**Long-Term Student Benefit of International Agricultural Study Abroad Courses**

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**ABSTRACT**

Iowa State University College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALS) has offered international agricultural travel courses since 1963. Students traveled to Europe, Eastern Europe, or Asia on roughly a bi-annual basis. We were interested in learning if agricultural travel courses had an impact on the student-travelers’ careers, and if the employer and employee perceived any benefits. Lists of student travelers collected over decades in the Agronomy Department at Iowa State University gave a unique opportunity to take a long-term perspective. We sent 335 surveys to students who had participated in a CALS-led international ag study course between 1964 and 1990. We received 132 valid responses. Respondents were asked to rate on a 5-point Likert scale to what extent they agreed or disagreed with statements regarding their international study course and career advancement and their personal development and attitudes regarding international awareness and humanitarianism. The responses relating to significant career advancement correlated with overall positive attitudes, a mean of 3.70 on the 5-point scale, toward the effect of student travel. Most respondents felt their employers benefitted as well. The questions on personal development such as improved self-confidence had a mean score of 3.86, and broadened attitudes regarding others’ customs and beliefs scored 4.22. One question regarding increased international interest had a mean score of 4.16. Overall the survey showed strong impacts and favorable attitudes decades after participation in an international agricultural travel course.

**Core Ideas**

- Do agricultural travel courses have an impact on the student-travelers’ careers, and do the employer and employee perceive any benefits?
- We surveyed 335 students who had participated in an Iowa State ag-led international ag study course between 1964 and 1990.
- Overall the survey showed strong impacts and favorable attitudes decades after participation in an international agricultural travel course.

**EXPERIMENTAL LEARNING**

In the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALS) at Iowa State University (ISU) as off-campus summer study courses dates back to the 1930s (ISU Department of Agronomy records). From the 1930s until 1963, the off-campus courses focused on travel within the United States, allowing students to learn about domestic agricultural production. The first international study course sponsored by CALS was in 1963; lead by faculty in the Departments of Agronomy and Animal Science. After 1964, the international study courses became bi-annual, alternating with the domestic travel study course. The first international travel courses went to Europe, including Eastern Europe; the first Asian tour was in 1980. In general, the short-term travel study courses were 4 to 6 weeks in duration.

In the late 1980s, faculty began experiencing difficulty in recruiting students because students were using the summer months to gain work experiences, participate in internships, and generate income. Beginning in 1991, ISU CALS cooperated with five other Midwestern universities to offer international travel experiences. These courses were offered during spring break, which did not interfere with the student’s summer obligations. In the late 1990s, Iowa State University and CALS recognized the importance of global citizenship and began stressing the need for undergraduate students to have international study abroad experiences. Modest scholarships were made available by CALS and departments to help defray the costs. International study abroad courses lead by faculty are now offered by CALS during Thanksgiving, winter, spring, and summer breaks. Currently, the international travel courses are from 10 days to 3 weeks in duration. Approximately 22% of ISU CALS students who graduated during the 2015/2016 academic year participated in some type of international study abroad experience either short-term (up to 6 weeks) or long-term (a semester or academic year) before graduating.

The CALS students returning from short-term international study courses today are offered a post-trip survey immediately after their return, often during the travel home. The assessment criteria for study abroad programs used by CALS Study Abroad Program is similar to the criteria described by Gillespie et al. (1999). The surveys ask about pre-departure preparedness, such...
as accurate description of the trip, advertising and promotional materials, health, safety, cultural briefings, and introductions to a country’s agriculture. A second section contains instructor/leader evaluations and questions concerning the academic value and course rigor from the student’s point of view. Subsequent sections in the post-trip survey allow students to comment on logistical arrangements and costs. Students are asked to comment on the achievement of their pre-trip goals. Students returning from international study courses are generally optimistic and positive regarding the value of their experiences and expect the experiences to have favorable impacts on their careers. An example of a typical response is, “My experience abroad has changed my career plans.” Because of the freshness of the response, how their career plans have/Will change is/cannot be articulated.

Study abroad outcome assessments at other universities are also routinely conducted soon after a participant’s return from abroad. Many studies focusing on long-term study abroad experiences referenced assessments that focused on the acquisition and/or proficiency of language, as well as changes in personal attitudes, interests, and values. The American Council of Teachers of Russian and the National Foreign Language Center (Breth and Robinson, 1993) surveyed 658 students who studied abroad for one semester in Russia. The study used qualitative measures to predict students’ success at language acquisition. The study also included several qualitative measures of language acquisition after the students’ return, including analysis of self-reported daily diaries, narrative and oral journals, and student notebooks. The qualitative findings reinforced the belief that the more language competency a student has before immersion into a foreign language environment, the more the student tends to gain while in-country. Dwyer’s study (2004) of personal and cultural adjustments found increased maturity, independence, and personal development obtained via study abroad through extensive qualitative interviews. However, the study involved only 23 students who had studied for one semester at Oxford University in England.

Patterson (2006) wrote her dissertation on how intercultural sensitivity is affected by study abroad. She compared students participating in on-campus summer school courses as a control group with those in short-term study abroad courses of 2 to 4 weeks during a comparable period of time at the University of Missouri. Patterson used interviews and the development model of intercultural sensitivity (DMIS) (Bennett, 1986) to qualitatively assess changes in attitudes. The DMIS was developed to describe how people react to cultural difference. Neither group drastically changed their intercultural attitudes on the various scales of the DMIS; however, the study abroad group demonstrated small statistically measurable attitude changes.

