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Innovation in International Feature

Coloring Up Study Abroad: Exploring Black Students' Decision to Study in China

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This qualitative case study used interviews and focus groups with 24 Black college students from a predominantly White institution in the Southwest who studied abroad in China to examine how capital and community wealth influenced their decision to participate and their study abroad experiences. Participants discussed the role of the faculty member who led the program, their family members, their peers, and the Black community.

As globalization becomes more prevalent, study abroad opportunities are becoming more prominent in postsecondary institutions. Several national organizations, such as the Lincoln Fellowships Advisory Council (2004), have discussed the importance of preparing global citizens in the job market who thoroughly understand issues related to international and cultural diversity. In order to produce these global citizens, the Council stated the need for more study abroad programs to prepare youth for the international job market.

The National Association for State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges (NASULGC Taskforce on International Education, 2004) challenged university presidents to use internationalization to inspire and broaden learning opportunities for students. Past research has found U.S. citizens are relatively unaware and uninformed about international issues and world matters (Jessup-Anger, 2008; McLellan, 2011). Many colleges and universities understand the urgency of developing and nurturing globally literate citizens to meet the demands of the increasingly interconnected world (Bollag, 2004).

Despite increased racial and ethnic diversity in postsecondary institutions (Fry, 2011; Horn, 2006), Black students are significantly less likely to participate in study abroad programs compared to their White peers (American Council on Education [ACE], 2002; Norflores, 2003; Obst, Bhandari, & Witherell, 2007). According to the *Open Doors* report from the Institution of International Education (2009), Black students accounted for only 5.3% of students studying abroad during the 2011–2012 school year, even though they made up 14.6% of overall student

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enrollment in U.S. higher education. If postsecondary institutions want Black students to be prepared for the global work force, increasing the number of students of Color studying abroad and providing pathways that encourage and allow them to do so is imperative.

Multiple studies (e.g., Carter, 1990; Cole, 1990; Jarvis & Jenkins, 2000; Jessup-Anger, 2008; McLellan, 2007; Norflores, 2003) have examined why students of Color, including Black students, do not study abroad. Few studies to date, however, have examined why Black students *do* study abroad and how they make meaning of their study abroad experiences. This qualitative case study asked two research questions: (a) What influences Black students to participate in international experiences, such as study abroad?, and (b) How do Black students process their reflections of their study abroad experiences?

Literature Review

Two bodies of literature inform this study. The first area explores the student benefits (e.g., personal, social, academic) that have been identified with studying abroad. The second area examines why students of Color remain underrepresented in study abroad, despite becoming more represented in higher education overall.

Benefits of Study Abroad

Literature discussing the benefits of study abroad has increased dramatically over the past decade. The vast majority of research examining the effects of study abroad has primarily used quantitative methodologies to explore personal, social, academic, and career development (Anderson, 2005; Black & Duhon, 2006; Savicki, 2008; Williams, 2005). The International Education of Students (IES), for example, conducted a large-scale survey targeting alumni from all IES study abroad programs from 1950 to 1999 (Dwyer & Peters, 2004; Norris & Gillespie, 2005). Using data from 3,400 respondents (a 23% response rate), the IES concluded study abroad positively affected students' career paths, world-view, and self-confidence, and continued to influence their lives for years after the experience.

Study abroad scholarship has also shown a positive effect of international experiences on academic attainment. Using the same IES data, Dwyer and Peters (2004) found that 80% of respondents reported an enhanced interest in academic study, 87% claimed that studying abroad influenced subsequent educational experiences, and 86% said that it reinforced commitment to foreign language study. Posey (2003) found students who studied abroad were more likely to graduate from college than those who did not.

Research has also shown that study abroad experiences can influence students to pursue graduate education. Gonyea's (2008) study, for instance, found that students who study abroad involved themselves more deeply in integrative and reflective learning experiences, which may demonstrate that studying abroad teaches students to think critically and become more self-aware. Norris and Gillespie (2005) found that students who studied abroad were 20% more likely than students who did not study abroad to attain a graduate degree.

Underrepresented Students in Study Abroad

Recent demographic reports have shown the U.S. racial profile has rapidly shifted over the past decade. This trend is also reflected in college student profiles across the country. According to a report released by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), undergraduate enrollment in the United States increased by 39% between 1984 and 2004 (Horn, 2006). During that

time span, minority enrollment more than doubled, increasing from 1.9 million to 4.7 million. Examining racial/ethnic groups, Hispanic enrollment increased by 15% over the past four years, which was the largest of any major racial/ethnic group. Black student enrollment increased by 8%, Asian student enrollment by 6%, and White student enrollment by 3% (Fry, 2011).

