

---

# **Study Abroad at Middlebury College Report and Recommendations**

Educational Affairs Committee

May 2002

Susan Campbell  
Jane Chaplin  
Bob Cluss  
Eric Davis  
Ted Perry  
Robert Schine, *Chair*  
Pat Zupan

---

---

## Contents

1. Why This Report.....	1
2. Rationale for Study Abroad.....	6
<i>Recommendations</i> .....	7
3. Advising.....	8
<i>Recommendations</i> .....	9
4. Existing Procedures.....	11
<i>Recommendations</i> .....	13
5. Middlebury/C.V. Starr Schools Abroad.....	14
<i>Recommendations</i> .....	16
6. Transfer of Credit.....	17
<i>Recommendations</i> .....	20
Appendices.....	22
<i>Appendix A: Letter to Students Considering Study Abroad</i> .....	22
<i>Appendix B: Study Abroad Statistical Summary: 1984 and 1992-2002</i> .....	24

# 1. Why This Report

## Introduction

Twenty-five years ago, most Middlebury students who studied abroad majored in a modern language and went to one of the Middlebury Schools Abroad for a year. Today, students in all subjects go abroad to all kinds of programs, more commonly for a semester only. A comparison between the statistics for 1984-85 and 2001-02 reveals general trends.

- In 1984-85, 194 students studied in 23 countries in 54 programs and universities; in 2001-02, there were 351 students studying in 44 countries in 94 different programs and universities.
- Since 1984-85, the percentage of juniors studying abroad has risen over 70% (from roughly 35% of juniors in 1984-85 to 61.3% in 2000-01 and 57.6% in 2001-02).
- In 1984-85, the majority of students who studied abroad (55% in 84-85) went to Middlebury Schools Abroad, but in 2001-02, students enrolled in Middlebury Schools comprised only 36.4% of those studying away from the Vermont campus.

At this point, with roughly 60% of Middlebury graduates spending some time enrolled in an overseas institution, it is, obviously, more typical to study abroad than not. Thus by every measurable standard, Study Abroad has become an increasingly large part of our students' educational experience.

Despite the enormous expansion of Study Abroad, no systematic consideration of its place in our curriculum has taken place during the last quarter century. Over the past year and a half, the Educational Affairs Committee has conducted just such an investigation, and we would like to begin by acknowledging the enormous assistance we received from all the people who took the time to share their expertise with us, in committees or individually. The list is not short: first, our work takes many of its starting-points from the Joint Report on Study Abroad written by the Foreign Language

and International Studies Peak Committees last year; we benefited tremendously from the discussion at the Chairs and Directors Meeting this January; we had two separate discussions with the chairs of the modern language departments; also this winter we met with the staff of the Office of Off-Campus Study, the Programs Abroad Committee, a group of about thirty students who were abroad last year in a variety of institutions, the Student Educational Affairs Committee, and the International Committee; Michael Katz, the Dean of Language Schools and Schools Abroad, talked us through the current administrative structure; David Macey, Director of the Office of Off-Campus Study, met with us last year and has been fielding questions all along; Karl Lindholm shared with us his report on Study Abroad in non-Middlebury programs from 1975 to 1995; Cindy Belanger, Kathy Weiss, and Alice Rouleau supplied information on the granting of credit; finally, we have had numerous conversations with individual faculty members. We received an education in how Study Abroad works at Middlebury, and it is a pleasure to thank our teachers.

Our overall conclusion is that there is little reason to change the College's general policy regarding Study Abroad: the endorsement and promotion of it as a vibrant and positive aspect of an undergraduate liberal arts education. The College can, however, do better in implementing that policy, and the changes recommended in this report are intended to clarify and tighten current procedures. (The EAC is making separate but related recommendations about the granting of AP and transfer credit; these will be brought to the faculty for a vote in the 2002-03 academic year.) The Committee recognizes also that it is impossible—and indeed inimical to the purpose of Study Abroad—to reproduce the Middlebury stateside educational experience elsewhere. What can be achieved is a more meaningful connection between students' program of study abroad and their work at Middlebury. The Committee's main recommendation is to improve the faculty's ability to advise students about Study Abroad. This last point cannot be emphasized enough: academic advising is the key to this aspect of the curriculum. To be effective advisors, we all need a full understanding of the role played by Study Abroad in the educational lives of our students.

The body of the report has six sections: 1) an historical overview to explain how Study Abroad and the procedures associated with it have changed in the past twenty-seven years; 2) a consideration of the reasons for Study Abroad; 3) an explanation of the crucial role of academic advisors; 4) an exposition of current procedures involved in Study Abroad; 5) an account of Middlebury's own C. V. Starr Schools; and 6) an outline of how credit is granted. The final five sections each lay out the current state of affairs, point to areas of concern, and make specific recommendations to address our concerns. Most of these recommendations formalize, clarify, or enhance current practice. The report ends with two appendices: a letter we have drafted and would like to see distributed to students contemplating studying abroad; and statistical information compiled by the Office of Off-Campus Study which highlights the growth in Study Abroad.

