It’s an exciting time for the International Education program at CCSU. Not only are we getting ready to celebrate the 40th anniversary of international education at CCSU next year, but also, according to the Institute of International Education’s (IIE) 2013 Open Doors Report released today, CCSU is the only Connecticut institution of higher education to appear among the Top 20 schools sending students abroad on short-term study abroad programs. In addition, CCSU is among the Top 40 institutions in the nation when it comes to sending students abroad on all types of study abroad programs, including semester and year-long programs. This is the sixth consecutive year CCSU has placed in the national rankings.

International education is a defining characteristic of CCSU, which is recognized as the State’s Center for Excellence in International Education. Central’s goal of graduating globally competent students is firmly embedded in its mission statement, strategic plan, and degree requirements. All international programs offered by the university include student learning objectives that not only emphasize how studying abroad builds international competency – global knowledge, skills and attitudes – but also enhances employment opportunities after graduation.

According to IIE, CCSU’s Study Abroad program currently ranks 27th among Master’s granting institutions for the total number of students studying abroad. CCSU’s short-term, faculty-led Course Abroad program received particular distinction, ranking 17th in the nation among Master’s-level institutions; the flagship CCSU Course Abroad program serves over 600 undergraduate and graduate students each year. Programs are offered under the direction of CCSU faculty who develop academic courses that use the world as a classroom.

CCSU’s success in sending students abroad does not come without challenges. We in the Center for International Education recognize that study abroad is often – and erroneously – perceived as a luxury, not a necessity. We work diligently on a daily basis to dispel this myth. In addition, as costs associated with international travel continue to rise and the U.S. dollar struggles to gain ground abroad, many of our students face difficulty financing study abroad. Working together with the CCSU Foundation and the Office of Institutional Advancement, the Center for International Education is making every effort to identify and pursue as much financial support as possible to help make study abroad a viable option for all CCSU students.

As CCSU continues to take a leadership role in international education in the state, study abroad enrollments are expected to rise at a rapid pace. With the help of new and existing donors and the planned expansion of study abroad options, Central will continue to achieve its international mission, graduating students who are well-prepared to advance Connecticut companies’ positions in an increasingly competitive global environment.