

## **ABSTRACT**

WILLIS, AMBER LYNN. Motivations and Concerns about Study Abroad: A Case Study of the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences Agribusiness Short-Term Study Abroad Program. (Under the direction of Dr. Wendy Warner.)

Due to the increase in globalization, universities must focus on internationalization throughout their curricula and programs. Land grant universities and colleges of agriculture are no exception. There is currently a lack of agricultural students participating in study abroad programs.

The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of the participants' motivations and experiences related to a short-term study abroad experience. This was an observational case study of the North Carolina State University College of Agricultural and Life Sciences Agribusiness Short-Term Study Abroad Program with the 2014 program student participants. The study explored student participants' motivations to participate in a short-term study abroad program, examined student participants' experiences prior to and during their time abroad with the short-term study abroad program, tried to understand the participants' perceived importance of international experiences to be gained, and examined concerns participants' may have about international travel all through activities, such as focus groups and questionnaires.

This study discovered that students were motivated to participate in a short-term study abroad program because they liked the short-term length aspect, it helped with the completion of course credits, and due to encouragement from other people, both other students and faculty. Students viewed international experiences like this one as an opportunity to experience culture, gain an advantage in their future career fields, learn more content knowledge, gain new experiences, and have new social opportunities. Students

revealed they were concerned about transportation abroad, finances, language barriers, and safety. The findings of this study will provide valuable insight to utilize in the continued planning and facilitation of this specific study abroad program and also the design and implementation of future international experiences. The knowledge gained from this study will be valuable in encouraging more college of agriculture students to study abroad.

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Motivations and Concerns about Study Abroad: A Case Study of the College of Agriculture  
and Life Sciences Agribusiness Short-Term Study Abroad Program

by  
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## **DEDICATION**

To my great-grandparents, Jack and Wilma Hoyle

To Papaw: thank you for showing our family the value of education and thank you for making it possible for your grandchildren and great-grandchildren to attend college. I will always cherish our talks in the sunroom.

To Mamaw: thank you for playing the student in the afternoons in the sewing machine room while I taught to you in front of my favorite world map. Thank you for being there on the front porch every day when I got off the school bus.

## **BIOGRAPHY**

Amber Willis was born and raised in Belwood, North Carolina to her parents Steve and Angie Weathers. Amber's passion for agricultural education formed while she was a student at Burns High School. After graduating from Burns in 2009, Amber moved to Raleigh, North Carolina to attend North Carolina State University. In December 2012 Amber graduated Magna Cum Laude with her Bachelor's of Science degree in Agricultural Education with a minor and concentration in Horticultural Sciences. While enrolled at North Carolina State, Amber had several opportunities to study abroad, which is how she discovered her love for traveling and other cultures.

Amber began her Master's of Science program in Agricultural and Extension Education in January 2013. Throughout her graduate studies at North Carolina State, Amber worked in the Crop Science Department as a graduate research assistant in Dr. Thomas Sinclair's laboratory and as a teaching assistant for the Agricultural Institute CS 111 Field Crops Production course.

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## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

### **Conceptual Framework**

The United States of America is situated in a global era requiring citizens to learn how live in an interconnected world (Nehrt, 1993). Globalization promotes interconnectivity by making people of the world increasingly dependent on each other (Smith, Jayarante, Moore, Kistler, & Smith, 2010). This dependence is crucial for people throughout the world because “the future of any country rests on its ability to prepare and compete in a world which is moving rapidly toward economic, political and social interdependence” (Smith et al., 2010, p. 60).

The National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges (NASULGC) has recognized the importance of globalization and interconnectivity. The organization asserts that globalization within financials, manufacturing, and agriculture will have a substantial presence throughout all aspects of American society (NASULGC, 2002). Many employers seek to hire individuals who are able to succeed in a culturally, ethnically, and racially diverse work environment (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2007). Organizations desire to hire employees with diverse backgrounds and experiences because their “differences enrich us, expand us, [and] provide us the competitive edge” (Makower, 1995, p. 51). While in college, many students are not acquiring the global knowledge that employers expect to see (Hudzik, 2004). Globalized education and experience is the key to helping people understand how to live this interconnected way (Nehrt, 1993).

### *Globalization within the University*

Our society is developing an increasingly international focus, requiring people within the university to globalize in order to stay current (Nehrt, 1993). The growth of communication via technology has made the world a smaller place, increasing the importance of global participation and interactions (Akpan & Martin, 1996). In 2004, the NASULGC listed five characteristics of globally competent graduates: have a diverse and knowledgeable worldview, comprehend the international dimensions of the major field of study, communicate effectively in about language and cross-culturally, exhibit cross-cultural sensitivity and adaptability, and continue global learning throughout life. Additionally, the NASULGC stated that in order to succeed in today's world, students need a broad knowledge of the world but they also need to "have developed the skills to comprehend, analyze, and evaluate the knowledge" (NASULGC, 2004, p. 8). According to many scholars, globalizing undergraduate education programs is gaining importance (Bruening & Frick, 2004) and all undergraduate students need to have a strong international experience before they graduate (NASULGC, 1997). However research has shown undergraduate student leaders lack the knowledge of global issues and are basically globally illiterate (Moore, Boyd, Rosser, & Elbert, 2009).

In order to improve student success and enhance student engagement, Kuh (2008) stated universities must, "make it possible for every single student to participate in at least two high-impact activities during his or her undergraduate program, one in the first year, and one taken later in relation to the major field" (p. 21). These high-impact educational

activities include practices such as diversity/global learning, first year seminars and experiences, and service and community-based learning.

### *Globalization in Colleges of Agriculture*

Since the post cold war era, United States colleges of agriculture have been thinking about international programs (Ackers & Scanes, 1998). Having international components in the university is “essential, integral and central to the education, research, and outreach missions in a college of agriculture” (Acker & Scanes, 1998, p. 59). Brooks, Frick, and Bruening (2006) recommended colleges of agriculture should improve their position on internationalization and provide a clearer vision with more enthusiasm about globalization through education. Colleges of agriculture must lead the way by showing the importance and relevance of globalization. Due to the increased emphasis on the need for a global emphasis in colleges of agriculture, Brooks, Frick, and Bruening (2006) concluded many universities had internationally related minors, specializations, and certifications available for students but the majority of the requirements for these were fulfilled outside the college of agriculture. These minors, specializations, and certifications did not have an international agriculture component (Brooks, Frick, & Bruening, 2006).

Educators have also been urged to have international agricultural experiences for students (Northfell, Edgar, Miller, & Cox, 2013; Edgar & Edgar, 2009; Wingenbach et al., 2003; Zhai & Scheer, 2004). Wingenbach et al., (2003) recommended undergraduate programs should have goals set that revolve around teaching students international agricultural issues because of the fast paced communication of global happenings and the

possible affects to changes in the food system around the world. Even with the repeated calls for the integration of global concepts into university coursework, college of agriculture graduates have been known to exhibit a “lack of knowledge of how globalization affects the United States and [the] international business environment” (Stephens & Little, 2008, p. 47). For example, students entering a doctoral program demonstrated little knowledge on theories, principles, and practices in cross-national agricultural development. This lack of international knowledge holds negative consequences for students who are becoming increasingly involved in international development activities (Lindner & Dooley, 2002). When employers hire college of agriculture graduates they expect them to have a “good grasp on issues and events that affect things throughout the world” (Irani, Place & Friedel, 2006, p. 28).

Further complicating efforts to promote global perspectives are students’ lack of interest in learning about international agricultural products, policies, people, and cultures (Wingenbach, et al., 2003). In 2002, RoperASW completed a study and found the majority of 18-24 years olds lack a general knowledge of world events. This lack of knowledge and understanding may come from a detachment between events in the real world and concepts discussed in agriculture courses (Wingenbach, et al., 2003).

### *Response to the Lack of Globalization at Universities*

In response to the aforementioned concerns, more efforts need to be implemented to help students better understand and connect real world events to the topics being discussed in courses. Wingenbach, et al., 2003 argues “a better understanding of international agricultural

policies, products, people, and cultures” may help prepare students to enter careers with a global outlook. Studying abroad is the best way for undergraduate students to gain international perspectives in agricultural studies programs (Brooks, Frick, & Bruening, 2006). Briers, Shinn and Nguyen (2010) stated faculty should be focused on creating and organizing experiences to provide global opportunities. Brooks, Frick, and Bruening (2006) suggested colleges of agriculture should consider the importance of study abroad and consider making it a mandatory experience for all students.

#### *Response at North Carolina State University*

In response to the increasing demand for internationalization, North Carolina State University included a global component in their 2011-2020 Strategic Plan. North Carolina State University’s Strategic Plan, *The Pathway to the Future*, contains five goals. Goal one is to “Enhance the success of our students through educational innovation” (NCSU Strategic Plan, 2011, p. 4). Goal one promises to enhance the undergraduate experience by providing each student with as many high-impact educational activities as possible, which includes global learning. North Carolina State University realizes this initiative requires them to look at the academic calendar and graduation requirements to create flexible and achievable options.

The fifth goal states to “enhance local and global engagement through focused strategic partnerships” (NCSU Strategic Plan, 2011, p. 13). The three identified strategies for this goal include:

- “Support and provide opportunities for increasing students’ civic and global knowledge, experience, and perspectives.”
- “Support and provide incentives for faculty and staff to engage in collaborative global scholarship.”
- “Enhance active and sustainable partnerships, locally, regionally, and globally.”

The strategic plan lists the following four accountability guidelines for these strategies: “student and faculty international and outreach activities, partnerships and collaborative academic programs, student and faculty satisfaction, and graduates’ global awareness and understanding, commitment to service” (NCSU Strategic Plan, 2011, p. 13). In essence, North Carolina State University is encouraging activities to help students see where they belong and how they contribute to the global community. Some of the programs North Carolina State University supports specific to this initiative are international service-learning trips and community-engaged study abroad and internships. Such programs give students and faculty “rich opportunities to expand the range and depth of their global research and understanding” (NCSU Strategic Plan, 2011, p. 13).

