

ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024



Penn Abroad

Produced by: Penn Abroad
Designed by: Camille Cropley

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Front Cover Images:

Left: Penn Global Seminar, Case Studies in Environmental Sustainability with travel to Iceland, Spring 2024

Top Right: Paris Ye, Global Research & Internship Program, Business in Sydney, Australia, Summer 2024

Bottom Right: Dushaun Thompson, Semester Abroad at Hitotsubashi University, Fall 2023



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Our Team

Penn Abroad is an energetic team dedicated to providing a meaningful global experience to every Penn student. Taking a creative approach to the evolving field of education abroad, the team provides a high-touch experience to help students meet their unique academic, professional, and personal goals by providing a vibrant portfolio of global opportunities, including semester study abroad, incoming exchange, internship and research placements, and short-term programs. The team is committed to student development through education abroad, cultivating meaningful partnerships within Penn and across the world, and increasing access to global opportunities.

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Executive Director

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Front Desk Coordinator

From the Executive Director

This past year marked Year 1 of [Penn Global's Strategic Framework for Initiatives, 2023-2028](#). In the lead-up to the year, we established a five-year roadmap, setting goals to chart a path of gradual enrollment growth coupled with new program development. As Year 1 ends, Penn Abroad is not only on pace for all its goals this year, but we are already surpassing many of them.

Across all programs, we have exceeded our enrollment ambitions for the year. Perhaps the area where that is most evident is within our study abroad portfolio. Last academic year, 2022-2023, Penn Abroad sent 333 students abroad to live and study for a semester or year. This year we raised that number by 82% to an incredible 607 students. Alongside this remarkable increase in students studying abroad, we also welcomed a sizable cohort of incoming exchange students, returning us to pre-pandemic numbers. Our research & internship portfolio continued to provide unmatched professional experiences for students on international teams across the globe. Following its inaugural call for proposals, the Penn Global Research Institutes (PGRI) program doubled its size, adding two new institutes for 2023-2024, including its first partnership with Penn's Graduate School of Education. Finally, Penn Global Seminars (PGS) not only rostered its highest number of courses to date this year, but it also resumed short-term travel to China. First among the Ivies, PGS persevered through several logistical challenges to support 71 students traveling to China across four courses – one per undergraduate school. Indeed, the year was a powerhouse one for Penn Abroad made possible by its dedicated staff, strong campus partnerships, and collaborative network of international colleagues.

Looking ahead, perhaps the most exciting initiative on the horizon is launching Penn's summer term for academic credit. Starting in summer 2025, and for the first time in Penn Abroad's history, we will offer a suite of summer programs as part of our study abroad portfolio. Long discussed but never fully realized, hours of countless planning and dialogue across Penn and with our international partners will finally bring this pilot program to fruition in the year ahead. Offering a summer term for academic credit that includes need-based financial support to participants will open another pathway for global mobility, ensuring we continue steadfast with our mission of providing a meaningful global experience to all Penn students.

As I round out my first full year as Executive Director of the Penn Abroad team, I am humbled daily by the incredible work of our team. As will be made evident in the pages to follow, each member of our team plays a critical role in achieving our core global mission. Join me as we look back on an incredible year at Penn Abroad and get energized for the possibilities to come in the next.

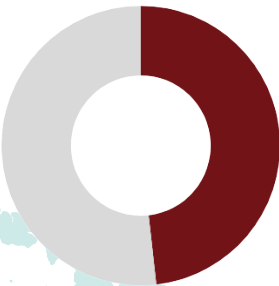


Kristyn Palmiotto
Executive Director
Penn Abroad



Year in Review

1,037 Penn students participated in a Penn Abroad program in **48** different countries, including:



48% of Penn Participants receive financial aid



Among students receiving financial aid, **35%** are highly aided

610

- 251** in the U.K.
- 100** in France
- 76** in Spain
- 33** in Italy
- 32** in Portugal
- 18** in Germany
- 17** in Ireland
- 14** in Iceland
- 10** or fewer: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Hungary, the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland

