

# How University Websites Portray Study Abroad

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## Abstract

*University websites across the country showcase the important underlying values of study abroad: experiencing a “local” culture, creating interactive conversations, and empowering students through personal and academic development. This research examined how universities communicate the benefits and values. Through a rhetorical analysis, grounded in framing theory, this study analyzed the key verbal, visual, and interactive messages of five university study abroad websites. These findings suggest how website communication can influence perceptions of study abroad.*

## I. Introduction

Study abroad has become an important aspect in higher education in the United States, as the phenomenon of globalization has grown increasingly important to how universities equip students for the professional and social world. In 2014, the Institute of International Education proposed the Generation Study Abroad campaign to provide more study abroad opportunities, with the goal of reaching 600,000 students studying abroad by 2019, more than a twofold increase from the 2013-2014 academic year (“Generation Study Abroad,” 2014). As study abroad becomes more relevant and timely for university students, many have begun to evaluate the study abroad experience and its academic, professional, and social outcomes. Intercultural competence has been seen as a valuable outcome for students, and scholars have worked to define and promote intercultural competences within the study abroad setting.

While study abroad has been researched from a social and cultural perspective, not many researchers have examined study abroad through a communication lens. In order for university study abroad programs to be successful, most universities promote study abroad through websites. Recent research has found that some study abroad websites and marketing tools tend to float on the border between promoting educational tourist experiences and authentic intercultural exchanges. According to Erving Goffman’s (1974) framing theory, communication tools seek to shape perceptions and realities on different issues, which means that websites are not neutral texts when it comes to communicating study abroad. In order to form a larger perspective on study abroad marketing, it is necessary to examine the rhetoric and language on university websites and to understand how they compare to intercultural competence frameworks and global understanding.

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## II. Literature Review

The literature below surveyed the status of study abroad; the importance of intercultural competence in study abroad programs; channels used to promote study abroad, especially websites; and the application of framing theory in creating university web content.

### ***The State of Study Abroad***

In order to analyze the marketing efforts of key universities' study abroad websites, it is important to understand the broader historical context of study abroad in the United States. Over the past two decades, U.S. participation in study abroad has more than tripled, with more than 280,000 students studying abroad for academic credit in the 2012-2013 academic year (Institute of International Education, 2014). Currently, almost all universities have study abroad programs or are working to include international programs into their institutions. In 2008, more than 90% of colleges and universities in the United States offered study abroad programs (Green, Luu, & Burris, 2008, p. 1). Study abroad has been an important goal for American universities in promoting internationalization in higher education and has been backed by other parties, such as the federal government, business communities, nonprofits, and major higher education associations ("History and Purposes," 2012, p. 21). President George W. Bush signed the Senate Resolution 308 in 2005, in which 2006 was declared to be "The Year of Study Abroad" and global competency and literacy were assumed to be a responsibility of American educational systems.

Study abroad programs have allowed universities to respond to national and international calls to ensure quality education for U.S. citizens in an increasingly globalized society. Advancing study abroad has potential to make universities more competitive, as 79% of people in the United States believe that students should study abroad in college, according to a 2002 American Council on Education poll ("Designating 2006," 2005). Many studies outline other benefits of study abroad both for students and for the university as a whole. For example, study abroad programs promote American universities in an international context, offering the chance to build global education partnerships (Bishop 2013, p. 399). In addition, studies have shown other positive outcomes, such as increased academic performance (Holoviak, Verney, Winter, & Holoviak, 2011), self-confidence, long-lasting career impact, and professional skills (Franklin, 2010, p. 186). Research has also shown other personal outcomes for students who study abroad, including greater intercultural proficiency, increased openness to cultural diversity, global mindedness, and effective intercultural communication skills (Clarke, Flaherty, Wright, & McMillen, 2009, p.174-175). Because these benefits are key selling points of the study abroad experience, it will be important to study how universities portray these benefits to students and the university community interested in study abroad.

While many see the value of study abroad, not many undergraduates participate in overseas education programs. Less than 10% of students study abroad during their degree program, and 71% of the students who study abroad are within the social sciences, humanities, and business disciplines (Institute of International Education, 2014). Even though study abroad programs are catering to the needs of different students, such as offering language immersion programs, courses in different majors, opportunities for internships and service, and extracurricular activities, a variety of other factors may influence students' decisions to study abroad. As colleges and universities continue to value and promote education centered on gaining intercultural experience and preparing students for a globalized world, universities' views on intercultural competence may influence students' desires and decisions during their study abroad process.