One office within North Carolina State University, the Office of International Affairs (OIA), is a key contributor in the effort to provide more global learning opportunities. The Office of International Affairs developed their own Strategic Plan for 2011 until 2020 which supports North Carolina State University’s goals from the university’s Strategic Plan. The five goals the Office of International Affairs created are designed to create more global interaction, partnerships, educational experiences, and extension activities for the students, faculty and staff at home and abroad (OIA Strategic Plan, 2011). The Office of International

Affairs hopes internationally-focused educational programs will have a high-impact on students which will broaden their global and cultural perspectives and give them global contacts (OIA Strategic Plan, 2011). These goals of the Office of International Affairs demonstrate the importance placed on international opportunities for students.

*Response within the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at North Carolina State University*

The College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CAL S) within North Carolina State University also places an emphasis on international relations and development. The College of Agriculture and Life Sciences has an International Programs Office (IPO) to strengthen “international and global dimensions of teaching and research” within the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (“International Programs Office,” 2011). The International Programs Office promotes “an international curriculum and development of relations and programs in developed and undeveloped countries (“International Programs Office,” 2011).” Two of the programs the International Programs Office specifically support and encourage are student and faculty exchanges and study abroad programs.

*An Agribusiness Short-Term Study Abroad Program within the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at North Carolina State University*

With the support of the International Programs Office, study abroad programs within the College of Life Sciences at North Carolina State University are possible. In 2011, the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics in cooperation with the Agricultural

Institute of North Carolina State University launched an agribusiness short-term study abroad program. This agribusiness short-term study abroad program was designed to make the participants more marketable, broaden their horizons, give them a different perspective, and provide a stronger understanding of issues related to international politics, agriculture and economics (CALs Agribusiness Study Abroad Program, “Why This, Why Now?,” 2014). Short-term study abroad programs are important to the university and colleges of agriculture because they reach students who may normally not have been able to study abroad. According to the Institute for International Education, short-term study abroad programs have increased in popularity (IIE, 2003). Students find short-term study abroad experiences to be appealing and realistic because they offer the opportunity to gain new experiences while having a short duration and fulfilling degree requirements.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Although the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences has an International Programs Office and a stated commitment to providing global opportunities, their study abroad numbers currently lag behind the rest of the university. Of the eleven colleges of North Carolina State University, the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences has had the least number of students studying abroad each year. In 2011-2012, there were 185 College of Agriculture and Life Sciences undergraduate students enrolled in study abroad programs out of the 4,432 total undergraduates enrolled in the college (Study Abroad College Report 2011-12). This four percent of CALS undergraduate students participating in study abroad is low compared to other colleges, such as the College of Design which reported 10% of

undergraduate students electing to study abroad. This lack of study abroad experience is not unique to undergraduate students at North Carolina State University. Bunch, Lamm, Israel, and Edwards (2013) also determined students at the University of Florida and Oklahoma State University were not very engaged in international experiences. With the continued call for the preparation of graduates with international experiences and increased global awareness, it is important to examine student motivations, perceived importance, concerns, and experiences of undergraduate students in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences who have elected to participate in a study abroad experience, specifically a short-term study abroad. These findings can be utilized to promote undergraduate student participation in future study abroad experiences.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of the participants' motivations and experiences related to a short-term study abroad experience. This research supports both the National Research Agenda for Agricultural Education from the American Association for Agricultural Education (AAAE) and objectives of the Association for International Agricultural and Extension Education (AIAEE). A research priority identified in the AAAE National Research Agenda is Public and Policy Maker Understanding of Agriculture and Natural Resources. The related research priority from AAAE establishes the need for policy makers to create educated decisions helping create sustainability of agriculture, natural resources, and the quality of life throughout the world (AAAE Research Priorities). As well, AIAEE recognized an objective to encourage research within the

profession that will favorably impact agricultural and extension education programs in countries around the world (AIAEE, 2009). The findings from this research will provide valuable insight to utilize in the continued planning and facilitation of this specific study abroad program and also the design and implementation of future international experiences.

The specific research objectives were to:

1. Explore student participants' motivations to participate in a short-term study abroad program.
2. Understand the participants' perceived importance of international experiences to be gained.
3. Examine concerns participants' may have about international travel.
4. Examine student participants' experiences prior to and during their time abroad with the short-term study abroad program.

### **Definition of Terms**

- International Education: "A variety of activities and programs designed to encourage the flow of ideas and people across cultural and geographic boundaries (Mitzel, Best & Rabinowitz, 1982)"
- Study Abroad: "The pursuit of educational opportunities and activities in an international setting ("Study Abroad of University of Illinois")"
- Short-Term Study Abroad Program: Study abroad programs that last anywhere from one week to one summer in length. The College of Agriculture and Life Sciences

Agribusiness Short-Term Study Abroad Program focused on in this study is ten days in length.

- Long-Term Study Abroad Program: Study abroad programs that are a semester or longer in length
- International Experience: An experience that will “provide a means for globalization of higher education, promoting communication, and understanding of real world issues (Snyder, Mickelbart, Eylands, 2012, pg. 55)”
- Globalization: “Spatial-temporal processes, operating on a global scale that rapidly cut across national boundaries, drawing more and more of the world into webs of interconnection, integrating and stretching cultures and communities across space and time, and compressing our spatial and temporal horizons (Inda & Rosaldo, 2006, p. 12)”
- Preflection: “The process of being consciously aware of the expectations associated with the learning experience (Jones & Bjelland, 2004, p. 963)”
- Preflective Activity: An activity used to think on an upcoming coming experience, such as questionnaires, focus groups, or journaling
- Reflective Activity: An activity used to reflect on an experience, such as focus groups or journaling, during or after the experience
- Case Study: “An in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system (Merriam, 2009, p. 40)”
- Audit Trail: A set of records collected during data collection (Lincoln & Guba, 1985)

- Acculturation: The process which occurs when a person or group enters a new culture. Adaptation of traits of the new culture normally occurs.

### **Assumptions**

For the purpose of this study it was assumed that:

- Students that participated in this study reported accurate data and that they answered questions and reported information to the best of their understanding.
- Students that participated in this study wanted to participate in the North Carolina State University College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Agribusiness Short-Term Study Abroad Program.

### **Limitations**

There were few limitations of this study. Those limitations are listed below.

- There were no out-of-class interactions with the student participants. All interactions took place during official class time or on during the program time abroad.

### **Chapter 1 Summary**

There is an increase in the need to globalize today because of the global era we live in (Nehrt, 1993). Globalization and education efforts are apparent in universities today like North Carolina State University and in professional research organizations like Association for International Agricultural and Extension Education. There is a need to increase the numbers of students studying abroad in colleges of agriculture and life sciences. The

purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of the participants' motivations and experiences related to a short-term study abroad experience. A better understanding was gained through analyzing the student participants' motivations, perceptions, experiences, and concerns. This research was an observational case study of North Carolina State University's College of Agricultural and Life Sciences Agribusiness Short-Term Study Abroad Program in the United Kingdom. An agricultural related study abroad program was chosen to possibly discover any information which could be used to encourage more students from Colleges of Agriculture and Life Sciences to study abroad.

## **CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of the participants' motivations and experiences related to a short-term study abroad experience. A better understanding was gained through analyzing the student participants' motivations, perceptions, experiences, and concerns. Chapter Two will address the theoretical framework used for this study and a review of related literature. A review of the literature shows multiple topics to be addressed:

- Types of Study Abroad Programs
- Motivations to Study Abroad
- Benefits of Studying Abroad
- Concerns and Barriers with Study Abroad and International Experiences

### **Theoretical Framework**

#### *Theory of Planned Behavior*

The theoretical framework guiding this study was informed by two theories, the Theory of Planned Behavior and the Two Factor Theory. The Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) states a person's attitude toward a behavior, the subjective norm, and the perceived control of a behavior can lead to intentions which can then predict human behavior (Ajzen, 1991). This theory is guided by three types of beliefs. The person's attitude toward the behavior, most likely based on the possible consequences of the behavior, is known as the behavioral beliefs. Behavioral beliefs create a favorable or unfavorable attitude toward the behavior. Normative beliefs are the beliefs related to the expectations of others. Normative

beliefs are formed because of social pressures felt. Beliefs about factors that may hinder performance of the behavior are known as control beliefs. These control beliefs bring perceived behavioral control, which forms intentions of the behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Ajzen (2006) states as a rule for the theory, “the more favorable the attitude and subjective norm, and the greater the perceived control, the stronger should be the person’s intention to perform the behavior” (p. 1).

In relation to this study, student behaviors about studying abroad, their subjective norms, and perceived control over the international experience can predict their intentions of studying abroad. One component of this study was to examine student study abroad participants’ decision to study abroad. Based on this theory, it could be argued the students in the study elected to participate in the short-term Agribusiness study abroad program because of positive attitudes toward gaining an international experience and subjective norm and great perceived control over and during the study abroad process. These factors could have impacted their intentions to study abroad, which can be considered to be strong intentions because they chose to participate in the study abroad program.

#### *Herzberg’s Motivational Theory*

Frederick Herzberg’s Two Factor Theory was a second theory used in the theoretical framework for this study. In this theory, Herzberg noted two separate groups of factors that have a strong impact on motivation. He notes factors are usually related to satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Herzberg refers to hygiene factors as preventative methods to reduce the risk for dissatisfaction. Herzberg states if any factors such as poor pay, poor physical working conditions and poor interpersonal relations are available then employees will like have job

dissatisfaction. Opposite of these hygiene factors are the motivational factors, which are known to increase sustainable satisfaction which will then create an increase in productivity. These motivational factors include things such as recognition, achievement, and growth. This growth mentioned is when the employee is given an opportunity to gain a new experience that is interesting (Herzberg, 1959). Study abroad programs are new and interesting opportunities for students which may motivate students and create satisfaction within them which in return will increase their productivity in their academic careers and future employment.

## **Literature Review**

### *Types of Study Abroad Programs*

The main goal of international education is to produce graduates with global perspectives (Pickert, 1992). One component of international education is study abroad (Tritz & Martin, 1997). There are different types of study abroad programs: short-term travel abroad, on-site classes, student teaching, and long-term study abroad (Gray, Murdock, & Stebbins, 2002).

### Short Term versus Long Term Study Abroad Programs

According to the Institute for International Education, the number of United States students participating in long-term study abroad programs is decreasing and the numbers enrolled in short-term study abroad programs are increasing. In 1993-1994, there were 14% of students enrolled in long-term study abroad programs and by 2001-2002 only 8% of students were participating in similar experiences. During the same time frame, the number

of students participating in short-term programs rose from 38% to almost half of the total, which shows short-term study abroad programs are the most common method of international studying among United States students (IIE, 2003).