A large-scale study assessed whether students taking courses abroad gain greater global awareness compared to those who enrolled in similar courses at the same time (winter term 2003 and 2004) on their home campus (Chieffo and Griffiths, 2004). The on-campus courses were defined as being at the same level (introductory or advanced) as the course abroad experience. Of 1792 students who studied abroad in programs at least 4 weeks in length, 1509 (84%) completed a survey just prior to the completion of their course of study. Of the 1008 on-campus students, 827 students (82%) also filled out surveys during the last week of the winter session. The surveys asked 21 questions aimed at assessing global awareness; the questions were in four categories: personal growth and development, awareness of global interdependence, functional knowledge of world geography and language, and intercultural awareness. Results dealt with the students’ perceptions and recollections and were not measurements of actual learning or changes in behavior. Of the eight questions associated with intercultural awareness, seven showed significant statistical differences (p < 0.05) between the two groups. The results indicated students in the abroad group had a greater recognition than their peers who studied at home that “the whole world is not like the United States.” (Chieffo and Griffiths, 2004).

Undergraduate students at Indiana University’s Kelley School of Business (KSB) are expected to meet an international dimension requirement, which is satisfied by either a mastery of a foreign language, international economics and business coursework, or an international study with a 6-hour minimum. In a survey of 198 KSB students, Orahood et al. (2004) found of the 42% who studied abroad, 96% responded that their study abroad experience made a difference in their career plans, 94% expressed an interest in working for a company in the United States with an international focus, and 82% were interested in working abroad. Only 51% of the non-study abroad survey respondents had any interest in working abroad. This was a study that dealt with students’ own perceptions of the study abroad experience. Orahood did not venture a conclusion as to whether the study abroad experiences led to the greater interest in working internationally or if students who were interested in working internationally were drawn to study abroad experiences.

Another study determined how well goals of the Michigan State University’s International Studies and Programs Office of Study Abroad were being met (Ingraham and Peterson, 2004). The goals included (1) to promote the intellectual growth, both in academic performance and in language learning, and (2) to develop personal growth, intercultural awareness, and professional development of students who participated in study abroad programs during 1999 through 2002. Respondents (1104) completing post-surveys were enrolled in 295 different study abroad programs in approximately 40 countries. The programs studied varied in length. Some were less than 3 weeks, or others were 3 to 7 weeks, 7 to 14 weeks, and some lasted an entire academic year. Results indicated students’ perceptions and recollections and were not measurements of actual learning or changes in behavior. Results were scored using the Likert 5-point scale, asking respondents to what extent they agreed or disagreed with a statement. In the category of intercultural awareness, students were asked six questions including, “Study abroad has contributed to my understanding of other cultures, and has increased my appreciation of human difference, and has contributed to my understanding of my host country” as well as, “My study abroad experience has enhanced my understanding of international issues, has increased my curiosity about other cultures, and has increased my understanding of my own culture.” The average score of the six questions in the category of intercultural awareness was 4.13 on a 5-point scale. A typical response was, “I have become more open-minded.” In the category of personal growth, students were asked nine questions including, “Study
abroad has enhanced my independence, enhanced my self-reliance, increased my ability to cope with unfamiliar situations, and helped me develop leadership skills” as well as, “My study abroad experience has improved my problem-solving skills, increased my level of comfort with people different from myself, and I have become more open-minded.” For personal growth, the average score was 3.78 (5-point scale). The two statements on the survey to query academic performance relative to international experience were, “Studying abroad has enhanced my critical-thinking skills” and “My study abroad experience has led to an improvement of my academic performance.” For academic performance, the average score was 3.22. A statement to query professional development was, “Studying abroad has made me reconsider my career plans, and helped me find professional direction.” The score for professional development was 2.72; this was the only area on Ingraham’s survey that scored below 3.0. Results indicate that a long-term experience enhanced the students’ international awareness and personal development.

Farrell and Suvedi (2003) conducted a study at Michigan State University of 139 students studying in Nepal for 12 weeks between 1997 and 2001. The survey was designed to assess students’ academic and personal development and measured flexibility, emotional maturity, empathy, and intellectual development. To gauge results quantitatively, participants were asked to complete a survey consisting of 26 close-ended questions and then four open-ended questions for a more qualitative characterization. After the surveys were returned (50.7% returned), researchers interviewed students and case studies were developed from those interviews. Results dealt with the students’ perceptions and recollections and were not a measurement of actual learning or changes in behavior. Results were scored using the Likert 5-point scale asking respondents to what extent they agreed or disagreed with a statement. The quantitative assessment focused on areas of personal development, academics, global perspective, and professional and intellectual development. Of the nine questions regarding personal development, the lowest mean response score was 3.26 in response to a question that asked if study in Nepal “helped develop my leadership skills.” The highest response was to a question asking if study abroad in Nepal “enhanced my self-reliance” 4.26. Of the nine questions regarding global perspectives, responses ranged from a very high 4.84 when asked if study abroad in Nepal “contributed to an overall understanding of Nepal” to a low of 4.31, when asked if study abroad in Nepal “increased my comfort around people different from me.” In the section asking about professional and intellectual development, students were asked if study abroad in Nepal “helped me find professional direction,” the results were low, at 2.84.

Most research assessing study abroad programs lack a multi-year perspective after travel. One long-term study conducted by the Study Abroad for Global Engagement (SAGE) sent 21,569 surveys and received 6391 responses (a 29.6% response rate) from former study abroad participants representing 22 United States colleges and universities and covering almost 50 years from 1960 to 2005 (Paige et al., 2010). Just under a half of the participants participated in the classic semester-long study abroad. The most common length of study among the entire sample was 4 months (25.4%), followed by 3 months (22%). Around 10% of the sample studied abroad for 1 or 2 months, and 23.7% were in programs abroad for 5 or 6 months. The study sought to ascertain in what ways and to what degree global engagement of the student travelers had changed after their study abroad experiences, and whether the student travelers attributed the change to the study abroad program. When asked about career decisions, 35.2% of study participants indicated that study abroad had helped their career to a large degree, and 39.9% indicated that study abroad had helped their career to some degree. Many study participants (37.7%) also indicated that their careers currently are, or have had, some international orientation. The study also found that undergraduates attributed their study abroad experiences to many subsequent educational and occupational decisions. The results showed since completing their bachelor’s degree, 60.5% of the participants had enrolled in one or more advanced degree programs. An internationally oriented graduate degree was pursued by 35% of the participants who worked on advanced degrees.

