

Minority Student Participation in International Programs: A Survey of Undergraduate Students Attending HBCUs

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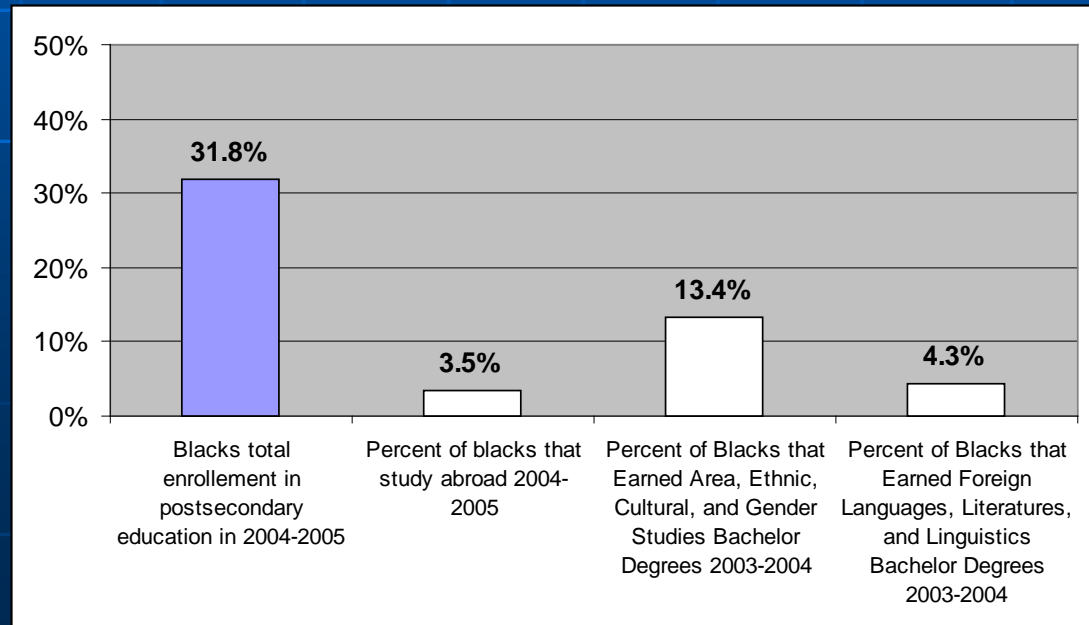
Study

- This study was first conducted in collaboration with the UNCFSP for its grant from USDOE in 2007. Taking a subset of the data we examine minority HBCU students' perceived importance and experiences (formal and informal) with international education activities.

Justification

- There is a wide gap between the percentage of Blacks or African Americans enrolled in postsecondary education and the percentage that study abroad (28.3% difference), as well as those who earn degrees in international study areas—Area, Ethnic, Cultural, and Gender Studies (18.4% difference), and in foreign languages, literatures, and linguistics (27.5% difference)

Percentage of Blacks that participate in study abroad and international areas compared to the overall percentage of Blacks enrolled in postsecondary education



