A Well-Rounded Experience: Connecting the Home Campus to the Study Abroad Experience and The Study Abroad Experience to the Home Campus

Mary Aurora Grandinetti

SIT Graduate Institute

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A WELL-ROUNDED EXPERIENCE
CONNECTING THE HOME CAMPUS TO THE STUDY ABROAD EXPERIENCE AND
THE STUDY ABROAD EXPERIENCE TO THE HOME CAMPUS

Mary Aurora Grandinetti

PIM 75

A capstone paper submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master of Arts in
International Education at SIT Graduate Institute in Brattleboro, Vermont, USA.

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Advisor: Peter Simpson
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Student Name: Mary Aurora Grandinetti

Date: 19 April 2017
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Table of Contents

Abstract ........................................................................................................................................... 1
Introduction ................................................................................................................................. 2
Literature Review .......................................................................................................................... 3
  Rationale .................................................................................................................................... 3
  Purpose and Value of Study Abroad ......................................................................................... 4
  Predeparture and Reentry Programming ................................................................................. 6
  Student Identity ....................................................................................................................... 8
  Theoretical Foundation ........................................................................................................... 9
  Current Practices in the Field ................................................................................................ 10
Needs Assessment .......................................................................................................................... 11
  Research Methodology ........................................................................................................... 14
  Research Results ................................................................................................................... 16
    Predeparture research ........................................................................................................ 17
    Goal setting and challenges research ................................................................................ 20
    Identity predeparture and reentry research ..................................................................... 21
    Reentry services research ............................................................................................... 23
    Research for program structural needs .......................................................................... 24
    Research from staff and faculty interviews ................................................................... 25
Program Design ............................................................................................................................. 28
  Program Description ............................................................................................................. 28
  Program Goals and Objectives .............................................................................................. 30
    Program goals .................................................................................................................... 30
    Student goals ..................................................................................................................... 31
  Curriculum ............................................................................................................................. 32
    Predeparture curriculum .................................................................................................... 33
    Distance learning ............................................................................................................... 35
    Reentry curriculum .......................................................................................................... 36
  Staffing Plan ............................................................................................................................ 38
  Program Marketing, Student Recruitment and Admissions .................................................. 39
  Logistics .................................................................................................................................. 40
  Health and Safety Plan .......................................................................................................... 42
  Crisis Management Plan ........................................................................................................ 43
  Budget .................................................................................................................................... 44
  Budget Notes ........................................................................................................................... 45
  Evaluation Plan ....................................................................................................................... 46
Limitations and Implications for Future Research ...................................................................... 48
Conclusion ................................................................................................................................... 49
Bibliography ............................................................................................................................... 51
Appendix ....................................................................................................................................... 54
List of Figures and Tables

Figure 1: Experiential Learning Theory ................................................................. 10
Table 1: Numerical Breakdown of Sample ................................................................ 15
Figure 2: Student Feedback on Need for Programming ............................................... 17
Figure 3: Personal Predeparture Activities ................................................................ 17
Figure 4: Preparation Provided by Educational Partners ............................................. 19
Figure 5: Challenges Students Reported When They Returned to Denison ............... 21
Figure 6: Visual representation of identity responses by number .................................. 22
Figure 7: Reentry Assistance Provided by Denison ....................................................... 24
Figure 8: Program Timeline ....................................................................................... 29
Figure 9: Experiential Learning Theory Applied to Curriculum ................................... 37
Figure 10: Program Budget ......................................................................................... 44
Figure 9: Evaluation Plan ......................................................................................... 47
Abstract

Many small liberal arts colleges across the United States partner with third-party providers or foreign institutions to provide their students with an opportunity to study abroad. Denison University, a small liberal arts school in Ohio, traditionally sends 50% of its student body to study abroad before they graduate. Since students have the option to spend a semester or two participating in study abroad, it is important for the students to be well prepared, for the experience to be integrated into their overall Denison education and for the students to transition back to campus successfully. To determine how students were preparing for study abroad and transitioning back onto their home campus, literature was reviewed and then interviews were conducted with 30 study abroad returnee students at Denison University as well three faculty and staff. The research demonstrated a need to design a program that connects the study abroad experience to the home campus mission, and revealed suggestions for what components should be included in the program as well as recommendations for the overall design of the program. The paper does not provide a complete and ready-to-use program design, but instead the paper demonstrates—through research—the need for a predeparture and reentry program and provides a basic example of what a program would look like that could be further developed and built upon. Using experiential learning theory as a guiding principle, the program will aim to enable students to deepen their learning before, during, and after study abroad with a focus on identity awareness and global citizenship. The program’s goal is to help connect students’ study abroad experiences to the Denison mission, to the Denison academics, and to the potential careers of the students.
A WELL ROUNDED-EXPERIENCE

Introduction
Denison University is a liberal arts school located in central Ohio, 35 miles outside of Columbus. The university has an enrollment of 2,150 undergraduate students and a student faculty ratio of nine to one. Students can earn a Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science, or a Bachelor of Fine Arts in any of the 50 courses of study or 11 pre-professional programs (DU, 2017c). The school’s mission focusses on creating an experiential living and learning environment which “engages students in the liberal arts, which fosters self-determination and demonstrates the transformative power of education” (DU, 2017a). The university states on its website, “Denison’s liberal arts tradition and residential community create a college of endless personal possibilities” (DU, 2017a). Denison has an almost entirely residential student body because living on campus all four years is a graduation requirement with few exceptions. One of those exceptions is off-campus study for a semester or up to an academic year.

For the past year, I have been working in the Denison University Off-Campus Study Office as a Study Abroad Advisor. Through working in the Denison University Off-Campus Study Office, I noticed a void in connecting the off-campus study experience to the overall Denison experience. Denison believes that off-campus study helps students to uphold the Denison mission to “become autonomous thinkers, discerning moral agents, and active citizens of a democratic society,” but there is little structured programming or reflection that can help students see the connection of off-campus study to the mission statement (see Appendix). Since students have the option to spend a semester or two participating in off-campus study, it is important for them to understand how it is integrated into their overall Denison experience, especially since it could make up one eighth to a quarter of their overall time at Denison.

My interest in connecting off-campus study to the overall Denison experience developed when I was asked to help create a one-credit reentry course for students. The students found this
exercise very valuable, but it was clear that the course could have been much more beneficial if the reflection, activities, and concepts could be discussed both prior to and after going abroad. Students in the course expressed many regrets about not setting goals, not preparing adequately for their experience and not making the most of their time during their off-campus experience. Some students also expressed that they felt that their time off-campus was separate from their overall Denison experience—once the experience was over, there was not much left to learn from it.

In response to the dearth of preparation, reentry support, and continued learning from off-campus experiences, I have designed a program that focusses on preparation and reentry for off-campus study. This program is designed so students will attend before they go abroad, complete some distance activities during the program, and attend the conclusion of the program upon their return to campus. This program will enable students to deepen their learning before, during, and after off-campus study. The goal will be to help connect students’ off-campus study experience to the Denison mission, to the Denison academics, and to the potential careers of the students.

**Literature Review**

**Rationale**

To situate this project within the current literature, I have explored research and literature on study abroad in general, the need for predeparture programming and reentry programming, and current best practices in terms of offering predeparture and reentry programming at US institutions. Twombly, Salisbury, Tumanut and Klute define study abroad as “a major component of international exchange that serves as a vehicle for internationalizing a campus and meeting educational needs in a globalized world” (2012, p.12). They go on to explain that they consider study abroad to be any credit-bearing activities by US students studying in another
country (Twombly et al., 2012). According to the most recent Institute of International Education (IIE) Open Doors Report, 313,415 students from the United States studied abroad during the 2014-2015 academic year earning academic credit and 37% of those students studied abroad for an entire quarter or more (Institute of International Education, 2016a).

In recent years, IIE has started to track both credit-bearing study abroad and non-credit bearing study abroad in their annual Open Doors Report as they are seeing universities offer more and more non-credit bearing activities abroad and hope to track the impact of non-credit education abroad (NCEA) (IIE, 2016b). The project developed here will focus specifically on credit-bearing study abroad but it is important to note that NCEA is a trend in the field and as Denison University expands its international non-credit bearing programming, a similar program design might be useful for students participating in Denison University NCEA.

