

# Building Global Environmental Awareness through Education Abroad

## Impact Statement

### INVESTIGATORS

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### SUMMARY

Education abroad increases global awareness, cultural competence and is an indicator of continued academic success. Nationally, individuals that participate in education abroad have higher GPAs and job placement rates than those who do not. The School of Environment and Natural (SENR) provides international curricular opportunities for undergraduate students to increase awareness of environmental issues. SENR provides education abroad opportunities in **Australia, China, Dominican Republic, Iceland, New Zealand, and Tanzania.**

### SITUATION

Environmental issues including climate change, food and water, energy use, and resource management have profoundly wide reach and impact human and natural systems on a global scale. To effectively address the issues, it is increasingly important that undergraduate students understand the ways these systems interact on local, regional, and global levels.





## RESPONSE

SENR students explore the social and natural impacts of environmental issues in various international contexts. **The intersection of water, energy, food, and health systems is addressed** through a community development lens in rural Tanzania. For both the Dominican Republic and Tanzania programs, attention is paid to **global poverty, wealth distribution, race and gender**. In China, students research **forest management** practices. **Students study the impact of climate change** on the vulnerable ecosystems including the Great Barrier Reef in Australia. In Iceland, students learn about **renewable energy, the effects of soil erosion and land degradation** on human and natural systems, and the environmental, social, and financial impacts of increased tourism. In New Zealand, students explore the challenges of balancing financial reliance on tourism with the desire to preserve the natural environment.

## IMPACT

Within SENR, there is a greater interest in education abroad than the university at large; **39.1 percent of SENR undergraduates participate in education abroad compared to the university average of 20 percent**. Of 53 surveyed students across SENR education abroad programs in 2016-2017, 86.7 percent indicated that their education abroad program significantly added to their understanding of the host country and issues. 60 percent indicated that their understanding of international issues greatly increased based on their participation in education abroad through SENR. Upon returning from Australia, one student began research studying the impacts of ocean acidification on coral reefs in Hawaii. As a result of participation in Sustainable and Resilient Tanzanian Community (SRTC), seven of 28 participants secured international internships with the Kilimanjaro Hope Organization, Tanzanian NGO over two years.

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## CONTACT

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