



Shibuya station in Tokyo, Japan

# U.S. Study Abroad Continues to Rise

**U.S. students are studying abroad in record numbers,** according to survey data released last month by the Institute of International Education. The number of Americans receiving academic credit for study abroad increased by eight percent to a total of 241,791 in the 2006/07 academic year, according to the *Open Doors* report, published annually by the Institute of International Education with funding from the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. This latest increase marks a decade of unprecedented growth in the number of American students receiving academic credit for their overseas studies, with an increase of close to 150 percent, from under 100,000 in 1996/97 to nearly a quarter of a million in 2006/07. Although figures are not available for the number of Americans who studied abroad without receiving academic credit, similar growth can be expected.

*Open Doors 2008* finds that American students are more frequently choosing non-traditional study abroad destinations. The number of U.S. students studying in China, Argentina, South Africa, Ecuador, and India each increased by more than 20 percent over the previous year. This increase is fueled in part by an increase in new program opportunities, partnerships between higher education institutions in the U.S. and abroad, and a range of fields and program durations to accommodate the needs of an increasingly diverse study abroad population.

Short-term programs serve the largest number of Americans studying abroad, including community college students and others whose financial or academic needs preclude a longer stay. A third of students studying abroad do so through semester-long programs, while more than half of U.S. students choose short-term programs (including summer, January term, and any program of two to eight weeks during the academic year). Mid-length programs (one semester, one quarter, or two quarters), which allow for deeper immersion into host cultures and increased opportunity for language acquisition, attract over 40 percent of all study abroad students. Less than 5 percent of study abroad students spend a full academic or calendar year abroad.

"I am immensely gratified to report that we are sending record num-

bers of American students abroad this year," commented Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs, Goli Ameri. "U.S. students recognize that our world is increasingly interdependent, and we at the U.S. Department of State are committed to providing many of them substantive international experiences that increase mutual understanding and provide them with direct knowledge and career relevant skills. Our Fulbright and Gilman program numbers are at all time highs, and hundreds of American students receive National Security Language Initiative scholarships. This year's *Open Doors* data also reflects the strong and expanding interest of American students for academic exchange in non-traditional locations. The State Department, in addition to expanding opportunities in more non-traditional locations, has enacted proactive policies to enhance the diversity of U.S. students abroad. We have ensured our outreach campaigns target the full array of talented potential participants from community colleges and minority serving institutions to public and private universities and colleges."

Allan E. Goodman, president and CEO of the Institute of International Education, noted that the experiences afforded through study abroad provide American students with the skills needed to live in today's world. "International experience needs to be a component of every student's education, equipping them for 21st century careers and for global citizenship," said Dr. Goodman. "The Institute of International Education is working with campuses and sponsors to ensure that this experience is increasingly available to all students, including those who previously would not have had the means or the opportunity to go abroad. We appreciate, too, the many faculty members and campus administrators playing key roles in emphasizing study abroad as an institution-wide priority."





The Port in Malaga, Spain

## Language Magazine reports on the increasing numbers of study abroad participants

The increase in study abroad numbers reported in *Open Doors 2008* is paralleled by an increase in the range of study abroad destinations: students electing to study for academic credit in Asia increased by 20 percent, those going to Africa increased by 19 percent, and those going to Latin America and the Middle East each increased by seven percent.

Europe continued to host the largest share of U.S. students receiving academic credit (57 percent), while Latin America had 15 percent, Asia 10 percent, Oceania (Australia, New Zealand, and South Pacific Islands) six percent, and Africa four percent. While the number of American students studying in the Middle East increased seven percent this year, the region is only host to one percent of the total amount who study abroad. About six percent of students study abroad in more than one destination during the same study abroad experience. While numbers headed to Europe rose from 130,274 to 138,871, this represents a smaller proportion of students than in prior years, with the European share of U.S. study abroad students declining over the past decade by seven percentage points.

Seventeen of the 20 leading destinations of U.S. study abroad students reported in *Open Doors 2008* witnessed increases in the number of American students studying in their countries. Campuses reported significant percentage increases of students studying in Ecuador, South Africa, Argentina, China, and India. The U.K. was once again the most popular destination, with a total of 32,705 students, up 2 percent from last year.

*Open Doors 2008* also reports substantial percentage increases (on smaller base numbers) in students studying in the Netherlands (2,139, up 20 percent), Ghana (1,645, up 36.5 percent), Thailand (1,584, up 21 percent), Guatemala (1,095, up 54 percent), Turkey (924, up 33 percent), and Taiwan (467, up 27 percent).

New York University remained the leading sending institution, reporting that it gave academic credit for study abroad to 3,034 of its students, followed by Michigan State University (2,801), University of Texas — Austin (2,172), University of Minnesota — Twin Cities (2,079), University of Georgia (2,060), University of Michigan — Ann Arbor (2,055), University of Illinois — Urbana-Champaign (2,052), University of Florida (2,051), University of Washington (1,970), and University of Wisconsin — Madison (1,846). *Open Doors 2008* reports that 40 U.S. campuses, primarily large

research institutions, awarded academic credit for study abroad last year to more than 1,000 of their students.

While large institutions dominate in terms of absolute numbers of their students going abroad, many smaller institutions send a higher proportion of their students abroad. *Open Doors 2008* data on study abroad participation rates show 18 institutions that reported sending more than 80 percent of their students abroad at some point during their undergraduate careers. These institutions are (in alphabetical order): Arcadia University, Austin College, Bates College, Centre College, Colorado College, Earlham College, Elon University, Goshen College, Goucher College, Hartwick College, Kalamazoo College, Lee University, Rhodes College, Saint

### Increased U.S. Study Abroad Rates

Country Rank	No. of Students	% above 2007
1 U.K.	32,705	2
2 Italy	27,831	7
3 Spain	24,005	10
4 France	17,233	10.5
5 China	11,064	25
6 Australia	10,747	2
7 Mexico	9,461	6
8 Germany	7,355	7
9 Ireland	5,785	5
10 Costa Rica	5,383	2
11 Japan	5,012	14
12 Argentina	3,617	26
13 Greece	3,417	6
14 South Africa	3,216	8
15 Czech Republic	3,145	10.5
16 Chile	2,824	10
17 Ecuador	2,813	30
18 Austria	2,810	1
19 New Zealand	2,718	7
20 India	2,627	24