5

Penn students conducted fieldwork and data collection in Mexico through the Penn Educational Alliance for Change and Equity

6

Penn students spent a semester abroad in Egypt, Israel and Lebanon

224

- 80** in China
- 39** in Singapore
- 37** in South Korea
- 25** in Japan
- 10** or fewer: Thailand, Vietnam, Hong Kong, Kazakhstan

16

Penn students spent spring break in Botswana while traveling with a Penn Global Seminar course

67

- 20** in Argentina
- 15** in Chile
- 10** in Colombia
- 14** in Ecuador
- 5** in Uruguay
- 2** in Costa Rica
- 1** in Cuba

8

Penn students conducted research at the University of Auckland through the Global Research & Internship Program



Study Abroad

Penn Abroad's Study Abroad (SA) portfolio (formally referred to as Semester Abroad) allows students to take coursework and earn credit at a host institution abroad for a term or year. The Study Abroad portfolio surpassed all expectations during the 2023 – 2024 academic year. The SA team sent a record 607 students abroad for a semester or a year, which represents the highest number in Penn Abroad's history. To handle this overwhelming interest, the Study Abroad team welcomed two new staff members who each took on significant regional portfolios and group advising sessions. In support of Penn Global's new five year strategic framework, the SA team evaluated methods to increase interest in non-traditional destinations outside of the UK and Europe, including working with undergraduate schools to communicate opportunities to faculty, building partnerships with large majors such as PPE and PSCI, lowering eligibility barriers, highlighting the voices of students studying in diverse locations, and compiling a website featuring programs with no language requirements.

A Record Breaking Year

Spring 2024 represented Study Abroad's largest semester cohort in Penn Abroad's history, totaling 437 students. This milestone reflects not only a noteworthy uptick in student appetite but is also a result of the removal of barriers that have previously prevented students from pursuing a semester or a year abroad. With increased numbers came new or elevated challenges. Although Penn Abroad received a large pool of applications for mainland China, visa complications forced a number of these students to defer to a later semester or switch

to another program or country. Students also faced difficulties with achieving lower grades while abroad and reported struggling with language more than in the past. Accessing independent housing in many locations remained a challenge, even within programs that do offer housing due to capacity reasons. The SA team worked tirelessly throughout the year to help students navigate these challenges and the learnings have already been applied when advising for future semesters.

Top 5 Majors

- 118** Finance
- 80** Politics, Philosophy, Economics
- 40** International Studies (Huntsman Program)
- 40** Political Science
- 36** Cognitive Science

