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The Gender Imbalance in U.S. Outbound Study Abroad: A Case Study of Semester at Sea

Jessica L. Ryan
SIT Graduate Institute

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THE GENDER IMBALANCE IN U.S. OUTBOUND STUDY ABROAD: 
A CASE STUDY OF SEMESTER AT SEA

Jessica Lynn Ryan

PIM 73

A Capstone Paper submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for a Masters of Arts in 
International Education at SIT Graduate Institute in Brattleboro, Vermont, USA.

December 14, 2015

Advisor: Lynée Connolly
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Student name: Jessica L. Ryan  Date: 12/14/2015
This capstone is dedicated to all those who wander, yet are not lost.
“Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness, and many of our people need it sorely on these accounts. Broad, wholesome, charitable views of men and things cannot be acquired by vegetating in one little corner of the earth all one’s lifetime.”

– Mark Twain, The Innocents Abroad
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND DEFINITIONS

DAC  Diversity Advisory Committee
ROM  Recruitment Operations Manager
ISE  Institute for Shipboard Education
SA   Study Abroad
SAS  Semester at Sea
STEM science, technology, engineering, and mathematics
UVa  University of Virginia

***

Gender  “It is the complex interrelationship between an individual’s sex (gender biology), one’s internal sense of self as male, female, both or neither (gender identity) as well as one’s outward presentations and behaviors (gender expression) related to that perception, including their gender role” (Gender Spectrum, 2015, para. 2).

Motivation  To be motivated means “to be moved to do something” and the “attitudes and goals that give rise to [that] action” are either intrinsic or extrinsic” (Deci and Ryan, 1985, p. 54).

Intrinsic Motivation  The desire “to doing something because it is inherently interesting or enjoyable” (Deci and Ryan, 1985, p. 55).

Extrinsic Motivation  The desire “to doing something because it leads to a separable [desired] outcome” (Deci and Ryan, 1985, p. 55).

Study Abroad  Study abroad is “education abroad that results in progress toward an academic degree at a student’s home institution” (Forum on Education Abroad, 2014a, para. 10).
Abstract

The purpose of this study is to explore the phenomenon of female college students studying abroad with Semester at Sea (SAS) at twice the rate of their male peers, in the hope of better understanding the significant gender imbalance overall in U.S. outbound study abroad. To put this issue into context, this study uses the theoretical framework of Deci and Ryan’s (1985) Self-Determination Theory of Motivation. Data was analyzed through the lens of intrinsic verses extrinsic motivation to answer the guiding research question: Is there a difference between male and female college students in their motivations to study abroad and, if so, does SAS appeal to these different motivations?

To answer this research question, data was collected through a survey of 79 male and female students enrolled in SAS’s Spring 2015 Voyage. A group of four male students participated in an all-male focus group. Six recruitment staff members from the Institute for Shipboard Education (ISE) were also interviewed. Data analysis revealed that both male and female students are intrinsically motivated to study abroad with SAS. The top two motivations, regardless of gender, are the desire to travel and to have new experiences. Students chose to study abroad with SAS because of the program’s multi-country model, which allows them to “see the world”. However, male students intrinsically motivated to study abroad are the minority among their male college peers. While female students received support for their decision to study abroad from their female friends, male students reported that their male friends did not see the academic nor career value in studying abroad. Previous studies criticize study abroad marketing for only highlighting the intrinsic benefits of studying abroad, such as personal development.

In order to effectively attract more male students, ISE should modify its programming and marketing to make it more appealing to the extrinsic motivations of male students. Strategies include showcasing successful male alumni, highlighting the academic and career benefits of the SAS program, and offering more STEM courses.
Introduction

According to the 2015 Open Doors Report published by the Institute of International Education (IIE), study abroad by U.S. college students increased by 5.2% over the previous year, has tripled over the last two decades, and is at a record high since the economic downturn of 2008 (IIE 2015a; 2015b; 2015c). In the 2013-2014 academic year, 304,467 U.S. students studied abroad for academic credit from their college or university (IIE, 2015a). However, despite the valid gains in study abroad participation and the appreciable diversification of students enrolled in higher education, the student profile of study abroad has not changed significantly, especially when viewed through the lens of gender (Hamir 2011). The majority of students who study abroad are female and the Association of International Educators’ officially classifies male college students as one of the targeted, underrepresented constituencies in education abroad (Lebold, Henry, Houston, Jackson, Scheibe, Van Der Meid, 2005). On average, male students constitute only 35% of those who study abroad and there has been no increase in male participation over the last two decades (see Appendix A). Remarkably, male students across all races and ethnicities are less likely than their female counterparts to study abroad (Twombly et al., 2012). In fact, over the last decade, “men are the only ‘minority’ group to show a decrease their enrollment in study abroad” (Fischer, 2014, para. 31).

The lack of U.S. college males in outbound study abroad is cause for concern when one considers that inbound male students constituted 56% of the 270,128 international students studying in the U.S. in 2013-2014 (IIE, 2014d; 2014b). A 2008 joint report by the American Council of Education, the Art & Science Group, and the College Board surveyed high school seniors (55% female, 45% male) and found 81% of students wanted to study abroad and 55% were “absolutely certain” or “fairly certain” that they would (p. 3). The results of this study show
that a majority of all students desire to study abroad; and yet, the majority of male students ultimately choose not to study abroad (IIE, 2015d).

**Background**

Inspiration for this study stemmed from my practicum experience with the Institute for Shipboard Education (ISE), which is the non-profit parent organization of the multi-country study abroad program Semester at Sea (SAS). SAS’s first voyage was in 1963 and the program specializes in comparative global education, which ISE defines as the “form of international study that identifies and connects the world’s peoples, patterns, cultures, and traditions” (Semester at Sea, 2014a). ISE organizes and manages three distinct semester voyages annually onboard their ship, the M.V. Explorer: Atlantic Exploration (fall semester; visits the Mediterranean region, African, and South American continents), Around the World (spring semester; visits Asian, Indian sub-continent, and African continents) and a summer voyage that focuses on Western Europe and the Mediterranean region. I was curious to discover whether SAS would fit the national trend in study abroad of female students outnumbering male students 2:1 (IIE, 2015d).

The ISE Assistant Vice President of Advancement provided me with the institution’s student enrollment figures by gender dating back to 1990 (see Appendix B). Based on the last 67 voyages, the average female student enrollment was 68% and the average male student enrollment was only 32%—3 percentage points below the national 14-year average! In other words, male students are even less likely to study abroad with SAS than they are to study abroad at all. The lack of male participation was confirmed when I boarded the ship to sail as the Assistant Director of the Field Office for the Spring 2015 Voyage—the 118th voyage of SAS.

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1 ISE now only offers a fall and spring semester voyage due to financial difficulties and institutional changes, including the sale of the ship, partnering with a new academic sponsor (Colorado State University starting June 2016), and hiring a new president.
There were 639 students on the Spring 2015 voyage, 69% female (438 total) and only 31% male (201 total). I wondered: why are so few male college students studying abroad with SAS?

**Statement of Research Question**

The purpose of this study is to explore the phenomenon of female college students studying abroad with SAS at twice the rate of their male peers, in the hope of better understanding the significant gender imbalance overall in U.S. outbound study abroad. To put this issue into context, the study used the theoretical framework of Deci and Ryan’s (1985) Self-Determination Theory of Motivation. To be motivated means “to be moved to do something” and the “attitudes and goals that give rise to [that] action” are either intrinsic or extrinsic (p. 54). *Intrinsic motivation* “refers to doing something because it is inherently interesting or enjoyable and *extrinsic motivation* “refers to doing something because it leads to a separable [desired] outcome” (p. 55). Students willingly act in pursuit of an extrinsically motivated goal when they understand the meaning of the goal, internalize its value, and believe they have the skills to succeed (e.g. efficacy). A student adopts an extrinsically motivated goal because “significant others” (parents, peers, society) in his/her life value and endorse that goal (p. 64). With this theoretical framework in mind, five research questions were devised:

I. What influences U.S. college students’ decision to study abroad? Whose support is most important?

II. How do U.S. college students learn about SAS? What is the most influential source of information?

III. What motivates U.S. college students to study abroad with SAS?

IV. Why do not more U.S. male college students study abroad with SAS?

V. How could ISE effectively recruit more U.S. male students to study abroad with SAS?
By better understanding male students’ motivations for studying abroad, ISE can effectively recruit more college males, thereby supporting the institution’s commitment to increasing student diversity while also meeting the financial goal of running the program at full capacity.

**Literature Review**

The gender imbalance in study abroad is not well understood precisely because it has not been well studied. NAFSA admits to this gap in knowledge, stating, “Although multiple theories and conjectures abound, no research has been undertaken to identify any overarching reasons why the gender breakdown for education abroad is not parallel to the gender balance on U.S. campuses” (NAFSA, 2005, p. 51). An extensive review was conducted of the relevant theoretical and professional literature published on the topic, including work by Adkins (2004), Hamir (2011), Lindsay (2014), Lucas (2009), Peterson (2003), Salisbury, Umbach, Paulsen and Pascarella’s (2009, 2010), Yankey (2014), and Shirley (2006). From this review, five major themes emerged: 1) student intent to study abroad, 2) psychosocial developmental differences between male and female students, 3) gendered barriers to study abroad, 4) feminization of study abroad, and 5) intrinsic verses extrinsic motivations to study abroad.

**The Intention to Study Abroad**

Salisbury et al.’s (2009) groundbreaking study used choice theory to examine the range of factors that influence the intention of college freshmen to study abroad. They measured this intention based on four predictive categories: human capital (knowledge, skills, and academic major), economic capital (family income and financial aid), cultural capital (students’ previous exposure to other cultures, diversity of previous experiences/education, family values, and social class), and social capital (access to resources and social networks). This study found that men are 8% less likely than women to plan to study abroad in college (p. 133). In 2010, Salisbury et al.
conducted a follow-up study to specifically examine the gender gap in study abroad. Their results indicate that human capital factors and economic capital factors affect men and women the same (p. 632). For example, having diverse experiences outside the classroom (i.e. socially interacting with people from different backgrounds) increased the likelihood of studying abroad for both male and female students and cost was also viewed as a significant barrier by both genders. However, there were statically significant differences by gender in regards to the impact of social and cultural capital. Firstly, involvement in extra-curricular activities and academic course diversity increased female students’ probability of studying abroad while it decreased male students’ probability of study abroad (p. 631). Furthermore, the study found that male students who entered college undecided about their major were 24% more likely to intend to study abroad compared to males who had already selected an academic major; however, this factor had no impact on female students who had yet to choose their major. The authors conclude: “Gendered differences play an important and varied role in shaping the ways that men and women develop interest in participating in study abroad programs during college.” (p. 632).

Finally, while peer interactions in high school and college had no effect on female students’ interest in study abroad, male students who were more involved in the social life of their school were actually less likely to study abroad. As for parental influence, parents had a positive effect on daughters’ intent to study abroad and no impact on sons’ intent to study abroad. Supporting these conclusions is a concurrent study done by Lucas (2009), which found that male students are less likely to study abroad if they have a close group of friends on campus, which is not the case for female students (as cited in Yankey, 2014, p. 18). This study also indicated that male students prefer to hear about study abroad from their male peers and that their
friends’ opinions were more influential than parents’ or professors’ messages when it came to making decisions about study abroad (p. 22).

**Psychosocial Development Differences**

In her pioneering 2004 capstone “Why are More Women Studying Abroad than Men?”, SIT alumna Maria Adkins examines the gender imbalance in SIT study abroad and proposes that psychosocial developmental differences of male and female college students explain the gender imbalance. The author cites Gilligan and Chodorow’s feminist theory of female development, which suggests that college women define their identity and achieve autonomy through the development of healthy relationships with others (p. 7). Conversely, Adkins uses Erik Erikson’s psychosocial development theory to suggest that male students realize autonomy by individual achievement, controlling their environment, and proving their independence (p. 8). The author explains that although the adventure of studying abroad might superficially appear like the perfect challenge for college males to prove their manhood, the reality is that flexibility and relying on others for guidance is much more important than toughness when living in a foreign culture. Adkins writes: “Living in a foreign environment, one is vulnerable and has to depend on other people…one cannot study abroad and be afraid to lose face. Thus men may feel threatened in an environment where individual achievement may be less important than one’s successful interactions with others” (p.8).

However, Adkins’ hypothesis that “…the average 20 year old woman is more mature and willing to take chances in a foreign environment, while men at that age are more insecure and afraid to lose face” is not fully supported by her data analysis (p. 26). When Adkins asked the male participants (academic year 2002-2003) to explain the gender imbalance in study abroad, their most common supposition was that men do not want to study abroad because they do not
want leave their “comfort zones” (p. 31). Nevertheless, when Adkins reviewed the survey responses of the male and female students who enrolled and then withdrew from SIT, “no men admitted to being ‘uncomfortable with uncertain situations’ as a reason not to study abroad” (Adkins, 2004, p. 43). The major weakness with the psychosocial development hypothesis is that it could only explain American male college students’ absence from study abroad. Males from other countries studying in the U.S. constituted 56% of the international student population in the 2013/2014 academic year (IIE, 2014d). There is no substantiated proof that U.S. male students are more psychosocially immature than their male peers from the rest of the world.

**Barriers to Studying Abroad**

The barriers commonly considered to prevent male student from studying abroad include: 1) the disproportion of female students enrolled in higher education, 2) cost (i.e. sticker price of the program as well as interference with a job and/or internship), 3) delayed graduation due to academic conflicts (i.e. the courses required by the academic major are not offered abroad, the course credits will not transfer because they are not approved by the home institution, and course scheduling conflicts), 4) extracurricular commitments, such as Greek life (fraternities) or collegiate sports, and 5) the lack of foreign language skills (see ACE, 2008; Hamir, 2011, Lindsay, 2014; Lucas, 2009; Redden 2008; Shirley, 2006; Stroud, 2010; Twombly et al., 2012; Yankey, 2014). The assumption by those who espouse the barrier theory to explain the gender imbalance in study abroad is that these study abroad barriers are greater for male students than female students.

Firstly, female students are not studying abroad in greater numbers simply because more female students are enrolled in college. In fall 2013, there were 17.5 million undergraduate students enrolled in degree-granting institutions (National Center for Education Statistics,
While it is true that female students made up 56% of this undergraduate enrollment (9.8 million total), enrollment for both female and male students actually increased between 1990 and 2013 at roughly equal rates, 39% (female) and 36% (male) (ibid). Furthermore, only recently have women been the majority in higher education while their dominance in study abroad is the historic norm.

A recent capstone study titled “The Gender Gap in Study Abroad” (2014) by Alexander Lindsay, also an SIT alumna, investigated if the dominant barriers to studying abroad are gender specific. The study surveyed both male and female college students who chose not to study abroad after showing initial interest and found the two most influential barriers were cost and delayed graduation. However, these barriers impacted both genders equally (p. 19). Several other studies support the claim that first finances and then a delay in graduation are the primary barriers to study abroad for both participants and non-participants, regardless of gender (Hamir, 2011; Peterson, 2003). The 2013 State of the Field Survey Report by the Forum on Education Abroad also found that program cost is the biggest deterrent to study abroad, regardless of gender. If finances really were a major barrier preventing only male students from studying abroad then the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act in 1992, which allowed for financial aid issued by a students’ home institution to be used for study abroad, would have resulted in a dramatic increase in male students’ participation rates. Studies have found that the overall cost of studying abroad (program cost plus interference with an internship or job) was actually a greater obstacle for female students than male students (Lucas, 2009; Salisbury et al., 2010; Shirley, 2006). This makes sense considering that a study by Kimmel (2008) found that “female students, not males, are more likely to be from lower socio-economic backgrounds in college (as cited in Lucas, 2009, p. 8).
A popular belief encountered in the literature is that collegiate sports are preventing male students from studying abroad. While college athletes are less likely to study abroad (Dessoff, 2006; Shirley, 2006), the availability of summer study abroad programming provides all athletes the opportunity to study abroad, except possibly the very small percentage of students playing on a Division I team. There has been a tremendous growth in short-term, summer study abroad programming without a correlating rise in the number of male participants. In 2013-2014, 62.1% of college students studying abroad chose short-term programs of eight weeks or less (IIE, 2015a). If sports pose a real barrier to studying abroad then one would predict a greater enrollment of male students on summer semester programs. However, reviewing the last five years of enrollment in SAS by gender reveals that the summer voyages actually had lower male participation than either the fall or spring voyages for those years, both in terms of actual student enrollment numbers and as a percentage of the entire student population (see Appendix C).