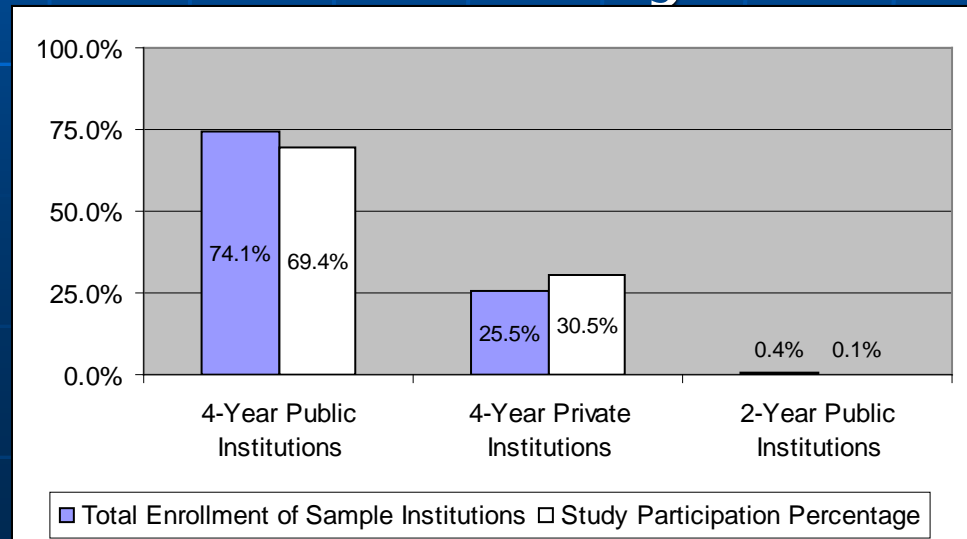
About the data

- The data set consists of 1,346 undergraduates from 62 HBCUs:
 - 33 (53.2%) 4-year public institutions
 - 28 (45.2%) 4-year private institutions
 - one (1.6%) 2-year public institution.
- Over half (59.0%) of the participating students were from eight institutions

About the data, Cont...

- Student participants in the study sample were generally representative of the overall enrollments of the sample institutions at the time of survey

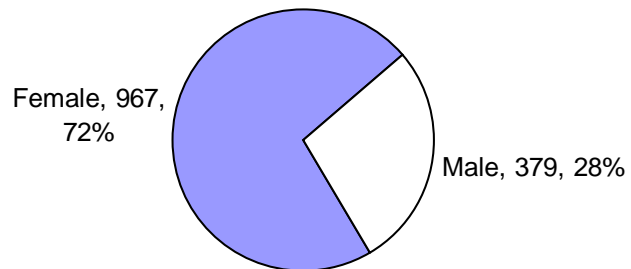
Comparison of the percentage of students in the sample vs. the overall enrollments at the sample HBCUs



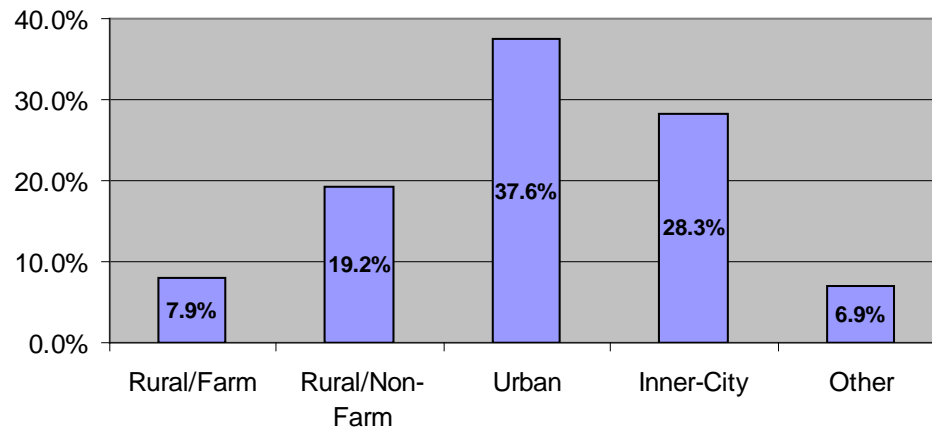
Variables used for comparison

- Four variables of interest were identified for this analysis:
 - Gender
 - Primary Area Where Raised
 - First-Generation College Student
 - Classification