607

Total Committed Students

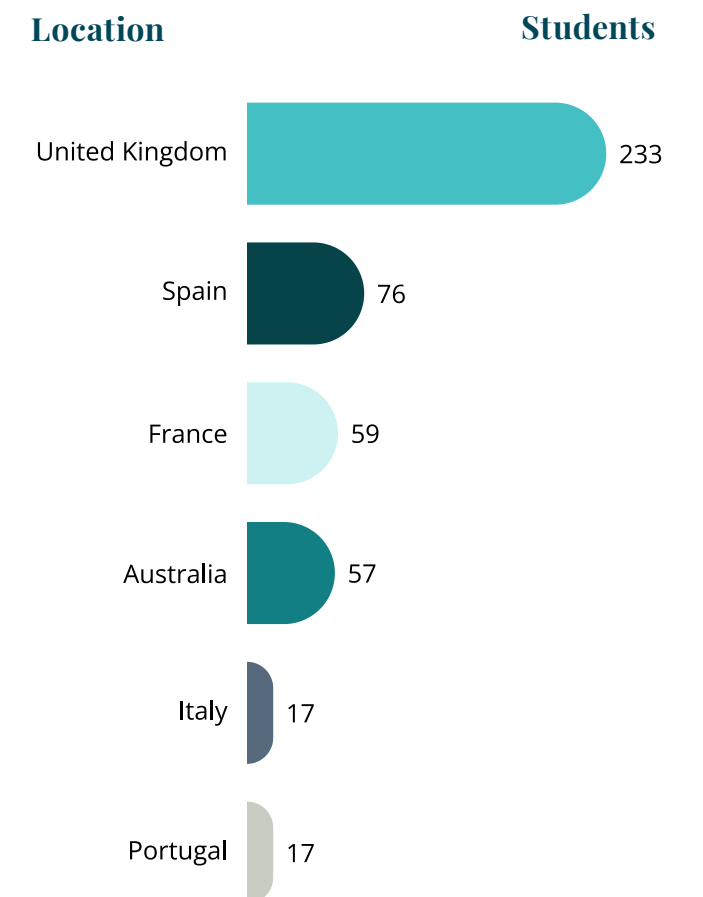
Key Actions and Milestones



Looking Ahead

Fulfilling a years-long aspiration, the Penn Abroad team is excited to launch a new Summer Term Abroad with a Summer 2025 pilot. This program will allow students to utilize the summer term to pursue credit-bearing study abroad programs for the first time in Penn Abroad's history. Not only will this program address a programming gap, but it is Penn Abroad's hope that populations such as athletes, transfer students, students in degree programs with rigid academic requirements, and other historically underrepresented students will be able to pursue their study abroad goals at a time of year that is best for them. To make the program accessible to all students, Penn Global will provide need-based grants to cover portions of tuition, housing, flights, and other program costs. The team anticipates serving 20 students during the Summer 2025 pilot, and target programs include the Chinese University of Hong Kong and Copenhagen Business School.

Top Locations





Exchange at Penn

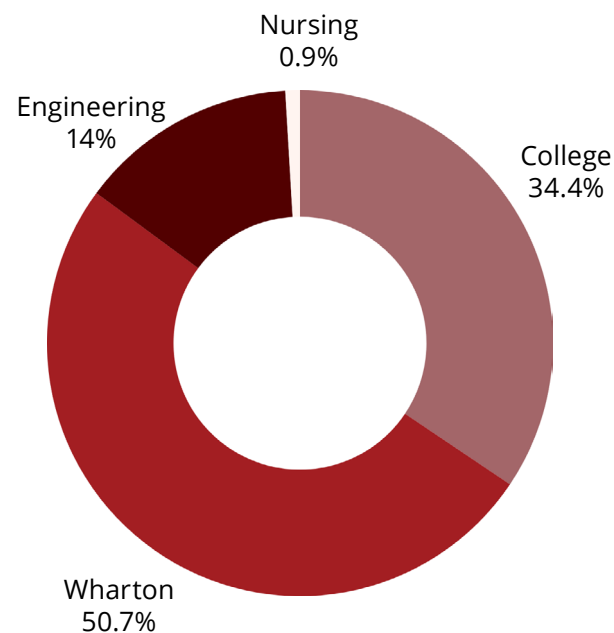
The Exchange at Penn (EAP) program partners with institutions around the globe and collaborates with Penn’s four undergraduate schools to offer incoming exchange student opportunities to study on the Philadelphia campus and earn credit across academic disciplines and programs. Continuing its momentum from last year, the EAP program experienced even more growth into academic year 2023 – 2024. A total of 221 students chose to spend a semester or academic year at Penn, up from 173 the year before.

Challenges and Opportunities

The large number of incoming exchange students reinforced the fact that Penn is an attractive place to study for students around the world. However, with this uptick in numbers came unprecedented challenges. The EAP program began to experience housing capacity pressures and could no longer guarantee housing for all incoming exchange students. The team tackled the program by expanding policies governing which students were eligible

to live off campus, freeing up space on-campus for those who needed it the most. The team also collaborated closely with off-campus housing to provide robust guidance around off-campus housing, ensuring that students received information about reliable residence options. In addition, exchange imbalances with historic partners persisted into academic year 2023 – 2024 due to continuing shifts in student behavior and interests.