**Purpose and Value of Study Abroad**

While a significant number of students are studying abroad, it is important to note the rationale for study abroad. Hoffa and Depaul (2010) argue that there are four key rationales for universities to offer study abroad to their students: “the curricular argument, the cross-cultural argument, the career enhancement argument, and the development argument” (p.8). Through study abroad, students can deepen certain areas of curriculum that are not offered on the home campus, are able to experience another culture, gain skills necessary for the workplace, and are challenged on a personal level. Study abroad pushes students to expand their social and intellectual capacities.

Twombly et al. (2012) argue that the purpose of study abroad must be seen at the national level as “promoting world peace and understanding; economic competitiveness; and…national security” (p.13). They go on to say that at university-level, study abroad is used as “a major
A WELL ROUNDED-EXPERIENCE

vehicle for internationalization of campus and curriculum, as a means of attracting students and providing them with engaging educational activities” and as a source of income for the universities (Twombly et al., 2012, p.13). Universities must be aware of what their motivations for a study abroad program are and what goals they hope to accomplish through that program. Denison University sees the many benefits for study abroad mentioned above, but also asks every student to align their study abroad experience with the Denison Mission Statement prior to the student being approved to study abroad. As a part of the Denison off-campus study approval process each student must write an essay that addresses how the Denison Mission Statement will connect to their off-campus study experience. The university wants to ensure that each student will be able to directly connect their study abroad experience to their Denison liberal arts education (Spence).

Many universities promote the value of study abroad, and the universities’ admissions offices use study abroad programming to recruit students to attend their universities. At the same time, study abroad can be criticized for having unclear goals and a lack of benefits. Passarelli and Kolb (2012) note that study abroad without a comprehensive approach to learning “can become little more than a glorified vacation…[students] engage in the experience at a surface level, maintaining distance from the physical, social, or intellectual tensions of the learning endeavor” (p. 137). Without a comprehensive approach, students return home without accomplishing the four rationales that Hoffa and DePaul (2010) argue are the reasons for study abroad (p. 8).

In The Handbook of Practice and Research in Study Abroad: Higher Education and the Quest for Global Citizenship, Hovey and Weinberg (2009) further reinforce the idea that study abroad can be extremely beneficial if implemented in a thoughtful, ethical, and comprehensive way, but they state that some current study abroad programs do not have a high standard of
practice and therefore do not benefit the student or the community (p. 34). The two go on to explain that “it all depends on the models we use, the goals we make explicit, and the learning outcomes that are achieved” (Hovey & Weinberg, 2009, p.34). If study abroad is not implemented ethically, thoughtfully, and with a comprehensive approach, the value of study abroad can be questioned.

**Predeparture and Reentry Programming**

One aspect of study abroad implementation is predeparture and reentry programming. An exploration of current literature shows that there is more of a focus on predeparture programming than reentry programming. Bathurst and La Brack (2012) note, “although many study abroad programs offer some sort of orientation, few offer any significant opportunities to understand the reentry process” (p. 270). Depending on the type of program, universities or third-party providers tend to offer or require some sort of predeparture or orientation program.

In an issue of *New Directions for Student Services*, Ann Highum (2014) specifically wrote about the need for predeparture programming saying “one area of increasing importance is that of predeparture orientation and cultural awareness, so that students can travel with knowledge…and can most effectively learn from the learning experiences” (p. 51). She goes on to detail fourteen topics that she believes are necessary to cover during a predeparture orientation. These topics range from safety issues and logistics to curricular goals and personal intentions (Highum, 2014, pp. 51-55). While Highum focusses mainly on the predeparture phase, she specifically notes that the importance of reflection should be stressed prior to the study abroad experience and upon the student’s return to the home campus (Highum, 2014, p. 54).

There are many resources that have been developed to help prepare students for study abroad or to enhance their overall study abroad experience. Among them are Stephen Duke’s
A WELL ROUNDED-EXPERIENCE

(2010) *Preparing to Study Abroad: Learning to Cross Cultures*, Lantis and DuPlaga’s (2010) *The Global Classroom: An Essential Guide to Study Abroad*, and numerous pamphlets and guidelines published by NAFSA: Association of International Educators such as *Exploring Education Abroad: A Guide for Racial and Ethnic Minority Participants* (2016). These resources are geared towards the student and cover topics from logistics, health, and safety to identity and cultural awareness. All of them encourage engaging in resources available from the home campus or the third-party providers. Many of them also note the importance of continuing learning upon return to the home campus and even recommend that students request that their university provide them with reentry programming if none is available.

In recent years, there has been increasing interest in reentry programing after study abroad. Gretchen Young (2014) details the theories of culture shock and explains about the reemergence of cultural adjustment when students return to the United States. She argues that the reentry period, which is often accompanied by personal challenges and reverse culture shock, is a part of the study abroad experience. Young (2014) explains that, “by learning new and specific communication strategies, [students] can decrease these challenges; significant personal growth can occur if students learn how to effectively reflect on their experiences” (p. 61). She advocates for supportive programming at the home institutions to help students look at reverse culture shock as an opportunity rather than a challenge.

Terkowski and Wielkiewicz (2010) detail the many challenges that students face upon their return to their home campus. They suggest that students should have university support as well as some sort of structure to discuss issues (Terkowski & Wielkiewicz, 2010, p. 663). They note that they see significant challenges with interpersonal relationships during reentry (Terkowski & Wielkiewicz 2010, p. 649). Hovey and Weinberg (2009) explain that reentry
should prepare students for “lifelong engagement” because students return home with momentum to learn and engage, but “struggle to find opportunities and outlets for channeling their newfound energies” (p. 38). Their recommendation to create a more ethical and higher quality study abroad experience is that universities should integrate learning theories of both civic engagement and study abroad into the design of the study abroad program, including predeparture and reentry. They note that this will not only benefit the student, but also the home university and the host community for study abroad (Hovey & Weinberg, 2009, p.34).

**Student Identity**

Jessup-Anger (2008) explains that “at their best, study abroad programs promote cross-cultural understanding so that students can become citizens of the world” (p. 360). Combining traditional academics and cultural immersion is not enough to accomplish this according to Jessup-Anger (2008), because “this approach fails to acknowledge that students bring their own socially constructed identities and cultural assumptions to a host county. These identities and assumptions influence and in some cases, may distort the ways in which students will approach, endure, and reflect on their experiences” (p. 360). Exploration of personal and social identities prior to the study abroad experience can help students mitigate cultural immersion stress, allowing them to set goals, reflect on a profounder level and experience enhanced cultural immersion as well as deepen their academic learning. Ensuring that students have an opportunity to explore their own identity prior to, during, and after study abroad can help them further their learning. “The more opportunities students have to articulate who they are, how they see the world, and what informs how they understand and make meaning of their own culture, the more easily they will be able to identify and explore cultural differences,” yet, if students are unaware of their own identity, they may not be able to embrace their learning prior to, during, or after
A WELL ROUNDED-EXPERIENCE

study abroad (Jessup-Anger, 2008, pp. 371-372). Weinberg and Hovey (2009) noted above that finding ways for students to engage when they return to campus will benefit both the student and the home institution; if students come back to campus grappling with their own identity and with no place to process this new information, they may not be able to effectively engage with other individuals on campus or with their education (p. 39).

Theoretical Foundation

The design of the predeparture and reentry course is informed by Experiential Learning Theory. Passarelli and Kolb (2012) explain that Kolb’s Experiential Learning Theory “provides a model for educational interventions in study abroad because of its holistic approach to human adaptation through the transformation of experience into knowledge” (p.138). Passarelli and Kolb argue that if Experiential Learning Theory is integrated into the study abroad experience students will have a deeper learning experience. Kolb’s model combines concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation into a learning process allowing students to have a transformative experience while at the same time grasping the meaning of that experience. Concrete experiences require the student to engage directly with an experience or activity and reflective observation prompts the student to think back to concrete experiences and reflect on the overall experience. Abstract conceptualization takes the reflection one step further helping the student build knowledge and skills. Active experimentation then gives the student the opportunity to take those skills and experiment with them—bringing them full circle back to a concrete experience. An individual’s experiential learning does not end after a lesson or an assignment: the learning continues and builds on itself.
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A predeparture and reentry program would allow for this type of learning. Students would be able to complete the cycle during predeparture, while off-campus, and then again when they return during the reentry portion of the program. Experiential learning cycles will be completed within each section of the off-campus experience as well as during the overall experience. Kolb (2015) explains that, “Ideas are not fixed and immutable elements of thought but are formed and re-formed through experience” (np). Students will have the opportunity to form ideas, experiment with those ideas, reflect on them, and apply them through using experiential learning as a model.

