulbright-Hays Act of 1961 states that the program "shall be balanced and representative of the diversity of American political, social, and cultural life." In addition, program-wide efforts have been guided by the ECA's diversity statement. Over time, this statement has been adapted to include wider audiences, but at its core the program "strives to ensure that it reflects the diversity of U.S. society and societies abroad" and the Bureau "seeks and encourages the involvement of people from traditionally underrepresented audiences in all its grants, programs, and other activities" (U.S. DOS, n.d.-a).

In the past 15 years, within the Fulbright U.S. Student Program, there has been a sharpening of focus on diversifying the types of students and institutions participating in the program. Outreach and training materials, for example, highlight the experiences of grantees from underrepresented backgrounds. As more diverse students have begun participating in the program, diversity initiatives have also stressed the importance of inclusion for all grantees. While this is a continuous effort, the program has directed resources to reaching diverse audiences and prioritized training of U.S. college and university-based Fulbright Program Advisers (FPAs). As a result, the program has had applicant pools, semi-finalists pools, and cohorts that

have increased in terms of all aspects of diversity. Over the past 10 years, total participation from minority populations has increased 61.6% (Fulbright, n.d.). Although the program tracked and celebrated the incremental increases in the numbers of participants from minority populations, the in-country challenges faced by grantees from varied backgrounds and identities was not initially a central focus, thus creating a need for the type of programming explored in subsequent section.

Equally important to diversity is inclusion, in-country structured support and one's experience and sense of belonging while abroad. In response to participant feedback, Fulbright has shifted its approach to embrace the importance of inclusion. The program has taken steps to ensure that its diverse participants are heard and supported so they can have successful and rewarding exchange experiences. These diversity and inclusion efforts have not materialized out of thin air but have been a continuation of effort on behalf of ECA, the IIE, FPA's, commissions, embassies, and program alumni. These efforts include, but are not limited to:

- The development of a comprehensive outreach and recruitment unit, communications and social media team that are responsible for every aspect of outreach to the public.
- A priority placed on outreach and training to Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs). This consists of outreach, training, and support to new and previous Fulbright campus contacts.
- The creation of Fulbright Outreach Partners, which are strategic alliances with organizations that successfully support diverse populations in higher education and serve audiences that have been historically underrepresented in education abroad.
- The implementation of the FPA Development Initiative, which since 2004, has supported over 245 institutions that serve a diverse student population through in-depth in-person and virtual trainings.
- The expansion of online resources that are easily accessible to FPAs, including manuals, toolkits, and interactive training.
- Investments in infrastructure through Fulbright Accident and Sickness Program for Exchanges (ASPE) Assist that supports diverse participants' inclusion, safety, and security while on program.
- The hiring of in-country Regional Diversity and Inclusion Coordinators.
- Fulbright Commission-driven efforts, like those in Europe with the European Fulbright Diversity Initiative (EFDI).
- Funding in-country enrichment seminars, trainings, and orientations for program participants.

- An annual investment by the Trustees at the IIE to a special group of alumni, who are chosen by competition of recent alumni and represent in themselves the diverse centers of U.S. society and represent the greater diversity found within the Fulbright Program. These Fulbright Alumni Ambassadors are the faces and voices of the program that can speak to students on their own terms (Fulbright Alumni Ambassadors Program).

In addition to the efforts mentioned, ECA has staff dedicated to ensuring that the program stays true to its commitments to equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI). One of these dedicated DOS employees is David Levin, who has served as a Senior Program Manager and Diversity Coordinator since 1999. Specifically, with the Fulbright Program, Levin plays a crucial role leading efforts to develop and maintain key partnerships with external organizations that serve diverse populations, as well as underrepresented colleges and universities.

Although these initiatives and efforts have yielded some progress toward diversifying the program demographically, they have not been able to address the issue of helping grantees feel supported and included in the host country. Inclusion concerns include (but are not limited to): (1) addressing racism and discrimination in the group dynamics in the grantee cohort, (2) confronting bias and discrimination in the host country, (3) training Fulbright Commission staff about unconscious bias in a cross-cultural context, (4) acknowledging mental health challenges that result from racism and discrimination, and (5) connecting grantees with a broader network of diverse Fulbrighters who can provide support, resources, and networking opportunities.

In this chapter, we are zooming in on the importance of giving agency to Black grantees and alumni, who can fill the voids and tackle the complexities that exist within the day-to-day operation of the program and ultimately help the program to rethink and rebuild the grantee and alumni experience around EDI. The sheer size and complexity of Fulbright presents challenges—challenges that cannot always be addressed by implementing initiatives or initiating sweeping structural, administrative, or policy changes. Serving over 2,200 U.S. Student Program participants each year while working in tandem with program stakeholders, administrative partners in the United States and in 140 countries, is no small undertaking. Due to the size and complexities of the program, married with the uniqueness of the individuals who participate (each bringing their unique history, interests, needs, experiences, and diversity of background to the table) and the varied interests of the stakeholders who support the program, not every need has been met—and this has created space for grantees and alumni to step in.

Challenging the Status Quo: A Grassroots Effort within Fulbright

Globally, EDI efforts in the Fulbright Program have evolved in various forms over several decades. Fulbright Commissions manage both inbound and outbound programs and several, including those in Belgium and Germany, have been examining EDI efforts for both types of grantee populations. The EFDI, led by the German-American Fulbright Commission, was created to facilitate the work of European Union (EU) Commissions regarding their EDI strategy for inbound and outbound grantees (Securius-Carr & Reiner Rohr, 2018). It is within this context that the Fulbright Commission in Brussels participated in events and task forces organized through EFDI, including the EFDI Conferences in Berlin (September 2018) and Sofia (February 2019).

Commissions are encouraged to develop strong academic, cultural, and professional programming activities for all grantees that give them the chance to strengthen their knowledge and understanding of the host country, as well as to network with fellow grantees who are often spread out around the country. They also work together, usually regionally, to develop enrichment seminars on special topics so that grantees can travel to other countries and meet other “Fulbrighters.”

In 2018, the German Fulbright Commission sponsored an enrichment seminar in Berlin where a session called “Cultural Sensitivity” was organized to help U.S. Fulbright ETA grantees understand how to navigate interpersonal relationships in the classroom. During the seminar, many of the grantees expressed an interest in discussing the topic of race relations in the classroom and in their host communities and proposed a second discussion called “Cultural Sensitivity 2.0,” which was subsequently supported. In the latter, grantees voiced the need for more support from commissions when these situations occur. For context, many of the grantees had been enrolled in an institution of higher education around the time of the mass student demonstrations beginning in 2014 against police murders of unarmed Black men in places such as Ferguson, Missouri, and Cleveland, Ohio, among other cities. Like their peers, they were outraged, horrified, and galvanized by racial violence, and they were inspired to examine their own immediate environments to root out racism and demand equal treatment. This renewed sense of purpose carried into the arena of international exchange, where students noticed that people of color were not well represented in study abroad programs and encountered additional hurdles in participating due to being discriminated against in the classroom, their cohorts, and the host community. A group of grantees from several EU countries met with the

German Commission leadership and asked to form a task force to study these issues further.

The Fulbright Belgium Commission and the Fulbright Noir Seminar

Around the same time that the German Fulbright Commission hosted its Cultural Sensitivity workshop in 2018, Fulbright grantees across Europe were expressing concerns about racism and asked the commissions for additional support. Several commission directors heard the concerns and began working with grantees in addressing the structural and interpersonal issues caused by racism. In response, the Belgian Fulbright Commission created a Fulbright Diversity Committee, adopted a statement on diversity and inclusion, and developed unconscious bias training for all its selection committees. Grantee leaders proposed to use the term “Fulbright Noir” to refer to the Belgian Commission’s EDI initiatives.

As part of its participation in EFDI and in response to the aforementioned report and alumni feedback, the Fulbright Commission in Belgium incubated a Fulbright Noir grantee affinity group and hosted the first Inaugural Fulbright Noir seminar. Not necessarily a straightforward process, the way in which this initiative came about speaks not only to the openness of the commission leaders, yet also of the vision and tenacity of Fulbright grantees—a central theme in this chapter and the focus of our collective work. Grantees and alumni need to have the support and encouragement to develop their voice in education abroad programs. When they believe that their voice matters and their experiences are acknowledged and validated, they are placed in a stronger position to recommend structural and policy changes that support EDI.