Breakdown by School



221

Total Committed Students

Fall 2023



87

Spring 2024



77

23-24 Year



57

Key Accomplishments

- The EAP team partnered with the IGSP program to host the largest and most comprehensive orientations in Penn Abroad’s history, welcoming exchange students into the Penn community and introducing them to the myriad resources and opportunities on offer.
- The EAP Correspondents Program entered its second year and has become a key element of the team’s overall integration strategy. Through blogging, Instagram content, and events such as excursions, the Correspondents helped increase student engagement across the board.
- The EAP program expanded their excursions and extracurricular programming this year. In addition to the regularly scheduled excursions, they supported peer-to-peer programming run by the EAP Correspondents and also collaborated with IGSP on some on-campus programming to bring together both populations. The team also collaborated with Penn Rec for the first time to coordinate Exchange Student night at a Penn basketball game.

Looking Ahead

Over the coming year, the Exchange at Penn team has planned many enhancements to the program that should result in a more streamlined and comprehensive process. The introduction of Thrive at Penn online modules will supplement the existing pre-arrival orientation with the goal of better preparing students for life in the United States and at Penn. By integrating more on-campus events like the President and Provost’s Welcome, as well as expanding engagement with degree-seeking Penn students before and after arrival, exchange students should feel more integrated into the Penn community than in years passed. Finally, in light of dramatically shifting demand across the Study Abroad portfolio, the EAP team will work diligently to adjust Penn Abroad’s intake from partners to keep in alignment with current student trends.



2023-2024 EAP student Emma Seddick

Sawiris Penn Scholars Exchange Program

Built on the foundation of the academically rigorous and culturally immersive Exchange at Penn program, the Sawiris Penn Scholars Exchange Program provides the opportunity for a select group of students from an Egyptian university to attend Penn for an academic year with full financial support. The second year of the Sawiris Scholars Program witnessed a growth in cohort size from four to six students. The scholars experienced a difficult start to their year at Penn due to flight delays which ultimately led to the cancellation of the entire pre-orientation program. The students bounced back from this early setback and ultimately thrived academically, enrolling in 19 unique courses through the academic year and performing exceptionally well in their classes. The program continued to gain momentum and recognition in Egypt, with applications more than doubling between the first and second year.

Program Highlights

- Introduced new pre-professional and academic programming, including visits to an architecture firm and Penn GRASP robotics lab
- Continuation of the two flagship overnight excursions to New York City and Washington, D.C.
- New faculty advisor Dr. Fayyaz Vellani played a vital role in development of excursions and trip itineraries, integrating his own academic interests and insights to experiences
- Faculty advisor planned unique engagement for students, this year taking shape as an informal afternoon tea to discuss career development and relationship building

“Life at Penn has been also so familiar, yet so different... In the week of the New Student Orientation alone, I got to meet people from almost all of Europe and parts of Asia and in the weeks that came after — well, I guess I covered the whole globe.”

Waseem Faheem
Sawiris Penn Scholar



2023-2024 Sawiris students

Sawiris by the Numbers



4

Electrical and Systems
Engineering Majors

2

Architectural
Engineering Majors

Looking Ahead

In anticipation of the third year of the program, the Sawiris Penn Scholars team will implement a new advising structure in collaboration with the School of Engineering and Applied Science which will ensure that each scholar receives discipline-specific guidance on course selection. The team will continue to improve and perfect pre-arrival support, communication, and resources for the next cohort, including increased involvement of student volunteers to assist with the cultural and social integration of the scholars to Penn. In addition, the admissions and course mapping processes will transition to align more closely with the new bylaws of the Ain Shams University Faculty of Engineering, which shortens the degree program from five years to four. The 2024 - 2025 cohort of scholars will undoubtedly reap the benefits of these curricular and co-curricular improvements and experience the most refined version of the program to date.