### ***Recognizing Intercultural Competence as a Key Aspect of Study Abroad***

As mentioned earlier, intercultural competence has become a buzzword among educators who have focused on increasing intercultural dialogue in the United States and abroad. Intercultural competence has become more significant when examining the influence of study abroad on academics and career advancement. Scholars have discussed various frameworks of intercultural competence and explored ways students can develop it (Deardorff, 2010, p. 87). Many studies formulate definitions and frameworks for intercultural competence (Bennett, 2011; Williams, 2012). Putting together a body of knowledge, the Association of American College and Universities (AAC&U) released its Intercultural Knowledge and Competence Value Rubric, which offers a definition, glossary of key terms, and framework for evaluating intercultural knowledge, skills and attitudes, from benchmark to capstone (2010). The rubric adopts the definition of intercultural competence from scholar Janet Bennett (2008), describing it as "a set of cognitive,

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affective and behavioral skills and characteristics that support effective and appropriate interaction in a variety of cultural contexts.” The rubric was built upon previous work from developmental models and research of Milton Bennett, Darla K. Deardorff, and Janet Bennett, whose individual works have made important contributions to the study of intercultural sensitivity and competence. Along with the definition for intercultural competence, the AAC&U rubric also outlines key aspects of intercultural competence that can be measured based on student experiences. These include cultural self-awareness, knowledge of cultural worldview frameworks, empathy, verbal and nonverbal communication, curiosity, and openness. The AAC&U rubric has been a key development in bringing intercultural competence to the forefront of higher education, giving educators and scholars tools to understand how intercultural competence develops and why it is important.

Other bodies of knowledge also define, simplify, and outline the concept of intercultural competence. Bennett’s work offers some facts on intercultural competence. She specifies that cultural knowledge and contact do not necessarily lead to competence; however, they may reduce stereotypes. In addition, she stresses that intercultural competence doesn’t just happen for most people, rather it must be intentionally cultivated and developed in people, through various means, such as effective program design; competence training; and stimulating learning before, during, and after intercultural experiences (Bennett, 2011, p. 5). Because communication plays a key role in spreading information about intercultural experiences through study abroad, university websites play important roles in the intentionality of cultivating intercultural competence in its students. It has been noted that some university websites specifically mention global competencies (Li, Olson, & Frieze, 2013, p. 74); however, more detail is needed to get a larger picture on how intercultural competence is communicated as a whole. Therefore, looking at the ways universities communicate intercultural competence through study abroad websites will show how intercultural exchanges are visually and textually portrayed, and what values are being promoted to students.

### ***Evaluating the Effect of Study Abroad Marketing***

While many scholars have researched study abroad with an academic or cultural lens, only some have examined the unique context of the study abroad experience from a marketing or communication perspective. Lukosius and Festervand (2013) developed a conceptual framework for marketing study abroad programs and recruiting students. Their framework includes four components that examine 1) the student segments targeted, 2) overall program cost, 3) timing and duration of the programs, and 4) the promotion and marketing of the programs. According to their framework, the promotion of study abroad should be prepared ahead of time and should include an integrated marketing communication plan with multiple outlets for promotion. The framework incorporates social media and website marketing, which continue to be a part of integrated communications plans that universities use to promote study abroad.

As technology and communication tools evolve, universities have promoted study abroad through poster campaigns, advertisements in campus newspapers or magazines, social media, videos, and websites. Due to the ways communication can frame the meanings of experiences like study abroad, researchers have been intrigued by the visual and verbal rhetoric and content found in study abroad publications, both in print and digital forms. Bishop (2013) analyzed three university websites’ study abroad content, concluding that these websites emphasized the cultural immersion aspects of study abroad, the promises for transformative or “life-changing” experiences, and some cultural homogeneity (p. 398). Bishop (2013) argued that the online rhetoric of the websites had potential to frame the study abroad experience, demonstrating how reality can be produced and revealed through communication — making university study abroad websites act like advertisements (p. 410).

Other studies have examined study abroad marketing by non-university organizations, such as Semester at Sea (SAS), a nonprofit travel educational program. Caton and Santos (2009) concluded that SAS’s depictions of cross-cultural interactions through images on its website and printed brochure show evidence of colonialist stereotypes about non-Western cultures (p. 11). The study compared the study abroad marketing materials to tourism marketing and representations of cultural “others,” suggesting that there is much similarity between other tourism organizations and SAS, at least in terms of communication and marketing.