Another assumption is that women study abroad in greater numbers because they are also more likely to study a foreign language in college. Indeed, studies have found that women are more interested in learning a foreign language than men (Kim and Goldstein, 2005 & 2006 as cited in Twombly et al., 2012) and the 2008 study by the American Council of Education, the Art & Sciences Group, and the College Board found that “Male students were more likely than female students to cite ‘don’t speak a foreign language well enough’…as the primary reasons why they do not plan to study abroad” (p. 8). However, the latest statistics from Open Doors (IIE, 2015b) show that only 8% of students studying abroad are foreign language majors. Furthermore, the most popular study abroad destination is the United Kingdom, which does not necessitate that U.S. students know a foreign language. Finally, all of the classes on SAS are
taught in English, so if language were the primary barrier preventing men from studying abroad then one would expect to find a preponderance of men enrolling in SAS, not a dramatic lack.

Finally, several studies discredit the idea that academic major, specifically STEM and business majors, is to blame for the lack of male students studying abroad (see IIE 2015a, 2015b; Fischer, 2012; Thirolf, 2014; Yankey, 2014). While male students do make up the majority of STEM and business majors and these programs usually have a strict sequence of specific courses, academic major is not the root cause to the gender imbalance in study abroad. At 23%, STEM was the top field of study of U.S. students studying abroad in the 2013-2014 academic year (IIE, 2015a, 2015b) and participation in study abroad by STEM majors increased by 10% since the 2011-2012 academic year (IIE, 2015a, 2015, 2014b, 2014c). Even in traditionally male-dominated fields like engineering, women still study abroad at a disproportionately high numbers compared to their male counterparts (Fischer, 2012; Thirolf, 2014). The National Science Foundation (2012) reported that female engineering students study abroad at a rate of 30-40% while only earning 20% of the bachelors degrees in engineering, thus “far outstripping their representation in the field (Yankey, 2014, p. 4).

**Feminization of Study Abroad**

Recent studies (see Fischer, 2012; Lucas, 2009; Redden, 2008; Yankey, 2014) suggest that traditional gender stereotypes and the perceived feminization of study abroad account for the gender imbalance in U.S. students studying abroad. College males do not study abroad because they perceive it as a pursuit more appropriate for female students. A study by Thirolf (2014) concluded that “If female students also view females as better suited for studying abroad, they may be more likely to participate in global education experiences just as male students may be less likely” (p. 255).
Viewed through the historical lens of higher education in the U.S., one sees how study abroad has gained the reputation of being a female endeavor. In her article in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, Fischer (2012, para. 13) writes:

From its inception more than a century ago, study abroad has had a reputation as a female pursuit, the lasting image one of Seven Sisters students steaming overseas for a grand European tour of art and culture, a refining gloss for a marriageable young woman.

James Lucas, whose doctoral dissertation on male students’ participation in study abroad is one of the most cited on the topic, agrees: “Women were sent overseas to be culturally educated ladies who could entertain their husbands’ business partners…The mantra became that study abroad is feminized and a dalliance” (ibid). Lucas is now the Assistant to the Dean of International Academic Life at Michigan State University and Lucas suspects that male students believe they can always “backpack through Europe with a friend or will have the opportunity to go overseas for work”, so they do not feel the same pressure as female students to check study abroad off the proverbial college to-do list (Redden, 2008, para. 22).

Jill McKinney, the associate director of Butler’s Center for Global Education, conducted research and concluded that women study abroad more than men because college is the time in a woman’s life when she has the most freedom and female college students want to take advantage of this temporary freedom by studying abroad because they will not have the same opportunity to travel abroad in the future (Twombly et al., 2012). In McKinney’s study, female students revealed that safety, motherhood, and age heavily influenced their decision to study abroad in college. Female students worry that after graduation they will be too focused on marriage and motherhood and will not have the time for overseas travel and adventure. McKinney states:

Essentially, my informants shared with me that they really hope someday to be mothers and they can’t imagine being able to travel abroad and also be a mom. So if they’re going to have an overseas experience, they’re going to do it before they become
mothers...[they] really felt plagued by the age of 30. They have a very long to-do list (as cited in Redden, 2008, para. 19).

Could the cultural norms that define what it means to be a man play a role in the gender imbalance in study abroad? In her doctoral dissertation *Dude, Where’s my Passport? An Exploration of Masculine Identity of College Men Who Study Abroad*, Yankey (2014) reasons that the traditional definition of masculinity encourages males to be competitive, seek power, define success through status and money, and avoid all things feminine (synonymous with weakness), which would explain male students’ disinterest in stereotypical female activities like study abroad; engaging in female activities would discredit their masculinity. A male student’s perception on what it means to be masculine is heavily influenced by the actions and judgments of his male peers. The easiest ways of affirming one’s masculinity is to devalue and avoid anything viewed as being feminine, like studying abroad (Yankey, 2014, p. 38).

When it comes to studying abroad, Lucas found that the majority of males (60%) “seek out programmatic advice and information from peers when making a decision about study abroad” (p. 21). However, the majority of their male peers have no study abroad experience. Since fewer men study abroad, male students have fewer male friends from whom to seek advice and receive encouragement. Indeed, the results of Lucas’s study indicate that male students receive less support from peers to study abroad; however, those male students who did “study abroad reported that their friends highly encouraged them...but those who did not study abroad tended to report little connection to other study abroad participants and a sense that study abroad was a frivolous, feminine, activity” (p. 158). Known as the “bro mentality”, it seems male students are “far more reluctant to leave their campus social groups to go overseas” and are also more likely to study abroad if their friends are also doing it” (Fischer, 2012, para. 17). Studies highlight the lack of male role models in study abroad and suggest this contributes to male
college students’ “belief that study abroad is not useful or appropriate” for them, the result being that they ignore viable opportunities to study abroad (Twombly et al., 2012, p. 55).

**Motivations to Study Abroad**

Perhaps the lack of male student participation in study abroad could be better explained by how study abroad advocates’ neglect to highlight the extrinsic benefits of engaging in cross-cultural, educational programs and only focus on the intrinsically motivated benefits of studying abroad. Deci and Ryan (2000) define intrinsic motivation as “the act of doing an activity for its inherent satisfaction rather than for some separable consequence” (p. 56). The authors continue: “When intrinsically motivated, a person is moved to act for the fun or challenge entailed rather than because of external prods, pressures, or rewards” (ibid). Interpersonal relationships (i.e. parents, peers, professors, etc.) and one’s environment (society’s cultural norms) can either support or undermine intrinsic motivation (Deci and Ryan, 2014, p. 85). Meanwhile, extrinsic motivation is “whenever an activity is done in order to attain some separable outcome” (Deci and Ryan, 2000, p. 60). However, performing an act can include both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. For example, a person could enjoy playing a sport (inherent value = intrinsic motivation) and also want to improve her performance in order to be the top player in the league (separable reward = extrinsic motivation).

Life goals are also divided into those that are internally motivated and those that are externally motivated. The best-studied intrinsic goals are “personal growth, developing meaningful relationships, contributing to the community, and being physically fit and healthy” (Deci and Ryan, 2014, p. 92). The best-studied extrinsic goals are “accumulating wealth, becoming famous or having an attractive image” (ibid). If male student are more extrinsically motivated than female students when it comes to studying abroad and the extrinsic benefits are
not sufficiently highlighted, then this could explain why studying abroad is simply not high on
male students’ list of college priorities.

In his study *Where Are All the College Males?* Lucas discussed how women were
“encouraged to participate in worldly and cultured activities like studying abroad because,
historically, their education was a path to a good marriage, not a good career (as cited in Yankey,
2014, p. 22) Meanwhile, men have traditionally been the breadwinners and responsible head of
the household, so they were encouraged to focus on their career and seek “money and success in
lieu of personal development” (ibid). A study by Gore (2005) supports the trend that women are
more interested in personal development and males are more career-focused (as cited in Lucas,
2009). This study also found that male students’ career aspirations were more influenced by
gender role stereotypes than female students. Lucas (2009) concludes: “If male students do not
view study abroad as contributing to their academic or career advancement, then they might
selecting other opportunities…” (p. 66).

Several studies criticize the way the study abroad experience is marketed and claim that it
appeals more to female students’ intrinsically motivated desire for personal development and
fails to appeal to male students’ extrinsically motivated desire for achievement. Thus, male
students struggle to envision themselves studying abroad. Several popular rhetorical articles
suggest that male students do not think study abroad is for them because the cultural experiences
highlighted in study abroad advertising are not in line with typical male interests. Lucas (2009)
argues that study abroad marketing promotes a feminized vision of study abroad and the
beneficial outcomes appeal much more to female students desire for fun, personal development,
and cultural immersion, than male students’ academic and career goals (as cited in Yankey,
2014). Lucas (2009) suggests that highlighting how study abroad makes one stand out in the job
market and how it directly enhances one’s career prospects would attract the attention of male students (as cited in Yankey, 2014). The results of this study indicate that “Men desire value added excitement, highly independent programs, and to see a connection between study abroad and their academic program or career” (Yankey, 2014, p. 21).

Indeed, when it comes to the advertised positive outcomes of study abroad, the focus is heavy on intrinsically motivated goals. For example, a recent piece in the Huffington Post listed the 10 Reasons You Should Study Abroad in College. The author, Nina Truong, is a current senior at Emory University who studied abroad and lists the top 10 reasons as follows: 1) It changes the way you see the world; 2) Relate to others by experiencing other cultures first hand; 3) Humbles you; 4) Empowers you; 5) Personal Growth; 6) Broadens your educational horizons; 7) Job prospects; 8) Expand your worldview and become a global citizen; 9) Learn a new language; and 10) Opportunity to travel (Truong, 2015). Reasons 1-5 and number 8 clearly focus on personal development as a result of the experience while reasons 6 and 10 highlight the experience itself. Meanwhile, only reasons 7 and 9 appeal to a students’ extrinsic motivation with a clear connection between study abroad and their academics or future career. Improving one’s job prospects is very much related to the desire of accumulating wealth, which is one of the most common extrinsic motivations. Meanwhile, personal growth is the most popular intrinsically motivated goal.

In a study of college students’ opinions of international exchange programs, students were asked to rank in order of importance their reasons for having studied abroad. The top three reasons given were: 1) “It is/was a good opportunity to live in another culture”, 2) “It is/was a good opportunity to travel”, and 3) “I liked the country my exchange program was located in” (Van Hoof and Verbeeten, 2005, p. 47). Not surprisingly, of the 353 students who participated in
the study, 71% were female and 29% were male. When it came to the relevance of their study abroad experience, students overwhelmingly perceived it as having a much greater impact on their personal development than academics or careers (p. 51). Thus, students who study abroad do so because of the intrinsically motivated desire for the experience and personal development.

Several studies have found that the potential career value of studying abroad is a much more significant motivating factor for men that women (Anderson, 2007; Lucas, 2009; Hamir, 2011). Based on the results from the study Where Are All the Males? (2009), Lucas proposes that male students have four motivations for studying abroad: “(1) fun, (2), cultural learning, (3) resume-building, and (4) major and/or career benefits” (abstract). However, the benefits for one’s academic major or career were the strongest and male participants believed that “a male should further his career and achieve success” (abstract). In fact, the stronger the connection between studying abroad and his academics or career, the more likely a male student was to study abroad; those students who do not see a connection tend to not study abroad (p. 199). In the study by Jill McKinney previously discussed, McKinney analyzed “more than 100 study-abroad application essays submitted by male students” and discovered that males view going abroad as a “resume-builder, a networking opportunity, and even a scouting trip for a possible career overseas” (as cited in Fischer, 2012, para. 18). In the 2014 capstone by Lindsay, which used the theoretical framework of Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs (1943) to examine male students’ motivation to study abroad, the author found that the number one reason male students studied abroad was to satisfy their academic major.

A more recent study by Kathryn Thirolf (2014) supports these collective findings described above. Thirolf gathered data on male college students’ perceptions about a university sponsored, summer study abroad program and found that male students’ dominant desire was to
spend the summer investing in experiences that would lead to “concrete outcomes”, specifically: 1) “doing something directly related to their academic and career goals”, 2) “making money”, 3) getting a “corporate job”, 4) “gaining research experience” and 5) “doing something that ‘looks good on a resume’” (p. 251). When asked why more women study abroad than men, male students expressed the belief that while they are more interested in “getting internships and making money”, female students care more about “doing things ‘for the experience’ than for the outcomes” (p. 254). Simply put, men do a cost-benefit analysis of studying abroad, weighing the value of studying overseas for a semester against the costs of leaving behind friends and possibly an internship or job. The majority of male students reach the conclusion that study abroad is simply not worth the investment because it will not benefit them academically or professionally (Lucas, 2009; Peterson, 2003). Meanwhile, female students are more likely than male students to believe studying abroad is worth the cost (Peterson, 2003).

Based on this literature review, there is still a major gap in knowledge when it comes to understanding why female students study abroad at twice the rate of their male peers. This capstone paper fills a critical gap in knowledge by examining this phenomenon through the lens of intrinsic verses extrinsic motivation.

Research Design

The purpose of this study is to explore the phenomenon of female college students studying abroad with SAS at twice the rate of their male peers, in the hope of better understanding the significant gender imbalance overall in U.S. outbound study abroad.
Data Analysis

The quantitative and qualitative data gathered from student surveys, an all-male student focus group, and interviews with ISE recruitment staff was gathered and analyzed through the theoretical framework of Deci and Ryan’s (1985) Self-Determination Theory of Motivation. The responses to closed questions were quantified and open questions were analyzed for emerging themes and patterns to create relevant categories. The data was then analyzed according to these categories to discover trends and address the five research questions guiding this study.

Culture of Inquiry

For the culture of inquiry, this study used the interpretivist tradition of the instrumental case study. In this study, the particular case is SAS’s Spring 2015 Voyage “with data gathered through participant observation, in-depth interviewing, and document collection and analysis” (Glesne, 2011, p. 22). The case of SAS was chosen “to ‘provide insight into an issue or redraw a generalization’” in regards to the gender imbalance in study abroad as a nation-wide phenomenon. For ISE, the benefits include a better understanding of what compels and prevents male and female college students from studying abroad with SAS. This understanding could be used to create new strategies to attract more male college students to SAS, which could result in a more diverse student body on future voyages. In today’s globalized society, communicating and collaborating effectively with people across personal differences (cultural, racial, socio-economic, religious, gender, etc.) is a necessary skill that ties into the overall mission of ISE/SAS: to educate students to address the global issues of our interconnected world.

The data collection methods were triangulated and consisted: 1) a paper survey administered to male and female students, 2) an all male student focus group, and 3) interviews with the ISE Recruitment Operations Manager (ROM) and five regional recruiters. All student
participants were U.S. citizens of traditional college age. For the student survey, all participants were self-selecting and recruited from one of the following lens courses: Introduction to Anthropology, Cross-Cultural Psychology, or World Mythologies (religion). These lens courses were chosen as a sub-pool of students because all SAS students must take one lens course, so these courses offer the best pool for student diversity. In total, 79 students participated in the survey. Students self-identified and disclosed their gender; they were instructed to select one gender identity from among four possible choices: “male”, “female”, “transgendered”, and “other”. From a total of 79 students, 40 identified as female and 39 identified as male; no participating student identified as transgender or other.

The researcher used a paper survey to gather students’ opinions on the gender imbalance in study abroad and also personal characteristics that could illuminate their decisions to study abroad with SAS. Participants were asked to address personal influences and motivations to study abroad as well as their opinions on the relationship between study abroad and gender. The surveys were anonymous and confidential. At the end of the survey, male students were asked to indicate their willingness to participate in an all-male focus group by providing their name and email address. Four male students participated in the focus group and the on-board Resident Director in charge of student diversity assisted.

For the all-male focus group, the researcher used a structured interview format to collect data. The interview was recorded using a computer app called AudioNote and was later transcribed for analysis. The researcher chose to not do a mixed-gender focus group because, based on personal experience in mixed-gender discussions aboard the ship, when students are in a mixed group then the male students are silent and conversation is dominated by the female students. The goal of the focus group was to create a safe space for men’s voices to be heard.
Six, self-selecting staff from the Recruitment Department at ISE headquarters in Charlottesville, Virginia, participated in individual, structured interviews via Skype after the spring 2015 voyage ended. These staff members included the ROM and two who were also SAS alumni, one of whom was also the only male recruiter at ISE; he sailed as a student on four SAS semester voyages and as a staff member on two, short-term enrichment voyages. At the time of the interview, he had been a recruiter at ISE for about one month. These staff interviews were also recorded using AudioNote and the recordings were later transcribed for analysis.

Limitations of Research Design

There are three limitations to the design of this study. Firstly, this study includes only a very small sampling of the tens of thousands of American, college students who have studied abroad with SAS during its 50-year history. Secondly, there is no control group. ISE is a third party provider and does not have a home campus. ISE is accredited by the University of Virginia and enrolls students from colleges from across the U.S. and the world. Therefore, there is no easily defined, ready available control group of male college students with a demonstrated lack of interest in SAS. Thirdly, SAS is unique among study abroad programs and a student might want to study abroad, but not with SAS. If a student desires to have a more traditional, immersive-style study abroad experience then he or she will not study abroad with a multi-country program like SAS.