After working at Fulbright Brussels for over a decade, Executive Director Erica Lutes observed several ways in which Fulbrighters approached their grant experience. Some grantees, for example, use the grant to complete their proposed projects, experience life in the host country, and make meaningful connections with their host communities. Others also arrive with these goals, but they have additional interests in fostering mutual exchange through broadening outreach and service to communities in the host country and at home. In 2018, Lutes connected with Chiamaka “Chi-Chi” Ukachukwu, a doctoral student who came to study bacteria in Brussels (see inset). During their mid-year meeting, Ukachukwu mentioned that she had started an Instagram profile “Fulbright Noir,” which highlighted one Black Fulbrighter each month. This seemed like a terrific initiative that should be highlighted so Lutes asked her to submit something for a conference proposal. Ukachukwu

proposed that the conference should focus on the Black student experience, a perspective that is often diluted in general discussions about diversity.

**In Her Own Words: Chiamaka “Chi-Chi” Ukachukwu,
Fulbright Research Grantee, Belgium and Founder,
Fulbright Noir**

When I discovered that I had been selected as a Fulbright finalist to Belgium, the first thing that I did was search for other Black Fulbright grantees in Europe. I hoped to learn about their experiences as Black cultural ambassadors and receive encouragement and support as I prepared to move abroad. Unsurprisingly, it proved extremely difficult to find Black Fulbright grantees, even when I expanded my search globally. By the time I started my Fulbright grant in Belgium, I was the only Black person in that space, an experience that I am all too familiar with as a Black woman in science.

Consequently, inspired by Travel Noire, I created Fulbright Noir with the goal of increasing representation in the Fulbright Program by supporting Black scholars through sharing their stories, amplifying their voices and experiences, and building a network and community. Higher education studies show that seeing oneself reflected in positions they aspire to be in has a major impact on their ability to do so. Furthermore, throughout my scientific training, I have had firsthand experience with the positive impact of affinity group programming. Thus, I immediately recognized the value and necessity for Fulbright Noir to be created.

As the platform continued to grow, I contacted the Fulbright Commission to Belgium to address the concerns of Black Fulbright grantees and solutions to improve their experience. They were eager to support and an instrumental resource in helping us develop programming to achieve this.

We also discussed the need for additional affinity groups to serve the unique needs of each marginalized community in the Fulbright program. Fulbright Noir was the inspiration and catalyst for the creation of these spaces. There are now a number of Fulbright affinity groups, including Fulbright Latinx and FulbrightPrism supporting scholars that identify as Latinx or LGBTQIA+, respectively that are working to create inclusive spaces so that all scholars feel welcomed and supported. This reiterates the fact that marginalized scholars require structured support to help navigate systemic barriers to ensure their success and livelihood in these programs.

In 2019, the first Fulbright Noir seminar was held in Brussels. The seminar activities included outreach to over 100 students from two high schools in Brussels to discuss racial and ethnic discrimination in Belgium, and study abroad opportunities within the realm of EducationUSA's mission; enrichment through presentations and networking opportunities with external partners; and a third day for internal reflection, discussion, and filming of grantee testimonials that described how they confronted and overcame discrimination abroad.

Outcomes of the seminar have since included 10 grantee testimonials, which aim to inspire diverse applicants to apply for the program, constructive conversation between program participants and Fulbright staff, and recommendations for posts to enhance their in-country orientations to include topics important to grantees of color, like:

- History of immigration and the politics of discrimination and racism
- A discussion about appropriate and inappropriate work conditions and expectations
- Emergency services
- For English teaching assistants, information about school and workplace culture

Additional takeaways cited by Fulbright staff included a recognition of the importance to:

- believe and not undermine grantees
- employ Black staff in the offices
- develop racial insensitivity training for staff at Fulbright Commissions and Posts
- convey a willingness to discuss racism and discrimination that grantees face
- develop formal discrimination reporting and recording of procedures

From the perspective of staff who were employed at the Belgian commission at the time, including Marie-Aimée Ntawukulyayo (see inset), the efforts started here were gratifying to see, both for the benefits of the Fulbrighters themselves and for those who identify as Black and were able to see progress in an organization that they had come to care for so much. At the same time, the takeaways from this program are not only relevant for the Fulbright U.S. Student Program or other postgraduate programs, they are also helpful for all practitioners in education abroad who are interested in strengthening their diversity initiatives and developing more inclusive support services where alumni are considered to be equal thought partners.

In Her Words: Marie-Aimée Ntawukulityayo, former EducationUSA advisor and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer for the Belgium Fulbright Commission

When I decided to study in the United States, one of my aunts asked me: “Why are you going to the United States, (a) it is expensive, (b) I am not sure of the quality of education, and (c) Belgium has one of the greatest education systems in the world!”

In my private circle, not everyone was supportive of my dream to study abroad and certainly not in the United States. When I decided to pursue my dream, I wanted (a) to be fluent in English as I was understanding the language shift that was happening in Rwanda, (b) I was really inspired by the amount of support that my Rwandan friends were receiving at their U.S. universities, and (c) I had a feeling that although Black people had to work twice as hard to make it, the representation that I received from the United States is that there was a tiny sliver of chance for Black people to succeed, if they worked very hard. The latter was reinforced as I grew up with many African American figures when looking at the business world, listening to music and watching TV.

And when Barack Obama was elected as the first Black President, many Afro-Europeans were very much inspired and had hope that a change could come.

On the contrary, in Belgium, we barely had any Afro-Belgians who were represented in the education system, political institutions, on TV or in the music industry. What I saw most of the time is that many Afro-Belgians had to figure out everything with no support from institutions let alone universities. I had a feeling that I could not really succeed in that country. Despite the fact that education is almost free in Belgium, it certainly does not create an inclusive atmosphere for Black students to succeed. From my own experience, in high school, to my high school math teacher and school counselors, my Black friends and I were not university material. Thus, while extolling equal opportunities in education and society in general, Afro-Belgians have in fact been excluded from fair competition in all spheres of the Belgian society. Looking back, today, I can now name exactly what I was trying to get away from: structural racism and lack of opportunity for Afro-Belgians. For many people, it is very difficult to understand but growing up in Belgium as an Afro-Belgian is truly a challenge.

When I arrived in Minneapolis, although sometimes challenging, I finally had a voice that could be heard and had a community that worked along with me to make sure that me and my Black friends were going to succeed. First, I was given an adviser from my department and we discussed my academic planning and what my goals were. I was really lucky to have had a white advisor who was culturally sensitive, a good listener and provided me with all the resources to study abroad. As the first Black woman going to university, they encouraged me to study abroad in the United Kingdom, and in Norway while simultaneously applying for the Nobel Peace Prize Scholarship. Surprisingly, I was selected as a 2013 Nobel Peace Scholar. Truly my experience in Minneapolis had a huge impact on my self-esteem, academic and career development, and I was quite certain that it would have been very challenging to have had these opportunities while studying in Belgium.

Second, I had a mentor who was a person of color who supported me in all my work and encouraged me to be involved on campus. One year later, I joined the Black Student Group on campus which facilitated my social integration on campus and exposed me to the politics of racism and how it impacted the Black community. I saw the creation of Student for Racial Justice, as a student-to-student facilitation group whose focus is to educate and dismantle racism and white supremacy within the context of my university.

It is only in Minneapolis and through my studies that I finally could speak to and name all the overt/covert racism that Afro-Belgians had undergone for decades. While growing up in Belgium, the expectation for Afro-Belgians when faced with racism then, was to be quiet and accept our circumstances. Studying abroad in Minneapolis where I had a support system and was involved in a Black Student Group allowed me to discover my voice and freely speak to the continuous barriers and challenges that Black people/students have to go through around the world.

