Why Don’t Men Study Abroad?

Will Roper
Sherrick O’Quinn
Phillip Thomas
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1996/97</td>
<td>64.9% female</td>
<td>2006/07</td>
<td>female 65.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>35.1% male</td>
<td></td>
<td>male 34.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings from Research

Factors cited as possible obstacles for men are not obstacles for women: major, career, finances, sports

Men perceive themselves as being less active and less willing to leave their friends and comfort zones.
Beloit vs. the National Picture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>93/94</th>
<th>06/07</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>62.9</td>
<td>65.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>37.1</td>
<td>34.9</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>05/06</th>
<th>06/07</th>
<th>07/08</th>
<th>08/09</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>29%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
How important is study abroad at Beloit College?

Aligned with mission

Included prominently in admissions materials

61% of admitted students say that study abroad was important in choosing a college

There is consensus among faculty, students, and staff on the importance of study abroad to the college

Data sources: Beloit College 2009 admitted student survey and 2009 CIRP; 2004/05 self study of international education
Even in fields traditionally associated with study abroad, fewer Beloit men do so

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>% of major</th>
<th>% who studied off campus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>International Relations</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modern Languages</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>86%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Beloit College 2004-2009 graduates
In “male” fields, more Beloit women study off campus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>% in major</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Males</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Econ/Mgmt/Bus</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of whom studied off campus</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science/Math</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of whom studied off campus</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biology</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of whom studied off campus</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Science</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of whom studied off campus</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Beloit College 2004-2009 graduates
Beloit female varsity athletes are more likely to study abroad than non athletes. A higher % of men do varsity sports, but male athletes are less likely (23%) to study abroad than non athletes (29%).
What we asked, who we asked

Sample: 11 full-time male students who did not study abroad

23 questions based on other research and Beloit data on the study abroad enrollments

1. factors in coming to Beloit
2. perceptions of study abroad
3. influences on the decision not to study abroad
4. their decision-making
5. speculations on the gender imbalance in study abroad at Beloit
Did study abroad and international education attract you to Beloit?

• Not really

• Academics and campus life were more important – sports, clubs, leadership, social life

• Viewed positively even though they did not study abroad
Perceptions of study abroad

• Expands world views, introduces students to new cultures and ideas, helps them develop intercultural competencies

• Broadens liberal arts education and makes students more marketable for job seeking

• In general was viewed positively
Influences on the decision not to study abroad

• 10 out of 11 reported that they did not have serious conversations with advisors and/or coaches about the possibility of study abroad - but feel advisors and coaches would have said OK

• Parents would have supported it if the students had wanted to do it
What they said about academics

“Study abroad doesn’t apply to me as a computer science major.”

“Study abroad isn’t relevant to my major and career.”

“The idea that I had to learn a [language] made me lose motivation.”
“I don’t think you learn a lot with study abroad academically and I’m still paying the same thing if I go abroad [...] If I go abroad it will be after school . . . be a lot less expensive, and I’ll get the same thing out of it.”

“Study abroad probably would have broadened my education and maximized my education.”
Why they didn’t

• “Coming far away from Beloit, I’m getting my own new perspective and don’t need to go abroad.”

• “I don’t think study abroad would have changed my Beloit College experience. People that go abroad don’t really come back different.”

• “I don’t need to experience something to learn about it. I can read about it. Besides, people who study abroad change and then have trouble fitting back in. I didn’t want to do that.”
Why other men don’t study abroad

“There is a certain level of fear involved with studying abroad. Maybe males aren’t as willing to get past that.”

“…males may not feel the drive to fully utilize their college experience by studying abroad. Females recognize the need to do as much as they can with their education and broaden their horizons for their career.”
Conclusions and Recommendations

- Males tend to not want to leave the comfort zones that they have established on campus
- Major and varsity sports tend to be excuses not reasons
- Males want someone to tell them to do it
- Advisors need to play a bigger part in supporting a semester off campus.
Acknowledgements

- Beloit Office of Institutional Research
- Kate Linnenberg, Sociology
- Elizabeth Brewer
References


Admitted Student Questionnaire. (2009). Beloit College Office of Institutional Research