Despite the significant increases in enrollment among students of Color, minority representation in study abroad programs is still lagging (Dessoff, 2006; IIE, 2009; Salisbury, Paulsen, & Pascarella, 2011; Shih, 2009). Research has also shown that study abroad participation has increased overall, while American students studying abroad remain disproportionately White. In the 2007–2008 school year, White students comprised 64.4% of all postsecondary students but represented 81.8% of American study abroad participants during that year. Salisbury et al. (2011) determined that the gap of White participants and participants of Color is only widening. Between 1998–1999 and 2007–2008, the proportion of minority students enrolled in higher education increased by 8%, while the percentage of minority student studying abroad only increased by 3.2%.

Higher education scholars have long examined why students of Color remain underrepresented in study abroad opportunities (e.g., Carter, 1990; Cole, 1990; Jarvis & Jenkins, 2000; Norflores, 2003). Rigid program structures, lack of course requirements, length of study, lack of family and community support, fear of the unfamiliar, and anxiety about racism in a foreign country have historically been identified as the primary causes behind why students of Color hesitate to study abroad (Salisbury et al., 2011). Scholars (e.g., Jarvis & Jenkins, 2000; McLellan, 2007; Norflores, 2003) have also found students of Color are less informed about study abroad opportunities, less likely to understand the connection between study abroad benefits and career objectives, less likely to have role models who support participating in study abroad experiences, and less likely to receive support from peers and family. Creating opportunities for students of Color to study abroad remains a critical issue that needs to be resolved.

Theoretical Framework

Yosso's (2005) Community Cultural Wealth (CCW) framework was chosen to guide this study because it is grounded in an asset-based approach and examines why Black students choose to study abroad as opposed to why they do not. Yosso's framework extends traditional understandings of social capital as articulated by Bourdieu (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990), which views those without dominant forms of social capital from a deficit-based perspective (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & González, 1992; Yosso, 2005). Yosso's (2005) CCW framework identifies six types of capital validating strengths within diverse communities: social, familial, aspirational, navigational, linguistic, and resistant. Social and familial capitals refer to the knowledge and understanding learned and passed on through relationships with friends and family, respectively. Aspirational capital connotes having high expectations, focusing on goals, and remaining resilient despite barriers. Navigational capital refers to skills needed to navigate unfamiliar or exclusive environments. Linguistic capital connotes skills and tools developed through communication in more than one language. Resistant capital includes the knowledge and skills used to challenge inequality.

Methods

The methods for this study were guided by a qualitative case study approach. This section presents the setting and context, participants, and data collection and analysis.

Setting and Context

The authors conducted this qualitative case study at South Point University (pseudonym), a research-intensive, predominantly White institution (PWI) in the Southwest region of the United States. In Fall 2013, the student body comprised 48.4% White, 19.1% Hispanic, 15.4% Asian, 4.0% Black, and 9.2% international students. The university is located in one of the 20 largest and fastest growing cities in the United States and has an estimated population of 850,000. The city's economy has been described as a "technopolis," due to its focus on recent technological developments and innovative industries.

Students participated in a four-week, faculty-led study abroad program in Beijing, China. This program developed from a partnership formed between a learning community at the university and the study abroad office. The faculty leader of the program, Dr. Xavier (pseudonym), played two key roles at the university: He was a full professor in the humanities as well as a senior administrator of a major division on campus. Because of their mutual missions to increase opportunities for underrepresented students and to diversify academic experiences for these students, the learning community and study abroad office formed a partnership. The course examined how the histories of China and the United States affected current social issues in each country. Students were challenged to conduct research on social enterprises of their choice in each country and how those enterprises have affected their respective societies.

Participants

Underrepresented students were actively recruited to apply for this study abroad opportunity. The majority of the application pool, therefore, was Black and Hispanic university students. Overall, 82 students applied to be a part of this study abroad experience, and 38 students were ultimately selected. Of the 38 students who participated in the study abroad program, 24 were Black, 8 were Hispanic, 5 were White, and 1 was Asian. Given that the scope and purpose of this study was to examine Black students in particular, only the 24 Black students in this program were invited to participate in this study. All 24 students accepted the invitation.

