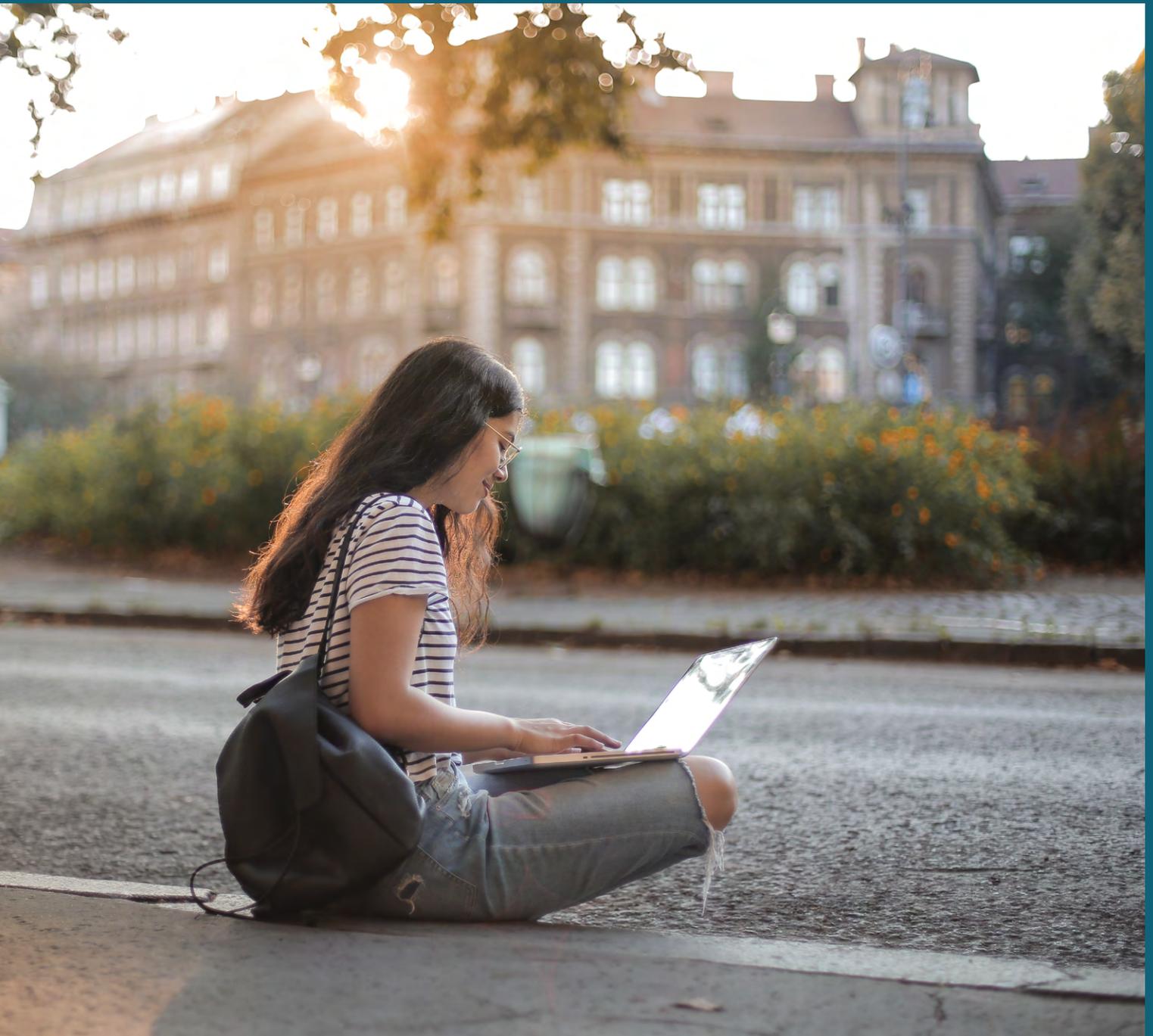


**2020 SNAPSHOT SURVEY:
STUDENT STUDY ABROAD
EXPERIENCES DURING COVID-19**



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Diversity Abroad was founded with a simple vision: that the next generation of young people from diverse and underrepresented backgrounds be equipped with the skills, knowledge, and global acumen to thrive—personally, academically, and professionally—in our 21st century interconnected world and global workforce.

As part of Diversity Abroad's efforts to support student success through global education, we developed the Snapshot Survey: Student Study Abroad Experiences During COVID-19. The goal of this survey is to better understand the experiences of students from various backgrounds who were enrolled at a U.S. higher education institution and who were abroad—or planning to go abroad—during spring 2020 and how COVID-19 will affect students' and their family's interest in education abroad in the future. We hope that the findings will further inform the field of global education on how to support students before, during, and after a crisis.

