

# RESILIENCE



*Photo by Kamya Jagadish (SM '16) in  
Kangerlussuaq, Greenland on  
Study Abroad*

## Yale Center for International and Professional Experience (CIPE)

Assessment Report 2016: Featuring Student Resilience

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YALE COLLEGE

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## *Images (from top to bottom):*

1. Photo by Kattera Logan (TD '17) in Lima, Perú
2. Photo by Azan Virji (DC '15) in Paris, France
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## CIPE'S MISSION

The Center for International and Professional Experience (CIPE) offers guidance and support for students and alumni, and a range of academic programs and experiential activities for and in partnership with students, faculty, and alumni. CIPE activities support the academic mission of the university and encourage the exploration and pursuit of personal, academic, and career goals which foster the capacity for thoughtful engagement with the world beyond Yale.

## CIPE'S SCOPE

Each year, nearly 3,000 Yale College, graduate, non-Yale (summer session), and visiting international students undertake experiences with support from CIPE staff who oversee:

- CAREER STRATEGY
- FUNDING (FELLOWSHIPS)
- STUDY ABROAD
- SUMMER SESSION and
- The YALE VISITING INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS (YVISP) PROGRAM

# INTRODUCTION

In the fall of 2014, Dr. Jonathan Holloway, Dean of Yale College, highlighted for the Heads of Colleges and the Residential College Deans three areas of student development that would later shape strategic planning for all of Yale College in 2016. These areas included: **Community Engagement, Making Mindful Choices, and Resilience.**

Yale College's Center for International and Professional Experience (CIPE), which oversees roughly 1,500 study, research, and work experiences domestically and abroad for Yale students each year, routinely assesses the impact that such experiences can have on students' academic, professional, and personal development. Aligning CIPE's assessment efforts with the Dean's stated priorities, **the following report offers the Yale community a deeper understanding of the impact that various experiences can have on students' resiliency.** Community engagement and mindful decision-making will feature in subsequent CIPE assessments.

## KEY FINDINGS

### RESILIENCE

Yale students who completed CIPE experiences during the 2014-2015 academic year and/or over summer 2015 were asked: *How, if at all, do you think that your experiences [through CIPE] impacted [your resiliency]?*

As a result of undertaking experiences through CIPE domestically or abroad, **over 90% of respondents** indicated a mix of:

**INCREASED *Independence*;  
DECREASED *Fear of Making Mistakes*;  
INCREASED *Flexibility / Adaptability*; and  
INCREASED *Persistence*.**

As Dean Holloway notes, "we are working with a population that, developmentally, struggles with the idea of failure or undertaking risks." Supporting students in thoughtfully undertaking co-curricular and extra-curricular experiences that lack a script for success and that take students outside of their comfort zones can, as the Dean extols and as this report captures, offer students "[the] tools to respond productively to those moments."

# RESILIENCE: SAMPLE STUDENT QUOTES

## INCREASED INDEPENDENCE

- *“I ... really enjoyed stepping outside the Yale bubble in terms of education. This hugely expanded my horizons and made me more confident as a person. At Yale, I was always comparing myself with peers who were like me. In Paris, I realized that it was all right to be different.”*
- *“I’m better able to put the challenges I face at Yale in perspective. I’m more calm and able to prioritize in a more objective manner so the challenges are less daunting.”*
- *“I think that experience [gave] me a lot more direction with regards to my career path than I had before and ... I think that is an incredibly valuable experience that all Yale college students should undertake during their time at Yale.”*

## DECREASED FEAR of MAKING MISTAKES

- *“When I first arrived in Brazil, language was my biggest hurdle. I hesitated communicating with locals for fear that I would make an error, which made me appear shy and introverted. Eventually, I accepted the fact that I was going to make mistakes and chose to learn from them rather than be hindered by them. ... While abroad, it is important that you remain open to the possibility of challenges and change.”*
- *“I decided to worry less about mistakes or minor setbacks, and to work on just immersing myself in the environment. This led not only to increased French skills, but also to more confidence and resilience.”*

## INCREASED FLEXIBILITY / ADAPTABILITY

- *“My experience abroad definitely increased my patience and tolerance for people I don’t understand .... I also gained a new appreciation of the learning that can go on when you are just talking with people.”*
- *“Being alone in a faraway land is the easiest way to become more resilient in the face of challenges. I had to step so far out of my comfort zone and I was rewarded so heavily for it.”*
- *“I think learning to navigate a foreign country and its unexpected surprises has taught me to be flexible .... I learned how to handle unexpected surprises quickly so as to not lose progress with my experience thus far and so as to not veer off the path entirely.”*

## INCREASED PERSISTENCE

- *“Part of studying abroad includes embarrassing, unfamiliar, and sometimes uncomfortable experiences. If I was lost I would ask a local for directions, but I’d have to ask them to repeat themselves three or four times to fully understand what they were saying. It was frustrating at times but along with these little roadblocks come patience and experience.”*
- *“[Traveling abroad] teaches you patience when things get complicated and makes you determined to continue and persevere through any new challenge you may encounter in the way.”*
- *“I am more accepting of what I can do and what is within my control, and not to blame myself for others’ actions and decisions. Instead, I have really had to focus on the positive and remain persistent.”*



# YALE COLLEGE and CIPE: MISSION SYNERGIES

## Resilience: Perspectives from the Dean's Office

The Dean of Yale College's communication to the Heads of Colleges and Residential College Deans in the fall of 2014 set the tone for how we might understand and promote greater resiliency among our students moving forward. In part, that communication reads:

*"[Among the three priorities of increasing Community Engagement, Making Mindful Choices, and Resilience among students,] teaching resilience may be the hardest one for us to grapple with, given the way we as an institution emphasize excellence over failure, and success over risks. Of course we are also working with a population that, developmentally, struggles with the idea of failure or taking risks. But we have opportunities everywhere for anticipating moments when our students will meet with outcomes they do not want or haven't anticipated, and for giving them tools to respond productively to those moments.... Academically, this work gives us the chance to teach the value of intellectual curiosity as an end unto itself – failures and all."*

In many respects, the opportunities offered through CIPE *should* be tailor-made for offering students exactly this mix of risk-taking, unanticipated outcomes, chances to exercise intellectual curiosity, and, indeed, to experience failure, often on a daily basis. It is not enough merely to say that CIPE "should" be playing an important role in this aim, however, so one purpose of this report is to offer a more definitive analysis.