### Short Term Study Abroad Programs

One way universities are increasing globalization is through the development and offering of short-term field study programs. A Delphi study conducted with members of the Association for International Agricultural and Extension Education (AIAEE) identified one of the best methods of incorporating international instruction on campus was to have international internships/study abroad programs that were one to three weeks in length (Bruening & Shao, 2005). Short-term study abroad programs are increasingly popular because they are ideal for students who were previously not able to participate in study abroad programs because of financial, academic, personal, and other barriers. Short-term programs abroad allow students to gain global experience while becoming more marketable with employers because of their cross-cultural experience (Bruening & Frick, 2004b). Additionally, short-term programs do not have negative impacts on a student's college degree track because they do not interrupt their coursework path (Bruening & Frick, 2004).

Several research studies have noted the benefits of short term study abroad programs. In a study of twenty-four Montana State students completing a short-term study abroad to Puerto Rico, Bruening & Frick (2004) found the student participants reported they gained a better understanding and interest in international agriculture, that they needed to become more culturally knowledgeable, and that they learned new ways how they can have an impact in the world (2004).

Similarly, Chieffo and Griffiths (2004) concluded students completing a short-term study abroad program were more able to realize the entire world is not like the United States and other cultures are very different than the U.S. culture when compared to the students who did not go abroad. Students who completed a short-term study abroad program were more confident in their intercultural awareness and functional knowledge, were engaged in activities that were more globally-minded, and saw their learning more broadly than just from an academic standpoint (Chieffo and Griffiths, 2004).

Lombardi (2011) discovered that student participants of a short-term study abroad program were more open to diversity and cultural understanding as compared to students that did not take part in a short-term study abroad program. Lombardi (2011) also found having previous contact with cultural differences and diverse situations had a positive impact on the student participants by allowing them to appear more confident while interacting with people abroad.

### *Motivations to Study Abroad*

Understanding students' intentions to study abroad could allow study abroad programs to better plan study abroad programs that appeal to students' interests and to better advertise their programs (Li, Olson, & Frieze, 2013). Zhai & Scheer (2002) stressed the critical need to motivate more students to participate in study abroad programs and gain a better understanding of how these programs improve students' educational experiences. The use of this knowledge could be helpful in the planning of international programs by helping those planning the programs increase the opportunities for student learning and personal

growth. Li, Olson, and Frieze (2013) found students with a large desire to study abroad have higher levels of neophilia, migrant personality, and desire to help. Zhai and Scheer (2002) discovered several important factors motivating students to participate in a study abroad program including personal interests, influences from peers, wish to experience something different, timing, and cost. Shinn et al., (2008) found students were very motivated to study abroad by the opportunity to advance in their professional careers. Students were also motivated to study abroad by the chance to learn a new language, have an overall life experience, and the chance of personal development. Students also noted the following motivations that had a moderate influence on their decisions to study abroad: to learn more about their academic focus, to have the opportunity to work in another country after studying, to get a graduate degree, and to have the opportunity to live in another country/culture (Shinn et al., 2008).

Briers, Shinn, and Nguyen (2010) found students are most motivated to participate in an international experience based on how much the international experience will contribute to their overall life experience. Having the opportunity to live in another country or culture was also a motivating factor for students. Furthermore, students were motivated to study abroad since international experiences look attractive on resumes (Briers, Shinn, & Nguyen, 2010).

Jarvis and Peel (2008) completed a study inquiring about students' motivations to study in another country. The top motivations revealed were: the wish to broaden their awareness of the world, the desire to travel and study in another country for a long time, the wish to meet new people, and the desire to experience another culture (2008). Other

motivations included: studying abroad seemed like a challenging experience, they wanted a change from their everyday home life, they heard positive comments from friends about studying abroad, and lastly they viewed it as a way to enhance their career opportunities (2008).

Kitsantas (2004) and Weirs-Jensen (2003) completed studies on student motivations to study abroad and their findings can be placed into four categories: cross-cultural experiences, academics, future careers, and family heritage. In 2008, Jarvis and Peel found most short-term study abroad participants specifically were motivated to participate in the program to have a widened global awareness, to experience new cultures, to gain social interactions and meet new people, and to escape from normal every-day life. A study was conducted at Oregon State University with on-campus students who had not participated in a study abroad program. Of those student participants, the ones interested in study abroad expressed this interest came from their desire to live in another culture, travel, adventure, grow personally, and learn more about another country. Even though they were not placed as important to the students, the students also mentioned that their desire to learn a new language and to better their future careers (King & Young, 1994).

### *Benefits of Studying Abroad*

A multitude of benefits related to study abroad experiences have been discussed in the literature. International experiences help students understand other cultures while widening their worldview by showing them their previous perceptions and understanding of other countries and cultures were narrow (Bruening & Frick, 2004; Zhai & Scheer, 2002).

Participants in a study by Kasravi (2009) recognized several benefits including personal development, a better self knowledge and understanding, flexibility, cultural knowledge, international knowledge, motivation, and career development. Kitsantas (2004) noted studying abroad enhanced cross-cultural skills, helped the participants become more proficient in subject matter, and improved their socializing skills. Banks (2001) stated students gain multicultural citizenship by participating in study abroad programs, international exchanges, or courses which allow direct contact with foreign nationals. Some researchers consider study abroad programs as the “most valuable internationalization technique” (Brooks, Frick, & Bruening, 2006, p. 100). Study abroad programs help students gain international perspectives that cannot be taught in a classroom (Tritz & Martin, 1997). Boyd, Felton, and Dooley (2004) noted there are more cost-effective ways to create an international experience, like virtual international experiences, but they even stated that these cannot be compared with study abroad programs.

Another recognized benefit includes increased employment opportunities. International educational experiences bring about professional growth. When students enter their careers with a global view and perspectives and knowledge of other cultures, students have an advantage over ones who do not have this experience and knowledge (McGowan, 2007). Barden stated, “The study-abroad experience shows you can live and work internationally and manage cross-cultural situations.” It has also been noted that employers are placing a higher value on employees who have international experience (Chicago Tribune, 2013). Briers, Shinn, and Nguyen (2010) show studying abroad improves competitiveness in the global market. According to Bruening & Shao (2005), one in six U.S.

jobs are connected directly with international trade. Large companies that work with other countries value and look to hire culturally diverse employees with language skills (Acker & Scanes, 1998). Almost all jobs in the future will require or benefit from employees that have a global understanding and awareness (Bickson, 1996, as cited in Wingenbach et al., 2003).

### *Concerns and Barriers with Study Abroad and International Experiences*

Even with the noted benefits resulting from study abroad programs, there have also been concerns and barriers that hinder students from participating in international experiences. Andreasen (2003) examined the barriers of internationalization in courses, departments, colleges, and universities and found there are multiple factors preventing students from enjoying or wanting to partake in an international experience or work. Previous research discusses both external and internal barriers to international involvement, with some of these internal barriers being concerns such as fear of a different culture, fear of having no language skills, fear of political unrest, and fear of lost opportunities.

A 2010 study conducted by Briers, Shinn, and Nguyen identified fourteen possible factors which students may view as difficult or challenging while studying abroad. The students identified paying for the program and/or living expenses abroad as the most difficult challenge. The students also identified finding affordable housing and other financial issues. The concern about finances is not unique to this particular study. Students often list the main reason they do not participate in study abroad is due to financial concerns (Dessoff, 2006; Chieffo, 2000). These financial concerns can be solved with the help of institutions' financial aid assistance (Paus & Robinson, 2008).

Academic concerns relating to course offering times and scheduling of courses within degrees at the university is another concern some students hold when considering study abroad. As well, the transfer of courses and student grade point averages have also been identified as areas of concern. If students need to improve their GPA they cannot do it through study abroad because the majority of courses transfer in as credits received, not with an actual grade (Paus & Robinson, 2008).

Connors (2004) found students were concerned about the quality of water abroad, not being to communicate, eating different types of food, crime, safety outside the United States, and using foreign currency (2004). Northfell, Edgar, Miller, and Cox (2013) discovered students were nervous about building relationships during international programs. Students also expressed concerns about host families. A language barrier was also seen as a difficulty (Briers, Shinn, Nguyen, 2010).

As students decide whether or not to participate in a study abroad program, they balance the benefits and costs associated with the study abroad program to make their decision to participate or not (Li, Olson, & Frieze, 2013). The possible costs are not seen as only financial. They can include such things as an increase in length in one's degree time or having to quit their part-time jobs (Paus & Robinson, 2008). Challenges of study abroad can also include stepping out of one's comfort zone and leaving a place of familiar friends, family, and places (Li, Olson & Frieze, 2013). Leaving one's comfort zone can be harder on students who have a deeper connection to their home or campus, causing homesickness and sad feelings abroad (Frieze & Li, 2010). Another difficult challenge faced with study abroad

is a period of acculturation which the majority of students experience while abroad (Kristjansdottir, 2009; Sobre-Denton & Hart, 2008).

A study was conducted by Gouldthorpe, Harder, Stedman, and Roberts (2012) to gain an understanding of faculty members' perceptions before a study abroad experience through the use of reflective activities. By examining the attitudes, beliefs, and expectations about the culture, faculty members' travel related concerns were identified pre-trip, so they could be addressed if needed before the international experience. Reflective activities can be used with students as well as to ensure students have a more enjoyable and rewarding experience abroad (McGowan, 2007). Paus and Robinson (2008) state friends, family, and faculty can play a role in decreasing students' concerns related to life abroad in other cultures and about making study abroad fit in with their degree and activities. An increase in involvement of faculty may increase the number of students willing to face their concerns and study abroad.

## **Chapter 2 Summary**

This chapter identified the theoretical framework for this study which shows the importance for understanding why students study abroad and their concerns related to it. Students are most likely to study abroad when they hold positive attitudes toward studying abroad, when their peers and school see studying abroad as a positive thing, and when they see that studying abroad is actually "do-able." Related literature and the following topics were focused on: types of study abroad programs, motivations to study abroad, benefits of studying abroad, and concerns and barriers with study abroad and international experiences.

This study will contribute to the literature available related to study abroad in agricultural focused programs.

