

Assessing the Impact of Global Titans Ambassador Program as a
Quality Learning Experience in Global Engagement

Study Abroad and Global Engagement (SAGE)
Division of Academic Affairs
2020-2021 Assessment Innovation Grant (AIG) Report
Project Lead: Shari Merrill (Associate Director, SAGE)
Report prepared by Shari Merrill and Aileen Vickory (Advisor, SAGE)
November 1, 2021

Table of Contents

Project Summary - Research Question	3
Methods of Inquiry	3
GTA Focus Group 1, December 17, 2020	3
GTA Focus Group 2, February 19, 2021	4
GTA Focus Group 3/Peer Interviews - June 2021	4
Data Collection	4
Focus Group 1 Data Collection	4
Focus Group 2 Data Collection	5
Focus Group 3 Data Collection	5
Analysis	6
Focus Group 1 Analysis	6
Focus Group 2 Analysis	8
Focus Group 3 Analysis	10
Results Discussion	14
Implications on teaching, curriculum, pedagogy, and/or practice	15

Project Summary - Research Question

This project allowed SAGE to assess whether participants in the Global Titans Ambassador (GTA) program perceived that they are achieving the GTA program's stated outcomes, by fulfilling assigned roles and through their participation in program activities. For background, the [GTA program](#) is a voluntary program that provides study abroad and away program alumni the opportunity to share their enthusiasm and passion for global education with the campus community by serving as role models for prospective study abroad/away students while acquiring relevant and applicable professional development and leadership experience for their future careers. As Global Titan Ambassadors (GTAs) participate in a variety of program activities, we wanted to assess the effectiveness of our GTA programming, in order to help the GTAs achieve the desired GTA program outcomes. Our AIG project went beyond our current assessment activities (e.g. surveys), which has provided good data and insight about student development but has not always provided specific insight into how or if our own GTA programming may relate to that development.

Methods of Inquiry

Originally, SAGE had proposed to conduct a series of three (3) focus group activities over the grant period, each one following the completion of a major GTA program project: 1. International Education Week (IEW) 2020 project, 2. Monthly information sessions and the Spring 2022 Global Engagement Expo project, and 3. the GTA project. The initial plan evolved over time, as the SAGE team considered how the focus group format and interviewers might influence the GTAs' ability to feel empowered to offer honest feedback about their experiences and development, as well as ideas for program improvements.

GTA Focus Group 1, December 17, 2020

Interviewers: Shari Merrill and Aileen Vickory

Participants: Nine (9) CSUF Global Titan Ambassadors

Support: Priscilla Ortiz, AIG Student Assistant

Format: Virtual over the Zoom Platform; 4 predetermined questions and one Google Form survey were presented to the participants.

The interviewers alternated asking questions, encouraging organic discussion and allowing for follow-up questions and comments. The discussion was recorded, and the AIG Student Assistant later added coding to the [recording transcript](#), which identified comments pertaining to specified project learning outcomes, which will be discussed in the next section. Additionally, [survey results](#) were compiled, documenting GTAs perceived growth in selected areas of career readiness detailed here in the following National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) resource:

<https://www.nacweb.org/uploadedfiles/files/2017/career-readiness-resources/nace-cr-resources-soft-skills-infographic.pdf>.

GTA Focus Group 2, February 19, 2021

Interviewers: Shari Merrill and Priscilla Oritiz

Participants: Eight (8) CSUF Global Titan Ambassadors

Format: Virtual over the Zoom Platform; two (2) groups of four (4) per group; six (6) predetermined questions

Prior to the second focus group, the SAGE team observed that some GTAs participated more in the group discussion than others, with the result that some GTAs did not provide their perspectives as often as their more vocal peers. Additionally, SAGE noted the overwhelmingly positive feedback provided by the GTAs during focus group #1. While the team had no doubt about the honesty of the GTA feedback, there was concern that participants may have felt uncomfortable offering constructive criticism, since Aileen Vickory, the GTA Program's creator and coordinator, was present in the interviewer role. The team also considered that some GTAs did not feel comfortable offering their opinions in a large, group setting. For these reason, the SAGE team decided that Aileen would not participate in future focus groups. Also, the focus group was broken up into two smaller groups of 4 participants each, and the interview time was reduced to approximately half an hour. As before, the interviewers alternated asking questions, again encouraging organic discussion and allowing for follow-up questions and comments. The discussions were recorded, and the AIG Student Assistant later added color coding to the [recording transcript](#), which identified comments pertaining to specified project learning outcomes and salient themes, which will be discussed in the next section.

