

# The Scholarship of Study Abroad Programs: Engaging Students Through International Experiences

**faeis** Food and Agricultural Education  
Information System

USDA | NIFA

The FAEIS Team:  
Anupa Sharma, Chaoping Xie, Mary A. Marchant, Eric A. Vance, William W. Richardson and Lisa S. Hightower

Virginia Tech

FAEIS URL: <http://www.faeis.ahnrit.vt.edu/>

**VirginiaTech**  
College of Agriculture  
and Life Sciences

## 1 Abstract

This research is motivated by two factors: (1) the importance of study abroad programs to agricultural students and (2) a need for a reliable, accessible and searchable national database that describes agricultural study abroad programs. Apart from the pedagogical benefits, study abroad experiences enhance job market competency and provide opportunities to increase awareness of different cultures and values. Data from the Food and Agriculture Education Information System-International Programs' Database (FAEIS-IPD: <http://www.faeis.ahnrit.vt.edu/>) are used to assess U.S. study abroad programs in Asia by land grant institutions for the years 2005-2010. Study abroad results show that the most travelled Asian countries are China, India and Russia; focus predominantly on agriculture; and are either research-based or teaching-oriented. Educators and universities could use this FAEIS resource to develop partnerships with other institutions, review the breadth of international study abroad projects, and serve as a recruitment tool to quickly identify campus-based experts.

## 2 Introduction

### Importance of Study Abroad Programs:

1. There are many pedagogical benefits of studying abroad (Kleine et al., 2012; Myers et al., 2005; Norris and Dwyer, 2005). For example, one in six agricultural jobs today is directly tied to international trade (Bruening and Shao, 2005). International exposure improves understanding of different ideas, cultures and respect of others' opinions (Falk and Kanach, 2006; Norris and Gillespie, 2009; Patterson, 2006; Peacock, 2005).

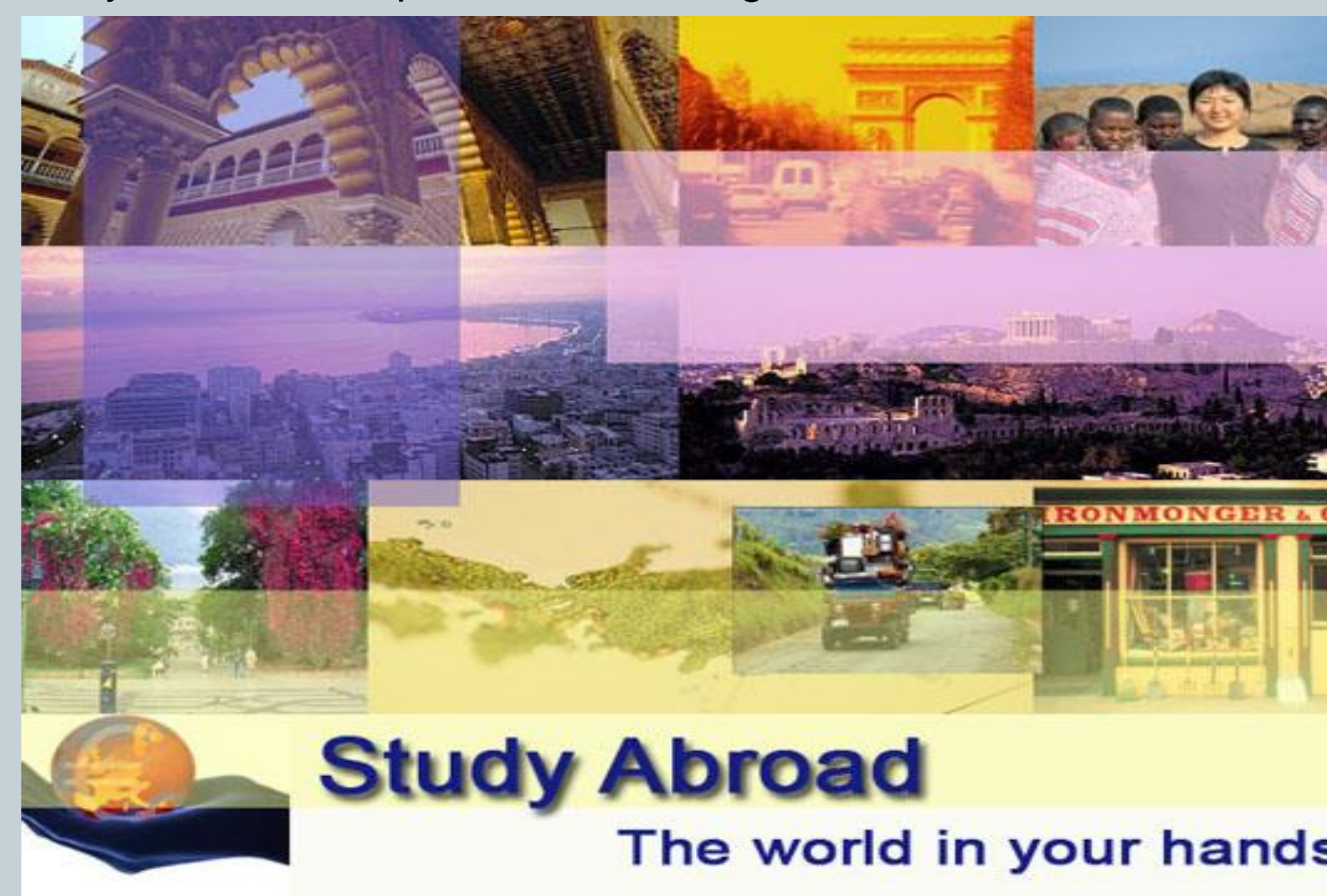
2. Earlier research suggests that studying abroad also provides a unique opportunity to discuss sensitive issues and may bring a greater understanding of different perspectives (Falk and Kanach, 2006; Ogden, 2007).

