

60-Second SoTL

Episode 23 – Breaking Barriers and Advancing HURMS Study Abroad Engagement

(Piano Music)

0:03

Jessie L. Moore:

Welcome to 60-Second SoTL! This week's episode is part of a short series by students in Elon University's Masters of Higher Education program. The students are exploring study away as a meaningful learning experience. Look for their blog posts at www.CenterForEngagedLearning.org and listen for the other podcast episodes in their series wherever you subscribe to 60-Second SoTL.

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(Piano Music)

0:28

Aly Weaver:

How do we break barriers and improve study abroad access for Historically Underrepresented Minority students (also known as HURMS)? That's the question for this week's 60-second SoTL from Elon University's Center for Engaged Learning. I'm Aly Weaver.

0:44

(Piano Music)

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In the blog post, "Barriers to HURMS Study Abroad Engagement," we explored the ethnoracial disparities in study abroad participation. For example, while Black students make up 13.1% of students enrolled in postsecondary education, they only account for 4.1% of students engaging with study abroad. In addition, we explored the barriers that commonly deter study abroad participation for HURMS. These barriers include but are not limited to finances, family concerns and attitudes, fear of racism and discrimination, and institutional factors.

1:22

Published by the Center for Engaged Learning at Elon University

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In this podcast, we will delve into a case study program that successfully broke down some of these barriers. In addition, we'll discuss the framework "Universal Design" and how it can serve as a tool for advancing HURMS study abroad engagement.

Our case study today comes from the University of Tennessee (UT). The program emerged after research found that food and agricultural sciences students were grossly underrepresented in the pool of undergraduate students engaged in study abroad. In addition, the vast majority of this student population was first generation and demonstrated significant financial need.

1:58

The program worked to break barriers in multiple ways. First, the program minimized financial barriers by arranging four years of funding from the United States Department of Agriculture in order to provide study-abroad scholarships for its participants. Second, in order to increase the perceived value of the experience for families and students, the program included a 3-credit course before the program and a group presentation to faculty and staff after the program. Third, so that the experience would not interfere with students' other courses, work obligations, or graduation timelines, the time abroad was intentionally short, specifically two weeks.

2:40

Students' opinions about this study abroad program were overwhelmingly positive. 100% of participants associated the experience positively in terms of personal, academic, and sociocultural growth, and the majority indicated greater overall competencies on all scales after the experience. And while this program did not account for all the barriers that affect HURMS study abroad engagement, it was intentionally designed to minimize deterrents and encourage study abroad participation for students who typically would not have access.

3:17

With this case emerges the essence of Universal Design. Johnstone and Edwards define Universal Design as a framework that provides flexibility in the way students are engaged and reduces barriers in instruction, provides appropriate accommodations, supports and challenges, and maintains high achievements for ALL students.

The Universal Design framework works to eliminate barriers to studying abroad from the start and makes it so accommodations do not have to be made for the program to include a diverse group of students. Instead, the program is created with accessibility at its core.

3:53

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This framework is the key to advancing HURMS study abroad engagement. We can no longer put it on our undeserved students to face the obstacles that come with studying abroad. Rather, it is the responsibility of an institution and its resources- faculty, study abroad services, financial aid officers, disability resources, and more- to create global education opportunities with no barriers to break. Only then will study abroad be a truly inclusive and effective high-impact practice.

4:25

(Piano Music)

4:28

Jessie L. Moore:

Join us next week for another snapshot of recent scholarship of teaching and learning on **60-second SoTL from Elon University's Center for Engaged Learning**. Learn more about the Center at www.CenterForEngagedLearning.org.

4:41

(Piano Music)