



October 28, 2024

The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart
Chair
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations
and Related Programs
U.S. House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Barbara Lee
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations
and Related Programs
U.S. House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20515

VIA EMAIL

Dear Chairman Diaz-Balart and Ranking Member Lee,

I write today on behalf of NAFSA: Association of International Educators to express our support for funding the Department of State’s Increase and Diversify Education Abroad for U.S. Students (IDEAS) program in the final Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations bill. Specifically, we urge you to adopt the Senate’s report language directive of \$5 million in funding for the IDEAS program for FY2025.

NAFSA is the world’s largest professional association dedicated to international education and exchange, with over 10,000 members at approximately 3,500 colleges and universities throughout the United States and around the world. Our members include professionals who manage study abroad programs and advise students who study outside of the United States during their educational programs as well as professionals who advise international students and manage international student programs.

The IDEAS program provides competitive grant funding to U.S. higher education institutions to grow and expand study abroad opportunities for U.S. students. In today’s global society, a U.S. undergraduate education that includes a meaningful study abroad experience is more important than ever. Study abroad gives students the opportunity to engage with other cultures, enhance foreign language skills, and expand international knowledge. Recent studies also show a positive correlation between students who study abroad and higher grade point averages and degree completion rates. Yet only ten percent of U.S. college students study abroad before they graduate, the majority going to Europe. Increasing institutional capacity for study abroad programming is essential if we are to grow and diversify both the destinations and number of U.S. college students who complete a study abroad program prior to graduation. Funding opportunities provided by institutional grant programs like IDEAS are key to achieving this objective.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

Fanta Aw, PhD
Executive Director & CEO