KEY FINDINGS

The Snapshot Survey: Student Study Abroad Experiences During COVID-19 provided an opportunity for students who were enrolled at U.S. higher education institutions and who were abroad—or planning to go abroad—to share their perspective on their experiences before, during, and after their global program. Nearly 1,000 students responded to the survey and submitted testimonials.

The analysis of the data revealed several key findings and shared experiences amongst students whose global programs were impacted by COVID-19.

The top areas that students indicated they would have liked to receive more support in were financial assistance, communication, and accommodations. Furthermore, 54% of students surveyed reported that they experienced a financial loss as a result of having to return home early from their global program. When asked about their perspective on future travel, nearly 85% of students surveyed reported they are still looking forward to traveling abroad in the future.

LIMITATIONS

The information captured from this survey relies solely on self-reported information and assumes the participants are providing accurate information about their experiences.

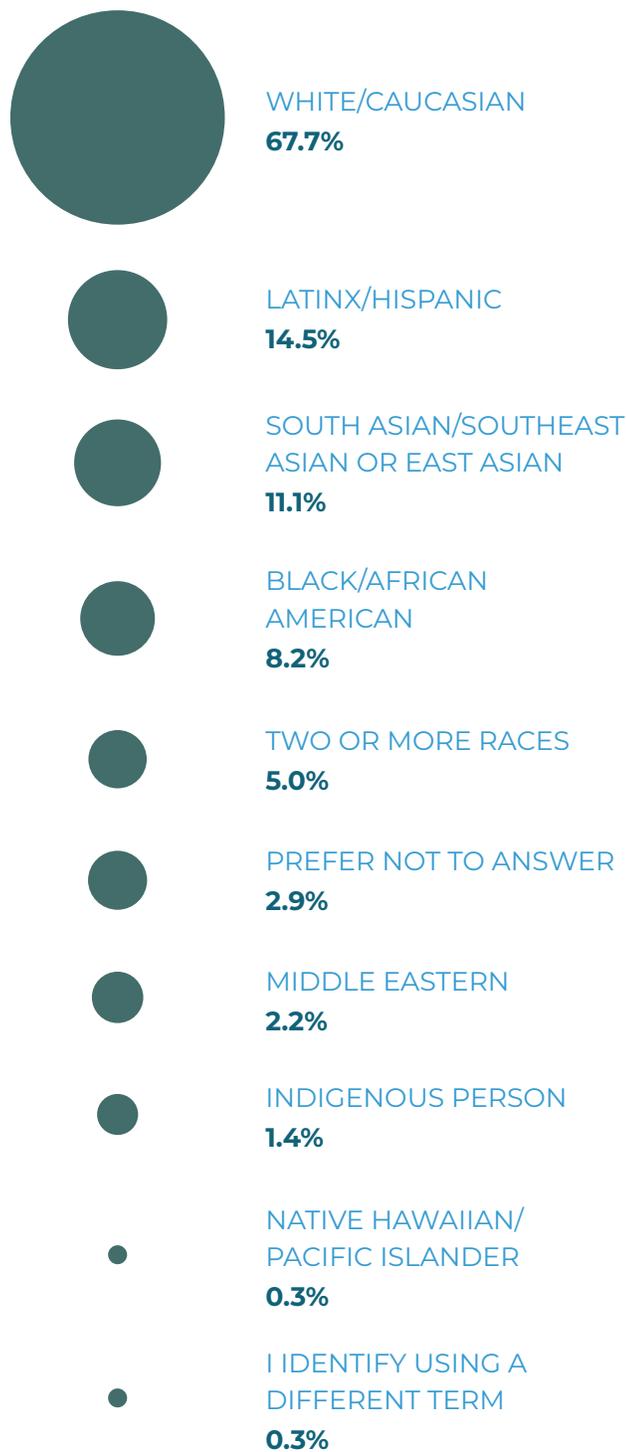
As with any survey that requests information about socially constructed identities such as race, ethnicity, and gender, the resulting data has the potential to be subjective. Participants may have come to the questions with their own interpretations of the classifications.

The reader should be aware of these limitations when drawing conclusions from the data and information included in this report.

