



THE BENJAMIN A. GILMAN INTERNATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

May 2016

Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs
U.S. Department of State



Introduction

Since its inception in 2001, the U.S. Department of State has administered the Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship Program to diversify U.S. participation in study abroad and provide young Americans with the knowledge and skills they need to collaborate internationally and succeed in the global economy. The Gilman Scholarship Program provides grants for American undergraduate students of limited financial means (defined as students receiving Federal Pell Grant funding) to participate in study and internships abroad for academic credit.

In 2013, the U.S. Department of State contracted with Research Solutions International to evaluate the Gilman Scholarship Program. The evaluation found that the program is achieving its goal of increasing opportunities for students of limited financial means to study abroad. The Gilman Program is also diversifying the countries and regions where students go. Gilman Scholars who were interviewed described having developed a “global perspective” and interest in continued international engagement.

In addition to diversifying the population of students studying abroad, the Gilman Program has also had an impact on U.S. college campuses. Participation in the Gilman Program allowed institutions to expand their study abroad programs to more diverse, nontraditional locations; attract new sources of funding for study abroad; promote professional development of study abroad staff; and support flexible approaches to study abroad for nontraditional students, including working adults.

The Evaluation

The external evaluation assessed whether the Gilman Program addressed Department of State priorities, including increasing study abroad opportunities for students of limited financial means, improving Americans' understanding of other countries, increasing U.S. global economic competitiveness, and supporting the internationalization of U.S. institutions of higher education.

In order to assess medium and longer-term outcomes, researchers collected information from 1,591 former Gilman Scholars who had studied abroad during the 2002-03 to 2009-10 academic years, as well as representatives from 42 U.S. colleges and universities and 30 family members and friends. Other research methods included 17 focus groups with Scholars in six cities, and 25 phone interviews with individual Scholars. To download a copy of the full report and its executive summary, visit studyabroad.state.gov/gilmanreport.



KEY FINDINGS



Gilman Scholars Remain Internationally Engaged

Upon return to the United States, Gilman Scholars stayed connected to their host countries through a wide range of activities, and the vast majority reported taking a greater interest in international topics.

International and Cross-Cultural Activities after Studying Abroad

84%

Maintained relationships with people from the country where studied

Followed media coverage on the country or geopolitical region where studied

79%

74%

Kept active interest in culture where studied



[The Gilman Scholarship experience was] crucial and definitely a pivotal [point] for me... the first big step in figuring out how I wanted to contribute to the world.

— Scholar, 2005

Undergraduate Academic Study

Took a greater interest in international/cross-cultural topics

87%

35%

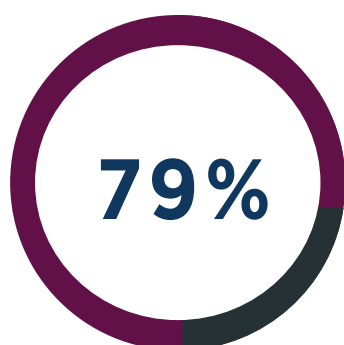
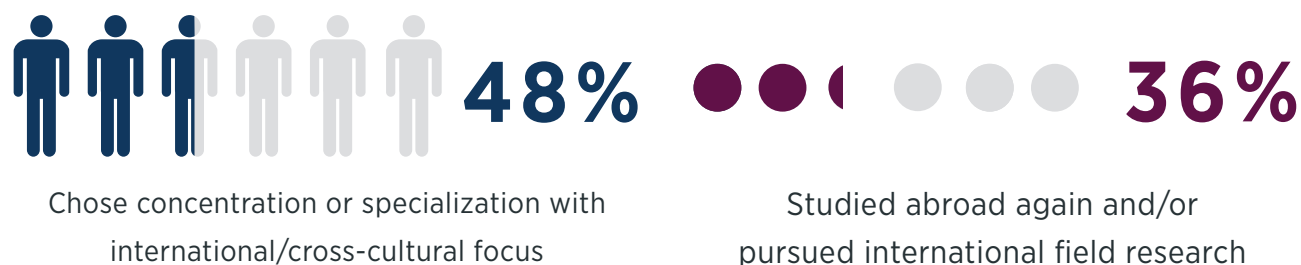
Chose major and/or minor with international/cross-cultural focus

Undertook research project with international/cross-cultural focus

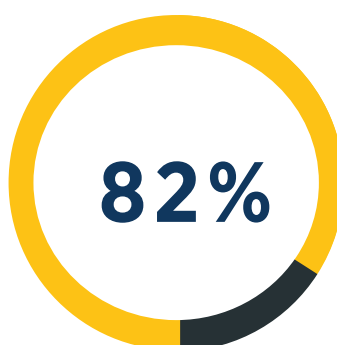
31%

Of the 819 survey respondents who were attending or had already completed graduate or professional school at the time of evaluation, more than one-third studied abroad again or pursued international field research. Almost one-third pursued a thesis or dissertation on an international or cross-cultural topic.