2023-2024 Sawiris students in New York



Penn Global Seminars

Penn Global Seminars (PGS) combine intensive semester-long study with a short-term travel component. In academic year 2023 – 2024, Penn Abroad rostered its largest cohort of Penn Global Seminars with 17 courses traveling to 13 countries. Included were nine new courses with travel to Botswana, Korea, Indonesia, Italy, the United Kingdom and China. The program also supported the largest cohort of students in a single academic year, 88% of whom were engaging with Penn Abroad for the first time through their PGS experience. Across the program, 283 Penn students participated in a Penn Global Seminar – an increase of 85 students from the previous year. For the first time in seven years, all four undergraduate schools were represented in a single cohort of Penn Global Seminars. To keep up with the growing portfolio and rising student demand, two additional staff members joined the PGS team.

Program Highlights

- PGS Greece was sponsored by the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Paideia Program. The group visited the US Embassy in Athens, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, and numerous NGOs and non-profits such as Melissa Network, We Need Books, Babel Day Centre, and ActionAid Hellas. Students even participated in a soccer game with adolescents who were part of an anti-racism empowerment group. The students wrapped up their time in Greece with a visit to the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center, where they gave presentations to Foundation officers.
- The PGS team developed new partnerships across campus with organizations including the Botswana-UPenn Partnership, Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia, Stavros Niarchos Foundation (SNF) Paideia Program, Penn Engineering’s General Robotics Automation, Sensing, Perception (GRASP) Laboratory, and the Wharton International Program. Each organization furthered the learning of its respective course through deep in-country connections that allowed for a truly immersive student experience.
- The PGS Correspondent Program debuted in Spring 2024 and required students to submit blogs posts and social media content before, during, and after their travel component. The Correspondent Program not only offered opportunities for reflection, but also provided prospective participants with a window into the student experience.

13

International Travel Destinations

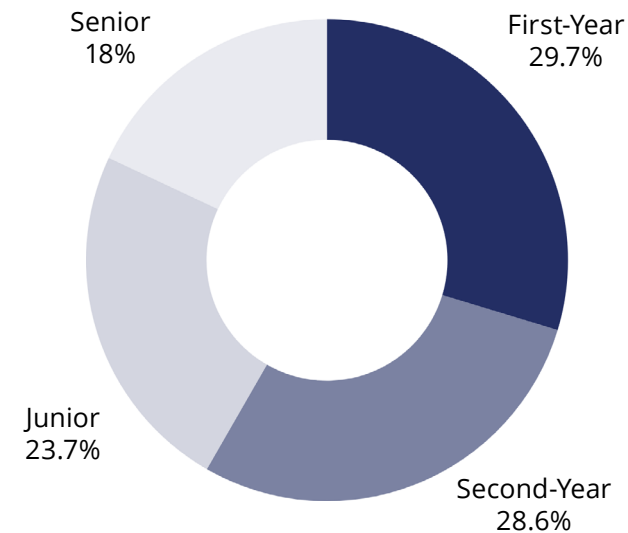
Australia, Botswana, Chile, China, Ecuador, France, Greece, Iceland, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Korea, and the United Kingdom

Non-Traditional Locations

The Penn Global Seminars program continues to provide students the opportunity to gain exposure to unique international locations, particularly those beyond the European Union. This year, 64% of students participated in courses involving travel outside of the European Union. In addition, each of the four undergraduate Schools rostered a Penn Global Seminar with

China travel, and this subset of the PGS program was funded by the China Education Initiative (CEI). With the assistance of strong local partnerships, 71 students in total participated in programming on mainland China, exploring a variety of themes from Traditional Chinese Medicine to artificial intelligence.

Breakdown by Year



Looking Ahead

In academic year 2024-2025, the Penn Global Seminars program will continue to expand. Penn Abroad will offer 18 Penn Global Seminars and will travel to countries all over the globe including Bulgaria, Costa Rica, China, Malawi, and other destinations. The courses represent a variety of departments such as Family and Community Health, History and Sociology of Science, and the Writing Center. Looking even further ahead,



Korean Language & Culture with travel to Korea in Spring 2024

Penn Abroad plans to offer 20 courses per year starting in 2025-2026. The expansion of the Penn Global Seminars program underscores Penn Global’s commitment to providing all Penn students meaningful, immersive educational experiences across the globe.