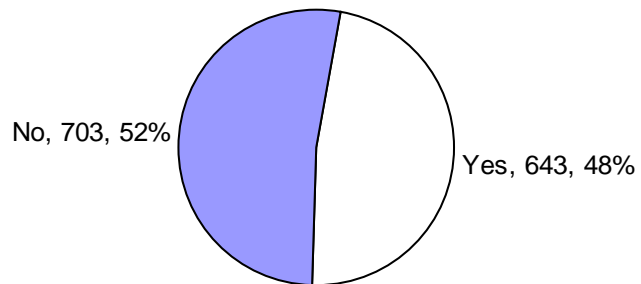
1. Gender



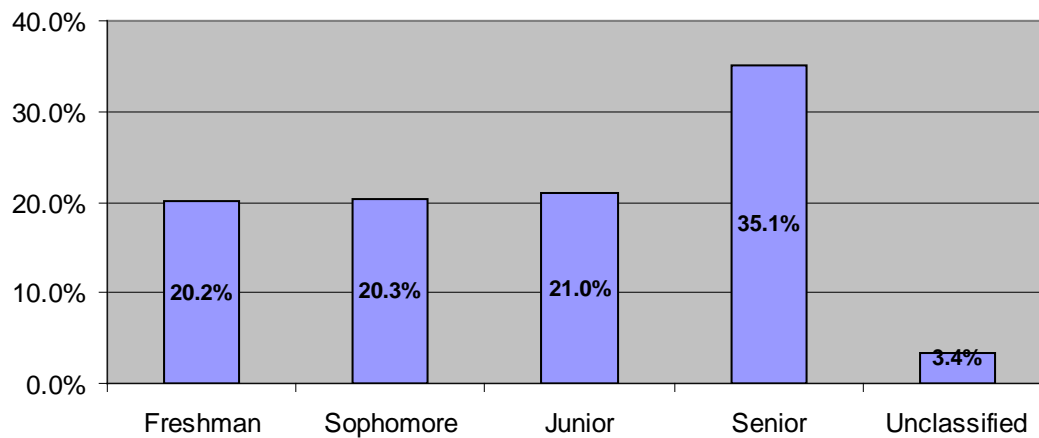
2. Primary Area Raised



3. First-Generation College Student



4. Classification



Racial Representation

- The overwhelming majority of the sample was Black or African American which is consistent with the general population of HBCUs overall (96% Black)

Race	No.	Percent
Black or African American	1251	92.9
White	62	4.6
American Indian or Alaskan Native	50	3.7
Asian	19	1.4
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	6	.4
Did Not Report	55	4.1

Results

Table 1: Percent Distribution of Respondents by Perceived Importance of International Education (n=1,346)

International Education Aspects	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important	No Opinion
1. To speak a foreign language ^{a,c}	38.6	44.4	14.0	3.0
2. To understand other cultures/customs ^a	88.7	25.9	3.9	1.6
3. To know about international issues/ events ^a	62.3	9.8	5.3	1.6

Note: ^a = response patterns differed significantly ($p \leq 0.05$) by gender; ^b = response patterns differed significantly ($p \leq 0.05$) by residence; ^c = response patterns differed significantly ($p \leq 0.05$) by first generation college student vs. others; ^d = response patterns differed significantly ($p \leq 0.05$) by classification.

Results, Cont...

- Females over males
- Students from rural back ground (farm and non-farm) over urban & inner cities
- First generation students over others

Perceived that these skills are very important/somewhat important in the job market.

- Response patterns by classification were not consistent

Results, Cont...

- Students were asked to indicate their degree of agreement on 10 items related to various international curriculum aspects and benefits (Table 2).

Results (contd.)

Table 2: Percent Distribution of Respondents by Degree of Agreement with International Education Aspects and Benefits (n=1,346)

International Education Curriculum Aspects & Benefits	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion
1. The more time spent in class learning about other countries, cultures, or global issues, the less time is available for the basics ^{a,b}	11.7	32.5	28.9	20.7	6.2
2. Learning about other countries, cultures, and global issues is useful, but not a necessary component of my education ^{a,b}	12.0	26.7	25.6	31.6	4.2

Results (contd.)

International Education Curriculum Aspects & Benefits	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion
3. All undergraduate students should be required to take courses covering international topics	32.5	43.5	15.2	4.5	4.4
4. All undergraduate students should be required to study one foreign language if they already don't know one ^{a,d}	49.7	36.5	7.1	3.8	3.0
5. Studying international topics, foreign languages, and visiting other countries will increase my understanding of my own culture and values ^b	57.8	33.0	5.1	1.4	2.7

Results (contd.)

International Education Curriculum Aspects & Benefits	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion
6. Studying international topics, foreign languages, and visiting other countries will increase my understanding of other peoples and cultures ^a	73.0	23.3	1.6	0.4	1.8
7. Studying international topics, foreign languages, and visiting other countries will make me a more well-rounded person ^a	70.1	23.7	3.1	1.0	2.0
8. Studying international topics, foreign languages, and visiting other countries will help me get a better job ^a	51.9	34.0	9.6	1.6	3.0

Results (contd.)