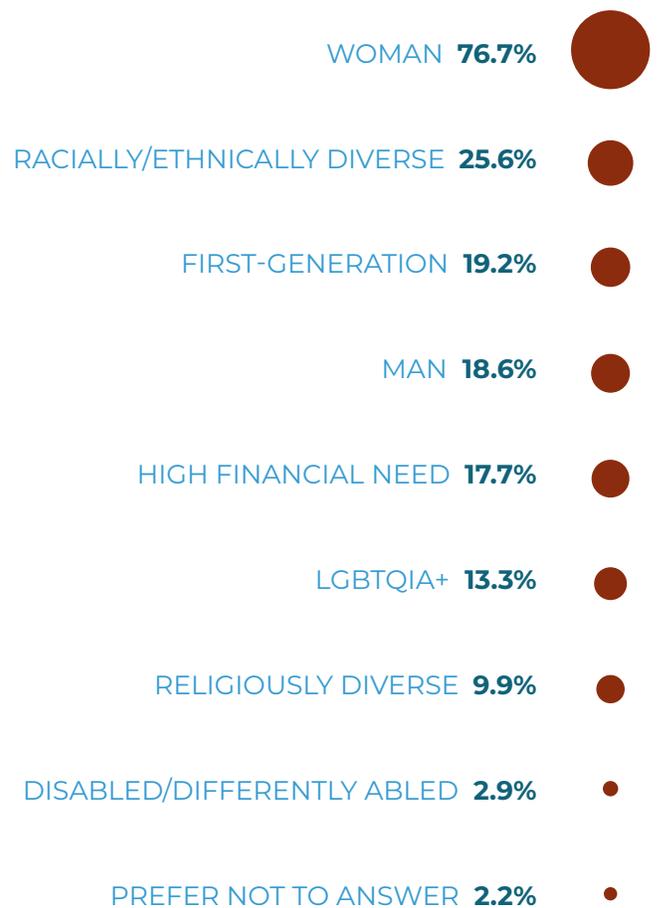
RESULTS

STUDENT POPULATION *(Students were asked to select all that apply.)*

Racial/Ethnic Breakdown



Identity Breakdown



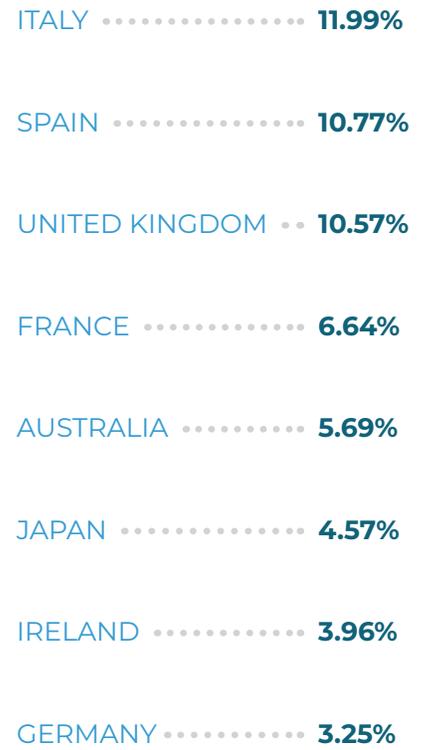
The testimonials included a reflection from a student that demonstrates the impact of COVID-19 on the treatment of Asian and Asian-American individuals:

“Fear of racism & actual experiences of racism as a result of COVID-19 definitely impacted my and other Asian students’ experiences abroad.”

COUNTRIES REPRESENTED IN SURVEY

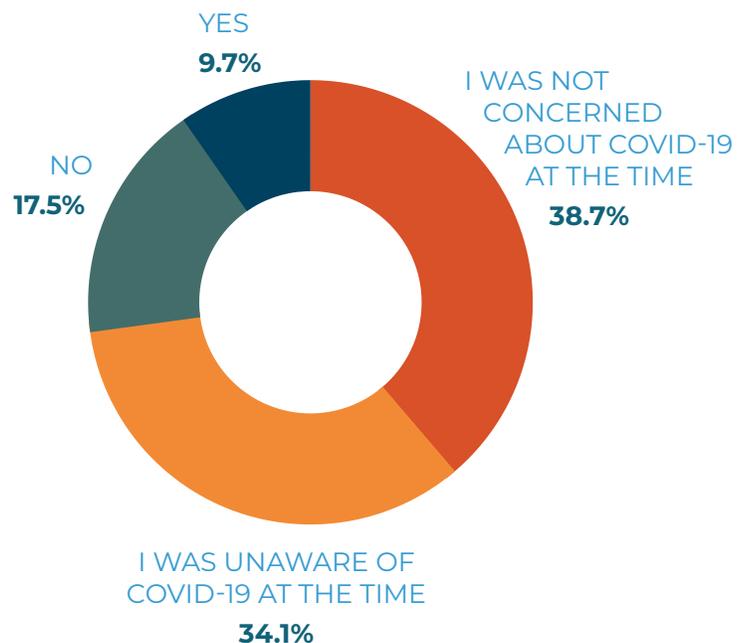
Top Host Countries of Students Surveyed

Thailand Sweden Switzerland Mexico Argentina Morocco
 Czech Republic **USA** India Netherlands Japan
 Vietnam Mauritius **Costa Rica** Singapore Denmark Malawi
United Kingdom Australia
 Brazil **Spain Italy** Jordan France Ghana
Japan Cuba Ireland Germany Croatia Greece
 Hungary Austria Kenya **New Zealand** South Korea
 Iceland **South Africa** Rwanda Belgium Scotland Nepal
Switzerland Poland Israel China Chile



