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# A Thematic Analysis of Study Abroad Programs in Community College Institutions in the U.S.

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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

A THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS IN COMMUNITY  
COLLEGE INSTITUTIONS IN THE U.S.

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO  
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL  
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF ARTS

PROGRAM IN CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL POLICY STUDIES

BY

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CHICAGO, IL

MAY 2015

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

American Association of Community Colleges	AACC
Bunker Hill Community College	BHCC
Howard Community College	HCC
Maricopa Community Colleges	MCCD
Eastern Iowa Community Colleges	EICC
Central Piedmont Community College	CPCC

## ABSTRACT

The following study focuses on community colleges and the textual website materials they present regarding study abroad programs in order to illuminate the the congruence between the overall community college mission of accessibility and the information presented on their study abroad websites. The text was evaluated by utilizing a thematic analysis coupled with multiple case studies and then further examined through the theoretical lenses of academic capitalism, institutional isomorphism, and universalism. The analysis of the text indicated that institutions are offering these programs for a combination of reasons, including institutional legitimacy, institutional revenue, and attempted student accessibility. The most significant deduction made from analysis was the lack of congruence between the overall community college mission of accessibility and information institutions present on their study abroad websites as it relates to scholarships, financial aid, diversity, and inclusion. These findings provide significant implication for further studies regarding how community colleges can seek to increase accessibility for students to study abroad programs as related to diversity and inclusion.

CHAPTER ONE  
INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

**Introduction**

According to the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), there are currently 1,132 community college institutions in United States serving a total of 12.8 million students. This accounts for 45% of all undergraduate students in the United States, and also represents 56% of the Hispanic population, and 48% of the African-American population (American Association of Community Colleges, 2014). With this significant statistic in mind, it is clear that those students who attend community colleges are an immensely important component of higher education in the United States. While there has been some research carried out regarding internationalization and study abroad at the community college level, most notably by Rosalind Latiner Raby, John Levin, and Edward Valeau, there is still a considerable need for more research to be conducted.

This study was undertaken in an attempt to address a portion of the research gap in the field of study abroad and community colleges by conducting a thematic analysis of the publicly available information presented by community college institutions on the study abroad sections of their websites. This study will also allow for a critical look to be taken at the specific nature, structure, and details of study abroad programs and how they are administered at the community college level. Through a thematic analysis of textual materials produced by community colleges coupled with multiple case studies the study attempted to elucidate the congruence between the overall community college mission of



accessibility and the information institutions present on their study abroad websites. The study includes a background section regarding community colleges, a literature review containing relevant information on the topic, a methods section explaining how the study was carried out, a results and discussion section explaining the information that was found through analysis and a comparison, conclusion, and recommendation section which will give final thoughts regarding the study.

### **Background**

In order to provide a comprehensive context for this research study, the thesis will begin with a brief overview of the community college as an institution of higher education, along with a brief history of the institution chiefly concentrating on its time in the United States. Rosalind Raby (2009) provides a clear definition of the community college model, stating that these institutions exist as “a unique form of postsecondary education that offers short-term semi- and professional terminal courses as well as an academic curriculum that results in an associate in arts or sciences, and in some cases the means to transfer to 4-year universities” (p. 3).

When community colleges were first developed at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, they were termed *junior colleges*, as their chief mission was to prepare students to transfer to a four year university. They had their beginnings in local school districts as extensions of high schools. The institutions gradually began to evolve to include vocational training, in addition to their transfer preparation focus (Bragg, 2001). The 1947 Truman Commission Report is credited with the first use of the term *community college* and promoted the mission of these institutions that one can see infused in the

system today, which entails providing and expanding educational access for all, rather than simply serving as institutions that prepare students for transfer (Boggs, 2010; Bragg, 2001). The largest expansion of community college institutions took place between 1960 and 1970. During this decade more than 450 new institutions were opened in order to accommodate the needs of the baby boom generation (Boggs, Elsner, Irwin, 2008).

The community college model in the present day United States includes seven salient characteristics, according to Raby (2009). The first being fairly obvious is that all community colleges are post-secondary institutions, or institutions that provide education after completion of a secondary education. The second characteristic, also widely known, is that community colleges in the U.S. operate on a binary university system, with a clear distinction between the community college model and the traditional university model. This binary feature also allows for students to transfer from community college institutions to four-year institutions (Raby, 2009). The third characteristic, which will be particularly salient for this study, deals with the mission of community colleges to serve those students who would not traditionally attend a four-year university. Students who attend these institutions are more likely to include women, racial minority groups, individuals with families, and those who are the first in their family to attend college (Bragg, 2001; Raby, 2009). The fourth characteristic deals with having a distinct length of study for community college programs, which traditionally last two years, however length does vary according to the program in which a student is enrolled.

The fifth characteristic given by Raby (2009) entails community colleges being seen a “less than” due to the fact that students often enroll at these institutions over four-

year universities due to lack of funds or necessary grades. The bevy of course offerings in vocational studies and the continuing lack of funding perpetuate this status as “less than.” The sixth characteristic, and one of the most salient according to Raby (2009), involves community colleges offering a curriculum that is designed to adapt and quickly change to the ever evolving needs of the particular community in which they are based. This flexibility is of particular importance, as no other division of higher education can respond more aptly and quickly to its community. The last characteristic, which details the open access philosophy, is arguably the most important concept to the mission of community colleges as a whole. The notion of open access in community colleges predicated itself on charging little to no tuition to students and admitting students regardless of factors such as race, income, or academic preparedness (Raby, 2009; Abelman & Dalessandro, 2008).

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

This review will focus on the topics of globalization, internationalization, and study abroad as they pertain to community colleges. A brief section regarding globalization and how it has manifested in the community college institution will be included. For the topic of internationalization, a broad definition of the concept will be provided, a brief history as it has been realized in community colleges will be given, current statistics regarding the state of the internationalization in these institutions will be discussed, and finally barriers to its growth and proposed solutions to these barriers will be related. For the field of study abroad, a broad definition will be provided along with the various types, a brief history in the community colleges will be given, the advantages and benefits of study abroad will be discussed, current statistics of study abroad in community colleges will be related, and finally challenges as well as possible solutions will be overviewed. The review will also elucidate gaps in the field, highlight areas that merit further inquiry, create warrant for this study, and identify the contribution that this study will make to the field.

#### **Globalization**

Globalization is often considered a particularly difficult concept to pin down and has been defined in a myriad of different ways by a number of various scholars. This piece will utilize globalization as Levin chooses to define it, as he is a leading scholar on

the topic of higher education concerning community colleges and globalization. Levin (1999) proposes that globalization is a multi-dimensional concept, as it suggests condition, process, economic connection, and is used in the form of the term *global*, to characterize political systems, multiple economics, and cultures. Levin (2002) also defines globalization as a process that entails “intensification of social and political relationships [which] heighten economic competition” (p. 51).

To provide another perspective, Raby (2009) states that globalization is a vigorous force that “perpetuates a borderless world where practices and ideas are shared across space and time aided by technology, mobility, communication, socioeconomic relationships, and environmental interdependence” (p. 21). Globalization as process permeates a number of institutional types, including political, military, cultural, economic, and legal. As higher education is involved in cultural, social, and economic realms, it is undoubtedly affected by the forces of globalization from all sides (Levin, 2002). One major way in which globalization has affected higher education and community colleges in return, is through economic globalization. The theory of academic capitalism, which will be detailed later in this study, explains how the new economy which can be seen manifesting worldwide, has affected institutions of higher education to move into a more business-like orientation and become propelled by the marketplace (Levin, 2002). Levin (2002) stresses that while these new economic behaviors play a large role in globalization and how it affects institution of higher education, there are many other aspects of globalization that also have an impact on these institutions. The

three aspects of economics, technology, and immigration patterns have had a substantial effect on community colleges as a whole (Levin, 2002).