## **CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY**

The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of the participants' motivations and experiences related to a short-term study abroad experience. The findings will provide valuable insight to utilize in the continued planning and facilitation of this specific study abroad program and also the design and implementation of future trips. The specific research objectives were to:

1. Explore student participants' motivations to participate in a short-term study abroad program.
2. Understand the participants' perceived importance of international experiences to be gained.
3. Examine concerns participants' may have about international travel.
4. Examine student participants' experiences prior to and during their time abroad with the short-term study abroad program.

This chapter will describe the methodology used and will discuss the research design, population, instruments used for data collection, data collection, data analysis, and trustworthiness.

### **Research Design**

This descriptive qualitative study utilized observational case study research. Case study is considered a bounded system and is viewed as an object instead of a process (Stake, 1995; Creswell, 1998; Merriam, 1998). When identifying a specific object worthy of examination several factors are considered. The object commonly represents the interest of

the researcher, which could be an event, situation, program, phenomenon, community, or individual (Trindade Leite & Marks, 2005). Due to the interconnected nature of the object and context, case studies are applied to situations where the object cannot be removed and studied out of its context (Creswell, 1998; Stake, 1995; Tellis, 1997; Trochim, 2003; Yin, 2003). The context of the case study includes the environmental, economic, historical, and cultural situations occurring during the time of the study. A rich description of these contextual factors is crucial to the understanding of the results and findings. Considering the time of the case study is important because case study research allows direct observation and direct interviews with people involved with the object (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2003). A benefit of case study research is that it allows researchers to preserve the significant and holistic characteristics of real-life experiences (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2013). Stake (1994) states that the “purpose of case study is not to represent the world, but to represent the case” (p. 245). Due to the importance of the context related to this research study, combined with the unique nature of the study abroad program and participants, a case study method was selected. Data were collected from participants of the 2014 North Carolina State University’s College of Agricultural and Life Sciences Agribusiness Short-Term Study Abroad Program to gain a better understanding of the motivations and experiences of short-term study abroad student participants.

An observational case study is created by observing the participants through formal and informal interviews as well as an analysis of documents. In an observational case study there is a focus on one group or one aspect of a group (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). This study is considered an observational case study because the focus is only on the 2014 North

Carolina State University's College of Agricultural and Life Sciences Agribusiness Short-Term Study Abroad Program and because of the data collection methods used.

### **Population and Sample**

This research was an observational case study of the North Carolina State University's College of Agricultural and Life Sciences Agribusiness 2014 Short-Term Study Abroad Program in the United Kingdom. This short-term study abroad program was started in 2011, with the desire to give students the opportunity to compare agribusiness techniques in the United States with the methods used in other countries, such as the United Kingdom, and with the desire to create more international opportunities for the faculty and students at North Carolina State University. Since the creation of the program, 90 undergraduate students have participated in the international experience.

This study used purposive sampling. The population for this study consisted of all of the student participants of the 2014 CALS Agribusiness Short-Term Study Abroad Program to the United Kingdom ( $N = 24$ ). A census study was conducted with a final  $N = 23$  as the accessible population. All of the program participants were enrolled in the undergraduate North Carolina State University course ARE 494 or AGI 194 and receive three credit hours. For undergraduate students enrolled in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, these hours can be used toward the fulfillment of the degree required General Education Program Global Knowledge courses. The course curriculum for ARE 494/AGI 194 is correlated with the learning outcomes developed by the Study Abroad Office.

In order to protect the rights and welfare of the human participants of this study, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of North Carolina State University reviewed the protocol, consent form, questionnaires, and focus group questions for this study. The IRB approved this study and the approval letter is located in Appendix A.

### **Instrumentation**

Different from survey, experimental, or historical research, case studies can use any method of data collection (Merriam, 1998). This study utilized several different instruments to collect data on the student participants' motivations to study abroad, their experiences in the study abroad course prior to and during their time abroad, their perceived importance of international experiences, and their concerns about international travel.

The first instrument used for this study was a questionnaire administered at the beginning of the semester to the ARE 494/AIG 194 students during designated class time. This questionnaire was created by the researcher and designed specifically for this study and its participants. It contained twelve open-ended questions regarding the student participants' demographic information, professional goals, travel experiences, agricultural background, interest in studying abroad, and expectations of the study abroad program.

Throughout the following weeks of the semester, several prelective activities were facilitated to inquire about interest in studying abroad, interests in this specific program, motivations for studying abroad, and concerns about international travel. Preflection is a period of time before the international experience occurs (Jones & Bjelland, 2004). Preflection is the best time to prepare students for learning (Roberts & Jones, 2009).

Preparing students for learning is important and this has been proved through learning theory over time (Newcomb, McCracken, Warmbrod, & Whittington, 2003). Connors (2004) recommended all students participating in international agricultural programs receive information and teaching on the culture, society, and agriculture on the other country before the start of the program. Preparing students before their international experiences allows them to be able to process more of what they will come in contact with abroad and therefore they will be able to focus on the things that are most important for their education and they will be able to make more connections throughout their learning experience (Roberts & Jones, 2009). At the beginning of their class every other week, students were asked one to three open-ended questions. These questions utilized both verbal and written formats.

Two weeks prior to the students' international experience, focus groups were held on-campus during their ARE 494/AIG 194 class time. The class was split into two groups; one focus group was led by the researcher and one by the class professor. The planned focus group questions were open-ended and related to their interests in studying abroad, their concerns, and their expectations. After returning from their time abroad, another round of in-class focus groups were held where students reflected on their experiences abroad. Reflecting on experiences is important (Kolb, 1984; Roberts, 2006). Since there are so many culturally and cognitively complex situations during an international experience, guided forms of reflections may be needed for learners (Roberts & Jones, 2009). Roberts and Jones (2009) noted educators should give learners many opportunities for individual and group reflection with adequate guidance so that the learners can reflect on experiences and how they relate to their reflection thought. While Goldstone and Wilensky (2008) stated that guided

interpretation can help learners understand complex situations better, Meade, Nokes, and Morrow (2009) argued guided reflection can be beneficial for experts but distracting for novices.

### **Data Collection**

During the first class meeting of the ARE 494/AIG 194 course during the spring 2014 semester, the students consented to participate in the study. The researcher explained the purpose of the study to the participants and provided the consent form to sign as an agreement between the two parties. One the same day, the participants completed the first written questionnaire in class, which was distributed by the researcher. This questionnaire required approximately 20 minutes to complete. Throughout the semester before their time abroad, students answered other short writing prompts during class.

Two weeks prior to the students' international experience, focus groups were held. Focus groups allow for interactions in groups generating rich data and information about a specific phenomenon (Creswell, 2005; Morgan, 1997; Patton, 1990). Focus groups promote an environment allowing for discussion "designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive and non-threatening environment" (Krueger, 1988, p. 18).

The focus groups took place on-campus during the ARE 494/AIG 194 class time. The class was randomly divided into two groups, with one focus group having eleven participants and another having twelve, which followed Krueger's (1994) suggestion of having focus groups range from four to twelve participants in size in order to allow for participant discussion and proper management. One focus group was led by the researcher and one by

the class professor. The second round of focus groups contained the same number of participants in each one but did not include all of the same students together in each one. This was done purposely to ensure there no was no bias within the group placements from the first round of focus groups and in hopes all participants would have a fair chance at participating in the focus group discussions. For each round of focus groups, students were randomly split into the two groups. For each round of focus groups the rooms were set up with the students' desks in a circle with all students and the researcher, or professor, facing each other. During the first round of focus groups, both groups continued discussion for 30 minutes. In the second round of focus groups, one group discussed for forty-five minutes while another discussed for sixty minutes. The researcher recorded the focus groups using voice recorders. The researcher and course professor also took notes to record the participants' statements. The voice recordings were saved onto the researcher's computer.

As a requirement of the ARE 494/AIG 194 course, the students maintained a journal about their experiences while abroad and their reflections upon return. Larson, Bruening, and Bruce (2009) suggest reflective journal writing should be a portion of each study abroad program. Journal entries are one way to view student perceptions and they are beneficial to researchers and the students themselves (Northfell, Edgar, Miller, & Cox, 2013). Studies have proven journaling strengthens, deepens, and enhances student learning (Brockbank & McGill, 1998; Zhao, 2003; Gouldthorpe et al., 2012). Doerfert (2011) recommended future international tours require daily reflections to encourage learning experiences that are meaningful and engaging. The researcher had access to the participants' journal entries. The researcher also had access to the student participants' applications to the study abroad

program. The researcher highlighted key points relating to the study objectives in the journals and applications and recorded them in the Excel file. The responses from the journals and applications were stored anonymously.

### **Data Analysis**

An Excel file was created to archive and organize the various forms of data collected from the participants. This master file contained responses to questionnaires and writing prompts, verbatim transcripts from the focus group recordings, notes from the focus groups, and responses from the participants' applications and journals.

The responses to the open-ended questions were analyzed by a coding process. Based on the recommendations of Merriam (2009) the coding was broken down to categorize segments of data into broader themes. These themes assist in making meaning and answering the research questions pertinent to the study. The researcher searched for common themes related to the participants' motivations for studying abroad, their experiences, their perceived importance of study abroad, and their concerns about international travel. Subthemes were identified within the common themes in order to describe the findings in more detail.

### **Trustworthiness Criteria**

With case study research, there is a concern about validation of the communication within the study (Stake, 1994). Lincoln and Guba (1985) assert qualitative research can be evaluated through credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Confirmability was addressed in this study by including excerpts of the raw data which

illustrate the findings and conclusions. Confirmability and dependability were also met by the audit trail of the researcher, which included audio recordings, field notes, and questionnaire results, and were appropriate for improving the trustworthiness of the data (Dooley, 2007; Merriam, 2009).

Triangulation is a common method in qualitative research which is the use of multiple methods of data collection to ensure the meaning of the data is clear and valid (Creswell & Miller, 2000). In order to decrease the chances of misinterpretation, researchers use a series of different data collection methods. This even includes repetitive manners in data collection (Denzin, 1989; Goetz & LeCompte, 1984). To increase the trustworthiness of the study, triangulation was used by having a variety of data collection methods: written questionnaires, oral questionnaires, focus groups, applications, and journal entries. Yin (2003) and Creswell (1998) view having multiple sources of evidence as the most crucial point for case study methodology because any finding in a case study that is based upon more than one source has higher credibility.