Data Presentation

Mixed-Gender Student Surveys

Results from the mixed-gender student survey show that female students start thinking about studying abroad in college earlier than their male peers (see Appendix C, Figure 1). The majority of both male (72%) and female students (75%) began thinking about study abroad while
still in high school or college, particularly their freshman year. However, four female students reported they actually began considering the possibility of studying abroad while only in middle school. The same number of male (4) and female (4) students reported they had “always known” they wanted to study abroad. A common theme across both genders is students started thinking about studying abroad after hearing stories of a parent’s study abroad experience or when an older sibling (or cousin) studied abroad, several of which were SAS alumni. One male student wrote: “I grew up on stories of my mother’s SAS experience...” Another male student wrote: “When my older siblings came back from SAS. I was a sophomore in H.S.” A female student wrote: “I have grown up hearing my dad’s stories about [studying] abroad so long as I can remember I wanted too.” Another female wrote: “Ever since I heard my cousin was going abroad her junior year of college, when I was still in HS, I wanted to do the same.” A third female student shared: “When I was 14 yrs. old and my mom told me she did Semester at Sea.”

Students were allowed to list as many sources of influence as they wished and the majority of students listed more than one source of influence. The top four sources of influence to study abroad for both male and female students were family (22 male students, 20 female students), friends/college peers (11 male students, 18 female students), the desire to travel (7 male students, 10 female students), and popular media (5 male students, 3 female students) such as books and movies (see Appendix C, Figure 2); When students highlighted parents, siblings, and friends as a source of influence then the majority of these family members had also studied abroad and often with SAS. One male student wrote: “My friend did SAS two years ago & she got me hooked on it. Study abroad in general was my parents. They did it so I naturally expected to.” A female student shared: “Dad & uncle went on SAS in college; sister went to Spain—great stories. [I] Wanted to experience new things.” Female students were more influenced than male
students by friends and college peers, the majority of whom were also SAS alumni. A female student wrote: “It was my choice & idea, but my mom supported & encouraged me. I also had a close friend that went on SAS and loved it.” Another shared: “Two college girlfriends both did Semester at Sea and other friends did many other programs.” Neither male nor female students viewed their home institution, study abroad recruiters, or SAS advertising as a major influence on their decision to study abroad (5 male students, 4 female students).

Both male and female students reported receiving the most support from their family (31 male students, 35 female students), especially from their parents (see Appendix C, Figure 3 and Figure 4). Parental/familial support was also the most important to all students, regardless of gender. One male student wrote: “My parents were very motivating in my decision to go abroad. My university was not especially [motivating] outside [of] the university abroad programs. All of my friends were going, [I] felt like I was missing out.” One female student wrote: “I had an incredible amount of support. My friends, family, and teachers helped me fund the SAS deposit. My parents’ support was most important to me.”

Both male and female students received significantly more active support (59 sources cited by male students, 72 f sources cited by female students) than active discouragement (12 sources cited by male students, 7 sources cited by female students). However, female students received more support and less lack of support overall compared to their male peers, especially from friends and peers (15 female students verses only 4 male students). One male student wrote: “My mother gave the most support as she knew it would be a once in a lifetime experience. My father did not much support it for safety reasons. My college peers were excited for me to have a fun semester but did not offer much support, as they didn’t see the academic benefit. My mother’s support was the most important as well as the support from a professor who thought
the experience would be invaluable.” One female student wrote: “My parents were the most supportive, giving me both financial security (& happily) and emotional support & help planning and figuring everything out. Also, it was supportive for me when I told my friends and they were so happy for me & thought the program was so cool.”

Students’ home institution/study abroad office seemed to provide the least amount of support to students, especially male students (2 male students, 6 female students). One male student wrote: “My parents 100% supported me, which was incredible. But my school study abroad office told me no 100 different times, so I had to fight my way through.” A female student shared: “My parents and teachers were supportive. The bureaucracy at my school and the paperwork provided obstacles. My advisors warned I might not graduate on time.”

Overall, only 30% of male students and 35% of female students reported being discouraged from studying abroad (see Appendix C, Figure 5). Thus, the majority of students received only support, regardless of gender. Both male and female students reported three sources of active discouragement and the level of discouragement was almost identical: parents/family (5 male students, 5 female students), friends/college peers (5 male students, 5 female students), and the students’ home institution (4 male students, 5 female students). The predominant reason behind parental discouragement was safety, regardless of their child’s gender. One male student wrote: “My father for safety reasons. My college peers who thought study abroad wouldn’t be academically useful.” Another male student shared: “My Aunt didn’t want me to go to Africa because of Ebola...” A female student wrote: “Sometimes my mom would be on the fence and tell me I didn’t have to go when I was feeling doubtful. This was really challenging because that was when I needed support most. But generally, she was very supportive.”
Meanwhile, the student’s home institution was most concerned about safety and money. One male student wrote: “My school study abroad office, my advisors & registrar because my home school wouldn’t be making money and because SAS was “unsafe & a booze cruise”. A female student shared: “Representatives from my school specifically encouraged me not to go on SAS b/c a student from my school has died on it so the school considers it unsafe.” Another female student shared: “My academic advisor discouraged me from doing SAS as be believed it was NOT academic enough in nature. Friends discouraged me from studying in China.”

The most popular source for first learning about SAS for both male students (17 students) and female students (18 students) was from a friend or college peer (see Appendix C, Figure 6). After friends/peers, male students (7 students) learned about SAS from a parent/family member; five male students reported that a brother first told them about SAS. For female students, after friends/peers the next most popular sources of inspiration were SAS advertising (10 students) and a parent/family member (8 students). Remarkably, twice as many female students than male students (10 female verses 5 male) learned about SAS from SAS advertising.

Regardless of the student’s gender, the most influential information about studying abroad with SAS came from SAS alumni (see Appendix C, Figure 7). Indeed, 49% of male students and 56% of female students reported they received the most influential information about SAS from word of mouth by former SAS students. One male student shared: “Former SAS students reached out to me & we grabbed lunch many times to discuss SAS.” A female student wrote: “SAS Spring 2014 student who also was my friend. Answered all my questions about it.” Meanwhile, only 23% of male students and 5% of female students credit the SAS recruiter with providing them with the most influential information. One male student wrote: “Easily friend
who have already done it before. Campus recruiters help but they can’t be honest all the time. Past SAS students were huge.”

For female students, the next three most influential sources of information after SAS alumni came from the SAS website (10 female students), personal research they conducted online (9 female students), including browsing YouTube and Facebook, and a friend or peer (7 female students) For male students, the next three most influential sources of information after SAS alumni came from an SAS recruiter (7 male students), a friend/peer (7 male students), and their parents (7 male students) as well as from personal research the male students conducted online (7 male students). Siblings, especially brothers, were a noteworthy source of influential information for male students (5 male students), but not for female students (1 female students).

Overall, a student’s school provided the least influential information (only 9 students total). One male student wrote: “My friend who did it the previous year. Campus study abroad office did a terrible job of giving me info and helping me make it happen.” A female student wrote: “I had zero study abroad information. My school doesn’t offer study abroad so everything I found out was from y own research.”

Students could list as many different motivations as they wanted and there was no limit to the nature of the motivation. Female students listed a total of 71 motivations and male students listed a total of 52 motivations; these motivations fell into 9 categories (see Appendix C, Figure 8). The top motivation for both male students (16 students total) and female students (20 students total) to study abroad with SAS was the opportunity to visit multiple countries in a single semester. Students who reported this as their motivation often explained that they “had trouble picking just one place to study” and wanted to “travel places I might not otherwise ever have the opportunity to see.” One male student wrote: “[I] couldn’t decide on 1 country so why not all of
them? Why not see the world. I’ll never sail around the world on a ship again. Once in a lifetime chance to go to these places.” A female student wrote: “I liked the idea of not only going to twelve different countries all within a semester, but also going to countries in Asia and Africa I probably wouldn’t have been able to go before.”

The second most popular motivation for both male and female students was the opportunity “to travel the world” (13 males, 14 females). One female student wrote: “Europe will always be there, but it isn’t often you have the opportunity to sail the world on a ship.” Another female student said: “I couldn’t pick just one country to stay in for four months. I wanted to circumnavigate the world.” Male students were in agreement. One wrote: “I wanted to see the entire world as opposed to just one country.” Another male student wrote: “Because SAS allowed me to get a ‘shotgun’ view of the world…I wanted to be a global citizen.” A third reported: “I wanted to see the whole world.”

For female students, the uniqueness of studying abroad on a ship (14 female students total) was tied with the motivation of seeing the world. One student wrote: “I wanted to go to multiple countries and liked the idea of living on a ship.” Another seconded this motivation: “I wanted to experience more than 1 country and I was also very interested in the idea of a voyage.” A third student wrote: “I have always loved cruises, meeting new people, and traveling the world and on SAS this is all possible adding a great learning aspect.” Overall, female students were much more motivated than male students (14 female students verses only 4 male students) by the unique experience of studying abroad on a ship and doing a voyage.

Female students were also more motivated than male students to study abroad with SAS for the sake of the experience and the sense of adventure (7 female students verses only 4 male students). One female student wrote: “I’d never been outside the U.S. before and thought it was
the ultimate travel experience.” Another female student wrote: “I didn’t just want to go to college in another country, I wanted to experience more.” A Third student wrote: “Exposure to multiple cultures all over the world.” Five female students also characterized studying abroad with SAS as a “once in a lifetime opportunity”. One female student wrote: “I knew SAS would be a once in a lifetime opportunity I could not pass up.” Another wrote: “The opportunity to see so many different countries that I have always wanted to go to, but probably wouldn’t have without SAS.” Meanwhile, only one male student viewed SAS as a once in a lifetime opportunity.

However, male students were twice more likely than female students to be motivated by family, especially siblings who were SAS alumni (6 male students verses only 3 female students). One male student wrote: “My brother was an alumni and helped get me excited for SAS.” Another shared: “My sister participated in SAS 8 years ago.” Two other male students just wrote: “my brother.” Meanwhile, female students who listed family mentioned parents as a motivation highlighted fathers as the person who motivated them to study abroad with SAS.

When students were asked if, before doing SAS, they were aware that more female students study abroad than male students, 63% of female students reported “yes” compared to only “43%” of male students (see Appendix C, Figure 9). Thus, it appears that female students are more aware of the gender imbalance in study abroad than their male peers.

Students were then asked, “Why do more American female students study abroad in college compared to American male students?” Male and female students provided different theories that fell into five categories (see Appendix E, Table 1 and Table 2). Three of these categories were suggested by both male and female students, they include 1) female students are more open-minded and curious about the world and other cultures while males are less willing to leave their comfort zones; 2) male students have other priorities, like sports and social groups
and are not as interested in travel; and 3) female students are more ambitious, determined, and organized than their male peers.

Male students also theorized that males are more focused on their major and career driven while females are more driven by self-discovery and personal growth. One male student wrote: “Female students tend to put more value on ‘self-discovery’ and ‘broadening their horizons’ while male students prefer to work hard at a specific subject and get ahead of the competition as early as possible.” However, female students made no comments to suggest they view their male peers as more career driven. Rather, female students believe that male dominant majors, like STEM, are less conducive to studying abroad. One female student wrote: “I think males are in majors, such as STEM, that do not allow them to take a full semester of elective credit and still graduate in four years.” It seems that male students view studying abroad as not compatible with a successful post-graduate career while female students view study abroad as not compatible with certain academic majors. Although, it could be argued that certain majors that are dominated by male students, like STEM, have the reputation of being more serious, career-focused than female dominated majors in the humanities and social sciences. Thus, choosing more profession-oriented academic majors is a sign of also being more career-driven.

Several female students also highlighted the idea that females study abroad more because they are more mature than males. One female student wrote: “male students aren’t mature enough. They don’t care.” One student used the word “lazy” to describe college males. Meanwhile, males characterized females as being more “ambitious”, “determined”, and “independent”, which is perhaps characteristic of being mature. Several male and female students also described females as better at maintaining long distance friendships and thus more willing to leave their friends behind for a semester to study abroad. Finally, a couple of male and
female students connected study abroad with gender norms. One female student wrote: “*Maybe because women have been suppressed so much in society in the past that in today’s world more women are encouraged to experience things that are as amazing as SAS programs.*” A male student described the flip-side of scenario: “*Although I would be crucified onboard for this opinion, men are still in this day and age expected more so than women to be successful and to do that you need to fully engage in your major, not travel abroad.*”

Students were asked to recommend ways to encourage more male students to study abroad. Male students’ suggestions fell into seven different categories as did female students’ suggestions and three of these categories were suggested by both genders: 1) more informational outreach targeted at male students (marketing that highlights male students studying abroad); 2) programs that appeal to males’ desire for adventure AND satisfy their academic needs (i.e. courses that fit their major); and 3) address the pressure on male students to conform to gendered expectations of success as defined by career achievement (see Appendix E, Tables 3 and 4).

Male students also thought that if male students understood how studying abroad would help their career then more male students would study abroad. They recommended that advertising highlight how a study abroad experience supports male students’ career goals. One male student wrote: “*If studying abroad was presented as being more beneficial on a resume or in furthering a career.*”

**All-Male Focus Group**

The four students who participated in the all-male focus group were incredibly generous with their time and forthcoming with their thoughts and feelings. Prior to sailing, they had defined expectations of their study abroad experience with SAS. All four had come on the voyage with the goal of better understanding the world in the hope of better understanding themselves (See Appendix F, Table 5). Student 4 shared:
“The word I kept referring back to with everyone was just ‘perspective.’ Um, one of the things that the professor I talked about mentioned was just learn how much you don’t know. And so for me, I was primed and ready to have my expectations shattered and they were, far beyond what I would have ever expected...it’s almost more of a different thinking style or just an entirely different view rather than an accumulation of information learned. It’s a different kind of knowledge. And I think I’ve received that and that’s what I was looking to get out of this trip.”

When asked to describe their ideal study abroad program, all four participants replied it would still be SAS, but they agreed certain adjustments could be made to substantially improve the program (see Appendix F, Table 6). These changes include, 1) fewer ports and longer stays in each port, 2) a mission-based voyage with a geographic focus, and 3) more structured opportunities for hands-on experience and service-based learning while in port that related to one’s personal and/or academic interests. While the participants appreciate the comparative nature of the SAS program and the multi-country itinerary, they miss the experience of feeling truly immersed in a place and the chance to get to live and learn alongside the local people, which is only possible with an extended stay. Ideally, SAS would allow voyagers to visit multiple countries and stay for a longer period of time in each place by reducing the number of ports visited and focusing on a particular area of the world. Student 3 explained:

“...if I were to do a similar trip to this or just like a different one that was optimum, I would probably try to stay in an area longer, which everyone would probably say that. Maybe do a few less countries than Semester at Sea, like a happy middle between what we’re doing now and what a single, immersion country is doing. Maybe focus on area studies. So like, in your university you have Asian Studies, you have African studies, you know, we could even do something like that...So piggy-backing off all that was said about the internships and service-learning, I had never thought about that before, but I think it’s a great idea...You could almost do like a mini internship type thing. And it would be paired with whatever classes you’re taking, much similar to how our field labs are so that it would be a lot more in depth...I think that would be very useful.”

While these four male students were passionate about their study abroad experience and confident in their choice to study abroad with SAS, it was clear that their male friends did not share their same enthusiasm (see Appendix F, Table 7). All of them had friends who either did
not support at all the decision to study abroad or else thought that an immersion program would be a better experience than a multi-country program like SAS. The majority of their male friends did not see the academic or career value of studying abroad—they viewed it as a vacation. For their friends, staying on campus was a better investment of time because it directly contributed to their future career. Student 4 shared:

“My friends weren’t for it or against it really, but they weren’t nearly as excited as I was...My friends at school, one of my good friends, said that he couldn’t afford it. But I also know that it would have interfered with his coursework...Another one of my friends, he called it a 4-month vacation and didn’t see the benefit it would have for either his career or his education. So he was busy with internships and stuff like that. The friend who I spoke to...he’d studied abroad in one place for a long time so we had a lot of discussions about that...he favored getting in depth with one culture rather than seeing all these different ones.”

When asked why there is a lack of male student participation in college study abroad, all four participants agreed that the typical male college student is more focused on his career development than personal development and does not believe studying abroad will enhance his career readiness (see Appendix F, Table 8). A male college student prioritizes tangible achievement and thus focuses on graduating on time with a major that will lead to a successful career. He does not think studying abroad will help him get a job after graduation because he sees studying abroad as merely fun—a “semi-vacation”. When it comes to having fun, college males prefer the social life offered by their home campus, with easy access to friends, sports, and parties. Even if he wants to study abroad he will still choose to stay on campus if he thinks studying abroad will interfere with his academic and career goals. Student 1 suggested:

“I feel like males are so focused on what they want in their career and they’re set to that and they’re going to do whatever it takes to get there and a lot of that may be cutting out a semester of fun in order to focus on the end, whether that be financial success, career success, being the CEO... they didn’t want to miss football season, they didn’t want to miss party season. They wanted to be home involved in the tailgates, involved in the formal season or their fraternities and sororities...men just don’t want to miss out... I don’t regret it at all, but I’m very disappointed that I missed the Patriots’ football season
this year. My brother said, ‘Yeah, you messed up. I would have given up four years of study abroad to not miss this season.’”