When I started working at the Fulbright Commission in Belgium and began organizing the Inaugural Fulbright Noir Seminar, I realized that our commission barely had any students of African descents in their past and current cohort. Unfortunately, a lack of representation is pervasive in many societies. As scholar and postcolonial theorist Paul Gilroy (2002) notes, “We certainly get to see more Black people in the dreamscape of advertising, on television, and on the sports field, though not in Parliament, the police service, or the judge’s bench” (p. xxxiv). The case of Belgium is very close to one of the United Kingdom. In

spite of Afro-descendants in Belgium being highly educated, they are still portrayed in the nation's imagination through the lens of the last Colonial Museum in Europe, the Africa Museum.

In light of the global events, our commission [worked] to address some of these systemic issues. Some of the questions that guide our work include, how does the Fulbright Program participate in better recruiting and creating a different representation of all marginalized communities at the student and staff level? How can we participate in creating successful role-models of all marginalized communities? These are the questions that are crucial to answer in order to avoid designing One-Size-Fits strategies.

Impact & Next Steps of Fulbright Noir

As a direct result of the Inaugural Fulbright Noir seminar, the Fulbright Commission in Brussels implemented new practices, policies, and programs, with the goal of promoting sustainable and systemic change. What had started as informal conversations with grantees led to a much greater shift in thinking and action. New initiatives included mandatory staff training on race, privilege and power facilitated by a trained professional; mandatory training on LGBTQ awareness and inclusion & considerations for higher education; and supporting students with visible and invisible disabilities. In addition, opportunities provided to grantees included the incorporation of diversity and inclusion as a key topic in the U.S. Fulbright Grantee Orientation and reentry resources, programming, and conferences, as well as the launch of diversity roundtable discussions.

At the same time the commission was implementing these changes, world events altered much of what was possible. In 2020, 1 year after hosting Fulbright Noir's inaugural event in Brussels, the COVID-19 global pandemic halted student mobility and all programs were forced to end early. In addition, a new series of murders of Black Americans at the hands of the police—including Atatiana Jefferson, Rayshard Brooks, Breonna Taylor, and George Floyd—led to the largest civil rights demonstrations in the history of the United States, with ripple effects and solidarity protests felt around the world (Buchanan et al., 2020). Many grantees were outspoken about the long-term realities of structural racism, racial injustice, white supremacy, and police brutality in the United States and globally.

This sort of awakening is not new within the United States. The concerns raised by grantees and alumni are part of a longer history of Black student

activism in higher education that began in the late 1960s and resulted in the establishment of Black Studies programs at universities nationwide. In providing context for this movement, Black Studies scholar and historian Peniel Joseph also notes the role of travel abroad in galvanizing student activism, “through street-speaking, revolutionary journals, study groups, and overseas travel, radical black students anticipated and contributed to the institutionalization of the Black Studies Movement” (2003, p. 196). At the same time, the timing of these calls was valuable in moving forward the work of Fulbright Noir. Conversations about race, racism, and inequities brought about discomfort but were also crucial in breaking the silence. Grantee and alumni activism helped the Fulbright Commission to Belgium understand the need to expand its efforts to include two Black Lives Matter events, two LGBTQIA+ Trainings, and a book club with a focus on EDI. Importantly, these events and discussions empowered grantees to participate in critical discussions of world events and how they can use their privileges as Fulbrighters to amplify marginalized voices and serve their communities.

In response to the work occurring in the Belgian Fulbright Commission and in other regions, ECA created an EDI position and hired full-time diversity coordinators, in three of the six world areas, to support grantees.

Formal & Informal Mechanisms to Support EDI

As Belgium initiatives have taken root to address systemic racial equity, parallel actions have been taken by program stakeholders to address the broader landscape of the Fulbright U.S. Student Program. We have learned that gaps inevitably occur while long-term structural changes to policies and processes are taking place. We have likewise realized that progress can be expedited by leveraging the energy, creativity, and efforts of engaged program participants and alumni. As institutions begin to adapt structurally, there are movements, both formal and grassroots, taking place within alumni communities to provide supplementary support for EDI efforts. In this closing section, we explore some ways in which Fulbright, its grantees, and alumni have continued to develop initiatives around EDI, building on the formal and grassroots efforts started in places like the German and Belgian Fulbright commissions.

Empowered by the work they had done in their host countries, to raise awareness of how discrimination negatively impacts grantees, program alumni have created independent grassroots organizations. Formed out of Fulbright alumni networks, Fulbright Affinity Groups, like Fulbright Noir and Fulbright HBCU (see Brown-Grier et al., 2022 for more on this topic), have

continued to be relatable role-models and use their collective influence to advocate for structural improvements in the Fulbright Program. In 2020, external societal events, like the dual crises of COVID-19 and anti-Black racism, played a role in expanding participation in peer-to-peer support and alumni activism. For example, in June 2020, a collective of affinity group leaders petitioned the DOS to respond to civil rights demonstrations with a renewed commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and student support in the Fulbright Program. In addition, several active members of these groups used their voices to bring attention to systemic barriers, mental health support needs, and safety concerns for program participants. These examples highlight the power of students to affect change and importance of institutions listening to and adapting policies and practices based on student input.

Building on earlier success, in June 2020, program alumni met with the Fulbright Program staff at IIE and ECA to discuss the program's response to systemic racism and tangible changes to the program that could improve its outreach to and support of diverse populations. Alumni discussed how their identity affects the grantee experience and how experiences with racism and discrimination abroad shaped their desire to create more opportunities to prepare grantees and support them abroad. They presented a plan for enhancing the role of affinity groups and other groups in participating in predeparture orientations, organizing virtual meetups and conversations, and one-on-one mentoring of new grantees. The meeting was considered successful by all parties involved and both groups left with the feeling that their questions and concerns were heard by the other side.

For its parts, Fulbright has responded actively and positively to requests for more support and action, helping to facilitate grassroots efforts by grantees and alumni. In 2019, for example, the U.K. Fulbright Commission developed the Fulbrighter App. This new tool acts as a bridge between formal and informal networks by simplifying the process of building peer-to-peer connections. From a visual and functional standpoint, the user experience with the app is a blend between two other social networking tools: Facebook and LinkedIn. The stated mission of the Fulbrighter App is to be a grassroots platform that allows alumni and grantees to connect and network with like-minded thinkers that one identifies with professionally and personally. The app seeks to "engage with Fulbrighters to discover and support their work and collaborate on initiatives to build cross-cultural understanding" (Fulbrighter, n.d.). To date, this exclusive platform has over 21,000 users and is available to all verified Fulbright alumni and grantees.

The app features a global space that allows Fulbrighters to engage with each other, interface with Commissions, and find and create events where users can share advice, best practices, and develop collaborative projects. Within the local space on the app, users can build a profile and connect with Fulbrighters locally and across the globe. It is within this local space that Fulbright Noir, Fulbright HBCU, and other identity-based affinity groups can be established as nurturing safe spaces and function as agents of action to address current issues, like EDI.

For decades, technology has connected us in various industries, cultures, and disciplines across the globe; it has made our vast world seem a bit smaller, bridging the gap for humanity and increasing our understanding of one another. To make a greater impact and enhance the student experience abroad, the work here demonstrates that practitioners should embrace technology's role in facilitating communication and dialogue between students and alumni.

Another aspect of empowerment has been in preparing Fulbright grantees and alumni to serve in their fields as thought leaders. In an effort to gather the Fulbright community and create a space where grantees and alumni could process and discuss the unique ways that international exchange contributes to social change, Fulbright added a special panel discussion in July 2020 called "Race, Justice, and the Global Civil Rights Struggle" as part of its Fulbright Impact in the Field virtual panel series (Fulbright, 2020). This special program, organized quickly to respond to the national moment, included Fulbright Program alumni from a variety of disciplines who discussed how their Fulbright experiences shaped their research on race, civil rights, and policing in the United States and abroad. Panelists not only discussed their personal experiences as Fulbright grantees, but they also reflected on how this opportunity shaped the intellectual questions they have pursued throughout their careers. With over 500 participants, this event was an example of how the Fulbright Program encourages grantees and alumni to be vocal "thought leaders" who are prepared to act and respond to global challenges. The event emphasized the importance of connection among Fulbright grantees and alumni to stimulate intellectual exchange, mentoring, and community engagement.