## Toward Something Definitive ...

Over 90% of respondents to the survey reported on here indicated that their experiences through CIPE contributed to increased resiliency by helping them become more independent, less fearful of making mistakes, more flexible and adaptable, and more persistent in achieving their goals. To the extent that Yale College can further promote and make more accessible such experiences, there seems little doubt that thoughtfully leaving the Yale context for a time, often under logistically and personally challenging circumstances domestically and abroad, represents a tried-and-tested path for increasing students' resiliency. That is a significant finding.

## ... but Not the Final Word:

Assessing complex human phenomena through a single survey underscores that work lies ahead if we are to deepen our understanding of student development. This report, one that relies on students' self-reporting, offers just one piece of a larger picture. Eventually we might also have the capacity to add "direct" measures to our study, such as tracking students' engagements over many years in activities that require varying degrees of risk-taking and resiliency. Even then, we wouldn't have the full picture. How, for example, do we ascribe particular outcomes to certain kinds of experiences when natural maturation is also taking place? We can't. That said, the process of gaining experience is essential to personal growth, and surely there must be differences both in kind and in degree among the many experiences from which students can choose. Study of student feedback about these experiences can offer significant insights to Yale College's progress with its primary aims, including with fostering resiliency. In the case of many if not all CIPE experiences, the question now is not *can* those experiences foster resiliency? Clearly they can. Instead, the question might be: How can Yale College better understand, improve upon, and make commonplace such outcomes for every Yale student?

## CIPE'S CULTURE of ASSESSMENT

The survey reported on here represents only a portion of the assessments conducted at CIPE. The efforts below represent the larger strategy to understand how CIPE's programming can, through continual improvement, more effectively impact student development, faculty support, employer partnerships, and institutional planning:

### OFFICE of CAREER STRATEGY

- First Destination Survey
- Summer Activities Survey
- Employer Survey
- GSAS Exit Survey
- Career Interest Survey
- Workshop Survey
- Advising Survey

### YALE SUMMER SESSION & STUDY ABROAD

- Pre-Departure Session Survey
- YSS Faculty Survey
- YSS Faculty Report
- Global Summer Program Survey
- Post-Experience Student Report
- ELI Student Survey
- Writers' Conference Survey

### FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMS

- Post-Experience Survey
- Information Session Survey
- Pre-Departure Session Survey
- Post-Experience Student Report (Light Fellowship)
- Site Visit Report (Light Fellowship)
- Alumni Survey (Light Fellowship)

## CIPE SURVEY DESIGN, 2016 DATA

### SURVEY POPULATION

Yale College students participating in selected CIPE- and Yale-coordinated activities during the 2014-15 academic year and summer 2015 term were surveyed at the start of the spring 2016 term. CIPE units included: Study Abroad (Yale and non-Yale programs), Fellowships (including the Light Fellowship), and the Office of Career Strategy. A small number of students also replied after attending the Yale in London (7 respondents) and AIESEC (3 respondents) programs. Not surveyed here were participants in the Global Summer Program, YSS New Haven, the English Language Institute (ELI), or YSS Abroad non-Yale students.

### RESPONSE RATE and MARGIN of ERROR

The response rate was 30%: 1,223 survey invitations were sent to students, and 369 students responded, yielding a 4.3% margin of error.

### RANKING and CODING ANSWERS

Utilizing data from prior CIPE surveys to create a menu of answer options, students were asked to rank answer choices to six survey items that ranged from student goals for the experience to how, if at all, they are engaging differently with coursework, community, or career as a result. These rankings required no "coding" (see below) and are presented as is.

A single, open-ended question was also asked: *How, if at all, do you think that your experiences [through CIPE] impacted [your resiliency]?* Students self-reported freely, and, with guidance from Kelly McLaughlin and Lynn Saiers, staff from each of CIPE's units "coded" these answers (grouped open-ended student replies into shared answer categories) for quantitative analysis. Kelly and Lynn further grouped these coded answers across units into a common set of answer categories for all survey responses.

Such coding clearly involves a series of judgment calls that can obscure nuance even as this coding makes possible broad analysis across a diverse set of experiences. Coding bias is always a concern, so training and guidance throughout the coding process are important in determining as reliably as possible a set of answer categories that reflect what students are actually saying; and as a further safeguard to preserve and to present this student voice, a full page of student quotes for each reporting unit in CIPE appears for each unit, offering the reader a sample of the student feedback that summative response categories will naturally struggle to convey.

## STUDY ABROAD (Yale Programs): *Summary*

### SUMMARY of SURVEY RESULTS: Resilience

As the table below indicates, students returning from study abroad experiences *on Yale faculty-led programs* overwhelmingly (83%) reported increased resiliency in two categories: **Increased Adaptability / Flexibility (43%)** and **Increased Independence (40%)**. Students also indicated greater resiliency via Increased Persistence (6%), being Less Fearful of Making Mistakes / Failure (5%), and Other (6%).

Study Abroad (Yale Programs) Categories	Coded Responses
Increased Adaptability / Flexibility	43%
Increased Independence	40%
Increased Persistence	6%
Less Fearful of Making Mistakes / Failure	5%
Other	6%

Number of coded responses = 83

100%

### SUMMARY of SURVEY RESULTS: Broader Inputs and Outcomes

Top answers (summarized below) indicate a study abroad population *on Yale faculty-led programs* that begins motivated by immersion in another culture and location, whose most effective action to accomplish that goal was to make the decision to go abroad in the first place (often a difficult decision on many levels), who found it challenging not to have more ability with the local language(s) abroad (a challenge anticipated by 74% of respondents), but who returned to campus feeling more independent, adaptable, flexible, and broader-minded. These data mirror closely the results from students participating in non-Yale programs abroad (see page 9).

