



Sharpening Our Edge: Enhancing U.S. Competitiveness THROUGH STUDY ABROAD AND FOREIGN LANGUAGE AND AREA STUDIES

Nearly three-quarters of American college students want to study abroad.¹ Yet only 10 percent² do so before they graduate, largely due to the real or perceived cost of studying abroad.³ This hurts American competitiveness, workforce development, and global standing. Federal funding for study abroad and foreign language learning contributes to a more secure and prosperous United States.

Studying Abroad Boosts U.S. Students' Success and Careers

More than **31 million job openings require skills that students can acquire from studying abroad**, such as leadership, problem-solving, communication, and time management.⁴

Students who study abroad show **meaningful, long-term improvements in their language skills** which can enhance their ability to communicate in international and multicultural settings.⁵

Four-year **graduation rates are 15 percent higher** for students who study abroad.⁶

Global Experience Strengthens the U.S. Workforce and Economy

Studying abroad cultivates a **greater appreciation of American culture and values** and less fear of others.⁷

More than 85 percent of U.S. business leaders believe their **business would increase** if their employees had international experience.⁸

In the United States, **more than 41 million jobs are tied to international trade**, making foreign language and intercultural skills gained through study abroad more valuable.⁹

Global Students Shape U.S. Business, Culture, and Government



Robert Gates
Former U.S. Secretary of Defense and
Central Intelligence Agency Director



Catherine "Cady" Coleman
NASA Astronaut
high school exchange student in Norway



David Muir
Journalist, ABC News
college semester abroad in Spain



Reed Hastings
Founder and CEO, Netflix
Returned Peace Corps Volunteer