Conclusion

The Fulbright U.S. Student Program provides a powerful example of how education abroad helps students develop and hone community engagement and leadership skills that allow them to deepen their impact on social issues.

Through their experiences navigating identity and confronting racial bias and discrimination while abroad, Fulbright grantees have learned how to identify challenges, raise concerns with administrators in positions of power, and use their experiences and expertise to take meaningful actions that would benefit future program participants. This work has involved managing cross-cultural relationships, being persistent, growing as advocates and allies, and developing an understanding of how federally funded programs are structured.

Education abroad professionals, faculty, and administrators should closely examine their program structure and content to understand how it affects the student experience, particularly since these students eventually become alumni and program advocates. Alumni engagement and postgraduate professional development are becoming an important element in the field of education abroad. The Fulbright Alumni Ambassador Program and the Fulbright Affinity groups offer one approach to cultivating strong alumni connections to the education abroad experience while also working toward achieving EDI goals.

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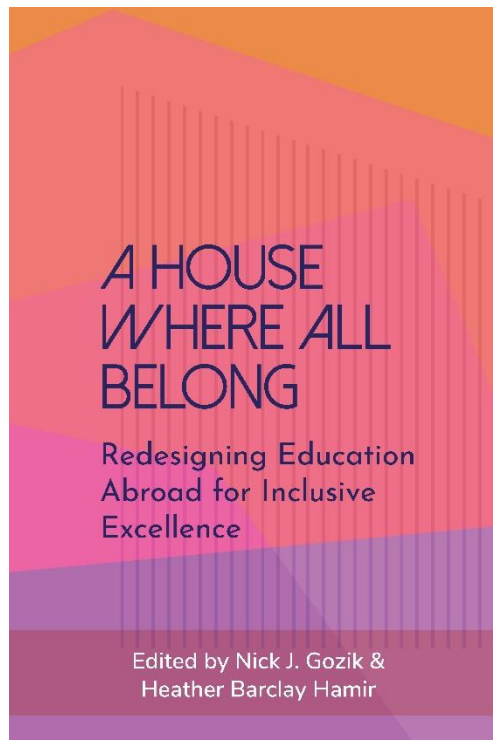
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Deepening Reentry Impact through Inclusive Practice in Education Abroad

**Maraina Montgomery, Neal McKinney, Jane Nzomo,
Angela Manginelli and Lily López-McGee**

Introduction

Of the stages of the education abroad process, that is, from when students first consider going abroad to when they return, reentry programming is often the phase that receives comparatively less attention (Brubaker, 2017). Many international education practitioners lament how few opportunities there are to engage students once they return home and how few students participate. These reasons often include student's prioritizing immediate demands (e.g., classes, work, family), the timing of students' return (e.g., returning during holiday/seasonal break before returning to campus), a lack of prioritizing reflection in the reentry period, and the reliance on students to proactively seek out activities when they return home. These factors—valid and legitimate in their own right—place the burden of planning almost exclusively on the student. If education abroad practitioners take seriously the charge to develop more inclusive practices, reentry must be reimagined as a tool for reflection, goal alignment, and personal and professional growth for students. Education abroad practitioners must also consider how the nuance of each student's experience affects their reintegration into their home or campus community and develop advising and programming strategies that make it easier, not harder, to access reentry resources.

Prevailing research and inquiry on the reentry stage has tended to emphasize outcomes assessment rather than programming (Brubaker, 2017; Szkudlarek, 2010). This chapter aims to offer insight into the latter, thus filling an important gap in both scholarship and practice. Here, we offer strategies for reengaging students following international learning experiences and recommendations for how the field can provide more and inclusive opportunities to advance students' learning well beyond their time abroad. In reimagining reentry, this chapter proposes that the success of diverse students is best predicated on those actions taken before students board the plane, emphasized while they are abroad, and reiterated when they return home. The case studies that follow contribute to an underdeveloped area of literature that focuses on the programmatic features of inclusive reentry practices and not simply the evaluation of student gains and satisfaction by way of assessment.

It is important to acknowledge the moment in which this piece was written. The global pandemic caused by COVID-19 and the global movement to end police brutality and racism have consumed everyday activities. As practitioners in a field that prides itself on cooperation across difference, intercultural engagement, and the exchange of ideas, we endeavor to reflect on how international experiences have the potential to foster longer term learning and reflection that undergird students' transitions back home.

Reentry: Moving Beyond Assessment

It has largely been within the past two decades that international educators and education abroad practitioners have explored more deeply the implications and need for student reentry activities. As Szkudlarek (2010) outlines in her literature review, scholarship addressing the affective, cognitive, and behavioral aspects of returned students is broad and multidisciplinary. Scholars, for example, have documented the growth and skill development that may come from an education abroad experience including affective, behavioral, and cognitive learning such as intercultural competencies (e.g., Gray & Savicki, 2015; Hammer et al., 2003; Vande Berg et al., 2012), adaptability and tolerance to ambiguity (e.g., Kitsantas, 2004; Williams, 2005), language acquisition (e.g., Mohajeri Norris & Steinberg, 2008; Segalowitz et al., 2004), and global citizenship (e.g., Morais & Ogden, 2011; Tarrant et al., 2014). Notably, the scholarship in this domain emphasizes assessment of student learning as a way to make the case for reentry programming rather than evaluating reentry programming and activities directly.

Students ideally continue to learn and build on the skills they have developed when they return home, and for this reason, reentry programming offers many possibilities to integrate the core tenets of inclusive excellence where practitioners attend to students' intellectual and social development poststudy abroad; mobilize campus resources to ensure returned students have an opportunity to deepen their learning; integrate strategies that consider distinct cultural experiences students bring with them from their time abroad; and develop a welcoming climate where students' unique experiences are celebrated rather than minimized (Milem et al., 2005). Still, the theoretical understanding can sometimes be difficult to tie to the day-to-day practices of those supporting students in their return.

Reintegration and Advising

Scholars have shown that students returning from a study abroad experience may find it difficult to locate people with whom they can process their experience (e.g., Arouca, 2013; Wielkiewicz & Turkowski, 2010; Young, 2014). For students from minoritized communities, the experience of returning home may be particularly isolating as many may not have individuals in their network (i.e., family and friends) who have had international experiences (Salisbury et al., 2011). In addition to processing the common reentry challenges—reintegrating to home culture, missing the abroad experience—students from minoritized communities are also met with having to navigate being different from many people in their immediate social circles. Moreover, students from minoritized populations may have had experiences while abroad that their peers from majority populations did not that they want to discuss, such as different treatment from locals (e.g., the expectation of a heritage student to speak the local language, face harassment based on their appearance) and interactions with their peers who have had less exposure to diverse communities in the United States (e.g., microaggressions, tokenism).

In light of the recent global pandemic and protests against racism and police brutality, some students—students of color in particular—may be more comfortable discussing issues around diversity, equity, power, and privilege while their White peers may be less prepared to do so (Stallman, 2009). Providing space and different modalities for students to reflect (e.g., individual advising, group discussions, student ambassador programming) can in and of itself signal to students that the abroad experience does not have to end simply because they have returned home and that there are communities that can help students continue to make meaning of their experiences. Developing reentry programming and support allows practitioners

to connect students to resources they may need, particularly as it relates to mental health services and counseling if appropriate.

Research has shown that students from minoritized backgrounds (e.g., racial/ethnic, gender/sexual identity) who have meaningful relationships with faculty and staff at their home institution are able to utilize their community in a way that mitigates the negative influence of bias and bigotry in their daily experiences on campus (Cress, 2008). However, institutions of higher education suffer “a lack of a clear definitive framework” for inclusive excellence that often undermines students’ participation in and access to an inclusive campus and education environment (Chun & Evans, 2016, p. 7). For this reason, advising can provide a venue where practitioners are able to develop meaningful and direct relationships with students, which can help foster a sense of connection with staff and offer students a sense of community with which they are excited to reengage.