## **Historical Background**

There are two main paths for students going abroad: 1) the C. V. Starr-Middlebury Schools Abroad, and 2) what are loosely referred to as 'non-Middlebury programs.' They have mostly separate histories.

### *1. The C. V. Starr-Middlebury Schools Abroad*

As noted above, in the mid-1970's the predominant pattern for studying abroad was for students to spend a year at one of the Middlebury Schools Abroad. There were five sites (Florence, Madrid, Mainz, Moscow, and Paris), and the students were mostly majors in modern languages. The Schools in Mainz and Paris had a directorship that rotated among members of the Middlebury College faculty; occasionally a Middlebury College faculty member directed the School in Madrid, and even less frequently the Schools in Florence and Moscow. In addition, one member from each of the five corresponding languages at the Vermont campus also served as the 'Dean' of the relevant School and had full administrative responsibility for admissions, orientation, advising, liaison with the directors of both the summer and the abroad programs, preparation of catalog and other information, housing, and debriefing of students upon their return. The entire system was overseen by the Vice President for Foreign Languages.

Middlebury's own programs remain a major avenue for Study Abroad: over the past five years approximately 40% of students going to a foreign country attended one of the Middlebury Schools Abroad. There are also significantly more options for students who attend one of the Middlebury Schools, with the increase due in large part to the 1999 acquisition of the C.V. Starr grant for new initiatives. The College now offers a total of nine additional satellite programs in the five original countries. Save those in Russia, at these locations students 'direct enroll,' taking their courses exclusively at local universities. Currently, there are plans to increase students' options to include Argentina (Buenos Aires) and Uruguay (Montevideo). A new School in China is anticipated for fall 2003, and a site in Mexico is being considered. (Students wishing to study in Japan do so primarily under the auspices of the Associate Kyoto Program [AKP], a consortium of which Middlebury is a very active member.)

Along with the expanded number of sites and the increased opportunities for direct enrollment have come changes in the administration of Middlebury's programs. Over the course of the past decade, responsibilities for the Schools have been re-distributed. There are now full-time residential directors for the five established Schools (and their national satellites), and these Directors report to the Dean of Languages and Schools Abroad (Michael Katz), who is responsible for the entire Study Abroad system. With the designation of International Studies as a Presidential Peak in the curriculum, the Office of Off-Campus Study (hereafter OCS) was established in 1996-97. The staff members of OCS handle the paperwork associated with students' applications and enrollment and advise students early in the application process. The head of OCS, the Director of Off-Campus Study (David Macey), is responsible for administrative liaison with and oversight of the Schools Abroad; specifically, he acts as liaison among the residential Directors, the Middlebury faculty (particularly department and program chairs), and also the Dean of Languages and Schools Abroad. In 2000, the Dean of Languages and Schools Abroad (hereafter the DLSA) created Advisory Boards composed of Middlebury College faculty for each country where Middlebury runs an autonomous School or participates in a program. (This report recommends an enhanced role for the Advisory Boards.) Some responsibilities necessarily remain with foreign language departments (normally the chair), namely advising (both curricular and 'cultural'),

screening of language ability, and some coordination of curriculum between the academic year and abroad programs.

## *2. Non-Middlebury Programs*

In the 1970's, only a handful of students went abroad to institutions other than the Middlebury Schools. In order to do so, the students had to apply through a faculty committee, the Programs Abroad Committee (hereafter PAC). This was set up in 1975, and the faculty on the committee considered each application individually. In 1976 Karl Lindholm joined the Dean of Students Office, and one of his responsibilities was to sit with the PAC. As familiarity with institutions increased, it became possible to establish general guidelines (e.g., the minimum GPA required to study abroad). In the early 1980's, Karl put these in writing; they remain the core of our current guidelines.

Study in non-Middlebury programs, however, is the area of Study Abroad that has seen the greatest growth, in part because of student demand, curricular developments, and Middlebury's concomitant promotion of Study Abroad. In the 2001-02 academic year, 63.6% of juniors are in non-Middlebury programs, up from 55% just five years ago and 45% in the mid-1980's. Because the majority of students going abroad now go to non-Middlebury programs and are not necessarily majoring in modern languages, there is a tremendous range in what students study, where they study, and why.

As a result, not just foreign language faculty, but faculty across the curriculum help students to choose programs, sign off on their proposed course of study, decide whether the student can complete major and minor requirements upon returning for the senior year, determine whether courses taken away from Middlebury can count towards a major or a minor, and attempt to integrate the educational experiences of students who go away with those who remain. Given the proliferation of destinations and the recognized benefit of direct enrollment, we as faculty are facing the necessity of making decisions about a seemingly infinite number of unfamiliar institutions, programs, instructors, courses, and course materials. In other words, responsible advising of students who wish to study abroad can be a considerable challenge.

