

A Guide to Being Mentally, Academically, and Financially Prepared for Study Abroad

Rachel Flaherty, Accounting & Finance – Welch Scholar

As a Welch Scholar, I was given creative freedom to create and research a project that interests me. My idea began when I decided I wanted to study abroad. In the fall of my junior year, I produced questions that I had and sent a survey out to Global Ambassadors to gather data on their time abroad and more specific questions relating to budgeting, travel and spending.

I collected 30 responses from those who studies abroad in a variety of places and lengths of their programs. After sorting through the data, I saw reoccurring themes. I categorized the responses into 4 main themes.

Awareness of Money

Planning in Advance

YOLO!
You Only Live Once

SAVE!
SAVE!
SAVE!

Examples of having awareness of money is eating in versus eating out, being cautious about shopping and buying unnecessary items and budgeting better to know where your money is going. Travel is mainly related to planning in advance to know that tickets are cheaper further in advance and to research before going on a trip to make sure you find the best deals. YOLO is exactly what it means. The data showed that people did not want to have regrets during their time abroad so took advantage of the once in a lifetime opportunity. The data mentions how people wish they saved more before going abroad to better prepare.

After gathering this data, I spent 4 months in Rome, Italy with the partnership school, John Cabot University. I applied all the information I gathered to make the most of my time abroad, while keeping on budget. Through my time, I took note of anything that I thought was important for knowing before going abroad, because I felt there was more than just the financial aspect. This is how I ended with my final project for the year, A Guide to being Mentally, Academically, and Financially Prepared for Study Abroad.

Financially Mastering the Months Abroad

Travel can get quite expensive, so it is important to be smart with your money to make it last. It is possible to have an amazing experience with or without a ton of money. I personally made a budget spreadsheet to see where my money was being spent the most. This helped me to see where I can cut back to save for travel. It is also important to make sure you have a credit card without foreign exchange fees, and you might be wasting additional money you didn't have to.

Academically Succeeding while Abroad

This is STUDY Abroad so make sure you don't lose sight of that. Continue to do what you do at SHU as you know your study habits the best. Use a weekly/monthly planner to know when you will have heavier weeks. Get to know your professors!

The Mental Aspect while Abroad

It is okay to feel all types of ways as you are in a new country, far from home, and in a different time zone. You may experience a roller-coaster of emotion. Anxiety and homesickness is common with all the change. Listen to your body, take time for yourself and call your loved ones at home.



Now that the first part of my project was done, I was focused on reflecting on my time abroad and sharing what I gained from my experience.

After returning to SHU, I decided to continue my project by helping the Global Affairs office.

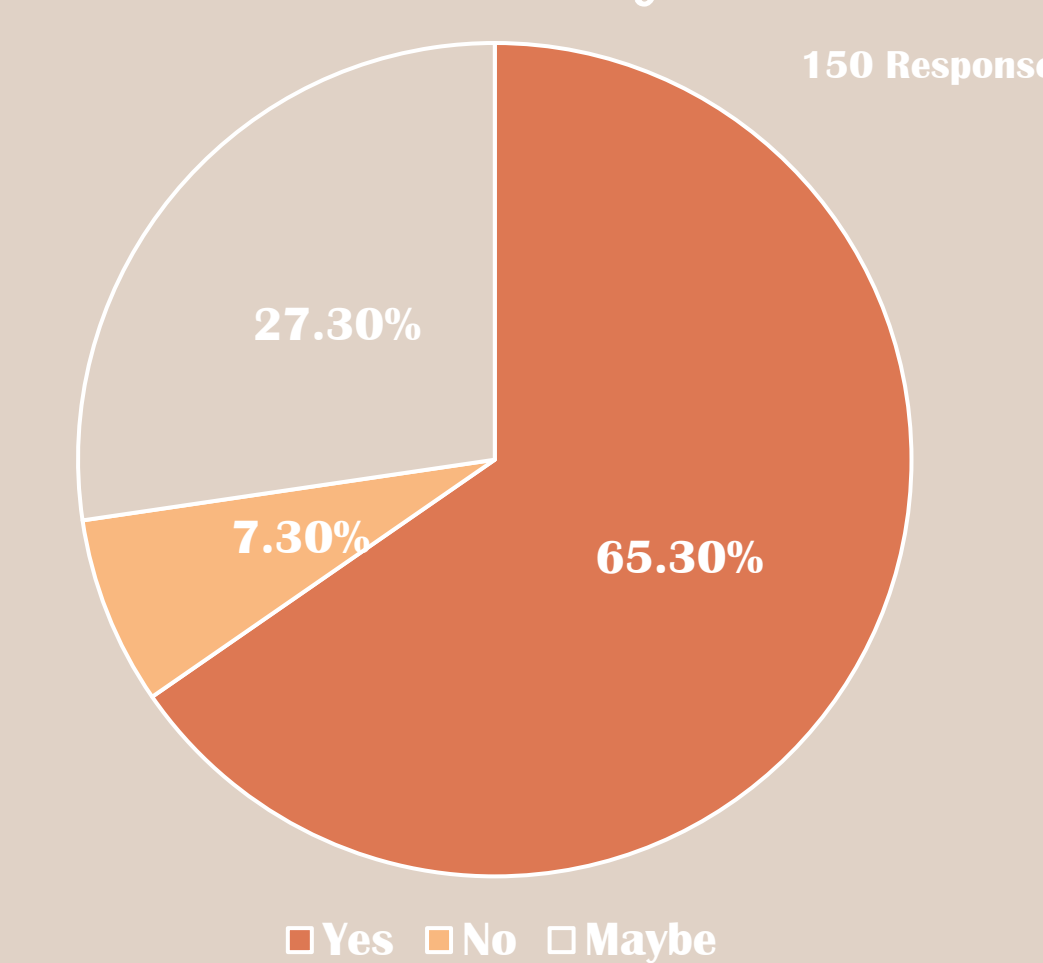
In the fall of this year, I shared my insights to interested students at study abroad information sessions hosted by the Global Affairs office.