The all-male focus group took place near the end of the 110-day voyage and after four months of classes and travel, having visiting twelve ports in nine countries to circumnavigate the earth, the participants shared how the voyage changed them as people and shifted their values. The participants believed the study abroad experience had taught them things and allowed them to grow as individuals in ways they never could have if they had stayed at their home university (see Appendix F, Table 9). They deeply understood that this incredible experience would impact the rest of their lives, including their future careers and they wanted other male college students to know this. Student 2 shared:

“You actually have to be there to experience it. You gotta actually interact with the people and smell the smells and hear the sounds. People are really missing out when they don’t study abroad and those who think they can experience these things later in life…they missed out on an opportunity to apply this perspective to the rest of their working lives going forward. And I want to be able to have a more global perspective going into the workforce as opposed to coming out of it. I want to open myself up to changing my path and I hope, I think I have a much different idea of where I want to be, you know, 10 years from now, 15 years from now because of Semester at Sea than I had before that. And I’m really glad I was able to go and travel and see the world and experience all these things before I committed to a career path...”

ISE Recruitment Staff Interviews

The six ISE recruitment staff that participated in the interviews generously shared their experience and insight and from these conversations several important themes emerged.

Five of the recruiters agreed that students study abroad with SAS because they are attracted to the program’s multi-country itinerary (see Appendix G, Table 10). Many students choose SAS because they are indecisive about where to study abroad and SAS allows them to make a decision without having to choose only one destination. The ROM explained:

“So the students who are attracted to our program like the fact that we’re able to go to multiple destinations...These are first-time travelers and they know they want to study abroad because someone told them it was good for their career or good for their degree
Three recruiters characterized the typical SAS student as someone who does not have their future set in stone and goes on the voyage in search of inspiration (see Appendix G, Table 11). These students hope to discover who they are and what they want to do in life. All six staff members agreed that the motivating desires to see the world and to discover more about oneself were shared by both male and female students. Recruiter 1 shared:

“When I first came into the idea of studying abroad, I was kinda confused of where I wanted to go and I think Semester at Sea does a great job of giving those students that don’t know where to go the opportunity to see the world…I think most students that go on this voyage are seeking to find out what it is they want to do after college. I personally identify myself as one of those students and I talked to other students and I said you know, ‘What are your plans?’ and they’re like, ‘I don’t know. I did this program particularly to become inspired to do something right after college or right after the voyage.’ And I think that is a typical student, you know, trying to figure out who they are and what it is they’re going to do for the rest of their lives. So, it’s a great program to be able to do that, a lot of time to reflect.”

The recruitment team is aware of the gender imbalance in study abroad and four of the recruiters suggested that academic major plays a significant role in creating this gender imbalance because certain majors, like STEM, are male dominated (see Appendix G, Table 12-A). It is a challenge for non-major specific study abroad programs, like SAS, to accommodate the strict sequence of specific courses required by STEM majors. SAS lacks lab facilities and it is difficult to recruit STEM faculty to teach on board. Thus, SAS cannot offer STEM courses and the students who need these courses, predominantly males, cannot study abroad with SAS. When asked to describe the typical student who chooses not to sail with SAS, the principle feature mentioned by recruiters was a student with a major in the STEM field. Recruiter 2 said:

“We have a really hard time finding professors from those [STEM] majors to study abroad on Semester at Sea because those majors don’t really allow the professors
themselves to have much flexibility to go and do research abroad. And so if we can’t have professors to offer those courses on the voyage then it makes it that much harder for those students to study abroad because then there aren’t any courses in in their major to at least attempt to stay on track.”

Three ISE recruiters proposed the theory that since word of mouth is SAS’s best form of advertising and since more women study abroad with SAS then female alumni are more likely to share their experience with female peers than male alumni with male peers (see Appendix G, Table 12-B). Thus, potential female participants are being informally recruited at a higher rate than potential male participants and it is a self-perpetuating cycle. Recruiter 2 explained:

“...the best way or the most effective way of spreading the program is through word of mouth. So even though I go to all of these study abroad fairs and try to find ways to put Semester at Sea out there, most students still tend to sign up because they heard about the program from someone, or they know someone who’s done it...women are known for talking and chatting, and the sharing of information and being more communicative, than their male peers. And if, I mean, word of mouth is the way the program is shared the most then it would just make the most sense that it would flow more through the female lines of communication that the male lines of communication...a female student is more likely to share that information in all of her friend groups and pass it along all of those webs she’s connected to.”

Three of the recruiters mentioned how gender roles might account for more women studying abroad (see Appendix G, Table 12-C). They reasoned female student might want to take advantage of study abroad to travel before they settle down and have a family. Perhaps doing something adventurous and independent, like studying abroad, is a way for women to distinguish themselves and prove they are just as capable as their male peers. Recruiter 4 said:

“...females or women feel the need or have the urge to see the world or take advantage of various opportunities not just study abroad prior to settling down, getting married, and having kids...Men, on the other hand, may feel more driven to achieve their career goals. So they may only be open to internships or work related opportunities.”

All six recruiters considered the lack of male role models in study abroad (from the recruitment/management side and/or the participant/student peer side) as a possible contributor to the lack of male student participation (see Appendix G, Table 13). The ROM explained:
“I think that plays a significant role. I mean, if you want to recruit someone people want to see their peers. They want to see someone like them who already went and did that. So if you go, and this is not just for gender, this is also for ethnicity and major, they want to see someone who has been in their position who is also done the same exact thing. So if you have a male engineering student walk into our study abroad office and it’s all females and they all have liberal arts majors then it’s gonna be hard to make that students believe it’s possible because they have no one else in that exact position who has probably had to overcome the same challenges they’ve had.”

When asked if they thought the gender imbalance in study abroad was a problem, four of the staff said “yes” (see Appendix G, Table 14). These recruiters believe that achieving a gender balance would enhance the students’ experience both in the classroom and while in port.

Recruiter 4 said:

“I think yes, coming from a higher education background I think it’s always a best practice to try to achieve a critical mass for underrepresented or minority populations…I do think that gender imbalance is a big deal and something that should be addressed…”

The two recruiters who said “no” think that the gender imbalance in study abroad is not a pressing issue. Recruiter 3 said:

“I don’t think it’s a problem. I don’t think any sort of gender imbalance is an issue. I think that, you know, I think a good balanced community is always ideal, but at the same time I wouldn’t say it’s a problem…if people think it’s a problem in higher education then maybe that’s something to consider…but I just don’t think we can label gender imbalance as an issue.”

When asked how SAS could effectively recruit more male students, three of the recruiters proposed marketing targeted at a male audience, including having more male recruiters, showcasing male participants and male favored activities in their advertising, and highlighting how study abroad connects with male students’ overarching college goals, like how it will help students achieve their future career (see Appendix G, Table 15-A). Recruiter 5 suggested:

“So, if we did marketing, or if we did something to engage our male student alums who have sailed to really help us get feedback of how did they learn about it…and help Semester at Sea or any study abroad program be seen in how it is an advantage to what are maybe goals that they’re not aligning up, you know, what a male student might not be aligning. ‘Here’s study abroad, here’s how it will fit into how I will get a career.’ And I
think if we could do that a little bit better maybe going through career development offices that might also help attract more male students because they can see what a great investment it is.”

The other three recruiters proposed adding more STEM courses to the SAS academic program in order to attract and accommodate students with those majors, the majority of whom are male (see Appendix G, Table 15-B). Recruiter 4 suggested:

“\textit{I think related to STEM majors or whatnot, I think it would be helpful if we offered classes in those majors and also if we could offer any internship opportunities.}”

\textbf{Data Analysis}

\textbf{I. What influences a U.S. student’s decision to study abroad? Whose support is important?}

One interesting theme that emerged from the mixed-gender student survey is that the majority of SAS students began thinking about studying abroad after hearing about a parent’s study abroad experience or when an older sibling (or cousin) studied abroad and several of these family members studied abroad with SAS. Students were the most influenced to study abroad by their family, followed by friends and college peers, the personal desire to travel, and also popular media (books, movies, etc.). Remarkably, female students were almost twice as influenced by their friends and college peers than were male students. This makes sense considering that female students received over three times as much support from their friends and peers for their decision to study abroad than did male students. In fact, male students were four times more likely than female students to cite their friends and peers as lacking support for their study abroad plans. During the all-male focus group discussion, all four participants highlighted how their male friends did not support their decision to study abroad. At best, their friends judged the SAS program as less valid an experience than a traditional immersion study abroad program and at worst they viewed it as nothing more than a vacation. Student 3 explained:
“All my friends were like, ‘Bro, like, are you actually going to be doing school on that boat?’ And that’s all I got. So, there was like, a little bit of, ‘What are you doing? This isn’t actually going to benefit your life.’ To them it didn’t carry the same value as it did to me...I saw value in the experience of seeing the world whereas I guess they didn’t.”

However, overall, both male and female students were actively encouraged to study abroad and were strongly supported by their families; overall, familial support was the most important to students. Considering that one semester of SAS costs $23,950 (2015a), which is twice as much as one semester at an in-state, public institution (NCES, May, 2015b) and the complex pre-departure process is bureaucratic (medical clearance, applying for visas from multiple countries, class selection, etc.), it would be extremely challenging to overcome these obstacles without the financial and emotional support of one’s family.

II. How do U.S. students learn about SAS? What is the most influential source of information?

Overwhelmingly, both male and female students first learn about SAS from a friend or college peer and SAS alumni were the most influential source of information. In students’ opinion, SAS alumni were the best sources of information because they were “first-hand experiences” and thus were the most “objective” and “least biased”. Alumni reviews were more influential than a student’s study abroad office, an SAS recruiter, or the SAS website. This finding was supported by the ISE staff interviews because recruiters know that world-of-mouth is the most effective form of advertising they have. Recruiter 5 shared:

“I think the students who are choosing to study abroad with Semester at Sea know someone who sailed, whether that be a family member or a friend or a faculty member or a staff member that they know who has sailed. I think that’s the biggest driving factor because...they feel more confident and secure in making that choice that they’ve talked to someone they trust firsthand about the experience. And I think our alumni are our best advocates—they can really convey the takeaways and the learning outcomes and just all the things you can get from a voyage...”
Thus, one could surmise that the friends and peers informing other students about SAS and the SAS alumni acting as the most influential source of information are one and the same. Furthermore, two of the ISE recruiters highlighted how the preponderance of female students plus females’ reputation for being more communicative than their male peers may contribute to the lack of male students studying abroad with SAS considering their best form of advertising is word-of-mouth.

ISE sponsored advertising was much more effective at reaching a female audience. Female students were twice as likely as male students to cite SAS advertising the primary way they learned about SAS and the SAS website as the most influential source of information. It seems that the current SAS advertising lacks appeal for male students. Meanwhile, male students were five times more likely than female students to cite their brother as the primary source of information and five male students compared to zero female credited their brothers as being the most influential source of information. This highlights two issues: 1) male students highly value the opinions of male peers over authority figures when deciding whether or not to study abroad and 2) study abroad marketing does not appeal to male students. His in capstone, Lindsay (2014) even referred to study abroad advertising as “an obstacle men have to overcome” (p. 11).

Salisbury et al. (2010) recommended that proponents of study abroad “craft targeting marketing strategies that recognize and account for key difference between women and men in terms of both pre-college and in-college experiences that affect the formation of aspirations to study abroad” (p. 33). The problem is that the face of study abroad still belongs to a woman. Female participants dominant promotional photos and the majority of study abroad professionals are women (Redden, 2008). All of the ISE recruiters thought that the lack of male role models in study abroad could contribute to the lack of male student participation.
III. What motivates U.S. students to study abroad with SAS?

Both male and female students’ top two motivations for studying abroad with SAS were the opportunity to visit multiple countries followed by the chance to “see the world,” which is a popular catchphrase in SAS advertising to highlight how their program is different from the more traditional study abroad programs. As one female student explained: “Why choose one country when I could visit 12?” These findings are supported by the comments of ISE recruiters, four of whom highlighted the multi-country, comparative model of the SAS program as why students choose to study abroad with SAS. Recruiter 3, who is also and SAS alumna, explained:

“I know the reason I went on it versus any other study abroad program is I couldn’t pick where I wanted to go. I wanted to see a lot of places and I couldn’t tell you where that was gonna be...but I wanted to see it. I wanted to see the world...So I went with 700 other college students to 10 countries, I knew I was still not really alone, I was still with a group of college students that were kinda in the same boat as me.”

Of all the different motivations listed by male and female students, only one category falls into the category of extrinsic motivation. One male student explained that he only sailed on SAS because he received a full scholarship; otherwise, he would not have studied abroad. The other 8 categories should all be classified as extrinsic motivations (see Appendix C, Figure 8). The following are all intrinsically motivated desires: 1) to visit multiple countries, 2) to travel around the world, 3) to sail on a ship/do a voyage, 4) to have new experiences and adventures, 5) to have a once-in-a-lifetime experience, 6) to have memorable experiences like those described in the stories of family members who were SAS alumni, 7) to be supported by SAS’s comprehensive student services, and 8) to have experiences like those described by friends and peers who are SAS alumni. Thus, overwhelmingly, students study abroad with SAS for the joy of the experience, not for possible, separable benefits that they might receive afterwards. Not one
student mentioned completing their college major or future career benefits as what motivated them to study abroad with SAS.

The results of the mixed-gender survey are supported by the results of the all-male focus group. All four male students shared that they were motivated to study abroad with SAS by the opportunity for new experiences and the desire for personal growth, the quintessential intrinsic motivation. Student 1 shared:

“For me, I was just kinda searching for clarity and a huge perspective. I’m unsure of my major I wanted to be up until I came here and I knew somehow in my life I want to incorporate international missions...I saw this as an opportunity to see the world and be around people who I’ve been told on Semester at Sea have a huge array of ideas and a huge array of beliefs. For me I wanted to come on here and kinda experience things that made me uncomfortable and that’s definitely happened and I think I’ve grown from those experiences”.

The idea that students choose to study abroad with SAS because they want to better understand themselves and discover their passion is supported by comments made by ISE recruiters, three of whom mentioned that the desire to discover oneself by exploring the world is one of the major motivations for studying abroad with SAS. Recruiter 2 shared:

“...there’s a huge theme of finding yourself on Semester at Sea and many students find that very appealing and especially the undecided major, which I think is why it has been a pretty consistently sending major because those students are like, ‘I’m not sure, my interests are all over the place. If I go do this program I’ll be better able to understand myself and maybe even see a cause that I will become passionate about. And then when I return to my campus I’ll have an idea of what major I want and what my life goal is. So they really see the voyage as a personal discovery...”

Based on the data presented and analyzed above, this study concludes that students are intrinsically motivated to study abroad with SAS for the unique experience this program offers, such as traveling to multiple countries within a single semester. This conclusion compliments the results of Adkins’ (2004) earlier capstone study, which found that male students were primarily motivated to study abroad with SIT because of their desire to visit a particular country and an
interest in the culture of a particular place. However, this study’s finding goes against the results of Lindsay’s capstone (2014), which found that male students at the University of New Hampshire were motivated to study abroad first because it was required of their major (extrinsic motivation) and second because they wanted to travel or had desired to study abroad since high school (intrinsic motivation).

IV. Why do not more U.S. male college students study abroad with SAS?

The male students who participated in this research study were just as intrinsically motivated as their female peers were to study abroad with SAS. However, considering that males constitute only 32% of students who enroll in SAS and only 35% of U.S. college students who study abroad overall, then these male college students who are intrinsically motivated to study abroad with SAS are definitely the minority among their male peers (see Appendices A and B). Previous studies found that college males are more extrinsically motivated by the potential academic and career benefits (or costs) when deciding whether or not to study abroad (see Anderson, 2007, Fischer, 2012; Gore, 2005; Hamir, 2011, Lucas, 2009; Redden, 2008; Thirolf, 2014; Yankey, 2014). These studies found that male students are pragmatic about study abroad and if it does not support their academic and/or career goals then they will lack sufficient motivation to study abroad. Or, if a male student is interested in studying abroad but it would interfere with his academic major and/or career plans then these extrinsic goals will trump his intrinsic desire to study abroad because male college students feel pressured by the social expectation that they are still supposed to be the breadwinners in society; males measure their success more by career achievement (extrinsic motivation) than personal development (intrinsic motivation) (Adkins, 2004; Redden, 2008; Lindsay, 2014; Lucas, 2009; Yankey, 2014). All of the research participants in this capstone study were asked to share their thoughts on male
students’ underrepresentation in study abroad in general and SAS in particular. Based on the data collected, it is reasonable to conclude that the lack of appeal to male students’ extrinsic motivation is indeed the reason why more male students do not study abroad.