### Why Asia?

Asia is also very important to the U.S. from an international trade point of view. For example, India and China are very influential on international trade related agricultural policy developments. More recently, China has emerged as a major trading partner for the United States.

## 3 Methods

This research validated the FAEIS-IPD data obtained from 783 study abroad programs in 84 land-grant institutions for 2005-2010. Of these, 115 study abroad programs from 25 land grant institutions focused on Asia. Study abroad program variables include the nature of the program, academic year in which the program took place, and the university conducting the program. Data on study abroad programs in a country tend to be rather unique and therefore present a greater scope for descriptive analyses, which include frequency analysis, cumulative frequency analysis and descriptive tables and figures to summarize results.



## 4 Results

**OBJECTIVE 1. Identify Which Asian Countries are Sites for Agriculturally-Driven Study Abroad Programs:** The U.S.-based agriculturally-driven study abroad programs visited 30 different Asian countries. Table 1 lists the ten most frequently visited Asian countries. China has the highest number of Asian study abroad programs (n=20), followed by India (n=15) and Russia (n=12). Among the four FAEIS academic areas of FAEIS (see Table 1 columns), the programs in China focus predominantly on agriculture and involve teaching and research.

Table 1. Top 10 Most Frequently Visited Countries in Asia for Agriculture Based U.S. Study Abroad Programs During 2005-2010.