This challenge is somewhat offset by the creation of OCS. As with students applying to the C. V. Starr-Middlebury Schools, the OCS staff members manage the paperwork; they also provide advice about institutions. But just as faculty are not familiar with every study abroad program, OCS staff members are not trained in every academic discipline and, despite their many years of experience in the field, cannot be expected to be familiar with the myriad programs where our students may want to study. The growth in the number of students going abroad means that successful identification and completion of an appropriate program require collaboration between faculty and OCS staff. Now when students apply to study abroad, they (and the institutions they choose) are screened initially by OCS staff before advisors review and endorse the application. One significant consequence is that the PAC now concentrates on new, problematic, or anomalous cases; for the vast majority of applications, the committee relies on OCS' evaluation of the institution and the advisor's endorsement of the suitability of both the student and his or her program of study.

### **Conclusion**

Although the C. V. Starr-Middlebury Schools Abroad and enrollment in non-Middlebury programs have different histories, study at either kind of institution has the same implications for our students: namely that Study Abroad is a large part of their education and their Middlebury College degree. Consequently, regular Middlebury College faculty are best qualified to advise our students before, during, and after their time abroad. These developments—the growth of Study Abroad, its expansion into every area of our curriculum, and the increased importance of informed faculty advising—are the motives behind this report.

## **2. Rationale for Study Abroad**

### **Current Practices**

The large number of students who choose to study abroad indicates the extent to which Study Abroad has become central to undergraduate life at Middlebury College. The College's emphasis on and reputation for languages and international studies justify

the importance of studying abroad. Study in another setting presents important opportunities for our students to be exposed to challenging educational and residential situations not offered on the Vermont campus.

### **Concerns**

The growth in numbers of juniors going abroad and the shift away from studying at one of Middlebury's Schools Abroad mean that we have more students going away and with a greater range of motivations. The general impression we received from students is that they feel entitled to study abroad, regardless of their academic program.

Given that our students assume that studying abroad is a part of the curriculum that needs no justification, it is all the more important for them to articulate for themselves as well as for their advisors precisely how a specific program of study will enhance their undergraduate education. For this reason, we think it is essential that students be able to provide what our literature uniformly refers to (but never defines) as "a compelling academic rationale" for studying away from the Vermont campus.

### **Recommendations**

1. The literature given to students by OCS and by departments and programs should emphasize that the primary purpose for studying abroad is academic. This academic reason needs to justify time away from the residential and educational experience at Middlebury. A compelling academic rationale means that the student will be taking courses that meet one or more of the following criteria:
  - a. The courses are not offered at Middlebury but are rigorous and appropriate to a liberal arts education;
  - b. The courses are not offered at Middlebury but are rigorous and appropriate to the student's major(s);
  - c. The courses are the equivalent of Middlebury courses but are unique in perspective;
  - d. The courses may or may not be offered at Middlebury but are unique in perspective because they involve study of the natural history, economics, history, politics, or culture of the region where the school is situated.

2. When the student is given the application for study abroad, he or she should also be given the memo in the Appendix, "Letter to Students Considering Study Abroad."

### **3. Advising**

#### **Current Practice**

The current state of advising reflects the increased and complex role of Study Abroad in the curriculum. Students rely on a number of possible sources of information regarding study abroad programs: OCS, other students, and faculty members in their area of study. For many students, their first advice regarding Study Abroad comes from OCS. Prior to submitting their Study Abroad applications, all students are required to meet with an OCS staff member to discuss their goals and plans. The OCS staff encourages students to research their program options through a variety of sources including the Study Abroad library, the internet, talking with other students, reading the program evaluations of students who have returned from studying abroad, and consulting with their academic advisors. Some students receive helpful information from many or all of these sources, and choose a program that suits their individual needs and goals. Other students seem to choose a program on the basis of little more than a recommendation from a fellow student who enjoyed his or her experience in a particular program.

#### **Concerns**

There are two ways in which Study Abroad advising falls short of the ideal. First, students often do not engage in the kind of thoughtful advance planning that would ensure that their study abroad and on-campus academic experiences are well integrated. Many fail to consider the implications of a semester or year spent away from campus, especially the impact on their major course(s) of study. Faculty report that students are sometimes unable to complete the necessary coursework for their major during their senior year, or must take a large number of major courses at once, without regard to appropriate sequencing. These students may not be prepared for senior work upon their return to the Middlebury campus. Even when students do consider these issues as part of

the process of completing their study abroad applications, the middle of sophomore year may be too late to engage in the most effective curricular planning. Faculty advisors often are ill equipped to help students with this process, particularly if their department or program has not developed recommendations for integrating on-campus and off-campus study.

The second concern is that the quality of advising that students receive about particular programs or institutions abroad is so uneven. OCS has more information about Middlebury Schools Abroad than about other programs. Some students wishing to study in a non-Middlebury program report that they feel overwhelmed by the process of finding an institution abroad with a curriculum that is suited to their needs. Some departments have made concerted efforts to gather information about the best institutions for studying abroad in their field. Faculty in some other departments have little knowledge about the many programs and institutions available to students, and students who wish to study in these areas of the curriculum are left to choose their destination and program of study with little direction from faculty. Because these students will spend some or all of their junior year studying away from the Middlebury campus, many of them will complete a significant portion of their college coursework elsewhere, and many of these students want to take courses that will count towards their major requirements. Students who must choose a Study Abroad destination, institution, and/or coursework without informed guidance from the faculty cannot be expected to get the most out of their academic experience.