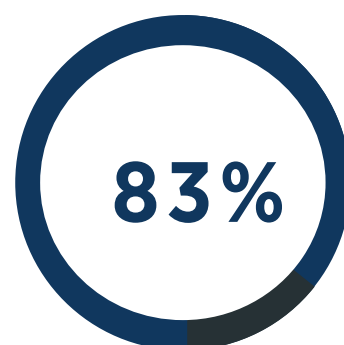
Gilman Scholars' Academic Choices



Studied a foreign language during their academic program overseas



Sought opportunities to speak the language they had studied when they returned home



Said that the Gilman Scholarship enabled them to undertake academic opportunities overseas that could not be pursued at home

The Gilman Program helps participants develop skills required to compete in a global economy, and opens the door to new career possibilities. Eighty-three percent of survey respondents found jobs where they could interact with people from different backgrounds or nationalities, and more than half reported working in a field that includes an international or cross-cultural component.

My current employer told me that my international experience and the internship I held while abroad was a deciding factor in my getting hired.

—Scholar, 2010

Impact of Gilman Scholarships on Career Perspective

Professional Vision	Percent
Broadened the geographic locations where they are willing to work	73%
Promoted desire to work in cross-cultural/international field	67%
Broadened range of employers they would consider	60%
Led them to apply for positions at companies with international/cross-cultural focus	59%
Clarified desired career	48%
Led them to apply to company/organization with diverse workforce.	47%
Changed their career direction to more international/cross-cultural focus	39%

Work Environments of Gilman Scholars

After returning home	Percent
Interacted with people of different backgrounds/nationalities in the workplace	83%
Worked in a field that includes an international/cross-cultural component	54%
Took a position where they can utilize international/cross-cultural expertise	50%
Took a position where they can use a foreign language	45%
Took a position where they can travel internationally	30%

Gilman's Impact on U.S. Higher Education

One-third of U.S. college and university representatives interviewed credited the Gilman Scholarship directly for changes in their institutions' study abroad offerings and for contributing to internationalization efforts, allowing them to expand study abroad programs to more diverse locations in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East.

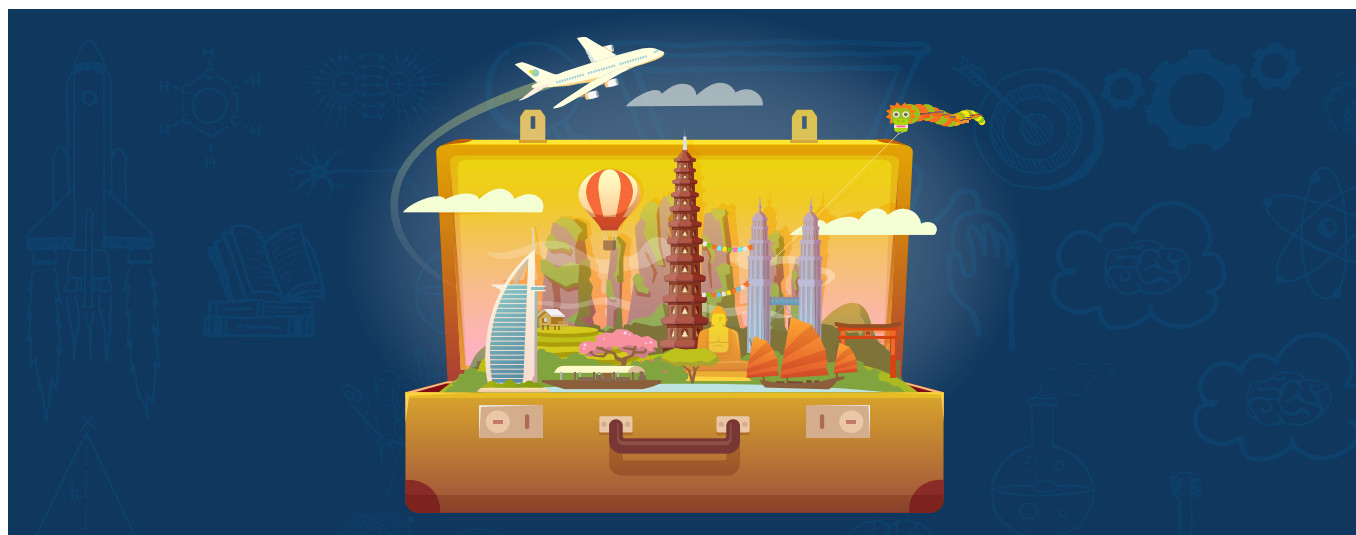
Several representatives reported using the Gilman Scholarship parameters as a model for their own study abroad programs. They also credited the Gilman Program for allowing them to attract new sources of funding for study abroad, expanding course offerings to help students prepare for broader study abroad opportunities, and supporting the professional development of study abroad staff.

