



College of Biological Sciences

"There are few things more educational than experiencing your own country from the perspective of a foreign land. It makes you realize there are things other countries do much better than your country does, and it makes you appreciate things about your own country that you would otherwise take for granted."

—Valery E. Forbes, Dean, College of Biological Sciences

History of Curriculum Integration at the University of Minnesota

In the late 1990s, the University of Minnesota (UofM) began a pilot project to test new ways to integrate study abroad into the curriculum. It offered a model for interactions with other academic units. Meanwhile, the UofM leadership placed priority on providing international perspectives as part of the undergraduate experience. Past presidents Mark Yudof and Robert Bruininks enthusiastically supported study abroad as one way to integrate international perspectives into the curriculum. Over the last 20 years, undergraduate experience abroad participation has grown from 861 to over 3,000, and learning abroad as a percentage of degrees granted reached 35% in 2019.

Career Integration

In 2012, the Learning Abroad Center (LAC) developed a campus-wide committee to apply the methodology of Curriculum Integration to a specific focus on career planning. Once again, the LAC partnered with campus colleagues to further integrate studying abroad into career advising structures and articulated individual program outcomes while further assisting students in maximizing career reflection and opportunities on site.

History of Curriculum Integration in the College of Biological Sciences

Since 2003, the College of Biological Sciences (CBS) and the LAC have maintained a strong Curriculum Integration partnership. This long-standing partnership focuses on the alignment and development of program needs, allowing for more CBS learning abroad opportunities in undergraduate research, field work, and integrated courses.

Although the funding from the Bush Foundation Grant ran out long ago, the LAC has built a sustainable model that speaks to the success of the innovations that are still part of our work. CBS continues to collaborate with the LAC to integrate learning abroad into the undergraduate student experience.

Due to the college's small size, cross collaborations over the years have continued. In 2012, Nikki Letawsky Shultz took on an expanded new role as Assistant Dean for Student Affairs and International Programs. Shortly thereafter, through a financial partnership with CBS, one LAC staff member began to operate in a split position—75% LAC, 25% CBS—allowing them to work with CBS students, faculty, and staff.

Undergraduate Student Participation

CBS undergraduate abroad participation has grown from 15 in 1999–2000 to 263 in 2018–19. The college continues its serious commitment to increasing the number of CBS students who study abroad.

Scholarship Information

CBS supports learning abroad through three primary initiatives:

- CBS Passport Program
- CBS Study Abroad Scholarship
- Murray and Pearl Rosenberg Award

Students selected for the CBS Passport Program receive assistance in the passport application process, and CBS funds all their passport expenses.

The CBS Study Abroad Scholarship is intended to encourage more CBS students to study science and/or conduct research abroad. The scholarship awards up to \$3,000 for semester

or academic year programs and up to \$1,500 for summer, winter break, and spring break programs.

The Murray and Pearl Rosenberg Award provides assistance with travel expenses for CBS undergraduate students conducting research or providing humanitarian service abroad. Preference is given to students traveling to non-English-speaking countries, especially developing countries, and those working on projects or research that have a direct impact on human health. Award amounts typically range from \$800 to \$1,200.

CBS students regularly receive funding from the Learning Abroad Center. Scholarships awarded include the LAC Study Abroad Scholarship, Financial Need Scholarship, and Diversity Abroad Scholarship.

CBS students are also eligible to apply for the innovative LAC Bridging Loan Program. "This program has made study abroad possible for underrepresented students and highlights a creative solution to an institutional economic barrier," says former Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost Karen Hanson. Since 2013, more than 240 University of Minnesota students have received funds to cover program deposits and flight booking costs. This enables students to pay for these predeparture costs later with their financial aid package without added interest or fees. In addition, the UofM received an honorable mention for the 2015 Heiskell Award by the Institution of International Education (IIE).

On-Site Program Engagement Opportunities

Since the late 1990s, the LAC has engaged more than 450 campus partners on program reviews, familiarization visits, and program development opportunities. Of those, 23 of these visits have involved CBS faculty and staff. Locations visited include Argentina, Australia, Cambodia, Chile, Costa Rica, Denmark, Ecuador, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Norway, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom.