These results differ from internships in the obvious way of not being overtly focused on exploring a career; these results differ, too, from “less structured” experiences, such as independent research while on a fellowship, that yield not just greater independence, adaptability and flexibility but also, according to students, greater self-sufficiency. Structured study abroad experiences seem well-suited, then, to setting a foundation for greater self-sufficiency later on in the workplace or when conducting projects more independently.

The primary goal that I set for this experience was to:

**Travel / Immerse Myself in Another Culture and Location (#1, 45%)**

The most effective action I took to try to accomplish my primary goal for this experience was to:

**Make the Decision to Study Abroad (#1, 47%)**

One thing that I found most challenging about this experience overall was:

**Not Having Better Skills with Local Language(s) (#1, 37%)**

During this experience I gained new understanding about myself or others in the following way:

**I am More Independent / Adaptable / Flexible (#1, 47%)**

I am engaging differently with my coursework, community, career path, family, or friends in the following way:

**I Gained a Broader Perspective on Life (#1, 65%)**



## STUDY ABROAD (Yale Programs): Student Quotes

### INCREASED INDEPENDENCE

- *“This was the first time that I ever traveled without my parents and simply flying to another country was stressful. But since then I have taken on more responsibility and actually traveled to other places in Europe by myself. It was an incredibly worthwhile experience and now I feel more prepared to handle other challenges on my own as well.”*
- *“I ... really enjoyed stepping outside the Yale bubble in terms of education .... This hugely expanded my horizons and made me more confident as a person. At Yale, I was always comparing myself with peers who were like me. In Paris, I realized that it was all right to be different.”*
- *“I think that my experience abroad definitely helped me become more resilient in the face of challenges. I now feel confident taking on tasks that seem scary or more difficult. For example, I believe I can take more difficult classes and have the confidence to do so now because I know that if I can succeed in living in a foreign country while still learning the language, I can take on almost any challenge.”*
- *“I walked right out of my comfort zone in this program -- I stayed with an unfamiliar family, spoke an unfamiliar language ..., and lived in an unfamiliar city ... I am MUCH more likely to do things that scare me, because I've done something much scarier and I know that they can be extremely rewarding, and I am less intimidated....”*

### DECREASED FEAR of MAKING MISTAKES

- *“This experience was much harder than I expected and I had to accept failure in a way I never had before. It was a difficult experience for me but next time I'm horrible at something, hopefully I won't be so hard on myself.”*
- *“I was very nervous about trying to engage my host family in conversation, and so every time I did I would have to combat intense fear of making a mistake or being misunderstood. However, after a few weeks of continuously addressing this fear, I could feel that both my language skills and confidence were improving.”*

### INCREASED FLEXIBILITY / ADAPTABILITY

- *“[A] lot of unexpected events occurred ..., and I learned to be flexible and accept challenges as they arose.”*
- *“I became much more flexible ... we never knew if a 2 pm meeting [in the local community] would be at 1 or at 5. We had to be ready to meet with locals to film our documentary and adjust accordingly.”*
- *“Studying abroad in Ecuador was no walk in the park, especially coming from the Yale bubble.... [T]his made me realize how truly lucky and privileged I am.”*

### INCREASED PERSISTENCE

- *“It took many museum visits and online excursions (though limited in my home stay) to begin to learn where to start researching this rich history. I eventually learned of a walking tour which chronicled the popular haunts of many black artists from the past. Given that information and experience, I was then able to delve into all sorts of deep connections that answer the question: why do so many people of color from the United States find themselves being ex-pats in countries like France, and particularly in a city like Paris? None of this would have been possible, had I not been in Paris for the amazing ... program through Yale.”*

# STUDY ABROAD (Yale Programs): *The Data*

## SURVEY RESULTS: Goals and Ranking Outcomes

The primary goal that I set for this experience was to:	
Primary Goal	Responses Ranked #1
Travel / Immerse Myself in Another Culture and Location	45%
Improve Language Skills	28%
Study a Familiar Topic in a New Context	14%
Fulfill a Language Requirement	12%
Improve Writing Skills	2%
Number of respondents = 58	100%

The most effective action I took to try to accomplish my primary goal for this experience was to:	
Most Effective Action	Responses Ranked #1
Make the Decision to Study Abroad	47%
Use the Target Language	19%
Live with a Host Family	14%
Engage with Culture	12%
Participate in Class / Trips	9%
Number of respondents = 68	100%

One thing that I found most challenging about this experience overall was:	
Challenge	Responses Ranked #1
Not Having Better Skills with Local Language(s)	37%
Managing My Time Effectively	25%
Meeting the High Demands of the Coursework	18%
Adjusting to Cultural Differences	14%
Other	7%
Number of respondents = 57	100%

During this experience I gained new understanding about myself or others in the following way:	
New Understanding	Responses Ranked #1
I am More Independent / Adaptable / Flexible	47%
I Gained a Broader Cultural Perspective	40%
I am Better Able to Engage with Others	8%
I am More Aware of What I Want to Do in Life	4%
Other	2%
Number of respondents = 53	100%

I am engaging differently with my coursework, community, career path, family, or friends in the following way:	
New Understanding	Responses Ranked #1
I Gained a Broader Perspective on Life	65%
I am Building on Coursework Related to the Experience	19%
I am More Self-Directed and Less Stressed	17%
Number of respondents = 54	100%

## STUDY ABROAD (Non-Yale Programs): *Summary*

### SUMMARY of SURVEY RESULTS: Resilience

As the table below indicates, students returning from study abroad experiences *on non-Yale programs* overwhelmingly (75%) reported increased resiliency in two categories: **Increased Independence (41%)** and **Increased Adaptability / Flexibility (34%)**. Students also indicated greater resiliency via Increased Persistence (11%), being Less Fearful of Making Mistakes / Failure (3%), and Other (11%).