Current Practices in the Field

A chapter in Student Learning Abroad: What Our Students are Learning, What They’re Not, and What We Can Do About It by Laura Bathurst and Bruce La Brack (2012) focusses on the need for interconnected predeparture and reentry programming. In my exploration of the literature, I only found published reference to two schools which have an interconnected predeparture and reentry program, Wake Forest University and University of the Pacific (Bathurst & La Brack, 2012, p. 261; Young, 2014, p. 65, Sample, 2012, p. 554). This was despite many publications justifying the need of either predeparture support or reentry support. The reference to the Wake Forest University program was brief but the University of the Pacific program was detailed in Young’s article, studied in Sample’s article, and detailed in Bathurst and La Brack’s chapter.

University of the Pacific requires all students to complete a credit bearing pre-departure course and failure to pass the course results in the student not being permitted to go abroad
A WELL ROUNDED-EXPERIENCE

(Bathurst & La Brack, 2012, pp. 264-265). While not all students are required to complete the credit-bearing reentry course, students in one particular academic program are required to do so and any other student may take the reentry course as an elective (Bathurst & La Brack, 2012, pp. 266-267). The authors explain that “in the past, students were considered primarily responsible for their own intercultural learning while abroad, as well as for the integration and application of that knowledge after their return. . . [The authors’] present view is that a carefully guided, interventionist approach facilitates significant intercultural learning prior to, during, and after study abroad” (Bathurst & La Brack, 2012, p. 261). They argue that the predeparture and reentry programming is just as important as the actual study abroad experience. Their chapter details how the program runs, the rationale behind the program, and exactly how it fits with the overall goals and expectations of University of the Pacific.

In approaching my design, I have kept the University of the Pacific design in mind but been cognizant of the fact that the program needs to cater to Denison University’s specific needs in terms of predeparture and reentry programming and the overall university goals and rationale. From reviewing the literature, it is clear there is a need for both predeparture and reentry programming and that linking the two programs has value. My exploration of literature and best practices to this point has led me to find that there are many predeparture programs focused on logistics offered by third-party providers and universities that run their own programs. I have not found any publications noting small liberal arts schools that focus on connecting academics and identity to study abroad. The existing reentry programs do not seem to be connected to the predeparture programs. My design encompasses predeparture, time while abroad, and reentry in one comprehensive program for study abroad students.

Needs Assessment

Denison traditionally sends around 50% of their student body to an off-campus summer,
A WELL ROUNDED-EXPERIENCE

semester, or year-long program during their junior year. Denison students have the choice to study in over 75 countries, choosing a program from an accepted program list of over 186 programs that are run by third-party providers (DU, 2017d). Denison also has six options in which students can directly enroll at a host university without the assistance of a third-party provider. Denison defines off-campus study as any credit bearing opportunity that happens away from campus. This includes domestic summer, semester, and year-long programs, as well as programs abroad. While not a common choice for students, the off-campus study office also oversees proposals for May Term and January Term for-credit programs.

While study abroad is the more common term found in literature and the field of international education, Denison has chosen to use the term off-campus study. This is because Denison students have the option to participate in some domestic-based programs. My research focusses on study abroad and was not inclusive of Denison off-campus study programs which occur in the United States. I will utilize the term study abroad within this paper with the aim to make it clear that the research was not inclusive of students participating in off-campus study through a domestic program. When appropriate, I will use the term off-campus study—such as when I refer to the Denison off-campus study office or staff or the overall Denison off-campus study program.

Denison’s study abroad options include classroom-based learning, experiential learning, research-focused learning, and hybrid models. Additionally, depending on program choice, students may live with local students in apartment-style housing or dormitories, live with host families, live independently, live at field research stations, or live with other students from American institutions in a variety of housing options. Students are not required to take courses within their major or minor while studying off-campus, but if a student wishes to do so, the
A WELL ROUNDED-EXPERIENCE

Denison off-campus study accepted program list has several program options which offer course content related to all 50 majors (DU, 2017d).

Currently, Denison runs no predeparture programming. Denison trusts the third-party providers or hosting universities to determine what preparation students need prior to study abroad and expects them to provide that preparation to the students. The Denison Off-Campus Study Office provides an informal, optional reentry program in partnership with the Denison on-campus counseling services and the Off-Campus Study Office hosts a welcome back social event for returnees. When students return to campus, they are thrust back into the Denison academics and lifestyle and have little to no formal opportunity to share their off-campus experience, continue their learning, or apply their new skills (Davis).

The core of Denison’s mission, “to educate and inspire students to be autonomous thinkers, discerning moral agents, and engaged citizens,” is what drives Denison’s off-campus study program. Denison also has new strategic priorities which were established in 2015 with the goal to achieve them by 2020. One of the main priorities is to expand the curriculum, with a key component being to “infuse global experiences throughout the entire education” (DU 2017e). Simply sending students to study abroad and trusting the third-party providers or home institutions with the student’s learning is no longer enough. Denison needs to help facilitate that learning before and after study abroad to infuse the global experiences into the Denison experience and ensure that students are aspiring towards the mission of becoming global citizens. Study abroad is a perfect opportunity for students to have a global experience and then to bring that knowledge and experience back to Denison and impart it into their future coursework and the overall Denison community.
A WELL ROUNDED-EXPERIENCE

It is important to note that Denison sends students to over 186 unique off-campus programs. While Denison trusts its educational partners—third-party providers, sister colleges, and direct enroll hosting universities—Denison is aware that those organizations and institutions are not responsible for helping connect study abroad to the Denison mission statement, nor are they solely responsible to ensure that students are prepared to study abroad and that following that experience students have a positive reentry process. At the same time, Denison is aware that some educational partners are doing some of this work already. Through focusing on identity, awareness, and reintegration—at Denison specifically—this program will be designed to not be redundant or in conflict with the work that some of the educational partners are already completing.

Research Methodology

To inform my design, I held a student focus group and completed interviews with Denison students who had returned from study abroad, interacting with a total of 30 students. The goal of the research was to evaluate and demonstrate the need to design a program that connects the study abroad experience to the home campus mission, as well as inform what components should be included in the program and the overall design of the program. I reached out to all students who had studied abroad during the 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 academic years via email to invite them to participate in the research. I interviewed any student that responded to the email invitation. The interviews were all one-on-one and confidential. I hosted one focus group with four students, these students agreed to keep their discussion confidential and were asked the same questions that the students who participated in the one-on-one interviews were asked. There was potential for the structure of the focus group to reveal new information which is why methodologies were selected when designing the research process. In the end, student
A WELL ROUNDED-EXPERIENCE

schedules prevented multiple focus groups from being hosted and the one successful focus group did not produce any notably different data than the individual interviews.

Through creating an open invitation to the students, I had hoped to collect a representative sample group of students. While I did not have access to exact demographics of study abroad students at Denison, I feel like my student participants were representative of the overall study abroad population as shown in the charts below. Additionally, students interviewed participated in study abroad study through 12 different educational partners, in 23 different countries, and at 29 different program sites. One student participated in a January term abroad and a semester abroad.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Time Period Abroad</th>
<th>Race or Ethnicity (Self Identified)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Fall 22</td>
<td>Minority Group 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Spring 17</td>
<td>Majority Group 22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Academic Year 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>January Term 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 1: Numerical Breakdown of Sample*

I transcribed the interviews and focus group. To analyze the results, I coded the information from the interviews/focus group to determine common themes and information. In some cases, students used the same vocabulary to answer questions and correlations were obvious. Other times, I noted feelings and emotions that were described by students and categorized them into like groups to determine themes.

Students were asked questions about predeparture preparation in terms of personal preparation, academic preparation, and logistical preparation. They were also asked how Denison helped them to prepare and how their program providers helped them to prepare. Students were asked if they set goals and what those goals looked like. They also discussed the challenges they faced while studying abroad and during the reentry process. Identity exploration was also a topic, as students were asked if they explored their identity before they studied abroad, and how their
identity impacted them during their time abroad and when they returned to Denison. Lastly, students were asked how Denison or their educational partner prepared them to return to Denison and integrate their learning from their study abroad experience into their Denison experience. The students were also asked what would be ideal in terms of scheduling the program, incentivizing the program, and marketing the program to Denison students.