### **Internationalization**

Raby and Valeau (2007) provide an apt distinction between the concepts of *internationalization* and *globalization* and relate “in essence, globalization is the phenomenon that exists and that we cannot control, while internationalization is the response that education is making” (p. 6). Levin (2002) provides further explanation and defines internationalization as a certain set of behaviors such as “the recruitment of students from other countries, the delivery of college curriculum in other nations, and the inculcation of others’ cultural values, including the promotion and display of international images, symbols, and practices” (p.52). According to Raby and Valeau (2007), the idea of *international education* also seems to be related to this and they state that “international education is a set of programs and curricula that institutions can employ to globalize students, faculty, and the surrounding communities” (p.5). However, Raby and Valeau (2007) also define international education as the need to understand “a variety of perspectives (geographic, ethnic, cultural, and gender) by acknowledging similarities, and by respecting and protecting differences among multi-country diversities” (p.6). Raby and Valeau (2007) perhaps would differentiate between the two definitions by pointing out that international education is the set of actions while internationalization is the act of carrying out the actions themselves. They do use the terms interchangeably throughout the piece, and for the purposes of this study, the concept will be referred to as internationalization.

Raby (2012) states that since the late 1960s, various scholarship has emphasized the importance of internationalization for community colleges. The Truman Commission spoke to its importance in the 1940s; however it was not until the 1960s that officials began to realize that the community college should become an integral part of internationalization efforts in higher education. The mission was promulgated throughout various institutions by the AACC and other community college organizations in the 1980s, 1990s, and early 2000s. Finally, in 2007 the AACC challenged all community college institutions to strive to make internationalization a fundamental aspect of their mission as bodies of higher education (Raby, 2012). While there has been some success in the realm of internationalization, and the majority of institutions have made a concentrated effort to include internationalization in their mission, efforts usually only entail including one form of internationalization. Raby (2012) relates that “today, internationalization has not become an integral part of mission, of leadership transition, nor a component of visionary change” (p. 84). It is evident that internationalization has become increasingly marginalized.

Raby (2012) states that there is also a lack of statistics on this topic, however, this review will incorporate the minimal amount of statistics that were found regarding internationalization in community colleges, to give a partial sense of its current state in these institutions. A report published on behalf of the American Council of Education by Green and Siaya (2005) summarizes information from a national institutional survey given to a number of community colleges that was meant to measure their internationalization on campus. Green and Siaya (2005) examined this survey and created

an internationalization index to better understand the survey and to help determine the amount of internationalization in which campuses were engaged. Using this index, Green and Siaya (2005) found that the majority of community colleges scored “low,” and none of the institutions surveyed scored “high.” While this was published a number of years ago, it is still a fairly accurate portrayal of internationalization efforts in community college institutions. This is supported by Raby (2012) as she iterates that internationalization programs have seen no significant growth in the past few decades. This is further supported by data analyzed in the *Expanding Education Abroad at U.S. Community Colleges* piece written by Raby (2008) and based on IIE’s Open Doors Report.

As internationalization efforts have remained a low priority for community colleges, scholars have identified a number of barriers to implementing internationalization. As articulated by Madeleine Green (2007) barriers to internationalization occur on both the institutional and individual level. The barriers include institutional leaders not viewing internationalization as relevant, lack of an institutional strategy, fragmentation of international programs and activities, a lack of funding, global learning being seen as solely happening outside of the classroom, individual attitudes against internationalization, a lack of personal knowledge and academic expertise, and finally a lack of internationalized mind-set (Green, 2007).

Floyd, Walker, and Farnsworth (2003) stress that internationalization can allow for community colleges to become leaders in global education and allow for students and faculty to have a greater understanding of world issues. The benefits of



internationalization go beyond these factors as well, and scholars have also suggested a number of ways in which barriers to internationalization in community colleges can be remedied and provide for an overall increase in internationalization efforts in community colleges across the United States. Green iterates that these barriers can be overcome by “ensuring active leadership, creating a strategic framework for action, using available assets, ensuring faculty development and engagement, committing to meet student needs, and providing supporting structures and resources (Green, 2012). Raby and Valeau (2007) also offer their own set of approaches to overcome barriers to internationalization that are a bit more detailed than what Green presents. They state that institutions should clearly include internationalization in college documents, ensure organizational leadership at all levels, create connections between internationalization and other programs, create international committees on campus, create a line item for internationalization in the college budget, secure visible office space and staff, provide counseling services and student advising, and create coalitions with regional and national advocacy groups.

Raby (2012) states that community colleges overall have a strong impetus to make a concentrated effort to fight these barriers, as community colleges serve nearly half of the undergraduate population in the United States. If internationalization is not implemented, a majority of students will not “have the chance to expand their understanding of the global world or change their perceptions and attitudes about global relationships” (Raby, 2012, p. 93). Consequently, new models of internationalization must strive to produce an environment in which programs can be maintained and

continued over time. According to Raby (2012), advocates of internationalization will also have to make a concentrated effort to encourage investment in international education, along with ensuring that those who are concerned with the process remain educated on its lifelong benefits and advantages.

### **Study Abroad**

Peterson et al. (2007) as cited in Zhang (2011) relate that study abroad “refers to formal education programs that occur outside the participant’s home country and that intend to enhance and enrich student’s learning experiences” (p. 182). To give a more specific definition study abroad also refers to “the variety of learning programs in a foreign country or region, including academic programs, language programs, internships, service programs, and work programs for which credit is awarded” (Zhang, 2011, p. 183). Raby (2008) states that study abroad “is a pragmatic tool that ensures national security, encourages the development of politically active citizens who can contribute towards participatory democracy and social service, and provides careers skills needed for work in the global economy” (Raby, p. 9). Characteristics of study abroad at community colleges includes open access compliance, specific course credit transfer, flexible program length, and the consortia model which allows community colleges to work together to provide education abroad (Raby, 2008).

Hoffa (2007) as cited in Zhang (2011) states that study abroad, as recognized currently in the United States, has its origins at the University of Delaware in the 1920s. The programs saw major growth after World War II and the term *study abroad* was first coined in the 1950s (Zhang, 2011). The programs saw their most dramatic increase in the

1960s and 1970s and have steadily increased in higher education institutions since this time. As stated previously, internationalization and more specifically study abroad programs were not introduced into the community college until the late 1960s (Zhang, 2011). Hess (1982) as cited in Zhang (2011) states that Rockland Community College in New York is often cited as one of the first institutions to implement a successful study abroad program. Presently, an increasing number of community college institutions are offering study abroad opportunities for their students in order to increase internationalization on campus (Levin, 2001).

Raby (2008) states that study abroad is explicitly aligned with the community college mission as it “contributes to credit transfer, career and technical preparation and community education, and is student focused” (p. 8). Similarly, Frost and Raby (2009) relate that creation of a global citizenry is at the foundation of the community college mission. Raby (2008) also states that there are a number of advantages and benefits associated with studying abroad for community college students which include “significant growth in interpersonal skills, academic performance, cultural proficiency, and personal growth” (p. 9). It can also be a major transformative experience for a number of students who have not previously traveled outside of their own states. Frost and Raby (2009) also make a valid point and stress that for some students this may be the last opportunity they have to “study abroad, to learn with international peers, to gain experiential learning for career enhancement, and to test their intercultural abilities” (p. 172).

Presently, community college students are vastly underrepresented in the portion of students participating in higher education that participate in study abroad. In 2005-2006, community college students made up less than three percent of those students that studied abroad, and that percentage has essentially remained stagnant. This is a discouraging number, due to the fact that community college students make up nearly 50 percent of all undergraduate students in the United States (Raby, 2008). According to a 2007 *Open Doors* report, 114 community colleges offered study abroad programs to an estimated 6,321 students. While this number has more than likely slightly increased, these were the most up to date statistics that could be found.