### **Recommendations**

1. Advising regarding a student's study abroad experience should begin early, preferably in the student's first year. First Year Seminar advisors should encourage students to be the architects of their college education and ask whether and where Study Abroad fits into this academic structure. Advisors should stress the importance of advance planning. For example, those students who are considering spending some or all of their junior year abroad should be encouraged to take this into account when selecting their courses.
2. OCS should be charged with developing better information on the non-Middlebury schools abroad.

3. All departments and programs should develop a set of guidelines to help students integrate Study Abroad with a major or minor in their area of study. These guidelines, which should be clearly communicated to students, should address the needs of all the department or program's students, including majors, minors, majors with a minor in a modern language, and minors with a major in a modern language. We recommend that each department and program create a section on its website dedicated to the subject of Study Abroad. It should contain both a statement on the acceptable reasons for studying abroad and identify the department or program's Study Abroad guidelines, answering questions such as:
  - a. Does the department advise students to study abroad for one or for two semesters?
  - b. Should particular courses be completed prior to studying abroad?
  - c. How should students plan in order to ensure that they will be able to participate in senior work (senior seminars, independent projects, and other required courses) upon returning from a junior year or semester abroad?
  - d. What kinds of courses are likely to transfer for credit towards the student's major and minor?
  - e. Is there a minimum or maximum number of courses that can or should be taken in the major and minor while abroad?

Academic advisors should address these issues with students and help them to make study abroad plans that are compatible with their major(s) and other curricular goals (i.e., minors, pre-professional plans).

4. We also encourage departments and programs to compile a list of institutions deemed desirable for Study Abroad in their field of study. This list could be included with the Study Abroad guidelines on the department or program website. Some departments currently provide such a list, but many do not. Departments and programs could consult with OCS and students who have returned from abroad to identify these institutions and review the program evaluations submitted to OCS by returning students. As departments accumulate more and better information on programs abroad from year to year, the list should be updated.

## **4. Existing Procedures**

### **Current Practices**

Applying to study abroad is a complex process, involving OCS staff, advisors, and language faculty. The Office of Off-Campus Study holds a series of informational meetings in the spring and fall for first and second-year students who are considering Study Abroad their junior year. At these meetings, students learn the steps they must take to apply for Study Abroad, as well as the requirements. Foreign language departments, for instance, set standards for language proficiency. The College requires a minimum overall GPA of B- and an average of B or better in the major and in the language or in the discipline in which the study abroad program is to be primarily undertaken.

When, as a result of their consultations and discussions with OCS and their academic advisors, students have made a decision about where to study, they fill out a form supplied by OCS that is entitled “Application to Study Abroad,” which includes or requires: A) Major Advisor's Approval Form; B) Language Assessment Form; C) Essay of 300-500 words giving the academic reasons for seeking to study abroad. (Students who are majors in a modern language, IS, or IP&E and who study abroad for the full year do not have to submit such an essay.) Students take this form, with the essay if required, to their major advisor, seeking his or her support for Study Abroad. If the student is going to a country whose language is taught at Middlebury, the student also sees his or her most recent language instructor at Middlebury for an assessment of language proficiency. If the student plans to study in a country where there is no Middlebury School Abroad, but will be studying in a language taught at Middlebury, he or she must also seek the approval of the relevant language department chair. The deadline for submitting the application materials to the major advisor is about three weeks before it is due in the OCS, thus allowing time for the advisor to request revisions of the essay and of the plan of study.

For most students who choose to study abroad at one of Middlebury's schools, and who have the approval of their major advisor and most recent language instructor, as well as the minimum GPA, approval to study abroad is automatic. Borderline cases are referred to relevant department chairs. For non-Middlebury programs, students' applications are checked by OCS and approved by the PAC.

While actual practice varies among departments and programs, current College policy is to encourage students to study abroad for the full academic year. Those who want to go abroad for one term only are encouraged to go in the fall. Those students applying for Study Abroad during the spring only must make a compelling argument for their preference.

After returning from Study Abroad, students fill out an evaluation form on the program they have attended. These forms are kept at OCS, where they can be reviewed by students, faculty, and OCS staff.

The mechanics of granting credit are covered separately in Part 6 of this report.

Since financial aid is not within the purview of the EAC, it is not addressed in this report. We do want to make note of the fact that financial aid packages travel with students to Middlebury's own Schools Abroad, but generally not to non-Middlebury programs. In the spring of 2001 an *ad hoc* committee was appointed to consider this discrepancy and the implications of eliminating it. That committee's recommendations were forwarded to the Provost.