The sample of 24 students was gender balanced, with 12 male and 12 female participants. The faculty and staff members for this program actively encouraged students to apply for scholarship monies for underrepresented and first-generation college students through the study abroad office. They also held two scholarship workshops and had writing consultants available to help students finalize strong scholarship essays. Thirteen of the twenty-four students were the first in their families to go to college, and all but two received some scholarship support. For half of the students, this study abroad experience was the first time they had ever left the United States. In an effort to protect the participants' identities, pseudonyms were assigned to all students.

Data Collection

The authors conducted this case study (Creswell, 1998; Stake, 2005) in two phases of focus groups, each lasting approximately 90 minutes. They chose to conduct focus groups so students could generate and build upon shared experiences and use other perspectives to rationalize their own worldview (Marshall & Rossman, 1995). Phase I was completed in April 2013 in the United States and focused on their pre-departure experiences (e.g., Why did you choose to study abroad? How did your families and peers influence your decision? What challenges do you expect to encounter?). Phase II was completed in China in June 2013 and explored how students used their CCW (Yosso, 2005) to make meaning of their experiences (e.g., What knowledge and skills have

you used or gained while studying abroad? How do your experiences align with your pre-departure expectations? How has study abroad influenced your academic or career path?). Each focus group was approximately 60–90 minutes in length, and semi-structured in nature (Seidman, 2006).

To access multiple vantage points, data were also collected via online journaling, where each student wrote at least four journal entries throughout the program. Students were encouraged to write freely about their experiences but were also encouraged to be mindful of how their entries might be perceived by prospective readers. Journaling provided students with the opportunity to write about their experiences right after they happened, so that they could convey their experiences with a fresh perspective.

Data Analysis

Data analysis for this study was completed using an initial analysis codebook of six categories informed by Yosso's (2005) CCW framework: (a) social capital, (b) familial capital, (c) aspirational capital, (d) navigational capital, (e) linguistic capital, and (f) resistant capital. The researchers then took a sample of the first focus group transcript, and conducted an open coding procedure without the use of a codebook in order to identify emic codes that may not have emerged via the theoretical framework. After establishing the final analysis codebook, the researchers triple-coded all transcripts using the codebook. The researchers read each transcript several times and three team members separately coded the data into specific categories and themes.

The research team used ATLAS.ti, a qualitative data analysis software package, to organize, analyze, and identify emerging themes and subthemes within the data. Trustworthiness was established in a few different ways. First, the researchers conducted member checks by asking participants to review the transcripts for accuracy and clarity. After each focus group, the researchers wrote analytic memos and engaged in peer debrief sessions to construct and deconstruct emerging themes. The analytic memos and peer debrief sessions also provided a time for any additional questions between the first and second round of focus groups to be raised (Maxwell, 2013). The researchers also debriefed with two scholars unrelated to this research study and unfamiliar with educational research, which helped the researchers create a final analysis codebook of both etic and emic codes.

Delimitations

The choice to use case study methodology led the research team to delimit the study in a number of ways. First, this study and the participants represent a single case from a particular region, institutional type, and program. The findings should not be applied to other contexts, though the authors believe the findings can challenge theoretical conceptualizations of Black students in study abroad programs. Second, although all the participants in this study were Black, they identified very differently. Some students identified as "African," others as "African-American," and one student as "Nigerian." While some students were heavily involved in the Black community at South Point University, others were removed from the Black community and had little to no desire to be a part of it. These differences should also be taken into account.

Findings

Four main themes emerged from this research study, and all of the themes were interpreted through Yosso's (2005) CCW framework. The first two themes (Following the Faculty Leader and Changing Familial Adversity to Advocacy) discuss the faculty leader and family members as important considerations in the students' decisions to study abroad. The final two themes ("I'm

Already a Minority”: Using Social and Navigational Capitals Abroad and [Un]Used Resistant and Aspirational Capitals) explore how students used their social, navigational, resistant, and aspirational capitals to adjust to cultural differences and overcome various challenges of their study abroad experiences.

Following the Faculty Leader

The faculty leader, Dr. Xavier, was central to students’ discussions about why they looked into studying abroad. All 24 of the Black students were Dr. Xavier’s former or current students, which demonstrates how social capital played a substantive role in the recruitment and engagement of Black students participating in this study abroad program. Dr. Xavier, a renowned scholar of Black athletes, Black males, and the Black community, also holds several key leadership roles in the university administration and in one of the local Black churches. Thus, Dr. Xavier’s social influence as seen by CCW is extensive. In addition to being former or current students, all 24 participants agreed Dr. Xavier was the primary person responsible for engaging them in studying abroad, noting they would likely not have chosen to study abroad without his influence. Tiffany, for example, said:

I never thought that I would be studying abroad. It was just. . .not something I thought I could do. But when [Dr. Xavier] said he was going to be leading a study abroad [in Beijing], I thought, “Wow, if a Black man like him who obviously doesn’t look Chinese or speak Chinese. . .can survive in China, then I need to do it too.”