The most popular destination to study abroad for community colleges students is Europe, with Latin America, Asia, Oceania, and Africa following behind. The most popular individual countries include Italy, Spain, Mexico, the United Kingdom, and France. The majority of community college students study on short-term programs, which is logical, considering that most institutions only offer two-year academic programs. While the majority of students that study abroad at community college institutions are white, they do send a larger portion of minority students abroad when compared to four-year universities. It is also worth noting that the portion of white students who studied abroad in community colleges also decreased by ten percent from 2000 to 2006. However, they still were the overwhelming majority represented in community college study abroad, making up 69 percent. (Raby, 2008).

Unsurprisingly, there are a number of challenges that stand in the way of study abroad expanding across community colleges nationally. The major areas of challenge

include “serving the diverse community college student body, institutional constraints, and the need for further professionalization” (Raby, 2008, p. 18). Institutional constraints are varied and include a lack of stakeholder support, a lack of institutional funding, a lack of dedicated office staff, and having the status of being on the periphery. Raby (2008) provides a number of recommendations for expanding and improving education abroad at community colleges which include philosophical change, economic change, programmatic change, and a concentrated effort to recognize the real barriers to success.

While the literature above regarding globalization, internationalization, and abroad in community colleges may appear to be somewhat extensive, is it evident there are indeed many areas of further research that merit further inquiry. Harder (2010) strongly iterates that research on internationalization of community colleges is a narrow field. Valeau and Raby (2007) as cited in Harder (2010) also assert that “while literature on community college internationalization efforts can be found, it is not nearly as prolific as information on four-year colleges” (p. 154). As education abroad is a manifestation of internationalization in community colleges, it naturally is included in this research field. There is a need for this study, as it fulfills a necessity for further research to be conducted in the realm of study abroad and community colleges.

The literature detailed above also indicates that there is a need for more of the concrete materials that community colleges are putting forth to be analyzed. While some of the scholarship includes textual analysis, there is a noticeable lack of scholarship that includes study abroad materials that are explicitly put forth by community college institutions for public viewing. In-depth discursive analysis also allows for one to delve

deeper than a report or survey, and can allow for one to analyze information with a different lenses. It is imperative to analyze these textual materials, as it is some of the first information that students who attend community college view with when they initially consider studying abroad.

By conducting discursive research and analysis on the topic of community colleges and study abroad programs, a number of contributions can be made. One can begin to look at what the text may possibly convey to students when they view it, determine what motivations community colleges may have for including these programs, and can begin to ascertain how accessible these programs are for students that attend community college as presented in the text. As the literature above emphasizes, access to study abroad programs for community college students is still a major problem, and one of the central aims of this study is to contribute to ways in which access can be improved. This study also hopes to provide an impetus to foster future conversations on how to make community college study abroad more accessible to all students and better suited to the needs of a community college student, rather than a four-year university student.

## CHAPTER THREE

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

To further assist in answering the research questions and to further analyze the textual materials, the websites were evaluated through various theoretical frameworks. Employing three different theories rather than one theory to evaluate the text allowed for a comprehensive and complete analysis. It also allowed for the materials to be evaluated in different and unique ways. The three theories will be introduced, as well as how they helped to further inform analysis for this study. The possible conclusions that one could draw from the lenses of these theories when analyzing the various text will also be included below. It is essential to include these possible conclusions as they helped to illuminate and inform the discursive analysis before it was conducted.

The first theory that was utilized is academic capitalism. This theory was introduced by Slaughter and Leslie, and has been most recently shaped further by Slaughter and Rhoades in their book, *Academic Capitalism and the New Economy*. This study drew primarily from the more recent work done on the theory by Slaughter and Rhoades. A few aspects of the theory that were especially relevant for this study will be highlighted, and this section will also explain how these tenants of the theory were constructive for analyzing the materials.

At its most basic definition, the theory involves explaining how universities participate with and in the new economy that has become pervasive due to the forces of

globalization. The theory also states that academic capitalism in the new economy “involves institutions turning toward students as targets for the extortion of revenue, including but extending beyond tuition” (Slaughter & Rhoades, 1997, p. 279). Institutions of higher education are also mirroring the new economy by moving to serve the more privileged segments of the market. As Slaughter and Rhoades (1997) relate, “the increased significance of revenue considerations that comes with academic capitalism leads to a greater concentration of institutional energies and monies on students already privileged and served by higher education, with a lesser focus on those student populations that historically have been underserved” (p. 284).

For community college institutions, this meant moving away “from local community social needs toward local market needs and in line with national and international agendas of dominant influencers such as governments and businesses, suggesting a more pronounced economic role for community colleges” (Levin, 2001, p. 238). Community college students are now being treated as consumers and commodities. As consumers, they help to influence the curriculum of community colleges, and as commodities they provide value through tuition dollars (Levin, 2005). Levin (2005) emphasizes that community colleges are now expected to boost the economy and operate in a cost-efficient modus. Students serve as the connection of this shift, as they can provide funds that allow community colleges to function in this manner. Community colleges only receive funds from state and local funding, and student tuition. As funding has significantly waned in recent times, students provide a disparate amount of funds to the institutions (Levin, 2005). To expound on this idea, Slaughter and Rhoades (1997)



relate that more recently community colleges are now seeking to recruit various student populations, which seems a bit counterintuitive, as they traditionally are supposed focus explicitly on serving their local community. Specifically they have sought to recruit international students that can pay more tuition, and by entering into these various student markets, community colleges are enrolling and serving more privileged students than they ever have in the past (Slaughter & Rhoades, 1997).

Community colleges, according to Slaughter and Rhoades (1997), are not only recruiting from various student populations to increase revenue, but are also emphasizing certain programs, such as those that focus on continuing-education, in order to attract students that will pay more. This does not go without consequences, as when community college institutions target these kinds of students, they are “reducing their commitment to serving traditionally aged (potential) student populations that have been historically underserved and that are growing disproportionate” (Slaughter and Rhoades, 1997, p. 297).

The following possible conclusions that could be drawn based on the above ideas concerning academic capitalism were considered before analyzing the text. It was thought that perhaps community colleges publicizing their study abroad programs through websites and making their information about study abroad readily available could be regarded as an attempt by community colleges to target students for further revenue outside of the costs that they already pay for tuition. It could also be seen as a tactic to market to these students that are willing to pay more, rather than marketing themselves as a low-cost option for students in the local community. It was also considered that if the

cost of these programs could be located when looking at the website materials, then one could determine whether or not the institution is moving toward appealing to those students that are more privileged and can pay these costs, rather than those students that are underserved that traditionally attend community colleges. In fact, Raby and Valeau (2007) state that people often question if study abroad programs actually “benefit historically underrepresented community college students or cater to a more privileged group” (p. 10). While Raby and Valeau (2007) state that community colleges cater to more underprivileged students than other institutions of higher education, one still has to wonder if the text presented truly targets and attempts to recruit these underprivileged students.

It was also initially determined that analyzing the textual materials on study abroad presented by each institution on their website through the ideas of academic capitalism could also lead to conclusions that by having and promulgating study abroad programs, community colleges are attempting to recruit those various student populations that are outside of their local community. Through the lens of the theory, it was also considered that the institutions are now highlighting extraneous programs, such as study abroad programs, that increase revenue for the institution which thereby diminishes their commitment institutions to serve those student populations that have been historically oppressed and underserved.

The theory of institutional isomorphism was also utilized to analyze the discourse found on community college websites regarding studying abroad. This study made use of certain aspects of the theory that more readily apply to community colleges and their

publicizing of study abroad programs through website discourse. The theory, commonly associated with the scholarship of John Meyer, is based on the idea that institutional rules function as myths which organizations seek to incorporate in order to gain “legitimacy, resources, stability, and enhanced survival aspects” (Meyer & Rowan, 1977, p. 340). The theory also purports that institutions are adopting these rules as a result of influenced pressures, such as cultural expectations, or increased professionalization. When institutions conform to these pressures and adopt the prescribed structural arrangements, they become similar or isomorphic to institutions that promulgate these expectations and structural arrangements (Meyer & Rowan, 1977).