### **Chapter 3 Summary**

This descriptive research was an observational case study of the North Carolina State University's College of Agricultural and Life Sciences Agribusiness Short-Term Study Abroad Program. The population for this study consisted of the student participants of the 2014 Colleges of Agriculture and Life Sciences Agribusiness Short-Term Study Abroad Program to the United Kingdom. Triangulation was used in this study by using a variety of data collection sources: written questionnaires, oral questionnaires, focus groups,

applications, and journal entries. The researcher searched for common themes related to the participants' motivations for studying abroad, their experiences, their perceived importance of study abroad, and their concerns about international travel.

## **CHAPTER 4: RESULTS**

The population for this study consisted of all of the student participants of the 2014 North Carolina State University College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Agribusiness Short-Term Study Abroad Program to the United Kingdom ( $N = 24$ ). A census study was conducted with a final  $N=23$  as the accessible population. A case study of these participants occurred. The frame used to determine this population was the 2014 College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Agribusiness Short-Term Study Abroad Program.

### **Characteristics of the Population**

The population of the 2014 North Carolina State University College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Agribusiness Short-Term Study Abroad Program was made up of 48% ( $n = 11$ ) male student participants and 52% ( $n = 12$ ) female student participants. Student participants ranged from ages 18 to 39 with a mean age of 21.17.

All participants were enrolled in North Carolina State University as an undergraduate four-year student or as a North Carolina State University Agricultural Institute two-year student. Four of the student participants were enrolled in the Agricultural Institute seeking an Associate of Applied Science degree. The remaining students were enrolled as undergraduate students earning a Bachelor of Science degree. The students' majors are depicted below in Table 1. Student participants enrolled in the Agricultural Institute were first and second year students. There were undergraduate freshmen, sophomore, juniors, and seniors in the program. The student participants' year in degree program is shown in Table 2.

Table 1 *Majors of Participants*

Major	N	Associate's Degree	Bachelor's Degree
Livestock and Poultry Management	2	2	-
Agribusiness Management	8	1	7
Agribusiness Management with a Horticulture Concentration	1	1	-
Plant and Soil Science	1	-	1
Genetics	1	-	1
Agricultural Education	1	-	1
Poultry Science	3	-	3
Agricultural Science	1	-	1
Animal Science	4	-	4
Food Science	1	-	1
Total	23		

Table 2 *Year in Degree of Participants*

Degree	N	1 <sup>st</sup> Year AGI	2 <sup>nd</sup> Year AGI	Freshman	Sophomore	Junior	Senior
Associate's of Applied Science	4	3	1	-	-	-	-
Bachelor's of Science	19	-	-	4	5	8	2
Total	23						

In this study, twenty-two of the participants were originally from North Carolina. Two participants were from the North Carolina Mountains Region, seven were from the North Carolina Piedmont Region, and thirteen were from the North Carolina Coastal Plains Region. One participant was from West Virginia. This is depicted in Table 3. These regions were classified based on the way North Carolina Public Schools categorizes counties into regions.

Table 3 *Hometown Characteristics of Participants*

Home State	N	NC Mountains	NC Piedmont	NC Coastal Plains
North Carolina	22	2	7	13
Out of State	1	-	-	-
Total	23	2	7	13

Prior to their time abroad, students were asked to describe their professional goals as they presently understood them. Table 4 depicts their responses.

Table 4 *Professional Goals of Participants*

Career Goal	N	Percentage of Students with that Goal
Own/Manage a Farm	7	30.4%
Veterinarian	4	17.4%
Research/Development Position	2	8.6%
Marketing Position	3	13.04%
Ag. Communications Position	1	4.3%
Agriculture Teacher	2	8.6%
Undecided – Agriculture Field	4	14.4%
Total	23	100%

### **Findings**

To protect the confidentiality of participants, student names were not connected with specific responses. Within the findings, the designations of Q1, Q2, FG1, FG2, OA, and JE are used to indicate when statements were made, verbally or written. Q1 represents questionnaire one, Q2 for questionnaire two, FG1 for focus group round one, FG2 for focus group round two, OA for online study abroad application, and JE for journal entry.

#### *Findings Related to Objective One*

Objective one of this study was to explore student participants' motivations to participate in a short-term study abroad program. This exploration of their motivations was completed prior to the students' time abroad through reflective activities such as

questionnaires, focus groups, and analysis of the participants' study abroad applications. The common themes that emerged included the short-term length aspect, convenience, people-to-people interactions, and experiences.

### Theme One: A Short-Term Length Aspect

The first major theme to emerge from the participants' motivations to participate in a short-term study abroad program was the short-term length aspect of the program. Several subthemes emerged specific to the motivation of the short-term length. One of the subthemes mentioned described how the discovery of a ten day short-term program generated interest in studying abroad.

“I can honestly say that freshman year I made my mind up not to study abroad because I thought all of the programs were for a whole semester and I didn't like being gone that long. But, when I learned it was only ten days I got a little more accustomed to the idea and I thought that it would be fun to see another place in the world,”

One student stated (Q1). During a pre-trip focus group, another student had a similar response of (FG1), “I didn't want to go anywhere far away but when I found out the program was only ten days I thought, ‘That's do-able. I can always come back soon.’”

Another subtheme identified this particular study abroad experience as a foundation leading to future, long-term trips abroad. One participant stated (Q1), “I plan on pursuing a more long-term study abroad experience in the future, possibly in a country where English is not the native language. I thought this would be a good opportunity to learn more about studying abroad and to prepare myself for a future trip. It also sounded very interesting and fun.” A different student responded (FG1), “I really did not want to be away from NC State during a fall or spring semester and I wanted to see if I enjoyed life abroad. If I do I will

probably consider going over a summer break at some point.” One more student replied (FG1), “Short-term programs have more structure. I am thinking about doing a long term study abroad program later but first I wanted to do this because there is a lot more structure in short-term programs.” Another student said (FG1), “I wanted to see how well I would handle travelling to another country to see if it is something I am interested in doing long-term.” One student viewed this study abroad program as a stepping stone to future study abroad programs (Q2),

“Although I am from a small town I have high aspirations to travel across the globe and gain a global awareness which I have never experienced before. As a start to that personal goal, I have chosen to attend the Spring Break Trip to London, Cardiff, and Edinburgh. I have chosen this specific location due to the fact that it is during spring break and I will not be missing any classes and since it is my first study abroad trip I would like to go somewhere that is English speaking. I feel as if this program would be a great start to many future study abroad trips. This experience will allow me to interact with people from a variety of backgrounds and different cultures. I plan on becoming a food animal veterinarian and it is important that I understand that not everyone comes from the same culture I am from and I need to be able to work with people from every walk of life.”

The third subtheme noted was a lack of desire to stay away from a long period of time. Several students echoed the sentiment (Q1), “I do not [like] being away from home for long periods of time.” One student said (Q2), “I don’t like to be gone from home for long periods of time because I like my comfort zone. This trip will also serve as three credits which will help my grade and it will not interfere with work or other classes.” Another student mentioned his the time commitment associated with his duties at home (FG1), “Because of obligations I have back home on the family farm I would be unable to go on an entire semester. This short trip works perfectly with my schedule.”

The fourth subtheme observed was the perception of a diminished risk associated with short-term study abroad programs. The short duration of the experience contributed to these perceptions, evident in the following participant's statement (FG1), "I feel like there is less risk involved. I am kind of scared to leave somewhere for an entire semester and go somewhere new." Another supporting statement was (FG1), "Going somewhere for ten days isn't intimidating. If you get over there and didn't like it, it's only ten days till you're back at home."

#### Theme Two: Completion of Course Credits

The second theme that emerged when examining student participants' motivations to participate in a short-term study abroad program was the completion of course credits. An emerging subtheme was how the short-term study abroad program fit into their degree plan. Two students had very similar responses of, (Q1) "It is the only one [study abroad program] available to me" and (Q1) "It was the only one [study abroad program] that my degree program would allow me to do."

Another subtheme emerged related to the timing of the program. Students noted they favored the program being offered over spring break through statements such as, (FG1) "I like the fact that they are over spring break and you don't miss any classes that way" and (FG1) "I chose this program in general because I like the fact that it is only in spring break. Normally I don't do anything in spring break but work so it is something fun to do."

#### Theme Three: Promotion through Personal Interactions

The third emerging theme was the importance of personal interactions in encouraging students to participate in the short-term study abroad program. Two types of interactions

were deemed as important: student to student and student to faculty. The first subtheme under promotion through personal interactions was specific to the interactions between students. Many participants stated they chose to study abroad in this program because of comments from past participants. One student expanded, (FG1) “I had heard a lot of people that had went through the program in the past say it was the best experiences and that they would go back right now if they could” and another stated (Q1) “I had heard about the trip from people that did it in the past and they said it was great and I always wanted to go to Europe anyways so I figured this would be my best and only opportunity to go.”

Some students noted the importance of faculty which motivated them to participate in the program, which is contributed to the development of the second subtheme. One student noted (FG1), “I was talking with my professor and he said I should go for it.” Another student expanded (Q1),

“I chose to study abroad because of Dr. Campbell. I had first met Dr. Campbell in his Agricultural Law class that he offered this fall. He has impressed upon all of us how very great an opportunity this trip is for us and how easily obtainable the costs are. I had never planned to study abroad for fear of the costs but he broke down the different ways that you may be funded and I was more at ease with the idea of paying for the trip. I have always wanted to see other areas of the world and now I am really excited that I am able to with my NC agricultural peers.”

#### Theme Four: An Experiences Aspect

The fourth theme that emerged when examining the student participants’ motivations to participate in a short-term study abroad program identified opportunities to engage in different experiences. One subtheme noted was travel and cultures. One student elaborated on travel through the statement (Q1), “Short-term study abroad allows a taste of a different country. It inspires but does not overwhelm the traveler.” An additional comment was, (Q1)

“I have chosen to study abroad because I come from a very small and rural community. I have grown up seeing people who have never even really been out of the state and I decided a while ago that I am not that type of person. I want to see the world even if it is just this one trip.” One student discussed the importance of culture (Q1), “I thought I should start slow when it comes to immersing myself in another culture, so I thought that ten days is long enough.” Another student also commented on the importance of culture (Q1),

“I have chosen to study abroad for many educational reasons. I firmly believe that traveling internationally and understanding other cultures is a learning experience, hands down every time. I have chosen this particular program because the venues of choice are very interesting to me. I am extremely looking forward to visiting Harper Adams University and observing how things operate on a day to day basis. Also, a 10 day trip is more accommodating for me versus being gone for an entire semester or even a year. I plan in the future to become a teacher of Agriculture and feel that this program will provide me with insights that can help teach students about our global economy.”