Program Development Based on Curricular Needs

CBS and the LAC have a strong collaboration that includes developing programs abroad focused on freshmen, specific majors, and interdisciplinary programs that broadly serve the college. A few examples include:

Australia

Study & Intern in Sydney

University Study in Australia: James Cook University
University Study in Australia: University of Melbourne

Denmark

Study Abroad in Denmark

Ecuador

MSID Ecuador

Ireland

Study Abroad in Dublin
University Study in Ireland: University of Limerick

Kenya

MSID Kenya

Norway

Exchange in Oslo
University Study in Norway: Norwegian University of Life Sciences

Senegal

MSID Senegal

Spain

Cross-Cultural Health in Spain

Thailand

MSID Thailand

United Kingdom

Study & Intern in London
University Study in the United Kingdom: Queen Mary University of London
University Study in the United Kingdom: University of Glasgow

The School for Field Studies

The University of Minnesota–Twin Cities has been an affiliate member of The School for Field Studies (SFS) since 2007. The affiliation was established based on a request from CBS

to further expand program locations for the college's students, including options for the CBS marine biology minor.

CBS has continued to play an active role with SFS. In 2017, George Weiblen, CBS professor in Plant and Microbial Biology, and Kim Hindbjorgen, Assistant Director, Curriculum and Career Integration at the LAC, participated in the SFS inaugural external review team. That fall, Letawsky Shultz joined the SFS Council, an advisory group to provide guidance on a range of important issues that define the field of environmental education.

Instructor-Led Programs

Since 2000, CBS has offered nearly 35 instructor-led programs abroad. Locations include Brazil, Ecuador, Honduras, Iceland, Ireland, Norway, and Sweden.

Instructor-led faculty and staff include Robert Brambl (Plant and Microbial Biology), James Cotner (Ecology, Evolution, and Behavior), Sehoya Cotner (Biology Teaching and Learning), Kelaine Haas (undergraduate research coordinator), Nikki Letawsky Shultz (Student Affairs and International Programs), Randy Moore (Biology Teaching and Learning), Jennifer Powers, (Ecology, Evolution and Behavior), and John Ward (Plant and Microbial Biology).

Additional Faculty & Staff Engagement

Ongoing Adviser Engagement

LAC adviser training

Student scholarship review

U-Credit Abroad training

Committee Representation

Early curriculum integration efforts

- Freshman/Sophomore Advising Group
- Major Advising Group
- Undergraduate Department and Discipline Representatives

Recent Committee Engagement

- Career Integration Partnership Committee
- Career Integration Partnership Group
- COVID-19 Advising Leads

- Education Abroad Network Advisory Board
- Global Health Advising Collaborative
- Learning Abroad Center Advisory Committee
- Multicultural Study Abroad Group

Presentations

“Meaning Making through Short-Term Programs.”

February 2021 Excellence in Leading Programs Abroad Series

Nikki Letawsky Shultz, Presenter

“Digital Storytelling & Journaling.”

November 2019 Excellence in Leading Programs Abroad Series

Nikki Letawsky Shultz, Presenter

“Under the Microscope: Examining Data for CBS Learning Abroad Strategies.”

December 2018 Learning Abroad Center Annual Update Meeting

Nikki Letawsky Shultz, Presenter

“Intercultural & Experiential Learning, Journaling, Reflection.”

November 2017 Excellence in Leading Programs Abroad Series

Nikki Letawsky Shultz, Presenter

“Freshman Seminars Abroad: A Bridge to Being Global Ready.”

February 2017 University of Minnesota Student Success Conference

Nikki Letawsky Shultz, Presenter

“Intercultural & Experiential Learning, Journaling, Reflection.”

November 2015 Excellence in Leading Programs Abroad Series

Nikki Letawsky Shultz, Presenter

“Curriculum and Career Integration of Learning Abroad.”

August 2015 Summit on Learning Abroad

Nikki Letawsky Shultz, Co-Presenter

“Internationalizing the Sciences? Yes, it's possible!”

April 2014 Internationalizing the Curriculum and Campus Conference

Nikki Letawsky Shultz, Presenter

“Using Goal-Based Education Abroad to Address Workforce Expectations for STEM Graduates.”

July 2014 University of Minnesota Career Integration Conference

Nikki Letawsky Shultz, Co-Presenter

“Curriculum Integration of Learning Abroad.”

August 2013 Summit on Learning Abroad

Nikki Letawsky Shultz, Presenter

Publications

Dordel, Rebecca et al. (2015): “Career Integration Onsite Workshops,” in Career Integration: in C. Anderson, J. Christian, K. Hindbjorgen, C. Jambor-Smith, M. Johnson, & M. Woolf, eds., Career Integration: Reviewing the Impact of Experience Abroad on Employment, pps. 53-56, Learning Abroad Center, University of Minnesota and CAPA International Education Publications, Boston, MA.

Updated 28 January 2022 (developed August 2021)