Prior to analyzing study abroad discourse from community colleges through the view of institutional isomorphism, a variety of possible conclusions that could be deduced were reflected upon in the following ideas. It was thought that perhaps one could surmise that community colleges are striving and attempting to emulate study abroad and international education programs seen at four-year university programs, so that they can gain further legitimacy and compete with these institutions. It was also considered that motivation could include wanting to be seen as an institution that is preparing their students for a world that is increasingly globalized. The institutions could be seeking to legitimize themselves as so-called global institutions by mirroring the idea of studying abroad that was popularized and first enacted at four-year institutions. The reflection was also made that perhaps even the creation of websites with discourse about study abroad programs could be seen as institutional isomorphism, as the institutional rule in higher

education disseminates that in order to be legitimate, study abroad programs should be available to be viewed by the public in the form of a website.

Anna Tsing's idea of *universals* was also applied as a way in which to analyze the materials made available on the study abroad websites of community colleges. Tsing relates that universals are certain ideas or knowledge that "moves across localities or cultures" (Tsing, 2005, p. 7). The mission of universals is to "form bridges, roads, and channels of circulations" (Tsing, 2005, p. 7). Before analyzing the text, it was thought that the universals idea could be utilized to illuminate that the materials surrounding study abroad programs at community colleges contribute to the idea of studying abroad and student mobility as a possible universal, as it serves as another locality to move through.

Through this idea, it was also determined that one could surmise that community colleges are promoting study abroad to students because they believe that all students should have access to an international experience. The students should have other channels of accessing studying abroad, rather than solely through a four year institution. It was also considered that the text could signify that the community colleges are publicizing their study abroad programs because they wish to be a part of the ever-growing networks and channels of higher education institutions that offer study abroad programs. It was proposed that the idea of disseminating study abroad at the community college level could attest to the fact that colleges are not simply enacting the programs to increase institutional revenue, but to further participate in the universal of study abroad.

When analyzing the materials, the important task was to discern whether or not the text points to the community college institutions offering study abroad opportunities for the ideas that adhere to the theories of academic capitalism and institutional isomorphism, or if they are offering study abroad opportunities as a matter of increasing access to study abroad for all students. It was of course noted that the analysis of the text could point to a combination of these theories as well. The results and discussion sections of this study will provide a detailed and comprehensive view of what could be determined and concluded from the textual materials.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### METHODOLOGY

Six community college institutions and community college systems were analyzed in this study. The community colleges were selected from different regions of the United States in an attempt to be as geographically inclusive as possible within the confines of the study. The institutions analyzed include Bunker Hill College in Boston, Massachusetts, Howard Community College in Columbia, Maryland, Green River Community College in Auburn, Washington, the Maricopa Community Colleges system in Arizona, Eastern Iowa Community Colleges in Davenport, Iowa, and Central Piedmont Community College in Charlotte, North Carolina. It should be noted that Maricopa Community Colleges and Eastern Iowa Community Colleges are community college systems which respectively include ten and three institutions. These two systems were included to increase the variety of the research sample. The particular colleges analyzed were located by completing an internet search utilizing the search term “community colleges with study abroad programs.”

The materials set forth by community colleges and the study programs they offer as articulated and made public through their institutional websites were analyzed and evaluated to help answer what the congruence is between the overall community college mission of accessibility and the information institutions present on their study abroad websites. The website text included in the analysis was restricted to each

institutional study abroad website and pages that were included in the directory of each site. The discussion section of this study includes a short profile of each community college, including such facts as location, student population, ethnic/racial makeup of the student body, and tuition costs. It should also be noted that when ethnic/racial makeup is provided, the terms to identify race and ethnicity used by the institution will be given. Providing the above outlined information further informs the study, and served as a point of reference for when analysis of the text was conducted.

A thematic analysis in conjunction with multiple case studies was employed in the study. The analysis of the text also sought to focus on questions of how the text is positioned, whose interests are served by this position, and whose interests are negated. The analysis process was carried out by employing text analysis, processing analysis, and social analysis. The text analysis focused on a description of the text, the processing analysis on an interpretation of the text, and the social analysis on an explanation of the text (Jank, 1999). The process analysis and social analysis portions were informed by the theories of academic capitalism, institutional isomorphism, and universals. The text found on the websites was also coded for analysis purposes in adherence to coding guidelines given by Miles and Huberman (1984). Coding assisted in organizing the materials analyzed and helped to identify which sections of the materials warranted further analysis and examination. Coding methods were also informed by Levin (1999; 2001; 2002) which helped to identify certain themes throughout the discourse. Codes, code abbreviations, and overall numbers for each institution can be found in the Results and Discussion section.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Coding Categories and Total Counts

Coding Category	Abbreviation	BHCC	HCC	GRCC	MCCD	EICC	CPCC
Motivation/Reason	M/R	3	0	1	7	10	1
General Study Abroad Information	GI	32	15	18	22	40	15
Course Information	CI	41	129	135	78	106	102
Cost	C	20	75	22	15	17	54
Financial Aid	FA	2	11	5	2	7	2
Scholarships	S	31	26	0	9	4	53
Diversity/Inclusion	D/I	0	0	0	0	0	0

This table can be used as reference for the Results and Discussion.

#### **Bunker Hill Community College**

Bunker Hill Community College (BHCC), founded in 1973, is the largest community college in Massachusetts. It has two main campuses located in Boston and Chelsea, Massachusetts. The institution has a total of 14,277 students enrolled. Women make up 57% of the total student population, while men make up 43% percent. Twenty-five percent of students are white, 25% percent are black or African-American, 23% are Latino/Hispanic, and 10% are Asian. Overall, there are 62% of students that identify as students of color. BHCC states that it is one of the most diverse institutions of higher education in Massachusetts. Tuition totals at \$141/credit hour as listed on the Fast Fact portion of their website, however under the Cost of Attendance section it is stated that



tuition is \$149 for in-state students and \$355/credit for out-of-state or international students (Bunker Hill Community College, 2014).

The BHCC website provides an International Center page, which then guides the user to a specific study abroad page. The website states that the programs are enacted to allow students to experience different cultures, and does not extensively elaborate as to why BHCC chooses to offer study abroad programs. There are four sections to the study abroad section of the website which include: Faculty Led Programs, Frequently Asked Questions, the BHCC Student Photo Contest, and Study Abroad Resources. The Study Abroad Brochure includes information about scholarship programs, along with a brief synopsis and cost information for each of the programs in Argentina, Belgium, China, Costa Rica, Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, England, France, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Mexico, Morocco, Peru, Spain, and Scotland. The programs are short-term, and last up to eight weeks. Courses include subjects from Spanish to biology and range from three to six credits (Bunker Hill Community College, 2014).

After coding the materials regarding study abroad presented by Bunker Hill Community College, it was clear that course information, general study abroad information, and scholarships were the main themes present. It was also apparent upon viewing these materials that study abroad scholarships are at the core of the study abroad program at BHCC. The BHCC scholarship program “pays for 80 percent of the total expenses, students pay for 20% of total expenses” (Bunker Hill Community College, 2014). According to BHCC “approximately 35 scholarships help BHCC Students realize the dream of traveling to another country” (Bunker Hill Community College, 2014).

Students are presented with cost information with their scholarship in mind. Examples of cost information can be seen through the language presented in the Argentina program which states information such as, “Total Cost of Program: \$5,843, 80%: BHCC Scholarship \$4, 675, 20%: Cost to Student \$1,168” (Bunker Hill Community College, 2014). While it is commendable that BHCC seeks to offer scholarships to the majority of students that study abroad, they only offer these scholarships to thirty-five students every year. This indicates that approximately .2% of the entire student population at BHCC has the opportunity to study abroad each year, which is a very small percentage. It is not completely clear in the materials presented by BHCC, but it seems that BHCC only offers scholarship study abroad programs and “scholarships are only available to qualified BHCC students” (Bunker Hill Community College, 2014). The only program non-scholarships students can participate in is the faculty led program to Costa Rica, and that is only on a space available basis. By offering almost exclusively scholarship only programs and by not allowing non-scholarship students to enroll in all study abroad programs limits access for the general student population at BHCC. It is also worth mentioning that BHCC provides no information on inclusion and diversity in their programs, and does not provide statistics for students who have participated in past programs. They do state that they are “one of the most diverse institutions of higher education in Massachusetts” (Bunker Hill Community College, 2014).