Sharing the International Experience with Friends and Family

According to survey responses, many Gilman Scholars shared their international experience with family and friends in the following ways:

How Scholars Shared Their Experience with Family and Friends

Activity	Family	Friends
Encouraged others to apply for international exchange/travel abroad	65%	96%
Debunked myths or stereotypes about other countries	81%	88%
Presented new/different perspective on media coverage of an international issue/event	66%	75%



I realized I must, and need, to work for a firm which is open to diversity. I didn't realize how important diverse cultural and life experiences are in a workforce until I returned from Gilman. I also want to be in an organization that recognizes the significance in being global and understanding diverse cultures.

—Scholar, 2010

Diversity in the Gilman Program

Increasing the diversity of students studying abroad is a priority for the U.S. Department of State, and the Gilman Program is vital in reaching that goal. According to the Open Doors Survey, Gilman Scholarship recipients are significantly more diverse compared to the national pool of U.S. students studying abroad.



of Gilman Scholars are first generation college students

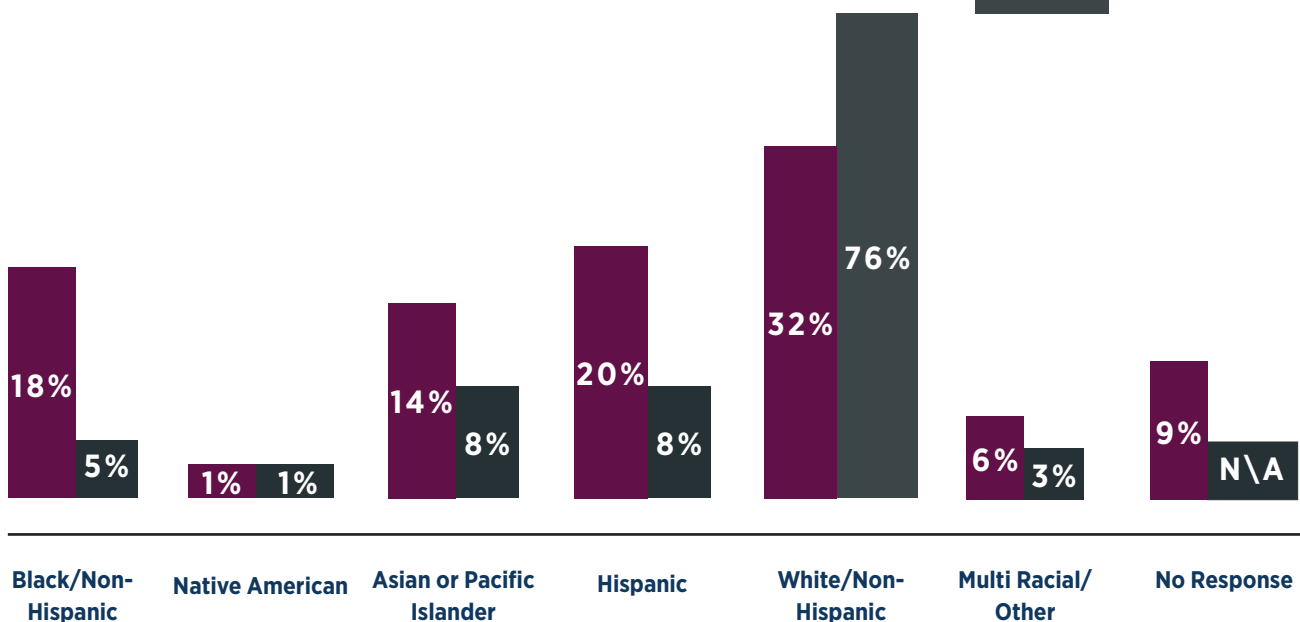
Ethnicity

2013-14

Comparison of 2013-2014 Gilman Students to the 2014 Open Doors data on all U.S. students studying abroad for credit.

