

Study abroad for commuters: a case study at the University of New Hampshire at Manchester

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Studying abroad can impart a number of valuable, lifelong skills in students, including improved foreign language skills, appreciation for other cultures and, importantly, access to unique learning opportunities only available in certain countries and settings. However, less than 10 percent of U.S. college students participate in study abroad experiences. The cost of these experiences remains a major impediment to many students. As part of the American Physiological Society's (APS's) Institute on Teaching and Learning in Madison, Wis., Patricia A. Halpin, Ph.D., will present a case study of a pilot program that aimed to provide more opportunities for students at the University of New Hampshire at Manchester to study abroad.

Most of the students at the university's commuter campus work part-time to defray the cost of attendance. "In order to increase access to study abroad opportunities, a new semester-long course was designed with a study abroad trip to Belize occurring during spring break. The cost of the study abroad portion was made a course fee so it could potentially be covered under a financial aid package that provides funds for tuition and fees," Halpin wrote. The course explored native Belizean ecosystems, including the coral reef, mangroves and rain forests, and included in-class lectures and on-site research in Belize. Ten students enrolled in the class, with [financial aid](#) covering full or partial [costs](#) of the trip for seven of the students.

"Many [students] reported that in addition to learning about Belize they learned more about themselves and felt more comfortable getting out of their comfort zone. All of the students stated this course increased the likelihood that they would travel abroad again and that they would recommend the course to a friend," Halpin said.

Patricia A. Halpin, Ph.D., assistant professor at the University of New Hampshire at Manchester, will present "A new course makes study abroad more accessible to commuter students" in a poster session on Thursday, June 21, at the Madison Concourse Hotel.

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