Through the materials presented regarding their study abroad programs, BHCC is attempting to attract the best and the brightest, so to speak, of the general population to study abroad. BHCC (2014) states that scholarship recipients are interviewed and chosen

“by a College-wide committee of faculty, staff, and former recipients.” They are also “rated by each member...and [then] finalists’ total scores are ranked” (Bunker Hill Community College, 2014). The programs are made attractive to students, as eighty percent of costs are covered; however, there is an air of prestige to the programs as well, as only approximately thirty-five students are selected to participate each year.

BHCC also provides a decent amount of course information for each program. For example, the Czech Republic program description states, “Take courses in English on Czech culture, history, and politics at Anglo-American College in Prague. Live in local apartments with other students, participate in field trips to cultural and tourist sites in Prague, Earn six credits in liberal arts” (Bunker Hill Community College, 2014). This type of information is also an attempt to attract the top students at BHCC, as it details the enriching experiences in which they will have the opportunity to participate. While focusing on the scholarships and programs offered, BHCC is attempting to highlight how accessible and affordable their programs are, however as stated above, this is somewhat misleading, as only roughly thirty-five students are allowed to enroll. In summary, the programs are affordable and accessible, but only available to a limited number of students, and it is unclear to which students the programs are accessible to, as statistics are not given.

### **Howard Community College**

Howard Community College or HCC was founded in 1970, and is located in Columbia, Maryland. It serves 14,538 credit seeking students. Approximately 57% of these students are female, with 43% being male. Forty-one percent of students are White,

29% are Black/African American, 13% are Asian, 10% are Hispanic/Latino, 4% are two or more races, 3% are listed as unknown, 0.3 percent is Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander, and 0.3% is American Indian/Alaskan Native. The cost per credit hour for in-county students is \$127, \$210 out-of-county students, and \$255 for out-of-state students (Howard Community College, 2013).

HCC provides a general International Education and Services portion of its website, which gives a general overview of what they offer to international students studying in the United States, and the international programs they offer to current students which include study abroad programs, international programs of study, international events, activities, clubs and organizations, international alumni connections, and international studies endowments. There is also an Office of International Education section of the website separate from this page, which provides information regarding what this office does. The International Education and Services page is what will lead a student to find information regarding study abroad opportunities. The International Endowments section provides sparse information on scholarships that are available to students, and states that students should look at the Financial Aid portion of the website or contact the Office of International Education for more information. When one tries to find information under the Financial Aid section of the HCC website regarding study abroad financial aid it proves to be a bit difficult, and the information is not organized in one place. The Financial Aid information is quite sparse as well and does not match the information given on the International Endowments section. After further searching, it was found that there are five scholarship programs available for study abroad, but these

programs are not listed anywhere on the study abroad portion of HCC's website.

(Howard Community College, 2013).

The Study Abroad Programs section of the International Education and Services portion of the website provides an overall list of the programs HCC offers including brochures and separate pages for each of the programs. The programs are offered through partnerships with other institutions of higher education abroad. These separate pages and brochures essentially provide the same information and give details on how to sign up, general course information, activities that will take place, and cost of the program. The programs generally last from two to three weeks, except for one semester long program in Denmark, and are offered in Bermuda, China, Denmark (one semester program and one two week program), Ireland, Turkey, and a World War II History centered program that takes place in various locations throughout Europe. The course subjects range from biology to arts and culture, and the majority of the programs offered include 3 credit hours, with exception of the semester long Denmark program, which offers 12 to 15 credit hours (Howard Community College, 2013).

After coding the materials regarding study abroad presented by HCC, it was determined that cost of the programs and course information were the main themes present throughout the text. Scholarships, along with financial aid were also mentioned a number of times throughout the discourse, however fell far behind course information. Course information was the most prevalent throughout the discourse. Examples of course information provided by HCC can be seen through language from the text such as "Participants will fly to China for 16 days with a HCC professor as Program Director and

work with a team of Chinese professors including artists, academicians, and language teachers,” or “HCC students who wish to receive college credits need to register for the Fine Arts 102 course before going to China” (Howard Community College, 2014). This type of information provided for each of the programs conveys that HCC is attempting to provide comprehensive information for all students, and is endeavoring to portray their programs in the most sophisticated manner possible. However, overall information for the study abroad programs seemed a bit lacking, as there was no information about how the programs were instituted, and no information as to how these programs directly benefit students.

Program cost being mentioned and detailed numerous times throughout the discourse conveys that HCC is trying to attract students who can afford to pay for these programs. Mentions of cost in the text can be seen through language examples from the Denmark Culture Program such as “The \$3,550 cost per person includes: Round Trip Airfare, Ground Transportation..., Accommodations..., and Select Program Excursions” (Howard Community College, 2014) Other mentions of cost seen throughout the text include the statements “HCC reserves the right to increase the cost of the Program Fee up to 10% due to increase program costs, increased flight costs, and/or, currency fluctuations” and “Additional tuition fee required for FINE 101 (3 credits)” (Howard Community College, 2014). It should also be noted that the majority of these programs cost over \$3,000 and according to the program information presented for each location, “Limited Financial Aid is available for HCC credit students” (Howard Community College, 2014). The word *limited* conveys that students will be unable to have the cost of

programs completely covered or even have the majority covered by financial aid. The information that was found regarding financial aid and scholarships for study abroad was minimal and disorganized, and it was unclear as to how to apply for these scholarships from the website. A student would have to visit the Office of International Education in order to find out how to do so. It is also worth mentioning that in the International Endowments section of the website, the study programs listed, which include the “Mexico Study Option, Spanish Business Internship, Italy on Perspective, and Culture of China” (Howard Community College, 2014) do not match what is listed on the Study Abroad section of the website, which further adds to the confusion surrounding financial aid and scholarships for these programs.

Analyzing the text, it does not seem that HCC is intentionally trying to preclude a large number of students from these programs, as they do provide some scholarships and financial aid. However, as stated above, it does not seem to be a high priority for HCC, as it is for a school such as Bunker Hill, and the information surrounding scholarships and financial aid is not extensive or well-organized. It is also worth noting that HCC does not provide statistics on the students that participate in these programs, and does not provide any inclusion or diversity information regarding the programs they offer, and 56.6% of the HCC student population includes students of color (Howard Community College, 2014).

### **Green River Community College**

Green River Community College or GRCC, located in Auburn, Washington, was founded in 1965. Its overall campus includes the branch campuses at the locations of

Auburn, Kent, and Enumclaw. GRCC is unique from the other institutions analyzed, as they also offer a Bachelor of Science program. It currently has an enrollment of 19,266 full-time and part-time students. GRCC states that “the College prides itself in welcoming a diverse student population” and relates “students come from around the Puget Sound region, across the United States, and from around the world” (Green River Community College, 2015). Forty-seven percent of students are female, with 53% percent being male. The 2013 Report to the Community states that 40.3% of students are white, 14.8% are Asian, 9.2% are Hispanic, 6.5% are Other Non-white, 4.6% are African-American, 0.6% are Pacific Islander, and 0.6% are Native American. In-state students pay a total of \$106 per credit hour, out-of-state students pay \$119, and international students pay \$287 (Green River Community College, 2015).