Non-Yale Study Abroad Categories	Coded Responses
Increased Independence	41%
Increased Adaptability / Flexibility	34%
Increased Persistence	11%
Other [or No Impact]	11% [1%]
Less Fearful of Making Mistakes / Failure	3%

Number of coded responses = 103

100%

### SUMMARY of SURVEY RESULTS: Broader Inputs and Outcomes

Top answers (summarized below) indicate a study abroad population *on non-Yale programs* that begins motivated by immersion in another culture and location, whose most effective action to accomplish that goal was to make the decision to go abroad in the first place (often a difficult decision on many levels), who found it challenging not to have more ability with the local language(s) abroad (a challenge anticipated by 69% of respondents), but who returned to campus feeling more independent, adaptable, flexible, and broader-minded. These data mirror closely the results from students who participated on Yale programs abroad (see page 6).

These results from participating in non-Yale programs abroad mirror student experiences on Yale's faculty-led programs abroad in the summer, suggesting a high degree of parity. Once again, students returning from study abroad do not indicate career- or independent research-related outcomes, per se, but their reported increases in independence, adaptability, flexibility, and broadened perspectives surely will help to prepare them for their eventual careers and, generally, for facing subsequent challenges with greater self-sufficiency.

The primary goal that I set for this experience was to:

**Travel / Immerse Myself in Another Culture and Location (#1, 42%)**

The most effective action I took to try to accomplish my primary goal for this experience was to:

**Make the Decision to Study Abroad (#1, 40%)**

One thing that I found most challenging about this experience overall was:

**Not Having Better Skills with Local Language(s) (#1, 34%)**

During this experience I gained new understanding about myself or others in the following way:

**I am More Independent / Adaptable / Flexible (#1, 43%)**

I am engaging differently with my coursework, community, career path, family, or friends in the following way:

**I Gained a Broader Perspective on Life (#1, 56%)**



# STUDY ABROAD (Non-Yale Programs): Student Quotes

## INCREASED INDEPENDENCE

- *“The experience gave me significant independence and showed me that I can absolutely direct my own life and go places, reach people, and do things that I would like to do.”*
- *“Being abroad is a challenge mostly because you're forced to be independent in a totally foreign country. This gives you endless opportunities for growth. After navigating an entire country--often on my own--I feel like I can take on many new social and cultural challenges.”*
- *“I had to do all of the nitty gritty things I was not used to doing at Yale or back home, from cooking to cleaning to shopping and more. The[se are] mundane things, yet I think for a student like myself managing those things on top of an academic program and recreation was an incredibly useful experience.”*
- *“I'm better able to put the challenges I face at Yale in perspective. It's one thing to know vaguely that you're ridiculously privileged within the Yale bubble, and another to live outside of it. I'm more calm and able to prioritize in a more objective manner so the challenges are less daunting.”*

## DECREASED FEAR of MAKING MISTAKES

- *“I had to learn to accept ... my lack of knowledge and mistakes and not become discouraged.”*
- *“I decided to worry less about mistakes or minor setbacks, and to work on just immersing myself in the environment. This led not only to increased French skills, but also to more confidence and resilience.”*
- *“I think my experiences abroad made me less afraid of challenges. This is because I was forced to be self-sufficient, and because of that, I realized that I could be. I have more control than I thought in my own success. It was quite empowering to go abroad and discover this. In addition, seeing how other people live and function in the world gives me ideas for how to improve my own existence, and makes me more able to put my problems and challenges in perspective.”*

## INCREASED FLEXIBILITY / ADAPTABILITY

- *“Being alone in a faraway land is the easiest way to become more resilient in the face of challenges. I had to step so far out of my comfort zone and I was rewarded so heavily for it.”*
- *“All of my luggage went missing for two weeks, leaving with me completely unprepared for field trips, school supplies etc. However, I then went shopping for basic necessities and found that this helped me interact with the locals more. I now find my suitcase situation in Spain to be a blessing in disguise.”*
- *“The point [of study abroad] is to experience something new as a whole, and that'll include many challenges and difficulties that'll bring you out of your comfort zone.”*

## INCREASED PERSISTENCE

- *“[Traveling broad] teaches you patience when things get complicated and makes you determined to continue and persevere through any new challenge you may encounter in the way.”*
- *“Instead of resigning myself to poor communication and relationships, my time abroad forced me to meet my fears head on and improve my language skills.”*

# STUDY ABROAD (Non-Yale Programs): *The Data*

## SURVEY RESULTS: Goals and Ranking Outcomes

The primary goal that I set for this experience was to:	
Primary Goal	Responses Ranked #1
Travel / Immerse Myself in Another Culture and Location	42%
Improve Language Skills	31%
Other	16%
Study a Familiar Topic in a New Context	10%
Number of respondents = 67	
100%	

The most effective action I took to try to accomplish my primary goal for this experience was to:	
Most Effective Action	Responses Ranked #1
Make the Decision to Study Abroad	40%
Engage with Culture	18%
Participate in Class / Trips	16%
Use the Target Language	12%
Live with a Host Family	7%
Other	7%
Number of respondents = 68	
100%	

One thing that I found most challenging about this experience overall was:	
Challenge	Responses Ranked #1
Managing My Time Effectively	34%
Adjusting to Cultural Differences	19%
Not Having Better Skills with Local Language(s)	19%
Other	18%
Meeting the High Demands of the Coursework	9%
Number of respondents = 67	
100%	

During this experience I gained new understanding about myself or others in the following way:	
New Understanding	Responses Ranked #1
I am More Independent / Adaptable / Flexible	43%
I Gained a Broader Cultural Perspective	25%
I am More Aware of What I Want to Do in Life	22%
I am Better Able to Engage with Others	8%
Other	3%
Number of respondents = 65	
100%	

I am engaging differently with my coursework, community, career path, family, or friends in the following way:	
New Understanding	Responses Ranked #1
I Gained a Broader Perspective on Life	56%
I am Building on Coursework Related to the Experience	22%
I am More Self-Directed and Less Stressed	19%
Other	3%
Number of respondents = 63	
100%	

# INTERNSHIPS: *Summary*

## SUMMARY of SURVEY RESULTS: Resilience

As the table below indicates, students returning from internships overwhelmingly (92% for domestic and 95% for abroad) reported increased resiliency in two categories: **Increased Adaptability / Flexibility (70% domestic and 64% abroad)** and **Increased Independence (22% domestic and 31% abroad)**. Students on internships abroad also indicated Other (5%) examples of gaining resiliency while students on internships domestically indicated No Impact (7%) on resiliency. Internships domestically and abroad also reported 0% for becoming Less Fearful of Making Mistakes / Failure versus 3-13% among other CIPE experiences. This interesting result may point to differences in nature between working and studying or researching.