Two long-term surveys investigated the effects of study abroad on career and professional development. The ERASMUS Program (European Region Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students) was established in 1987 in the European Union with the purpose of using student exchange to promote unity. Students typically study away from their home university for at least one academic term in another country. Bracht et al. (2006) conducted a comprehensive study on the long-term professional impacts of the program covering not only the 4589 university students who had completed the program (2065 responded, or 45%), but 3123 former teachers (755 teachers responded, or approximately 24%), 626 university leaders and administrators (44% of the 1437 contacted), and approximately 4500 employers (312 responded, or 6%) of the student participants. Three groups of ERASMUS participants from 1988 to 1989, 1994 to 1995, and 2000 to 2001 were surveyed. Students were contacted after graduation from their home universities. Over the 13-year span of the survey, a majority of former ERASMUS students reported that their study abroad experience was helpful in obtaining their first job. However, the success rate declined with more recent graduation dates—the 1988 to 1989 group reported a 71% success rate, which fell to 66% for the 1994 to 1995 participants, and down to 54% for the 2000 to 2001 group. The survey covered a wide geographical area of Europe (16 home and host countries) and also covered 16 fields of study.

The Institute of International Education (IIE), an independent nonprofit academic consortium founded in 1919 to promote international student educational exchange, has a long history of evaluating its programs. The Institute surveys students both during and immediately after the students’ study abroad experiences. Over 50 years, IIE estimates it has sent over 45,000 students originating from over 500 U.S. colleges and universities overseas in 25 different programs in 14 different countries. In 2002, IIE added a longitudinal component to its evaluations (Dwyer, 2004). It was able to locate more than 14,800 alumni who studied between the academic years 1950 to 1951 and 1999 to 2000. The survey covered areas of career impact, intercultural development, personal growth, and academic attainment, with more than 28 questions, some of which had numerous sub-questions. The purpose of the study was to determine if study abroad
for one academic year had more pronounced effects than study abroad for one semester, or study abroad for a few weeks, on career and professional development. The Institute considered 32 weeks abroad a full-year program; 16-week programs were considered a semester program, and summer term programs ranged from 6 to 7 weeks. For career-development questions, the changes were more pronounced, in general, for those who spent a year studying abroad vs. those who spent a shorter time. For graduates who chose to work internationally, 57% had been full-year study abroad students. Full-year students opted for full-time employment with multinational organizations 21% of the time vs. 17% for those who studied abroad for a shorter duration. In answer to the question, ”Did study abroad cause a change in career path,” full-year students admitted to making a career change 18% of the time vs. 12% for those students who studied abroad for a shorter duration. The IIE study showed significant positive effects for all groups who studied abroad in personal development, intercultural awareness, academic attainment metrics, and continued language use; some effects were noted for as long as 50 years after travel.

Although both the IIE 50-year alumni survey and the ERASMUS study were large surveys comparing career impacts, neither survey had a control group. The ERASMUS study included teachers and employers as well as student travelers. A survey that covers a span of 13 years can be called a long-term study, but the survey group was divided into three periods (1988 to 1989, 1994 to 1995, and 2000 to 2001), whereas the IIE study covered almost 50 consecutive years. None of the IIE 50-year alumni study questionnaire items exactly matched those from the ERASMUS study, but there were similarities. The IIE study found that 20% of respondents reported their IIE experience influenced them to get a job overseas. This is similar to the 18 to 20% of the ERASMUS respondents who said they had been ”regularly employed abroad—at least for some time after graduation.”

None of the long-term studies focused on agricultural related travel courses. The studies cited referred to student experiences in which students lived and studied abroad as opposed to a typical ISU CALS study course in which students travel as a group for a 10-day to 5-week period. Additionally, ISU CALS has not assessed the effect that short-term travel courses may have on travelers’ professional careers. We were interested to know whether former student travelers reported positive career effects due to the short-term travel classes. We were particularly interested in surveying students 25 years or more after their travel experience.

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

International short-term travel courses in ISU CALS began in 1963; however, the names of those student travelers were unavailable. After 1964, the international study courses became bi-annual, traveling to Europe, including Eastern Europe; the first Asian tour was in 1980. Students enrolled in the travel courses would spend the quarter or semester preparing for the trip by studying different aspects of the country, e.g., the agricultural food system, geography, economics, history, and politics. Some instructors would spend some time teaching rudimentary statements in the language of the country(ies). Prior to the 1990s, the in-country time during the international experience was approximately 5 weeks in duration. Not all instructors provided a debriefing after the trip.

We were interested in surveying student travelers who had traveled more than 25 years ago, allowing for enough life experiences to put their international study course in perspective. Using our archival files, we chose those who had traveled from 1964 to 1990. Using the 412 archival names, the Iowa State University Alumni Association was able to generate address labels for 335 of the 412 students (Table 1).

