

Perceived Barriers and Challenges to Study Abroad Based on Academic Classification and Major Within a College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources

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Introduction

- Barriers to study abroad: cost, time commitment, not being aware of available programs of interest (Bunch, Blackburn, DanJean, Stair, & Blanchard, 2015; Chang et al., 2013; Briers, Shinn, & Nguyen, 2010).
- Study abroad experiences which may be of interest to students are those related to their major (Schmidt, 2009).
- Of undergraduate U.S. students who engaged in study abroad for credit in most recent academic year, majority identified as juniors (Institute of International Education, 2018).

Conceptual Framework

- Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB): People act on their beliefs when performing behaviors (Ajzen, 2006).
 - Behavioral beliefs
 - Normative beliefs
 - Control beliefs

Methodology

- Population: Undergraduate students in a college of agricultural sciences and natural resources (CASNR) at 4-year university.
 - ~416 undergraduate students enrolled in CASNR in spring 2019.
 - Beginning sample size: ~201 students (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970).
 - Final sample: 56 students.
- Web-based questionnaire originally created by Rieger (n.d.) used to assess the willingness of students to study abroad.



Figure 1. Five-contact email strategy recommended by Dillman, Smyth, & Christian (2014).

Results

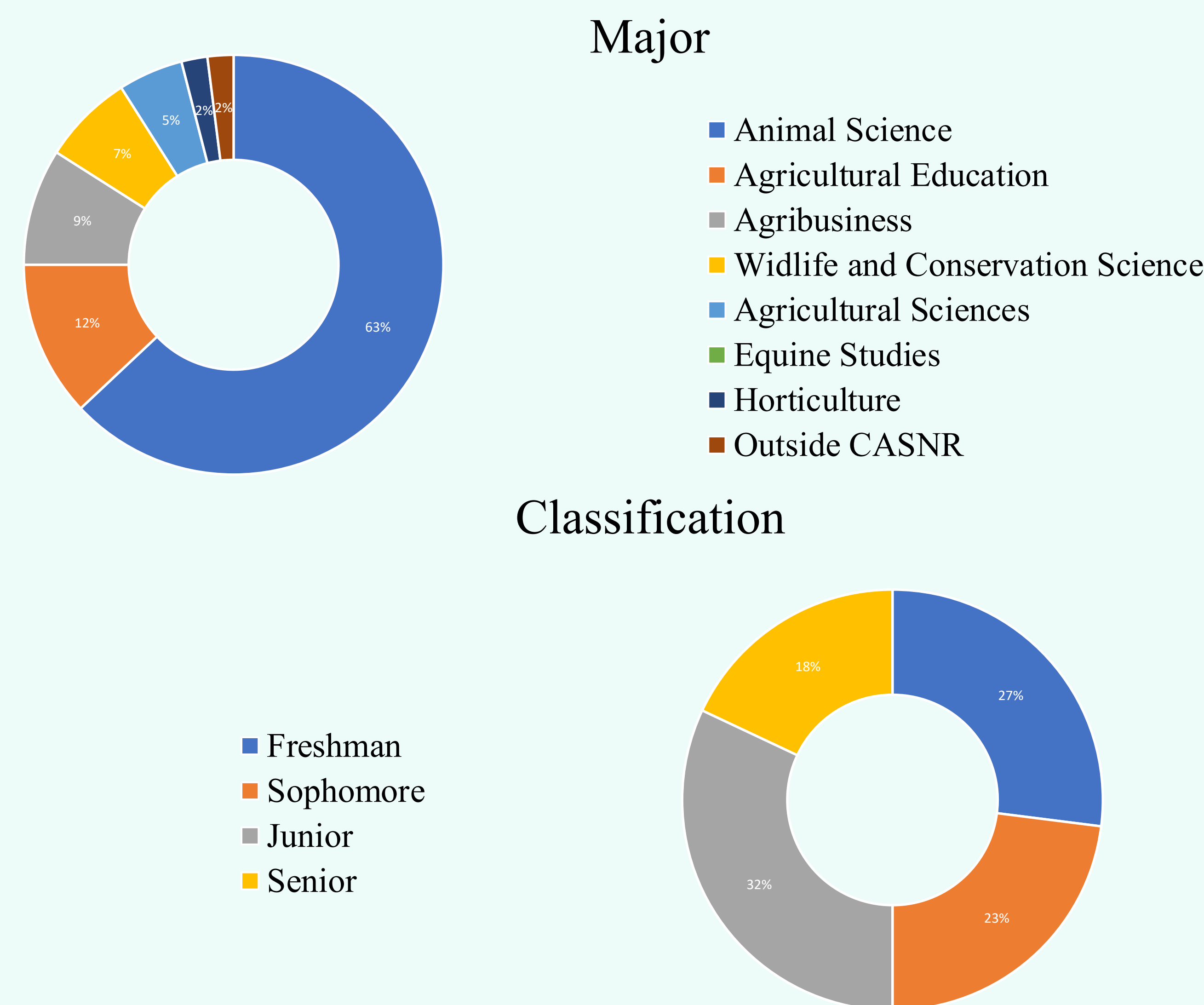


Table 1

Summary of Participants' Perceptions Related to Barriers and Challenges to Study Abroad

Barriers/Challenges	M	SD
Cost, don't have the money or want to spend on study abroad	2.61	0.623
Time, will take extra time to complete degree	2.16	0.733
No interest in traveling outside USA	1.16	0.417
Not aware of any programs related to major or of interest	2.16	0.781
Rely on part/full-time employment to pay for school	1.93	0.850
Can't apply credits towards graduation in my major	1.98	0.842
Would like to go but parents/family/spouse prevent me from going	1.46	0.571
Potential for being victim of crime, terrorism, or unjust government action	1.84	0.804
Don't have academic qualifications to study abroad	1.36	0.586
Don't have foreign language skills	1.86	0.699
Potential for contracting diseases in foreign countries	1.68	0.664

Note. Participants provided responses based on the following scale: 1 = not a reason, 2 =

minor reason, 3 = major reason. The threshold for significance was set at $p < .05$.