In the mixed-gender survey, male participants suggested that male students are more focused on their academic major and career driven while females are more driven by desire for personal growth. One male student wrote: “Studying abroad is a fantastic, romantic experience. I think this appeals more to women as men are more pressured & focused on pursuing difficult degrees that will produce money.” Female participants complimented this idea with their suggestion that male students select academic majors, like STEM, that make it difficult to study abroad and still graduate on time; STEM is a male-dominated field that is considered to produce “serious, career-oriented degrees” (Hoffa, p. 153). One female student wrote: “I think males don’t see the point in traveling if they don’t need it for their major.”

In the all-male focus group, all of the student participants highlighted that their male friends did not support their decision to study abroad because they did not see the academic nor career value of it; to them, studying abroad was like taking a vacation. All of the participants agreed that this male attitude toward study abroad was responsible for the gender imbalance in study abroad. Student 3 said:

“I had a lot of people say like, ‘Oh, you’re taking a break from school for a semester.’ They didn’t realize that I view this as an educational experience as well, you know, I am taking classes and they do count. I’m learning in such a different way, but it’s still learning. It’s still pretty valuable.”

SAS has an extra barrier to overcome in that its academic program is dominated by courses in the humanities and social sciences and offers very few STEM courses. However, these are the courses with the greatest concentration of male students. At worst, STEM majors do not
study abroad at all and at best they choose to study abroad with a different program—one that is designed to meet their specific academic needs. Recruiter 3 explained:

> So I think it’s hard for students to justify paying a lot of money for a program if they can’t get their credits to transfer and for that to count toward their degree program...when you factor in that we have a limited amount of classes for students that are STEM classes and that’s where the majority of males are in the college, system, that’s also gonna double-bias right there, so we’re looking at the smallest pool of men in a small pool of men in order to get people to study abroad. So, I think that is a huge barrier. I think that is the reason why more females go abroad...If I were a male engineering student I could find a program that would let me study abroad as a male engineering student...”

Thus, by not offering upper-level STEM courses, SAS is effectively excluding those academic majors with the highest percentage of male students and forcing those male STEM students to study abroad with a different program, even if they would like study abroad with SAS.

**V. How could ISE effectively recruit more U.S. male students to study abroad with SAS?**

In order to recruit more male students to study abroad, ISE must address the two major issues that currently undermine male students’ desire to study abroad with SAS: 1) the absence of STEM courses from the SAS curriculum and 2) the lack of relevance of the SAS experience to the students’ future careers. While personal development is important, marketing must also appeal students’ extrinsic motivations. By offering more STEM courses and demonstrating how studying abroad with SAS will enhance their academic experience and benefit their future career, ISE will tap into male students’ extrinsic motivation for achievement and career success and, hopefully, more male students will want to study abroad with SAS.

The theory that if ISE connects the SAS experience to male students’ desire for career success will result in more male students studying abroad is supported by the literature. In the research paper *Students’ Study Abroad Plans: the Influence of Motivational and Personality Factors* (2013), the authors’ concluded: “Highlighting benefits of study abroad (career
development, international experience, etc.) and offering more diverse study abroad programs…may help reduce the biased population in study abroad program we see” (Li, Olson, and Frieze, p. 81). Study abroad advertising has been criticized for only appealing to desires stemming from intrinsic motivations, like personal growth and the opportunity to travel, and neglecting to appeal to extrinsic motivations, such as enhancing one’s academic major or increasing one’s job prospects (see Fischer, 2012; Gore, 2005; Lucas, 2009; Redden, 2008; Yankey, 2014).

Both the male and female students who participated in this capstone study believe there should be more informational outreach targeted at male students, which would highlight male students studying abroad and recognize the pressure male students face to conform to gendered expectations of success. Students recognize that for a study abroad program to be inclusive it is not enough to offer an itinerary of exotic destinations that fulfill male students’ desire for adventure, the program must also satisfy male students’ academic needs. Data collected from ISE staff support the students’ observation. Recruiter 5 explained:

“...I’ve noticed a lot of my students who are male are coming from STEM, STEM fields, and those are a lot less forgiving and a lot less supportive on the academic front for a Semester at Sea voyage Part of that is Semester at Sea—what are we offering on the voyage? We do offer a little bit of engineering and a little bit of STEM sciences, but really not that much variety and definitely not a lot of variety if you need upper level and lower level [courses]. It would be hard to make an entire schedule on Semester at Sea with just STEM classes...so when I’m at fairs there are a lot of guys who come up and say, ‘I study chemistry. I study physics. I study any number of these things that we don’t offer.’ So, I think that’s a big one for Semester at Sea because other study abroad programs they might be short-term program or even semester-long ones that have more of a focus in those fields so at least if they want to come they can have courses that they need when they come.”

Male students also recommended that study abroad be made more compatible with males’ focus on career. Student participants in the all-male focus group suggested this could be accomplished by providing students with more opportunities for structured, hands-on experience
while in port to pursue interests related to their academic major and/or personal passions; students called this a “mini internship”. However, is not necessary to drastically change the SAS program model in order to make it immediately more appealing to male students. To start, ISE should change its messaging to make it more relevant to career driven male students. Ideally, prospective male students would be connected with male SAS alumni since this would tap into their desire to hear about study abroad from a male peer’s perspective (Lucas, 2009). SAS could begin by sharing the experience of male alumni with prospective male students. For example, Student 1 from the all-male focus group summarized his major takeaway from the SAS experience this way:

“But I guess what I learned the most is that there’s so much more to life than what your career might lead you to be and as much as you wanted to be interested in that and involved in that, I fully believe you can study abroad and gain more in a semester than you could taking your career path classes back at school by being able to apply this after and the life lessons learned. So, you can go and you’re going to be successful after this—look at the alumni who have grown from this, it’s incredible.”

Receiving a message like this from a male peer who is also a SAS alumna might persuade more male students to seriously consider studying abroad with SAS. It is time ISE start describing the SAS experience in terms of real world value, like demonstrating how the study abroad experience will enhance students’ professional development and give students’ a competitive edge in the job market.

**Discussion**

**Practical Applicability**

ISE recognizes that the lack of student diversity on its SAS study abroad program, including gender, is a problem. During the interview, the ROM stated:

“Yes, I do think the gender imbalance on SAS and in study abroad in general is a problem and a major epidemic. Part of the study abroad experience is being able to connect with peers from different backgrounds and different experiences. With a lack of
diversity in this area, it greatly hinders the overall experience if we are missing the experiences of a specific group, such as males.”

Thus, at the start of 2015, ISE formed the Diversity Advisory Committee (DAC), which is comprised of staff volunteers from each department. The “DAC’s purpose is to not only work toward increasing access, diversity, and inclusion on all voyages, but to also make sure our home office staff understands the challenges our participants may experience during their voyages” (Semester at Sea, 2015c). The findings from this study could be used by the DAC as a guide for making recommendations to ISE for how to successfully attract and recruit more male students. While it might be challenging to add more STEM courses to their academic program since ISE has trouble recruiting STEM faculty, it would not be too challenging to revise the SAS marketing and communications to appeal more to a male audience. ISE should tap into male students’ extrinsically motivated desire for academic and career success by highlighting how these goals are supported by the SAS experience and, thus, how SAS is relevant for the typical college male.

A good example of such targeted marking is Michigan State University, which promotes its study abroad programs by sending differently messaged letters to male and female students: “women get the ‘traditional’ message, which highlights the cultural and experiential benefits of going overseas, while the letter to men ‘makes it sound more like a privilege...this is how you are going to distinguish yourself at a big university and, later on, in a global workforce’” (Fischer, 2012, para. 23). So as not to be sexist in their advertising, ISE could highlight both the personal and professional benefits of studying abroad with SAS in their advertising and in the way recruiters talk with potential applicants.

Recommendations for Further Research
The major weakness of this study is that it does not represent the thoughts and feelings of those males who expressed interest in SAS and then chose not to enroll and a future study should focus specifically on these male students. It would be interesting to see if these male students chose to study abroad with another program that better fit their academic and career goals or decided not to study abroad at all. This would be a starting point for ISE to figure out how to make SAS more appealing to those male students who do not yet see studying abroad as a value-added college experience. In this way, SAS could both enhance their bottom line of student enrollment (and revenue) and while also moving closer to achieving a more balanced and diverse the student population aboard their floating U.S. college campus.

More research must also be done on the long-term outcomes of study abroad and include more than just qualitative anecdotes of personal growth. Van Hoof and Varbeeten are correct in their conclusion that “It is no longer sufficient for educators to just say that the international study experience is invaluable and necessary in the education of our students because they think it is so. These opinions have to be backed up with hard facts …” (2005, p. 54). More quantitative research on how study abroad benefits students both personally and professionally would resonate with those students, both male and female, whose college goals are extrinsically motivated. A quantitative study of the long-term impact would help professionals in the field of international education differentiate between causation and correlation when determining positive outcomes of study abroad and give more validity to the claims that studying abroad benefits one’s career. For example, ISE claims that 22% of its alumni from a sample pool work or have worked overseas, but fails to demonstrate that these jobs were obtained as a result of studying abroad with SAS (Semester at Sea, 2015b). The problem is that career skills development is not being sufficiently assessed by study abroad program providers because the
focus is still on the program as opposed to student learning outcomes (Forum on Education Abroad, 2012). It is time international education professionals moved away from promoting study abroad based on the belief that its inherently a good thing and start emphasizing the real-world, utilitarian benefits of studying abroad.

**Conclusions**

The purpose of this study was to explore the phenomenon of female college students studying abroad with SAS at twice the rate of their male peers, in the hope of better understanding the significant gender imbalance overall in U.S. outbound study abroad. Based on the research findings, which were analyzed using the theoretical framework of Deci and Ryan’s (1985) Self Determination Theory of Motivation, this study concludes that students are intrinsically motivated to study abroad with SAS. Overwhelmingly, both male and female students reported they want to travel and have new experiences. The majority of both male and female students chose to study abroad with SAS in particular because of the program’s multi-country model, which allowed them to “see the world”. However, the female students received much more support from their female friends for their decision to study abroad with SAS than male students received from their male friends. These male friends did not see the academic nor career value in studying abroad. Furthermore, SAS marketing was twice as influential on female students’ decision to study abroad than on male students’ decision to study abroad. Male students were more motivated by the experience of their brothers who were also SAS alumni.

The outcomes highlighted by study abroad advocates focus on intrinsically motivated goals, such as personal growth and self-discovery, and neglect extrinsically motivated goals, such as how an overseas, cross-cultural experience will enhance one’s future job prospects. Thus, it makes sense that students compelled by that messaging are the ones who study abroad.
However, by only focusing on intrinsic desires to study abroad, ISE excludes those students who are more extrinsically motivated, like the majority of male students seem to be. Studies have shown that college male students prioritize completing their academic program and securing a good job over personal development. The failure to design study abroad programs that support these goals and/or effectively convey how study abroad already offers academic and career benefits may be the reason why male students are not interested in studying abroad.

In order to recruit more male students, SAS must modify its marketing and programing to make it appeal to those extrinsi-

cally motivated male students. Short-term marketing strategies include showcasing successful male alumni in their advertising, targeting fraternities in recruitment outreach, and highlighting academic and career benefits in messages to male audiences. Long-term SAS voyage remodeling include offering more STEM courses, providing students with more structured hands-on experience related to their major while in port, and focusing on career skills development as part of their program model.

Increasing male student participation in study abroad is important on the micro, mezzo, and macro level. On the micro level, studies have found that study abroad has a bigger impact on an individual’s life than any other college experience, including friendships and coursework (Paige et al., 2009). A study focused exclusively on SAS alumni found that studying abroad with SAS was the most meaningful semester of their college career and the SAS experience continued to still impact them greatly later in life (Weigl and Baker, 2009).

On the mezzo level, achieving a gender-balanced student population is critical to ISE fulfilling its mission. The mission of ISE is “To educate students with the global understanding necessary to address the challenges of our interdependent world” (Semester at Sea, 2014b). The lack of male students in study abroad is a serious issue because men still dominate the leadership
positions that have the power to address global issues on a global scale (Iverson, 2011). If ISE is serious about realizing this mission then it must educate more male students.

On the macro level, rapid globalization has resulted in our economy, national security, public health, and role as a world leader increasingly dependent on our effective cross-cultural collaboration with other nations. The U.S. government recognizes that international education is one effective way of building such collaboration. The former Secretary of State for Educational and Global Affairs stated: “International education is crucial to building relationships between people and communities in the United States and around the world. It is through these relationships that together we can solve global challenges like climate change, the spread of pandemic disease, and combatting violent extremism” (Duncan, 2010, para. 3). In support of building international relationships, President Obama launched two signature education initiatives: 100,000 Strong China (2009) and 100,000 Strong in the Americas (2011). The goal of each initiative is to increase the number of U.S. students studying abroad in these respective regions to 100,000 each by the year 2020 (U.S. Department of State, n.d.). To reach these goals would require we increase U.S. college student participation in study abroad by 67% in the next five years; currently, only about 10% or just over 300,000 students study abroad annually (2015a). If we are to achieve these goals then we must make study abroad more appealing to and inclusive of all college students, regardless of gender and/or major.

Recent world events demonstrate that economies are international, health crises cannot be stopped by geopolitical borders, security depends on coalitions of nations, and preserving our natural resources requires global commitment. America’s leaders, male and female, must have the knowledge, skills, and global perspective to communicate and collaborate cross-culturally in order to solve today’s global issues in our increasingly interdependent, culturally diverse world.
References


http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cehsedaddiss/65


Appendices

Appendix A: U.S. Students Studying Abroad by Gender, 2000 - 2013
Modified from the 2014 Open Doors Profile of U.S. Study Abroad Students, 2000/01-2012/13 and the 2015 Open Doors Profile of U.S. Study Abroad Students, 2003/04-2013/14

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<th>Female Students</th>
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<td>65.00%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2004-2005</td>
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<td>65.50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2005-2006</td>
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<td>65.50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2006-2007</td>
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<td>65.10%</td>
<td>241,791</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-2008</td>
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<td>65.10%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-2009</td>
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<td>2009-2010</td>
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<td>63.50%</td>
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<td>2010-2011</td>
<td>35.60%</td>
<td>64.40%</td>
<td>273,996</td>
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<td>2011-2012</td>
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<td>64.80%</td>
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<td>2013-2014</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>14 yr. Average</strong></td>
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Appendix B: Student Enrollment by Gender in Semester at Sea, 1990 – 2015

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<tr>
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<td>176</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>626</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer 2014</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>328</td>
<td>462</td>
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<td>71%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spring 2014</td>
<td>184</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fall 2013</td>
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<td>434</td>
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<td>74%</td>
</tr>
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<td>74%</td>
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### The Gender Imbalance in Study Abroad

#### Voyages

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<th>% Female</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Fall 1999</td>
<td>215</td>
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<td>34%</td>
<td>66%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spring 1999</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>411</td>
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<tr>
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<td>231</td>
<td>395</td>
<td>626</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 1998</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>389</td>
<td>606</td>
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<td>64%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fall 1997</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>398</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spring 1990</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>331</td>
<td>447</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>74%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Average per Voyage</strong></td>
<td><strong>175</strong></td>
<td><strong>372</strong></td>
<td><strong>547</strong></td>
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### Appendix C: Comparison by Gender of Fall, Spring, and Summer Voyages, 2010 – 2014

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<th>Male Students</th>
<th>Female Students</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>% Male</th>
<th>% Female</th>
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<tr>
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<td>184</td>
<td>392</td>
<td>576</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2013</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>433</td>
<td>646</td>
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<td>Spring 2012</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>374</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spring 2011</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>413</td>
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<td>65%</td>
</tr>
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<td>199</td>
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<td>66%</td>
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<td><strong>Spring average</strong></td>
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<td><strong>66%</strong></td>
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<td>28%</td>
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<td>151</td>
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<td><strong>Fall Average</strong></td>
<td><strong>175</strong></td>
<td><strong>375</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>556</td>
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<td>24%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td><strong>440</strong></td>
<td><strong>603</strong></td>
<td><strong>27%</strong></td>
<td><strong>73%</strong></td>
</tr>
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Appendix D: Quantitative Data from Mixed-Gender Student Survey – Graphs

Figure 1: “When did you first consider studying abroad?”

![Graph showing the distribution of responses to the question: “When did you first consider studying abroad?” with categories: “I always wanted to study abroad,” Grade School (<15 yrs old), High School (≥15 yrs old), College, Unclear (i.e. “Fall 2014”), and “Never.” The graph displays the number of males and females (in purple and blue bars respectively).]

Figure 2: “What influenced your decision to study abroad?”

