

SCIENCE

The Representation of Majors in Purdue University Study Abroad Programs

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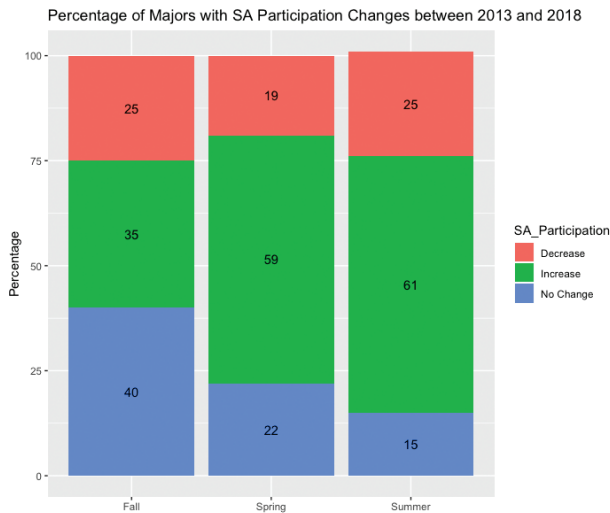
In September 2013, Purdue announced a new scholarship fund that was intended to increase study abroad participation. Starting in spring 2014, students could apply for the “Purdue Moves” scholarship, which offers up to \$3,000 to qualified undergraduates who study abroad. In order to ensure that these scholarships provide opportunities to study abroad for students with majors that were previously underrepresented in study abroad programs, an analysis was conducted to see how study abroad participation by major has changed from 2013 to 2018.

Study abroad participation was analyzed using academic periods (fall, spring, summer) for 2013 (the year before the scholarship began) and 2018. Only identically coded majors between 2013 and 2018 that had ten or fewer students studying abroad in 2013 were analyzed.

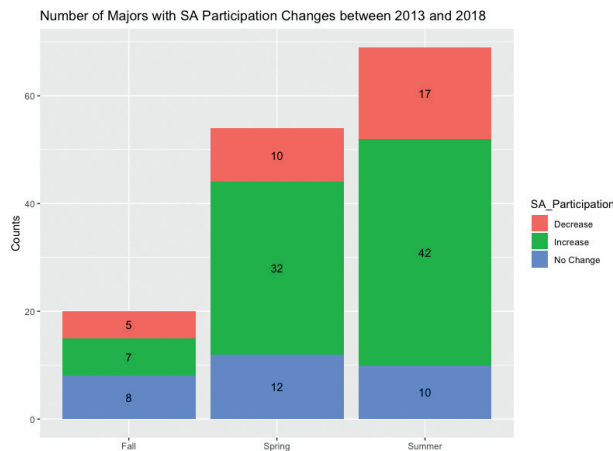
Several of the majors that included increased participation for all three terms were STEM-related,

while economics and management majors tended to have a decrease in participation, especially in the spring. For all three academic periods in both years studied, the College of Education had the fewest students studying abroad, but this could be due to the overall small size of the college. There is no clear trend of majors seeing either increased or decreased study abroad participation based on their disciplinary colleges, meaning that the scholarship did not inadvertently only benefit students in certain colleges. While the majority of underrepresented majors in study abroad programs have seen increased participation since Purdue Moves has been established, it is important to investigate the reasons why majors such as organizational leadership and food science are seeing even lower levels of participation than they had in 2013.

Research advisor David Nelson writes: “Since Purdue prioritized international experiences in 2013, not all students have benefited equally. Ms. Martinez provides insightful inquiry into the disparity and identifies specific majors whose students may have been denied the opportunity to study abroad. This analysis should encourage departments and colleges to examine their international learning opportunities.”



Percentage of underrepresented majors in study abroad programs that had decreased, increased, or had the same level of participation from fall, spring, and summer 2013 to 2018.



Number of underrepresented majors in study abroad programs that had decreased, increased, or had the same level of participation from fall, spring, and summer 2013 to 2018.