



TERRADOTTA



Funding Study Abroad

Six strategies to increase financial resources and expand internationalization efforts

Thanks to IIE's Generation Study Abroad initiative, schools all over the country have pledged to significantly increase the numbers of students they are sending abroad each year. To some extent, funding, or lack thereof, will play a big part in the success or failure of their efforts. With more financial resources at hand, schools can fund more scholarships, provide more faculty stipends, and invest in new and expanded program development.

Because we are committed to helping colleges and universities expand their study abroad efforts and feel sharing best practices is a good way to spark new ideas, Terra Dotta reached out to one of our partner universities for insight on avenues through which to increase funding. We spoke with several representatives of Valparaíso University, an institution that has not only successfully funded study abroad scholarships and programs for years, but has also included increasing those funds in their long term strategic plan.

The ideas and suggestions that came out of that discussion are listed below.



Establish Corporate Partnerships

Corporations have a vested interest in making sure the next generation of workers have the hard and soft skills necessary to compete in a global economy. By investing in today's students, organizations like Caterpillar, Cargill, Nestle, and Coca-Cola seed their future talent pool and gain valuable publicity in the process. Many offer grants to fund study abroad scholarships. When seeking partners, look for corporate foundations that have a stated interest in your program goals.

At Valpo: Valparaíso has been fortunate to be one of five universities nationwide to receive a significant financial infusion from the Caterpillar Foundation. As a result of this partnership, they are able to award ten scholarships valued at \$5,000 to business, computer science, and engineering students to study in China. This partnership is not the first Valparaíso has with Caterpillar. It is an initiative the university has been developing and nurturing for years as a way to increase funding for the College of Engineering.



Set Up Endowment Funds

Endowment funds are an excellent way to establish a long-term source of income. Jason Petrovich, Valparaiso's Associate Vice President for Advancement, explains it this way:

"An endowed fund functions somewhat like a savings account. The principal will grow over time through market earnings, while the fund makes annual distributions that provide the money for scholarships. At most universities, an average spending rate on endowed funds is around 5% annually, so for every \$100,000 in endowment, the institution receives \$5,000 to spend. The wonderful thing about this is that endowments exist in perpetuity, truly establishing a legacy of generosity."

At Valpo: It is through endowments that Valparaiso is able to fund the operation of its Kade-Duesenberg German House and Cultural Center, as well as several scholarships for both current Valparaiso students to study in Germany and German exchange students to study at Valpo. The cultural center provides space for classes, film nights, conversation hours and social activities that promote language and culture learning. The residence provides a language immersion experience, where students can prepare for their study abroad experience.



Partner with Study Abroad Organizations

While many schools look to study abroad companies for programs and individual student scholarships, with the right partnerships they can also be the source of long-term revenue—particularly if you have homegrown study abroad programs that you are currently only offering to students enrolled in your institution.

At Valpo: Thinking outside of the box, Valparaiso recently forged a partnership with CISabroad. Thanks to this partnership, Valparaiso's decades old Reutlingen Germany program will now become part of CISabroad's catalog and will be available to students enrolled at universities nationwide. Program fees will be reinvested in the program to set the stage for future growth.



Take Advantage of Grant Funding

There are numerous foundations and federal organizations that are willing to fund programs that match their philanthropic objectives. Many have a stated interest in study abroad. Any institution that wants to expand study abroad opportunities should make an effort to prioritize grant seeking and grant writing activities. According to Rasha Abed, Associate Director of Sponsored Research, Sponsored and Undergraduate Research at Valparaiso, www.grants.gov and federal agency websites are both good starting points for identifying federally funded research opportunities. Another good website with a searchable database is www.foundationcenter.org.

Identifying grant opportunities is only the first step, however. Should you decide to pursue federally funded research grants it is important to do due diligence.

"Ideally, in order to develop a strong proposal you will need several months to prepare," said Abed. "There's a great deal of competition so if enough time is not allotted it can show during reviews."

At Valpo: Leveraging a grant generously provided by the ASIANetwork Freeman Student-Faculty Fellows Program, Valparaiso was able to send six students and two faculty mentors to China for a month-long historical research project on Shanghai Jewish Refugees. The grant funded almost the entire research program.



Collaborate with the Development Department

While corporate giving is important, private gifts are often even more so, if only because the playing field becomes much broader when reaching out to individuals. Your Development Office or Office of Institutional Advancement is likely already mining alumni, friends, and family in search of financial support, so it is important to engage their support and assistance in identifying gifts specifically allocated for study abroad.

At Valpo: Valparaiso has an experienced team of gift officers who visit with alumni, parents, and friends all over the country. Through personal visits and conversation they identify donors who have a passion for the university, are philanthropic, and believe in their mission.



Make the Most of Third-Party Scholarships

In addition to home-grown university-sponsored scholarships, there are countless third party opportunities available to help students fund their international experience. The extent to which your students can benefit from them will be up to you. It is up to each study abroad and international education department to identify and publish available opportunities. They should also work to ensure that students have the knowledge and skillset needed to successfully complete applications, through mentoring programs, information sessions and more.

At Valpo: Valparaiso has formalized this process with a mentorship program designed specifically to aid students who are pursuing competitive scholarships such as the Benjamin A. Gilman Scholarship.

Not only that, they offer a full semester long course in grant writing. "The Scholar in Society" is a 300 level course that aims to help students clarify goals, raise awareness of issues, and mentor them as they apply for competitive awards.



Additional Ideas to Consider

Valparaiso has other study abroad funding initiatives, such as investigating ways to direct portions of tuition dollars towards study abroad scholarships.

"We want to equal the playing field for students of all income levels and get a broader participation in study abroad," said Valparaiso Director of Study Abroad Programs, Julie Maddox. "We are looking at all avenues to support student learning at the international level. There are opportunities in so many different disciplines and we want to be able to support all these different experiences."

Get Familiar with These Searchable Scholarship and Grant Databases

There are a number of searchable databases that simplify the process of identifying third party scholarships and grant opportunities.

A few are listed below:

Grants:

www.grants.gov

www.foundationcenter.org

Scholarships:

www.scholars4dev.com

www.studyabroadfunding.org

www.usa.campusfrance.org

www.bigfuture.collegeboard.org

www.fastweb.com

www.finaid.org

www.collegenet.com

www.scholarships.com

Terra Dotta Tip:

Don't limit your funding search to organizations within US borders. Many foreign governments sponsor programs. All it takes is a bit of time spent searching online to find them.

EXAMPLES of places to look

- [DAAD—Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst](#)
- [AMEXCID—Agencia Mexicana De Cooperacion International Para El Desarrollo](#)
- [The French Embassy](#)
- [Chinese Ministry of Education](#)

Note: All sources are hyperlinked for easy access.



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ABOUT TERRA DOTTA

Terra Dotta is committed to effective process automation and the secure management of data. The flexibility and robust features have made our software essential to all types of organizations. Terra Dotta's international education roots and innovative software capabilities serve the complex needs of many educational and business offices.

Terra Dotta software simplifies your everyday processes from the way you access information to the way you gather data and create reports. Risk management capabilities are an integral aspect of the software, providing the ability to locate and communicate with your applicants and travelers worldwide. Simply put, Terra Dotta software allows you to realize the full potential of your data and use the software your way at your institution.

For additional information please visit www.terraddotta.com