International Education Curriculum Aspects & Benefits	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion
9. Studying international topics, foreign languages, and visiting other countries will provide me with skills to work with people from diverse backgrounds ^a	74.4	21.5	1.3	0.8	1.9
10. All undergraduate students should have a study abroad experience sometime during their college or university career ^c	42.8	38.0	9.4	4.0	5.9

Note: ^a = response patterns differed significantly ($p \leq 0.05$) by gender; ^b = response patterns differed significantly ($p \leq 0.05$) by residence; ^c = response patterns differed significantly ($p \leq 0.05$) by first generation college student vs. others; ^d = response patterns differed significantly ($p \leq 0.05$) by classification.

Table 2 summary

- Consistent with Table 1, males over females; and, students with rural residential backgrounds over those from urban areas were higher among those strongly agreed/somewhat agreed with most the first two notions
- Approximately 75% of HBCU students strongly or somewhat agree that all undergraduates should have a study abroad experience, be required to take course covering international topics and be required to study a foreign language if they don't already know one

Table 2 Summary (contd.)

- Over 86% of HBCU students strongly agreed or somewhat agreed that *all undergraduates should be required to study one foreign language if they do not already know one*
- Females over males; and, non-freshmen over freshmen tend to agree more frequently with this requirement.

Table 2 Summary (contd.)

- Nearly 81% strongly agreed or somewhat agreed that *all undergraduates should have a study abroad experience sometime during their college or university career*; and,
- 76% strongly or somewhat agreed that *all undergraduates should be required to take courses covering international topics*
- No significant differences were found in these response patterns by gender, classification, residential background, or whether they were first generation college students

Table 2 Summary (contd.)

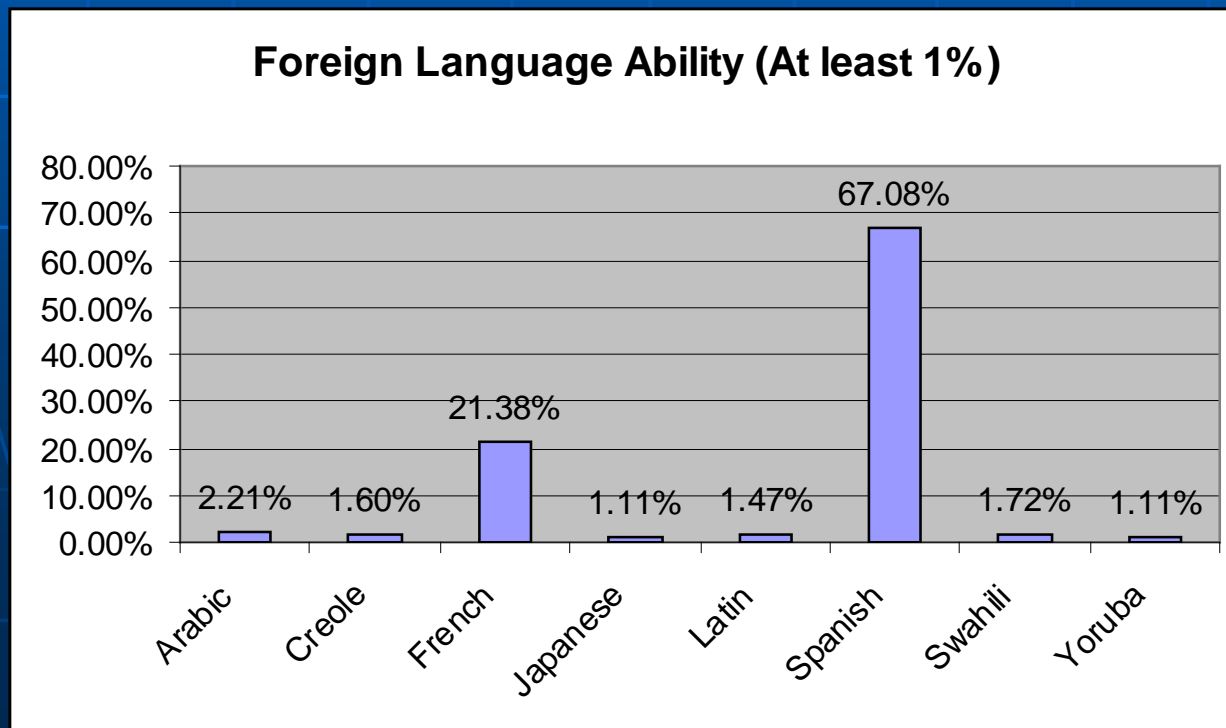
- At least 9 out of 10 agree or strongly agree that studying international topics, foreign languages, and visiting other countries will increase their understanding of (a) their own culture and values; as well as, (b) other people and cultures; (c) provide them with skills to work with people from diverse backgrounds; and, (d) help them get a better job.
- Over all, females' attitudes towards international education experiences tend to be more positive than males