I created a survey that I had students fill out regarding questions about if they were interested in studying abroad, what made them excited and worried about the thought of studying abroad, and if they considered any mental, academic or financial aspects to their decision.

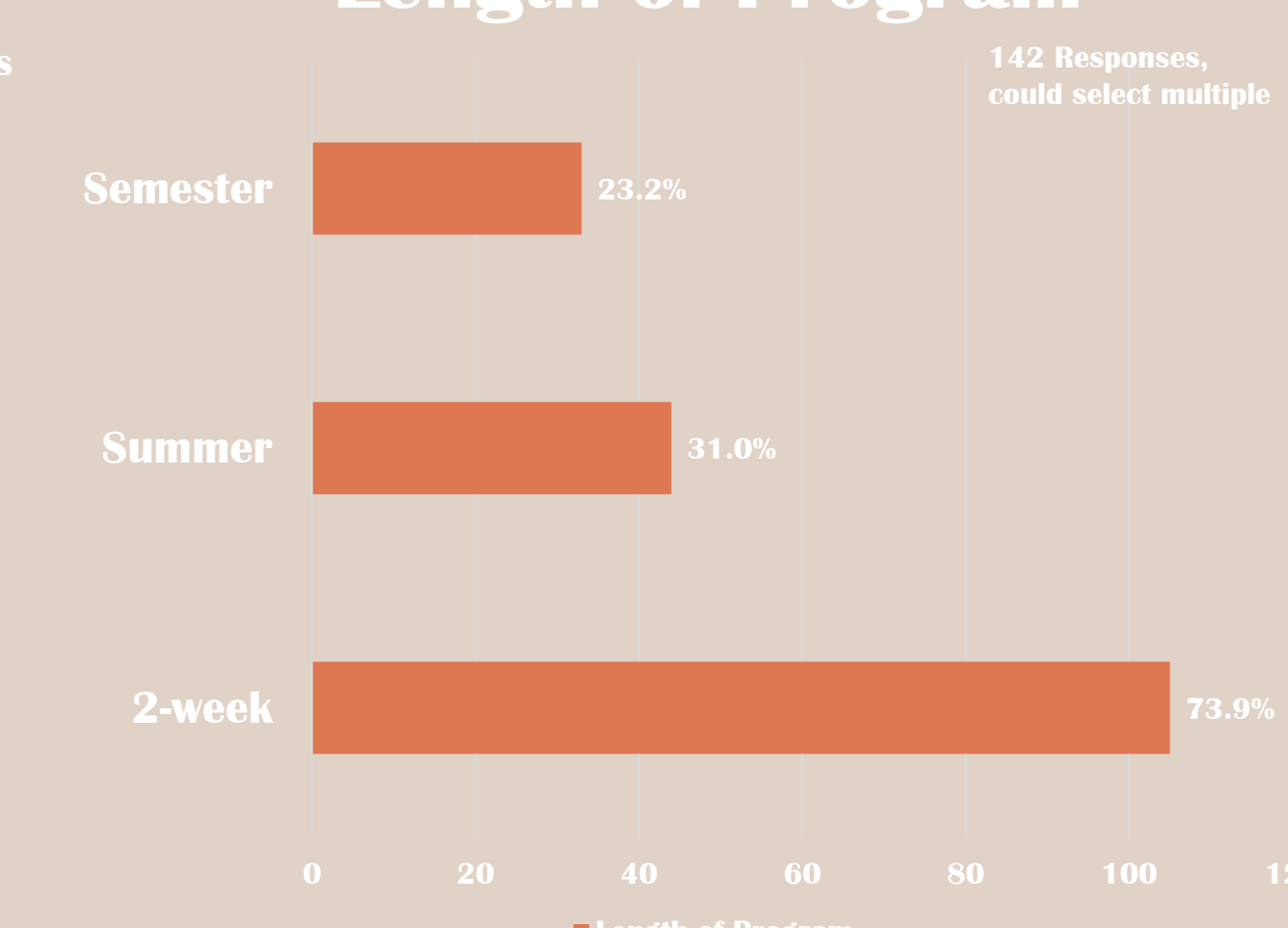
During the second week of the spring semester, I presented to 150 freshman in BU-101 about opportunities to study abroad at SHU, what I learned from my time abroad and why I believe it is important to have global education.