Program Design

Furthermore, when considering reentry efforts, we argue that practitioners should prepare for students’ return at the time that programs are developed, well before the student leaves the country. Integrating reentry into the program design has the potential to extend student learning beyond their time abroad and deepen the learning. Embedding opportunities for reflection (e.g., Engle & Engle, 2003; Gross & Goh, 2017) into the structure of education abroad programs can be as important as outlining required readings for a course and determining which assignments will most appropriately develop students’ understanding of a concept. Preparing in this way ensures that practitioners prioritize elements of reentry in developing syllabi, scheduling programming, and determining other interventions that can equip students to employ such skills long after the end of the program.

Research on reentry is interdisciplinary and helps inform practitioners’ understanding of what students gain from going abroad. Nonetheless, more can be done to understand how to translate those findings into practical strategies that attend to students’ cultural differences and experiences they have had while spending time away from their home or campus. The subsequent case studies highlight four institutional experiences in prioritizing reentry programming in the life cycle of education abroad.

Case Studies and Strategies

The following section details the reentry programming, engagement, and advising strategies of four distinct institutions. The case studies represent a

diversity of institution types including an Historically Black College (HBCU) in the mid-Atlantic United States; a predominately White, liberal arts institution in the Midwest; a U.S.-based provider program based in Kenya; and a U.S.-based provider with its headquarters on the East Coast. In bringing together such unique experiences, this section endeavors to offer strategies and approaches that practitioners from different institutional and organizational ties may incorporate into their practice.

Howard University, Washington, DC

Howard University (HU) is a private, federally funded HBCU founded in 1867, located in Washington, DC. During the 2018 to 2019 academic year, the institution enrolled 6,243 undergraduate and 2,896 graduate-level students. An estimated 86% of HU's student population identifies as Black or African American, and 4% of the student body are from countries outside the United States. Of the undergraduate student body, approximately 8.9% studied abroad in 2018 to 2019 (Ralph Bunche Center Newsletter, 2019). HU students who study abroad for credit for a semester or academic year are generally high achievers, as they must meet a minimum 3.0 GPA requirement. HU's history of sending students abroad through third-party provider programs reaches back to 1983, and its 12 study abroad partners award students credit for participation in programs in over 85 countries. HU is distinct among its peer institutions for having the Ralph J. Bunche International Affairs Center (RBC), which is dedicated to creating an energy of enthusiasm and accessibility related to all things international on campus by promoting international affairs and study abroad.

In 2016, the RBC sought to reimagine and increase its promotion of study abroad to HU's largely Black student body and hired a new program manager to lead this initiative. Over a period of 5 years, and due to new energy and effort, student participation in study abroad nearly tripled. Today, the HU Bison Abroad Office (BAO) markets study abroad as an empowering life experience that is accessible and important for the holistic development of HU students. At the time this chapter was written, the BAO sent approximately 100 students abroad each semester.

Trust, Study Abroad, and the Role of Practitioners: Despite having motivated new staff members, building buy-in within the greater campus community, especially among students, has taken time, intentionality, and trust building. These efforts have been the cornerstone to the BAO's success in student engagement in programming efforts, but particularly after they return from being abroad. These efforts start early on with an extensive predeparture

orientation process that brings students and staff closer together through intimate conversations related to Blackness (and other marginalized identities) within the global context, information for first-time travelers, and preparation for maximizing study abroad. An important part of the predeparture experience is a collective reading of the #StudyAbroadSoBlack manifesto that solidifies students' membership into a new community of global citizens and commitment to ensuring that they support other students in accessing global opportunities. This pledge undoubtedly draws students back to participate in reentry programs at a similar rate of predeparture programs as it ties their success to the success of a broader community.

HBCU Values & a Call-to-Service Leadership: HU and other HBCUs are seen as a beacon in the United States due to their commitment to uplifting the pan-African community, dedication to service, and encouragement to “pay-forward” what one has gained with the support of others. These values are what the BAO leadership team harnesses when marketing resources and support systems and ultimately compels students to reengage upon their return. By encouraging what Greenleaf calls “servant leadership” (1970)—a leadership philosophy in which the main goal of the leader is to serve—students are invited to lead with the goal of informing their peers as part of the #StudyAbroadSoBlack movement on campus. In effect, students become recognized as a leading source of information, guidance, and empathetic support for their peers who express interest in international opportunities. This approach to student leadership development begins during the predeparture phase and continues while students are abroad through the encouragement of the use of the #StudyAbroadSoBlack hashtag to make visible and own the narrative around their global experiences. These experiences crescendo upon their return to campus, especially following the “Welcome Back Mixer” each semester where students continue to invest in the community they have developed.

Bison Abroad returnees are welcomed back to a campus community by previous cohorts of study abroad participants and BAO staff. During and at events following the welcome back gathering, returnees are encouraged to become Bison Abroad Ambassadors, peer advisors, develop content for social media, facilitate classroom visits in their major department, produce short marketing films, participate in programming, and intern within the BAO. This cycle of servant leadership development, volunteerism, and campus engagement provides returnees with a platform to express their newly expanded selves and a community of peers who have shared the same growth process. The success in reentry engagement with returnees is largely predicated on a

collectivist approach to study abroad that encourages students to create deep and meaningful connections with each other.

Outcomes: Students have fostered a community of support for each other, taken on leadership roles to increase study abroad operations and visibility on campus, and become advocates for change and improvements within the professional field through their active use of reentry resources. Using digital and physical space, returnees connect with one another through BAO tools—such as an ambassadors’ GroupMe chat and regular (monthly, bimonthly) in-person and remote alumni meetings—a regular flow of returnees remain engaged with the office and each other. Student participation in reentry programming like the biannual “Night of Reflection,” “Leveraging Study Abroad,” “Teaching English Abroad,” and “International Careers and Graduate Schools” has steadily increased. These programs offer students regular opportunities to plug back into their study abroad campus community while also gaining important skills and information for how to leverage their experience abroad for career and longer term professional and academic success. See event flyers in Figure 13.1.

In addition, the BAO staff and the HU globally minded community provide an important audience for returned students to process their individual abroad experiences. Many families and communities from which returning students come are unfamiliar with the study abroad process, the overseas experience, and the multitude of ways in which their Black scholars’ experiences abroad can challenge them emotionally. Students find initial support and resources in the BAO and peer advisors, and this support frequently supplements the services (or lack thereof) offered in other campus offices such as careers services and the counseling center.

Recommendations: The lessons from the experience of BAO staff suggest that practitioners working with underrepresented students, especially Black students and/or students attending HBCUs, should do the work of engaging these student populations early and consistently. Developing programming for prospective participants that empowers study abroad alumni to reflect on and authentically share about their study abroad experience in a way that naturally informs listeners of the challenges and successes experienced is one way to gain the attention of returnees. Upon reentry, inviting returnees to become part of a campus community of global-minded peers and professionals offers students a much-desired space for belonging among peers during the resettling process. By investing in building a campus culture that empowers students, builds community, and encourages servant leadership



Fig. 13.1 Howard University Select Outreach Flyers for Returned Student Activities.

and role-modeling, practitioners can set the foundation from which useful reentry programming and student support can flourish.

DePauw University, Greencastle, Indiana

DePauw University is a baccalaureate-granting, private liberal arts institution that enrolls just under 2,000 students, with 19% of the population identifying as first-generation students, 20% domestic students of color, and

20% international students (DePauw University, 2020). DePauw ranks seventh in the nation for study abroad participation by institution type (Institute of International Education, 2019) with 20% of all DePauw students participating in semester-long study abroad (referred to internally as off-campus study) through the Hubbard Center for Student Engagement (Hubbard Center). In 2018 to 2019, the Hubbard Center tracked that 182 students participated in semester off-campus study, and within this group, 19% of participants are domestic students of color, 19% are first-generation students, and 19% are Pell eligible (DePauw University, n.d.).

