

doi:10.5191/jiaee.2016.23103

University Student and Faculty Needs, Barriers, and Expectations of International Efforts and Opportunities: A Closer Look at One Land-Grant University's College of Agriculture

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Abstract

International academic opportunities have gained increased attention among students, faculty, and administration at American universities. It is important for agricultural students to have an awareness and understanding of agricultural policy and issues in the United States and other countries. Also, faculty who have personal and professional ties internationally are often the link for these students to engage in global experiences. This study used descriptive survey methodology to assess students (N = 773) and faculty (N = 85) at the University of Arkansas about their perceptions of international experiences, as well as what they saw as the most influential barriers and influencers to participating in international experiences. Students noted their parents (M = 3.30) as the most impactful influence for deciding whether or not to engage in an international experience, and cost (M = 3.92) was perceived as the most influential barrier to an international experience. Faculty noted money (84.2%) and time (80.7%) as barriers, and about one-half of the faculty wished to collaborate with institutions in Europe. Faculty perceived that institutional financial support should be provided to both faculty and students (74.1%). This study notes student influencers and barriers and faculty needs and provides recommendations for improving international learning experiences and opportunities for future research.

Keywords: agricultural education, international experiences, international experience influencers and barriers, study abroad

Introduction

Study abroad opportunities for United States students have been a common theme in higher education since the 1970s (Hachtmann, 2012). These experiences have diversified over the years, starting as a general education model focused primarily on sending mostly female students to Western European countries for cultural and language training (Hachtmann, 2012). Now, study abroad experiences focus on preparing students for a global market, and the typical experience is not easily defined (Hachtmann, 2012). During the 2011-12 academic year, 283,332 U.S. students studied abroad for academic credit, an increase of 3.4% from the previous year (Institute of International Education, 2013). This mirrors the trend in study abroad increases over the past two decades, during which U.S. student participation has more than tripled (Institute of International Education, 2013). Higher education prioritizes internationalization through various programs for increased academic and professional opportunities involving students and faculty (Andreasen, 2003; Dewey & Duff, 2009; Harder, Lamm, Roberts, Navarro, & Ricketts, 2012; Navarro & Edwards, 2008; Salisbury, Umbach, Paulsen, & Pascarella, 2009). Internationalization efforts at one university was categorized into four main areas: faculty research and teaching, curriculum, study abroad programs, and other areas of activity (Dewey & Duff, 2009). Yet, these efforts vary by institution.

Engaging in international experiences provides students with many educational opportunities and instances to develop professionally and personally (Kitsantas & Meyers, 2001). The educational justifications for study abroad include increases in students' level of awareness of the interdependence of nations, value of diversity, development of global

perspective, and the importance of international understanding (Kitsantas & Meyers, 2001). In addition to these educational justifications, it is also thought that study abroad experiences allow students to be more competitive in the job market after graduation and to develop language proficiency and lifelong friendships (Kitsantas & Meyers, 2001). Research also links the accumulation of culturally relevant knowledge gained from study abroad experiences to creative thinking processes (Lee, Therriault, & Linderholm, 2012). Within the framework of a global knowledge-economy, universities provide and advertise study abroad opportunities that are thought to equip students with the skills, abilities, and mindsets "needed to deal with the realities of globalizing markets, greater job insecurity, and the likelihood of continual occupational mobility throughout their lives" (Barnick, 2010, p. 21). The University of Arkansas set a goal for 25% of graduating seniors to complete an international experience (University of Arkansas Annual Report, 2013); however, the current rate of graduating seniors in the Dale Bumpers College of Agricultural, Food and Life Sciences (Bumpers College) at the University of Arkansas completing an international experience ranges from 3 to 5% annually (Dean Michael Vayda, personal communication, August 22, 2013).

Ultimately, the decision to study abroad is for each student to make, and students must consider a myriad of factors before committing to pursue an international experience. When students choose programs, decisions are usually made based on budget or career goals (Salisbury et al., 2009). Students who prioritize budgets consider additional direct or indirect costs, family income, and other financial considerations, and students who choose a program based on career goals consider their academic potential, preparation for program

achievement, and the likelihood that a program will enable them to reach their career goals (Salisbury et al., 2009). Salisbury et al. (2009) also noted the socioeconomic status of a student's family, based on parent's income and education level, is positively related to intent to study abroad. Students are also influenced by timing, meaning they decide when to study abroad based on education and career timeline (Barnick, 2010).