GRCC features one of the more comprehensive and developed study abroad websites out of all community college institutions analyzed, with the exception of scholarship information. The main page features a list of programs they offer, an overall program history, course transfer information, and contact information. The Program History section of the website is unique to the GRCC website and gives an overview on how study abroad came to be enacted at the institution. It relates that GRCC is part of the Washington State Community College Consortium for Study Abroad or WCCCSA, and it offers the majority its study abroad programs in conjunction with this organization. The section also gives information on programs GRCC has developed on its own. They “developed a Study Abroad program in Australia/New Zealand in the year 2000, now its 14<sup>th</sup> year of successful operation” (Green River Community College, 2015). Recently in



2009, a program in Japan was also “developed in partnership with the Kanagawa Institute of Technology in Atsugi, Japan” (Green River Community College, 2015).

There are separate pages on the website for each specific program which feature comprehensive information detailing course information, location, accommodations, activities, program fees, and the application process. The programs offered are also unique at the community college level, as they are long-term programs, with most programs lasting two and a half months, and the shortest program lasting five weeks. Participants can study in Australia/New Zealand, Costa Rica, Italy, Japan, England, South Africa, Spain, and the Netherlands. Students usually receive up to 15 credit hours for the programs they participate in, and courses offered are varied and ranged from multicultural history to digital photography (Green River Community College, 2015).

After coding the textual materials presented, it was found that course information was overwhelmingly the major theme. Examples of course information presented in the Barcelona Program include general information such as “Students must carry a 15-credit load and are expected to fully participate in all class activities” and more course specific information such as “This course examines the multicultural history of the United States from pre-European contact with North America to the present alongside the much older multicultural experience of Spain” (Green River Community College, 2015). Course information for the other programs was similar to the examples given from the Barcelona program. Cost was mentioned for each program, but not considerably so and financial aid was mentioned the least with scholarships not being mentioned at all.

Through these programs, GRCC conveys they are trying to attract well-rounded and financially able students that attend the institution. They offer semester and quarter long programs, which is undoubtedly of interest to those students who wish to participate in a more traditional long term study abroad experience. While cost is high for these programs, it is not the main theme of the discourse, and cost is mentioned toward the end of the program information for each location. Cost ranges from \$2,949 for the Costa Rica program to \$7,820 for the Australia/New Zealand program. Some of the programs, such as the London and South Africa programs, do not specify how much they will cost and state that “the program fee is TBD” (Green River Community College, 2015). The Italy program has no cost information whatsoever. This is further supported by the fact that the Costa Rica, Italy, and Barcelona programs feature no information on financial aid.

The information for financial aid given in the other programs is also not uniform throughout, with the Australia/New Zealand program stating “financial aid students are required to pay a minimum of 30% of the program fee, the Japan program stating “you may be able to use financial aid to pay program fees, and the London and South Africa programs stating “many students are eligible to apply for financial aid, grants and loans to assist with the costs of the program” (Green River Community College, 2015). While these differences are not huge, this conveys that GRCC is not overly concerned with financial aid for their programs. It should also be noted that no scholarship information is given whatsoever for any other programs, and it seems that financial aid is the only assistance available when looking at the materials provided by GRCC. This was fairly

surprising, as GRCC prides itself on being an institution focused on diversity and inclusion. Students could more than likely receive scholarship information through the study abroad office, but again scholarship information is not a main feature of the study abroad website. The website also does not provide information on diversity and inclusion in their study abroad programs, or give statistics regarding the students that have participated in past study abroad programs. While the study abroad programs are quite comprehensive and developed for a community college, the accessibility of the programs for all students that attend GRRC does not seem to be incredibly high when analyzing the materials provided.

### **Maricopa Community Colleges**

Maricopa Community Colleges or MCCD comprise a large system of 10 colleges that are committed to serving the residents of Maricopa County in Arizona. Maricopa County includes and surrounds the Phoenix area. Established in 1962, MCCD is also one of the largest community college districts in the United States serving more than 265,000 students. While exact demographics proved difficult to locate, MCCD states their student population includes 56% women, 44% men, and 49% Non-Anglo (which is assumed to mean students of color). The cost per credit hour for residents is \$84 and \$325 for non-residents. It is assumed that a resident means someone who is a resident of Maricopa County and a non-resident, anyone who lives outside of the county (Maricopa Community Colleges, 2015).

There is a general International and Intercultural Education portion of the MCCD website which includes information on student programs, faculty and curricula,

international students, grants and scholarships, and forms and resources. Under student programs, one finds the main source of study abroad information. This particular section of the page includes general study abroad information, information regarding study abroad programs, a study abroad catalog, benefits of studying abroad, and the impact of study abroad. There is a small section for study abroad scholarships under the Scholarships and Grants section, and another small section regarding financial aid under Forms and Resources. The 2015 Study Abroad Catalog did not have a working link; consequently the 2013 catalog was analyzed, as this was the only one able to be found on the MCCD website. While this portion of the website on study abroad was not particularly overly comprehensive or innovatively organized, it did provide more information than most of the other institutions about why students should study abroad and what benefits they can gain from it (Maricopa Community Colleges, 2015).

The Study Abroad Catalog offers the majority of information on the programs themselves. Programs are offered in England, Ireland, Spain, France, Belize, Peru, Mexico, Europe, Prague, Namibia, and Vietnam. Programs also vary in length from one week to one month. There is a sizable range of subjects offered from psychology to film. Credit hours offered range from one to seven. The program locations and topics are fairly comprehensive, which is to be expected as these programs are supposed to support students from ten institutions (Maricopa Community Colleges, 2015).

After coding the discourse put forth by MCCD, it was found that course information was mentioned the most throughout the text, and therefore the main theme. Course information was descriptive and extensive including such language examples

from the England and Belize programs as “participants spend four weeks exploring the rich heritage of one of the world’s most influential countries, while taking courses in British history, children’s literature, digital storytelling, or history of fashion” and “students will spend 11 days studying and discussing social and environmental realities of life in the local communities while taking daily excursions to ancient ruins, guided nature walks, canoe trips, scenic drives and guided snorkeling” (Maricopa Community College, 2013). Extensive and rich course information indicates that MCCD wishes to convey that they are an institution that offers comprehensive and advanced study abroad programs to their student population. Financial aid, scholarships, and cost of the programs were mentioned the least. The Grants and Scholarships page states that “a variety of funding opportunities and links (most of them external) are provided here for your reference. Please note that Innovation (Internal) Grants are not for students but rather for faculty and employees” (Maricopa Community College, 2014). The other scholarship and financial aid provided is in the form of external links that will lead students to more scholarship and aid information. This conveys that accruing revenue through these programs is not a major goal for MCCD, however offering extensive scholarships or financial aid is not a high priority either.

As MCCD is the overarching source for all of these institutions, more financial aid and scholarship information may be available to students through their individual institutions. Through the text MCCD communicates that trying to attract students who can pay a higher fee for programs (most are around \$2000), but also a myriad of other students. These programs seem a bit more accessible than others analyzed, as they offer

programs that have a variety of length, rather than only offering a certain length of study for most programs. Length ranges from one month programs in Prague, England, Ireland, Spain, and Mexico, two week programs in France, Belize, Peru, and Namibia, and one week programs in Mexico and Vietnam.

Accessibility also seems higher for these programs; as cost varies from \$900-\$950 for the one week programs and up to \$3400 for the month long programs. These prices included tuition as well, in contrast to programs offered by other institutions analyzed. These choices and variety are emphasized by the eagerness MCCCD seems to be conveying through the statement, “The Maricopa Community Colleges District is excited to offer the following education abroad programs to 11 different countries for Summer 2015! These programs are taught by Maricopa instructors and range in length from one week to one month!” (Maricopa Community College, 2015). It should be noted as well, as with the other websites analyzed, MCCCD does not provide statistics on students that have studied abroad in the past, or include information about promoting diversity and inclusion in their study abroad programs. Individual institutions in the district may provide this information, but MCCCD does not.