### **Concerns**

In general we found that students and faculty complained that there was confusion about the division of responsibilities among OCS, departments, programs, chairs, and faculty advisors, and that the application process, as well as the principles guiding study abroad, were unclear. We found that few advisors and students understood that the Study Abroad application was asking the faculty member to certify that the courses to be taken were liberal arts courses. Many students did not understand that in order to gain credit toward the major or minor, or toward cultures and civilization requirements, they had to

bring back to their advisor, and/or chair, complete information on the courses to be considered for such credit, i.e., syllabi, assignments, bibliographies, examinations, and written work. At many institutions abroad, the schedule of courses being offered is not definite until the student arrives, and students find that they have to make decisions on the spot about which courses to take. Some foreign language departments felt that they did not have sufficient input into language study for students who were minors in the language. The evaluation forms that students fill out do not seem to be adequate in evaluating the academic experience of the students who have studied abroad, and, generally, these forms are not as readily available to advisors as they might be.

### **Recommendations**

1. Faculty should no longer be charged with certifying that courses identified on a student's Study Abroad application are liberal arts courses. Most faculty do not realize that this is what they are doing by initialing a student's tentative course choices on the application form. This responsibility should instead be given to OCS, which is already responsible for certifying the institutions from which our students can receive credit.
2. OCS should change the Study Abroad application form so that it is clear that students seeking to apply courses taken overseas toward their major, minor, distribution or culture/civilization requirements will need such courses individually approved by the appropriate department chair upon return. Students must bring back all syllabi, bibliographies, assignments, examinations and written work to support such claims. The application form should also make it clear that the student should consult with the department or program chair prior to study abroad in order to ascertain whether there is even a possibility that the courses to be taken might be applied toward the major, minor, distribution, or culture/civilization requirements.
3. When a student requests an application for Study Abroad, he or she should be given the attached "Letter to Students Considering Study Abroad," or, the information in the letter should be incorporated into the Study Abroad Application form.
4. Foreign language departments should have a say in vetting language study overseas, particularly for those who have a minor in the foreign language.
5. Since schools abroad do not always post their schedule of courses until very late, or make changes at the last minute, students should be required to be in contact by e-mail with their academic advisor and OCS in order to

gain approval for the courses to be taken, especially to ensure that the courses are liberal arts in nature.

6. OCS should revise the evaluation forms that are filled out by returning students in order to emphasize the need for an assessment of the academic experience of the school the student attended and on the academic quality of the courses. OCS should make the information from these evaluations easily available on-line to faculty advisors in their offices, either in their entirety or through narrative or quantitative summaries. Individual faculty members and chairs wishing further information can consult the complete forms in the OCS office. Faculty members should also convey to OCS their opinion of particular Study Abroad programs and these comments should be incorporated into the database that is available to each department and advisor.

## 5. Middlebury/C.V. Starr Schools Abroad

### Current Practice

As noted in the introductory section, the five original Middlebury Schools Abroad have expanded considerably, especially in the past few years. Each of them now comprises an ‘autonomous’ site (i.e., one where the School establishes its own curriculum, hires its own faculty, provides housing or helps students to find accommodations, owns or rents offices and classrooms, and, where appropriate, arranges for students to take some courses at local universities) and one to three ‘satellite’ sites (i.e., places where the students enroll directly in a local university that is some distance from the city of the autonomous site). Each of the autonomous sites is administered by a residential Director who also provides supervision and management for the satellite sites. Non-Middlebury students also study abroad at both the autonomous and the satellite sites. In addition to this fundamental distinction between autonomous and satellite sites, there is also variability from one School to another, so the following account is based on generalizations.

*At the autonomous sites of the Middlebury Schools Abroad, courses are taught by local faculty in the target language and are tailored specifically to the linguistic, cultural, and pedagogical needs of non-native students. In theory, the curriculum is established collaboratively by the residential Director, the chair of the relevant language department,*

and faculty from relevant departments (e.g., the School in Florence offers courses in art history as well as in Italian language, literature, and history because it is a regular destination for majors in the History of Art and Architecture). Students who study at the autonomous site can also enroll at the local university. For instance, in Paris, students take some courses at the ‘autonomous site,’ but they also take courses at one of the University of Paris campuses.

*The satellite sites of the Middlebury Schools Abroad* are select universities with which Middlebury has a formal agreement. At these institutions, the College’s responsibility is limited to facilitating the students’ ability to enroll in courses. Support is administrative and logistical. These university courses make no or few accommodations to non-native students, who must integrate themselves directly into courses, with differing levels of tutoring support available. Since Middlebury has no say in which faculty are hired, and what courses are taught, there is no specific control over either curriculum or faculty. The residential Director of the Middlebury School Abroad in that country and regular Middlebury College faculty in Vermont do their best to identify appropriate courses for students who choose this option.

### **Concerns**

The current system, with five autonomous sites and nine satellites, has grown beyond the ability of any one individual to have a comprehensive knowledge of the curriculum. The growing number of students with some kind of international major means that an increasing number of faculty, beyond the modern language departments, have direct interests in the curriculum of the Schools Abroad. These changes, intensified by the administrative reorganization of the French and German Schools Abroad, means that all the Schools Abroad are in a period of transition and require further time and attention.