Students viewed study abroad opportunity attributes as motivators or deterrents in the decision-making process (Payan, Svensson, & Hogevoid, 2012). The motivator and deterrent attributes were statistically different, and the research showed that motivators have stronger impact on students' likelihood to study abroad (Payan et al., 2012). Motivators include attributes such as "fun, different culture, personal development, different language, and broadened career opportunities," and all of these attributes loaded on one factor in the statistical analyses of Payan et al. (2012, p. 76). Deterrents loaded on three separate factors, which included (1) relationships and commitment, (2) country concerns, and (3) economic concerns; only one deterrent was significantly negatively associated with the likeliness to study abroad; relationships and commitment (Payan et al., 2012). Payan and colleagues (2012) postulated the likeliness to study abroad was influenced primarily by three factors: risk aversion, motivators, and the relationship and commitments deterrent. Economic concerns did not have a strong effect on the likeliness to study abroad, which could be attributed to the economic conditions in the countries, i.e. the United States and Norway, where this data was collected (Payan et al., 2012).

Once students decide to engage in an international experience, they must make the decision of where to travel. In 2012, the top three leading destinations of U.S. students

were the United Kingdom (12.2%), Italy (10.5%), and Spain (9.3%) (Institute of International Education, 2013). In terms of choosing where to study abroad, historical or colonial links between home and host countries, commonality of language, the availability of science or technology-based programs, and geographic proximity of the home and host countries all play important roles (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002).

Researchers also noted the more knowledge a student has of a potential host country, the more likely the student will be to travel there (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002). Another factor that influences students' choices of study abroad destinations is family influence, which is particularly strong for undergraduate students (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002).

As noted previously, international experiences allow students to grow personally and professionally (Kitsantas & Meyers, 2001). The task of seeking and securing opportunities for students in higher education, however, often falls to university faculty. After participating in an international experience, faculty strongly supported student participation in international programs (Hand, Ricketts, & Bruening, 2007). Faculty who participate in international programs acquire unique aspects in their professional development (Hand et al., 2007; Harder et al., 2012; Navarro & Edwards, 2008), such as "academic validation, intellectual growth, acculturation, academic administration, and cognitive repositioning" (Festervand & Tillery, 2001, p. 109). Faculty participating in international efforts have a changed outlook on the world and their careers (Hand et al., 2007; Harder et al., 2012). Faculty research and teaching on an international level includes personal experiences, conference and network participation, and both short-term and long-term appointments as visiting researchers or instructors at

institutions abroad (Dewey & Duff, 2009). Faculty-perceived benefits include working with people from different cultures, expanding their knowledge of current issues and affairs on an international scale, positive impact on teaching, and having a life-changing experience (Dooley, Dooley, & Carranza, 2008; Hand et al., 2007).

Previous studies noted barriers to faculty involvement in international efforts, especially concerning program cost and time commitment (Andreasen, 2003; Dewey & Duff, 2009). Lack of administrative support may be another barrier to faculty involvement in beginning and leading a study abroad initiative. With no recognition of international efforts for tenure and promotion decisions, assistant professors are discouraged from engaging in international programs or research (Dooley et al., 2008). Higher education institutions should offer financial opportunities and tenure and promotion decision incentives to encourage faculty to participate in and expand on international opportunities (Dooley et al., 2008). Departmental challenges when faculty members are abroad, such as securing replacement instructors, managing salary payment, and maintaining continuity in the department, also serve as deterrents to faculty pursuing international experiences (Dewey & Duff, 2009). "Barriers exist, real or imaginary, regarding the internationalization of courses, departments, colleges and the university as a whole" (Andreasen, 2003, p. 65). Barriers to successful faculty international work should be reduced or eliminated in colleges of agriculture to facilitate internationalization (Andreasen, 2003).