Global Research & Internship Program

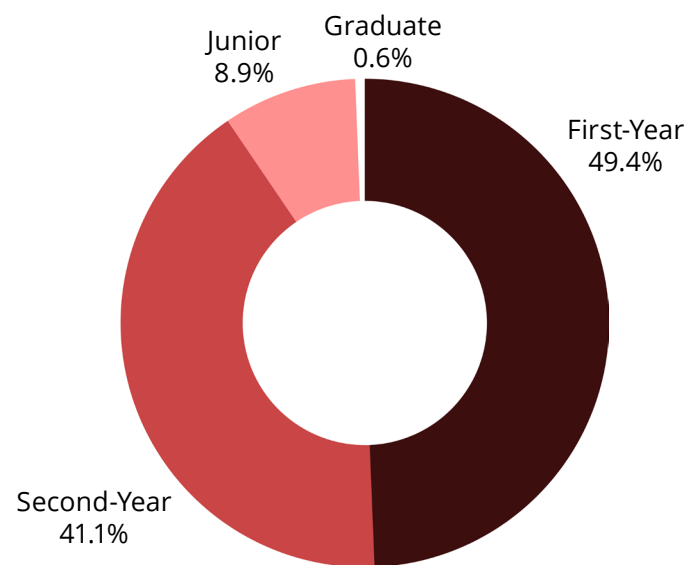
The Global Research & Internship Program (GRIP) offers undergraduate and graduate students the opportunity to intern or conduct research with a variety of organizations and companies abroad over the summer. Summer 2024 saw an increase in both student interest and participation in the program, with 158 participants selected from a record 723 applications. This year brought a noticeable shift in student demographics, with first-year students becoming the largest class year represented in the program at just shy of 50%. This trend has informed the approach to cultivating new placements as well as the advising and preparation that the GRIP team offers for students.

The Future of Work

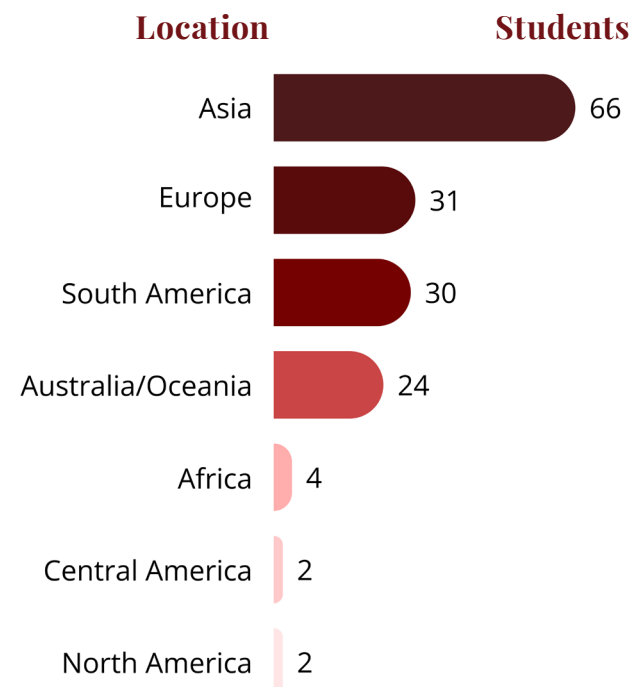
To prepare students for the realities that await them after graduation, the GRIP program has enthusiastically embraced hybrid work formats and students have responded positively to these opportunities. However, as many GRIP employers closed the doors on permanent office spaces, students faced challenges navigating remote work and experienced greater feelings of isolation and disconnection. The decline

of in-office work also impacted students' ability to absorb professional norms and build networks. Moving forward, the GRIP team will work in close collaboration with employers and partners abroad to develop best practices for establishing internship formats that balance professional development with modern realities of the working world.