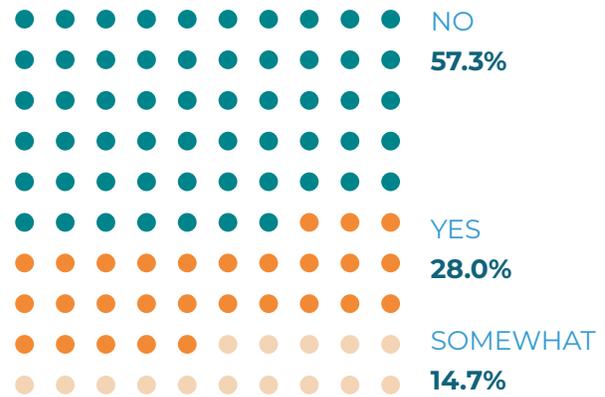
SUPPORTING OUR STUDENTS

If you were departing for your semester abroad in December 2019/January 2020, were you considering the potential impact of COVID-19 on your experience abroad?



SUPPORTING OUR STUDENTS

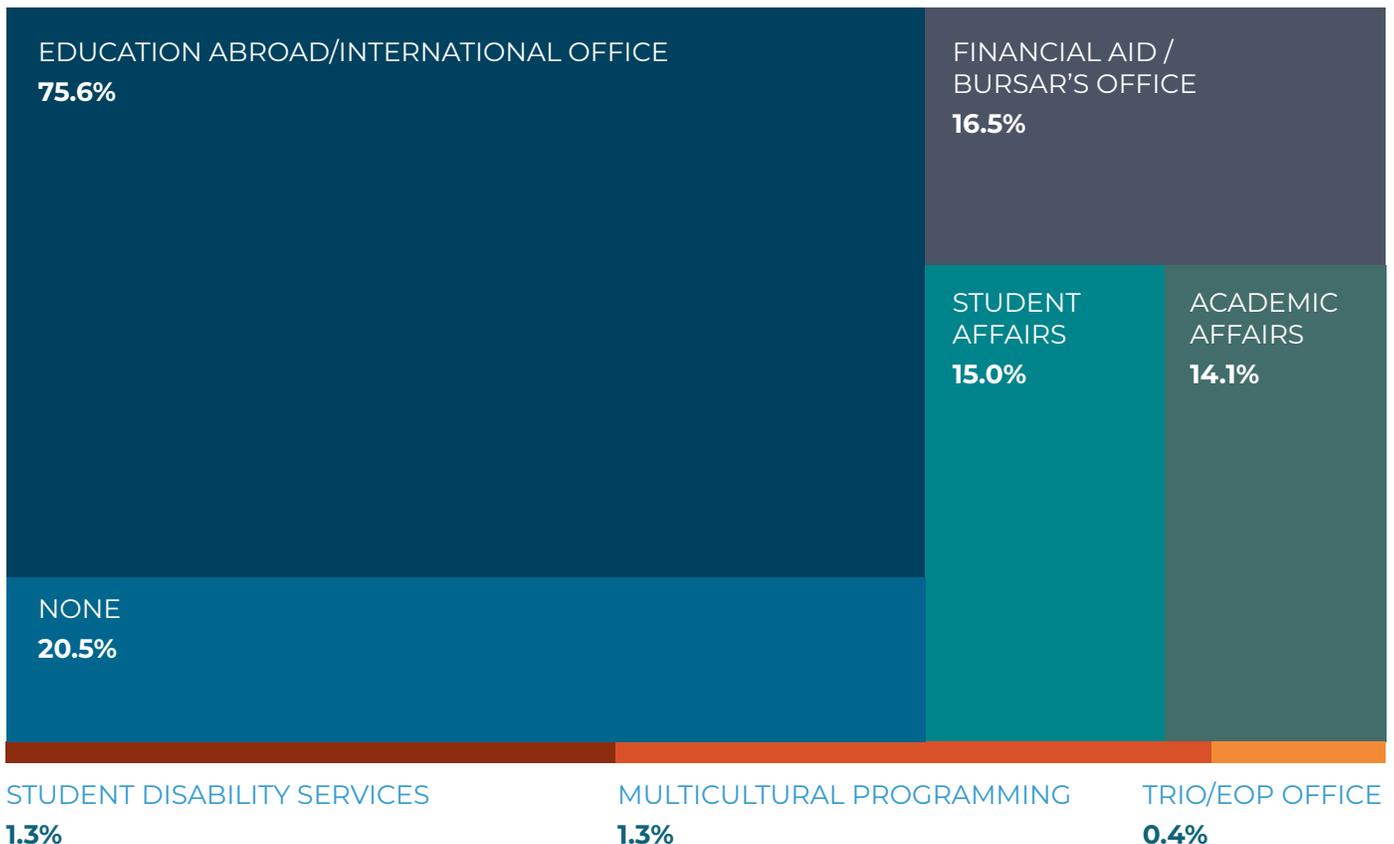
Did your host institution/
program provider communicate
information regarding the
potential impact of COVID-19
before your departure?