One student commented on their past travel experiences when asked about their motivations for participating in the study abroad program (OA).

“When I went to Barcelona, Spain in the spring of 2010 with my high school senior class I had no idea what kind of things to expect or what kind of lifestyle the people that lived there had. I was just a simple small town girl who had never been out of the country or even that far out of the state honestly. After ten days there I had experienced things that I never thought I'd be able to and had learned and saw things that some people only get to read about in textbooks, and because of this I have always desired to go back overseas. As an older more adventurous individual then I was back then, I believe that this study abroad program would allow me to gain insightful experiences on how the people of London, Cardiff, and Edinburgh live and even more detailed their agricultural lifestyles.”

Another subtheme that emerged was that of content based experiences, such as agricultural or agribusiness experiences. One student offered the following response when asked about their motivations to participate in the short-term program (OA):

“When I first came to NC State and heard about traveling abroad, I never saw myself as going that far away from my hometown in Johnston County. That all changed when I found out about the amazing opportunities to visit and explore another place's agriculture. North Carolina's agriculture industry is one of the most diverse in the country but that does not compare to the sights and fields that are halfway across the world. To get the chance to explore and learn about how other farmers lead their lives is something I can only dream about. I want to be able to learn about their experiences and bring them back to my own hometown. To hear other student's experiences with this specific trip and how passionate they were about made me want to jump on a plane and go tomorrow. Eventually I plan on taking over my family's tobacco, wheat and soybean farm with my cousin. The chance to go and adventure around the world before I am completely tied to the land would be a chance of a lifetime. I also hope that I get a chance to learn something that I could bring back to my own farming operation that would be beneficial to our resources.”

To further examine the importance of content-based experiences, students were asked, “When applying, what part of the program appealed to you the most – the agricultural aspect of the location aspect?” Seven students stated the location of the program was the most appealing to them. Six students stated that the agricultural aspect was the most appealing factor for them while applying to this program. Seven students stated that the agricultural and location aspects were weighted equal in their minds and they could not choose one aspect which seemed more appealing than the other.

### *Findings Related to Objective Two*

Objective two of this study was to understand the participants' perceived importance of international experiences to be gained. Common themes emerging from this objective were related to cultures, employment options, agricultural and business content knowledge, gaining new experiences, and social aspects.

### Theme One: Cultural Appreciation

The first emerging theme related to the participants' perceived importance of international experiences was cultural appreciation. One participant said (Q1), "This [international experience] will allow me to be more open to cultures around the world as well as grow as a person and give me a better perspective on life." Two students mentioned American culture when stating,

(FG1) "Well the U.S. is so huge and Europe is so compact compared to the U.S. so here we are really only immersed in our own culture. Being abroad you can really experience another vision so you will not have tunnel vision of having only seen one culture. That really helps you as a person because you can really sympathize and relate to a lot of other people around that world"

and (FG1) "It will give an outlook on another culture and a group of people to compare to our own."

### Theme Two: Future Employment

The second emerging theme was specific to future employment. The first subtheme was related to being more employable. One student stated (Q1), "I feel that it cultures me to a more globally connected student which makes me more employable." Two different students said (FG1), "I feel like it will make me a well-rounded person, will be an experience not many people have had the opportunity to do and will give me an advantage in my work field" and (Q1) "Studying abroad and visiting other countries can be a deciding factor in a future job position race."

Two other students mentioned the second subtheme, interview skills, when stating, (Q1) "The experience will give me something to talk about in future interviews" and (FG1)

“I think any international experience will only help out careers in the future. I think companies will look highly to it and could help make for interview discussion.”

A third subtheme, resume building, was also mentioned by participants in ways such as (Q1), “I believe this trip will improve my resume by allowing potential bosses [to] see that I am knowledgeable and diverse. This will also help my professional goals by giving me alternative ways of thinking when problem solving” and (Q1) “I believe this study abroad program will enhance my resume as professionals will see that I am capable of being open, flexible, and accepting of different cultures and environments.”

Some participants discussed contributions to future employment, which was identified as a fourth subtheme. One student stated (FG1), “This experience will give me stories to tell my future students while I am teaching.” Another participant said that the international experience would help him in his career (Q1),

“This trip as a whole will teach me so much more about agriculture, agricultural business, and the world. I am excited to land in Edinburgh with an open mind and open eyes. The places and people I will encounter while studying abroad will help me in my career as an agricultural educator more than anything else. Being able to share a new perspective on agricultural practices and international trade with my future students is thrilling.”

A different participant responded (Q1),

“I feel like there is so much you learn outside of the classroom and this trip is a perfect example of that. I know I will gain knowledge about subjects I wouldn’t learn about in a typical classroom. Professionally, I hope to see how I enjoy traveling to see if I want to pursue a career involving international agriculture.”

One other participant shared (Q1),

“This study abroad program is an amazing opportunity for me to make worldwide contacts with current and future business leaders, educators and scientists in London, Cardiff and Scotland. It will also give me the opportunity to see the land my family

came from when they immigrated to America from Scotland in the mid 1700's. I will be able to see first-hand historical sites and objects that I have only been able to read about. Also, as a future educator, how could I advise my students properly about an opportunity that I have never experienced?"

### Theme Three: Content Knowledge

Content knowledge was the third theme that developed specific to participants' perceived importance of international experiences. Agricultural knowledge was one commonly discussed subtheme. Some participants' comments indicated a hope to learn something agriculturally related to bring back to North Carolina. For example, one participant explained (Q2) "Looking at how agriculture is different here than the United Kingdom will be neat. I hope I can gain something there. By seeing their different methods and technologies maybe I can learn from that and I can bring that home and make my farming better" and (FG1) "It may be beneficial to view the efficiency of their agricultural practices and integrate some of their ideas into ours."

Other students discussed the acquisition of different viewpoints, like shown in this statement (Q1), "It allows me to see agriculture from a different viewpoint than the U.S., and will add to my food science education by seeing it from a European standpoint." Another student said (FG1) "I hope to gain a wider view of agriculture there. A guest speaker we had in class said that here in the U.S. we have a higher percentage of people involved in farming so it will be interesting to learn about agriculture there because they have a different perspective of agriculture." Another one stated, (Q2) "I am interested in the production agriculture view. I am interested in looking at problems we have in North Carolina versus

problems they have with crop issues and how the governments deal with them and the farmer support available.”

Agricultural business content knowledge was the second related subtheme. Many students expected to learn more about agricultural business through their international experience, like the student who responded (Q1), “I expect to gain a broader perspective of international agribusiness and agricultural marketing.” Another student responded with the following statement (Q1), “I expect to learn about international agricultural business, as well as culture and values that are prevalent in other countries.” Two students wanted to learn about agribusiness strategies and procedures so they could compare them to the system in the United States, which was evident in their responses of, (Q1) “I expect to learn more about business tactics used abroad so I can compare them to strategies here in the United States” and (Q1) “I hope to gain a better understanding of agbusinesses and procedures in a foreign country and an ability to develop pros and cons of those practices compared to ours.”

#### Theme Four: Gaining New Experiences

The chance to participate in new experiences was the fourth emerging subtheme. One student said (Q1), “It is a very different, hand-on experience that I do not feel could be duplicated in a classroom alone.” Another student stated (FG1),

“I hope it will give me a different perspective. Here at NC State we are supposed to embrace diversity, but look at us. We here are all in agriculture and are mostly all from North Carolina. This is making us step out of our comfort zones to see a different culture and way of life. Most people do not get a chance like this. To have this opportunity is something we can really brag on NC State about.”

(Q1) “I think it diversifies my outlook. It also gives me experience in new places with new people” and (FG1) “We may be exposed to more international travel later on and with it we

can gain a different perspective, which will even help with people with working with people from across the country. It will give us different perspectives and respect” were also comments made from the participants.

#### Theme Five: Social Aspects

The social aspect of a study abroad experience was identified as a fifth theme. The statement (Q1), “I hope to gain friends, a new relationship with my advisor, and learn about history” is an example for what students expected to gain socially from an international experience. Students also reported, (FG1) “I would like to gain a new experience studying with my peers,” (FG1) “I hope to make new friends, have a fun spring break, and see a new continent,” and (FG1) “I hope to learn background and history for the host culture and to understand the daily life as lived by the people in the U.K.”

#### *Findings Related to Objective Three*

Objective three examined any concerns participants may have had related to international travel. During the pre-departure focus groups, student participants were asked to share about concerns about their upcoming international travel. Students also reported concerns they had during the completion of their online North Carolina State University study abroad application. Common themes arose in the student participants’ responses through the pre-departure focus groups and their online study abroad applications: transportation concerns, financial concerns, language concerns, and safety concerns.

### Theme One: Transportation Concerns

Many student concerns revolved around transportation. A subtheme that emerged from this transportation concern was traveling by airplane. The concerns about flying in the plane abroad included: fear of heights, fear of crossing the Atlantic Ocean, and health problems such as swelling of the legs. Another transportation concern was navigating in unfamiliar places, the second subtheme. Another subtheme emerged when students noted they were nervous about adapting to the new transportation systems, such as new airports, underground metro systems, and bus systems. One student responded (FG1) “Although I feel more comfortable that everything will be in English, navigating in a different country can be difficult and stressful.” A fourth subtheme was evident when some students showed concern about getting lost. Another subtheme was the concern mentioned of having jet lag. Students were concerned that overcoming jet lag would take a while. One student stated (FG1), “The biggest challenge for me will be the first twelve hours upon arriving in Europe, seeing how fast my internal clock can change.”

Losing items, another subtheme, was also a concern mentioned by many of the students. Participants were concerned that the airlines might lose their luggage. They were also concerned with losing personal items in general while abroad, especially their passports.