To gather corresponding data, I interviewed the three Denison faculty and staff who work in the Off-Campus Study Office to gather data about Denison’s goals, the current situation at Denison, and challenges that students face prior to study abroad, while studying abroad, and upon their return. They were asked about what Denison and the Off-Campus Study Office do to prepare students to go abroad, what goals and rationales Denison has for study abroad, and how Denison supports students upon their return to campus. They were also asked what they see as the biggest challenges for students when they go abroad and when they return from abroad. The faculty and staff were asked the same program structure questions as the students as well.

**Research Results**

Looking at the student experience, a total of 27 out of 30 students stated that they thought the addition of predeparture and reentry programming would be beneficial for students and a best fit for Denison. Two students noted that they did not believe Denison students needed a predeparture program but that a reentry program would be beneficial. Only one student noted that she felt a predeparture and reentry program was unnecessary. She stated that her third-party provider provided all the information she needed and that the Denison program would have been redundant. She also explained that in talking to her peers, she was aware that other third-party providers were not as supportive as her own and said that predeparture and reentry programming
would be a good resource for students working with other third-party providers. The data suggests that most students believe a predeparture and reentry program would be useful.

**Figure 2: Student Feedback on Need for Programming**

**Predeparture research.**

When it came to personal preparation, 15 students noted that they did not know how to prepare or did nothing to prepare for study abroad. Only two students expressed that they felt prepared already and did not need to do any preparation. Nine students discussed the upcoming experience with their family, friends, or other students who had returned from the same program.

**Figure 3: Personal Predeparture Activities**

This data suggests many students felt unable to prepare personally. A predeparture program would provide a venue for those students who did not know how to prepare personally to take part in activities like discussion, reflection, and research—which were ways other
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students had prepared personally for their study abroad experience and are ways the literature in the field recommends (Highum, 2014, p. 54).

When specifically asked if Denison had helped to prepare the students for study abroad, twelve students noted that after selecting a program, Denison did nothing to prepare them or “passed [them] off to the third-party provider.” Academically, eight students mentioned Denison language study as preparation and two students completed an academic concentration process¹. Logistically, three students noted that the Off-Campus Study Office partnered with the educational partner to provide an on-campus predeparture orientation and three different students noted that the Off-Campus Study Office helped to navigate communication during difficult situations with the educational partners. Four students noted that they came in to the Off-Campus Study Office and received personalized guidance and preparation in terms of financing their experience. Four students also commented that the Off-Campus Study Office was “helpful with everything.” All four of those students explained that they took the initiative and felt comfortable coming to the Off-Campus Study Office to ask questions. The data demonstrates that after receiving advising in terms of program selection Denison has no formal process for preparing students to study abroad in terms of logistics, which was expected because logistical preparation has been largely delegated to the educational partners. Many students even commented that they did not believe Denison would be able to—or was qualified—to prepare them culturally or logistically because of the wide variety of study abroad programs.

As mentioned earlier, it is important to note that Denison’s educational partners do provide some predeparture programming and initial onsite orientations. To investigate this, students were asked in what ways their third-party provider or hosting institution prepared them

¹ The Denison University International Studies Major (INTL) requires students to propose international research prior to their study abroad which is a required component of the major
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for their experience either before they arrived or during an initial onsite orientation. All 30 students noted that their provider in some way or another addressed logistics for their experience before they arrived. This included things such as answering frequently asked questions, providing a packing list and directions for obtaining a visa among other information. Only nine students noted that they were prepared academically by their third-party provider or hosting institution, some noting advance readings and others explaining that academic expectations had been set in advance. Preparation for the local culture was mentioned by 25 students, most of whom noted that this preparation was done during their onsite orientation at the start of their study abroad program. No students acknowledged any type of preparation in terms of identity awareness from their educational partner.

![Prepartion Provided by Educational Partners](image)

Figure 4: Preparation Provided by Educational Partners

Upon review, the research confirmed that neither Denison nor the educational partners provided any sort of preparation in terms of identity awareness. Additionally, in terms of academics—apart from language study at Denison—there is very little preparation offered to the students. Logistics and culture seem to be well covered by the educational partners and are specific to each program.
Goal setting and challenges research.

Students were asked about the different challenges they faced during study abroad. One student stated that they did not have any challenges, while 29 other students expressed that they did face some challenges. The challenges that were mentioned by the most students included homesickness, being overwhelmed by the language barrier, not knowing how to succeed academically or balance a new academic structure, and not knowing how to meet locals, make new friends, or manage their homestay relationships. Challenges while participating in study abroad are not necessarily a negative component and they can be an opportunity for experiential learning if students are given the right tools to navigate them. Noting what challenges students are likely to face can inform the curriculum of the study abroad predeparture phase of the program.

To determine if students were preparing for potential challenges, they were asked about goal setting. Half of the students noted that they had set goals prior to their study abroad experience and the other half of the students explained that they had not set any goals. Goals that were set included language learning, travel, cultural immersion, meeting new people, being open-minded, and increased independence. Many of these goals correspond to the challenges that students reported facing while studying abroad—discussing these goals (or need for goals) prior to study abroad could encourage students to embrace challenges as an opportunity to deepen their learning.

As the literature implied, the reentry process can also come with challenges. Upon coming back to the United States and Denison, 23 students recalled facing challenges, while seven said they had faced no challenges. Nine students noted that it was very difficult to transition from living in a city—or a new and interesting place—back to the “Denison Bubble”
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or “small town Granville.” Eleven students explained that they had a very hard time getting back into the Denison pace of things. Several students noted that before they studied abroad they had not noticed any pressure to be “over involved and over committed,” but when they returned it seemed like something they could not keep up with. Sixteen students referred to various issues related to grappling with identity such as changes in personality, difficulty relating to friends, and a more critical perspective of their country or community.

![Figure 5: Challenges Students Reported When They Returned to Denison](image)

**Identity predeparture and reentry research.**

In reviewing the common challenges students faced when returning to the United States and Denison, grappling with identity was the most commonly reported challenge. Depending on the student, the challenge of adjusting to the Denison pace of things could very well be related to the student learning that they have new motivations and preferences due to changes in their identity. The challenge of reverse homesickness, or missing their host community from study abroad, and the challenge of reintegrating into small town life could also correlate with identity. While studying abroad, students may have developed a new identity or perspective of themselves. As students return to Denison, a community that has defined them based solely on their former identity, they may have difficulty reconciling these two perspectives of themselves. Reentry challenges seem to be dominated by aspects of identity, personality and a sense of self.
Therefore, it would be important for the reentry program to address these challenges of identity. This is further reinforced by Young’s (2014) suggestion that helping students reflect on their experiences and develop communication strategies can help them transform challenges into opportunities for learning (p. 61).

Students were asked if they considered how their identity might affect them while they were abroad before they left for their study abroad experience. Fourteen students noted that they did not think about identity before going abroad and the remaining 16 students said that they—in some way—thought about their identity in relation to study abroad prior to going. Seven students thought about how their race or ethnicity might impact them or their experience while abroad, four students—all female—thought about their gender, and three students thought about their citizenship. Some students also considered their heritage, their status as a first-generation student, their identity’s relation to the colonial legacy of their host country, their age, and their physical appearance.

![Figure 6: Visual representation of identity responses by number](image)

When asked if any of their identities affected their time abroad and if the way they identify with different aspects of their identity changed while abroad, eight students explained that they had not thought about their identity since they returned to campus. Twenty-three students noted that the study abroad experience impacted their identity. One of those 23 students noted that she had a formal opportunity to explore her identity and process how she had changed
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in a Denison course. The other 22 students said there was no formal setting to support their identity changes and exploration. This further emphasizes the need for a reentry program that creates a formal space to support identity exploration.

**Reentry services research.**

When asked how the educational partners prepared the students to return home or to Denison, twenty students noted that the educational partner provided no support or guidance. Ten students explained that their educational partner acknowledged that they might have some challenges. Only four of those students noted that they received significant reentry preparation which came from two specific educational partners.

