

Since its first overseas program in 1997, the Governor's Institute on Asian Cultures in China (GIAC-China) program has provided over 300 Vermont high school students with the opportunity to learn about Asia and to travel to China over a two-year cycle. Given the generous funding to support this program by the Freeman Foundation and the financial investments made by families of GIAC participants, as well as the time commitment and efforts of the families and the GIAC staff, conducting an outcome assessment of this short-term study abroad program could offer insight into the long-term impact of the program on alumni's cultural sensitivity, global awareness, and decisions in career or education.

Research on study abroad indicates that the study abroad experience can be beneficial if not transformative, and that participants can express the impact of the experience in subsequent behavior or in subsequent attitudes. At present, no known outcome assessment has been conducted on the alumni of the GIAC-China programs. With permission from the director of the Asian Studies Outreach Program and approval from the IRB, the researcher employed a triangulation mixed method design to gain qualitative and quantitative data on the long-term impact that participation in the program had on the academic, personal, and careers of alumni of GIAC-China programs held between 2004 and 2006. The researcher simultaneously used electronic surveys and telephone interview surveys containing a combination of 24 closed-ended, semi-closed-ended questions and open-ended questions. With a 30% response rate, the researcher hopes that the data gained from this research will contribute to the ongoing dialogue on international education in Vermont and short-term study abroad programs.