Breakdown by Year



Participants by Region



Key Milestones and Accomplishments

- Launched two new cohort placements including Media in Seoul, South Korea, developed in partnership with Penn's James Joo-Jin Kim Center for Korean Studies, and Community Health and Environment in Monteverde, Costa Rica. Also launched a new direct placement at Swicorp Infra Capital (SIC) in Tunis, Tunisia, which allowed students to explore the world of private equity and infrastructure development in emerging economies.
- The GRIP Global Career Guides program was re-branded to the GRIP Correspondents, setting the program in better alignment with Penn Abroad's overall marketing and outreach strategy. Seven students wrote blogs, conducted interviews with their supervisor, and created Instagram posts and stories to share their experiences with the GRIP community and prospective students.
- Partnered with Career Services on a professional development segment of the GRIP pre-departure orientation which served as a primer on building soft skills and networking strategies in their placements.
- Changes to the advising and application process included a newly mandatory group advising model, which the students could pursue either synchronously or asynchronously, as well as the establishment of an application cap for each placement. These changes positively impacted outcomes: not only were students more prepared for their abroad experiences, but they also completed applications earlier in the cycle than in years past.



Grace Chen, Marketing Intern in Bangkok, Thailand

Looking Ahead

The Penn Abroad team anticipates that Summer 2025 will be an opportunity for both experimentation and refinement within the GRIP program. By targeting a modest increase to about 160 student participants, the team will strategically realign the portfolio to better match the professional interests of Penn students by leveraging the program's strongest partners. New placement locations will include Taiwan

and Greece, and an increased level of funding from the Freeman Foundation will allow even more students to participate in placements in East and Southeast Asia. In service of Penn Global's latest 5-year strategic framework, the team will work throughout the 2024 - 2025 academic year to build new partnerships which will accommodate a larger number of students in future summers.



Penn Global Research Institutes

The Penn Global Research Institutes (PGRI) program provides outstanding undergraduate and graduate students the opportunity to conduct research and fieldwork abroad alongside Penn faculty. Students work as part of a small research team made up of Penn students, Penn faculty, and local community members and researchers to address major global challenges. As the program entered its third year, the Penn Abroad team launched its inaugural call for proposals for new institutes to the University community. The call yielded seven proposals and many more expressions of interest, raising awareness of the PGRI program across campus. Building off of the momentum generated by the first two institutes in the PGRI portfolio, the Galapagos Education and Research Alliance (GERA) and the Penn Global Documentary Institute (PGDI), Penn Abroad successfully launched two new institutes in 2024, effectively doubling the size of the program's impact. These institutes expand the program's reach into another Penn School, guarantees additional graduate student engagement, and increases the regional diversity of the program.

Two New Institutes

Co-led by Drs. Gerald Campano and Manuel Gonzalez Canche of the Graduate School of Education, the Penn Educational Alliance for Change and Equity (PEACE) relies on storytelling as a powerful strategy to understand minoritized communities from the ground up, including their experiences and social inequities, as well as to develop plans of action to improve prospects for education. In Summer 2024, students affiliated with PEACE traveled to the University of Guadalajara, Jalisco, in Mexico to conduct fieldwork and data collection and gain hands-on experiences on research projects that apply storytelling.

The European Studies Institute (ESI), led by Dr. Mitchell Orenstein of the School of Arts & Sciences, provides undergraduate students the opportunity to conduct research on the theme of How Russia's Invasion of Ukraine is Changing

Europe. The first cohort of seven students was selected in April 2024 and will work for a full year as part of a research team studying European security arrangements, threats, and altered policies and institutions in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. In January 2025, the group will travel to several cities in Europe to interview policy makers and thought leaders while the students continue developing their own individual research projects, such as senior theses or publishable papers.