Others analyzed study abroad rhetoric in books or travel guides, genres that do not formally promote a particular university program, but rather offer stories or advice about study abroad. For example, Doerr (2012) examined the discourse of study abroad guidebooks, other important texts in a study abroad experience. Viewing study abroad as “adventure,” the study found that the guidebooks accentuated the

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differences between the host's and student's cultures, creating an unbalanced view of the two societies (p. 265). Overall, cultural hegemony and the incorporation of cultural "others" are large themes in study abroad literature, and will be important when examining the rhetoric of study abroad websites at the university level.

### ***Websites as Marketing Tools***

According to Bishop (2013), the university website is often the first reference for a student when researching study abroad programs (p. 400). She explains that study abroad websites cater to prospective applicants by using verbal and visual imagery to engage student populations. Because websites tend to be the first choice for getting information about study abroad, it is important to view university websites as relevant artifacts of language and communication, crucial to researching study abroad marketing. University websites have served as subjects of research in various studies. For example, Yoo and Jin (2004) evaluated the design and features of the homepages of the top university websites from *U.S. News & World Reports*. Another study also found that university websites were effective in providing useful information for students; however, they could improve features that promote more dialogic, two-way interactions between students and the institutions (Gordon & Berhow, 2009, p. 152).

From a marketing perspective, websites can be seen as promotional outlets set in place in order to achieve a business or organizational goal. Some website scholars explain that all website communication has an ultimate goal: to "achieve positive response action from every visitor" (Sharp, 2001, p. 42). Positive response actions could mean a visitor remaining on the website for an optimum period of time, downloading content from the site, forwarding content to another person, purchasing an item, subscribing for more information, or returning to the website at a later time. When study abroad websites subscribe to this theory, they should strive to engage visitors so they would use the website for information, apply to a study abroad program, or share the information with other people interested in the study abroad process. Because websites are crucial in promoting study abroad to students, it is important to observe how website communication, rooted in the complex nature of university goals and ideologies, plays a role in making study abroad part of higher education. Determining how this communication frames the intercultural aspects of study abroad is the next step.

### ***Framing Theory and Study Abroad Websites***

This research, as well as other studies of website rhetoric and content, is grounded in the framing theory of communication, first outlined by Erving Goffman (1974). He suggested that frames allow individuals to assign meaning to experiences and actions, making framing a way to interpret and communicate reality. Framing is a way to understand the background of each party involved in a conversation or interaction. In communication theory, framing has become a way to adjust the audience's perception and awareness about particular issues, as media and communication outlets can stress certain viewpoints over others ("Framing," 2010). It is important to note that framing has been applied to both organizational communications as well as public relations theory (Johansson, 2007, p. 277), with the emphasis that organizations and publics, such as universities and students, need to establish common frames of reference for them to maintain mutually beneficial relations.

In the case of study abroad websites, universities' online rhetoric may frame students' perceptions and experiences of study abroad, as well as their awareness of intercultural competences gained by an international experience. As with other research on study abroad rhetoric (Bishop, 2013), this analysis of study abroad messages on university websites does not seek to judge the online communication as positive or negative, but rather present the different ways to portray study abroad to students through online channels.

This study aimed at gauging the current state of how universities portray intercultural experiences through study abroad websites. To achieve this goal, this study asked the following research questions:

R1: How do university websites portray study abroad?

R2: How much do university websites promote the intercultural benefits of study abroad?

R3: What other values of the study abroad experience do university websites portray?

### III. Methods

In order to answer the research questions, the author collected online rhetoric from five university websites that promote study abroad. Five universities were randomly selected from the U.S. News & World Report Study Abroad Rankings, which rate study abroad programs based on a number of criteria including academics, cultural interactions, lengths of program, and more (“Study Abroad,” 2015). Out of the 30 universities rated with exceptional study abroad programs, five were randomly selected, as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1. The Type, Location, and Enrollment of Five Universities**

University	Type	Location	Enrollment (2014)
Michigan State University	Public	East Lansing, Michigan	50,000
Stanford University	Private	Stanford, California	15,000
St. John’s University	Private	New York City, New York	20,000
Macalester College	Private	Saint Paul, Minnesota	2,000
Centre College	Private	Danville, Kentucky	1,200

While each university created an extensive website for study abroad in a variety of ways, the author analyzed only web pages that offered general information about study abroad, global or international studies, or study away. Through a rhetorical analysis with close reading, the author examined the visual, verbal, and interactive elements on these websites. Elements such as their overall themes, photographic or other visual messages, language and interactive features of the websites were included in the analysis.