### **Eastern Iowa Community Colleges**

The Eastern Iowa Community Colleges system or EICC is comprised of three community colleges in Clinton, Muscatine, and Scott, Iowa. It was started in 1965, and now states that it has a student population of more than 8,000 students. While the exact student enrollment is somewhat difficult to locate, when looking at the given statistics about students it appears that 13,591 students were enrolled in the three institutions as of

2014. Currently, 57% of students are female, and 43% are male. Regarding race/ethnicity, 0.2% is Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, 0.5% of students are Native American/Alaskan Native, 2.2% are Asian, 2.3% are two or more races, 5.3% are unknown or did not report, 7.2% are Black, 8.5% are Hispanic, any race, and 73.9% are white. Tuition rates are \$137/credit hour for in-state residents, and \$204 for out of state residents (Eastern Iowa Community Colleges, 2014).

EICC provides an International Programs portion of its website which is used to provide information for international programs, international students, and study abroad. The study abroad section of this page provides information about eligibility, getting started/application, programs, financial aid, scholarships, student resources, and the study abroad application. Program locations include Belize, China, Denmark, and Jordan. Course topics range from biology to education in the Middle East. Course length ranges from one week to one semester and from 3 credit hours to 16 credit hours (Eastern Iowa Community Colleges, 2014).

After coding it was found that course information and general study abroad information were the main themes present in the discourse, and financial aid and scholarships were mentioned the least. Course information included mirrors what other institutions provide about their courses and can be seen in text examples from the Jordan program and Belize program stating, “students will spend most mornings at Al-Quds College, where they will learn about the education system of Jordan, doing business in Jordan, Jordanian government, and the history of Jordan” and “this exciting opportunity is designed for you to learn about Belize’s natural resources and the impact of human

activity on resources and ecosystems” (Eastern Iowa Community College, 2014). Through the programs offered it is conveyed that EICC is trying to attract the largest number of students they can within the confines of the programs that they offer. While they only offer five locations for program options, these locations are quite varied, as well as program length and cost being varied. One would think that they would offer more program options, as they are serving three institutions. However, the lack of options probably is due to lack of funding, along with the fact that they do not participate in any kind of consortium program and rely on forging relationships with other institutions abroad on their own. EICC also offers their China program at almost no cost to the student (excluding tuition and book fees). Although according to EICC, “a rigorous application and interview process will be expected of participants prior to selection for the program” (Eastern Iowa Community College, 2014). This is unique to what is offered by other institutions in this study, as while even institutions such as BHCC offer scholarship only programs, students still have to pay 20% of the program fee.

EICC does have a section regarding financial aid and scholarships, but it is not the predominant focus of the text. The financial aid section states that “financial aid pays for tuition and textbooks. Any remaining balance is refunded to the student. This remaining balance can be applied toward the cost of the Study Abroad Program” (Eastern Iowa Community College, 2014). Scholarships listed in the scholarship section are all external, and there is no information given on how to apply. For example, the portion on the Freeman-ASIA scholarship only states “Freeman Awards for Study in Asia (Freeman-ASIA) provides scholarships for U.S. undergraduate students with



demonstrated financial need to study abroad in East or Southeast Asia” (Eastern Iowa Community College, 2014). While the programs are varied in cost, location, and length, the number of programs is still small. This communicates that EICC is attempting to be focused on access, but only to a certain point, as they offer such a small number of programs for their students with limited financial aid and scholarships. One cannot make a true judgment on the accessibility of these programs, because as with other institutions analyzed, no information on the past students that have participated is provided, and no information on diversity and inclusion regarding these programs is related.

### **Central Piedmont Community College**

Central Piedmont Community College or CPCC was formed in 1963 and is located in Charlotte, North Carolina. The total student population is 58,353 which includes curriculum and extension students. As of 2014, the student population is made up of 52% women and 48% men. For ethnicity (the chosen term used by CPCC) the student population includes 44% white students, 31% black, non-Hispanic, 12% Hispanic, 7% unknown/other, 5% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 1% American Indian/Alaska Native. CPCC charges \$71.50/credit hour for in-state students and \$263.50 for out-of-state students (Central Piedmont Community College, 2015).

CPCC includes a general Study Abroad and International Education section of their website. This page includes sections on global learning, scholars of distinction, study abroad programs, steps to study abroad, applications and forms, scholarships and financial aid, fundraising, global issues, student clubs, photo galleries, resources, and partnerships. The study abroad programs section is where one will find a list of programs

with links to more information about each specific program. Each program page is fairly standard and tells you a bit more on how to apply, the course you will take, and the cost of the program. There are a total of ten programs and program locations include the British Isles, Cambodia, Costa Rica, France, Greece, Italy, Peru, Taiwan, Thailand, and Vietnam. The programs are varied and range in length from 8-30 days. Cost ranges from \$2000-\$4500 (Central Piedmont Community College, 2015).

After coding was conducted it was found that course information was the most prominent theme seen, along with cost and scholarship information being second. It should be noted that included in the cost theme was fundraising, which focused on how to pay costs. Course information is similar to other institutions and can be seen through language examples from the Peru and Tanzania programs that include “Selected participants will travel to Cusco, Peru and participate directly in patient screening, sample collection, phlebotomy and laboratory procedures as necessary with direct faculty oversight” and “Participants in this course will explore the develop economic conditions in Tanzania. The will also have the opportunity to participate in service learning, taking care of children or the elderly in an education setting” (Central Piedmont College, 2015). A with other institutions, including a substantial amount of course information for each program shows that CPCC is trying convey that they have wide-ranging programs that are sophisticated and highly developed.

The study abroad portion of the CPCC website communicates that they are making an effort to attract all students across the institution, and make the programs accessible as possible. They have an extensive section on scholarships and financial aid,

and CPCC itself provides twelve scholarships. The scholarships and financial aid sections states that students should “start early!—by researching your options early you are in the best position to find financial aid for studying abroad” (Central Piedmont College, 2015). CPCC also provides a small description for each scholarship they provide. For example, the German Language & Culture Foundation Immersion Scholarship states that it will “provide recipients with up to \$1500 for CPCC’s German in Germany program. Applicants must be currently enrolled in a CPCC German course” (Central Piedmont Community College, 2015). In addition to the scholarships they provide, CPCC also gives information on outside scholarships for which students can apply.

Another feature of the website which is completely unique to CPCC is a section on fundraising, which gives student tips on how they can raise money in order to participate in a study abroad program. On this section CPCC states that “studying abroad is a large financial commitment, but one that can pay off both personally and professionally. There are many ways to creatively raise funds for your studies” (Central Piedmont Community College, 2015). While some of the tips seem a bit trite such as “have a yard or garage sale” or “offer a service to friends or family—painting, cleaning, washing cars etc.,” they do provide some salient information such as “write a brief essay or proposal that describes the trip you would like to take and the impact that it will have on your studies, professional or personal development, or community involvement” (Central Piedmont Community College, 2015). Fundraising may be an unrealistic time commitment for some students as well, but unlike the majority of the other institutions, CPCC explicitly acknowledges that studying abroad is a large financial commitment and

attempts to provide information on a myriad of ways in which students can pay fees, rather than simply providing information about scholarships and financial aid. However, as with the other institutions analyzed, it has to be noted that no information was given on diversity or inclusion, and no scholarships offered focused on diversity. If an institution does not include information regarding inclusion, then programs cannot be fully accessible, and as stated at the beginning of this study, accessibility is central to the community college mission.

CHAPTER SIX  
COMPARISONS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

**Institutional Comparison**

Comparing across the institutions analyzed is valuable, as it helps to further illuminate what these institutions are conveying with information that is included or not included in the text they choose to present. The three most notable comparisons will be provided and discussed. There was a notable lack of robust scholarship and financial aid sections across the institutions. Only BHCC and CPCC provided extensive sections regarding these two themes. The other four institutions offering sparse information conveys an overall discrepancy between the mission of accessibility and affordability of community colleges and what they provide regarding their study abroad programs. Choosing not to offer comprehensive information on scholarships and financial aid communicates that the majority of the institutions analyzed are focused on those students who have no problem paying for high program fees, rather than students that have to rely on scholarships and financial aid. As noted by Raby (2009), community college institutions traditionally focus on open access and providing affordable tuition. Another notable comparison was the absence of explicit mention of diversity and inclusion regarding study abroad programs. This is not to say that these institutions are not committed to diversity and inclusion overall, however there is a definite lack of

congruence between the overall mission of diversity and inclusion, and what is seen in the text of study abroad websites.