DePauw is not immune to the challenge of low student participation with off-campus study reentry programming. The Hubbard Center's Off-Campus Study (OCS) team continuously offers a myriad of reentry opportunities for returned OCS students (e.g., reentry luncheon, participation in provider campus visits, peer advising); however, the participation results for the majority of returned students have remained low. At the same time, the OCS team began to realize that in spite of the low attendance, the highest participation in reentry programming came from minoritized students of diverse identities (e.g., race/ethnicity, first-generation, socioeconomic, +) and that has been a pivotal education opportunity for better supporting this student population at a Predominantly White Institution (PWI).

Over the past 5 years, the biggest lesson learned in reentry support for minoritized students at DePauw is that they take pride in guiding their own reentry process, and the best way to support them is to provide them with the space and opportunity to participate. In general, returned OCS students demonstrate a high level of independence, but the minoritized students in particular come back and indicate that their biggest motivation to process their abroad experiences is rooted in encouraging their peers to pursue OCS opportunities. Gilman scholarship recipients (who are required to carry out follow-on service projects that reach out to minoritized students after they return), as well as students who are selected to be ambassadors for their study abroad programs, have been particularly eager to work with the Hubbard Center to promote and produce their own outreach programs. Such programming has included panel discussions on what it is like to be a student of color while abroad, information sessions on scholarship resources, and one-on-one mentoring.

In response to this student initiative, the OCS team has prioritized supporting minoritized students in a number of tangible ways. First, logistical support is offered for every program students would like to host. In practice, this support is realized by an OCS team member either proactively reaching out to students or vice versa, and meeting to discuss their event, generate

ideas for advertising/promotion (which includes sharing information via social media), and offering to book campus spaces on their behalf. See Figure 13.2 for examples of social media outreach.

Second, the office offers modest financial resources to subsidize program food costs, which is covered by a line item in the yearly budget. Through these mechanisms, the OCS team is able to serve as a partner to these students and witness how motivated and passionate they are about encouraging their peers to go abroad (which directly influence overall pre-OCS advising/engagement and OCS participation rates).

As one example of how office–student partnerships have worked, since 2015 the OCS team has taken particular attention to promoting the Gilman scholarship to eligible minoritized students. Upon reentry, many of the Gilman awardees have dedicated themselves to putting together projects to unpack their experiences abroad with their peers in mind. For their part, the OCS has made a concerted effort to partner with the Gilman awardees beyond the surface level of marketing by also offering financial, technical, and physical resources. Due to these efforts, DePauw has garnered 30 Gilman awardees since 2015, with 1 year resulting in 13 awardees (2017–2018), and minoritized DePauw students are participating at rates near parity with their enrollment demographics. In addition to helping recruit new students, the efforts have helped to give awardees greater confidence during and upon return from OCS.

Recommendation: As with the HU example, this case demonstrates the significant benefits of forming intentional relationships with students throughout the study abroad process, with the goal of not only increasing participation yet also in championing individual students' success. Minoritized students want to be assured of their choices, so offices/practitioners should act as an authentic source of empowerment to promote self-authored motivation, independence, and passion. Though minoritized students may experience hardships while abroad due to their identities, their resilience in processing these realities is best unpacked by practitioners in a support role, as has been described earlier in this case study. This supportive approach in reentry is noticed by prospective minoritized students, who become more willing to trust in building relationships with the study abroad office.

Minnesota Studies in International Development - Kenya Program, Nairobi

The Minnesota Studies in International Development (MSID) – Kenya program is an academic study abroad program with semester- and year-long

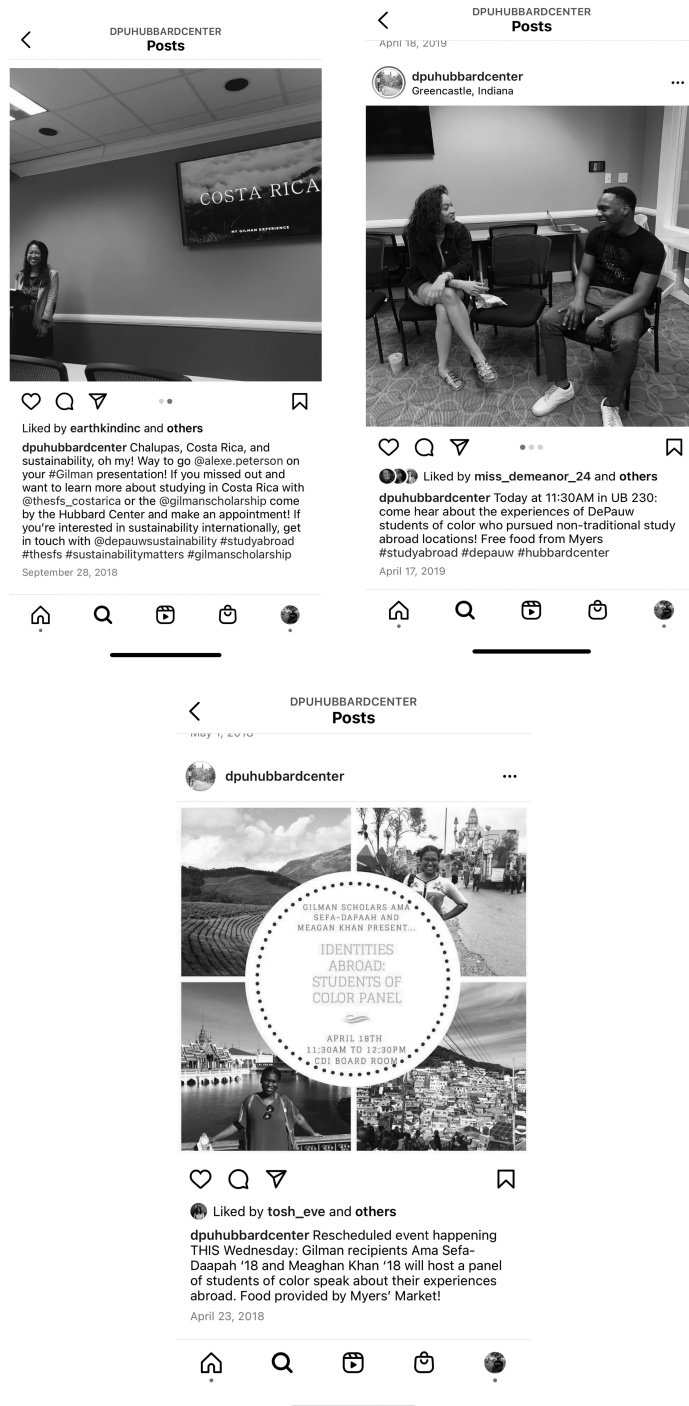


Fig. 13.2 DePauw University Select Social Media Outreach for Returned Student Activities.

options developed by the University of Minnesota. MSID Kenya is one of several programs operated by the Learning Abroad Center at the University of Minnesota open to any university-going student and offers an example of what a program do while students are still abroad to prepare for reentry. The program combines coursework with hands-on experience in a non-governmental or government institution working with local communities. It is designed for undergraduate and graduate university students who are interested in issues of development, sustainability, and social justice. The program puts the student into direct contact with the social and economic realities of Kenyan communities and affords participants opportunities to learn through experience in areas such as entrepreneurship, public health, social service, and environmental sustainability. Through classes, excursions, and an extended internship or research placement, the program strives to establish a continual dialogue that links experience with theory and critical analysis. While the majority of the participants are White, each cohort has some Africans, African Americans, and/or Asian American students, with an average of 12 students total each semester. All participants live with Kenyan host families and engage regularly with staff who are all Kenyans. MSID Kenya is an affiliate of Wildlife Clubs of Kenya, an education institution based in Nairobi.

In-Country Orientation: During the first week of orientation, staff and faculty are intentional about preparing students for cultural immersion in the host culture. Students with minimal or extended knowledge of the country engage in local excursions that require them to think about their home and host cultures. To track their own progress, participants are asked to reflect and write down their individual goals for the study abroad experience, initial impression of the host culture, what they think will be the most challenging and rewarding experiences, and personal aspirations. Each student writes a self-addressed letter prior to departure, reviews it mid-semester, and reads it again at the end. This activity achieves two seemingly separate goals that ultimately help prepare students for their return home: It offers students a model for how to take time to reflect intentionally on their experiences, while also helping them develop a deeper awareness of their perceived and actual understanding of cultural differences, where there is often a gap.