In her testimonial, Tiffany also described several fears that were shared by many of the other Black students in the program. They were afraid of traveling to a country where they could not speak or understand the language, were unaccustomed to the food, and knew relatively little about the customs and norms. Having a Black professor who had traveled to China and returned to speak about his trip with fervor and animation was essential in their decision-making processes.

Cindi emphasized the influence the professor had on her perspective and life, stating, “It really didn’t matter where he was going. [Dr. Xavier] could have gone to [anywhere] and I would have followed him there.” Cindi shared that while the location and topic of the course factored into her decision, she mainly chose to participate because of Dr. Xavier’s involvement, whom she considers one of the most influential people in her college career. Cindi spoke about Dr. Xavier’s extra effort to get to know her brother, even though he was the “screw up of the family” and was the last person interested in going to college. This interaction was important to her because it showed Dr. Xavier valued her and her family. Cindi (along with several other Black female participants) said she knew that Dr. Xavier was going to take care of her while in China, linking directly to familial capital.

In addition to sharing a racial/ethnic identity and positive relationships with the participants, Dr. Xavier also actively recruited them to study abroad. Students recalled how Dr. Xavier would often check in to see if they had completed their applications. Bert claimed that Dr. Xavier’s personal interest in him was a large part of why he opted to study abroad, saying:

[Dr. Xavier]’d be like, “Yo Bert, you comin’ to China? You comin’ to China, right?” And I had a bunch of things come up and I didn’t even think I would be able to go because it was like the day before the deadline and I didn’t have a recommendation. . .and [Xavier] was like, “I’ll take care of it. Just submit your app. . .” Stuff like that, [showed] he really cared and he really wanted me to go.

Dr. Xavier recruited Black students to study abroad because of their shared identity, the relationships he had built with them, and his willingness to check in on them. Participants

reported Dr. Xavier made them feel their participation was important to him, and would take time out of his busy schedule to ensure they understood how to complete the complex application system, another example of navigational capital in this case study. Dr. Xavier successfully recruited a group of participants historically underrepresented among the study abroad student body.

Changing Family Adversity to Advocacy

Yosso's (2005) concept of familial capital was a recurring theme in the findings from this study, which revealed an evolving family dynamic for participants. The majority of participants initially experienced negative reactions from their families when they discussed studying abroad for a variety of reasons (e.g., cost, concern studying abroad would delay graduation, safety, and lack of familiarity). These findings are consistent with recent scholarship exploring the causes behind why students of Color are less likely to study abroad (Jarvis & Jenkins, 2000; McLellan, 2007; Norflores, 2003). Students who did not receive familial support talked about how their personal goals of studying abroad and the influence from Dr. Xavier outweighed the familial discouragement. When asked why he went against his family's wishes to go home for the summer, Harry responded, "[Dr. Xavier]...[convinced] me that...going to China is an investment...that will make me more marketable and set me apart from any other job applicant." Harry also claimed he knew going to China would help him obtain a higher-paying job he could later use to help support his family. Students from this study demonstrated how social, aspirational, and navigational capital (Yosso, 2005) could inoculate one from family disinvestment.

A recurring theme in this case study referred to how many family members' perspectives shifted over time. Though most students initially encountered adversity from their families, all of the participants' family members eventually became excited for their students. As Cal shared:

I don't really get it. My mom wasn't supportive at all when I first told her I wanted to study abroad... but as time went on, she kept...wanting to talk about it. She'd be like, "So what's going on with China? I heard this happened in China..." I think at this point she's more excited about me going to China than I am.

Many participants discussed a similar phenomenon. Some, however, noted that their family hid their feelings from them. Chrystal talked about how her mother still acted as if she was "crazy" for wanting to go to China, but in conversing with family friends, Chrystal learned that her mother constantly talked about how proud and excited she was for her daughter to experience China. After learning her mother's true feelings and blessings (albeit through family friends), Chrystal claimed she knew that she made the right decision in choosing to study abroad.