In comments shared from the previous two questions, many students recognized that both they and their home/host institutions were not aware of the large-scale impact that COVID-19 would have on their global program and the world.

Did you receive support in navigating interruptions to your global program from any of the following offices?

75% of students reported receiving support in navigating interruptions to their global program from the Education Abroad/International Programs office.



“

My host institution went above and beyond to make sure we were taken care of.

”

What resources were provided to you to return home from your host/home institutions/program providers, if any?

Some of the resources students named as receiving included the following:

- Online courses
- Virtual events
- Emails of coping strategies
- Direct support from staff/faculty
- Transportation and housing
- Covered airline tickets
- Extended add/drop period
- No fees for changes to course schedule
- Partial Financial Reimbursement (tuition, program, housing, flights, etc.)
- COVID-19 hotline
- Luggage stipend
- Termination of lease agreements
- Counseling Services

“

Coping with the loss of this opportunity is very difficult. Although I know both universities did everything they could, I just wish things turned out differently.

”

What resources would you have liked to receive from your host/home institutions/program providers, if any?

Some of the resources students named that would have been useful to them in navigating COVID-19 while participating in a global program included the following:

- More clarity from host institutions
- Support finding a job upon returning home
- Proper ‘closure’ from the program like a conclusion program survey or wrap up communication
- More communication and opportunities for live video advising
- More financial support for the process of returning home and unforeseen expenses
- Meals once dining halls closed
- Having one point person for coordinating the returnee process
- Guidance and accommodations regarding academic impact
- Step-by-step emergency return plans
- An option to stay in the host country
- Well-being checks from home/host institution

SUPPORTING OUR STUDENTS

The **top three themes of support** students would have liked to receive were regarding financial assistance, communication, and accommodations. The topic of **mental health support** was also a consistent theme throughout the testimonials.

“

There were a lot of people heartbroken over being sent home. I think this can take a toll on mental health and no one is really addressing that important issue.

”

“

I know that everyone was trying their best, but it was really emotionally and mentally difficult to have study abroad and life plans altered and cut short all of a sudden. It really took a toll on mental health, and then needing to bounce back and find morale to be productive has been slow. But, I'm hoping something good comes out of all this and that I get to go abroad again after senior year and that some portion of what we had to pay gets reimbursed. Thank you for supporting students!

”

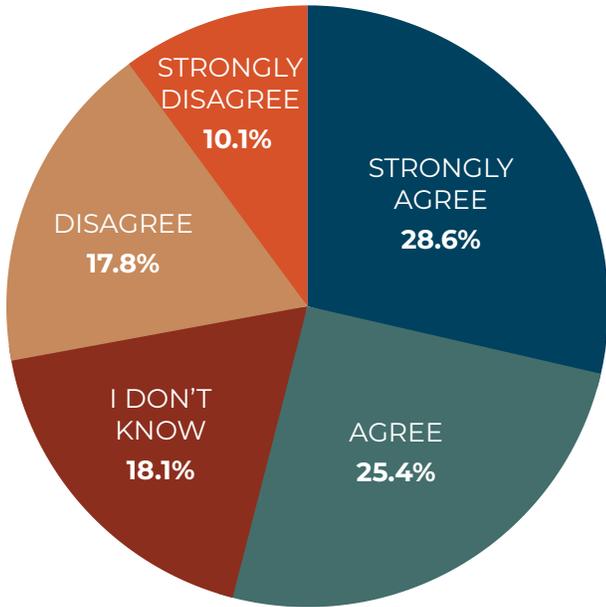
Does participating in virtual learning match your learning style?

While **48%** of participants' programs are continuing virtually, **only 5.8%** said that virtual learning matches their learning style and **26.7%** said that learning in the virtual environment partially matches their learning style.



IMPACT ON STUDENTS

I experienced a financial loss to return home early from my program.