Students often find that the most challenging or rewarding experiences shift by the end of the semester, when it is time to reflect back on their time in Kenya. This experience helps students develop more self-awareness of what they know and practice reflection in an intentional way that gives them valuable strategies they can employ when they return home as they

process their experience abroad and identify ways to articulate what they have experienced. Notably, MSID staff frequently receive correspondence from students months after they have returned home that demonstrates these continued reflections. Among many examples, one MSID alumnus wrote:

There is no way I would have gotten my current position (working in Monitoring and Evaluation in Rwanda) without my time in MSID. The on-the-ground experience that the program gives you, really prepares you to work abroad in a developing country. I honestly credit this program 100% for landing me my dream job.

Workshops to Reflect on Student Learning: During the final week of the program, students participate in a session on preparing for their return home. Staff guide them through materials and activities that begin to encourage students to think about what it will be like to return and how they can integrate their experience adjusting to the Kenyan culture to their reintegration home. The session encourages students to continue to reflect on how to incorporate all of their cultural identities into their own perspective on the world. Students learn strategies for managing the emotional challenges of study abroad (e.g., homesickness, adapting to new cultural surroundings) and reentry (e.g., reverse culture shock and making career, academic, personal decisions). As with their initial arrival in Kenya, so too must students give themselves time to go readjust and adapt to their home culture. The workshop also offers students strategies for how to share with friends and family what they might be feeling (e.g., difficulty adjusting, sadness, loss) as a way to help them process their international experiences. Staying in contact with friends and contacts from the host culture, joining an international student group, and becoming active in events sponsored by their international studies/education abroad office offer students an outlet to share their concerns and experiences. Importantly, program staff urge students to apply what they have learned abroad in planning for their next phase of life.

This workshop plays a very important role in preparing students' expectations for their return. Some report that it was not until a couple of months after being home that they started to experience reverse culture shock and readjustment challenges. The activities MSID has employed to support student preparation for the reentry stage can be especially helpful for students who may be returning home to communities with less exposure to international travel. Being able to independently reflect and having had practice expressing their growth prior to departure helps students feel more comfortable articulating what they are processing and reengage

with communities back home where they can share their experiences. One returnee wrote:

The discussion we had at the end of the trip on what we might experience when re-entering the US was very helpful. There's much more of an emphasis on the changes you might notice and the feelings you may have upon entry of a new country but not as much focus on the reverse culture shock you may face when returning so for me, it was an eye-opening discussion. For many people including myself, being immersed in another country for a few months can change your perspective on life and even thoughts on your own culture. When you go back to your friends and family, you may feel as if they don't understand you or can't relate to your passion about what you discovered and experienced abroad. We discussed that although you may experience loneliness or frustration, patience is necessary when explaining your experience to others. The group discussed that you also need to give yourself some time and space to fully understand your feelings and emotions as you transition back into regular life.

Recommendation: From these experiences, it would be helpful for institutional partners to have a dedicated returnee support staff or team for returned study abroad students so that students can continue to use their skills in reflection they gained abroad to help returnees continue to process their experience. This could include facilitated group discussions, individual advising, and a seminar that focuses on reflective practices, among other possible activities staff could lead. Importantly, the MSID Kenya program experience suggests that more can be done while students are abroad to prepare them for the reentry process before they leave their study abroad location. This helps facilitate the transition for students back to their home campus and students create plans for how to navigate postprogram transitions.

AIFS Study Abroad, Stamford, Connecticut

AIFS Abroad is one of nine cultural exchange programs offered by the American Institute for Foreign Study (AIFS). AIFS is an education abroad provider organization that hosts students from a wide range of schools, and this case study offers an example of how providers can both prepare students for the reentry process while they are abroad and design reentry programs that keep them engaged after returning to their home campus. Since 1964, AIFS has been a leading provider of educational opportunities for more than 1.6 million people. More than 5,000 students participate in an AIFS study abroad program annually, choosing from more than 70 comprehensive programs spanning more than 35 host cities during the semester, academic year, summer, or January term. Many students who participate in the programs are going abroad for the first time and more than 50% of students receive

scholarships or grants from AIFS (AIFS Study Abroad, 2020a). While applicants have been asked to provide optional demographic information, most have not done so, making it difficult to track participation rates. Beginning in spring 2021, recently adjustments have been made to encourage student self-reporting, as part of the AIFS Abroad Plan of Action for Access, Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity (AIFS Study Abroad, 2021).

As an international education organization, AIFS aims to build the best possible relationship with each of its partners, representing a variety of institutional types. This provides a unique responsibility to understand and meet the needs of individual campuses, something that is only possible through collaboration and trust. Since implementing these programs, there has been anecdotal evidence of increased interest and participation of students from minoritized backgrounds, including students of color, first-generation college attendees, students who identify as LGBTQIA+, and students with cognitive and mobility considerations. As noted earlier, more work is needed to collect demographic data, allowing for better tracking. This work is never finished, and the goal is to improve continuously as individuals and as an organization through research, education, assessment, and collaboration.

The experience abroad is approached comprehensively (before, during, and after) and, as such, programs and resources have been created that engage students early in their experience abroad and continue throughout their physical return to their home institution. This is exemplified through the AIFS Alumni Ambassador program.

AIFS Alumni Ambassador Program: Each year, AIFS collaborates with partner institutions to select 40 to 50 students for the Alumni Ambassador program. Students must apply and be approved by their home institution, respective AIFS resident director, admissions officer, and the alumni team. Accepted participants commit to providing 80 hours of outreach on their home campuses and online throughout the school year. A comprehensive training in August provides participants space to process the emotional side of their return, learn about the entire AIFS program portfolio, review outreach best practices and information on the current study abroad participation data, and discuss how to remove potential barriers for participation in education abroad.

Since 2017, Alumni Ambassadors have been asked to do intentional outreach to two underrepresented communities that have been historically underrepresented in education abroad on their home campus. They can choose the targeted populations, based on their campus' needs, yet are asked to pick one community they already have ties to and one that is outside their

own lived experience. The latter invites all participants to engage with a new group and thus move out of their comfort zone as they did when abroad. This process provides opportunities for students from diverse backgrounds to connect in a meaningful way and helps to build increased empathy and awareness in student leaders. For example, McKenzie Kelley, an Alumni Ambassador at Lake Forest College in 2017 to 2018, offers the following observation:

Participating in the AIFS Alumni Ambassador program allowed me to gain experience with a diverse group of people. To connect with other students I had to establish a genuine relationship that allowed me to get to know someone's motivation for desiring to study abroad.

Program marketing materials clearly articulate that ambassadors will be expected to contribute to access efforts that expand the scope of who has information about and access to resources for education abroad. Related questions appear in the application and interviews. In addition, ambassadors participate in monthly meetings with staff where they continue to engage in identity reflection in a cohort setting and report their progress in engaging with their selected communities throughout the year. First-year participants are paired up with a returning ambassador buddy who can provide personalized support and mentorship as new students find their footing in the program.

In a postprogram survey, 94.6% of the 2019 to 2020 AIFS Alumni Ambassador cohort (AIFS, 2020b) and 97.7% of 18 to 19 cohorts (AIFS, 2019) indicated they were able to connect with two communities on their home campus. Examples of programming have included tabling in academic departments and spaces for students that are underrepresented in study abroad; meetings with and office hours in the multicultural center, LGBTQIA+ office, financial aid office, diversity and inclusion office, and office for adult students; information sessions focused on social identities; alumni panels comprised of diverse students; open discussion events; meeting with underrepresented student groups on campus; and continued one-on-one outreach and conversations. Amie Knowles, an Alumni Ambassador at Emmanuel College in 2018 to 2019, reflected on the experience:

My most successful activity and one I feel that I grew from the most was speaking at a conference that revolved around Diversity and Inclusion. It was a project that I had been working on all year. My presentation was called 'Cultural Immersion: How I Learned to Love Myself and the World Around Me.' I shared my thoughts about culture shock and identity. It was very interesting and I was able to make connections with a lot of people whom I had never talked to before. I felt that this was one of my most successful moments.