Internships Categories	Coded Responses	
	US	Abroad
Increased Adaptability / Flexibility	70%	64%
Increased Independence	22%	31%
Other	0%	5%
No Impact	7%	0%

Total number of coded responses = 69      100%      100%

## SUMMARY of SURVEY RESULTS: Broader Inputs and Outcomes

Top answers (summarized below) indicate an internship population that begins motivated by exploring a career, whose most effective action to accomplish that goal was to engage with people at the internship, who found it challenging *not* being challenged enough (domestically, anticipated by 53% of respondents) or to adjust to new work and the need for taking initiative (abroad, anticipated by 67% of respondents), but who returned to campus having gained insights to a particular field or work culture and who reported gaining insights as to whether or not they wished to continue on particular career paths or to pursue new ones.

Not surprisingly, students returning from internships focus on exploring a field and the importance of making connections with co-workers in doing so. Interestingly, internship participants reported the highest level of gaining insights to *self* while students returning from non-internship experiences report higher levels of gaining insights into *others* (or the world broadly). Clearly both kinds of insight are important and complementary.

The primary goal that I set for this experience was to:

**Explore a Career** (#1, 79% domestically and 60% abroad)

The most effective action I took to try to accomplish my primary goal for this experience was to:

**Engage with People** (#1, 58% domestically and 52% abroad)

One thing that I found most challenging about this experience overall was:

**Not Feeling Challenged Enough** (#1, 42% domestically) and **Getting Used to New Work, tied with Taking Initiative** (#1, 28% + 28% abroad)

During this experience I gained new understanding about myself or others in the following way:

**I Gained Insights to the Particular Field / Work Culture** (#1, 39% domestically and 50% abroad)

I am engaging differently with my coursework, community, career path, family, or friends in the following way:

**I Gained Career Path Insights for Myself** (#1, 72% domestically and 64% abroad)



# INTERNSHIPS: *Student Quotes*

## INCREASED INDEPENDENCE

- *"I think that experience [gave] me a lot more direction with regards to my career path than I had before and it has also really impacted my academic life as it has placed me on a new path back at Yale as a result of the new passions and interests that I developed .... The experience also exposed me to a new culture for 2 months and I think that is an incredibly valuable experience that all Yale college students should undertake during their time at Yale."*
- *"From travel crises where you have to figure out how to get money when your card stops working, or get from point A to point B with no access to internet, to physically pushing yourself outside of your comfort zone, this has been the most valuable experience and I can't thank CIPE enough. It truly is life-changing and life-making."*
- *"[T]he biggest thing that an internship prepares you for is living on your own and putting in effort on both sides of the work/life balance. And potentially dealing with less structure in those areas than at Yale."*
- *"Well, I had to go to work, even when I didn't feel like going to work ... the way it will be in real life."*
- *"Not having three fully prepared buffet meals every day, having to clean the bathroom, going grocery shopping, washing dishes (and so on) were all small hassles I had never dealt with before .... In other words, I matured."*
- *"Knowing that I can live on my own on the complete other side of the world has opened my doors to exploring new job opportunities in far reaching areas of the world that I would have never considered before."*
- *"I learned how to live independently in a way I never could have with only the experience of my parents' home or my dorm--I shopped for myself and found my own means for transportation to work and other places."*

## DECREASED FEAR of MAKING MISTAKES

- *"I realized that my analytical skills from reading and writing about literature and culture were transferrable to international relations research and that I should not fear a class with a Global Affairs or Political Science designation...."*

## INCREASED FLEXIBILITY / ADAPTABILITY

- *"Teaching is a job that ... requires 'rolling with the punches' and a large degree of flexibility. You might have a certain timeline by which you aim to teach something, but it might end up taking a lot longer than expected and that's something you have to deal with. You may also think that a concept is really simple, but it might end up perplexing your students more than expected, causing you to have to find different more creative approaches to teach the material."*
- *"It was my first time living on my own and having a 9 to 5 office job, so those in itself were challenges for me that I am proud I did well with. I spent the summer in ... the Midwest, so that was also a new experience that I feel I took advantage of in many good ways. I think the summer built me as a person by making me more outgoing with talking to people and exploring new places and activities. It was also a challenge to live with 15 other people, which was a good challenge to have."*
- *"[M]y first day at the office was filled with culture shock because I was in back to back meetings in a foreign language learning all about the organization, what they had done in the past month, and what they planned on doing the upcoming month. Even the employees believed the day was difficult, but instead of giving up or getting frustrated, I used it as an opportunity to learn and ask questions."*

# INTERNSHIPS: *The Data*

## SURVEY RESULTS: Goals and Ranking Outcomes

The primary goal that I set for this experience was to:	Responses Ranked #1	
Primary Goal	US	Abroad
Explore a Career	79%	60%
Engage Cross-Culturally	0%	30%
Learn a Skill, a Language, etc.	0%	7%
Take Initiative About the Future	11%	0%
Other	11%	3%

Total number of respondents = 49

100% 100%

The most effective action I took to try to accomplish my primary goal for this experience was to:	Responses Ranked #1	
Most Effective Action	US	Abroad
Engage with People	58%	52%
Work Hard	26%	21%
Take Initiative	11%	24%
Attend Meetings and Events	5%	3%