*At the autonomous sites*, there is a wide range in the degree of collaboration and communication between Middlebury College faculty and the residential Directors of the Schools Abroad. When the Director has a strong historic relationship with the College and the department, understands the Middlebury curriculum, and hires faculty abroad

who understand American students and institutions, the quality of courses is largely satisfactory, and there is a meaningful attempt to integrate the curriculum at the School Abroad with the one at Middlebury. Problems in quality and continuity occur, however, when the residential Director at the Middlebury School Abroad does not know the curriculum or the style of teaching on Vermont campus, or when the historic relationship with the department is not as strong. Communication breaks down because it was never firmly established, and the curriculum and our students are the casualties.

*At the satellite sites*, neither stateside faculty nor residential Directors in that country exercise any direct influence on the content or format of courses our students take. This option is clearly riskier for students: there are problems with quality control and with the identification of courses at local and satellite universities that correspond well to curricular requirements at the Vermont campus. At the same time, while the volume and diversity of courses offered at these satellite sites make it difficult to track the quality and the ‘fit’ of these courses in a systematic way, it seems clear to us that there are many advantages for our students to be learning alongside local students and to be in an environment which requires that they speak more often the language of the country where they are studying.

## **Recommendations**

1. To promote the curricular integration of Middlebury stateside and abroad, we recommend that the DLSA expand the Advisory Boards’ mandate to include an annual assessment of curriculum and of program quality. (The meeting schedule should be expanded to meet this important expectation.) This annual review should include:
  - a. a yearly visit to assess the curriculum by two members of each Advisory Board (a foreign language department member and another faculty member from across the curriculum);
  - b. the Boards’ consultation of student evaluations at both autonomous and direct enroll sites;
  - c. effective and timely communication of developments, findings, and concerns among the Boards, Directors Abroad, the Director of OCS, and the Dean of Languages and Schools Abroad.

2. We recommend that the Director of OCS and the DLSA ensure close contact between department and program chairs, or designates, and Directors of Schools Abroad. Contact between the Directors and the language department chair is especially crucial. Directors need to familiarize themselves with the Middlebury stateside curriculum and with departmental policies on Study Abroad. To advise students, departments (particularly language departments) need to know what curricular changes are proposed for the following academic year with sufficient advance notice to allow for effective consultation and solutions. To this end, we recommend that the Directors of each School Abroad make annual visits to Middlebury, during which they meet with the entire faculty who have special interests and needs in the School Abroad that the Director represents. The primary purpose of these visits should be to ensure that these Directors have firsthand experience with the faculty here as well as with Middlebury's curricular and pedagogical needs and emphases.

## **6. Transfer of Credit**

### **Current Practice**

As part of the EAC's discussion of Study Abroad, we reviewed the current policies and procedures for awarding course credit when students return to campus, and considered more generally the College's policies for allowing students to accumulate course credits earned elsewhere towards a Middlebury College degree. Some of the current policy is summarized on page 66 (chapter 3, section IV.A.) of the *Handbook*: "All course work completed off campus, whether in the U.S. or abroad, must receive final approval by the Director of Off-Campus Study. When courses are transferred, the credit is recorded, but not the grade that was awarded. Transfer grades do not count towards the student's G.P.A."

We include here all of our recommendations on transfer of credit, even though some affect areas other than Study Abroad. These recommendations will be presented to the faculty as a free-standing proposal in the fall.

It should be noted that these recommendations are not intended to change current policy regarding credits granted to the handful of students who transfer to Middlebury as sophomores or juniors.

Students may receive credit for three kinds of courses not taken at Middlebury: 1) courses taken abroad (Middlebury or non-Middlebury schools); 2) credit towards graduation granted for advanced placement prior to matriculation at the College; and 3) courses taken at other U.S. institutions.

### *1. Courses taken abroad*

Each student's proposed course of Study Abroad is reviewed and pre-approved prior to departure. Students who enroll in the Middlebury Schools Abroad programs (autonomous and satellite) in France, Spain, Italy, Germany and Russia for either one or two semesters and satisfactorily complete the course of study are granted Middlebury credit. Students may also direct enroll for one or two semesters in select foreign institutions or in approved programs established by other U.S. institutions. Page 67 (chapter 3, section IV.C.) of the *Handbook* states: "In granting permission for a junior year abroad program, Middlebury agrees to grant full equivalent credit on successful completion of the program." Course credit for returning students is determined following the review of an official transcript from the host institution. The Director of OCS carries out this review. Before a student's departure, his or her academic advisor certifies that the courses to be taken are 'liberal arts' courses. Upon the student's return, the department or program must approve course equivalency towards major or minor credit. Credit toward cultures and civilization requirements is determined by the department or program offering a similar course.