Theoretical Framework

Social cognitive theory has been used to describe the processes that occur during a study abroad experience (Conner, 2013). Social cognitive theory is an

explanation for learning based on interactions between people (Bandura, 1986). Bandura (1986) asserted that learning can only occur if individuals involved in the process possessed prior capabilities, including symbolizing capability, forethought capability, vicarious capability, self-regulatory capability, and self-reflective capabilities. The symbolizing and forethought capabilities hold particularly important impact on students as they decide and prepare to engage in an international learning experience. Symbolizing capability allows individuals to adapt and alter their surrounding environment and assign meaning to that experience; it is also the first capability learners must negotiate (Bandura, 1986; Conner, 2013). Students who decide and prepare to engage in international experience must first navigate this capability if they desire to attribute meaning to the change in their environment, which in this case is an international learning experience. Forethought capability allows learners to think about the consequences their actions will create before they engage in the behaviors (Bandura, 1986). This is important for students who are making the decision to study abroad; whereas, they must weigh the consequences of an international experience before they engage in the experience.

The need exists for educators to support student participation in study abroad programs (Wingenbach, Boyd, Lindner, Dick, Arispe, & Haba, 2003). Wingenbach et al. (2003) found a lack of knowledge about international agricultural issues among undergraduates, but noted potential, existing opportunities to present knowledge in classroom curriculum or through participation in international experiences. Research has been conducted to determine the effect of study abroad programs on students in a college of agriculture (Zhai & Scheer, 2002). The study abroad experiences

of the agricultural college students had positive effects on self-efficacy and understanding of cultural diversity and understanding (Zhai & Scheer, 2002). It is particularly important for agricultural students to gain awareness of international agriculture and the effects of policy and issues on agriculture in the United States and other countries (Edgar & Edgar, 2009). The National Research Agenda, a document that guides the agricultural education discipline, prioritizes sufficient scientific and professional workforce that addresses the challenges of the 21st century and meaningful, engaged learning in all environments; both of these priorities can be improved through a better understanding of international learning experiences at the collegiate level (Doerfert, 2011). Yet, little research has been conducted to understand what factors contribute to an agricultural student's desire to study abroad, where college of agricultural students want to study abroad, and what hinders agricultural students from studying abroad. In addition, to allow educators to support student participation in study abroad programs, research should be conducted to assess the past international experiences of faculty members, as well as their preferred views on opportunities and existing barriers to future experiences.

Purpose and Objectives

Previously, the Bumpers College at the University of Arkansas did not have a centralized office to support international programs for its faculty and students. However, in August 2013, a formal office was established. As part of the charge of the new international programs office, it was important to understand perceptions, preferences, and needs of students and faculty, along with influencing factors, barriers, and benefits to students and faculty

engaging in international learning experiences.

This study assessed Bumpers College students at the University of Arkansas to determine students' preferences for various types of international learning experiences, desired length and time of experience, and barriers to studying abroad. This study also surveyed faculty to determine their perceptions of benefits to being involved in international efforts, barriers to involvement, and location of preferred international engagement.

Four objectives guided this study: 1) determine students' perceptions of international experiences (i.e., time and duration); 2) describe students' influencing factors and barriers for engaging in international learning experience; 3) determine faculty members' perceptions of benefits and barriers to being involved in international efforts; and 4) describe locations of faculty previous and/or preferred international engagement.

Methods

This study utilized descriptive survey methodology to assess student and faculty perceptions of international experiences, perceived barriers and influencers of international experiences, and selected characteristics of the respondents.

The population for this study consisted of all Bumpers College students. Therefore, the student survey used a random stratified sample, i.e., academic department and course level (Trochim, 2001), of large-enrollment undergraduate courses in the Bumpers College during the fall semester of 2013. Initially, 24 courses were identified to be surveyed, but only 19 course instructors agreed to participate and were surveyed as a part of this research study. The instrument was distributed during a regularly scheduled class meeting for each course. Prior to instrument distribution, a brief statement

was read explaining the purpose and voluntary nature of the study and asking students having completed the instrument in another class to not participate again. According to official course rosters, 1,094 (potentially duplicated) undergraduate students were enrolled in these 19 courses; usable data were collected from 773 students for a 70.1% response rate. Because of the anonymous nature of the research it was not possible to control for non-response error.