![Graph showing the distribution of responses to the question: “What influenced your decision to study abroad?” with categories: Family (parents, siblings), Friends/College Peers, Desire to travel, Other (“gap year”, “all of the above”), Study abroad recruiter, Home institution, “Not sure what motivated me,” SAS advertising, Scholarship/money. The graph displays the number of males and females (in purple and blue bars respectively).]
Figure 3: “Describe the SUPPORT to study abroad given by your parents, friends, professors, coaches, academic advisors. Whose support was most important to you?”
Figure 4: “Describe the LACK of SUPPORT to study abroad given by your parents, friends, professors, coaches, academic advisors. Whose support was most important to you?”

Figure 5: “Did anyone discourage you from studying abroad? If yes, who and why?”
Figure 6: “How did you learn about SAS?”

![Bar chart showing the comparison between males and females for various methods of learning about SAS.]

Figure 7: “Who gave you the most influential study abroad information? (SAS recruiters, former SAS students, campus study abroad office, parents, friends, professors, academic advisors, coaches, etc.)”

![Bar chart showing the comparison between males and females for the most influential study abroad information sources.]
Figure 8: “What motivated you to study abroad with SAS in particular?”

Figure 9: “When you decided to study abroad, were you aware that more American female college students study abroad than American male college students?”
### Table 1: Male Student’s Theories to Explain the Gender Imbalance in Study Abroad

| Males more focused on their major and career driven while females are more driven by self discovery and personal growth (4 students) | “I think male students are more driven to work on their careers almost immediately upon entering college. I think that female students wish to have a fun and exciting experience a more than males do at the college stage of life.”

“I think women are more interested in becoming well rounded individuals and becoming more cultured, while males focus on building a status at their home school or possibly the work world.”

“Studying abroad is a fantastic, romantic experience. I think this appeals more to women as men are more pressured & focused on pursuing difficult degrees that will produce money.”

“I believe that men are more focused on seriously developing majors, so they forgo the opportunity to study abroad in order to focus on their future careers.” |
| --- | --- |
| Female students are more open-minded and curious about the world and other cultures while males are less willing to leave their comfort zones; females are more adventurous (5 students) | “Many men I knew have a lack of desire to travel. Also, many men I know have a fear of missing out on things at home. Many of my male friends are seeking jobs with no need for international experience such as construction.”

“Males as a whole are less willing to go outside of their comfort zone than girls. I have not met another male student who has expressed interest in studying abroad.”

“I feel like female students are more motivated to see other cultures, while male students don’t want to change their routines.”

“[Female students are] more open minded to change, flexibility, exploration of new ideas & new things.”

“I think a lot of female students see studying abroad as ‘fashionable’. Also, college aged women, in general, are more open to other cultures than men.” |
### Males have other priorities, like sports and social groups (4 students)

- “Greek frat life? Friend groups? Or is the American female just more romantic about travel?”
- “Guys like their frats and sports too much.”
- “Male tendency to do things as groups.”
- “During spring no male wants to miss Superbowl, March Madness, plus some guys I heard want to maintain their relationships.”

### Females are more ambitious, determined, and organized than their male peers (6 students)

- “Guys don’t like planning as much, maybe?”
- “Because they’re more organized…”
- “They’re more determined.”
- “A more ‘independent’ nature & stronger drive to explore.”
- “One must be organized about their classes and diligent about deadlines to complete the process. Also, I think it’s easier for women to remain close with friends while spatially separated.”
- “Females are just more ambitious in general. Males take longer to be good at school—they don’t have the grades/motivation to do extra.”
### Table 2: Female Student’s Theories to Explain the Gender Imbalance in Study Abroad

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Males major in subjects that do not encourage study abroad (6 students)</th>
<th>“I think that many male enter majors that have higher course requirements, like computer science/engineering and can’t afford the time off. Also, women are generally geared to pursue connections &amp; communication.”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“There are more male students in the STEM fields and it is much harder to fit study abroad into those programs. It takes time and planning to go abroad and females can sometimes plan more.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“At my university the majority of business majors are male and our business school does not let their students go abroad.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Females have majors that allow for [them to go] abroad.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I think males don’t see the point in traveling if they don’t need it for their major.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Female students are more open-minded and curious about the world and other cultures while males are less willing to leave their comfort zones; females are more adventurous (11 students)</th>
<th>“I think women are more comfortable traveling and meeting new people.”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Females are more adventurous and are influenced by those around them…if their friends want to study abroad they will want to study abroad.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“We’re more adventurous and willing to take risks.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Because women mature faster and are oriented toward relationships, which studying can help strengthen through personal growth. Men want to think they have it figured out and they don’t need time for self-discovery. Maybe they succumb to gender roles.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“[Females are] More adventurous, more willing to take risk. Guys are content.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“More willing to get out of their comfort zone; male college students generally don’t want to leave their friends or care enough about traveling to do so.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I think, in general, more male students are content in their lifestyle at their home college. Because most males mature later, I believe they don’t have as much of an interest in picking up and starting over, changing and traveling when they’re happy and content with the lifestyle they’ve grown comfortable with.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males have other priorities, like sports and relationships (4 students)</td>
<td>“I think more college males care more about the partying and their spots teams and don’t want to miss it…”</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Sports and fraternities are huge and they only have four years to experience it all so they aren’t that inclined to leave.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I feel men love to stay with their guys friends and drink. Or too much effort to apply.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Men don’t want to miss ski season, football/basketball season.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females are more ambitious, determined, organized than their male peers (6 students)</td>
<td>“It’s a lot of time, energy, and patience to prepare for…I think it requires some level of maturity not every college age student has come to yet, especially boys.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Females tend to plan things out more, and study abroad take a lot of planning.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Because of organization and because of a willingness to try new things.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Males aren’t willing to put in the work it takes to get all the papers in order at their current school to study abroad. It takes a lot of self-motivation and effort.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“On average, there are more females in college across the nation and maybe because it takes a lot of time and organization to plan for</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
studying abroad and guys are not as good at time management and planning (on average of course, not all guys).”

“Honestly, the males I know are not as organized. It took a lot of time & paperwork to finally get to San Diego.”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3: Males’ Suggestions for Encouraging more Male Students to Study Abroad</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Connect study abroad with males’ focus on career</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“A greater availability of work experience abroad.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I think just a general learning experience and how that can help w/ future jobs.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“If men knew how much you were able to network and develop relationships that would benefit you for the remainder of your life…”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Advertising that the experience would help you in your career.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Highlight to men that there are more women studying abroad</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Tell more males there are more females studying abroad.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Telling them that most study abroad programs are 70% female.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Advertising that there are more girls…”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“…if they knew how many women participate in studying abroad this would encourage us.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Knowing that the majority is female.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Mention the ratio.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Knowing the m/f ratio.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>More informational outreach targeted at male students and highlight male students studying abroad in marketing</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Most study abroad programs I saw used females in their marketing.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“More info about it.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“A better understanding of the relative difficulty that comes with planning travel once other responsibilities of life become apparent.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“More information on studying abroad from our home institutions.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I would say simply more advertising &amp; talks from people who have already studied abroad.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Talking more about [it] in the college atmosphere.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Programs that appeal</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Maybe different destinations— Southern Africa, SE Asia, — places</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
to males’ desire for adventure AND satisfy their academic needs (easier credit transfer)

that seem ‘dangerous’.

“It will grow over time if study abroad programs offer broader topics. Also certain countries likely attract more men than women.

“Focus on the risk, changes, & daring people to adventure.”

“Maybe getting schools to be more receptive to study abroad by accepting transfer credits easier.”

“It will grow over time if study abroad programs offer broader topics. Also certain countries likely attract more men than women.

“Greater advertising showing it as an adventure. Guys like adventure.”

“Sports and easy credit transfer.”

“Programs that offered more comprehensive academic options—more than just (primarily) the humanities.”

Address pressure on male students to conform to gendered expectations of success that discourage them from studying abroad.

“If western society put more value on understanding and learning from other cultures, rather than capitalistic “self-betterment.”

“Less stigma”

“They being okay with taking on a somewhat irresponsible semester and being a bit behind in school.”

“Studying abroad does not negatively influence your future success. So do what you want to do & not what the academic society tells you is right.”
### Table 4: Females’ Suggestions for Encouraging more Male Students to Study Abroad

| Offer more “bro” activities | “Beer and video games.”
|                            | “More athletics and entertainment on board.”
|                            | “Honestly, the ability or more flexibility with alcohol. College guys like to drink, and a lot don’t want to give that up.”
| More support and encouragement during the application process | “Make it easier. Studying abroad takes a lot of work and I feel like the majority of men are too lazy to follow through with it.”
|                            | “More help with choosing and organizing a program. Many guys want to and regret not doing it. They just never got everything together.”
|                            | “Helping them be more aware and maybe more guidance/planning help made available.”
|                            | “If applying was easier (at their home school’s end)…”
|                            | “More support from the people around them.”
|                            | “Have US universities work better with students to make it fit into their curriculum.”
|                            | “Encouragement from parents, friends, academic advisors.”
|                            | “I don’t think it’s a matter of males not wanting to study abroad, I just think they don’t plan it in advance (scheduling, etc.)”
| More informational outreach targeted at male students and highlight male students studying abroad in marketing | “Different marketing?”
|                            | “That you won’t be alone. I think guys are really group based in college and leaving or abandoning the group for a while is seen as betrayal.”
|                            | “Maybe advertise the idea of studying abroad more…Also advertise it early on in college career so the process is easier when it comes time.”
|                            | “Information! Let the know about scholarships & that it won’t force them to graduate late.”
|                            | “Having abroad programs go into frats and other clubs to educate male students about abroad opportunities—many decide too late they would like to go abroad and miss the deadline.”
|Offer programs that appeal to males’ desire for adventure AND satisfy their academic needs (easier credit transfer)| “Went to more adventurous areas like Brazil as opposed to France.”  
“More STEM classes that actually transfer as major credit instead of elective.”  
“Less ‘it will change your life’ and more ‘it will be one of the biggest adventures of your life.’”  
“…make it sound more adventurous rather than eye-opening?”  
“More specialized classes?”  
“Making it easier for credits to transfer and for there to not be repercussions for leaving for a semester (with sports/extracurricular activities).” |
|---|
|Address pressure on male students to conform to gendered expectations of success that discourage them from studying abroad. | “Showing them that they don’t have to follow ‘the plan’—get a degree to get a job.”  
“Changing gender expectations for male individuals and allowing them to cultivate different forms of expression and ways of thinking.”  
“To challenge them to step out of their comfort zone and create new experiences.” |
**Appendix F: Qualitative Data from All-Male Focus Group – Tables**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5: What were you hoping to gain from your study abroad experience?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student 1</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“For me, I was just kinda searching for clarity and a huge perspective. I’m unsure of my major I wanted to be up until I came here and I knew somehow in my life I want to incorporate international missions. ...I saw this as an opportunity to see the world and be around people who I’ve been told on Semester at Sea have a huge array of ideas and a huge array of beliefs. For me I wanted to come on here and kinda experience things that made me uncomfortable and that’s definitely happened and I think I’ve grown from those [experiences]”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student 2</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I love to explore and I guess see as much as I possibly can. For me, it’s never enough to just read about something in a book—I wanna go there and experience it, test it, see it with my own two eyes. And if I had the opportunity I told myself make sure to take it and Semester at Sea seemed like that opportunity for me. And it has been so far. I’ve been able to see so many things that I never thought I’d get around to seeing in my life. I’ve gotten a lot out of it and that’s what I wanted.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student 3</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The thing I was always hooked on was that on the Semester at Sea website, in the mission statement or whatever, it says ‘creating global citizens’ and that’s what I wanted to be. I wanted to be someone who was sensitive to people all around the planet. And because I wasn’t ever going to have the chance to travel to these countries ever again in my life I wanted to see this part of the world...and just be more sensitive in general and more accepting of everybody and maybe rid myself of prejudices that I had.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student 4</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The word I kept referring back to with everyone was just ‘perspective.’ Um, one of the things that the professor I talked about mentioned was just learn how much you don’t know. And so for me, I was primed and ready to have my expectations shattered and they were, far beyond what I would have ever expected...it’s almost more of a different thinking style or just an entirely different view rather than an accumulation of information learned. It’s a different kind of knowledge. And I think I’ve received that and that’s what I was looking to get out of this trip.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Student 4 | “This is tough because I’d want it to be perfectly balanced between being in depth in one place and feeling the culture and also having that freedom that we’ve had, like people want to do programming and also go and explore because I think both
of those are very valuable. So, I liked a lot of what [give’s another student’s name] said, where you have more time in a place so you don’t feel as rushed to do a lot of things You can kind of like you said, mission based…But in an ideal situation, if you could work alongside somebody doing something you were passionate about some particular service…so you get to see…Here’s how these other places are taking worldwide issues into account and how they’re working to solve them. Here’s what you can learn from their approach and compare it to your approach…So, maybe 3 weeks in one place, work in the days with an organization or you take classes with students in those countries and then you come back and debrief it and compare back to what it ‘s like at home. And just see how many different perspectives you can get from working toward a common goal…’
### Table 7: Prior to studying abroad, what did your male family members/friends/peers say about study abroad?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student 1</th>
<th>“But in regards to telling other people about Semester at Sea in general, nobody seemed as interested as I did. They kinda just were like, “Why do you want to do all those places? Why wouldn’t you want to be fully immersed in the culture of one? And most of these conversations were with men who, most of them didn’t care to study abroad at all. Well, some of them did. But the ones who were firm in their beliefs were the ones that wanted to study abroad in one place…but what was so surprising to me was how these people are so focused on international business, but they aren’t willing to sacrifice one semester of college to get that international experience…They’re so focused on that they aren’t really opening their mind to the idea because they believe this experience could, in fact, inhibit their career success initially after college, but on the ship it’s such a community that’s focused on a global education and focused on coursework that is far beyond any scope that I’ve received back at my home school.”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student 2</td>
<td>“I had a lot of people say like, ‘Oh, you’re taking a break from school for a semester.’ They didn’t realize that I view this as an educational experience as well, you know, I am taking classes and they do count. I’m learning in such a different way, but it’s still learning. It’s still pretty valuable.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 3</td>
<td>“Yeah, all my friends were like, ‘Bro, like, are you actually going to be doing school on that boat?’ And that’s all I got. So, there was like, a little bit of, ‘What are you doing? This isn’t actually going to benefit your life.’ To them, it didn’t carry the same value as it did to me because I saw value in the experience of seeing the world whereas I guess they didn’t.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 4</td>
<td>“My friends weren’t for it or against it really, but they weren’t nearly as excited as I was…My friends at school, one of my good friends, said that he couldn’t afford it. But I also know that it would have interfered with his coursework…Another one of my friends, he called it a 4-month vacation and didn’t see the benefit it would have for either his career or his education. Se he was busy with internships and stuff like that. The friend who I spoke to…he’d studied abroad in one place for a long time so we had a lot of discussions about that…he favored getting in depth with one culture rather than seeing all these different ones.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 1</td>
<td>“My initial response would be just that, I feel like males are so focused on what they want in their career and they’re set to that and they’re going to do whatever it takes to get there and a lot of that may be cutting out a semester of fun in order to focus on the end, whether that be financial success, career success, being the CEO, whatever that could be…some reasons that I heard of men that didn’t want to come was because they didn’t want to miss football season, they didn’t want to miss party season. They wanted to be home involved in the tailgates, involve dint he formal season or their fraternities and sororities…men just don’t want to miss out…For the record, I don’t regret it at all, but I’m very disappointed that I missed the Patriots’ football season this year. My brother said, ‘Yeah, you messed up. I would have given up four years of study abroad to not miss this season.’”</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 2</td>
<td>“I think it is because men are not quite as, they don’t feel it’s as urgent to see the world and travel and experience it now. You know as part of the societal pressure, I don’t want to say ‘duty, but it’s best for them to focus on getting established and working first and doing everything they can to sorta get that going and studying abroad might, you know, if it’s not a hindrance it’s at least an inconvenience for them. And to that end, they’re focused more on career and they believe that career if their career pans out then they can focus on personal development later. Whereas I think most women are probably taking the approach that’s more holistic—they want to better themselves. They do want to have a career, a good strong career, but they don’t’ want to o it as the expense of furthering their own personal, I guess, benefit or growth. And they do see that there is a bit more of an urgency because they do see that once they have a family they might be, I don’t want to use the word, but they might be stuck with it…it’s just that it might hinder them from being able to travel and experience the world as freely as they would otherwise be able to. So they feel a more urgently to use this opportunity to study abroad…I know a lot of the guys, at least my age, are short-sighted and maybe, especially, take for granted we’ll always have the help that we need and the freedom we need to be able to go abroad and travel.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Student 3 | “…I think men are more concerned about their careers and resumes. And in that sense I kind a think men are more concerned about their career than they are about their personal growth, if you were to set those two on opposite sides…so I think if you could make men more aware, if you could make men value their personal growth over their resume…men are almost kinda living in their own world and not wanting to have to confront other things that they can’t necessarily explain. I think for some men it just doesn’t even matter. ‘Why do I have to care about the rest of the planet when my whole life is just right here?’ They don’t think it affects them…I think for most men, they will do the tings that impact their life and they
| **Student 4** | “I think, just based on my experience and the things I’ve heard in this discussion, that men, we talked about society’s view of them and that they should be strong, independent, career drive. So I think that career driven part of it is a big one…maybe the mindset is, ‘Why not focus on my career now, invest and then play later?...When I think of the girls that I know who have gone abroad, they talked about it much more enthusiastically than I did…. I talked about it from a very academic, here’s what I’m going to gain from it kinda standpoint. But when you talk to women about it, it’s ‘Oh it’s going to be so fun, I’m going to be doing all the different things they have planned.’” |

| | think that’s cool. And I think, in some minds, study abroad can almost be equated like a semi vacation, like traveling…” |
Table 9: What would you like the people who work in study abroad to know about the experiences of men who do study abroad?