"I'm Already a Minority": Using Social and Navigational Capitals Abroad

As previously discussed, the participants in this study were afraid of being unfamiliar with the language, culture, and norms in China. However, the participants felt that they were less concerned about "looking different from everyone there" compared to their White counterparts because they were already used to being a racial minority in the United States and an underrepresented student at a PWI. Only 4% of students at the participants' university were Black; being a minority in China was no different from their experiences as Black students at their university. Jane, an African/African-American Studies junior, said:

My first year here, I used to trip out because I'd walk into a class and I'd be the only Black face in the room. I got used to it. I guess that is one of the things that you learn being Black at [South Point University]...to accept looking and being different.

Jane further elaborated that she learned to *code switch* in college due to its predominantly White environment, and that the knowledge, skills, and mindsets gained from those experiences allowed her to fare better in China. *Code-switching* is the process by which a speaker alternates between two or more languages or two dialects of the same language (Ray, 2009). Jane's ability to navigate between standard American English in the presence of Whites and African-American Vernacular English (AAVE) amongst peers illustrates this denotation. The navigational and resistant capitals that Jane built as a racial minority at a PWI also proved to be useful in her study abroad experience.

Other students also claimed that being a racial minority at a PWI forced them out of their comfort zones, and these experiences helped them delve deeper into the Chinese experience. Lenny, a marketing senior, provided an example of how the social and navigational capitals he developed as a Black man at South Point University helped him greatly when he was bargaining and negotiating for products at the Beijing flea markets:

Being Black at [South Point University] . . . forced me to take risks, ask questions, and talk to everybody. This helped me in China because the ladies at the markets tried to rip us off because they knew we were American. I knew they weren't just going to give me a break, so I asked them about their families, their jobs. . . and I got to actually be friends with them. They're still ripping me off, but they rip me off a lot less than before.

Lenny further explained these vendors were typically working for 12 hours every day (including weekends), and someone else pocketed most of the money they earned. Because the vendors lived hard and difficult lives, Lenny said he did not feel as bad getting "ripped off" a little because he also came from an underprivileged background. The social and navigational capitals he developed in the United States made Lenny curious about and aware of others' perspectives, but also saved him some money in the end.

(Un)Used Resistant and Aspirational Capitals

During the pre-departure focus groups, half of the participants admitted that they were afraid of being discriminated against in China. The other half felt they were already discriminated against in the United States due to its historical roots of slavery and racism, so they felt that it could not be any worse in China. All of their perceptions changed by the second round of focus groups. While exploring the various sites in China, the Black students were treated like celebrities. Chinese citizens constantly wanted to take pictures of them, take pictures with them, and even take pictures of them holding Chinese babies. Several of the participants in this study noted that they were "given more attention than the White or Latino students" on the trip. The Black women, in particular, discussed how they had never felt more attractive than they did when they were in China because they were often stopped and told how their hair and skin were beautiful. Janine, for instance, mentioned how she often had Chinese women "come touch [her] hair, smile, and give [her] a thumbs up sign." The men were also complimented on their height and beautiful skin.

As previously mentioned, several of the students went to China with their resistant capital built up, ready to expend, and were surprised at how little they had to use it. Tony, a finance senior, discussed an experience that changed his outlook on race in China:

One night, I was walking home with Joe [another Black male] . . . it was like, 3 a.m. and we were lost in some small alley. Halfway down, we came across . . . a small Chinese woman who was by herself, so Joe and I just froze. As [Black men], we learn to do that in the U.S. The woman just smiled and nodded at

us so we asked her for directions. She had no fear; she didn't clutch her purse, or anything. That would never happen in America.

This short but powerful exchange demonstrated how the Black experience for these participants vastly differed in China compared to the United States. Tony and Joe had both learned how to navigate in a racially unjust society like the United States by building up their resistant and navigational capitals but found they were not needed in China.

While some students possessed capitals that were unused in China, other students continued to develop aspects of their capital while abroad. Tiffany, for example, was shocked when she saw a Black female mannequin in one of the high fashion stores in Beijing. She said, "I have never seen a Black mannequin in the U.S. ...it's so sad that I had to fly across the world to find one." Tiffany, however, leveraged her aspirational capital with this experience to decide that she wanted to start a cosmetic and beauty line for Black women. According to Tiffany, she had never thought of it before because she had never been in a setting where she felt that her Black identity was so appreciated. She now wants to affect American society by creating a high fashion beauty line that celebrates Black women.