I gathered responses to the same survey and got a tremendous response. The results to my data collection are below!

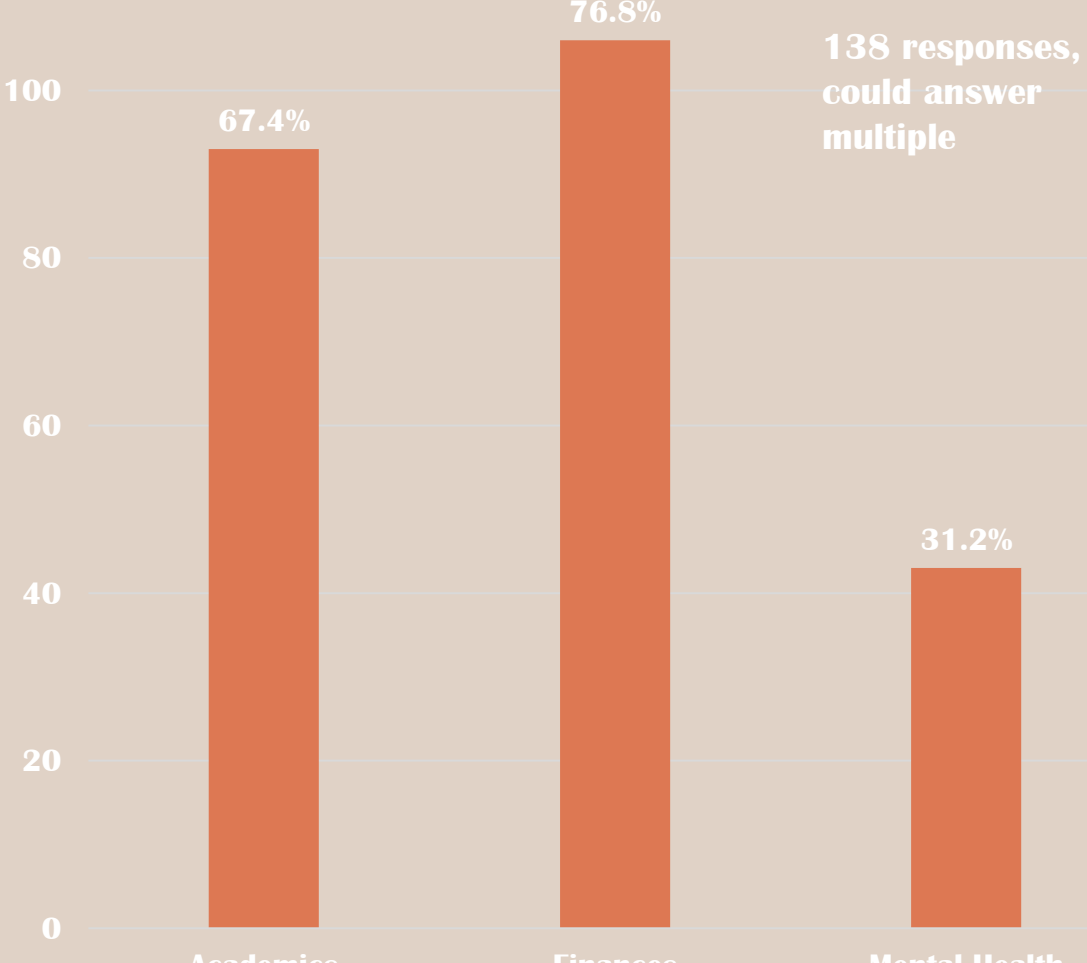
Interest in Study Abroad



Length of Program



Do you think of these?



Excitements?

- Travel & seeing new places
- A new experience
- Meeting new people
 - Culture
- Trying new foods
- Art & architecture

Worries?

- FOMO at SHU
- Homesickness
- Finding new friends
- A lot of change
- Falling behind in classes
- Language barrier
 - Money

Scan the QR Code to watch a video of my presentation from last year and view my slides from this year