### IV. Findings & Discussion

#### ***Content of websites for study abroad programs***

The study revealed many similarities among the five universities analyzed and the ways they promote study abroad. Most of the websites included large photos of students, places, people, and even animals to promote study abroad on their websites. In addition, they all had one or two levels of primary navigation through the study abroad section of the website, with similar content including types of programs, costs, preparation tips, health and safety, important dates, and more. Four out of the five websites included a calendar of events prominently on its study abroad web page. Frequently asked questions and student testimonials from studying abroad were also part of popular website strategies among the universities. Overall, the universities had a variety of verbal, visual, and interactive components to their websites to communicate the study abroad experience and the intercultural competence process.

#### ***The Changing Rhetoric of “Study Abroad”***

The concept of study abroad was termed differently by universities. To name their study abroad departments, universities adopted phrases like “overseas programs,” “study away,” “global studies,” “international studies,” as well as “study abroad.” For example, Stanford University’s undergraduate study abroad program is the Bing Overseas Studies Program (BOSP). Macalester College’s study abroad program falls under its “International Center,” where they promote the “study away experience.” Michigan State University (MSU) uses the term “study abroad” most often under its “Office of Study Abroad” department. St. John’s University also uses the term “study abroad,” while also referring to “global studies” when promoting its programs around the world.

While the term “study away” encompasses a broader range of places to study, including international and national locations, a “global studies” program can also refer to a similar concept. Studying “overseas” or “internationally” in a rhetorical sense does not include places within national borders. This shows that within the realm of “international” or “intercultural” education, institutions are rethinking what intercultural experiences mean, whether studying abroad should be an international experience or if studying “away”

(within one's own country) could also provide authentic intercultural education. While explaining the presence of buzzwords such as "global competency" and "campus internationalization" involved in the rhetorical frames of college administrations, Reilly and Senders (2009) argued that critical definitions of study abroad and its outcomes should be present in universities' rhetoric (p. 241). In their critique on study abroad, they suggested that universities replace the rhetoric of "internationality" with the idea of "we are all co-inhabitants of a single planet" (p. 250). This view corresponds to terms used on university websites such as "global studies," where studying abroad is seen from a planetary scale.

The various terms for study abroad show how universities communicate study abroad on their websites and how they view intercultural experiences whether study abroad is exclusively international program or a global experience. Much of the language used to define an international or intercultural education evokes a sense of traveling to a different place in order to understand different people on both a local and global level.

### ***An emphasis on the "local"***

Despite the intricacies of study abroad terminology, the university websites also provide a rich look into how these intercultural experiences are portrayed. An important aspect of promoting intercultural experiences on these websites focuses on not only the global, but the local. Looking at key themes on the websites gives insight into the values being promoted on study abroad websites: the value of local experiences. The emphasis on local community, people, and environment is found in language in the pre-departure phase before students travel abroad and while students are abroad. Specifically, several universities promote campus events, such as "Your Global Backyard Field Trip" and "Study Abroad in the 'Hood,'" where students were encouraged to participate in study abroad advising programs or global education programs "right in their backyard." This local emphasis signifies the merging between the local and the global, instilling the idea that forming close connections with the surrounding environment is an important habit when preparing to go abroad and during the actual experience. The emphasis on the local reinforces the idea that intercultural competence is developed through community interaction and must be cultivated intentionally (Bennett, 2011).

University websites also promote the local aspect of study abroad through specific examples of experiences students may have abroad. For instance, St. John's University describes its study abroad programs as a way to merge global and local education:

"Imagine sitting outside the Coliseum under the sunny Italian sky, drawing a piece of history as part of your 'Italian Sketchbook' class. Or maybe you're more interested in Paris's 'Economics of Poverty & Income Inequality' class, through which you'll tackle complex social issues before heading out into the streets to feed the hungry? [sic] No matter the subject, our courses offer you local context—firmly embedded in the host city wherever possible—for understanding the global framework of each discipline" ("Academic and Cultural," 2015).