Nationality & Foreign Language Proficiency

- Nearly 95% of the student respondents were reportedly the U.S. Citizens (n=1,278)
- Approximately 88% (n=1,180) studied a foreign language before college.
- Only 11% (n=150) were native speakers of a language other than English
- 60.5% (n=814) are able to speak or read at least one language besides English; of them, Spanish (67%) and French (21%) are most commonly spoken languages. These trends are consistent with that of the Nation; however, Arabic ranked 3rd in this study sample, while it ranked 10th in the nation (see Association of Departments of Foreign Languages at the Modern Language Association, *Foreign Language Enrollments in United States Institutions of Higher Education, Fall 2010*)

Nationality & Foreign Language Proficiency (contd.)

- 18.9% (n=154) two other languages
- 3.7% (n=30) as many as three or more other languages



Results: Formal Experiences

Table 3. Distribution of Respondents by Their Formal International Education Experiences

Formal International Education Experiences	Number	Percent
1. Travelled outside the United States (n=149) ^d		
One month or less	74	49.7
1-6 months	37	24.8
6 months - 1 year	11	7.4
Over 1 Year	27	18.1
2. Countries Visited (n=149)		
Canada	16	10.7
France	14	9.4
Mexico	11	7.4
Spain	11	7.4
Nigeria	9	6.0
South Africa	9	6.0
Costa Rica	7	4.7
Germany	7	4.7
U.K.	6	4.0
Japan	4	2.7
Kenya	4	2.7
Trinidad & Tobago	4	2.7
Other	47	32

Formal Experiences (contd.)

Table 3. Distribution of Respondents by Their Formal International Education Experiences

Formal International Education Experiences	Number	Percent
3. Perceived Benefits of traveling outside the U.S. (n=149)		
Increased understanding of own culture and values ^b	115	77.2
Increased understanding of other peoples and cultures ^{a,c}	126	84.6
Increased foreign language skills	88	59.1
Made a more well-rounded person	124	83.2
Increased chances of getting a better job	61	40.9
Provided skills to work with others from diverse backgrounds ^{a,b}	113	75.8
Other	39	26.2
4. Participation in International Education Programs/Activities (n=1,346):		
Studied a foreign language ^{a,b,d}	1,091	81.1
Took a course focused on global themes ^d	708	52.6
Took a course focused on foreign cultures/religions ^d	757	56.2
Participated in study abroad/other international travel related to academic study/research ^{a,d}	268	19.9

Note: ^a = response patterns differed significantly ($p \leq 0.05$) by gender; ^b = response patterns differed significantly ($p \leq 0.05$) by residence; ^c = response patterns differed significantly ($p \leq 0.05$) by first generation college student vs. others; ^d = response patterns differed significantly ($p \leq 0.05$) by classification.

Table 3 Summary

- 149 of the 1,346 (11.1%) respondents traveled outside the United States for academic purposes
 - Predominantly female (67.1%)
 - Raised primarily in urban areas (37.6%) or inner cities (27.5%)
 - Not first generation college students (57.0%)
 - Senior undergraduates (38.1%)