Our survey questions focused on career development, humanitarianism, educational attitudes, personal development, and international perspective. For every question we offered respondents an opportunity to comment and many did. Given that we were interested in the year students traveled and where they went—not

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Destination</th>
<th>No. of student travelers</th>
<th>No. of surveys mailed</th>
<th>No. of responses†</th>
<th>Percentage returned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>62.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>44.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>31.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>35.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>61.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>24.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>36.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>41.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undetermined</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>402</td>
<td>335</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>39.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

† 132 surveys were returned, but 7 could not be matched to an exact year of travel.
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results and discussion

We were interested in learning if short-term travel courses had an impact on the student travelers’ careers, and if from the employer and employee perspective, there were perceived benefits. Lastly, we asked questions to determine if student views regarding humanitarianism, personal development, and international awareness were affected (Table 2). Students who traveled in the 1960s and 1970s, in general, responded to our survey at higher rates than those in the 1980s or 1990s (Table 1). Those who were students in the mid-1960s and 1970s would be 60 or 70 years old now. It might also be reasonable to assume at least a few more of the group would have passed away by now. However, the earliest international ag study course (1964) actually had the highest response rate (62.5%). Students who traveled in the mid-1960s and 1970s would be expected to have retired or certainly be of retirement age. Students participating in international ag travel classes in the 1980s and 1990 could be expected to be mid-career or nearing retirement. Perhaps retirees have more time to respond to surveys.

Career Development

Our first question with regard to career orientation was, “My international ag study class had a significant positive effect on my career path.” Only one person strongly disagreed and five disagreed. Conversely, 53 (40.5%) agreed and 26 (19.8%) strongly agreed. One of those who disagreed and chose to comment was a 1978 student traveler to Europe who said, “I planned to return to the family farm.” Of those who neither agreed nor disagreed, two travelers noted that the effect was not realized until many years after the international experience. A 1970 traveler to Europe said, “It was not until mid-career that my ag travel course experience came into play,” and another traveler to Europe in 1976 had a similar comment, “It broadened my perspective considerably, but impact on career did not come until 35 years later.” Of those who agreed or strongly agreed, a traveler to Europe said, “It made me more aware globally of agricultural systems. Increased my interest in finding new ideas and concepts in agricultural production.” A 1971 traveler to Europe said, “My intent was to farm, and I have, but my work in the soybean industry needed the international travel experience.” Two 1972 travelers had different reactions. One said, “Helped reaffirm a desire to report on global commodity markets. Was tremendously helpful in understanding complexities of international agricultural policies, especially during the time of the Soviet Bloc,” and the other, “Always remembered how high land prices were in Europe. Bought some because!” A 1980 student traveler said, “Seeing how differently the Europeans tended livestock piqued my interest and caused me to make livestock selection, nutrition, and handling my life’s work.” A traveler to China in 1980 returned to China to teach English and said the experience made her a better ag journalist. And another from the same trip said, “Ended up with a Ph.D. in marketing and just finished leading my own class to Africa.” Another said, “I wanted to live and work overseas as an agriculturalist and this trip affirmed my desire to do so.” A 1988 traveler to Europe said it helped him decide to farm in the United States.

Our next question, “My international ag travel class caused me to think about alternative career paths,” did not generate strong reaction one way or another. Only six strongly disagreed and eight strongly agreed. With a standard deviation of 0.98 against an average of 2.91 on the 5-point scale, the answers clustered around those who answered neither agree nor disagree (36.9%). Agricultural study classes are often taken by upperclassmen who have developed a career path by the time they go on the trip. Comments from those who strongly disagreed, such as a traveler to Europe in 1980, were “I wanted to be a veterinarian then and I became one,” and another said simply, “I farm.” A traveler to Asia in 1980 disagreed but said, “I still wanted to be an agricultural journalist but it greatly increased my global perspective and made me a better journalist.” Even though only eight strongly agreed, the comments emphasized the effect on their careers. A 1979 traveler to Europe who strongly agreed said, “Switched from returning to farm to an ag business career.”

A question with an employment focus was, “My international travel class caused me to think about working or living overseas,” to which 37.9% disagreed and 10.6% strongly disagreed. A 1978 traveler to Europe strongly disagreed, noting, “It was great to travel overseas but also made me glad to come home to the United States.” A 1988 student traveler to Europe probably spoke for the majority, “Nice places to visit but I wouldn’t want to live there.” Only 23 (17.4%) respondents agreed and 12 (9.1%) strongly agreed with the statement, and they provided interesting comments. A traveler to Europe in 1964 said, “Yes, I have lived some in Argentina and Japan and Australia. Though I probably would have done such anyway, the (travel study course) experience reduced barriers of uncertainty.” Another traveler on the same trip said, “I have done several assignments with the State Department.” A student on the 1975 European trip strongly agreed and said, “I investigated Heifer Project International and served as an animal advisor in Cameroon, West Africa.” A traveler to Europe in 1976 said, “I strongly considered doing a 2-year post-doc in Gambia in 1986.” A traveler to Europe in 1976 said, “My ISU ag travel course experience was positive and instilled self confidence that convinced me to apply for European work thru USAID. Without the ISU ag travel course experience, I would have never looked at working outside the United States.” A 1980 student traveler to Asia agreed and said, “I worked as an agriculturalist in Nepal for 7 years.” Two respondents said they had purchased property overseas. A European traveler from a trip in 1974 said, “Bought a farm in Brazil/would be nice to live there.”