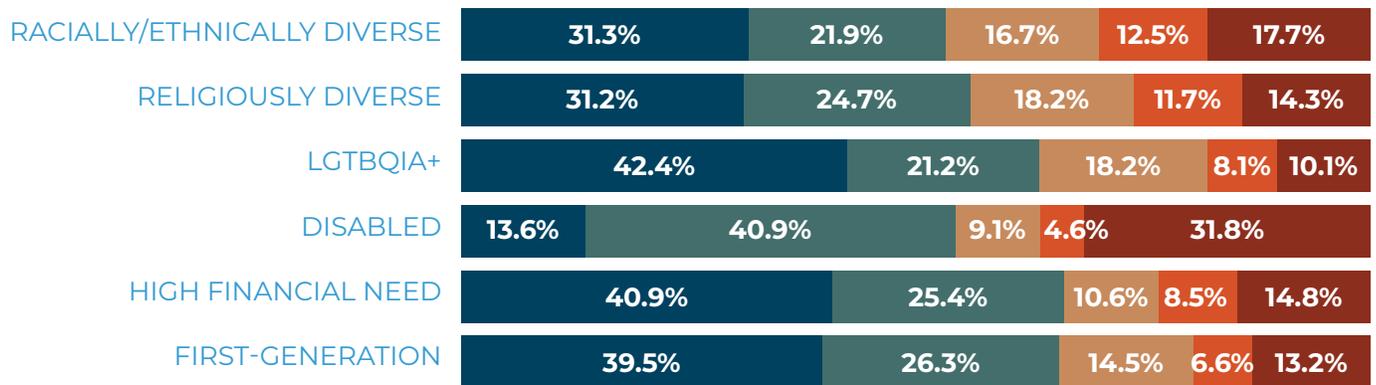


“
I just wish I didn't have to pay to fly back home. I also spent money on household items, because my program coordinators kept reassuring us the program wouldn't get cancelled but it was. Furthermore, the situation in Korea is much better than the USA at this point, so I would have been better off staying there, but with my program cancelled, I didn't have a choice. I also missed an entire quarter of school in January sitting at home waiting for my program. Very sad.
 ”

54% of respondents reported that they experienced a **financial loss** as a result of having to return home early. 65% of students identifying as **high financial need** reported experiencing a financial loss.

“
Because of this impact I have lost most of my hope for studying abroad. I never got to leave the country and had already invested over \$1000 in this trip. This would have been my only chance due to my credits and making sure that I graduate with the classes I need.
 ”

By demographic



■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree ■ I don't know

In addition, 24.9% of respondents reported that they **do not know** if they will graduate on time because of the process of returning home from their program abroad.

FUTURE GLOBAL PROGRAM PARTICIPATION



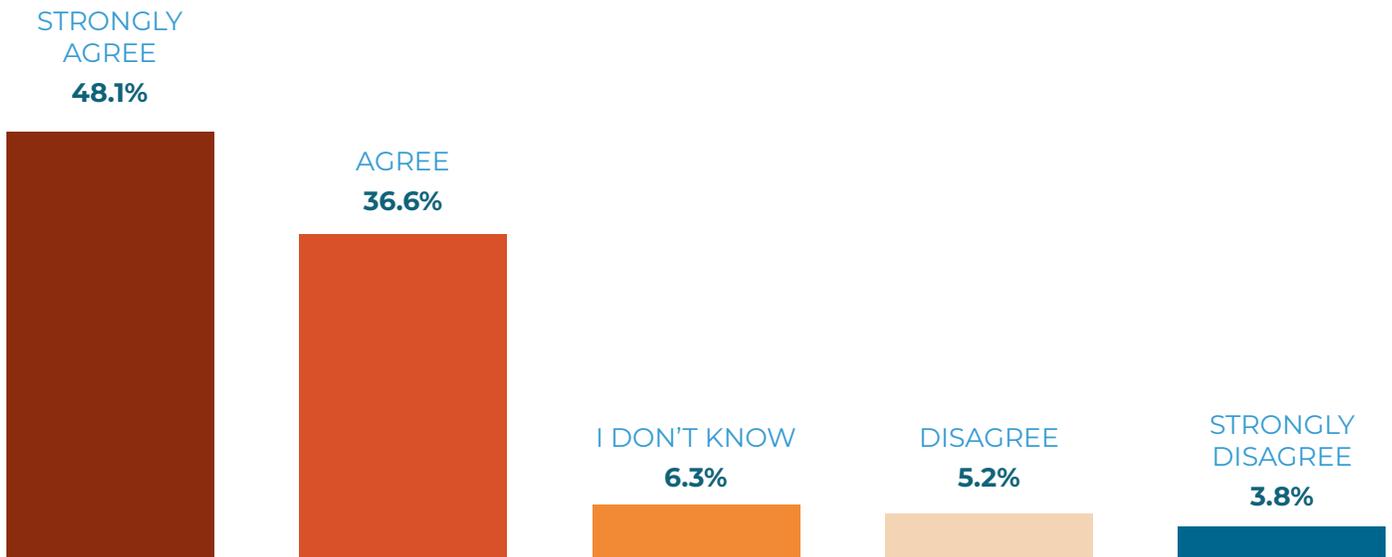
I would love to travel abroad but now that my education abroad was cancelled, I am no longer able to.