### Theme Two: Financial Concerns

Another common concern was paying for the international travel experience. The first subtheme that arose was the concern of paying for their international experience. Many students mentioned that a large concern of theirs’ was finding money to pay for the international travel. When students were asked what their biggest hesitation was when

applying for the study abroad program, several students simultaneously stated money (FG1). Some students mentioned they were worried about obtaining scholarships to use before they left for the program. Another financial concern, and the second subtheme, was running out of money while abroad. Students were nervous about knowing how much money to take abroad with them as spending and food money.

### Theme Three: Language Concerns

One concern that kept arising was the language barrier. Even though the students have the same first language as the United Kingdom, there were concerns about the language. Students showed concerns about the different dialects and accents and having those possibly create a language barrier. A student participant said, (FG1) “The language will be different, just like the connotations of things we may interpret differently than they do.”

### Theme Four: Safety Concerns

Safety also appeared to be a common concern among the group. Some students showed concern about being pick-pocketed while abroad, like the student who stated (FG1), “I’m worried about getting pick-pocketed.”

### Other Concerns

There were also some other concerns that were mentioned among the students, they were just not as common. Students were concerned about not liking the food, leaving loved ones and pets behind in the States, learning the new laws abroad, and carrying around all their luggage.

In the focus groups held post-trip, some other concerns were mentioned. These concerns did not become apparent until the students were already abroad. Some of these

were homesickness, immaturity of inexperienced travelers, and people being obsessive over having Wi-Fi access. Students commented that all of these things should be mentioned next year for the next group of participants prior to their time abroad.

#### *Findings Related to Objective Four*

The purpose of objective four was to examine student participants' experiences prior to and during their time abroad with the short-term study abroad program through prelective and reflective activities. The prelective activities were used to discover background information about the students' experiences, such as their agricultural backgrounds and past international experiences. It was important to gain a better understanding of the background information of the participants to assess what type of students elected to participate in this international experience. Additionally, the prelective activities inquired about the participants' academic focus in school, year in school, age, hometown and professional goals. Reflective activities were used to examine the positive and negative aspects of the participants' experience in the study abroad program.

#### Findings through Prelective Activities

When examining the agricultural backgrounds of the participants, 17 of the students stated they had an agricultural background, meaning they have had some agricultural experience in the past. This included as little experience as being a member of their high school FFA chapter to advanced farming experiences like working on their large-scale family farm every year. Six students stated they did not possess an agricultural background. When examining the students' past international experiences, it was found that fifteen of the

participants had traveled outside of the United States before participating in the program. The countries visited among them prior to the program were Canada, Mexico, Bahamas, Belize, Dominican Republic, Iraq, Italy, Greece, Uruguay, Holland, Jamaica, El Salvador, Ireland, Ecuador, Russia, Spain, France, and the United Kingdom. The students said their travel to these countries was related to the following purposes: family vacation, personal vacation, student ambassador programs, military service, high school field trip, and mission-based trip. When students were asked if they had any additional descriptions about their time outside of the U.S., one male respondent replied with the following words about his high school field trip to Italy and Greece (Q1), “It was the best thing that has happened to me thus far. It was a life changing experience.”

#### Findings through Reflective Activities

The day after students returned from their time abroad, in-class focus groups were held. All students seemed to have had a pleasant experience abroad. During the focus groups the students were asked what their favorite components of their time abroad were. Almost every student stated the following: time at Harper Adams University, the Abbotts Lodge dairy farm, Leault Sheep Dog Farm, and Westminster Abbey. The students seemed to make the most comments about Harper Adams University, saying they really enjoyed spending time with the students there. The students also mentioned they were very interested in the Graduate School opportunities available at Harper Adams. The students suggested that that in the future students should be allowed to stay in the dorms at Harper Adams University for at least one night.

One of the few negative experiences that arose was the trip to Country Farm Stud Service. Students noted the farm was too far out of the way to make the farm visit worthwhile, especially when everything they learned there was no different than a horse farm in the United States. Another negative experience was listening to a presentation at St. Andrews Golf Course while experiencing jet lag from the long flight and adjusting to the time difference. Students suggested adding something more interactive to the first day of the program in the future to ensure that the students stay awake while fighting jet lag.

## **CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Summary of Purpose and Objectives**

The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of the participants' motivations and experiences related to a short-term study abroad experience. The findings will provide valuable insight to utilize in the continued planning and facilitation of this specific study abroad program and also the design and implementation of future trips. The specific research objectives were to:

1. Explore student participants' motivations to participate in a short-term study abroad program.
2. Understand the participants' perceived importance of international experiences to be gained.
3. Examine concerns participants' may have about international travel.
4. Examine student participants' experiences prior to and during their time abroad with the short-term study abroad program.

### **Summary of Methodology**

This research study was an observational case study of North Carolina State University's College of Agricultural and Life Sciences Agribusiness Short-Term Study Abroad Program. The population for this study consisted of all of the student participants of the 2014 College of Agricultural and Life Sciences Agribusiness Short-Term Study Abroad Program to the United Kingdom (N = 24). A census study was conducted with a final N = 23

as the accessible population. All of the program participants were enrolled in the undergraduate North Carolina State University course ARE 949 or AGI 194 and received three credit hours.

Instrumentation for this study included written questionnaires, oral questionnaires, pre-program focus groups, and post-program focus groups, all consisting of open-ended questions. The researcher collected the data and analyzed it by searching for common themes. Trustworthiness was earned through triangulation, confirmability and dependability.

### **Conclusions**

Based on the findings of this study, the conclusions below were drawn. Since this was a case study of the 2014 participants of the North Carolina State University's College of Agricultural and Life Sciences Agribusiness Short-Term Study Abroad Program, the conclusions can only be applied to those participants.

#### *Conclusions Based on Objective One*

Students were attracted to this short-term study abroad program because of the length of the program. Students found the short duration of ten days appealing. This study abroad program was also seen as attractive since it was over spring break and students did not have to miss class. These findings supported prior research reported by Zhai and Scheer (2002) and Bruening and Frick (2004).

Students that do not wish to stay away from home for an extended period of time considered short-term study abroad programs to be an ideal opportunity. Short-term study

abroad programs are an attractive option for students who have too many obligations at home to leave home for a long period of time. Students that have once decided not to study abroad because they do not want to be away from home long, can be influenced to study abroad through short-term offerings.

Students were also motivated to participate in this short-term study abroad program because they viewed it as a chance to see if they might possibly enjoy a long-term stay abroad. Students viewed short-term study abroad programs having less risk than long-term study abroad programs because there was less time invested abroad and away from home.

Some students were motivated to participate in this study abroad program through interactions with others. Several positive interactions, like the conversations held with peers who had previously participated in the program served as a motivator for current students. This is similar to previous findings by Zhai and Scheer (2002). Past participants enjoyed their study abroad experience and shared that enjoyment with potential program participants, which is related to Herzberg's (1959) Two Factor Theory when discussing how noticed growth leads to motivation and satisfaction. As stated in Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior, the more positive the discussion of the program leads to a stronger desire to participate in the program (Ajzen, 2006). Professors also motivated students to participate in this short term study abroad program. This encouragement from the professors could be viewed as expectations from others, which would be considered a normative belief (Ajzen, 2006). In contrast, negative interactions such as observing the bad habits of others in their hometowns, motivated students to participate and study abroad.

When agriculture majors at North Carolina State University are contemplating a study abroad program, there are not many options that help fulfill their degree requirements. Brooks, Frick, and Bruening (2006) discovered similar findings with other agriculture majors at a different institution. One reason participants were motivated in this particular study abroad program was the chance to complete course credits which are under the required category of General Education Global Knowledge courses . This program was the only study abroad option to help meet the curricular hour needs of students. Having a short-term program containing three hours of course credit was appealing to students, which is also shown through Herzberg's Two Factor Theory when stating that motivational factors relate to recognition and achievement (1959).

#### *Conclusions Based on Objective Two*

Students viewed short-term study abroad programs as an educational opportunity making them more culturally aware, which Jarvis and Peel (2008) also reported. Participants viewed studying abroad as a better way to learn compared to in the classroom and reading in books, supporting research conducted by Tritz (1997). Students hoped to gain agricultural knowledge while abroad that they could apply back at home to improve their practices. Students saw study abroad as a tool that would make them more marketable in the industry and job market. Shinn et al. (2008) and Bruening and Frick (2004b) reported comparable findings. Like Jarvis and Peel (2008) concluded, this study found students pictured study abroad as an opportunity to gain new friends. All of these views of perceived importance were seen as motivational factors according to Herzberg (1959).

### *Conclusions Based on Objective Three*

Students held concerns relating to international travel, such as concerns with flying, transportation, language barriers, losing items, jet lag, financial issues, and safety. Connors also discovered students having the same concerns (2004). Even though students held concerns such as these, these participants were still open to studying abroad.

### *Conclusions Based on Objective Four*

Agricultural students valued both the location and the content area of this study abroad program. Participants valued having student to student interaction with students of other universities while abroad. The North Carolina State students were interested in the graduate school options available at Harper Adams University.

## **Recommendations for Future Practice**

With the noted importance of personal interaction, past program participants should be recruited to talk to potential student participants about the study abroad program as a way to influence and motivate more students to participate in the program. A study abroad peer presenters program should be formed in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. This program should be modeled after North Carolina State University's Study Abroad Office Peer Presenters Program. All of the peer presenters in this new program should be students from the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and should be presenting to classes and students specifically in the college, not the entire university. For the program, past study abroad participants from the college can apply to serve as a peer presenter for the academic

year. The peer presenters would be responsible for giving informational presentations about the study abroad opportunities in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences to try and encourage other students in the college to study abroad. This ambassador-type program will also provide the peer presenters with leadership and public speaking skills. Professors should also take the time to identify and encourage students who would be good candidates for a study abroad experience.

North Carolina State University needs to encourage and provide opportunities in regards to course release or funding to encourage faculty to participate in global opportunities. Having faculty who support and encourage study abroad opportunities is important. Faculty in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at North Carolina State University should become more involved in the study abroad opportunities, either through their own participation or encouraging students and/or advisees to seek out global programs. Faculty should have the option and should be encouraged to complete a faculty exchange with professors and scientists at Harper Adams University or comparable institutions in other countries. Continuing to build the relationship between North Carolina State and other universities could be fostered through such experiences.