This particular example focuses on local living and becoming immersed in a new environment. Other websites heighten the local aspect by using strong language to describe cultural immersion as an "invaluable" experience or a "once-in-a-lifetime opportunity." Study abroad scholars have also encouraged students and universities to embrace the local and understand the multiple sides of the cultures in their host cities (Reilly & Senders, 2009, p. 253). As a whole, university websites are balancing two different concepts, globalism and locality, a complex but necessary view for explaining and promoting intercultural experiences. Investing in the local community is one value seen through study abroad marketing on these specific university websites, and it gives a clearer picture on how universities communicate intercultural experiences.

### ***Framing the outcomes of study abroad***

As we compare the rhetoric of university websites to the ideas presented in scholarly research about intercultural competence and global citizenry, it is important to note if and how universities define these concepts specifically on their websites. Out of all five websites, St. John's University specifically mentions "intercultural competence," defines it, and lists its benefits ("Academic and Cultural," 2015). While this definition is not located in a primary part of its study abroad website, it goes into detail about the value of intercultural competence. It also describes its Cultural Mentorship Program as what the university implements to enrich cultural understanding and intercultural competence in students. This web page mentions outcomes

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of intercultural competence, such as heightened empathy, understanding of different worldviews, strong communication skills, and better awareness of one's own culture and worldview.

Other websites specifically outline the intercultural benefits of study abroad. Michigan State University highlights the intercultural outcomes on their website, noting that students “may increase their interests in other cultures, become less ethnocentric . . . develop language skills within a cultural context” (“Why Should I,” 2015). The intercultural benefits here also coincide with views of aforementioned Bennett and Deardorff.

MSU lists the intercultural benefits alongside other advantages of study abroad, including personal, academic/intellectual, and professional benefits. While the intercultural opportunities are an important aspect integrated into the messages of the university websites, often phrases and visual imagery focus on other benefits for students. This includes emphasis on “high academic performance” and “learning experiences,” as well as how study abroad fits into different academic and curriculum requirements. Personal development is also strongly highlighted in the language, with some universities emphasizing that students will receive “personal attention” or students will “deepen awareness of themselves.” The verbal rhetoric often seems to favor noting how students can be transformed personally and academically, which suggests a broader impact than just intercultural benefits. Highlighting some benefits over others is one way that websites can frame the reality of the study abroad experience. This also shows how the personal and academic values of the study abroad experience are key themes in university website communication.

### ***Intercultural experiences promoted visually***

The university websites can also be studied by examining the use of images and graphics on the sites. Visually, they used images that portray different aspects of study abroad: personal development, academic achievement, and cultural experiences. The universities usually incorporated large photos on their websites, often in slideshows across the full page.

Out of the 52 photos examined on the main study abroad pages of these universities, 13 photos showed individual students in various locations around the world, while another 11 photos featured only landscapes or animals. For example, one showed a female student with a big smile and her hands in the air, overlooking a South African landscape. Another featured a female student sitting on a rock overlooking a dry landscape, with blue skies. Photos like these reflect the notion that study abroad is an individualized experience and that universities work to promote the students' personal development. While cultural self-awareness and personal skills like empathy are important to building intercultural competence (American Association of Colleges and Universities, 2010), interactions between two or more individuals are needed for authentic intercultural learning. Images that portray individual students solitarily do not relay the message that an intercultural exchange involves two or more groups of people coming together. In the end, students' learning cannot happen solitarily, but rather with others.

Other photos on university websites promoted intercultural benefits further, such as images of student groups and faculty interacting with local people abroad. Out of the 52 images, 9 portrayed students interacting with non-students from a host country. As a whole, many of these images included photos of people in different cultures with various skin colors, dressed in traditional ethnic clothing. The images relate to Bishop's (2013) description that study abroad can promote the message that “travel abroad allows students to encounter welcoming, exotic ‘others’ who willingly provide glimpses into areas of the world previously known” (p. 403). In addition, the images on the website support Bishop's (2013) analysis of learning environments abroad. Only four photos depicted indoor environments, which can lead to study abroad marketing to “deemphasize traditional university learning environments” (p. 403). Promoting images of outdoor environments suggests that study abroad encourages fieldwork, cultural experiences, and learning opportunities beyond the classroom, which may lead to intercultural interactions that develop in various authentic settings.