Another employment-oriented question was, “My international ag travel class was valuable in helping me get a job or being promoted after employment,” to which 51.5% neither agreed nor disagreed. One of those who neither agreed nor disagreed said, “The experience helped to mold my character and broaden my knowledge of animal and plant agriculture. My knowledge level and communication skills helped me gain employment several times later in life.” Another said, “I can’t say for sure that it helped me get a job, but it has been a valuable experience and
Table 2. Question and response data of students on international ag study courses between 1964 and 1990.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Mean Likert score</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Career development</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My international ag travel class had a significant positive effect on my career path.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>0.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My international ag travel class caused me to think about alternative career paths.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>0.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My international ag travel class caused me to consider working or living overseas.</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>1.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My international ag travel class was valuable in helping me get a job or being promoted after employment.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>0.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My international ag travel class gave me a global perspective that I think was valued by my employer(s).</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think my employer(s) benefitted from the broader global perspectives I gained on my international ag travel class.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>0.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My international ag travel class made me more inclined to work for a company or organization with an international scope.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>0.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My employer(s) recognized me as someone who could successfully work in a global marketplace.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Humanitarianism</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>My international ag travel class encouraged me to seek out opportunities to volunteer for international humanitarian aid work.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My international ag travel class gave me an increased concern for the welfare of the world.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3.77</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Educational attitudes</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was a more serious student after completing my international ag travel class.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>0.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My international ag travel class prompted me to change my major, add a minor, or add additional courses related to international topics.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>0.90</td>
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<tr>
<td>My international ag travel class prompted me to apply to graduate school.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>My international ag travel class reinforced a desire to learn a foreign language.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.58</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Personal development</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My international ag travel class sparked a life-long interest in international travel.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>3.82</td>
<td>1.02</td>
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<tr>
<td>My international ag travel class gave me more self-confidence.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td>0.69</td>
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<tr>
<td>My international ag travel class enabled me to broaden my thoughts about others’ customs and beliefs.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>4.24</td>
<td>0.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>International perspective</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My international ag travel class gave me a better understanding of how the U.S. is perceived in the world.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>0.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My international ag travel class increased my interest in world events.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>0.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My international ag travel class made me realize I am a citizen of the world.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>3.97</td>
<td>0.86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

† For the yes or no questions, “no” was scored 1 and “yes” was scored as 5 on a Likert scale.
contacts I made have been important in my employment.”
A 1987 traveler to Asia said, “I’m not sure I have a direct
link from the ag travel class to getting a job. However, I
can say that it has helped me greatly in providing me with
a broader perspective regarding food production and food
manufacturing.” The 13.1% who agreed and the 6.9% who
strongly agreed provided significant comments. A
student traveler to Europe in the 1960s (exact year could
not be determined) said, “I’m positive my experience and
contacts I gained from the international ag travel class were
truly beneficial in gaining employment with three different
organizations from 1973 to 2004.” A 1978 traveler to
Europe noted, “Employers like diverse experiences.” And a
Need I say more?”

One question addressed the value of the trip from an
employer’s perspective by asking, “My international ag
travel class gave me a global perspective that I think was
valued by my employers.” Only one respondent strongly
disagreed. The average response was 3.65 on a 5-point
scale, and 35.9 and 21.9% agreed and strongly agreed,
respectively. A student who traveled to Europe in 1964
and went to work for an animal feed producer said, “The
company saw that I had traveled overseas if only for a short
time and that I understood feed needs by various overseas
markets especially the Middle East.” A student who in 1968
taveled to Europe said, “As an independent consultant I
did a number of international speaking tours sponsored
by USDA and the State Department. While on faculty
at a university I participated in a faculty exchange with
University of Costa Rica and taught a course at Shenyang
Agricultural College in China.” Another student traveler said,
“15 years following my participation in the 1976 ISU travel
course, my experience was valuable to my then employer,
and I accepted an assignment to contract to USAID
organization. I traveled to the Czech Republic and consulted
on restructuring dairy farms in post-communist ruled
Eastern Europe.” A 1987 student traveler to Asia strongly
agreed, and said, “I work for Land O’Lakes and the ag class
global experience definitely is valued by my employer.”

Another employment-oriented question was, “I think my
employer(s) benefitted from the broader global perspective
I gained on my international travel class.” Only 2 out of
the 118 who answered the question strongly disagreed
and 12.3% disagreed. As with the previous question,
most agreed 45.9% with the statement and 9.8% strongly
agreed. A student traveler to Europe in 1968 offered
concrete proof when he commented, “Working in the UK
and Ireland, in the first 5 months, sales in these countries
tripled.” A 1972 student traveler to Europe who worked for
the Natural Resources Conservation Service agreed and
said, “I think the public benefits from my experience and
that is whom we serve.” A 1975 student traveler to Europe
said, “I was not just a rural Iowa farm boy when hired by
Heifer International Project.” A 1976 student traveler to
Europe agreed and added, “Employers that I have worked
for have appreciated not having to train tolerance of
opinions from outside local or U.S. areas.” A 1978 student
traveler to Europe agreed and went on to say, “I think I
really gained a lot of knowledge from visiting farmers from
Europe that I could apply to farmers here. Especially in the
crop forages area.”

Continuing employment-oriented questions, we asked
if, “My international travel class made me more inclined
to work for a company with an international scope,” and
41.5% neither agreed nor disagreed with an average of 3.1
and a standard deviation of 0.95. A 1964 student traveler to
Europe said, “One of the reasons I joined the company was
to sell feed overseas.” A traveler on a 1966 trip to Europe
said, “It made me appreciate working for a university where
international programs were strong and viable.” A student
who traveled to Europe in 1972 said, “I did consider soil
mapping overseas and also conservation work overseas.”

Another employment-oriented question was, “My
employer(s) recognized me as someone who could
successfully work in a global marketplace.” It was another
question that generated a strong consensus around the
mean. Slightly more than half (50.8%) neither agreed nor
disagreed with the statement. A 1972 traveler who neither
agreed nor disagreed attributed it to, “There were few
opportunities for overseas jobs.” A 1976 student traveler
to Europe was one of the 21.7% who agreed with the
statement and said, “Having the ISU travel course listed on
my resume and application for contracting service to USAID
made a positive difference. Having previous experience
in Europe was a focus during the hiring process.” A 1980
student traveler to Asia agreed and said, “I was offered an
ag business venture in Indonesia.”