More short-term study abroad programs with an emphasis on agriculture should be developed and offered. This Agribusiness Short-Term study abroad program could serve as a model for these future study abroad programs. Since students placed importance on having a study abroad program relating to their majors and fields of study, the development of additional short-term study abroad programs should occur in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

As new programs are developed, faculty should be made aware of the various study abroad opportunities so promotion for degree-related short-term study abroad programs could occur through the departments within the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. Undergraduate coordinators should play an important and active role in informing the faculty of their departments about the available agricultural related study abroad opportunities and how they fit into their students' degree plans. Undergraduate coordinators should understand how to substitute courses from institutions abroad, such as Harper Adams University, for required classes at North Carolina State University. Since participants noted the importance of fulfilling course credits, new degree-related short-term study abroad programs should be created to fit curricula within the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. Faculty advisors throughout the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences should be given displays or brochures with detailed information about how their advisees can study abroad while fulfilling their degree-related required courses at the same time. Underclassmen, especially freshmen, should be informed early in their academic career about the short-term study abroad options available so they can plan in advance for future study abroad programs. Additionally, participants noted possible interest in participating in a longer-term study abroad program in the future. Some younger students may have a similar interest. By becoming aware of the different options for long-term and short-term study abroad programs, students could possibly have the chance to participate in both over the course of a college career. Participants also noted the ideal timing for this study abroad trip. As a result, short-term programs during spring break should be continued to be held because they reach students who cannot be away from home for an extended amount of time.

The concerns listed by these student participants should be discussed thoroughly with future program participants to ease potential concerns. To address the transportation related concerns, students could be required to participate in an in-class workshop prior to their time abroad which covers the transportation concerns identified. The workshop could include tips and information on flying, navigating public transportation systems, navigating with maps, and dealing with jet lag.

In an effort to address financial concerns, this study abroad program should have a brochure, handout, or website with very specific and detailed information on the financial investment for the program and ways to help finance the program, including scholarship opportunities and deadlines. The program organizer should arrange for a representative from the Study Abroad Office to come speak to the participants about how to pay for the program, financial aid, scholarships, how to manage their money before and while abroad, how to keep their money safe, and to answer any other questions they may have.

The study abroad program leaders should seek out local industries which would contribute to a scholarship fund for student participants. This scholarship fund could become endowed with the investments of agricultural related industries. Various industries have noted the importance of international perspectives, so this would be a valuable investment in the future workforce. This fund could be created and used to provide annual student scholarships for this Agribusiness short-term study abroad program. If possible, students should be notified about scholarship awards prior to their commitment to the study abroad program. This would help ease concerns of students who can only participate in study abroad with the support of scholarships and financial aid.

A crash course on language and culture should also be required for the students to participate in before they travel abroad in hopes to diminish concerns about language. A workshop on smart safety habits should be conducted to prepare the students for possible safety situations they may come across while abroad.

Since students who participate in a study abroad experience commonly gain several global competencies that are considered desirable by potential employers, this study abroad program should offer a post-trip workshop teaching participants how to highlight their short-term study abroad experience on their resume and elaborate on skills gained in job interviews. Additionally, a human resources professional could speak to participants about the types of international experiences that are valued by employers.

For this study abroad program specifically, pre-trip class times should include more agricultural related lessons. These lessons should relate to the agriculture the participants will experience while abroad. For example, having a turf expert come talk about current turf trends could make the visit to St. Andrew's Golf Course more meaningful, educational, and interesting. For this study abroad program, sites such as Harper Adams University, the Abbotts Lodge dairy farm, Leault Sheep Dog Farm, and Westminster Abbey should remain on the itinerary. Arrangements should be made for more student to student interaction time between North Carolina State students and Harper Adams students. Preparations should be made for North Carolina State students to spend one night in the dorms of Harper Adams University. For other study abroad programs, program organizers would want to consider sustained interaction with students at a university. Opportunities such as "a day in the life of a student" or student shadowing should be provided.

Since students showed interest in the graduate school opportunities at Harper Adams University, students may also be interested in returning there in the later part of their undergraduate careers. Students that attend this Agribusiness short-term program and are then interested in studying at Harper Adams University should be encouraged to attend Harper Adams for a semester or year during the upper level of their undergraduate work, when there is more focus on their agricultural major content. This is currently supported in the Memorandum of Understanding between North Carolina State University and Harper Adams University and follows the advice of George Kuh (2008) in having a high-impact later in the undergraduate career which is related to the student's major field of study.

### **Recommendations for Research**

Pre-trip and post-trip focus groups should be held for the future programs as a way to understand the participants' motivations, experiences, and concerns about the international experience. A five and ten year follow up study should be conducted with these same participants from this study to see how this short-term study abroad program influenced their remaining school experiences and career interests/goals. A similar study should be carried out with the future participants of this same program each year to see if the same motivations, expectations, and concerns arise. Another study should be conducted to see how location of an agricultural related short-term study abroad program encourages or discourages student participation. Additional research should also be completed with a comparable agricultural short-term study abroad programs at North Carolina State University, such as the pre veterinarian winter break study abroad program titled

Management and Conservation of Wildlife in India and the Crop Science spring break program in Costa Rica titled Exploring Food Security, to see if participants share similar motivations, expectations, and concerns. The same comparable study should be conducted with agricultural short-term programs at universities. A future study should be completed with undergraduate students in Colleges of Agriculture who are participating in a long-term study abroad program to see if they share similar motivations, expectations, and concerns as did these participants.

This same research methodology could be completed with short-term programs at North Carolina State University that are not within the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences specifically. The same study should be conducted with the Alternative Service Break programs in the Center for Student Leadership, Ethics, and Public Service to see if students in a service based program have different motivations, expectations, and concerns than those enrolled in short-term study abroad programs. The students which participate in the Alternative Service Break programs are from all across the university, including some from the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. Finally, future research with business and industry would be important to assist in the development of competencies that are important to be gained during study abroad.

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## APPENDICES

# Appendix A

North Carolina State University is a land-grant  
university and a constituent institution of the  
University of North Carolina

Office of Research and Innovation  
Division of Research Administration

**NC STATE UNIVERSITY**

Campus Box 7514  
Raleigh, North Carolina 27695-7514

919.515.8754 (phone)  
919.515.7721 (fax)

From: Jennifer Ofstein, IRB Coordinator  
North Carolina State University  
Institutional Review Board

Date: May 6, 2014

Title: Agribusiness Short-Term Study Abroad: A Case Study of Student Motivations,  
Concerns and Behaviors

IRB#: 3981

Dear Amber Lynn Willis,

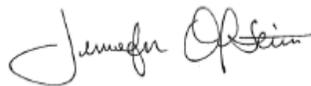
The research proposal named above has received administrative review and has been approved as exempt from the policy as outlined in the Code of Federal Regulations (Exemption: 46.101. b.2). Provided that the only participation of the subjects is as described in the proposal narrative, this project is exempt from further review. This approval does not expire, but any changes must be approved by the IRB prior to implementation.

NOTE:

1. This committee complies with requirements found in Title 45 part 46 of The Code of Federal Regulations. For NCSU projects, the Assurance Number is: FWA00003429.
2. Any changes to the research must be submitted and approved by the IRB prior to implementation.
3. If any unanticipated problems occur, they must be reported to the IRB office within 5 business days.

Please forward a copy of this letter to your faculty sponsor, if applicable.  
Thank you.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Ofstein  
NC State IRB

# Appendix B

## North Carolina State University INFORMED CONSENT FORM for RESEARCH

Title Of Study: Agribusiness Short-Term Study Abroad: A Case Study of Student Motivations, Concerns and Behaviors

Principal Investigator: Amber Lynn Willis

Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Wendy Warner

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### What are some general things you should know about research studies?

You are being asked to take part in a research study. Your participation in this study is voluntary. You have the right to be a part of this study, to choose not to participate or to stop participating at any time without penalty. The purpose of research studies is to gain a better understanding of a certain topic or issue. You are not guaranteed any personal benefits from being in a study. Research studies also may pose risks to those that participate. In this consent form you will find specific details about the research in which you are being asked to participate. If you do not understand something in this form it is your right to ask the researcher for clarification or more information. A copy of this consent form will be provided to you. If at any time you have questions about your participation, do not hesitate to contact the researcher(s) named above.

### What is the purpose of this study?

The purpose of this study is to investigate student participants' motivations for participating in the NCSU CALS Agribusiness Short Term Study Abroad Program, to understand their perceived importance of an international experience, and to understand their concerns relating to international travel.

### What will happen if you take part in the study?

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete a series of questions about your feelings toward your study abroad experience. Some of these questions will be asked on paper and some will be asked orally in small focus groups.

### Risks

There are no foreseeable risks with this research. Your participation in this research study is not a requirement for your grade or course. Your participation in this study will not have an effect on your course grade.

### Benefits

There may or may not be any direct benefits for you if you participate in this research study. However, the results of this research study will help university programs have a better understanding of how short-term study abroad programs benefit students.

### Compensation

You will not receive anything for participating in this study.

### What if you have questions about this study?

If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, you may contact the researcher, Amber Lynn Willis, at alwillis@ncsu.edu, or 704-472-6960.

### What if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact Deb Paxton, Regulatory Compliance Administrator, Box 7514, NCSU Campus (919/515-4514).

### Consent To Participate

"I have read and understand the above information. I have received a copy of this form. I agree to participate in this study with the understanding that I may choose not to participate or to stop participating at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled."

Subject's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Investigator's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix C

### NCSU CALS AGRIBUSINESS SPRING SHORT-TERM STUDY ABROAD PROGRAM – QUESTIONNAIRE

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Major at NCSU: \_\_\_\_\_

Year Classification in School: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Hometown & State: \_\_\_\_\_

Please describe your professional goals as you presently understand them: \_\_\_\_\_

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Have you traveled outside of the United States before this program? \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, please describe any past international experiences you have had outside of the US:

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Do you have any agricultural background? \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, please describe your agricultural background and experiences: \_\_\_\_\_

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Why were you interested in studying abroad? \_\_\_\_\_

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Why did you choose to participate in this **short-term** study abroad program specifically? \_\_\_\_\_

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What did you expect to gain/learn from this study abroad experience? \_\_\_\_\_

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How do you feel this study abroad program adds value to your college education and professional goals? \_\_\_\_\_

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