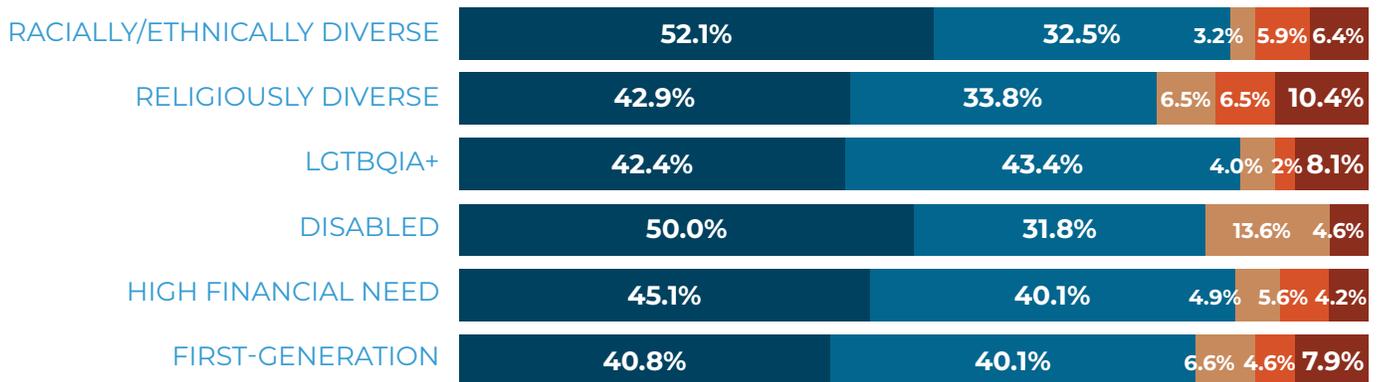
73.5% of students stated that they were unsure when they would be able to participate in a global program, and testimonials spoke widely to students not being able to integrate a global program into their studies prior to graduation without a disruption to their credits/requirements.

My travel plans were put on pause but I am looking forward to traveling abroad in the future.

84.7% of respondents reported they are still **looking forward to traveling abroad** in the future.



By demographic



■ Strongly Agree
 ■ Agree
 ■ Disagree
 ■ Strongly disagree
 ■ I don't know

FUTURE GLOBAL PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

I am more fearful of traveling abroad in the future.

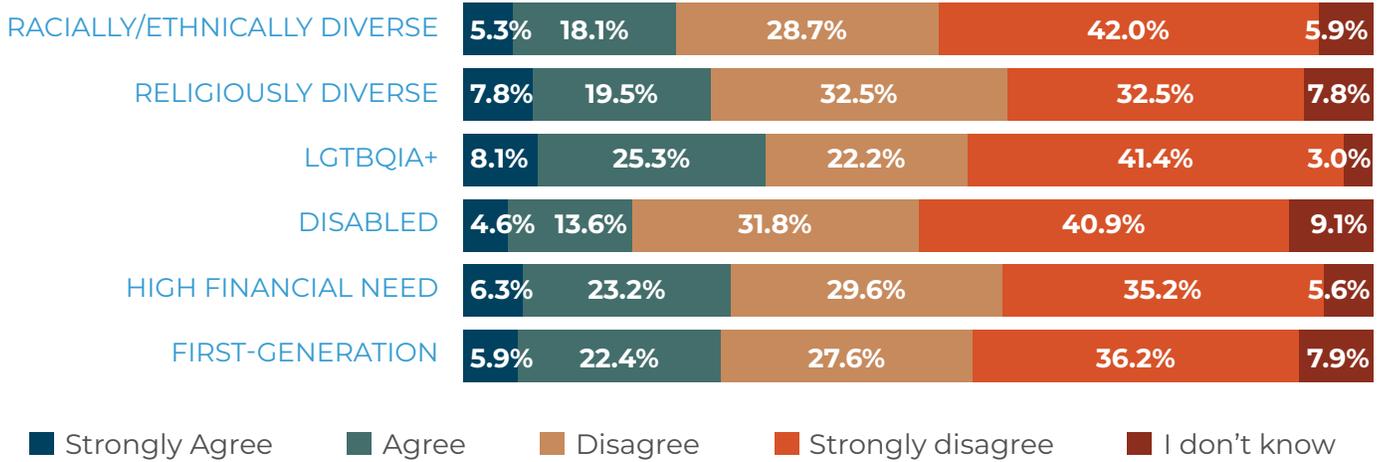
Nearly **72%** of respondents **disagree** with the statement: *I am more fearful of traveling abroad in the future.*



I hope after this pandemic, global programs will not become feared.