**Humanitarianism**

A question that sought to find if respondents
were inspired to work for international humanitarian
organizations that have an employment as well as a
humanitarian orientation was, “My international ag travel
class encouraged me to seek out opportunities to volunteer
for international humanitarian aid work.” Of the 126
respondents to the question, exactly 30.0% disagreed,
and 38.5% neither agreed nor disagreed. The average
was 2.9, with a standard deviation of 1.01. One of those
who neither agreed nor disagreed, a 1987 traveler to Asia
said, “I wouldn’t say that the class encouraged me to seek
out volunteer opportunities for international humanitarian
aid work. I would say due to the exposure to the living
conditions of people in the countries I visited, I am a more
empathetic person. I already had been an active volunteer
but not necessarily categorized under international
humanitarianism.” Again those who agreed (19.2%) or
strongly agreed (8.5%) with the statement were also likely
to leave a comment, and even if they were in the minority,
the impact the trip had on their lives and the lives of others
was substantial. A 1967 traveler to Europe said, “People
are in need all over the world. While I was not interested in
being overseas for work, I did adopt six children from South
Korea.” Of the travelers to Asia in 1980, four left significant
comments. One said, “The class helped me realize a lot
more can be done to help people.” Another said, “This is
exactly the type of work I did in Nepal,” and another said, “I
am involved with an international organization which helps
developing countries with water purification systems,” and
another, “ Ended up volunteering in several countries.”

We asked for reactions to the statement, “My
international ag travel class gave me an increased concern
for the welfare of the world.” Only 2.3% strongly disagreed
and 3.1% disagreed. The average was 3.77, 28.5% were
neutral, 46.9% agreed, and 19.2% strongly agreed with a
standard deviation of 0.88. A student traveler to Europe in
the 1960s (exact year could not be determined) strongly
agreed and said, “You can’t help but be concerned about the
plight of other people and how their environment shapes their survival when seeing first hand some of the conditions they must deal with.” A traveler to Western Europe in 1980 said, “I already had an interest, and that interest has continued.” A 1987 traveler to Asia said, “Yes, Spanish, and I am still working on it.” A 1988 European traveler said, “Yes, Spanish, and how culture can impact living conditions. There is a huge need to help other countries.” A 1975 traveler to Europe also said no but went on to comment, “I should have learned German! Many friends there now.” Two of the 14.4% who answered yes were travelers to Asia in 1980. One spent a year in Taiwan learning Chinese and another studied Nepali. A 1980 traveler to Europe said, “Yes, Spanish in high school but encouraged me to work on it on my own and had my kids take a foreign language.” A 1988 European traveler said, “Yes, Spanish, and I have now traveled to 59 countries.” A student traveler to Europe in the 1960s (exact year could not be determined) said, “After my first degree in dairy science and then living in Norway, I returned to Iowa State and studied ag journalism. By that time, I was more geared, older, and challenged myself to be a better student. It paid off in a remarkable career.” Those who agreed such as a student traveler to Europe in 1968 said, “Started grad school, got married, saw a bigger picture,” and a 1970 traveler also to Europe, “Puts more value on more education. Created a quest for learning.”

In terms of educational attitudes, we asked people to respond to the question, "My international ag travel class prompted me to change my major, add a minor, or add additional courses related to international topics," 52.7% disagreed, 8.5% strongly disagreed, and 29.5% were neutral. The average response was 2.45 out of 5 with a standard deviation of 0.90. The comments tended to come from the minority on the side that agreed with the statement: A self-described, self-employed farmer who traveled to Europe in 1968 said, “I came back for great courses on ag economics and world economics.” A fellow traveler on the same trip agreed, and said, “I added an ag education minor to my farm operations major.” A 1972 student traveler to Europe strongly agreed and said, “I added ag journalism as a double major because of the trip.” A 1976 traveler said, “I took the World Crop class after my travel class.” A student traveler to Asia in 1980 returned to take a year of Chinese history to better understand what he had seen. Another traveler on that trip said she “Added Chinese in my master’s program.”

A yes or no question with the intention of learning about educational attitudes was, “My international ag travel course prompted me to apply to graduate school.” Only 9.1% agreed, but this was a question in which many indicated that they already had post-graduate plans by the time they took their trip. A 1966 traveler to Europe noted, “I was already accepted to grad school.” A 1968 traveler to Europe said, “No, I already planned to go to grad school,” and a 1972 European traveler said simply, “I got a job.” On the other hand, a 1964 student who went to Europe and circled yes went on to say, “An expanded scope made me aware of the potential value of graduate education.”

Another yes or no question about educational attitudes was, "My international ag travel class reinforced a commitment to learn a foreign language.” The majority (85.0%) said no, but the no was followed six times with a "but” or “however.” A 1966 traveler to Europe answered no followed by, “but I should have.” A 1970 traveler to Europe said no and followed with the comment, “Never learned a foreign language, but I could see the value of a foreign language.” A 1975 traveler to Europe also said no but went on to comment, “I should have learned German! Many friends there now.” Two of the 14.4% who answered yes were travelers to Asia in 1980. One spent a year in Taiwan learning Chinese and another studied Nepali. A 1980 traveler to Europe said, “Yes, Spanish in high school but encouraged me to work on it on my own and had my kids take a foreign language.” A 1988 European traveler said, “Yes, Spanish, and I am still working on it.” A 1987 traveler to Asia said, “Yes,” and “I enjoyed learning basic Chinese and Japanese. I encouraged my kids to learn another language.”

**Educational Attitudes**

We were interested to learn about the effects student travel courses have on educational attitudes and we asked respondents to what degree they agreed or disagreed with the statement, “I was a more serious student after my international ag travel class.” The average was 3.25 on our 5-point scale with a standard deviation of 0.87 for the 124 who choose to answer the question. A traveler to Europe in 1978 who disagreed said simply, “I graduated.” A 1964 European traveler agreed, “Discussion with students from other countries made me aware of how much more they had a ‘worldly’ perspective that I and other U.S. students had.” A student traveler to Europe in the 1960s (exact year could not be determined) said, “After my first degree in dairy science and then living in Norway, I returned to Iowa State and studied ag journalism. By that time, I was more geared, older, and challenged myself to be a better student. It paid off in a remarkable career.” Those who agreed such as a student traveler to Europe in 1968 said, “Started grad school, got married, saw a bigger picture,” and a 1970 traveler also to Europe, “Puts more value on more education. Created a quest for learning.”