Discussion

The findings from this study confirm much of the prior research on the benefits of study abroad (Dwyer & Peters, 2004). Several of the students from this program discussed how their experiences in China made them more academically curious and globally competitive. Three of the students from this study have infused a foreign language into their academic careers since returning; one is double majoring in communication studies and Mandarin, one in finance and Mandarin, and the last is minoring in French. All three of these students attributed their study abroad experience as a key factor in deciding to take learning another language seriously. An additional five students are participating in another study abroad program within the next year. They, too, ascribed their newfound interest in global travel to their participation in this study abroad program.

Our findings from the study have also affirmed some of the existing research regarding why students of Color, particularly Black students, are hesitant to study abroad (Carter, 1990; Cole, 1990; McLellan, 2007; Norflores, 2003). Several of the participants in this study discussed factors such as lack of familial support, fear of the unknown, and anxiety over racism in a foreign country—all of which initially made them uncertain about studying abroad. This case study suggests that Black students *can* and *will* study abroad under the right conditions. As this study has shown, much of students' fear and anxiety over leaving the country can be alleviated if a relatable faculty leader has gone to that country and had a good experience. Students also need to be invested in the program. Dr. Xavier continuously amplified the importance of how studying abroad (specifically in China) would be beneficial to students' academic careers and job prospects. Many of the students found this to be important and viewed the time and money spent as an investment. They were able to rationalize a monetary return on investment of studying abroad to their families, peers, and themselves.

At the end of the program, the students were left with one resounding question: How can we bring what we have learned here back to the Black community? Several of the students felt that participating in an opportunity like this made them more worldly, sophisticated, marketable, and elevated their status in society. They learned about their strengths, their boundaries, and many achieved things that they never thought they could achieve before, such as flying on a plane or

eating foods they have never seen before. As a result, the students felt like they had a responsibility to bring their newfound knowledge of the world back with them to “bring up” and encourage other Black students to study abroad and travel the globe.

Implications for Student Affairs Practitioners

As this case study demonstrated, it is possible for institutions to have diverse study abroad programs that consist of underrepresented, low-income, and first-generation college students. Because the scope of this particular study focused on Black students, the implications and recommendations for student affairs practitioners will center on how to increase Black student participation in study abroad programs. Based on findings from this case study, the authors propose seven recommendations to increase the number of Black students that study abroad:

1. Encourage popular faculty members who have strong relationships with Black students to lead study abroad programs. A key finding in this case study was the significance of the faculty leader and his relationships with students. As many of the students stated, they cared more about who was leading the trip than where they were going.
2. Actively target and approach underrepresented students directly, and encourage them to apply for study abroad programs. Many of the students in the study indicated they would have not applied had it not been for Dr. Xavier approaching and letting them know about the benefits of this study abroad program.
3. Ensure the faculty leader has a pre-departure orientation. Dr. Xavier was able to market his program to students because he was able to go to Beijing for a week to look at the residence halls, facilities, and sites. He was able to take pictures and testify with credibility about what the students were going to see and do in China.
4. Study abroad courses should focus on a topic that will make students more marketable in the workplace. This program focused on social entrepreneurship and allowed students to become immersed in a language and culture that has been increasingly important in the past decade. As previously mentioned, many of the students saw this study abroad experience as an investment as opposed to a field trip. Because of this, study abroad topics should be student-centered and advertised in a way that will explicitly show the professional development experiences to be gained.
5. Keep the length of study abroad programs manageable. Most of the students claimed that they would not have participated in this program had it been any longer because it would have conflicted with their degree plans and they could not have afforded it. This study abroad program occupied one summer session, so students could still take summer classes during the second session or complete an internship (which many did). At the end of the program, however, many students said that time went by too fast and wished they could have stayed in China longer at the end of the program.
6. Institutional leaders and study abroad directors need to prioritize diversity and work with other university units to provide scholarship opportunities for students. This program was able to attract and retain so many students of Color because the university, study abroad office, and learning community worked closely together to recruit and work with underrepresented, low-income, and first-generation college students.
7. The majority of the students in the program were provided with some form of scholarship. Several of the students still had to take out loans or find other methods to finance the study

abroad trip; however, they ended up going because the scholarship monies they received made the experience financially manageable.

As the world becomes more interconnected, it is of vital importance for students to participate in more international and global experiences, like study abroad opportunities. Today, U.S. higher education mission statements commonly include a declaration for equitable and just educational opportunities. If institutions truly wish to live up to their diversity statements, it is imperative to carve pathways for underrepresented and underprivileged students to attain a global educational experience as well.

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