The student instrument consisted of 13 questions that assessed students' international learning experience preferences, perceived barriers and influencers to studying abroad, and gathered information about selected characteristics. Part I of the survey assessed students' willingness to participate in an international experience, type of experience desired, length of international learning experience, and duration of and time of year desired for experience. These questions were structured in a multiple choice format. The second part of the survey assessed students' perceived barriers and influencers to engage in international experiences, students answered these questions on a five point response scale, ranging from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (5). The barrier options used in this research were based on barriers used in research studies by Edgar and Edgar (2009) and Wingenbach et al. (2003). Part II of the survey instrument was comprised of questions about the students' previous international experiences. Part III of the survey instrument gathered students selected characteristics information, classification at the time of the survey, and provided space for students to leave comments. Face and content validity were assessed and deemed acceptable by faculty involved in international programs in the Bumpers College.

The faculty instrument was based on the student survey and was administered to

Bumpers College faculty in early spring semester of 2014. Bumpers College had 165 full-time teaching faculty at the time data were collected. Usable data were collected from 85 respondents. The faculty instrument consisted of 11 questions that assessed faculty members' perceptions of international programs, their international program experience, their views on the benefits and barriers to being involved in global experiences, and solicited recommendations for improving Bumpers College's international programs. Barriers in the faculty survey instrument were altered to account for the differences in barriers faculty may face compared to students. At the beginning of the instrument, respondents were asked to read a brief statement noting the Bumpers College international programs mission and the purpose of the survey. Part I of the instrument assessed faculty members' previous international experiences. Faculty members were also asked to list the countries and institutions in which they had previous international experiences. Part II of the survey instrument assessed the relationships associated with global experiences, perceived benefits and barriers to international engagement, and international locations in which faculty members had been or would like to be engaged in the future. These questions were structured in a multiple choice format with the option to select any that apply(ied), with the exception of listing preferred regions for future international engagement, and recommendations for improving Bumpers College international programs.

Data analysis consisted of descriptive statistics, including the computing of frequencies, means, standard deviations, and percentages. Open-ended responses were counted to determine frequency. Data were analyzed with SPSS© version 20.

Findings/Results

A total of 773 students were surveyed from the college of agriculture. All classifications of students were represented in approximately equal proportions: 23.6% freshmen, 27.9% sophomores, 28.8% juniors, and 19.7% seniors. Of the students surveyed, 66.3% were interested in an international experience. Bumpers College students who were interested in an international experience were most interested in general study abroad (52.4%), internships (47.3%), research (18.2%), study tour groups (17.9%), and finally faculty-led programs (13.5%). Regarding length of stay, students who desired to

engage in an international experience chose 4 to 6 weeks (32.2%) more frequently than any other time span; followed by one semester (27.5%), 2 to 3 weeks (23.5%), 7 to 12 weeks (12.6%), 2 semesters or more (2.6%), and one week or less (1.5%). Students were most interested in international experiences during the summer semester (49.8%), followed by spring semester (20.3%), between summer sessions (16.8%), fall semester (13.1%), and winter break (11.5%). Student respondents indicated that their previous international experiences were primarily in European countries (Figure 1). Pins represent each location reported by students.



Figure 1. Geographic locations where Bumpers College students had global experiences.

In regard to individuals who play a major role in influencing a student's decision to study abroad, agricultural students were neutral or disagreed on whether or not parents, faculty, peers, or siblings influenced their decisions to study abroad. Student participants listed parents as the most important influencer ($M = 3.30$, $SD = 1.28$), followed by faculty ($M = 2.95$, $SD = 1.24$), peers ($M = 2.91$, $SD = 1.25$), and siblings ($M = 2.43$, $SD = 1.28$). However,

the large standard deviations noted indicate substantial variability in the students' responses.

The students identified cost as the most inhibiting barrier to participating in international experiences ($M = 3.92$, $SD = 1.16$), and they disagreed that the fear of traveling outside of the United States was a barrier ($M = 1.89$, $SD = 1.18$). Additional barriers are noted in Table 1.

Table 1
Students' Perceived Barriers to Participating in an International Learning Experience
 (N = 773)

Barrier	n	M	SD
Money	767	3.92	1.16
Time	765	3.60	1.16
Language	764	3.21	1.15
Do not know the opportunities	769	3.04	1.14
Do not know the benefits	767	2.68	1.18
My personal skillset	765	2.60	1.06
Fear of traveling outside the country	767	1.89	1.18

Note. Scale: 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Undecided, 4=Agree, and 5=Strongly Agree.