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**Personal Development**

We asked several questions regarding personal growth and development. The first was, “My international travel class sparked a life-long interest in international travel.” The average response was 3.82. Only one respondent strongly disagreed, and those who disagreed (12.1%) often indicated that they already had the travel bug. A 1984 traveler to China and South East Asia and who disagreed said, “I already had the spark, and have been to Europe three times.” A student traveler in 1980 to Europe was one of the 20.5% who neither agreed nor disagreed, and went on to say, “I already had an interest, and that interest has continued.” Although not the intent, the 37.1% who agreed and the 29.5% who strongly agreed did not hesitate to list countries where they had visited. One student who went to Europe in 1964 said, “I have traveled a lot, over 50 countries,” and another from the same trip said, “I have now traveled to 59 countries.” A student traveler to Europe in the 1960s (exact year could not be determined) said, “25 countries.” A 1970 student traveler to Europe said, “I have been to over 50 countries, and to some, many times. I have been to all parts of the globe.” A 1976 traveler who agreed said, “Every time I’m in a foreign country, I take an ag tour of that country.” A student traveler to Europe in the 1970s (exact year could not be determined) said he had been back to the EU 10 to 15 times. A student traveler to Asia in 1980 said, “Over 80 counties on six continents (missing Antarctica),” and another student from that same trip strongly agreed and said, “South America investment in land.” A 1988 traveler to Europe said, “I have been to 50 to 60 different countries and all of the continents except Antarctica, and I have traveled all the way around the globe several times.”

In terms of personal development, we asked for responses to the statement, “My international ag travel class gave me more self-confidence.” No one strongly disagreed and only four disagreed out of the 129 who responded. The average was 3.86 out of 5, 23.5% neutral, 58.9% agreed, and 14.7% strongly agreed. A 1964 traveler to Europe strongly agreed and went on to say, “I was able to gain self-confidence by asking questions. Part of the confidence process comes from being out of your elements and your own little world. International travel proved to be
a valuable tool for me.” A 1976 European traveler agreed and said, “I had an adventurous spirit, but lacked courage, confidence, and know-how to travel much beyond central Iowa until the trip.” A 1976 traveler to Europe said, “For one thing it gave me enough confidence to travel alone for 4 weeks in Europe in 1980 and for 6 weeks in Australia and NZ in 1986. Last year I spent 3 weeks consulting in Eastern Russia.” A student traveler in 1980 to China said, “I had never traveled overseas before. Now I love talking to people from other countries. I love to travel abroad (on our own—not on a tour). I am not afraid of unknown situations.” Another from the same trip said, “This was my first time I traveled internationally and I felt more confident to go on my own afterward,” and yet another from the same trip said simply, “Knowledge replaces fear.”

We asked if, “My international ag travel class enabled me to broaden my thoughts about others’ customs and beliefs.” As with the other questions about international awareness, no one strongly disagreed with the statement and only two disagreed. The average was 4.2 with a standard deviation of 0.65, 10.2% neutral, 55.1% agreed, and 33.8% strongly agreed. A 1964 traveler to Europe philosophically commented, “A mind stretched by travel can never return to an earlier thought system,” and another from the same trip said, “Helped me understand that you must honor their customs when doing business with them.” A student traveler to Europe in the 1960s (exact year could not be determined) put it this way, “To avoid stubbing your toes or becoming involved in an embarrassing situation, you need a wakeup call and must focus on others’ customs and beliefs. The international travel class was a perfect way to start.” A 1978 student traveler to Europe added, “There’s more than one way to do things.” A 1980 traveler to China said, “I was able to see forms of agriculture, medicine, etc. that were not very ‘understandable’ to me, but which seemed to be working.” And a 1988 traveler to Europe realized, “Being different doesn’t mean it’s wrong. Accepting others’ customs and beliefs is a huge step towards global cooperation.”

Our curiosity regarding personal development prompted us to ask for respondents to rate their reaction to the statement, “My international ag travel class made me more tolerant of ambiguity and uncertainties.” No one strongly disagreed and nine disagreed. Of the 39.7% who neither agreed nor disagreed, one student traveler to Europe in 1972 left the comment, “Cognizant, yes. Tolerant, no.” The average response was 3.61, 39.1% agreed, 15.1% strongly agreed, with a standard deviation of 0.83. A student traveler to Europe in the 1960s (exact year could not be determined) agreed and said, “Everyone faces uncertainties every day. The travel class helped me solve problems because I was able to see the world in a different perspective.” A 1966 traveler to Europe said, “Exposure to multiple and varied ideas and viewpoints makes one more flexible and better able to handle conflicts or inconsistencies,” and another from the same trip, “You have to be very flexible and tolerant when traveling abroad.” A student traveler to China in 1980 said, “I realized there may be no right or wrong, only a different point of view.”

**International Perspective**

In seeking to learn more about international awareness, we asked the question, “My international ag travel class gave me a better understanding of how the United States is perceived in the world,” and no one strongly disagreed and only two or 1.6% disagreed. The average was 4.22, 55.9% agreed, and 33.9% strongly agreed, with a standard deviation of 0.67. A 1964 student traveler to Europe strongly agreed and left the comment, “It gave me a better perception of the United States and an expanded and improved appreciation of living here,” and from the same trip another student said, “It’s a big world and many world views.” A 1972 traveler to Europe including the then eastern communist-bloc agreed and said, “At that time it was hard not to notice the machine guns aimed at our bus at a couple of border crossings, including Berlin.” Another traveler to Europe in 1976 agreed and said, “Although people were friendly toward Americans during the course, it taught me that America is not the center of the world. It was interesting to spend the 200th anniversary of America’s independence in England. Not a lot of celebration in England.”