When the students asked how Denison helped with reentry, nine students said they received no help with the reentry process from Denison. Two students noted that help was available but they did not take advantage of that help. Ten students noted that they participated in the Baggage Claim series; many reacted positively to this experience but three students noted that the experience enhanced their reverse homesickness. Baggage Claim\(^2\) is co-sponsored by Counseling Services and the Off-Campus Study Office and is an optional informal small counseling group which allows students to dialogue about and process their reentry experience. Four students commented on participating in the one-time reentry course that had been piloted in the fall of 2016 as their only assistance from Denison for reentry. That reentry course has not been offered again. One student noted that the welcome back party helped her feel more at home at Denison. Three students who had been selected to promote study abroad as Off-Campus Study Ambassadors\(^3\) explained that the opportunity to do this had allowed them to process their

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\(^2\) Baggage Claim is hosted over lunch on the first five Thursdays of the semester students return to campus

\(^3\) The Denison Off-Campus Study Office employs 12 diverse students, called Ambassadors, to help with student outreach for off-campus study to underclassmen
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experience and two other students made similar comments after they received an opportunity to present about their experience in one of their courses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reentry Assistance Provided by Denison</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Welcome Back Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal Opportunity to Talk about Experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baggage Claim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rentry Course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not utilize available help</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student was Unaware of Resources</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 7: Reentry Assistance Provided by Denison

The current reentry resources offered by Denison are well received by some students but are not reaching the majority of the study abroad returnee population. The positive feedback about the one-time reentry course and the other forms of reentry assistance validates the value of reentry programming in general and the need for expanding reentry programming at Denison.

 Research for program structural needs.

To determine what type of program structure would engage the most students at Denison, the students were asked how they would have preferred to see a predeparture and reentry program structured if it had been offered to them. With twelve student recommendations, the most popular suggestion was a retreat-style experience. The next most popular suggestion came from nine students who recommended one or two nights per week over several weeks. Condensing the reentry program into several hours on two Saturdays was suggested by six students.

Students were also asked how to encourage participation if the program was not required. Offering a credit hour for participation was the most common suggestion, coming from 28
students. The second most common suggestion, mentioned by 20 students, was offering free food to participants. Nine students explained that if they understood the benefit of the program that would be enough to convince them to participate. Looking only at the reentry portion of the program, 11 students said being allowed to move back onto campus a few days early would be an ideal incentive to encourage people to participate in a retreat style reentry program prior to the semester starting.

The students were presented with the proposal that Denison students might be asked to complete reflection activities or assignments by Denison while they were on their study abroad program. Nineteen students expressed that they either thought this was a bad idea or that it could be very challenging to complete. One even went so far as to say, “being forced to connect back to Denison while I was abroad would be harmful to my experience.” In contrast, only ten students were very supportive of Denison promoting more reflection while students were abroad. These structural comments have informed the design of the predeparture and reentry program that will follow.

**Research from staff and faculty interviews.**

The interviews with the staff align closely with the responses of the students. The faculty and staff were asked what the institutional goal was for the Off-Campus Study Office. All three faculty and staff members responded that the goal was to uphold the Denison Mission Statement to “create active citizens, discerning moral agents, and autonomous thinkers,” and that participating in study abroad brought students closer to achieving that mission. The faculty and staff were asked what they were doing to prepare students for study abroad and if they felt like their efforts were adequate. They all noted that they provide extensive advising when it comes to selecting a program and applying but once the student is accepted to a program they “pass them
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off to the educational partners.” It is important to note that the staff also acknowledged that they take an individualized approach for each student and if they are aware that a student might need additional assistance or preparation they try their best to help them or connect them to the right resources. This aligns with results from the student interviews, which revealed that most predeparture preparation is left to the educational partners. If a student takes the initiative to come in and ask for help, though, it is likely they will receive assistance from the Off-Campus Study Office.

When asked what they could be doing better to prepare students, they responded saying, “I don’t think we are doing enough, we do as much as we can with the staff we have” and “we rely on our providers to do orientations and that is inadequate because it does not inject Denison into the process.” They expressed that it would be good to create a space for reflection, goal setting, and creating a community of like-minded students to support one another during the predeparture phase of the study abroad process. Looking at reentry programming, the Denison faculty and staff explained that some sort of programming would be a best practice. They acknowledged that the current Baggage Claim series is not reaching enough students and does not cover all the topics that might be necessary for reentry programming. A staff member noted that it would be important to make sure that Denison is not duplicating the predeparture or reentry work of the educational partners and even more important that Denison does not contradict the educational partners and send mixed messages to students. Additionally, it was noted that a great deal of learning during study abroad is related to independence and it could be detrimental to the students learning if Denison becomes too involved. The school must find a balance between challenging the students and supporting the students.
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Looking at the challenges that students face while studying abroad and upon their return to Denison, the faculty and staff referred to challenges similar to those the students emphasized: not being prepared to be independent, not knowing how to succeed academically or not putting forth the effort to do so, and not knowing how to make the most of their situation abroad. The challenges that the faculty and staff said they heard the most about upon students’ return included not being able to get back into the Denison pace of things, grappling with new identities which make personal choices and relationships challenging, and reverse homesickness.

In talking to the faculty and staff specifically about identity, they acknowledged that currently there is no programming to help students with identity awareness before they go abroad. Upon the students’ return to campus they can participate in the Baggage Claim series, but they noted that very few students take advantage of this option. They stated that “we only bring identity up if it is brought up by the student, but it is a great educational opportunity, it is better to happen before [they go abroad] because it can be a conversation versus a problem.” They all acknowledged that identity exploration prior to study abroad and upon their return would be useful.

The faculty and staff also answered questions about ideal program structure. They explained that it can be very difficult to encourage students to participate in programming because Denison students are very involved. Incentivizing the program was stressed by the faculty and staff and they all recommended both food and a credit hour as the most enticing incentives. They recommended that having options for scheduling the program was necessary in order to accommodate schedules of students coming from diverse groups on campus. For example, science students often have labs in the afternoons, so they cannot participate in a course offered in the afternoon and athletes may have away games on weekends, so they would not be
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able to participate in a program offered over the weekend. Overall, the faculty and student data aligned with one another. A need for the predeparture and reentry program was demonstrated and suggestions for structure and design were collected from the participants in the research.

Program Design

Program Description

This program will be offered in two parts, with a distance component falling between the two parts, and participants will earn a credit hour. The first part will be a ten-hour course that will prepare students to make the most of their upcoming study abroad programs. To accommodate the variety of student schedules at Denison, two sections of the course will be offered. One will meet two hours a night, once a week, for five weeks starting at the midpoint of the semester prior to when the student studies abroad. The other section will meet on two consecutive Saturdays for five hours within the last two months of the semester prior to study abroad.

The distance component of the program will occur while the students are completing their study abroad program. They will have a list of reflective activities from which they will choose two to complete. Each activity will have clear and detailed instructions for completion and submission. Some activities will be required to be submitted while students are studying abroad via different technologies, while others could be submitted upon the student’s return to campus. Each student’s situation will be evaluated separately by the faculty and staff teaching the program and deadlines and expectations will be amended if the student’s study abroad program will not be able to accommodate this portion of the program. For example, students participating in study abroad programs on which they will have no access to internet or phone for much of their time abroad will not be required to complete any activities that would need the internet or a phone.
The third component of this program will take place when the student returns to campus. Two sections will be offered—the first being a pre-semester retreat. If student move-in day is on a Sunday, students participating in the program will move in on the Thursday prior and the on-campus retreat will take place all day Friday and all day Saturday. The second section will meet one night a week for two hours for the first five weeks of the semester that students return from study abroad. Care will be taken to ensure that scheduling considers the timing of mid-terms, campus holidays, and important annual events for both the predeparture and reentry process.

Potential participants include any student who will be studying abroad the following summer or semester; May term and January term study abroad students will also be considered if space allows. The program will be highly encouraged for any student participating in semester-long study abroad who has earned a grade point average below 2.5, any student attending a program at a Denison sister college or a university where they direct enroll or any student who will be studying abroad for two consecutive semesters.

Students with lower GPAs will be encouraged to participate in the program for two reasons. The first being that the students can use the course as an opportunity to illustrate to the educational partners that they are invested in preparing for the study abroad experience. That extra investment might help them to be considered a stronger applicant by the educational partners. The second reason is that many students at Denison have a low GPA due to challenges
to adjusting to college and campus life their first semester. Encouraging them to participate in this program and better prepare themselves for both study abroad and returning to campus could help mitigate additional adjustment issues.

Students attending a program at a Denison sister college or at a university where they direct enroll may find that they do not have as much support from their educational partner as students who study abroad through a more traditional third-party provider. They could benefit greatly from participation in the program. Students studying abroad for an academic year may find culture shock and the reentry process especially challenging due to having a much longer time to immerse themselves and be away from Denison.