A total of 75 Bumpers College faculty participated in the study. When asked about engaging in global experiences in the past 10 years, 76% (n = 57) answered *yes* and 24% (n = 18) answered *no*. Faculty were asked to describe their relationships associated with global experiences; person-to-person, i.e., faculty in the United States to faculty in another country, relationships had the most responses (86.7%), followed by

multi-institutional programs (44.4%), bilateral agreements (28.9%), and U.S. state department programs (13.3%). When asked to identify countries where faculty have engaged internationally, European countries had the most representation in responses (39.3%), followed by Asian countries (22.1%), as represented in Figure 2. Pins on map represent specific countries with experience and not frequency.



Figure 2. International locations where Bumpers College faculty had global experiences.

Bumpers College faculty noted the benefits of being involved in international efforts. Of the 45 faculty who responded to this question, 88.9% found involvement provided value to their respective departments, followed by a tie with value to students (84.4%) and to the university

(84.4%), and then to their overall careers (84.4%). Respondents also expressed Bumpers College (82.2%) and their research inquiry (77.8%) received value.

Open-ended comments were included to help understand why faculty chose to work or collaborate abroad. When

asked to identify the areas in which faculty had been or would like to be engaged internationally, 83.0% of responses were research collaboration, followed by educational purposes (79.2%), cultural exchanges (42.4%), distance education to bring experts into the classroom (30.1%), humanitarian efforts (28.6%), and other (13.3%). The other category included technical assistance, administrative facilitation, meetings/presentations, business development, and student exchanges. When asked where they would like to engage internationally, 49.2% of faculty answered

Europe or a European country, followed by South or Central America (21.3%), and Asia (14.4%), which is represented in Figure 3. Pins, in the figure, are representative of region and/or country based on participants' responses. Bumpers College faculty were asked to identify barriers to being involved in global experiences. Money (84.2%) and time (80.7%) were the largest barriers, and 29.8% identified administrative support as a barrier. Table 2 describes faculty members' perceived barriers to engaging in international experiences.

Table 2
Faculty Members' Perceived Barriers to Engaging in an International Experience (N = 75)

Barriers	n	%
Money	48	84.2
Time	46	80.7
Administrative support	17	29.8
No global contacts	13	22.8
Not knowing where to begin	11	19.3
Not familiar with campus procedures and policies	10	17.5
Lack of student interest	7	12.3



Figure 3. Geographic locations where Bumpers College faculty are invested in having global experiences.

Faculty were also asked to identify their needs to assist the newly developed International Programs Office (IPO) for Bumpers College, including the use of

funds. The majority of faculty members noted that funds should be used to support both faculty and students (74.1%). None of the faculty respondents answered that IPO

funds should be used to only support faculty. Table 3 shows a complete set of faculty members' responses in regard to where funds should be used. In validation, faculty were asked to provide insight in regard to what the IPO could do to better assist them and their students. The faculty members indicated three primary areas for which they preferred to receive assistance from the IPO: connecting, developing, and funding. The "connecting" responses comprised 37.9% of the full set of responses, and these responses called for the IPO to assist faculty by creating and maintaining connections that would enable them to engage and provide

international experiences. Next, 27.6% of the responses to this question called for developing the IPO to better assist faculty. The responses recommended improved and increased infrastructure in the IPO that would improve the process faculty members' face when engaging in or providing international experiences for students. Finally, 27.6% of the responses to this question indicated that funding would be helpful in assisting faculty; this response pointed toward the need for the IPO to secure and provide funding for international experiences.