Total number of respondents = 48

100% 100%

One thing that I found most challenging about this experience overall was:	Responses Ranked #1	
Challenge	US	Abroad
Not Feeling Challenged Enough	42%	17%
Getting Used to New Work	26%	28%
Taking Initiative	21%	28%
Other	11%	7%
Adjusting to a New Culture	0%	21%

Number of respondents = 48

100% 100%

During this experience I gained new understanding about myself or others in the following way:	Responses Ranked #1	
New Understanding	US	Abroad
I Gained Insights to the Particular Field / Work Culture	39%	50%
I Learned What Work I Enjoy / Am Fit For	33%	4%
I Gained Insights About my Strengths and Weaknesses	17%	18%
I Became More Confident and Independent	11%	29%

Number of respondents = 46

100% 100%

I am engaging differently with my coursework, community, career path, family, or friends in the following way:	Responses Ranked #1	
New Understanding	US	Abroad
I Have Gained Career Path Insights for Myself	72%	64%
I Have Gained Specific Skills and / or Knowledge	17%	28%
I am Building on Coursework Related to the Experience	6%	4%
Other	6%	4%

Number of respondents = 43

100% 100%

## FELLOWSHIP EXPERIENCES: *Summary*

### SUMMARY of SURVEY RESULTS: Resilience

As the table below indicates, students returning from fellowship experiences overwhelmingly (69%) reported increased resiliency in two categories: **Increased Persistence (38%)** and **Increased Adaptability / Flexibility (31%)**. Students also indicated greater resiliency via Increased Independence (16%), being Less Fearful of Making Mistakes / Failure (6%), and Other (6%) or No Impact (3%). Interestingly, fellowship and language study experience yielded top responses about increased persistence whereas study abroad and internships elicited top answers about increased adaptability / flexibility and increased independence.

Fellowship Categories	Coded Responses
Increased Persistence	38%
Increased Adaptability / Flexibility	31%
Increased Independence	16%
Less Fearful of Making Mistakes / Failure	6%
Other [or No Impact]	6% [3%]

Number of coded responses = 83

100%

### SUMMARY of SURVEY RESULTS: Broader Inputs and Outcomes

Top answers (summarized below) indicate a fellowships population that begins motivated by an interest in conducting research, whose most effective action to accomplish that goal was to engage with local contacts, who found it challenging to be flexible about revising realistic expectations for the work that can be done in a limited time (a challenge anticipated by 71% of respondents), but who returned to campus more self-sufficient (better able to problem solve and to utilize resources) and more thoughtful /aware of other people and of ideas that differ from their own or that were unimagined before embarking on the fellowship.

As with internship experiences, making connections with others, in this case with locals, is key to conducting successful research. More so than any other experience reported, too, non-language study fellowships seem particularly strong in fostering flexibility and self-sufficiency, which reflects the outcomes of having to independently complete research that, despite planning, routinely takes a series of unexpected twists and turns.

The primary goal that I set for this experience was to:

**Conduct Research** (#1, 92%)

The most effective action I took to try to accomplish my primary goal for this experience was to:

**Engage with Locals** (#1, 38%)

One thing that I found most challenging about this experience overall was:

**Needing to be Flexible (with Time, Expectations, etc.)** (#1, 30%)

During this experience I gained new understanding about myself or others in the following way:

**I Became More Self-Sufficient** (#1, 43%)

I am engaging differently with my coursework, community, career path, family, or friends in the following way:

**I Am More Thoughtful / Aware of People and Ideas** (#1, 46%)



# FELLOWSHIP EXPERIENCES: *Student Quotes*

## INCREASED INDEPENDENCE

- *“For this project, I had to have clear goals for what I wanted to accomplish while in the UK.... I needed to learn enough that I could continue the project independently back in New Haven. I encountered several roadblocks.... However, I used those roadblocks to figure out the best way I could learn (a combination of detailed independent study and checking against the UK expert's opinions).”*
- *“The most challenging part of my experience was exploring completely foreign places alone. I especially hated having dinner alone, always feeling self conscious. A naturally paranoid person, I also had to learn to let go when exploring places alone in addition to living in less comfortable accommodations.”*

## DECREASED FEAR of MAKING MISTAKES

- *“Facing adverse and unexpected situations while abroad forced me to learn how to adapt.... When I first arrived in Brazil, language was my biggest hurdle. I hesitated communicating with locals for fear that I would make an error, which made me appear shy and introverted. Eventually, I accepted the fact that I was going to make mistakes and chose to learn from them rather than be hindered by them.... While abroad, it is important that you remain open to the possibility of challenges and change.”*
- *“I felt like my fellowship funding allowed me to jump into almost entirely new terrain and experiment with my future career field by conducting a long-term project and not berating me for all the time failed finding myself at dead ends. I sincerely appreciate ... the trust the fellowship committees put in me. They made me understand the requirements of my field far better.”*

## INCREASED FLEXIBILITY / ADAPTABILITY

- *“I think learning to navigate a foreign country and its unexpected surprises has taught me to be flexible and on my toes at all times. I learned how to handle unexpected surprises quickly so as to not lose progress with my experience thus far and so as to not veer off the path entirely.”*
- *“I faced challenges of mistrust in conducting my ethnographic study. This initially made me doubt the project and more broadly myself and my ability to conduct research of this sort. I came to realize that this was in fact one of the major findings.... By continuing my research through difficult moments of mistrust from others and self-doubt, I was able to explore the very complex dimension which I had initially seen as an obstacle.”*

## INCREASED PERSISTENCE

- *“I have definitely become resilient in the face of challenges outside of my control. I am more accepting of what I can do and what is within my control, and not to blame myself for others’ actions and decisions. Instead, I have really had to focus on the positive and remain persistent.”*
- *“I started my project in the aftermaths of the April earthquake in Nepal and immediately had to alter my plans due to the natural disaster.... [T]here were political riots in Nepal and I had to manage my project around such a circumstance as well. Such circumstances taught me a lot about working under difficult conditions and still producing results.”*
- *“In research, most of the times, things don't work and equipment fails or performs different from what is expected. Spending 10 weeks in Professor DeMille's lab made me more perseverant when it comes to scientific work.”*