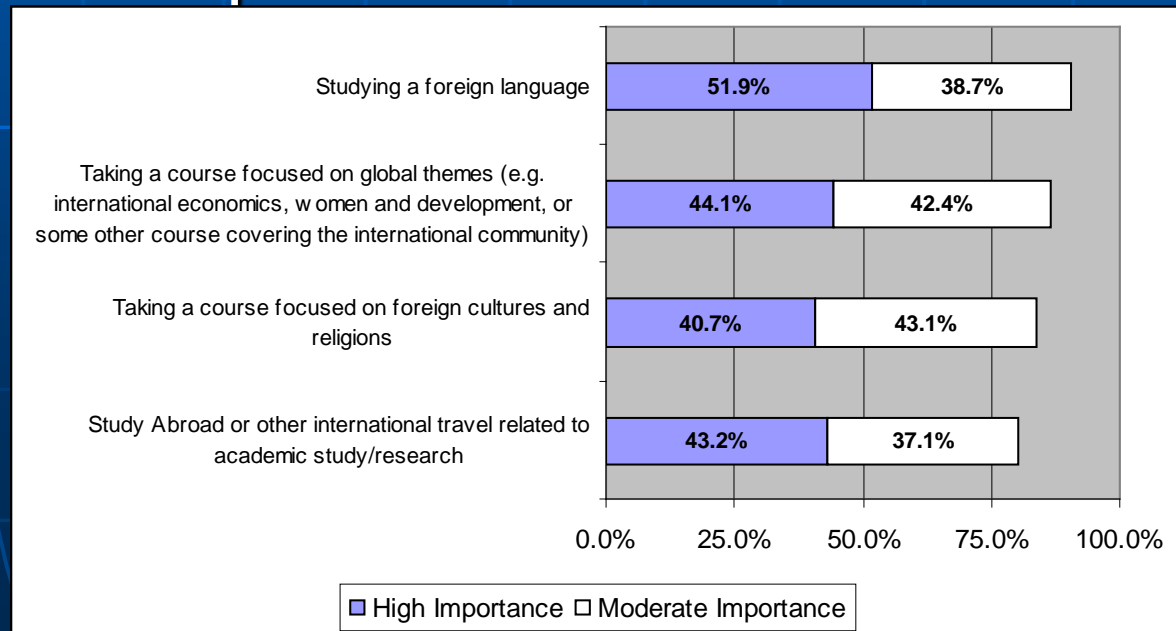
Table 3 Summary (contd.)

- Three out of every four participants reportedly felt that their travel for academic purposes: (a) increased understanding of other cultures, (b) made them more well-rounded, (c) increased understanding of own culture, and (d) provided skills necessary to work with people from diverse backgrounds.
- Students with rural residential backgrounds (farm and non-farm) compared those from urban and inner city areas tend to feel more strongly about the later two benefits (c and d).

Table 3 Summary (contd.)

- Students were asked to rate the importance of participation in four different international education experiences
- All these activity participations received higher ratings of importance from females than males

Perceived Importance
of Academic Study
Activities



Results: Informal Experiences

Table 4. Distribution of Respondents by Their Informal International Education Experiences

Informal International Education Experiences	Number	Percent
1. Travelled outside the United States (n=521) ^{a,b,c,d}		
One month or less	355	68.1
1-6 months	71	13.6
6 months - 1 year	24	4.6
Over 1 Year	71	13.6
2. Countries Visited (n=149)		
Canada	94	18.0
Bahamas	66	12.7
Mexico	61	11.7
Jamaica	39	7.5
U.K./England	38	7.3
Germany	23	4.4
Aruba	17	3.3
France	14	2.7
Virgin Islands	14	2.7
Haiti	12	2.3
South Africa	12	2.3
Barbados	11	2.1
Trinidad & Tobago	11	2.1
Other	109	20.9

Informal Experiences (contd.)

Table 4. Distribution of Respondents by Their Informal International Education Experiences

Informal International Education Experiences	Number	Percent
3. Perceived Benefits of traveling outside the U.S. (n=521)		
Increased understanding of own culture and <u>values^a</u>	305	58.5
Increased understanding of other peoples and <u>cultures^c</u>	378	72.6
Increased foreign language <u>skills^{a,c}</u>	164	31.5
Made a more well-rounded <u>person^c</u>	305	58.5
Increased chances of getting a better <u>job^a</u>	81	15.5
Provided skills to work with others from diverse backgrounds	224	43.0
<u>Other^b</u>	189	26.3