All institutions had comprehensive sections on course information. Choosing to include a substantial amount of course information indicates that institutions are attempting to convey that they are legitimate entities offering programs that comparable to what students would have access to at a four-year institution. While offering these programs and providing extensive course information somewhat addresses the accessibility mission of community colleges, it must be noted that scholarships, financial aid, diversity, and inclusion were not mentioned at the same level. Consequently, the text presented, and lack of text presented in the case of scholarships, financial aid, diversity, and inclusion does not display a commitment to accessibility of study abroad programs.

### **Conclusion**

The goal of this study was to employ a thematic analysis coupled with multiple case studies to examine the congruence between the overall community college mission of accessibility and information presented by institutions on their study abroad websites. A number of observations were made by conducting this analysis.

As predicted, the materials analyzed from each institution did not adhere to one theory. All institutions exhibited a combination of theories. While some institutions, including GRRC, EICC, and CPCC, displayed more of one theory than the others, they still were seen as having a combination of the theories in their discourse after analysis was conducted. One can infer from this that the institutions are not offering study abroad programs solely for revenue purposes, for legitimacy purposes, or for accessibility

purposes. Analysis exhibited that the institutions were motivated to offer the programs for a combination of all three of these reasons.

Academic capitalism is seen in the text, as the majority of institutions does not provide extensive financial aid and scholarship sections, and charge a high fee for their study abroad programs. This conveys institutions wanting to attract students that can pay for the programs, rather than those that have to rely on financial aid or scholarships. Institutional isomorphism explains that these institutions are offering these programs to further legitimize themselves as global institutions of higher education, and to convey that they are striving to participate in internationalization and prepare students for a world that is increasingly global. Offering these programs also allows them to compete with other institutions of higher education, and portray their institutions as highly developed organizations that offer programs comparable to what a student would experience at a four year institution. As seen through universalism, institutions are offering the programs in an attempt to provide students with access to meaningful international access at the community college level. The theory also elucidates that institutions are offering these programs because they wish to be a part of the ever-growing networks and channels of higher education institutions that offer study abroad programs, and further participate in the universal of study abroad.

Regarding accessibility, the majority of the programs did not appear to be exceedingly accessible, and the overall mission of accessibility was not congruent with the information presented on community college study abroad websites. No institution analyzed had information on inclusion and diversity in their study abroad programs, or

that they were committed to carrying out these principles. This was a bit surprising, considering that BHCC and GRCC all emphasize diversity along with the fact that college institutions are historically some of the most diverse institutions in the nation, and enroll a large number of minority students. Open access and serving non-traditional students are also two of the guiding principles of community college institutions. The omission of this information does not bode well for accessibility efforts in the study abroad programs of these institutions. It should be noted that one cannot determine exactly what students have been able to participate in the programs, as no institution provided statistical information regarding those that participated in the past. Accessibility was also an issue for these institutions as seen through the text, because fees for programs were quite high. While some schools did offer varying program fees, most schools did not offer extensive information on financial aid or scholarships. The institutions that did offer scholarships offered a fairly limited number, or only allowed a limited number of students to participate in the programs. While this is understandable, it should be noted that this still limits accessibility.

The most important takeaway from the above conclusions is that inclusion and accessibility efforts have to be improved for study abroad programs offered by community colleges. As stated previously, inclusion and diversity were not mentioned once throughout the textual materials analyzed. This is a pretty significant finding. It is not adequate to simply offer the programs to enrolled students, certain measures have to be enacted so that more students can participate in the programs. What good are the programs if only a handful of students are able to take part? It is vital to improve



inclusiveness and accessibility as 45% of all undergraduate students in the United States attend community college, which represents 56% of the Hispanic population, and 48% of the African-American population (AACC, 2014). If study abroad across the United States is to be increased, one can contend that the community college segment of higher education needs to have a much larger focus. There are recent pushes for an increase in study abroad nationwide, and an increase in the diversity of students that participate, however not nearly as much of a focus on how these two factors can be improved in community colleges. If you truly want to increase diversity and inclusiveness in study abroad, it would make the most sense to head to community colleges.

As it stands, while study abroad is improving in the community college sector, there is much more that needs to be done. As the literature review exhibited, there have been some studies and reports given on what obstacles are standing in the way of growing study abroad in the community college level. However, there is a significant need for more research to be completed in order to ascertain how to improve accessibility. Some recommendations as to how to help solve this problem and for future studies will be outlined below.

### **Recommendations**

Within the confines of this discourse analysis and study, one can see that accessibility and inclusion need vast improvement among community college institutions. With these observations and findings what can one seek to do next? There are some simple solutions that institutions could enact to help improve accessibility as it pertains to diversity, inclusion, scholarship, and financial aid efforts. Institutions can show that they

are committed to diversity and inclusion by adding a section focused on these principles to their websites. They can state how their institution is committed, and what they plan to do improve their efforts. A display of commitment on a public platform goes further than many might think. This shows students who view the website that their institution is committed to helping all students study abroad, rather than solely those who can afford it or those who are very successful on the academic scale. Institutions can also publish statistical information regarding students who have participated in past programs. This would not even need to be all information, but some statistical information provides a necessary transparency. A published commitment to diversity, along with statistics can show that an institution is truly trying to increase inclusion and access in their programs. Even if diversity in programs is not where an institution would like it to be, it shows that the institution is trying to be transparent about where their program is currently, and this can invite others to provide ways in which it can be improved.

Institutions can also include an extensive, organized, concise section on the website dedicated to financial aid and scholarships. Even if they do not have the funds to offer scholarships themselves, they can provide students with extensive information on outside scholarships, or provide information on other ways to manage money to pay for a program. A small or nonexistent financial aid/scholarship section conveys that institutions do not have a true commitment. As with inclusion and diversity, by providing more information this shows students that the institution is dedicated to helping them figure out how they can afford to pay for a program.

It is important to note that this particular study should be utilized as an introduction to the analysis of the textual materials that surround the study abroad program opportunities in community colleges. It is also necessary to note that conclusions that are drawn from text analysis and coding are somewhat subjective, and for future studies, it is imperative to acquire student and administrator input on programs and the discourse in order to support conclusions made and provide for a stronger study overall. Students are the individuals who actually participate in these programs, so in order for them to truly become more accessible and inclusive, students are the ones researchers and administrators should turn to for suggestions on what needs the most improving and attention. It is vital to note as well that diverse students are critical to include in acquiring input, and should be at the forefront of students interviewed. Those who work in administration would also be central to interview as their thoughts on accessibility and how to increase it would be crucial in figuring out the inclusion equation for community college institutions. There are still substantial numbers of community college institutions that need to be analyzed regarding study abroad in general and accessibility of the programs.

APPENDIX A  
LIST OF INSTITUTION WEBSITES UTILIZED

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- Central Piedmont Community College Study Abroad Programs. (2015). Retrieved from <http://www.cpcc.edu/study-abroad>. *Accessed 02/6/15.*
- Eastern Iowa Community Colleges Study Abroad. (2015). Retrieved from <https://www.eicc.edu/future-students/international-programs/study-abroad/>. *Accessed 02/06/2015.*
- Green River Community College Study Abroad. (2015). Retrieved from <http://www.greenriver.edu/academics/study-abroad.htm>. *Accessed 1/31/2015.*
- Howard Community Colleges Study Abroad. (2014). Retrieved from [http://www.howardcc.edu/academics/international/office\\_international\\_education/study\\_abroad.html](http://www.howardcc.edu/academics/international/office_international_education/study_abroad.html). *Accessed 1/29/2015.*
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