# FELLOWSHIP EXPERIENCES: *The Data*

## SURVEY RESULTS: Goals and Ranking Outcomes

The primary goal that I set for this experience was to:	
Primary Goal	Responses Ranked #1
Conduct Research	92%
Engage Cross-Culturally	4%
Learn a Skill, a Language, etc.	4%
Number of respondents = 24	
100%	

The most effective action I took to try to accomplish my primary goal for this experience was to:	
Most Effective Action	Responses Ranked #1
Engage with Locals	38%
Have a Clear Plan	21%
Immerse Myself / Go Outside of my Comfort Zone	17%
Engage with Primary Resources (Local Archives, Architecture, Theater, etc.)	13%
Stay on Task	8%
Other	4%
Number of respondents = 24	
100%	

One thing that I found most challenging about this experience overall was:	
Challenge	Responses Ranked #1
Needing to be Flexible (with Time, Expectations, etc.)	30%
Handling Logistics of the Experience	26%
The Demands of the Work	13%
Other	13%
Engaging with People	9%
Navigating a Different Culture	9%
Number of respondents = 23	
100%	

During this experience I gained new understanding about myself or others in the following way:	
New Understanding	Responses Ranked #1
I Became More Self-Sufficient	43%
I Learned to be More Adaptable	22%
I Gained Self-Insights	17%
I Became Better at Collaborating	13%
I Gained Career Insights	4%
Number of respondents = 23	
100%	

I am engaging differently with my coursework, community, career path, family, or friends in the following way:	
New Understanding	Responses Ranked #1
I Am More Thoughtful / Aware of People and Ideas	46%
I Am Taking the Next Steps in My Studies and/or Career	38%
I Am Directly Applying Skills Learned While on the Experience	17%
Number of respondents = 24	
100%	

# LANGUAGE STUDY (Light Fellowship): *Summary*

## SUMMARY of SURVEY RESULTS: Resilience

As the table below indicates, students returning from Light Fellowship experiences overwhelmingly (68%) reported increased resiliency in two categories: **Increased Persistence (39%)** and **Increased Independence (29%)**. Students also indicated greater resiliency via Increased Adaptability / Flexibility (16%), being Less Fearful of Making Mistakes / Failure (13%), and Other (3%). Interestingly, Light Fellowship experiences showed strong results with becoming Less Fearful of Making Mistakes / Failure: Light Fellows reported this outcome 13% of the time versus 0-6% among other CIPE experiences.

Light Fellowship Program Categories	Coded Responses
Increased Persistence	39%
Increased Independence	29%
Increased Adaptability / Flexibility	16%
Less Fearful of Making Mistakes / Failure	13%
Other	3%

Number of coded responses = 31

100%

## SUMMARY of SURVEY RESULTS: Broader Inputs and Outcomes

Top answers (summarized below) indicate a Light Fellowship population that begins motivated by an interest in cross-cultural engagement, whose most effective action to accomplish that goal was to select a challenging language program abroad, who found it challenging to handle the intense workload (a challenge anticipated by 61% of respondents), but who returned to campus feeling more independent and who are more capable of independently moving forward with their lives while being, often through an increased awareness and understanding of cultural context, more thoughtful and aware of the people and of the ideas that surround them.

Among all activities reported, language study via a Light Fellowship in East Asia (and likely language study abroad generally, if we were to analyze the data that way) registers the highest sense of student interest not simply in travel or immersion abroad but in cross-cultural *engagement*. Light Fellows also uniquely reported the intensity of the workload as the most challenging aspect of the experience, which speaks to the extremely high expectations that Yale and the Light Foundation Trustees set and maintain for this flagship experience.

The primary goal that I set for this experience was to:

**Engage Cross-Culturally** (#1, 65%)

The most effective action I took to try to accomplish my primary goal for this experience was to:

**Select a Challenging Program Abroad** (#1, 47%)

One thing that I found most challenging about this experience overall was:

**Handling the Intense Workload** (#1, 32%)

During this experience I gained new understanding about myself or others in the following way:

**I Gained a Sense of Independence** (#1, 43%)

I am engaging differently with my coursework, community, career path, family, or friends in the following way:

**I Am More Independent** (#1, 33%) - tied with **I Am More Thoughtful / Aware of People and Ideas** (#1, 33%)

# LANGUAGE STUDY (Light Fellowship): Student Quotes

## INCREASED INDEPENDENCE

- *"I am more independent and better at solving problems on my own, which will serve me well throughout my career no matter what I will be doing."*
- *"Shopping for your own food is a normal, but starkly independent task. Doing it in a foreign country, while navigating a different language is even more challenging. That said, coming back to America and doing the same task-- food shopping-- or something equally independent and almost isolating doesn't seem nearly as daunting."*

## DECREASED FEAR of MAKING MISTAKES

- *"I made a decision to face my challenges head-on without taking myself too seriously to be discouraged by failures. This applies to both language learning itself... and to the freestyle dancing that I began to study while in Seoul. I threw myself out there to dance and must have looked awful those first few months, but the feedback and connections with Korean dancers I obtained from taking that risk paid off enormously."*

## INCREASED FLEXIBILITY / ADAPTABILITY

- *"I think that studying abroad has allowed me to approach problem-solving differently by ... using critical thinking skills to try and tackle problems that I would otherwise rely on google to answer for me. For example, if I can't find directions for a supermarket and neither have internet to search for maps or the name of the place, I would ask a pedestrian where the 'place that sells food' is."*
- *"My experience abroad definitely increased my patience and tolerance for people I don't understand. Sometimes I was flat out unable to understand my host family but I had to infer what they wanted and then accommodate those needs. I also gained a new appreciation of the learning that can go on when you are just talking with people."*
- *"Being exposed to a different culture adjusts you to an entirely new environment, giving you experience in solving an entirely new set of problems. Also, exposing yourself to a new culture helps expand your perspective which may help you look at a problem in a different way."*
- *"Most importantly, I learned a lot about how to be alone.... Studying in Beijing made less afraid to reach out and connect with others."*