Program Goals and Objectives

Goals will be used to guide the program as well as the students as they are participating in the program. Each goal has a set of objectives that provide details of different tasks or steps that can be taken to reach the goal. Below are the goals and objectives for both the overall program as well as for the student participants.

Program goals.

Goal 1: Further internationalize the Denison campus through intertwining the study abroad experience with the on-campus experience

Objective 1A: Prior to study abroad, students’ participation in the predeparture course will enable them to feel confident in discussing questions, concerns, expectations, and learnings in regards to study abroad with their academic advisor, in their courses and with their peers

Objective 1B: The campus community will have more exposure to and awareness of students’ study abroad experiences and learning upon their return to campus through
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providing students with venues and tools to further integrate their study abroad experience into their on-campus life

**Goal 2:** Uphold the Denison mission statement and global strategic priorities

*Objective 2A:* Students will utilize study abroad to be “autonomous thinkers, discerning moral agents and active citizens” and be role models to their peers

*Objective 2B:* Students will deepen their understanding of their own personality and identities allowing them to be strong contributors to course discussions and campus communities

**Goal 3:** The study abroad experience will be enhanced while it is occurring

*Objective 3A:* Students will learn about identity and personality which will allow them to self-reflect and then push themselves to learn at a deeper level while abroad

*Objective 3B:* Denison’s risk management will improve because students will be better prepared

**Student goals.**

**Goal 1:** To deepen the learning connected to study abroad

*Objective 1A:* Students will be able to use skills taught during the predeparture course while studying abroad, which will help take their learning a step further

*Objective 1B:* Students’ participation in the reentry course will enable them to continue their global learning at Denison until they graduate

**Goal 2:** To increase the ability to communicate the value of study abroad

*Objective 2A:* Prior to going abroad, students will be able to articulate why they want to study abroad, what they hope to accomplish, and the steps they plan to take to do so
Objective 2B: After reentry, students will be able to convey the value of study abroad in terms of academics, personal growth, community engagement and professional skills

Goal 3: To understand how study abroad can be connected to the personal Denison experience

Objective 3A: Denison students will integrate the study abroad experience into the overall Denison experience through general course participation, extra-curricular activities, peer-to-peer relationships and leadership opportunities

Goal 4: To become a globally engaged citizen

Objective 4A: Students will develop a greater awareness of their own citizenship in their home country as well as how their actions and intentions can have a global impact before study abroad and while studying abroad, and further this awareness upon their return

Goal 5: To understand identities and personality and how they can impact individuals when entering and exiting communities and cultures

Objective 5A: Students will be able to articulate their own identities and personality before and after study abroad

Objective 5B: Students will be able to discuss the impact of identities and personality and the importance of identities and personality when crossing borders and entering new communities

Objective 5C: Students will reflect upon how the study abroad experience and the overall Denison experience has impacted their identities and personality

Curriculum

Keeping the program goals and objective in mind, the curriculum will focus on identity awareness and global citizenship. Several topics will be covered within each section of the course, but the underlying themes will be identity and global citizenship—identity awareness ensures that the students have an opportunity to fully embrace their learning and a focus on
global citizenship will help to connect the learning to the Denison mission statement and the overall Denison experience (Jessup-Anger, 2008, p.360; Hovey & Weinberg, 2009, p.34).

The predeparture portion of the program will consist of five units that will cover the following topics: identity, personality, culture, relationship management, country research, academics, health and safety, civic and community responsibility, reflection techniques and goal setting. The distance learning off-campus portion of the program will be structured as self-guided reflection with a focus on identity and global citizenship. The reentry portion will have some topics that will overlap with those covered in the predeparture phase. These topics will be presented in a different manner and students will likely approach them with a new perspective. Relating back to topics that were visited in predeparture will enhance the opportunity to use the Experiential Learning Cycle as a method of learning allowing the students to complete the cycle again. The reentry topics include identity, personality, culture, relationship management, integrating one’s experience into Denison and the professional world, reverse culture shock, reflection, civic and community responsibility, and goal setting.

**Predeparture curriculum.**

*Unit 1: Identity and Personality*

The identity and personality unit will start off by utilizing the Big Five Personality Inventory⁴. Students will explore their own personality and discuss in pairs and the large group. They will transition into how personality and identities are intertwined and they will do a hands-on identity mapping activity which will help them to process getting to know their own identities

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⁴ The Big Five Personality model looks at personality based on five characteristics: Extraversion/Surgency, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism/Emotional Stability, and Openness/Intellect – completing the inventory will aide students in self-reflection and personal self-awareness (Halverson, C. & Tirmizi, 2008, pp. 57-60)
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and becoming more aware of the impact of those identities. Previous study abroad students will present to the group about how identity and personality impacted their study abroad experience.

Unit 2: Culture’s Influence

Students will explore Hofstede’s Cultural Dimensions to learn more about how culture can influence human behaviors, interpersonal interactions, and personality (Halverson, C. & Tirmizi, 2008, pp. 26-29). They will complete cultural role plays to practice and experience what communicating across cultures might feel like and how that could challenge their identity and definition of global citizenship. Students will research cultural tendencies and behaviors of the country or community they are entering and share with the group.

Unit 3: Civic and Community Responsibility

Students will complete a small service project for the local community during the program. During this project the role of a citizen will be discussed as well as how that might be defined differently in various countries and when looking at citizenship within a global context. Students will reflect as a group and individually about this experience, how they can engage as a community member in their future host community, and how this engagement could enhance their study abroad experience.

Unit 4: Academics and Health and Safety

Students will discuss and evaluate what makes them a successful student at Denison and what challenges them. In a small group, they will complete case studies that address different academic structures that might be encountered throughout the world. They will discuss what they would need to do to succeed academically if they were in the environment depicted in their case study. Each group will share with the larger group. Students will complete a health and safety self-inventory form. This form will not provide them with health and safety answers or
instructions, but instead it will ask them about the things that they should be working on with their educational partner—and independently—to ensure they are prepared for health and safety.

Unit 5: Goal Setting and Relationship Management

Denison Counseling Services will present about how to manage healthy relationships with people from home and people from Denison. They will also discuss challenges students sometimes face when trying to balance academics, adjusting to a new environment, and making new friends. Information on SMART\(^5\) goal setting will be shared with students and students will be asked to work with a partner to set three SMART goals for themselves (Hornyak & Lawlor, 2012, p. 259). They will be asked to integrate identity and global citizenship into their SMART goals. Students will write a letter to themselves about what they would like to accomplish during their time abroad, what they are excited about, and what they are nervous about. The distance learning component of the program will be explained to the students.

Distance learning.

Students will be given a travel journal that contains a variety of reflective prompts and activities. They will also receive a digital version of the reflective prompts and activities. The students will be expected to complete one on-going reflective activity or three one-time reflective activities. Examples of on-going activities include journaling, blogging, creating a photo montage, creating a 1-second a day video, or other reflective activities that continue throughout the time abroad. Examples of one-time reflective activities include attending a cultural event and writing a reflective piece about the event or going to a public place and observing differences in culture and creating a piece of artwork that represents those differences.

\(^{5}\) SMART stands for: specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely (Hornyak & Lawlor, 2012, p. 259)
Reentry curriculum.

Unit 1: Welcome Back and Reflection

Students will have an opportunity to share about their study abroad experiences. They will present some aspect of the reflective activities they completed while abroad to the group. Reverse culture shock will be discussed and students will complete a personal mapping activity where they map out their personal highs and lows prior to study abroad, while abroad, and as they are starting their reentry process. The letters that students wrote to themselves during the predeparture phase will be returned to the students to review and reflect upon.

Unit 2: Revisiting Identity and Personality

Students will take the Big Five Personality Inventory again and see if their experience impacted their personality in any way. They will also revisit their previous identity mapping activity and see if they want to add or omit anything from their previous map.

Unit 3: Integrating Learning at Denison

Previous study abroad returnee students will present to the group about different ways that study abroad students can continue their learning or share their learning when they return to Denison. Students will meet in small groups and design a “toolkit for success” detailing ways in which they can integrate their learning into the Denison academic experience.