### *2. Advanced Placement*

The current policy for awarding AP credits is set forth on page 62 (Chapter 3, Section II. B.) in the *Handbook*. The faculty established this policy in 1987, at the time that the faculty voted to start the First Year Seminar Program. Students are granted general course credit or course equivalency with scores of 4 or 5 on the Advanced Placement exam. In a few disciplines, a score of 3 is adequate to obtain credit. At the

discretion of the department or program, AP exams may be counted as 1 or 2 credits. Some departments require the student to take a Middlebury course before AP credit is awarded. Currently, there is no limit to the number of AP credits that a student may count toward the degree. AP credits may be used to satisfy a maximum of two of the distribution and cultures and civilizations requirements. AP credits may also be used to reduce a student's course load. For each of the past five years (1997-2001), about 60% of the incoming class arrived with AP credits. Among this group, the average number of AP credits has increased every year from 3.2 in 1997 to 4.1 for 2001.

### *3. Courses taken at other U.S. institutions*

Courses taken at other U.S. institutions, during the summer or the regular academic year, may be transferred for academic credit. A *Transfer of Credit Form* is supposed to be completed prior to enrolling in the course in order for a student to obtain preliminary approval for equivalency or for general credit. (Junior college courses are acceptable for transfer as long as the student is not a junior or a senior, but exceptions are allowed.) Such courses are generally above the introductory level and according to page 66 (chapter 3, section IV.A.) of our *Handbook* "carry at least three semester-hour credits or five quarter-hour credits." These courses must meet for at least the same number of class hours as an equivalent course at Middlebury. Students may transfer two courses per summer session and a maximum of four courses over two summer sessions and must carry at least a C- in the course to be transferred. Transfer credits may be used to satisfy distribution and cultures and civilizations requirements if the course is considered the equivalent of a Middlebury College course, as determined by the Middlebury department that offers the course.

## **Concerns**

### *On Study Abroad*

Study abroad is considered a significant element of a Middlebury College education, but grades are only recorded for courses taken at Middlebury Schools Abroad. This policy seems inconsistent, since regular Middlebury College faculty teach neither at Middlebury's Schools Abroad nor at the non-Middlebury programs.

*On Advanced Placement*

College policies on awarding advanced placement credit are too generous. For instance, there is no limit on the number of AP credits that a matriculating student may count towards the Middlebury degree.

*On Transfer Credit*

Students often do not get approval in advance for courses whose credit they wish to transfer from other U.S. institutions, particularly for those courses taken during a summer. Faculty have difficulty approving such courses after the fact, particularly when the student has little to offer in the way of syllabi, assignments, or other course material. Another concern is that the College accepts courses taken at junior colleges to count towards the Middlebury College degree.

**Recommendations***On Study Abroad*

1. Grades for courses taken abroad should be recorded on the transcript, but not included in the calculation of the GPA.

*On Advanced Placement (AP) credits*

2. Middlebury College will award college credit for scores of 4 or 5 in subjects where Advanced Placement examinations are given.
3. One Middlebury College credit will be awarded for each qualifying AP exam score. Two credits will be awarded in those instances in which the department has demonstrated to the Curriculum Committee that the AP examination adequately covers material in two separately numbered Middlebury College courses that students would normally take sequentially.
4. AP credits may not be used to satisfy distribution or cultures and civilizations requirements.
5. A maximum of five (5) Middlebury College credits may be accumulated through AP exams.
6. AP credits may not be counted toward graduation when the student takes a Middlebury College course that covers substantially the same material as an AP exam.

*The recommendations on Advanced Placement credits will take effect with students entering Middlebury in September 2003. The Administration Committee shall be responsible for oversight of this policy, and the Registrar shall inform students of all policies on Advanced Placement credits.*

*Transfer Credits*

7. After students matriculate at Middlebury College, they may not take junior college courses for credit towards a Middlebury College degree.
8. OCS should revise the *Transfer of Credit Form* so that it very clearly stipulates that courses taken at other U.S. institutions always require approval in advance if they are to be considered for credit toward the Middlebury degree. The form should also make it clear that no credit will be granted after the course is taken unless the student has secured such preliminary approval. As with Study Abroad courses, students seeking to apply these credits toward the major, the minor, or the cultures/civilizations requirement, will need to seek the approval of the appropriate department chair. To support such requests, students must submit syllabi, bibliographies, assignments, examinations and written work.

## Appendices

### Appendix A: Letter to Students Considering Study Abroad

To: Students Considering Off-Campus Study

From: Office of Off -Campus Study

Studying abroad is an exciting opportunity, and almost uniformly students find it to be a life-changing experience. Middlebury College, however, does not grant academic credit solely for life experience or cultural immersion. While these benefits of studying abroad are of enormous value, the fundamental purpose is always academic.

The individual student has the responsibility to present to his or her Middlebury College academic advisor a compelling academic case for off-campus study. To the first meeting with the Middlebury advisor, the student should bring: 1) the completed application form; 2) as much information as possible on the courses to be taken while abroad; 3) and an essay that presents a compelling rationale for off-campus study. The student will be expected to take some courses on the culture and/or natural history particular to the site for off-campus study.