Another question along the lines of international awareness asked the extent of agreement with the statement, “My international travel class increased my interest in world events,” to which no one strongly disagreed and only one disagreed. The average response on our 5-point scale was 4.17, with 61.4% agreeing with the statement and 27.6% strongly agreeing. The standard deviation was 0.63. A student traveler on a 1964 trip to Europe said, “The world news has direct impact because of the people and places I know.” A 1970 traveler to Europe said, “No doubt—being there makes world events more interesting,” and another from that same trip said, “I became more interested in the world around me, which continues to this day.” A traveler to Western Europe in 1978 agreed and said, “I changed the daily reading material that I look at and I am more in tune with daily events.” A traveler to China in 1980 said it well, “World events are now personal.” A 1988 traveler to Europe gained an interesting perspective on history and said, “Being in the Eastern Bloc countries 1 year before their collapse, definitely made an impact on me as I watched the events unfold.”

Lastly along the lines of international awareness, we asked to what extent, “My international ag travel class made me realize I am a citizen of the world,” and only two strongly disagreed (1.6%), disagreed (4.0%), 16.9% were neutral, and none of those left a comment. On our 5-point scale, the average response was 3.97 with a standard deviation of 0.86. A student traveler who went to Europe in 1964 was one of the 50.8% who agreed and went on to say, “Of course I knew this, but it did make me feel more a part of the world, not just of Iowa.” Another student traveler in 1964, said, “While I have only traveled in 35 countries, being able to write about and photograph different cultures has helped me become a better citizen of the world. I am thankful that international ag travel provided that opportunity for me.” Another traveler to Europe said, “I am a member of the agriculturalists of the world engaged in food production for the world population. Having traveled to Europe in 1976 to interact with other agriculturalists showed me that I am part of the citizenry of all people, worldwide.” Another traveler in 1976 said, “I saw how similar people are all over the world. I was impressed that once language barriers were overcome, farmers are farmers no matter where they are from. I know that I could live or work anywhere—I am able to communicate to most people. Europe is less “rural” than Iowa and the different thought process seems more related to rural vs. urban than national identity.” A traveler to China in 1980, one of the 26.6% who
strongly agreed went on to say, “For the first time in my life, I felt like a global citizen. It was exhilarating,” and from the same trip another said, “Yes, I am a ‘world citizen’ first and secondarily a citizen of the United States.”

**General Comments**

Our survey ended with two open-ended questions. One asked what respondents thought was the single greatest benefit of the travel course. One answer from a student who traveled to Europe in 1970 was brief, “I grew up,” and a 1968 traveler to Europe said, “As a rural Iowa farm boy, it opened the world to me,” but those who chose to comment often had a lot to say. Many referenced the life-long friendships formed.

A 1968 traveler to Europe said, “College cost me $5,000 plus the $2,000 I spent on this educational trip; this was an investment and the best money I ever spent.” Also from the same trip in 1968, a respondent said the single greatest benefit was, “That it increased my curiosity about other countries and cultures,” and another from the same trip said, “That meeting new and different people, yet realizing we all deal with much the same problems.” Travelers to Europe in the 1970s had this to say, “Growing up in a small town in central Iowa, I had no idea of what was out there until I took the trip,” and another said, “Gave me a greater understanding of why people from Europe came to America in the first place,” and another said, “ISU ag travel course of 1976 was one of the very best educational investments of my life.” A traveler to China in 1980, responded by saying, “It gave me a global perspective that I’ve benefitted from for the last 35 years,” and another from the same trip said, “It gave me the confidence that I can go anywhere and that ISU provided me with the skills and tools to compete and thrive.” Another said, “The trip gave me the confirmation that my career choice as an international development worker was the right choice for me.” A traveler to Europe that same year characterized the single greatest benefit as the realization, “That I am part of a world economy now that I’m a farmer in West Central Iowa.” A student traveler to Europe in 1990 thought the single greatest benefit was, “Being part of something bigger than me. When I create a new business today, I still think of the bigger-than-me that I discovered from this program.”

Lastly we left space for general comments. One student traveler said, “Thinking back 51 years one can see how much the world has changed.” Numerous respondents used the general comment space to characterize the trip as a highlight of their college experience. A 1976 traveler said, “The ag travel course and the trip was the highlight of my college experience. Although my career path took me back to the farm, I feel the trip is still of value.” A student traveler who went to Europe in 1988 said, “It was a great trip with lots of memories. Wish we were young and could do it all again!”

**CONCLUSION**

The original purpose of this survey was to determine if international ag study courses have positive influence on students’ careers. The career development effects were indeed positive. The eight questions with a career development orientation had average response rates of 2.75 to 3.73 on the 5-point scale. Although the students thought that the international experience had a significant positive effect on their careers, they did not think the experience directly affected their career paths or led to international work. Particularly interesting was that many students thought their employers benefited from the students’ travel experiences. Questions regarding humanitarianism, personal development, and international perspectives saw even more positive effects than career development. In particular the travelers reported agreement to statements confirming that the travel course sparked an interest in more international travel, tolerance to other worldviews, concern for the welfare of the world, and interest in world events.

Educational attitudes did not change as much as other areas surveyed; the international travel did not inspire students to learn foreign languages or apply to graduate school. The results of an increased international awareness and personal development in this study mirrors the responses described earlier in other studies. What is particularly interesting is that the short-term (2–5 weeks) international experience was long enough to provide positive benefits to the student travelers.

Future leaders may consider follow-up surveys in addition to those conducted immediately post-trip, although it might not be necessary to wait 25 years or more to gain interesting perspectives.

**ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

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**REFERENCES**


