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*Case Study of a Liberal Arts College: The Integration of Study Abroad into an Undergraduate Classics Curriculum*

I teach in a thriving Classics department at a liberal arts college in the US. My paper explores the ways that study abroad is integrated into our curriculum, as well as how this is advantageous and challenging within our institutional environment.

Study abroad helps our department in two interrelated ways – it helps us provide a full curriculum, and it helps our students achieve our goals for them in Classics and the liberal arts. Our courses traverse the ancient Mediterranean and Near East, from 1500 BCE to the film *Gladiator*. We offer major tracks in archaeology, civilization and languages, which include Greek, Latin, Hebrew and Arabic. Five professors have difficulty covering this domain, and we respond in part by requiring study abroad, for a full semester when possible. We use such study away strategically to get students higher level language courses than we regularly offer, languages we do not offer, and other material outside of our communal expertise. Our archaeology track also requires a field experience – excavation, survey work, an internship in a museum. We make use of all that is out there to build our curriculum.

In turn, study abroad helps our students get what they should from Classics and the liberal arts. Our department mission claims that our graduates ‘enter and engage sympathetically with worldviews not their own.’ The study of the ancient world is a journey for all of us out of our cultural and historical contexts. We want our students to experience other places and feel viscerally the difference between cultures, even if they cannot experience the ancient cultures which we study. To make this possible, we offer our own January and summer programs for students who for economic or curricular reasons cannot be away an entire term. These include January courses in Rome, Alexandria and Turkey, and a summer excavation in Israel. Students and faculty traveling and working together creates strong ties, and administrators love these programs, since semester study away is expensive.

Why does this work, and what are the challenges? Our college emphasizes internationalism – most languages require study abroad, as does International Studies, and over 50% of all students study away. I will let my colleagues on the panel speak to the Herculean task of running a January program. Instead I detail how funding for study abroad is structured at our institution, and the pressures mounting to restrict it, particularly for more expensive programs like the ICCS in Rome. Another challenge is to be knowledgeable of programs outside your expertise – which are the best for Arabic? Bronze Age Archaeology? Where can undergraduates study conservation? Our students regularly attend the ICCS, College Year in Athens, CIEE Amman, and the University of Edinburgh, but recently have been everywhere from Hebrew University in Jerusalem to the University of Seville. We try to be creative and flexible in working with students and their personal, academic and professional goals. Details about and reflections on our Senior Seminar course and all that students bring to it from their experiences abroad illustrate. In the end, the requirement provides more than coverage. It produces students more adept at the imaginary journey to another place, time and culture which our field requires, and it shapes more critical and more self-aware citizens of the here and now as well.