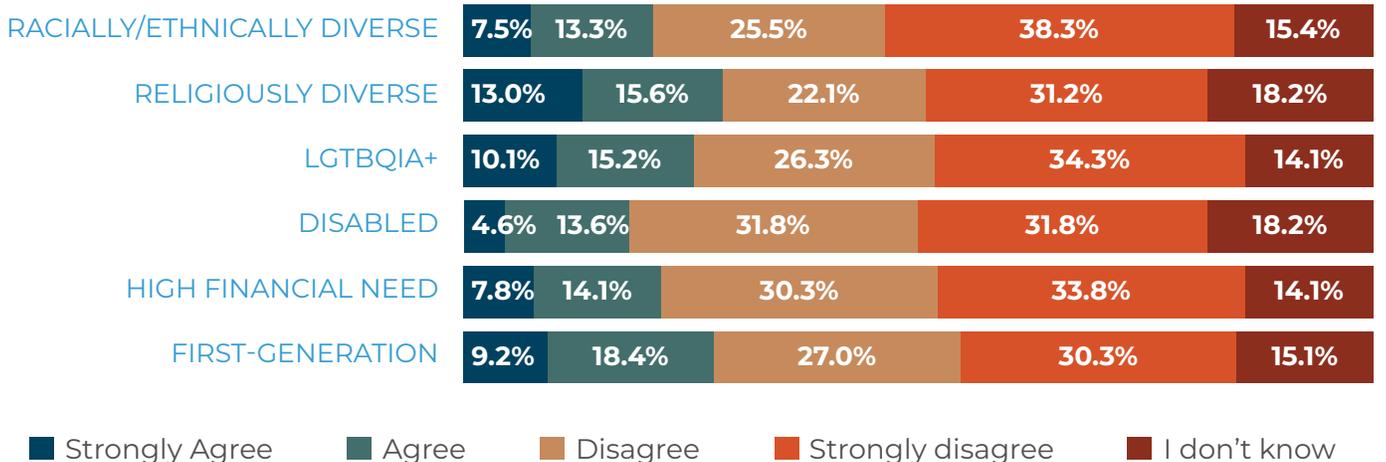
This time was unprecedented. I believe everyone is working their best to make accommodations.

By demographic



My family is no longer supportive of me participating in a global program.

67% of respondents **disagree** with the following statement: *My family is no longer supportive of me participating in a global program.*



CONCLUSION

The findings in this survey provide insight into what students experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic as it relates to global experiences. While some students were not able to depart, many left for their program without any fear of COVID-19 or worry that it would impact them to the degree it did. Although students were discouraged by the disruptions to their programs, and many indicated they wished they had additional support from their universities/programs, they are motivated to travel again in the future and most have the support of their families to do so.

Mental health was a consistent theme throughout testimonials and respondents frequently expressed feeling hopeless, disappointed, and discouraged. Many respondents did not feel there was an emphasis on support for the mental well-being of students who had to navigate returning from a global program. This is an area for Education Abroad offices to further collaborations with campus partners, such as health and counseling centers, to support student success.

Education Abroad offices provided more support than other offices on campus and testimonials acknowledged their efforts to do what they could for students in an unpredictable situation. However, the financial impact on returned students made it difficult for many respondents to feel that they gained adequate support throughout the process. Students' recommendations for resources they would have liked to receive, such as well-being checks, step-by-step emergency plans and a single point person for communications, can provide guidance for institutions and organizations planning emergency response in the future (see page 8 for the full list of recommendations from students).

While 48% of participants' programs continued virtually, only 5.8% of respondents indicated that their preferred learning style matched learning in a virtual environment. As curriculum is adapted for a virtual learning environment it will be important to integrate different learning styles and assure that content is delivered in an engaging and accessible way that meets the needs of this digital generation.

Looking forward, inclusive student support will remain instrumental to student success—not only before, during, and after a crisis but throughout the global education process. The benefits of a global education—empathy, intercultural competency, and a global understanding—are needed now more than ever. As the landscape of higher education shifts to a “new normal,” we must keep issues of equity and access at the forefront to ensure that all students graduate with the digital, technical, and soft skills necessary to thrive in a global and diverse workforce.



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& Global Education Intersect*

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