Unit 4: Marketing Your Study Abroad Experience

Denison’s Knowlton Center for Career Exploration staff will present to the students about how to market their study abroad experience. Students will complete a resume workshop in which they add their study abroad experience to their resume. Mock interview sessions will be held and students will practice talking about the benefits of their experience and what knowledge and skills they gained.
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Unit 5: Global Citizenship at Denison

Students will discuss the ways they were global citizens while abroad and share stories about the successes and challenges of engaging in their host communities. They will then work individually to set three SMART goals to continue or improve their role as a global citizen on Denison’s campus. As a group, they will be challenged to create a student led project that they can continue after the class with the goal to bring a greater global perspective to the Denison community.

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**Figure 9: Experiential Learning Theory Applied to Curriculum**
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Staffing Plan

The Denison Off-Campus Study Office is currently staffed by a Director, which is also a faculty position, a Program Coordinator, and a Study Abroad Advisor. The responsibility of marketing, recruiting, running, and evaluating this program will fall mainly to the Study Abroad Advisor. General off-campus study marketing, recruitment, and evaluation are a part of the current job responsibilities of the Study Abroad Advisor and inclusion of this program will not be too much of a burden in these areas. Since students who participate in the program will earn a credit-hour, the Off-Campus Study Director will be the faculty member who teaches the course. The Director will teach in conjunction with the Study Abroad Advisor.

Recognizing that initially building the curriculum, and evaluating and improving the program may require additional time and effort, Denison has applied for, and been awarded, a grant which funds two Denison faculty members to be identified and provides each of them with a stipend to work in conjunction with the Off-Campus Study Office to assist with the program. This grant has been funded for the 2017-2018 school year. This program will require three percent of the Off-Campus Study Director’s annual time and five percent of the Study Abroad Advisor’s annual time.

The initial goal will be to enroll about 40 students out of the anticipated 150 that go abroad each semester. This would mean that each section of the predeparture and reentry program would have about 20 students each. If the program evaluation demonstrates success and value and there is enough student interest, the Off-Campus Study Office will seek out additional funding to expand the program to be able to accommodate more students.
Program Marketing, Student Recruitment and Admissions

Marketing and student recruitment for the program will begin early. A bookmark that contains general information about the program on one side and the steps to apply for off-campus study on the other side will be a material that will be a part of all off-campus study tabling events. This will include admissions open houses, June Orientations⁶, August Orientation⁷, off-campus study recruiting events, and Global Education Week⁸. The program will be highlighted on the Denison off-campus study website and within the NoteBowl Course⁹ that students interested in study abroad join. The Denison Off-Campus Study Ambassadors will mention the program, and the program’s benefits, when they meet with First-Year Advising Circles¹⁰. When students attend Study Abroad 101¹¹, the off-campus study student workers will ensure to mention the program and explain value of the program. Additionally, when students complete their individual advising meeting with the Off-Campus Study Office, the advisors will include an explanation of the ways the course would be beneficial to each student.

When students are approved by the Denison Off-Campus Study Office to apply for the study abroad program they had proposed, they will receive a flyer inviting them to participate in the program with specific dates and times. Two months before the program begins all students approved for study abroad in the following semester will receive an email invitation to participate with follow up emails if necessary.

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⁶June Orientations are optional two-day orientations held in June for incoming first-year students to orient them to the campus, assist them with course registration and orient them to the University’s expectations.
⁷August Orientation is a required orientation held for all first-year students prior to the start of their first semester.
⁸An annual celebration hosted by the Off-Campus Study Office celebrating global education and connecting students to off-campus study opportunities.
⁹NoteBowl is a learning management system that can be used as a platform by universities to convey information to students.
¹⁰First-Year Advising Circles are “a structured, weekly opportunity for a small group of first-year students to come together to talk about their experiences…and to think productively about how to plan for four years of a meaningful, educational experience” (DU, 2017b).
¹¹Study Abroad 101 is a 45-minute session that introduces first-years and sophomores to off-campus study, it is the first step in the Denison off-campus study approval process.
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This program will be marketed towards any student that is participating in study abroad the following summer or semester. If Denison does not have the capacity to serve all interested students, admission will be first come first serve. Any student who expresses interest after the program has reached capacity will be placed on a waitlist. Students who are studying abroad will be automatically eligible once they complete their Denison off-campus study proposal, so there will be no formal application for this program.

Given that with the current staffing and funding there will be a limitation to the number of students that this program can accommodate, the Off-Campus Study Office faculty and staff will work closely together to monitor marketing and recruiting. They will scale the marketing and recruiting efforts up or down based on the number of interested participants. The waitlist will be maintained and if a student drops out of the program, their spot will be filled by the first student on the waitlist. Tracking the student interest which was unmet can be utilized by the Off-Campus Study Office as evidence to demonstrate the need for expansion of the program.

Logistics

In terms of logistics, the dates for the sessions must be set at the time of course registration for the semester during which the predeparture portion of the program will occur. This means that the dates will be set five to six months in advance for the predeparture portion and ten to eleven months in advance for the reentry portion of the program. This will allow for students to consider the timing of the program when they make course selections and commitments to extracurricular activities. It will also allow the Off-Campus Study Office adequate time to plan for the following logistical needs.

The Study Abroad Advisor will be responsible for reserving rooms for all program sessions through Denison’s room reservation system. Any special furniture needs will need to be
arranged with the Denison Physical Plant. Room selections will be reserved at least six months in advance to ensure that the space is appropriate for the program. Rooms will also be reserved beginning 30 minutes prior to the start of each session to allow time for set-up. The Study Abroad Advisor will take into consideration that the curriculum is highly interactive and hands on so there will need to be adequate space for large group discussion, small group discussion, and group activities. For Saturday sessions, the Study Abroad Advisor will schedule a 30-minute coffee/breakfast time prior to the start of the program to allow for informal conversation and settling in so the students are prepared to start the day.

The catering company will arrange for any logistical needs in terms of food that will be offered as part of the program. If the Off-Campus Study Office decides to bring food from an outside vendor, the Study Abroad Advisor will ensure that there is a clean space available for the students to eat and there are extra tables. For any sessions that involve food, the Off-Campus Study Office will ensure to bring cleaning supplies, cutlery, and plates in case they are needed.

The Off-Campus Study Office will coordinate with the housing office to arrange for program participants to move into their rooms early prior to the retreat portion of the program. They will be allowed to move in 24 hours prior to the start of the program. The Off-Campus Study Office recognizes that bringing students on campus prior to the official opening of the campus is a great way to help students ease back into the Denison environment and culture but could also encourage party focused behavior. When students pick up their keys from housing, an Off-Campus Study staff member will be present to remind the students of campus policies and procedures and the fact that moving in early is a privilege and that students should not take unfair advantage by hosting unruly parties.
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Health and Safety Plan

As an academic program hosted on the Denison University campus, the program will utilize the health and safety campus resources. All campus policies and procedures will be followed by the program administrators and the students. Students will have access to their primary health care provider on campus, Denison Health Services, if a need arises.

Prior to participation in the program students will be asked if they have any allergies or health concerns for which they would like to request accommodations. If this is the case, the Denison Off-Campus Study Office will work closely with the Denison Academic Enrichment Center, the Denison Counseling Center, and the catering company to ensure that all student needs are met. For the portion of the program which is an on-campus retreat prior to campus officially opening for the semester, some health and safety resources may not be fully available. The Off-Campus Study Office will work closely with Residential Life and Campus Safety to ensure that all necessary safety precautions are taken and that students, faculty, and staff understand the limited resources and are aware of the appropriate procedures in the case of any emergency while campus is not fully in operation. In the case of a medical emergency, emergency medical services will be contacted and if appropriate, students will be transported to Licking Memorial Hospital by the Granville Emergency Squad.

If a student misses a portion of the program due to a health concern, the Study Abroad Advisor will request that the student obtain appropriate documentation from Denison Health Services to excuse the student. The Study Abroad Advisor will then work with the student to set up an appropriate timeline to work with the Off-Campus Study Office to make up the missed content.
Due to the personal content of the curriculum, including identity exploration, students will be reminded of the resources available from the Denison Counseling Center. Additionally, upon their return to campus they will be encouraged to participate in the Baggage Claim Series.

While students are studying abroad, but completing the distance portion of the program, they will be advised to follow the health and safety procedures of their third-party provider and/or hosting institution. Since health and safety will be covered in the curriculum of the predeparture course, students should be adequately prepared to utilize the appropriate venues to access health and safety resources while studying abroad.