Year	Country	Agriculture	Human Sciences	Natural Resources	Veterinary Medicine	Interdisciplinary	Totals
2005-2010	CHINA	6	6	4		4	20
2005-2010	INDIA	8	5	1		1	15
2005-2010	RUSSIA	4	3	2	1	2	12
2005-2009	INDONESIA	2	1		2	2	7
2005-2009	PHILIPPINES	2	1	2		1	6
2004-2010	AFGHANISTAN	2	1			2	5
2007-2009	IRAQ	3				2	5
2005-2009	JAPAN	2	3				5
2005-2010	NEPAL	2	2	1	1		6
2005-2010	THAILAND	1	2			1	4

### OBJECTIVE 2. Identify Which Higher Education Institutions are the Major Operators of Asian Study Abroad Programs for Agriculture and Life Sciences:

The results show that Michigan State University is the major operator of study abroad programs in Asia. Out of the total 115 study abroad programs in Asia, 51 programs are conducted by Michigan State University; Texas A&M University ranks second with 11 programs. Half of the 25 universities operate only one program in Asia.



**OBJECTIVE 3. Identify Which Academic Area Receives Priority for Study Abroad Programs Among the Four Major Disciplines in Agriculture and Life Sciences—(1) Agriculture; (2) Family and Consumer Sciences and Human Sciences; (3) Forestry and Natural Resources and (4) Veterinary Medicine:** Among the four FAEIS academic program areas, agriculture receives the highest priority for study abroad programs. Forty-three of the 115 study abroad programs in Asia focus solely on agriculture. Eight programs in India and six programs in China focus solely on agriculture (Table 1). Although China was the top destination for all agriculturally-driven study abroad programs, when disaggregated by discipline, India was the top destination for agriculture. Other agriculturally-driven U.S. study abroad programs in China are forestry and natural resources (4); family and consumer sciences and human sciences (6); and interdisciplinary agriculture sciences, programs that involve more than one of the above disciplines (4). Veterinary medicine does not have U.S. study abroad programs in China.

Find a program that's right for you!



## 5 Conclusions

The FAEIS International Programs' Database promotes global initiatives in higher education and recognizes international accomplishments for both the institution and its faculty. Agriculturally-driven study abroad programs in the United States visit a wide range of countries in Asia. The most travelled Asian countries are China, India and Russia. Among the four program areas of FAEIS, the U.S. study abroad programs in Asia focus predominantly on agriculture and are either research-based or teaching-oriented. Such agriculture related study abroad programs are mostly conducted in India and China. Among the land grant colleges and universities, Michigan State University operates most of these study abroad programs in Asia. To conclude, FAEIS-IPD is a resource that can be used to develop partnerships with other institutions; review the breadth of international projects and serve as a recruitment tool to quickly identify campus-based experts who could serve on international projects.

## 6 References

- Bruening, T. and X. Shao. 2005. What should be included in an international agriculture undergraduate course. *J. of International Agricultural and Extension Education* 12(1):47-54.
- Falk, R. and N.A. Kanach. 2006. Globalization and study abroad: An illusion of paradox. *Frontier: The Interdisciplinary Jour. of Study Abroad* 6 (Winter):155-168.
- Kleine, C., D. E. Lawver, C. Meyers, J. Ulmer, and D. Laverie. 2012. The phenomenon of combining service learning and study abroad: A qualitative inquiry. PhD Dissertation, Agricultural Education, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, TX.
- Myers, D.N., M. Hill, and S.A. Harwood. 2005. Cross-cultural learning and study abroad: Transforming pedagogical outcomes. *Landscape Jour.* 24(2):172-184.
- Norris, E.M. and M.M. Dwyer. 2005. Testing assumptions: The impact of two study abroad program models. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Jour. of Study Abroad* 11:121-142.
- Norris, E.M. and J. Gillespie. 2009. How study abroad shapes global careers evidence from the United States. *Jour. of Studies in International Education* 13(3):382-397.
- Ogden, A. 2007. The view from the veranda: Understanding today's colonial student. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Jour. of Study Abroad* 15:35-55.
- Patterson, P.K. 2006. Effect of study abroad on intercultural sensitivity. PhD Dissertation, Department of Education, University of Missouri-Columbia, Columbia, MO.
- Peacock, J.I. 2005. Corporate recruiters' perceived value of study abroad and international travel experiences. MS Thesis, Department of parks, recreation, and tourism management, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC.

