

Study Abroad, from the Other Side

by Renata Mourão – Brazil – US Exchange Student 2003

The experience of the Brazil – US exchange program is enormously successful in producing important academic, personal, career, and intercultural development outcomes.

I spent the Winter Term 2003 at Washington and Lee University, and that was a fantastic time in my life. I learned more about myself in that one semester than I did in the three and a half years in my university, that was possible because of the traditions and unique liberal arts environment at Washington and Lee, where I was able to experience and spent explore another culture and way of life. My semester launched me into a personal and professional involvement with United States, and also it influenced my decision to attend graduate school.



The experience of living and studying in another country was so eye-opening. At the time I was there, the exact long-term benefits were unknown. The long-term impact of study abroad on my personal, professional, and academic life positively and unequivocally influenced my career path, world-view, and my self-confidence. It also helped me to better understand my cultural values and biases.

I can say almost without exception that living abroad is the best way to broaden students horizons and increase their appreciation for other cultures and people. Particularly if students are living with foreign or American students who bring them into their group, they will learn more in a few weeks than they could in years of studying at their home universities.