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Faculty Knowledge of the Purposes and Processes of Short-Term Faculty Led Study Abroad

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FACULTY KNOWLEDGE OF THE PURPOSE AND PROCESSES OF STUDY ABROAD

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Abstract

Are the faculty leaders of short-term international study abroad programs aware of what is necessary to facilitate the best outcomes for their students? Are faculty members aware of established purpose and processes for international education but specifically short-term programs? Open Doors reported in 2014 the percentage of undergraduate students in the U.S. participating in an international experience has more than doubled since 2000 but this is still less than 10 percent of the total number of undergraduates in the United States. In 2014, 60.3 percent of students participating in an international experience did so in a short-term faculty led course. Recently, the Institute of International Education announced its commitment to a new five-year initiative, “Generation Study Abroad”, with the goal of having 600,000 students studying abroad by the 2017-2018 academic year. With an already high percentage of undergraduates participating in short-term faculty led programs and the expectation of continued growth of these programs, faculty leaders need to be aware of smart practices in the field of international education. Faculty members around the United States participated in an online survey with questions designed to determine faculty leader’s knowledge of the purpose of international education as well as knowledge of suggested smart practices. The results show that faculty leaders are aware of some aspects of international education but overall awareness of the need to use experiential learning as a cornerstone for curriculum on these programs is lacking. To assure the best possible outcomes for students participating in short-term faculty led programs, training for faculty leaders on smart practices will facilitate the creations of graduates ready to participate as global citizens.

Keywords: experiential learning, study abroad, smart practices, purpose