

1

Pre-departure sessions on
cultural expectations and
diverse perspectives are crucial.



“ Important thing for American students to understand (especially those who run the gamut of minority status) is most countries do have not have the same civil-social awareness and reckoning that we have in the US. Identity issues - race, gender, sexuality, dis/ability, class, etc. - might not be addressed or considered "existential" to personal identity and background...therefore not be taken seriously or given any consideration for handling. ”



“ I studied abroad in China for a month. We were required to attend sessions to prepare us for the cultural differences. The study abroad office had a diverse staff reflective of the school's student population. So, we had the opportunity to hear perspectives /info from a Black woman and a Chinese woman. It was extremely beneficial to hear how we (Black women) would be viewed...stares, pictures, inappropriate requests to touch my skin. Overall, China was a great trip because our Blackness was considered for the pre-departure sessions. ”



“ I had a good study abroad advisor (a Black woman) and an overall great exchange student experience. However, I don't think we spent too much time talking about what the experience of being a Black woman in Japan would be like, which was a struggle at times. Conversations with Black students studying abroad need to happen to prepare them for the loneliness, otherness, and the global anti-Blackness, especially if they are going to a highly homogeneous country. ”



2

**Discuss and approve
academic credit options.**



“My advisor helped me early on to "save" a semester of credits because he knew I wanted to study abroad in Mexico. While there, I had an amazing experience. I enjoyed the fact that many of the other students in the program looked just like me. ”



“I studied abroad in Spain as an undergraduate, in Japan as a grad student, and worked abroad after finishing my undergrad. My grad school advisor helped tell me how to make my classes from abroad fit my degree, so I wasn't stuck doing an extra semester. ”

“ I studied abroad in Japan and was not equipped financially to go. I had to do everything on my own, including the paperwork to count my credits. After finally getting approval from each department for each class I wanted to take in Japan when it came time to graduate, they tried to say that my credits didn't count. It was an awesome experience in Japan, but the getting there and the aftermath was DREADFUL! My advice is to ensure you ALWAYS get the classes you take abroad approved by each department that correlates at your home institution. Ensure there are signatures; save any orientation notes from the classes abroad and any projects or papers you submitted while abroad as proof. ”



3

**Scholarships and
alternative financing
options are available.**





“ I APPLIED FOR A COMPETITIVE SCHOLARSHIP BECAUSE I COULDN'T AFFORD TO STUDY ABROAD.

I DIDN'T GET THAT SCHOLARSHIP, BUT SOMEONE ON THE COMMITTEE SAW MY APP AND HAD ME APPLY FOR ONE SPECIFICALLY FOR BLACK STUDENTS -WHICH I GOT.

I CAN'T REMEMBER WHO FLAGGED MY APP, BUT I'M SO GRATEFUL THEY DID. IT WAS AWESOME TO GET TO SERVE ON THE COMMITTEE THE FOLLOWING YEAR AND PAY IT FORWARD FOR ANOTHER STUDENT. ”

“During my MA program, I studied abroad in Havana, Cuba. My advisor and instructor were fantastic with resources, including helping me apply for an expedited passport to get a Visa for Cuba.

Later, I went to London and Berlin and was supported by my department chair (supervisor). My advisor allowed me to use it as an independent study to count towards my degree requirements. I received a scholarship for both trips and awarded a departmental scholarship to pay for my flight as long as I helped with making sure students reported on time and stayed with the group.


”



4

**Study Abroad prepares
for the workforce.**





“Going abroad was one of the best decisions that I made. It pushed me and challenged me to grow in ways that I now realize almost ten years later. It taught me skills for survival when you're in a new place with a language barrier and no relationships.”



“ I worked in the study abroad office, and the office encouraged me to study in Costa Rica. I had never been on an airplane. So the exposure of the possibility was impactful to me. I will say that I made a conscious decision to delay graduation to study abroad. I know all may not be able to do that. But it was an added plus when I did graduate and began looking for a job. Now working in higher ed, I'm always thinking about it to inspire the next group. ”



5

**Institutions and advisors
need training on supporting
underrepresented students
in all stages of going abroad.**



“I went to Mali in 2003. I loved it!!! I was home; I cried, I found myself in Mali! But I was the only Black student, and the White professor didn't support me, protect me, back me, or take care of me physically or otherwise. He later offered me a full-ride Doctoral Fellowship upon graduation. So, overall win! I highly recommend it. Go! Go! Go! And Black Women are the least likely to participate, which means there are tons of grants and scholarships to encourage us to go!”



“ In an attempt to advocate for students who are unaware of and, for the most part, not intentionally engaged around these kinds of opportunities - I was an international student on scholarship. I did not find out about study abroad opportunities until it was too late. Even then, I had no idea where to find advice. I assumed that my scholarship wouldn't cover study abroad and didn't know what questions to ask, much less who to ask. I suppose being an international student is quite literally studying abroad, but I regret not having/knowing about the opportunity to study elsewhere. ”



6

**Friends and mentors can
also be a great support in
studying abroad.**



“ IF IT WEREN'T FOR MY FRIEND WALKING ME THROUGH EVERY STEP OF THE FINANCIAL AID PROCESS, I WOULD NEVER HAVE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO SEE 17 AMAZING COUNTRIES WORLDWID ”



“ MY DOCTORAL MENTOR LAST YEAR WAS THE DIRECTOR OF A STUDY ABROAD OFFICE. SHE WAS THE FIRST BLACK WOMAN I MET DEEPLY INVOLVED IN STUDY ABROAD IN MY 15 YEARS OF HIGHER ED (BEYOND RECRUITMENT). SHE TOOK STUDENTS ALL OVER THE WORLD; I LOVED HEARING HER EXPERIENCES. SHE ALSO SHARED HER STRUGGLES AND THE BARRIERS FOR BIPOC STUDENTS WHO WANTED TO STUDY ABROAD. ”