The ambassador program has provided opportunities for AIFS to continue collaborating with university partners and take an active role in expanding access and information for and with students from minoritized backgrounds—something that can be challenging for a provider organization that works with students from around the United States. The program also allows students from diverse backgrounds to serve as leaders to their peers and come together with a common goal. The programmatic intentionality encourages participants to continue to learn from each other after their experiences in-country have concluded, mirroring the experience they will have in the professional world when they work within diverse teams. Participants develop lifelong relationships that can have a positive impact on their career opportunities and social network. Career development is a large component and draw of the program, which includes advice on how to market international experience, interview etiquette, and how to navigate the transition from college student to professional. Individual resume and LinkedIn reviews are conducted with the alumni team, who provide mentorship long after the program end date.

Recommendation: At many organizations and institutions, efforts for continuing to work with and invest in alumni are seen as nonessential or a lower priority. However, the investment is time well spent as alumni are often the biggest cheerleaders/influencers among their peers, and institutions/organizations are likely to see near-term results in increased interest in study abroad.

AIFS also believes it is important to utilize alumni in outreach efforts with intentionality. Encouraging students to concentrate their outreach efforts on one or two underrepresented communities in study abroad not only provides students with a greater focus on how to tell their study abroad story, but it also allows them to build trust and deeper relationships with members of communities which they may not have had connections to before. The alumni program can serve as an example for both providers and individual campuses, looking to move DEI (diversity, equity, and inclusion) efforts forward in real and meaningful ways.

Key Takeaways

Each case study has presented its own set of strategies and approaches that education abroad practitioners can take with them into their daily practice. There are also several key themes that emerged from this collaborative process that warrant additional attention.

Invest Early and Often

While practitioners often lament the lack of time for strategy and planning, dedicating space to thinking through and documenting offices, institutions, and organizations' priorities is key to ensuring these priorities are reflected in daily operations and in the areas where time and resources are dedicated. Education abroad practitioners must commit to investing *time and energy* early with students. This work begins from the moment a student expresses interest in education abroad and continues through their time abroad to when they return. All four cases emphasized the importance of communicating with students early on in their experiences, that is, during predeparture advising for HU and DePauw, before the students arrive in-country with MSID, and while students are still abroad as with AIFS.

For universities, DePauw and Howard offer insight into the importance of leveraging *outside opportunities and resources* to help practitioners promote poststudy abroad engagement/support. Modeling after programs such as the Benjamin A. Gilman and AIFS' ambassador program, practitioners have built-in levers that encourage students to engage their peers and communities creatively upon their return. Institutions are positioned to utilize such programs to ensure students return to campus already thinking about how they will share their experiences with others. Similarly, providers (education abroad and scholarship/fellowship) are well positioned to incorporate elements of reentry programming and engagement that allow students to return ready to discuss their international experiences.

Collaboration Is Vital

Education abroad offices and international education organizations cannot and should not be seen as the sole providers of every service that students may need when they return to campus. The following are three particular groups with whom it is important to cultivate collaborative partnerships.

Campus Partners: U.S. institutions of higher education are structured in such a way that students have access to services that extend well beyond their academic interests. Many campuses have offices and units dedicated to career preparation and physical and mental health, and diversity and inclusion services, among others. Such services can be of particular importance to students upon their return. An education abroad practitioner's role should not be to replicate such services. Rather, education abroad professionals should identify ways to collaborate with colleagues in offices across campus and share the specific needs and concerns of returned students. Education

abroad professionals can maximize partnerships by identifying key points of contact in other units and referring students to appropriate services upon their return.

Providers and Programs: In the same way practitioners can develop collaborative partnerships with campus units, practitioners on campus and at education abroad provider organizations are positioned to develop relationships with in-country teams and U.S.-based teams. Supporting students' reentry experience can and should be an ongoing and back and forth conversation between domestic and overseas staff. In-country teams can begin to prepare students for return, as MSID and AIFS have demonstrated, and share relevant information about students' experiences for their U.S.-based counterparts. Beyond information sharing, U.S.-based practitioners and in-country teams might collaborate to offer additional integrated resources (e.g., identity-based information relevant to the country) and activities (e.g., community building, navigating difficult dialogues) based on the students going abroad, which can be particularly relevant when working with students from populations underrepresented abroad. This can also provide a continuity of support for students returning from abroad. Organizations such as Diversity Abroad, The Forum on Education Abroad, and the NAFSA regularly publish resources for practitioners to explore such topics and hone skills to support their students (e.g., The Forum Standards of Good Practice, Diversity Abroad's Access, Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity Roadmap).

Alumni: Education abroad alumni are both recipients and prospective providers of reentry services. While practitioners support students upon their return, these same practitioners are also positioning students to support, create, and lead outreach efforts for populations underrepresented in education abroad. Institutions and organizations can develop reentry programming that continues student growth in several ways including leading outreach efforts to student populations underrepresented in education, serving as peer advisors to prospective education abroad students, and offering input on developing more inclusive services. Their involvement in such activities not only supports their growth but also helps engender systemic change in our institutions and organizations that can lead to a more diverse and inclusive education abroad ecosystem.

Technology: Although the case studies did not explicitly reference the use of technology, virtual spaces, social media, and other technological tools are important resources practitioners can use to connect and reengage students

when they return from abroad. HU's use and expansion of the *#StudyAbroad-SoBlack* hashtag has developed a unique space for Black students to celebrate and share their experiences abroad, demonstrating the possibility of developing online communities that invite minoritized communities to share and reflect on their experiences. Other initiatives such as Fulbright Noir (see Chapter 12 in this volume), Fulbright Latinx, and Fulbright Prism represent other primarily online spaces building virtual communities. These efforts also provide a unique way to leverage the idea of "paying it forward" as highlighted in nearly all of the case studies presented here. In a pandemic and postpandemic world, identifying technological tools that can bolster reentry efforts (e.g., virtual gatherings via Zoom, reflective workshops that leverage Google Jamboard, career development discussions done via Twitter) will be important for professionals entering the field.

Reentry Courses: The case studies also offer strategies focused on hiring or involving students in activities that are voluntary. However, developing a reentry course for credit for returned students may offer practitioners the opportunity to carve out space for students to continue honing their reflective skills (as noted in MSID) and share their experiences in an intentionally designed and facilitated way. To the extent that such courses are offered by instructors trained to navigate difficult conversations and help students build on their intercultural competencies, such courses may provide students a venue to discuss issues related to identity, challenging experiences from abroad, and more.

Concluding Thoughts

The case studies offer distinct strategies for how to approach the reentry phase of education abroad and have demonstrated that the field needs more examples, models, and research on the reentry process that help practitioners understand how to improve services and programming. These examples offer both insight into successful models and motivation for others to document and share their reentry efforts. They also contribute to the existing literature that goes beyond assessment and considers the programmatic implications for reentry, particularly for groups historically minoritized and underserved in the education abroad process. Having more voices and perspectives on reentry efforts offers the field a better understanding of effective programming and opportunities to incorporate these efforts into the full life cycle of the education abroad experience.

The case studies remind practitioners that in order to integrate inclusive practices that strive for excellence, the reentry stage is not one that can

be omitted. Just as learning begins before students go abroad, learning continues well after the students have returned home. Practitioners must ensure that *all* students can continue to learn and grow after they return home, not only the students who are independently motivated to reengage. Practitioners can begin with small steps like scheduling one or two reflection activities a term and integrating alumni into outreach sessions. Smaller, sustained efforts lay the foundation for more robust efforts later.

This chapter is written at a time when these case studies offer important insight into what successful reentry has looked like in a pre-COVID-19 world. There are certainly lessons and strategies that will continue to be relevant in a postpandemic environment. It is conceivable that education abroad will look different from the field in which these cases were operating. As a result, the approaches to reentry explored here will require changes and modifications based on the new reality following the current health crisis that has already had an incredible impact on international education and exchange. Sustaining and advancing efforts to embed DEI is more important than ever and will require our continued attention and commitment.

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