

# Trends

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## Student Learning Outcomes of International Education

Global education continues to be a top priority at the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University. In November 2005, international education was named as one of Saint Benedict and Saint John's first signature academic programs. Signature status is designed to strategically strengthen this interdisciplinary program which enhances student learning inside and outside of the classroom. The following data summarize the outcomes of studying abroad as indicated by student responses on the 2005 CSB/SJU Senior Survey and the 2004-2005 Study Abroad Program Evaluation.\*

### Different Perceptions of the College Experience

When asked about their collegiate experience, students who studied abroad reported significantly different perceptions of the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University and the schools' impact on their development:

- Nearly three-quarters of students who studied abroad replied that CSB/SJU frequently ("quite a bit" or "very much") emphasized learning outside of the classroom or in non-academic experiences, compared to 60% of all other students.
- CSB/SJU students who studied internationally were more likely to report that they read books for their own personal enjoyment or academic enrichment.
- Almost two-thirds of students who studied abroad indicated that CSB/SJU contributed to their appreciation of the fine arts, compared to only half of all other students who did not study abroad.
- Students who studied abroad were more than twice as likely as other students to select "Global" as a school descriptor (34% vs. 15%). Ninety-five percent of students who studied abroad in 2004-2005 agreed that their study abroad program helped them gain insight into another culture, and seven in ten said their international study abroad experiences caused them to become more involved in global issues.† Regardless of study abroad experience, few CSB/SJU seniors rated the colleges as diverse.
- Students who had studied abroad were more likely to have volunteered while at CSB/SJU. Seventy-three percent of seniors who had studied abroad indicated they had participated in community service or a volunteer program, compared to only 63% of seniors who did not have a study abroad experience. Furthermore, a greater percentage of senior students who had studied internationally agreed that participating in a volunteer or community service program was important to their overall collegiate experience (50% v. 39%).

Students who have studied internationally indicate different perceptions of CSB/SJU and different life expectations.

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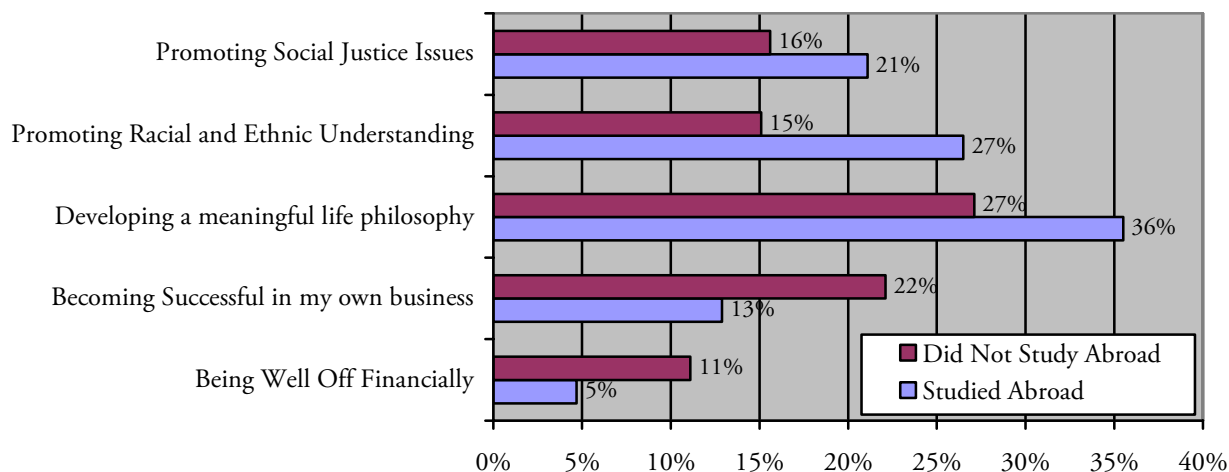
Saint John's  
UNIVERSITY

## Changed Life Expectations

Six in ten students who studied abroad in 2004-2005 agreed their international education experience caused them to more seriously evaluate their life goals. A similar percentage agreed that the experience caused them to reassess their career goals. As new entering students, those expecting and not expecting to study abroad responded similarly on the *2002 New Entering Student Survey* on questions of values, experiences and expectations. However, students who studied internationally had different responses as seniors than their peers on statements of values and experiences.

- Senior students who studied abroad were less likely to indicate that wealth and entrepreneurial success are essential life goals. Instead, these students were more likely to indicate that promoting social justice and racial and ethnic understanding are important life objectives. These objectives are reflected in the post graduation choices of students who studied internationally. Fourteen percent of 2004 graduates who had studied abroad volunteered after graduation from CSB/SJU, three times the rate of their classmates who had not studied internationally.

**Percent of 2005-06 Seniors who Indicated that these Life Objectives were "Essential"**



- Only 6% of the new entering students of fall 2002 said that promoting racial understanding was an essential life objective. By their senior year, 27% of students who studied abroad identified this as an essential life objective, compared to 15% of all other students. Additionally, fewer than half of new entering students indicated that improving their understanding of other countries and cultures was a key life objective. As seniors, 82% students who had studied abroad indicated that they wished to improve their understanding of countries and cultures, compared to only 64% of all other students.
- Students who held liberal political views were more likely to study abroad than those who identified themselves as conservative. It is not possible to ascertain whether students with liberal political orientations were more likely to study abroad, or whether the study abroad experience itself influenced their political orientation.

\* The 2005 CSB/SJU Senior Survey is administered by the Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Communication. The *Study Abroad Program Evaluation* is administered by the Office of International Education.

† The *Study Abroad Program Evaluation* used a ten point scale to measure the strength of students' agreement with various statements. Responses seven through ten indicated general agreement with the given statement.

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