## INCREASED PERSISTENCE

- *"The moments I look back on as most educational were not in the classroom .... [They were] as I journeyed overnight with my host mother to Aomori, conversing with her about Japan, America, and our impressions, like familiars."*
- *"Part of studying abroad includes embarrassing, unfamiliar, and sometimes uncomfortable experiences. In China, ... ordering food was a big ordeal. I'd always order wrong things. If I was lost I would ask a local for directions, but I'd have to ask them to repeat themselves three or four times to fully understand what they were saying. It was frustrating at times but along with these little roadblocks come patience and experience."*
- *"Unlike nearly every other country that I have visited, Japan was a place where the average person had almost no knowledge of or ability in English. That is, I had to completely rely on my Japanese to get by in most instances. It forced me to work hard on my listening comprehension and creativity, skills that have helped me at Yale since I have returned."*



# LANGUAGE STUDY (Light Fellowship): *The Data*

## SURVEY RESULTS: Goals and Ranking Outcomes

The primary goal that I set for this experience was to:	
Primary Goal	Responses Ranked #1
Engage Cross-Culturally	65%
Improve Language Skills	30%
Other	4%

Number of respondents = 23

100%

The most effective action I took to try to accomplish my primary goal for this experience was to:	
Most Effective Action	Responses Ranked #1
Select a Challenging Program Abroad	47%
Engage with Locals While Avoiding English if Possible	19%
Dedicate Hours Each Day to Study	14%
Participate in Class	12%
Undertake Independent Activities	9%

Number of respondents = 23

100%

One thing that I found most challenging about this experience overall was:	
Challenge	Responses Ranked #1
Handling the Intense Workload	32%
Keeping the Language Pledge	32%
Staying Rested / Energized	23%
Adjusting to the Culture	5%
Missing Home / Friends	5%
Other	5%

Number of respondents = 22

100%

During this experience I gained new understanding about myself or others in the following way:	
New Understanding	Responses Ranked #1
I Gained a Sense of Independence	43%
I Gained Insights to the Influence of Culture	17%
I Gained Understanding of How Language Can Connect People	17%
I Gained Broader Perspective and Patience	13%
I Gained Self-Insights	9%

Number of respondents = 23

100%

I am engaging differently with my coursework, community, career path, family, or friends in the following way:	
New Understanding	Responses Ranked #1
I Am More Independent	33%
I Am More Thoughtful / Aware of People and Ideas	33%
I Am Taking the Next Steps in My Studies and/or Career	24%
I Am More Collaborative	5%
Other	5%

Number of respondents = 21

100%

## CONCLUSIONS:

Do opportunities offered through CIPE provide students a productive mix of risk-taking, unanticipated outcomes (including failure), and chances to exercise intellectual curiosity? Do these experiences meet the Dean's aim for "giving [students] tools to respond productively to those moments ...[teaching] the value of intellectual curiosity as an end unto itself—failures and all"? Based on the survey results in this report, the answer seems, clearly, *Yes—at least in some key respects*: Over 90% of students indicated INCREASED Independence, DECREASED Fear of Making Mistakes, INCREASED Flexibility / Adaptability, and INCREASED Persistence as result of undertaking experiences through CIPE.

This is a significant finding that points both to the value of students' taking on challenges outside of the New Haven context and to ensuring that students have access to high-quality options domestically and abroad coupled with the best possible advising and financial resources from Yale. Without a doubt, Yale's financial commitment to experience abroad, as seen in the International Summer Award and in allowing student's financial aid to go abroad with them for Year or Term Abroad, point to serious and sustained institutional commitment. Students who are not on financial aid but whose families struggle to afford the additional expenses related to experiences abroad, of course, continue to wrestle with that challenge (although Yale's robust fellowship offerings, awarded on a competitive basis, help to fill that gap substantially).

In terms of advising, CIPE continually strives to make it ever easier for all students to access the information they need, be that in-person, on-line, or via various events and information sessions throughout the year. Armed with good information and advising as needed, students are more empowered to make thoughtful decisions not just about the immediate opportunities in front of them but also about how that and subsequent experiences can form integral parts of their development into capable, confident (without being arrogant!), and self-sufficient members of global society.

Over the next two years, building again on the Dean's priorities for student development and success, CIPE will turn its assessment efforts to student mindfulness and engagement, asking how, if at all, experiences offered through CIPE contribute to gains in those areas. Those reports will, as with the report here, include a substantial number of student quotes, carefully coded from qualitative replies and grouped into representative answer categories. While we can never completely control for all of the variables that contribute to student growth, we can ask students themselves to share with us their estimation of how particular experiences have or have not impacted them in significant ways. In doing so, we have a least one measure of the efficacy of the work and of the opportunities Yale College devotes to its students. So far, the story is an inspiring one, offering useful insights into some successful ways of building positively on experiences that are proving almost universally successful in meeting some of Yale College's most desired personal and professional outcomes for students.

**Yale Center for International and Professional Experience (CIPE)**

**November, 2016**

## CIPE: Yale's Center for International and Professional Experience

CIPE offers a wide variety of resources for students seeking international and US-based study, work, and research experiences. We provide information, advice, and guidance to potential travelers, as well as contact information for returned students.

### CIPE's Dean

**Dr. Jane Edwards**

Dean of International and Professional Experience  
Senior Associate Dean of Yale College



*Images (from top to bottom):*

1. Photo by Kai DeBus (SM '18) in Tokyo, Japan
2. Photo by Hailey Winston (ES '17) in Cappadocia, Turkey

# Yale Center for International and Professional Experience (CIPE)

*...for thoughtful engagement with the world beyond Yale.*

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## NOTES