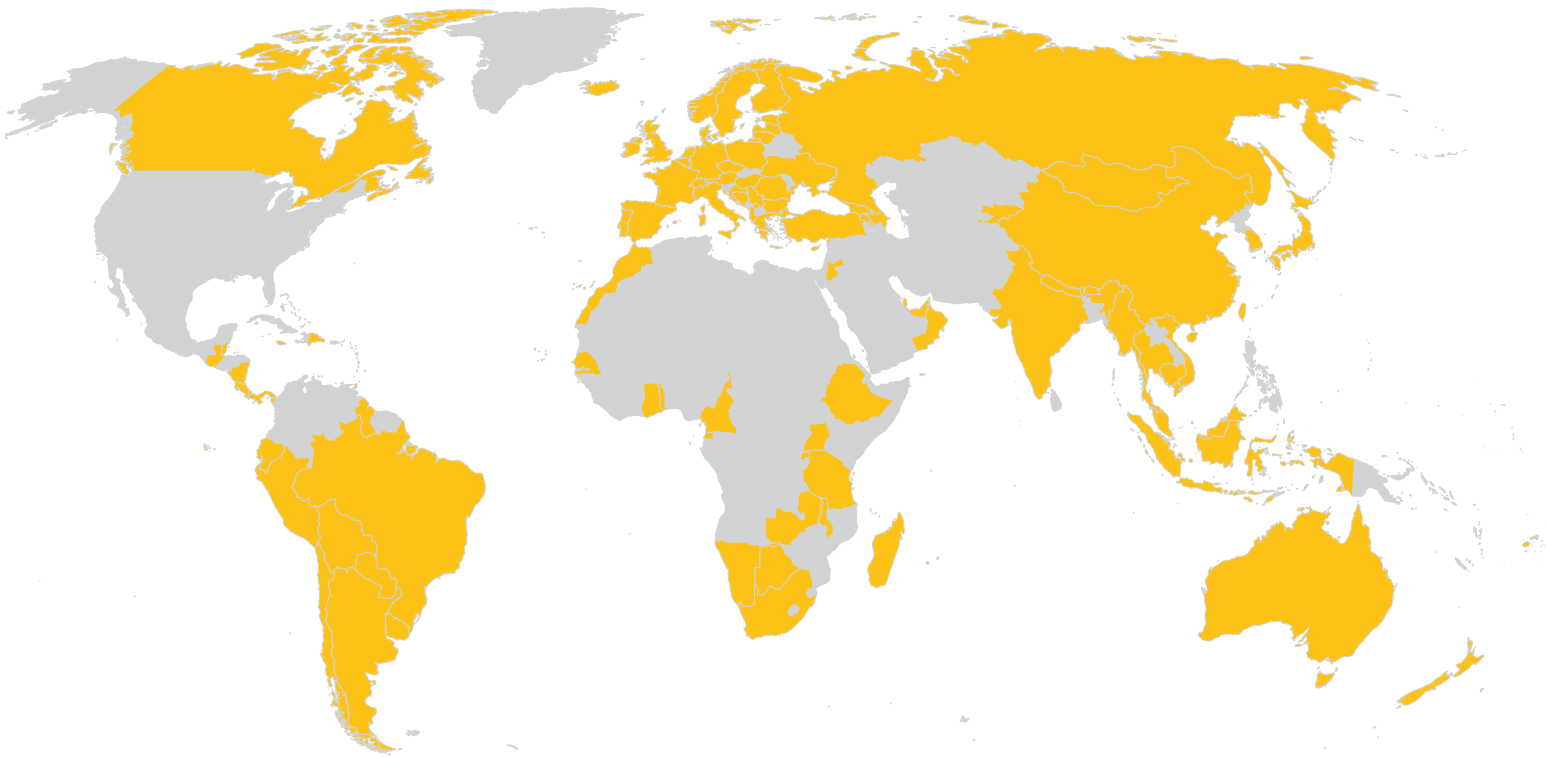
Gilman Recipients

All U.S. students



71% of Gilman Scholars study abroad outside of Western Europe. This number is significantly higher than the national average of 47% for all U.S. study abroad students. (Open Doors, 2015).

Gilman Scholars' Study Destinations



Conclusion

For almost 15 years, the Gilman Scholarship has supported students with financial need who have been traditionally underrepresented in academic study abroad. The evaluation clearly demonstrates the Gilman Program's impact on increasing opportunities for students of limited financial means to study abroad, broadening their perspectives and career opportunities. Demand for the Gilman Program continues to grow. In 2015, **10,025 applicants** from 1,100 U.S. colleges and universities competed for **2,800 scholarships**.



USA Study Abroad