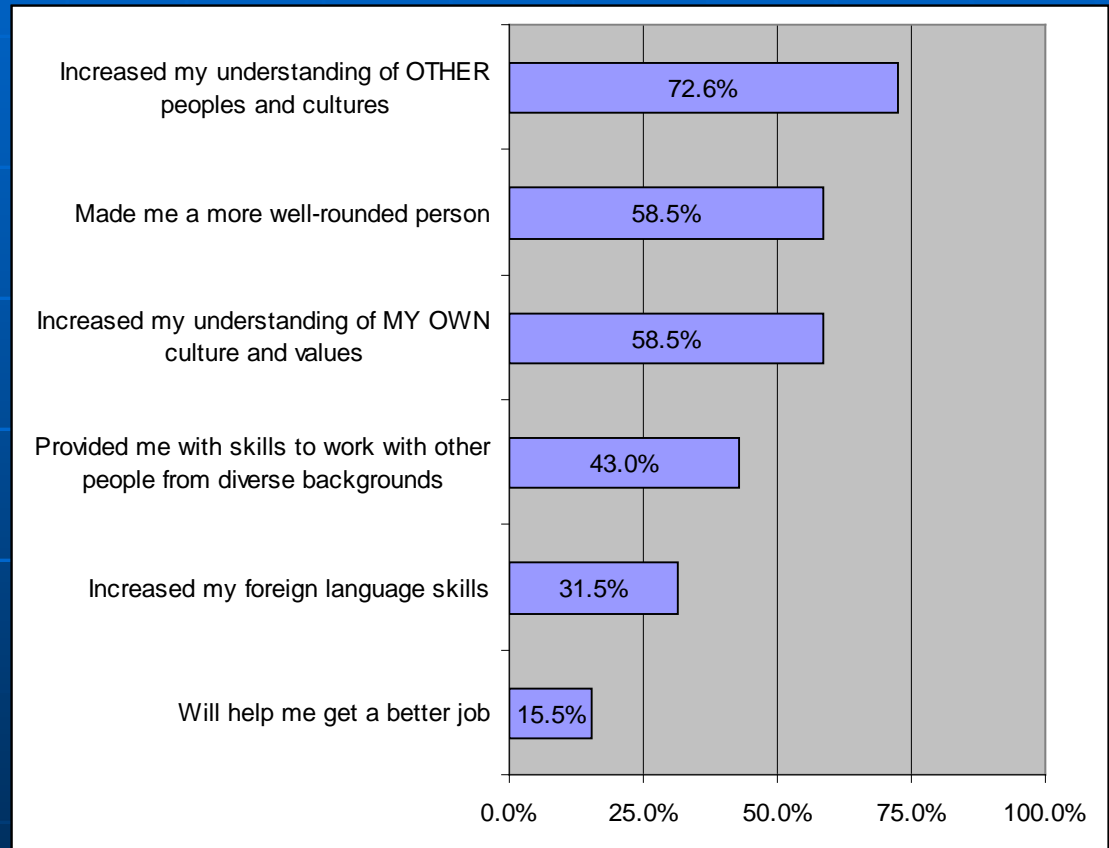
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Table 4 summary

- A total of 521 students (38.7%) reportedly traveled outside the United States for non-academic purposes
 - Canada (18%), Bahamas (13%), & Mexico (12%) were most commonly traveled countries
 - Predominantly female (68.3%)
 - Raised primarily in urban areas (39.0%) or inner cities (29.0%)
 - Not first generation college students (56.8%)
 - Senior undergraduates (34.4%)

Table 4 summary (contd.)

- Students were asked to note the benefits related to their non-academic travel abroad in six areas identified in the literature



Benefits of non-academic travel identified by survey participants

Table 4 summary (contd.)

- Males more often than females reported the following benefits of travel outside the US for non-academic purposes:
 - Increase their understanding of their own culture and values
 - Increase their foreign language skills
 - Help them get a better job

Reasons for Non-participation in international travel for academic and/or non-academic activities

Reason for Non-Participation	Academic	Non-Academic
Costs	24.1%	21.0%
Interest	11.7%	16.9%
Plan to do before graduation	9.3%	8.0%
Other	28.7%	31.7%

Recommendations

- Sustainability of Students' Interest
- Increasing Students' Motivation, Awareness, and Participation
- Strengthening Study Abroad Programs
- Increase Focus on Critical Languages
- Increase Focus on Male Students
- Lessons to Learn From More Successful Campuses
- Conduct Further Research