| Student 1 | “Because, after going through this, like I knew poverty existed in the world and I knew I would see some hard things and I knew I would go through challenges and grow from them. But I guess what I learned the most is that there’s so much more to life than what your career might lead you to be and as much as you wanted to be interested in that and involved in that, I fully believe you can study abroad and gain more in a semester than you could taking your career path classes back at school by being able to apply this after and the life lessons learned. So, you can go and you’re going to be successful after this—look at the alumni who have grown from this, it’s incredible. But, the lessons that you learned about that things are so much more valuable in life than money or success and fame, or whatever that maybe, are just overall priceless experiences that no matter how long it takes or how much you have to spend for a semester abroad, just nothing can compare to that gain.” |
| Student 2 | “You actually have to be there to experience it. You gotta actually interact with the people and smell the smells and hear the sounds. People are really missing out when they don’t study abroad and those who think they can experience these things later in life…they missed out on an opportunity to apply this perspective to the rest of their working lives going forward. And I want to be able to have a more global perspective going into the workforce as opposed to coming out of it. I want to open myself up to changing my path and I hope, I think I have a much different idea of where I want to be, you know, 10 years from now, 15 years from now because of Semester at Sea than I had before that. And I’m really glad I was able to go and travel and see the world and experience all these things before I committed to a career path…” |
| Student 3 | “I came into this trip fully expecting myself to go into the hospitality industry. I was just set on that, that’s what I wanted to do. And now, that is probably the thing that I would hate the most…” |
| Student 4 | “…it’s a shame because I think that a lot of the more masculine men that I know could benefit from this more than anybody else in realizing that their previous assumptions were false and that…they kinda would like to live in their own world…It’s easier for them than to be open, like I said, learn how much I don’t know. But that’s very, that’s a daunting thing—to realize you know nothing, essentially nothing about the entire world. And I think some people would rather not think that. And I think that a lot of my guy friends don’t think that they need that.” |
### Table 10: Why do you think students choose to study abroad with SAS?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment Operations Manager</td>
<td>“So the students who are attracted to our program like the fact that we’re able to go to multiple destinations…These are first-time travelers and they know they want to study abroad because someone told them it was good for their career or good for their degree or they just want to get out of whatever town they grew up in, but they don’t know where exactly they want to go. So it’s the comparative model they’re looking forward to and also because we have non traditional locations…they’re getting the best of both worlds when they’re doing our program.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruiter 3</td>
<td>“I know the reason I went on it versus any other study abroad program is I couldn’t pick where I wanted to go. I wanted to see a lot of places and I couldn’t tell you where that was gonna be and I didn’t want to plan it myself, but I wanted to see it. I wanted to see the world…So I went with 700 other college students to 10 countries, I knew I was still not really alone, I was still with a group of college students that were kinda in the same boat as me.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruiter 4</td>
<td>“… I think some students want the most bang for their buck. Semester at Sea, you know, we can take them up to 15 countries, 4 continents, we are open to all majors, we have a world-class faculty, credits come form the university of Virginia, it’s a living-learning community, so I think that appeals to some students.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruiter 5</td>
<td>“I think we’re going to see students who really find the comparative aspect appealing.”</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Table 11: What is the profile of the typical student who enrolls in SAS?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recruiter</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recruiter 1</td>
<td>“When I first came into the idea of studying abroad, I was kinda confused of where I wanted to go and I think Semester at Sea does a great job of giving those students that don’t know where to go the opportunity to see the world…I think most students that go on this voyage are seeking to find out what it is they want to do after college. I personally identify myself as one of those students and I talked to other students and I said you know, ‘What are your plans?’ and they’re like, ‘I don’t know. I did this program particularly to become inspired to do something right after college or right after the voyage.’ And I think that is a typical student, you know, trying to figure out who they are and what it is they’re going to do for the rest of their lives. So, it’s a great program to be able to do that, a lot of time to reflect.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruiter 2</td>
<td>“They want to go and experience something different, and so they want to see the world. I’ve seen a lot of students who were kinda indecisive, as I actually was, and so there are just too many places, how do they just pick one? So then our program comes in and allows them to be indecisive and still make a decision. So they can go to lots of places and that’s definitely really appealing…there’s a huge theme of finding yourself on Semester at Sea and many students find that very appealing and especially the undecided major, which I think is why it has been a pretty consistently sending major because those students are like, ‘I’m not sure, my interests are all over the place. If I go do this program I’ll be better able to understand myself and maybe even see a cause that I will become passionate about. And then when I return to my campus I’ll have an idea of what major I want and what my life goal is. So they really see the voyage as a personal discovery…”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruiter 3</td>
<td>“I think they have a broad view of what they want to do, something that’s not as um set in stone of what their career path is going to be, where they’re interested in a lot more things than just one specific goal in their future…”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruiter 2</td>
<td>“We have a really hard time finding professors from those [STEM] majors to study abroad on Semester at Sea because those majors don’t really allow the professors themselves to have much flexibility to go and do research abroad. And so if we can’t have professors to offer those courses on the voyage then it makes it that much harder for those students to study abroad because then there aren’t any courses in in their major to at least attempt to stay on track.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruiter 3</td>
<td>“…Semester at Sea is financially more expensive than a lot of the [other] programs that you can go to as well as we don’t offer a lot of the classes that would make it possible for the students to sail to study abroad if they are in some of the more specialized programs. We don’t have physics, we don’t have chemistry. We can’t physically do those on the ship. Engineering, we have very limited classes because it’s hard to get students to enroll in those when it’s a small set of them. Math is another one we don’t teach on the ship, really. So I think it’s hard for students to justify paying a lot of money for a program if they can’t get their credits to transfer and for that to count toward their degree program...females just outweigh males in college in general…and just right there you’re setting yourself up to have more women study abroad in general. Then, when you factor in that we have a limited amount of classes for students that are STEM classes and that’s where the majority of males are in the college, system, that’s also gonna double-bias right there, so we’re looking at the smallest pool of men in a small pool of men in order to get people to study abroad. So, I think that is a huge barrier. I think that is the reason why more females go abroad…If I were a male engineering student I could find a program that would let me study abroad as a male engineering student…the women unless they are in a STEM program, really have open options to go on Semester at Sea whereas the males they are kinda forced into looking for a program that would really fit into one of their STEM programs.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruiter 4</td>
<td>“I imagine it’s the courses we offer. Unfortunately, it’s harder for us to accommodate offering STEM courses. It’s very liberal artsy. So I imagine that’s why we see more females.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Recruiter 5 | “…I’ve noticed a lot of my students who are male are coming from STEM, STEM fields, and those are a lot less forgiving an a lot less supportive on the academic front for a Semester at Sea voyage Part of that is Semester at Sea—
what are we offering on the voyage? We do offer a little bit of engineering and a little bit of STEM sciences, but really not that much variety and definitely not a lot of variety if you need upper level and lower level [courses]. It would be hard to make an entire schedule on Semester at Sea with just STEM classes…so when I’m at fairs there are a lot of guys who come up and say, ‘I study chemistry. I study physics. I study any number of these things that we don’t offer.’ So, I think that’s a big one for Semester at Sea because other study abroad programs they might be short-term program or even semester-long ones that have more of a focus in those fields so at least if they want to come they can have courses that they need when they come.”
### Table 12-B: Why do you think more American, female students study abroad with SAS than American male students?

| Recruiter 1 | “Well from my experience a lot of the girls who have done Semester at Sea, girl students, they say, ‘Well my friend did this, my friend did this program, so that word of mouth really expands. So, if there’s already a strong community of females and it continues to be like that through the voyages through the ability to talk to your friends...girls have tend to have bigger social groups than men do, at least from my experiences. So that kinda word of mouth, that ability to talk to your friends about it grows bigger, bigger and I think maybe that’s something that contributes.” |
| Recruiter 2 | “…the best way or the most effective way of spreading the program is through word of mouth. Um, so even though I go to all of these study abroad fairs and try to find ways to put Semester at Sea out there, most students still tend to sign up because they heard about the program from someone, or they know someone who’s done it...women are known for talking and chatting, and the sharing of information and being more communicative, than their male peers. And if, I mean, word of mouth is the way the program is shared the most then it would just make the most sense that it would flow more through the female lines of communication that the male lines of communication...a female student is more likely to share that information in all of her friend groups and pass it along all of those webs she’s connected to.” |
| Recruiter 5 | “I think the students who are choosing to study abroad with Semester at Sea know someone who sailed, whether that be a family member or a friend or a faculty member or a staff member that they know who has sailed. I think that the biggest driving factor because it’s giving them, the feel more confident and secure in making that choice that they’ve talked to someone they trust firsthand about the experience. And I think our alumni are our best advocates—they can really convey the takeaways and the learning outcomes and just all the things you can get from a voyage...” |
## Table 12-C: Why do you think more American, female students study abroad with SAS than American male students?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recruiter 1</th>
<th>“Well I guess I’d go back to that discussion we had, I guess that idea really appealed to me…I did not know that female perspective where some of them are worried they won’t have the opportunity to travel once they finish college and they establish a family and a career. I think that is definitely something to consider…maybe just trying to, like, break that barrier of, like, saying you know, ‘I’m female and I can do this. I can travel the world. I can do all these things.’”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recruiter 2</td>
<td>“…in some regards, this is just a symptom of our a systematic problem in our society in general. Just like elements of the glass ceiling. I think a lot of female students recognize that they need to have more feathers in their caps to distinguish themselves from their male peers. And I think a lot of, you know, male students don’t really see this as a necessary way to show their worth or their effectiveness for their career.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruiter 4</td>
<td>“Another factor that could be at play is females or women feel the need or have the urge to see the world or take advantage of various opportunities not just study abroad prior to settling down, getting married, and having kids…Men, on the other hand, may feel more driven to achieve their career goals. So they may only be open to internships or work related opportunities.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 13: Do you think the lack of male role models in study abroad (peers, recruiters, study abroad office staff, etc.) plays a role in creating the gender imbalance in study abroad?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Quote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment Operations Manager</td>
<td>“I think that plays a significant role. I mean, if you want to recruit someone people want to see their peers. They want to see someone like them who already went and did that. So if you go, and this is not just for gender, this is also for ethnicity and major, they want to see someone who has been in their position who is also done the same exact thing. So if you have a male engineering student walk into our study abroad office and it’s all females and they all have liberal arts majors then it’s gonna be hard to make that students believe it’s possible because they have no one else in that exact position who has probably had o overcome the same challenges they’ve had.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruiter 1</td>
<td>“Maybe it has to do something with how this industry is women like women driven. I think that most of the recruitment events that I’ve been to have 1 or 2 guys at the fairs and I think you know, like, 10 or 15 females. So maybe the type of people you’ll attract or the gender you’ll attract depends on the person promoting the program. Not necessarily, but maybe it has some type of influence… more of the recruitment aspect where you’re really out there talking to those students, getting them excited about it, tends to be females. I think definitely having a variety would attract different types of students…”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruiter 2</td>
<td>“…in general the study abroad field and most of my contacts tend to be women. And I think as a student that just kinda reinforces the perception that discipline and the whole path is female dominated…if you were to walk into an office and there wasn’t a single male I think that would just kind of encourage more females to be there than males. I think it does play a role.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruiter 3</td>
<td>“I actually know a lot of males that work in study abroad…but I don’t think having male recruiters or male study abroad office staff is going to increase the amount of males that study abroad…I do think that peers have more of an influence than a study abroad advisor or a recruiter. The gender of them I don’t think has anything to do with it. But I think if there’s two guys in a business school and one of them wants to go abroad I think that his friend who he talks to all the time is more likely to go abroad because he’s going abroad. So I think the peer part of it is more important…”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruiter 4</td>
<td>“…it could be like a subliminal message that study abroad isn’t manly or a commonplace experience for men. So I think it could be like an underlying thing, yes.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruiter 5</td>
<td>“I was just got back from a really big international education conference called NAFSA and there were definitely a lot more women than men at that conference as well. So, it’s true, there are a lack of male role models and I can’t imagine that doesn’t have some correlation to how study abroad is perceived and how welcoming it may appear to other men. So, I feel like if there were more male role models in study abroad, I would like to think that would have kinda a factor that would inspire other men to study abroad cause they would see themselves in those roles and see them of value.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recruitment Operations Manager</strong></td>
<td>“Yes, I do think the gender imbalance on SAS and in study abroad in general is a problem and a major epidemic. Part of the study abroad experience is being able to connect with peers from different backgrounds and different experiences. With a lack of diversity in this area, it greatly hinders the overall experience if we are missing the experiences of a specific group, such as males.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recruiter 1</strong></td>
<td>“No, I don’t think so, I think it’s perfect. Why?…I just feel that balance is really great…from my experiences on the voyages, the guys want to do more of the nature aspect of ‘Oh, I want to go camping, I want to go hiking’ and the girls want to do more of the cultural experiences where ‘Oh, I want to go shopping, I want to do this, I want to see a show, I want to become culturally enriched…And like I said, every voyage is created by the people that are on it so every voyage is unique in its nature…So the male and female preferences obviously balance it out…It’d be awesome to have like 50-50, but I don’t see it as a problem. I like the idea of getting or of having more of a female presence onboard. There’s so much more opportunities for them and I feel that’s amazing.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recruiter 2</strong></td>
<td>Um, I do, I just, if we’re claiming to be diverse then I think we should try to have it as close to 50 – 50.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recruiter 3</strong></td>
<td>“I don’t think I’s a problem. I don’t think any sort of gender imbalance is an issue. I think that, you know, I think a good balanced community is always ideal, but at the same time I wouldn’t say it’s a problem…if people think it’s a problem in higher education then maybe that’s something to consider…but I just don’t think we can label gender imbalance as an issue.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recruiter 4</strong></td>
<td>“I think yes, coming from a higher education background I think it’s always a best practice to try to achieve a critical mass for underrepresented or minority populations…I do think that gender imbalance is a big deal and something that should be addressed…”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Recruiter 5** | “I think it is a problem. I think that it would benefit the community to be a little more in balance. I don’t think it’s causing any serious problems, but I think it’s
affecting the classroom experience, and the in-port experiences, to not have a more balanced community...we’ve had some people—them or their parents—come to us after they’re well within the pre-voyage process and they’re actually fairly upset at the ratio once they learn it and they feel that we have more control over that—that we’re admitting more females than males. And then we have to tell them, ‘No, that’s just in general how study abroad is and then even more so with Semester at Sea. We’re working with applications that we have and so we just receive man more female applicants than we do male applicants...Funny enough they are upset there’s not enough guys cause they start to exaggerate it in their mind and think of it more as, ‘Well, I wasn’t signing up to have myself or my daughter to be in this all or almost all girl school...And then actually some have been fairly blunt because I mean some women at universities are looking for men. And so they bring up that frustration that Semester at Sea probably is not going to be the place they find a man if there’s so many more women than men.’
### Table 15-A: What could SAS do differently to attract more male students?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Suggested Approaches</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment Operations Manager</td>
<td>“I think probably modifying our marketing to have some marketing specifically for male students. Getting recruiters who are, we only have one male recruiter right now. So even having recruiters that are more balanced in our recruiter model. Even if that means reaching out to alumni who are males, faculty, staff, and students, who can help with recruiting.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruiter 1</td>
<td>“I think the way you market things, the visuals, the pictures you put out there are what is going to catch the attention of the student…the male was more of the adventurous, like, more seeking to have that adrenaline rush…whereas the girls are more into the experience of the culture…. it was a actually a survey intended to make that point of what it is in study abroad programs and their marketing materials that catches your eyes as a male or female. So they had these pictures of water, white water rafting, biking, all these hiking things. And then there was one where it was more like the food, more of the dancing, the music. And so I think a lot of that really factors in to when the student sees the brochure or these marketing materials they’re like, oh wow, it really just creates that imagination of he possibilities that are to follow once you’re in the program. So having a good variety of both would definitely benefit how we attract more students.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruiter 5</td>
<td>“So, if we did marketing, or if we did something to engage our male student alums who have sailed to really help us get feedback of how did they learn about it…I think a lot of it would be on the marketing side and then if it was not horrible to do if we could tell all the guys how many women were there, I do think that actually would attract more male students given their reactions when they do find out, but I don’t think that would be perceived too well across the field if we did do that part…and help Semester at Sea or any study abroad program be seen in how it is an advantage to what are maybe goals that they’re not aligning with, you know, what a male student might not be aligning. ‘Here’s study abroad, here’s how it will fit into how I will get a career.’ And I think if we could do that a little bit better maybe going through career development offices that might also help attract more male students because they can see what a great investment it is.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 15-B: What could SAS do differently to attract more male students?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recruiter</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recruiter 2</td>
<td>“I know that we try very hard to find professors in those hard sciences, engineering majors, just to be able to offer those course and attract more of those students in those majors hoping that they’re going to be male students. I myself have gone to an engineering school in my region for that sole purpose because that school happened actually to have 70% male and 30% female, which I was able to get a male student to sail…So I think the in general male population is getting harder to recruit from because they’re not as many in college in the first place and then they happen to be in the majors that are harder to recruit from…And of course, we’ve tried using the selling point you know there are going to be more girls and be easier for the men to get girlfriends, but that doesn’t really address the financial or credit concerns, which are the top two reasons why a student’s not going to sail.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruiter 3</td>
<td>“I think one thing that would get us more students in general would be to have a STEM section of classes where we offer science, technology, engineering or math. But I just don’t think that it’s feasible and I don’t think we have the manpower to do so, and I don’t think it’s a bad thing…I think that’s one of the problems with a lot of businesses, is where they try to expand too much into getting too many people instead of really perfecting what they can do…I think perfecting just our basic program is more important than trying to expand into getting new and more gender diverse students.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruiter 4</td>
<td>“I think related to STEM majors or whatnot, I think it would be helpful if we offered classes in those majors and also if we could offer any internship opportunities.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix H: Student Informed Consent Form – Survey

Dear SAS Student:

Hello! My name is Jess Ryan and I am the Assistant Field Office Director/Field Lab Specialist for the Spring 2015 Voyage. I am also a graduate student at SIT Graduate Institute and I am conducting a research project to explore the possible reasons for the significant gender imbalance in study abroad. The purpose of this study is to better understand why many more American female college students study abroad with Semester at Sea than their male peers. I am curious to know if American male and female college students have different motivations and/or barriers to study abroad and if American male and female college students view study abroad as being more appropriate for one gender than another.

