According to the Institute of International Education’s Open Doors data:
- 2005/2006: White: 93.0%, Ethnic Minorities: 17.0%
- 2016/2017: White: 70.8%, Ethnic Minorities: 29.2%
- According to NCES’s Digest of Education Statistics: Students enrolled in colleges/universities in 2016:
  - White: 53.9%
  - Ethnic Minorities: 40.8%

Individuals who study abroad are primarily white students who come from higher income families, the number of minority students studying abroad has increased within the past 11 years by 12.2%; however, the majority of students who study abroad are still white.

Benefits of low-income and ethnic minorities studying abroad

- Increase self identity development:
  - Ask deeper questions about themselves and other societies
- Host countries benefit:
  - Can observe a broader American perspective that is often ignored or portrayed negatively
- Enables students to:
  - reject stereotypes
  - experience emotional link to their own and others ethnic history
  - examine American cultural values critically
  - experience growth in terms of ethnic and racial identity
  - experience enhanced achievement and motivation
- Minority students are more likely to excel academically
  - More likely to finish their degree/certificate
  - Community college students are more likely to transfer to a 4-year university
  - First and second year retention rates are higher
  - Increases employability and career skills

Who Studies Abroad?1,2

Scholarship Resources6

- Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship
- Up to $8,000- priority given to students of minorities, first generation and Pell grant recipients
- CAPA The Global Education Network - Diversity Advocate Grant
- $1,000 grant for students that attend HBCUs
- AIFS
- John S. Lankas Scholarship - low-income student committed to social justice
- Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities - Scholarship support for Hispanic students
- FIE: Foundation for International Education - Generation Study Abroad Scholarship
- Scholarship support for minority and first generation students ($3,000)

There are additional scholarships and resources available. For more information visit diversyabroad.com

Why are Students of Minorities and Low-Income not Studying Abroad?4

- Barriers
  - Financial cost
    - Low-income students often times attend universities on a scholarship or government aid, studying abroad is an additional expense that is not funded through government aid (housing, living costs, tuition fees, travel costs, and living expenses). Low-income students are often times working a job that helps to assist their family financially.
  - Fear of discrimination
    - Many minority students have experienced discrimination directly and indirectly. There is a fear of these students that if they experience racism and discrimination within their own country, there is no predicting the discrimination they might experience in foreign nation.
  - Family disapproval
    - African American families: There is a family disapproval in regards to safety and racism
    - Asian American families: As of 2002, it was noted that family disapproval is a restraint for 53% of Asian American students
    - Native American families: “have family and work commitments that may limit their time for traditional study abroad programs when those programs require students to travel for long periods of time”
  - Historical patterns and expectations
  - Minority families do not have a history of sending children abroad to pursue their education. As demonstrated in the Open Doors data report, there is a long established tradition of white, upper and middle class American students studying abroad.
  - “Not For Me theory”:
    - Minority students don’t think of studying abroad as something they can do. Since they do not believe that it is right for them, they then filter out and ignore any information that is regarding studying abroad.
  - Lack of institutional support
    - Many minority students report that their biggest barrier is a lack of support from their university, whether there be a lack of programs offered, inadequate information, awareness, advising and long-term program planning.

How Can This Change?5

In order to see a more diverse study abroad community, it is important to take note of the barriers that are preventing minority students from going abroad. The barriers preventing minority and low-income students from studying abroad are what makes it difficult to increase diversity abroad. These are barriers that have more of an impact on minority students than white students. Although it is harder to get minority students abroad, that does not mean we should stop trying to encourage them. To decrease barriers we should further promote and support opportunities, as it is beneficial for all ethnic groups.

There are additional resources that can help minority students, such as scholarships, which are available to students who plan ahead and make an effort to study abroad.

Why are Students of Minorities and Low-Income not Studying Abroad?4

6. “10 Programs That Offer First Gen & Minority Study Abroad...” GoAbroad.com

BIBLIOGRAPHY

January 2019: Thailand (Bangkok, Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai)
I am a Hispanic, first generation STEM major. I traveled in a group of 16 people, of which only two were a minority. The biggest barriers for me were finances, family disapproval, and fear of discrimination. The biggest barrier that affected me wanting to study abroad was believing in the Not For Me Theory. Prior to studying abroad, I always thought that it was an expense that I would not benefit from, would make me extremely uncomfortable, and feel like I am neglecting my personal responsibilities.

There are significant benefits for minority students who study abroad. More gains need to be made to ensure that they have access to the high-impact experience.
Some of my personal experience as a minority include:
- Introducing American/diverse culture to the Thai culture
  - I.e. Hair, types of relationships, views/stereotypes

How Can This Change?5

How Can This Change?5

Personal Experience as a Minority Student Abroad

6. “10 Programs That Offer First Gen & Minority Study Abroad...” GoAbroad.com