**Crisis Management Plan**

At the start of the on-campus portions of the program participants will be reminded of the procedures for and explanations available in the following Denison Emergency Guides: Shelter in Place, Hostile Person/Active Shooter, Lockdown, Severe Weather, Psychological Emergency, Bomb Threat, Fire, Power Outage, Medical Emergencies, Hazardous Materials, and First Aid. These procedures remain the same if the campus is officially open or not. In the case that there is a crisis while the student is studying abroad they will follow the procedures and policies of their third-party provider or hosting institution.
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Budget

**Program Budget**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predeparture Course Fixed Costs</th>
<th>Cost/Unit</th>
<th># of Units</th>
<th>Total Cost</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marketing Materials</td>
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<tr>
<td>General Course Supplies</td>
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<td>$50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thank You Notes/Gifts for Returnee Speakers</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>Thank You Notes for Other DU Offices</td>
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<tr>
<td>Room Reservations</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Saturdays Section</th>
<th>Cost/Unit</th>
<th># of Units</th>
<th># of Students</th>
<th>Total # of Units</th>
<th>Total Cost</th>
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<tr>
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<td>$10</td>
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<table>
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**Total Cost for Predeparture Phase**: $725

<table>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>100</td>
<td>$200</td>
<td>$200</td>
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**Total Cost for Reentry Phase**: $920

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<th>Staffing</th>
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<td>Study Abroad Advisor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Additional Faculty</td>
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**Total Cost for Staffing of Reentry, While Off-Campus, and Predeparture Phases**: $7,350

**Total Direct Costs**: $8,995

**Indirect Costs/Overhead**: 25%

**Total Direct and Indirect Costs**: $11,244

*Figure 10: Program Budget*
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Budget Notes

Marketing Material
Marketing Material includes printing the bookmarks, flyers, and posters that will be used in the marketing process. This line item also covers the cost of distributing these materials including postage and envelopes for any items mailed or delivered to student mailboxes and tape to hang posters. The budgeted amount is less for reentry than predeparture because reentry marketing only functions as a reminder to students who are already participating in the program.

General Course Supplies
General course supplies include office/mailing and print and copy costs that will be utilized during program preparation and planning, program implementation, and program follow up and evaluation. It also covers the cost of various educational materials such as flip charts and notebooks, construction paper, markers, and pens. Any needed disposable plates or cutlery are also included in this line item.

Journals
Journals will be ordered in bulk and provided to each student.

Participant Food
The participant breakfasts will be purchased at a local bakery. Lunches and Dinners will be catered by local Granville restaurants, such as Mai Chau, Dragon Village, or Elm’s Pizza.

Thank You Notes and Gifts
All student guest speakers will receive a gift as a token of appreciation from the Off-Campus Study Office. Other faculty and staff guest speakers will receive a thank you note as a token of appreciation from the Off-Campus Study Office. Since working with the student body is part of many offices’ missions, staff from these offices will be compensated for their time by they own
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office. For example, a Denison University Knowlton Center for Career Exploration staff member coming to teach the students about how to market their study abroad experience.

Room Reservation

The program will be offered on campus in Denison classrooms and meeting spaces. There is no charge for the use of academic spaces for academic purposes on Denison’s campus.

Staffing Expenses

Staff salary is calculated based on an annual expectation of working 2,080 hours, which is 260 days. A percentage is taken of 260 days to calculate the number of days that will be allotted to the program per employee. An estimated average salary was used for both the Study Abroad Advisor and the Off-Campus Study Director based on norms in the field. The faculty members that assist with developing and teaching the course will receive one stipend per session of a completed program.

Indirect Cost Rate

The Indirect Cost Rate is calculated based on a percentage of the total direct cost set by the institution.

Evaluation Plan

An evaluation plan will be necessary to demonstrate the impact of the program and to inform any programmatic changes that might be needed. The evaluation plan will aim to measure the success of achieving the goals of the program. The formative evaluation will consist of a survey that all study abroad students will take prior to starting their study abroad experience and if they participate in the predeparture programming prior to that programming. At the start and

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12 These are estimates as actual Denison financial information is not included in this capstone paper
conclusion of both sections of the predeparture programming students will complete a pre- and post-program evaluation form. Also, during the predeparture programming there will be a daily feedback structure. Each time the program meets, the students will have the opportunity to provide real time feedback to the instructors.

The same structure will be utilized for the reentry portion of the program. Students participating in the program will complete a pre- and post-program evaluation form and have the opportunity to provide daily real time feedback to the instructors.

The summative evaluation will consist a post study abroad survey and exit interviews. The post study abroad survey will correlate with the survey that students completed prior to study abroad and all study abroad participants will be asked to complete this survey. The survey results will collect data that will measure the success of achieving the goals of the program through comparing student responses from students who participated in the program and those who did not. Additionally, the Off-Campus Study Office will conduct exit interviews with students who participated in study abroad, some who participated in the program and some who did not. These interviews will help collect additional information that can investigate the effectiveness of the program.
Limitations and Implications for Future Research

There are limitations to this research. I did not interview any students that participated in study abroad during the summer or any students that participated in domestic off-campus study. Many students expressed difficulty in remembering what they did to prepare before going abroad due to the time that had passed since then. Ideally, the participants could have been interviewed before and after their study abroad experience, but time constraints prevented it during this research project. All students that participated in the interviews and focus group were volunteers. While many described challenges or negative experiences, it is possible that students who had certain types of experiences may not have volunteered to participate in the research.

Additionally, four of the participants worked in the Off-Campus Study Office and five were Denison Off-Campus Study Ambassadors. Since these students were connected to the Off-Campus Study Office after they returned from study abroad, their experience with reentry might not have been entirely representative of the overall student body. Four students had participated in the pilot fall reentry course offered in the Fall of 2016 which inspired this research and these students had a pre-established relationship with the researcher through participating in the reentry course and might not have felt the need to share as many details when answering questions about their study abroad reentry experience.

There are also areas for continued research and design. Initially, I had intended to interview educational partners regarding what services they provide for students in terms of predeparture and reentry. The time constraints of the project and the challenges communicating with educational partners around the world during a busy time of the academic year prevented me from being able to interview enough educational partners to consider their responses in my data. Further research on Denison’s part would be beneficial to ensure that they do not duplicate the
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work or contradict the messages of the educational partners, and to be aware of any challenges that the educational partners are seeing which the interviewed students and off-campus study faculty and staff might not be aware exist.

I had also reached out to several schools that are similar in size, academic pedagogy and institutional mission to Denison. Unfortunately, the other schools were not able to participate in my research within the timeframe available. There is a need to explore what other comparable schools are doing for predeparture and reentry programming and to compare my program design to those programs. This might help to improve upon the design through looking at other best practices and adopting aspects of their programming if they align with the Denison goals. Due to the fact that Denison considers off-campus study to be inclusive of both domestic programs and programs abroad it would be beneficial for research to be done to determine if students who participate in domestic based off-campus study would benefit from a program like this and if so how that program should be designed and developed.

This program is not fully developed and if implemented will need to be continuously evaluated and improved. My contribution was not to design a complete, ready to use program but instead to demonstrate the need for a program through research and create a basic example of what the program would look like that could be further developed and built upon.

**Conclusion**

Establishing a predeparture and reentry program with a focus on identity and global citizenship at Denison University would not only benefit the students that participate in study abroad but also the greater Denison community. The students who participate could develop a greater sense of self and come one step closer towards upholding the Denison Mission Statement to *become an autonomous thinker, a discerning moral agent, and a democratic citizen of a*
global society. Students would be able to return to campus and engage within the Denison community bringing their learning back to campus. While establishing and running a program like this would take investment from Denison University, it would create a program that would enhance their students’ experience and help the Denison off-campus study program to stand out in the region.
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Davis, Sue. Personal interview. 8 February 2017.


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BIBLIOGRAPHY CONTINUED

Appendix

Denison University Mission Statement

“Our purpose is to inspire and educate our students to become autonomous thinkers, discerning moral agents and active citizens of a democratic society. Through an emphasis on active learning, we engage students in the liberal arts, which fosters self-determination and demonstrates the transformative power of education. We envision our students’ lives as based upon rational choice, a firm belief in human dignity and compassion unlimited by cultural, racial, sexual, religious or economic barriers, and directed toward an engagement with the central issues of our time” (DU, 2017a).