2

Graduates

23

Total Students



21

Undergraduates

2023-2024 Program Sites



Penn Global Documentary Institute 2023-2024

Looking Ahead

The 2024 – 2025 academic year has much in store for the Penn Global Research Institutes. In October 2024, the PEACE institute will host a conference on Penn's campus and welcome colleagues from the University of Guadalajara to Philadelphia to continue their collaboration. This convening is a testament to the equitable partnership that the PGRI program is meant to support. The ESI will embark upon its fieldwork activities in January 2025, establishing a unique travel period for the PGRI program. No new institutes are planned for calendar year 2025; instead, the PGRI team will focus their energies on scaffolding the program with policies and procedures to better guide faculty and support student participants.

Student Engagement

The 2023 – 2024 academic year was one of rejuvenation for Penn Abroad’s student engagement activities. From an overhaul of the Penn Abroad Leaders to the expansion of the Correspondents program, Penn Abroad’s outreach diversified in approach and expanded to new audiences.

Penn Abroad Leaders

To capitalize on Penn Abroad’s most engaged returnee population in service of Penn Global’s new 5-year strategic framework, the Penn Abroad Leaders (PALs) program underwent a restructure in 2023-2024 academic year. The PALs included 11 students who had participated in at least one global program run through the Penn Abroad office. The group contained student leaders representing 3 out of 4 undergraduate schools, various academic disciplines such as engineering, psychology, biology, and pre-med, and representation from across the Penn Abroad portfolio. Following a planning retreat and kickoff event, the PALs met monthly and served as a focus group on a variety of topics, including beta-testing the new online predeparture orientation for the office of Travel Safety, reviewing website content, and suggesting edits to commitment contract language.

The highlight of the PALs experience was the opportunity to work on a group consulting project—one of which was focused on diversifying semester study abroad locations and the other on launching a for-credit summer term—which was directly tied to an initiative from the 5-year strategic framework. The projects culminated in an advisory report in which the PALs laid out their methodology, findings, and recommendations for how to achieve the initiative from a student perspective. At the end of the academic year,

the PALs presented their advisory reports to all Penn Abroad staff and Penn Global leadership. The revised format of the PALs program was hugely successful and not only received praise from the student participants but also provided much-needed perspectives on how to achieve Penn Global’s strategic goals.

Key Events

- **Penn Abroad Fair:** The flagship annual event attracted 361 attendees, with 11 campus partners hosting tables to share resources and opportunities.
- **Passport Drive:** Partnering with the U.S. State Department, the program enabled 39 students to obtain their passports.
- **Study Abroad Panel for BIPOC Students:** Four panelists shared experiences and challenges as Black, Indigenous, and Students of Color studying abroad, highlighting their unique perspectives and challenges.
- **Out of Eden Walk:** Former National Geographic editor Don Belt visited campus and held a 90-minute workshop introducing 11 students to Paul Salopek’s 22,000-mile “Out of Eden” walk tracing early human migration.

Correspondents

The Correspondents program seeks to amplify student voices by sharing their writing, photography, and videos across Penn Abroad’s platforms. In academic year 2023 – 2024, the program, which has been in place for Study Abroad and Exchange at Penn for several years, expanded to include Penn Global Seminars and the Global Research & Internship Program. For their inaugural year, 13 PGS Correspondents delivered one blog prior to travel, one blog after travel, and three Instagram posts while abroad to highlight their semester-long experience. Seven GRIP Correspondents represented a variety of internship and research placements during summer 2024. These students had the option of completing additional blogs, an interview with their supervisor, or a “Day in the Life” Instagram post to give prospective students a window into the GRIP experience. A “Finding Local Gems” prompt encouraged students to act sustainably and better appreciate their placement location without the need for extensive travel.

“I have made international friends here at Penn and they want me to visit them and before it didn’t seem possible, especially with the financial barrier. And this event just completely got rid of all of that.”

-Saragail Irons (CAS '27)
for the Penn Today article [Passport drive opens up the world to undergrads](#)



2023 Penn Abroad Fair



Study Abroad Panel for BIPOC Students



Spring 2024 Passport Drive



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