The benefits of participating in this study for you, the student, include gaining awareness and insight into your motivations to study abroad. Student participants could also gain a better understanding of how gender influences their interests and priorities. This increased level of awareness, insight, and understanding of their motivations, influencers, and priorities could empower students to make more conscious, purposeful decisions of how to dedicate their time and energy during the precious college years.

I invite you to participate in this project and to share your thoughts and feelings on this topic with me. If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to answer questions in survey format concerning your motivations to study abroad with Semester at Sea, the barriers you may have faced in your decision to study abroad, the relationships on and off campus that influenced your decision to study abroad or not, and your opinions on study abroad in relation to gender. The time commitment to complete the survey is approximately 15-20 minutes. You will not receive any compensation to participate in this project.

The potential risks of participating in this study are anticipated to be minimal. Surveys will be confidential and participants’ identities will be kept obscured as much as possible. My research will gather non-controversial data that addresses non-sensitive characteristics within adult populations regarding their identity and motivations. Thus, the risk is extremely minimal that any discomfort or risks (physical and/or psychological) as a result of participating in this study.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You are free to withdraw consent and to discontinue participation in this research project at any time. If you agree to participate, you still have the right to refuse to answer any question(s) that make you feel uncomfortable or uncertain. Your participation, refusal to participate, or decision to discontinue participation during the study will not result in penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

I seek to maintain the anonymity and confidentiality of all data and records associated with your participation in this research. I will keep these surveys in my cabin’s locked safe. I will keep the transcribed data on a password protected computer and external hard-drive; only I will have access to the data. The results may be used in my capstone paper and presentation.

If you have any questions about this research project and/or would like more information before, during, or after the study, please contact me via email at jessica.ryan@mail.sit.edu. If you have questions about your rights as a research subject, please contact the SIT Graduate School Institutional Review Board via email at irb@sit.edu.

Please sign and date the two copies of this letter. Please return one copy to me; the other copy is for your records.

Thank you for your consideration.

Jess Ryan
Assistant Field Office Director/Field Lab Specialist, Spring 2015 Voyage

I have read the above and I understand its contents and I agree to participate in this study. I acknowledge that I am 18 years of age or older.

________________________________________  __________________________
Signature                                Date
Appendix I: Mixed-Gender Student Survey Verbal Instructions

Current SAS Students – Spring 2015 Voyage – Script to Read to Students in Class

Dear SAS student,

My name is Jess Ryan and I am the Assistant Field Office Director/Field Lab Specialist on the current Spring 2015 Voyage. I am also a graduate student studying international education at the SIT Graduate Institute in Vermont. I am conducting a research project to explore the possible reasons for the significant gender imbalance in study abroad. The purpose of this study is to better understand why many more American female college students study abroad with Semester at Sea than their male peers. I am very interested to know your thoughts and feelings on male and female participation in study abroad in general and with SAS in particular.

I invite you to take part in this study if you are an American college student participating on the spring 2015 Semester at Sea (SAS) Voyage. As a current SAS student, your insights are invaluable and sharing them with me will greatly enhance the quality of this study. In order to narrow the scope of my research and yield more conclusive results, my study focuses on the experience of only American college students; the experience of international students studying abroad with SAS is beyond the scope of this particular study.

Your answers will be confidential. The survey is mostly open-ended questions and will take approximately 15-20 minutes. You are allowed to skip any question(s) if you feel uncomfortable or uncertain answering. You are allowed to abandon the survey at any point without consequence.

To participate in this research, please sign and date the two identical copies of the Informed Consent Form. Tear off the top copy and keep for your records. Then, complete the survey underneath. Please return the second copy of the signed Informed Consent Form and the completed survey to your professor when you are finished.

If you are a male student and would like to participate in a one-time (30 minutes) focus group with fellow male students to discuss this topic in more depth, please print your name on the sign-up list that is with your professor when you hand in your signed Informed Consent Form and survey.

Thank you for your participation. I appreciate you taking the time to complete this survey and look forward to reading your responses.

Do you have any questions?
MEMO FROM THE FIELD OFFICE

To: Cabin:
Date: B21 - 04/10/2015
Subject: Focus Group - A22 @ 17:05 in classroom 7 (Union)

Dear ____________________,

A big THANK YOU for volunteering to participate in the male focus group tomorrow, A22 (April 12th), at 17:05 in classroom 7 (Union).

You are playing a vital role in my research and your insights will help generate new knowledge in the cutting-edge field of international education. Thank you!

I look forward to seeing you tomorrow A22 (April 12th), at 17:05 in classroom 7 (Union) and hearing your thoughts on study abroad and gender. The meeting will end by 17:45.

If you have any questions or concerns then please email me or come visit me in the Field Office.

Cheers!
Jess
Appendix K: Mixed-Gender Student Survey

Mixed-Gender Student Survey - Spring 2015 Semester at Sea Voyage

1. Please indicate your gender (please circle only one):
   MALE          FEMALE          TRANS          OTHER

2. When did you first consider studying abroad?

3. What influenced your decision to study abroad? (For example, a book, a movie, a parent, a friend, a college peer, and/or a study abroad recruiter.)

4. Describe the support (or lack of support) to study abroad given by your parents, friends, professors, coaches, academic advisors? Whose support was most important to you? (Please do NOT provide specific names of individuals)

5. Did anyone discourage you from studying abroad? (Please circle only one):
   YES          NO

   If yes, who and why? (Please do NOT provide specific names of individuals)

6. How did you learn about SAS?
   a. Peer/friend
   b. SAS advertising.
      Please specify type of advertisement: ______________________________
   c. Study abroad counselor
   d. Professor
   e. Parent
   f. Other: ______________________________

7. Who gave you the most influential study abroad information? (SAS recruiters, former SAS students, campus study abroad office, parents, friends, professors, academic advisors, coaches, etc. (Please do NOT provide specific names of individuals or schools)
8. What motivated you to study abroad with SAS in particular?

9. What, if any, were the challenges and/or concerns you faced when deciding to study abroad with SAS?
   a. Finances
   b. Sports
   c. Academics
   d. Hobbies
   e. Relationships
   f. Family obligations
   g. Other: ______________________________

10. If you selected any of the challenges listed in the previous question, please briefly describe how you overcame these challenges/concerns.

11. When you decided to study abroad, were you aware that more American female college students study abroad than American male college students? (Please circle only one):
    
    YES           NO

12. Why do you think more American female students study abroad in college compared to American male students?

13. If you’re female, what is it like being the gender majority on the ship? If you’re male, what is it like being the gender minority on the ship?

14. In your opinion, what would encourage more American male students to study abroad during college?
Appendix L: Student Informed Consent Form – All-Male Focus Group

Dear SAS Student:

Hello! My name is Jess Ryan and I am the Assistant Field Office Director/Field Lab Specialist for the Spring 2015 Semester at Sea (SAS) Voyage. I am also a graduate student at SIT Graduate Institute and I am conducting a research project to explore the possible reasons for the significant gender imbalance in study abroad. The purpose of this study is to better understand why many more American female college students study abroad with Semester at Sea than their male peers. I desire to better understand American, male, college students’ thoughts on study abroad in relation to gender.

The benefits of participating in this study for you, the student, include gaining awareness and insight into your motivations to study abroad. Student participants could also gain a better understanding of how gender influences their interests and priorities. This increased level of awareness, insight, and understanding of their motivations, influencers, and priorities could empower students to make more conscious, purposeful decisions of how to dedicate their time and energy during the precious college years.

I invite you to participate in this project and to share your thoughts and feelings on this topic with me. If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to participate in an all-male focus group and share your opinions on study abroad in relation to gender. The time commitment to participate the group discussion is approximately 30-45 minutes; the conversation will be recorded so it can be transcribed later. You will not receive any compensation to participate in this project.

The potential risks of participating in this study are anticipated to be minimal. Subjects who participate in the group conversation will be identified only using a pseudonym. My research will gather non-controversial data that addresses non-sensitive characteristics within adult populations regarding their identity and motivations. Thus, the risk is extremely minimal that any discomfort or risks (physical and/or psychological) as a result of participating in this study.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You are free to withdraw consent and to discontinue participation in this research project at any time. If you agree to participate, you still have the right to refuse to answer any question(s) that make you feel uncomfortable or uncertain. Your participation, refusal to participate, or decision to discontinue participation during the study will not result in penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

I seek to maintain the anonymity and confidentiality of all data and records associated with your participation in this research. I will keep all data on a password protected computer and external hard-drive. Audio recordings will be stored on my computer and external hard-drive and transcribed. The transcriptions will be kept on the same password protected computer and hard drive. Only I will have access to the data. I will report the data using pseudonyms for SAS students and official titles only for ISE staff. The results may be used in my capstone paper and presentation.

If you have any questions about this research project and/or would like more information before, during, or after the study, you may contact me at 413-854-1116 or via email at jessica.ryan@mail.sit.edu. If you have questions about your rights as a research subject, you may contact the SIT Graduate School Institutional Review Board via email at irb@sit.edu.

Please sign and date the two copies of this letter. Please return one copy to me and keep the other copy for your records.

Thank you for your consideration.

Jess Ryan
Assistant Field Office Director/Field Lab Specialist, Spring 2015 Voyage

I have read the above and I understand its contents and I agree to participate in this study. I acknowledge that I am 18 years of age or older. I give my consent to be recorded.

___________________________  _______________________
Signature                                      Date
Appendix M: All-Male Focus Group Discussion Questions

Male Focus Group - Spring 2015 Semester at Sea Voyage

1. When you think about what it means to be a man, what’s the first thing that pops into your head?

2. How would you describe society’s definition of what it means to be a man?

3. Are there any individuals who role model for you what it means to be a man? (Please do NOT provide specific names of individuals) And, did/do any of these individuals study abroad?

4. Prior to studying abroad, what did your male family members/friends/peers say about study abroad?

5. What were you hoping to gain from your study abroad experience?

6. If you could design your ideal study abroad program, what would it look like?

7. A lot of people are talking about the lack of male participants in study abroad. What do you think about that?

8. When it comes to American college students, why do you think many fewer men study abroad compared to women?

9. What would you like the people who work in study abroad to know about the experiences of men who do study abroad?
Appendix N: ISE Recruitment Staff Informed Consent Form

Dear ISE Staff Member:
Hello! My name is Jess Ryan and I am the Assistant Field Office Director/Field Lab Specialist for the Spring 2015 Voyage. I am also a graduate student at SIT Graduate Institute and I am conducting a research project to explore the possible reasons for the significant gender imbalance in study abroad. The purpose of this study is to better understand why many more American female college students study abroad with Semester at Sea than their male peers. I am curious to know if male and female college students have different motivations and/or barriers to study abroad and if American male and female college students view study abroad as being more appropriate for one gender than another.

The benefit of participating in this study for you, the ISE staff member, is to move ISE/SAS closer to realizing its mission. The mission of SAS is “To educate students with the global understanding necessary to address the challenges of our interdependent world” (Semester at Sea, 2014). If ISE understands what compels and prevents male college students from studying abroad then this understanding could be used to create new strategies to attract more male college students to SAS, which could result in a more diverse student body on future voyages. Achieving a more diverse and gender-balanced student body will move SAS closer to fulfilling its mission because then the global understanding gained from participating in the program would be shared by a more diverse population.

I invite you to participate in this project and to share your thoughts and feelings on this topic with me. If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to answer questions in an interview format via Skype concerning students’ motivations to study abroad with Semester at Sea, the barriers students may face in their decision to study abroad, and your opinions on if interest and participation in study abroad is related to gender. The time commitment to complete the Skype interview is approximately 25-30 minutes. The conversation will be recorded so it can be transcribed later. You will not receive any compensation to participate in this project. The potential risks of participating in this study are anticipated to be minimal. Subjects who participate in the Skype interviews will be identified only using the official job title. My research will gather non-controversial data that addresses non-sensitive characteristics within adult populations regarding their identity and motivations. Thus, the risk is extremely minimal that any discomfort or risks (physical and/or psychological) as a result of participating in this study.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You are free to withdraw consent and to discontinue participation in this research project at any time. If you agree to participate, you still have the right to refuse to answer any question(s) that make you feel uncomfortable or uncertain. Your participation, refusal to participate, or decision to discontinue participation during the study will not result in penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

I seek to maintain the anonymity and confidentiality of all data and records associated with your participation in this research. However, any communication via the Internet poses minimal risk of a breach of confidentiality. I will keep all data on a password protected computer and external hard-drive. Audio recordings will be stored on my computer and external hard-drive and transcribed. The transcriptions will be kept on the same password protected computer and hard drive. Only I will have access to the data. I will report the data using only official titles for ISE staff. The results may be used in my capstone paper and presentation. If you have any questions about this research project and/or would like more information before, during, or after the study, you may contact me at 413-854-1116 or via email at jessica.ryan@mail.sit.edu. If you have questions about your rights as a research subject, you may email the SIT Graduate School Institutional Review Board at irb@sit.edu.

Please print, sign, and date two copies of this letter. Please scan and return one copy to me; the other copy is for your records. Thank you for your consideration.

Jess Ryan, Assistant Field Office Director/Field Lab Specialist, Spring 2015 Voyage

I have read the above and I understand its contents and I agree to participate in this study. I acknowledge that I am 18 years of age or older. I give my consent to be recorded.

___________________________  ___________________________
Signature                                                                -blind-Date
Appendix O: ISE Recruitment Staff Interview Questions

Staff Interview: Recruitment Operations Manager and Regional Recruiters
Institute for Shipboard Education

1. What are the trends in student enrollment for SAS?
2. What are the common degrees of students who do SAS?
3. What is the profile of the typical student who enrolls in SAS?
4. What is the profile of the typical student who does not enroll in SAS?
5. Why do you think students choose to study abroad with SAS? Are these motivations the same for both male and female students? Please explain.
6. Why do you think students choose not to study abroad with SAS? Are these barriers the same for both male and female students? Please explain.
7. The nation-wide trend is that almost twice as many American female college students study abroad compared to their male peers. Why do you think more American, female students study abroad in college compared American, male students?
8. The gender ratio is even more imbalanced for participation in SAS. Why do you think more American, female students study abroad with SAS than American male students?
9. Do you think the gender imbalance on SAS is a problem? Do you think the gender imbalance in study abroad in general is a problem? Please explain.
10. Do you think the lack of male role models in study abroad (peers, recruiters, study abroad office staff, etc.) plays a role in creating the gender imbalance in study abroad? Please explain.
11. What could SAS do differently to attract more male students?
12. Is there anything more you think I should know?