Table 3
Faculty Members' Recommendations for Improving the International Programs Office (IPO) of the Bumpers College (N = 75)

Areas	<i>n</i>	%
Support students and faculty	40	74.1
Support students and faculty at the discretion of the International Programs Committee	16	29.6
Support students and faculty at the discretion of the faculty; Awards made to faculty and faculty decide on students who should be funded	15	27.8
Support student international research	15	27.8
Support students only	7	13.0
Support faculty only	0	0.0

Conclusions

The fact that more than one-half of the students surveyed in this study were interested in an international experience mirrors previous research that showed international learning opportunities continues to be a growing part of the higher education experience (Institute of International Education, 2013). Drawing from previous literature, these students were likely interested in an international experience for the effects it could have on their future, including increasing awareness of diversity, developing a global perspective, improving their job marketability, and creating lifelong

friendships (Kitsantas & Meyers, 2001). The university targets students with these aspirations by advertising study abroad opportunities that will provide students with skills, abilities, and mindsets to adjust to increasingly globalized markets, potential job insecurity, and occupational mobility (Barnick, 2010).

When choosing to engage in international learning experiences, students must decide which type of opportunity will provide the most benefits and contain the least barriers. Students in the college of agriculture were most interested in study abroad as an international experience. In addition, students were interested in

experiences that lasted 4 to 6 weeks. Furthermore, the students surveyed indicated an international experience in the summer semester would be more desirable than at other times during the academic year. Choices students make regarding their preference in type and length of international experiences were made based on their perception of how well these opportunities fit into their educational timeline (Barnick, 2010). Thus, it seems agricultural students at the University of Arkansas are more apt to consider an international learning experience that does not require a lengthy time commitment, as indicated by the 4 to 6 week preference, and an experience that does not detract from their educational timeline. Also, it was most preferable for students to have a study abroad experience during the summer semester. The findings from this research revealed that respondents believed that the relationship/commitment deterrent was the most critical; this was the only deterrent found in previous research to be negatively associated with the likelihood of engaging in international learning experiences (Payan et al., 2012).

Students' also responded to questions on the survey that assessed their perceptions of barriers and influencers to participating in international learning experiences. The barrier identified by respondents that held the most bearing on their decision was cost. This barrier coincides with previous research that noted students typically make decisions based on two factors—budget and career (Salisbury et al., 2009). The students surveyed placed more importance on budget concerns in our study. Students were least concerned with fear of traveling outside the United States as a potential barrier to participation. This finding is similar to research conducted by Payan and colleagues (2012), which noted that country concerns were not an important

barrier to deciding to engage in international learning experiences. Students in our research indicated that fear of traveling was the least likely barrier to influence them. This supports previous research that found the more connected students feel to a destination country the more likely they were to travel there (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002). The most impactful influencer of students in our study were parents, which highlights the particularly strong influence family has on school-related decisions (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002). It is important to note that of the types of influencers listed on the survey instrument, a particularly large spread did not exist between the most influential and the least influential factor. This could be interpreted that Bumpers College students were not highly influenced by the opinions of any one group; yet, use all their resources to assist with decision making regarding international learning experiences.

More than three-fourths of the Bumpers College faculty surveyed had experience in international efforts in the past 10 years, supporting previous research that international programs are gaining more interest and attention among higher education institutions (Andreasen, 2003; Dewey & Duff, 2009; Harder et al., 2012; Salisbury et al., 2009). The majority of the programs established were based on person-to-person relationships between faculty and members of their own professional networks. In past experiences, faculty visited European countries most, followed by Asia, Africa, and South and Central America. Similarly, when asked where they would like to engage in future international efforts, Europe lead faculty preferences, followed by South and Central America, and Asia. Faculty members' expressed that participating in international efforts added personal or professional value for their students learning in the courses they teach;

supporting previous research that faculty support students' participation, and that these programs influence their teaching, research, and career appointments (Dooley et al., 2008; Hand et al., 2007). Faculty members' noted that their participation in international experiences added value to Bumpers College, the University of Arkansas, as well as their respective departments, students, research programs, and to their careers. Regarding future international efforts, faculty members' preferred to engage in research collaboration and educational purposes. The strongest barriers to faculty members' participation in international programs were money and time, which was also found in previous research (Andreasen, 2003; Dewey & Duff, 2009). These perceived barriers may be a result of universities not recognizing faculty participation in international programs when making tenure and promotion decisions, and not providing adequate funding for programs.