Conclusions & Recommendations

- There were no statistically significant differences in the perceived barriers and challenges.
- Freshman and sophomores did not perceive more barriers or challenges.
- Undergraduate students should be exposed to studying abroad early.
- Study could be repeated with other institutions considering or interested in assessing student interest in study abroad.
- Further research can be conducted with goal of exposing students to international experiences at most essential time of academic career/relating to most appealing subjects.

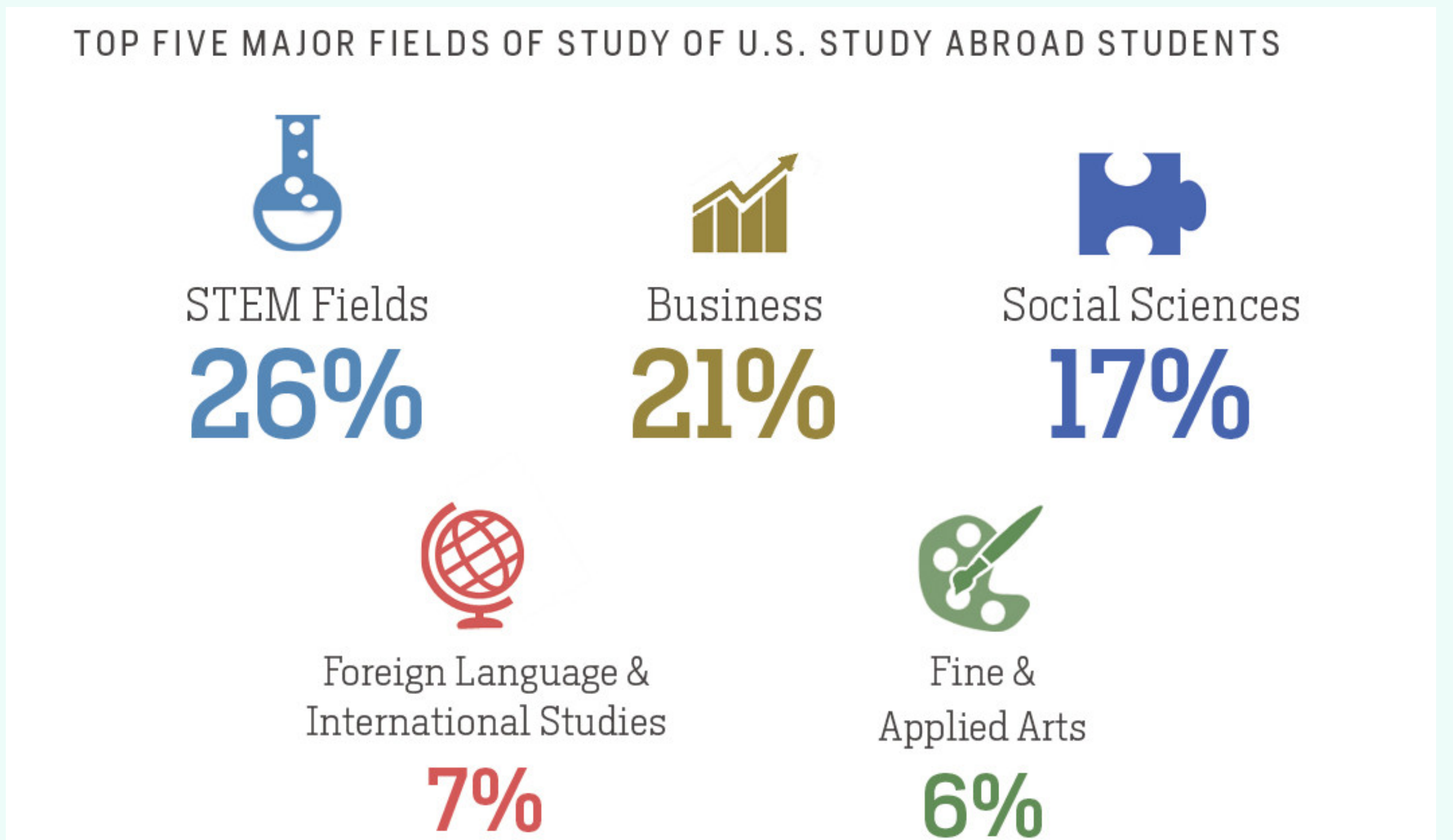


Figure 2. Top five fields of study of U.S. study abroad students 2016-2017. From "Infographics," by Open Doors, 2018, <https://www.iie.org/Research-and-Insights/Open-Doors/Fact-Sheets-and-Infographics/>

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