Public Abstract

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Title:Short-term Solution: Application of an Integrated Model of College Choice to Enrollment in Short-term Study Abroad

The study examined student choice to participate in short-term study abroad at Graceland University. The institution has short-term study abroad participation rates higher than the national average and a 40 year history of engaging in this high-impact educational practice. The mixed methods research included statistical analysis of ten years of student level data and interviews with students actively engaged in the choice process. Descriptive statistics, t-test, and logistic regression were used to examine the relationship between demographic, academic, and financial characteristics and participation in the short-term study abroad program. Student interviews were analyzed to identify factors influential in the choice process and to better understand why those factors were influential. The conceptual model used to frame the study was Perna's integrated model of college choice. This model was developed to facilitate understanding of the student choice to initially attend a college. In this research the model is applied to a student choice after enrollment at a college or university. In the integrated regression models only academic characteristics were significantly related to the choice to participate in short-term study abroad. The qualitative results of the study indicated a complex choice process that was strongly influenced by a supportive institutional culture surrounding the program. Faculty mentoring and peer mentoring of students engaged in the choice process were also important in the decision to participate in a short-term study abroad trip.