Recommendations

Conclusions gleaned from the findings of this study led to three pertinent recommendations for providing international experience opportunities for agricultural students at the University of Arkansas. First, if the Bumpers College wants to put more emphasis on international opportunities and the learning afforded through them, it should seek out and provide opportunities for their students that hold value other than what they can gain in the curriculum at the university (Kitsantas & Meyers, 2001). A key concept of learning under social cognitive theory is that students must be able to alter their environment and assign meaning to an experience (Bandura, 1986), however, students cannot begin to do that unless opportunities for such an experience and the meaning attributed to it are accessible to students.

Next, Bumpers College students were more interested in international experiences that fit into a short-term time commitment and did not require time out of their preconceived educational timeline. Applying the social cognitive theory lens once more, student forethought is key to learning (Bandura, 1986), and, in this context, agricultural students focus on commitment and timing as the primary areas of forethought. To improve the learning capacity of international experiences, the Bumpers College should address these areas of forethought to improve the likelihood students will engage in international learning experiences. In application, this means that the IPO must educate students on the benefits, outside of convenience, when making plans to participate in international learning experiences. The college should focus on recruitment messages that identify the value of traveling on these international learning experiences. That messaging could focus on the value of diversity, development of global perspective, the importance of international understanding (Kitsantas & Meyers, 2001), greater competitiveness in the job market after graduation, increased language proficiency, and lifelong friendships (Kitsantas & Meyers, 2001), as well as the benefits of learning in that specific country.

Finally, Bumpers College should invest more time into making students aware of financial funding opportunities available and work to secure more financial funding and scholarships so the influence of the major deterrent revealed by this research—cost—can be lessened. Following these recommendations will partially fulfill the need for educators to support student participation in international learning experiences noted in previous research (e.g., Wingenbach et al., 2003). In addition, following all of these recommendations would create awareness of international

agriculture, which is an important competency for agricultural students entering the workforce (Edgar & Edgar, 2009) and something that many universities are working toward.

Implications for Future Focus at Our University

The conclusions gathered from the faculty members' survey findings support three key recommendations for enabling faculty to engage in international experiences. Faculty appear to work primarily in Europe, Asia, Africa, and South and Central America and wish to work in Europe, South and Central America, and Asia in the future. Due to limited funding for international experiences, it is recommended that the University of Arkansas and Bumpers College focus funding and program establishment on areas with the strongest connections and interest among faculty. By focusing funding and strategic opportunities on areas with strong connections and interest, both faculty and students could benefit financially and professionally.

Next, faculty members' perceived benefits of international efforts add value to their careers, research endeavors, students, departments, the college, and the university. However, international engagement is not recognized in many universities' tenure and promotion decisions (Dooley et al., 2008), including decisions made at the University of Arkansas, which has a goal for 25% of graduating seniors to complete an international experience (University of Arkansas Annual Report, 2013). The University of Arkansas and Bumpers College should include international experiences of faculty members in these decisions to reinforce the value declared for international efforts.

Finally, to meet goals for university internationalization, higher education

institutions, in particular, the University of Arkansas should offer financial opportunities for faculty members to participate in and expand international programs (Dooley et al., 2008). The Bumpers College IPO has limited funding to offer faculty and students; therefore, the university should explore offering financial support such as travel grants and international sabbaticals for faculty, scholarships for students, and building networks that could contribute to financial needs in the primary focus areas expressed by faculty members. These recommendations address barriers to faculty engagement abroad, recognize benefits offered to faculty by these experiences, and encourage internationalization among faculty. Following these recommendations may result in student integration through faculty-initiated and led programs, contributing to meeting the University of Arkansas' goal for student participation in international learning experiences.

Based on the findings of the student section of this study, future research on the topic of student influencers and barriers to participating in international experiences should focus on gaining a more complete understanding of the range of factors students consider. Students' responses to the influencers and barriers presented in this study yielded results that showed none of the options were particularly notable. This finding may provide insight into assessing influencers and barriers more precisely, which may improve the opportunities offered to students to gain international experiences through their higher education. Research also should be conducted to assess why students were interested in international learning experiences, not necessarily what influences decisions their participation or keeps them from an international experience; this could take the form of qualitative research. Further research could

explore reasons why universities do not consider international experiences in tenure and promotion decisions and provide insight on how to incorporate such efforts in that decision process. In addition, more research should be conducted to better understand faculty needs that could be addressed to improve their international experience opportunities at higher education institutions.

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