In order to present a compelling rationale for the time away from Middlebury, students should keep in mind, as noted above, that the College does not grant academic credit solely for life experience or cultural immersion. The essay then must present a compelling academic case for off-campus study that uses the following criteria:

A. The essay should spell out how the student's course of off-campus study will be integrated with his or her course of study at Middlebury, serving a major, a minor, or some other established curricular interest.

B. In the essay, the student should demonstrate that he or she has adequate preparation for studying abroad, in the form of preparatory coursework or research.

C. The essay should demonstrate that the student will be taking courses that meet one or more of the following criteria: 1) the courses are not offered at Middlebury but are rigorous and appropriate to a liberal arts education; 2) the courses are not offered at Middlebury but are rigorous and appropriate to the student's major(s); 3) the courses are the equivalent of Middlebury courses but are unique in perspective; 4) the courses may or may not be offered at Middlebury but are unique in perspective because they involve study of the natural history, economics, history, politics, or culture of the region where the school is situated.

D. In the essay the student should describe how the off-campus study will not interfere with his or her ability to complete the major in a timely and reasonable fashion, through coursework while abroad and/or upon returning to Middlebury. [Note: The student should understand that going abroad may jeopardize his or her

ability to complete a major program, particularly if the student is pursuing a joint or double major. Departments and programs cannot predict with accuracy eighteen months in advance whether or not, and when, particular courses will be offered that the student may need in order to complete the requirements for his or her major program.]

Students seeking to apply courses taken overseas toward their major, minor, distribution or culture/civilization requirements will need such courses individually approved by the appropriate department chair upon return. Students must bring back all syllabi, bibliographies, assignments, and written work to support such claims. The student should consult with the department or program chair prior to Study Abroad in order to ascertain whether the courses to be taken might be applied toward the major, minor, distribution, or culture/civilization requirements.

**Appendix B: Study Abroad Statistical Summary: 1984 and 1992-2002**

(as of 4/2/02)

**1. Totals:**

2001-2002 - 351 students in 44 countries in 94 different programs and universities

2000-2001 - 390/47/104

1999-2000 - 344/39/87

1998-99 - 329/38/90

1997-98\* - 355 /36/90

1996-97 - 305/36/95

1995-96 - 270/32/77

1994-95 - 261/ 38/66

1993-94 - 294/35/69

1992-93 - 274/34/62

1984-85 - 194 students in 23 countries in 54 programs and universities

**2. Percentage of Junior Class:**

2001-2002 - 57.6 % (base 609 as of 7/1/01)

2000-2001 - 61.3% (base 636 as of 7/1/00)

1999-2000 - 55.4% (base 621 as of 7/1/99)

1998-99 - 56.4% (base 583 as of 7/1/98)

1997-98 - 56% (base 635 as of 7/1/97)

1996-97 - 55% (base 556 as of 7/1/96)

1995-96 - 50.9% (base 530 as of 7/1/95)

1994-95 - 47.5%

1993-94 - 49%

1992-93 - 49%

1984-85 - 31%

**3. Enrollments**

2001-2002: Year: 94 (26.8%) Fall: 112 (31.9%) Spring: 145 (41.3%)

2000-2001: Year: 108 (27.7%) Fall: 126 (32.3%) Spring: 156 (40%)

1999-2000: Year: 100(29.1%) Fall: 108(31.4%) Spring: 136(39.5%)

1998-99: Year: 107(32.5%) Fall: 106(32.2%) Spring: 116(35.3%)

1997-98\*: Year: 86(24.2%) Fall: 136 (38.3%) Spring: 133(37.5%)

1996-97: Year: 68(22.6%) Fall: 107(35.1) Spring: 130(42.3%)

1995-96: Year: 78 (28.8) Fall: 81 (29.3%) Spring: 115 (41.9)

1994-95: Year: 56 (21.5%) Fall: 113 (43.5%) Spring: 92 (35%)

1993-94: Year: 93 (32%) Fall: 76 (26%) Spring: 125 (42%)

1992-93: Year: 87 (32%) Fall: 50 (18%) Spring: 137 (50%)

1984-85: 83 (42%)/33 (17%)/78 (41%)

### 3. Middlebury Programs/non-Middlebury Programs:

2001-2002 - 135 (36.4%)/236 (63.6%)

2000-2001 - 174 (41.7%)/243 (58.3%)

1999-2000 - 134 (37.3%)/225 (62.7%)

1998-99 - 145 (41.1%)/208 (58.9%)

1997-98 - 161(45%)/194(55%)

1996-97 - 119(39%)/186(61%)

1995-96 - 120 (44.4%)/164 (55.6%)

1994-95 - 110 (41%)/151 (59%)

1993-94 - 130 (44%)/164 (56%)

1992-93 - 127 (46.5%)/147 (53.5%)

1984-85 - 106 (55%)/88 (45%)

\* Changed method of calculation as of 97-98: Students on two programs (different programs fall and spring) are counted as being abroad for the year rather than being double-counted for each semester.

\*\* Numbers of programs are counted rather than numbers of actual students; therefore, the total appears larger than the total in #1.