Taken as a whole, the images on study abroad websites feature bright, positive images and undermine the struggles that students may face while studying abroad, such as culture shock and anxiety. While the visual rhetoric on university websites does represent intercultural reasons for studying abroad, the photos can suggest different realities of the study abroad experience, perhaps framing a more educational touristic experience for students. This suggests that diverse aspects of the intercultural benefits should be promoted to a greater extent on university websites.

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### ***Continuing conversations: interactive study abroad marketing***

The universities incorporate interactivity in their websites, with which users continue the conversation about study abroad. According to Sharp's (2001) theory of positive response action for website communication, websites aim to produce positive actions from visitors such as staying on the site longer, clicking through various information, and engaging with the content (p. 42). The five university websites employ interactivity in the form of interactive maps, blogs, social media boxes, calendars, and videos so that they can continue the conversation about study abroad, especially with students who are in the preparation phase of the study abroad process.

The interactive websites can reinforce the messages of study abroad and the experience that universities are marketing to students. For example, Stanford University displays its global reach in the form of an interactive map on its website. This "Global Explorer" map allows users to see how the university reaches different parts of the world, with clickable red icons to symbolize locations where Stanford students and faculty have studied abroad, conducted research, and organized events ("Explore Stanford," 2015). Interactive websites allow universities to sound less like a sales pitch and more like a community of people coming together. It makes study abroad sound less like a tourism package with a postcard view, a one-sided perspective of an experience. Thus, universities should use this interactive marketing approach to complement a multi-faceted intercultural study abroad experience.

Interactive tools inspire students and other users to come back to the website for updated information. In addition, social media and blog content often promote authentic and user-generated stories to inform and connect with publics. Four of the five university study abroad departments included study abroad-specific social media channels on their web pages. Also, four out of the five websites featured a calendar section with upcoming events to update visitors. Michigan State University includes an "International News" section, with a curated list of recent articles from reputable news sources, such as *The Chronicle*, *USA Today*, and *The Atlantic*. Having a stream of updated information allows website visitors to engage with new content from a variety of sources. Through updating content and reinforcing the idea that many other organizations and groups of people are talking about study abroad, the universities increase the dialogic elements of their websites. The dialogic nature of the websites complements the idea that students gain experience by having engaging conversations with people from a variety of perspectives. The increasingly interactive nature of study abroad marketing creates an environment that encourages students to explore, build connections and learn from others, all crucial parts of an intercultural journey.

By exploring the interactive, visual and textual elements of these websites, this study shows how values like local community, engaging conversations, and students' personal development are part of study abroad website marketing. The rhetorical analysis of these websites shows the various ways in which intercultural experiences and other values are promoted across different universities.

There were several limitations to this analysis on study abroad websites. Among others, the content produced for these university websites cannot be generalized to those of the 30 ranked in the *U.S. News & World Report*, let alone the study abroad programs of all universities.

Considering the evolving interactivity and dynamic nature of digital marketing techniques for study abroad programs, future studies may examine other online artifacts beyond what this study analyzed. The use of Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and other new social media channels is becoming the norm for many universities when marketing their study abroad programs. Research on how study abroad departments use these media to connect with students and other key publics may help understand the marketing landscape of study abroad.

## **V. Conclusion**

In conclusion, university websites can frame the study abroad experience in a variety of ways. An analysis of the textual, visual, and interactive elements used online is important to understand how students view the purpose and benefits of study abroad for personal, cultural, and academic reasons. This analysis determined that universities use several means to communicate study abroad on their websites including the use of images of people and travel destinations; interactive content such as maps, calendars and news; student testimonials; and descriptive examples of study abroad experiences. The websites revealed that

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universities use particular terms to define their study abroad programs, such as “global studies” or “overseas studies,” which provide different rhetorical contexts for promoting intercultural experiences. The study also analyzed to what extent the intercultural benefits of study abroad were featured on university websites. While the intercultural aspects of study abroad are highlighted on the five university websites, only one specifically mentioned scholarly definitions of intercultural competence and its benefits to students. In many cases, the emphasis of personal and academic benefits for students outweighed the intercultural aspects of studying abroad. Other values promoted through the university websites include the importance of getting “local,” providing interactive outlets for conversations, and building global communities. As seen through these particular web pages, study abroad marketing could often promote a postcard view of an experience, highlighting particular outcomes of student experiences over others. A wider study would be necessary in order to draw more generalized conclusions on how university websites portray the intercultural experiences of study abroad.

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