GTA Focus Group 3/Peer Interviews - June 2021

Interviewers: Global Titan Ambassadors

Participants: Eight (8) CSUF Global Titan Ambassadors

Format: Virtual over the Zoom Platform; four (4) pairs and (4) separate interviews; six (6) predetermined questions each interview

During the second focus group, the SAGE team observed that certain GTAs continued to contribute much more frequently to the discussion than others, which did not allow SAGE to capture a full representation of perspectives from the GTA participants. Some GTAs could "hide" in the larger group format, allowing their more vocal counterparts to dominate the discussion. The team was also still concerned that GTAs felt uncomfortable offering feedback that was not positive because SAGE staff were present during the discussion. To foster the most honest discussions possible, where each of the GTAs' observations could be included, SAGE modified the third focus group format further in the following ways: 1.) The larger group was broken up into 4 pairs, and the members of each pair were tasked with the responsibility of interviewing each other; and 2) SAGE staff, including the AIG Student Assistant, did not participate in any of the interviews. The GTAs sent their interview recordings to SAGE, and the AIG Student Assistant later added color coding to the recording transcripts ([Pair #1](#), [Pair #2](#), [Pair#3](#), [Pair #4](#)), which identified comments pertaining to specified project learning outcomes and salient themes, which will be discussed in the next section.

Data Collection

Focus Group 1 Data Collection

The GTA project for IEW was to create and attend a GTA-led event (that was student-centered, student-driven, and EIP-approved). The GTAs created and coordinated an event called the “Souper Bowl,” during which GTAs hosted individual cooking lessons for a soup dish, explaining the cultural significance and history of each dish. It highlighted how we are all similar and connected by pointing out how despite the vast variety, soup is a dish that can be found in all cultures across the Globe. The learning outcomes associated with this project were relevant to: 1. Strengths and areas of growth; 2. Appropriate, effective and respectful collaboration with all members of the diverse CSUF community; and 3. Overall career readiness based on the NACE Competencies.

Focus Group 2 Data Collection

The discussion was centered around the monthly SAGE information sessions that GTAs host and their participation in the Spring 2022 Global Engagement Expo (e.g. info sessions, student panel, GTA info session, social media, etc.). Questions specifically asked GTAs to reflect on the impact the projects may or may not have had on their oral and written communication skills development. The learning outcomes associated with these projects were relevant to the GTAs achieving growth in their ability to 1. Articulate the impact of their study abroad experience on their academic, professional, and psychosocial (personal and social) development; and 2. Demonstrate overall career readiness through oral and written communications.

Focus Group 3 Data Collection

The third and final focus group of this grant project revolved around the final Ambassador Project, which required GTAs to design, implement and evaluate a personal ambassador project. While carrying out the project, GTAs were meant to demonstrate creativity, critical thinking and problem-solving. They were also required to create an assessment that defined project outcomes and measured whether the project successfully met them. Additional learning outcomes related to this project again included GTAs’ perceptions about growth in overall career readiness as described in the NACE career readiness resource previously provided. The Ambassador Project is like a capstone project to the GTA Program. The goal is to provide GTAs the opportunity to apply knowledge and skills gained in and out of the GTA program to issues they have identified and want to address. To help the GTAs plan and execute their Ambassador Projects, they had to answer the following six questions:

1. What need/challenge have you identified pertaining to study abroad and global engagement at CSUF?
2. How did you determine this need/challenge (e.g. data, research, anecdotes, etc.)
3. What is your project using SMART Goals?
 - a. Specific
 - b. Measurable
 - c. Actionable
 - d. Realistic
 - e. Time-bound
4. What information/research/theories/best practices can you look to/apply/experiment with to help you determine that your project will be effective/successful/impactful?
5. What is your timeline and target date for launching/completing your project?

6. How will you determine/measure if your project was effective/successful/impactful/etc.

Analysis

Focus Group 1 Analysis

1. Strengths and areas of growth - Yes, outcome met.
2. Appropriate, effective and respectful collaboration with all members of the diverse CSUF community - Yes, outcome mostly met.
3. Overall career readiness based on the NACE Competencies - Yes, outcome met.

For this first focus group, we were overwhelmed by the positive responses of the GTAs to the activity and what they gained, prompting us to question and adjust our interviewing strategy for future focus groups.

For **Strengths and Areas of Growth**, the following interesting observations were made: 1. GTAs discussed strengths they **knew** they had going into the IEW activity, as well as strengths they **realized** they had after completing the activity; 2. GTAs commented on their own **individual** strengths, but also commented on the strengths of the **group** as a whole; and 3. GTAs cited our **“Team Expectations”** activity that was previously done as the reason why they worked so well in their group for this project.

Known and Uncovered Strengths

Some GTAs went into the IEW activity knowing where they would excel and be able to contribute. As GTA 1 commented, “One strength especially when putting together the Souper Bowl that I knew I had was like public speaking skills...I was one of the presenters but also shared it with the group when we did the run-thru and I was able to give them feedback...I used my own individual strength not only for myself but to also help my peers...so as a whole it became a good [presentation].” Other GTAs were able to use the IEW activity to learn something new about themselves. For example, GTA 2 noted, “What I realized was okay so I’m able to take in criticism well and I’m able to turn that into something else.”

Individual and Group Strengths

During the interview, GTAs seemed to equally comment on their own individual strengths as well as comment on what the group did well overall. From the individual perspective, GTA 5 shared, “I kind of played more of a background role in this project. I think I was mainly a facilitator... I had to coordinate everyone’s thoughts and ideas. And I think I was able to grow in that respect facilitating and managing to an extent.” When commenting on the strengths of the group, GTA 2 said, “I think the biggest thing that I valued during this project is our abilities, each person’s abilities to communicate.” GTA 7 added, “I think it shows just how flexible and open-minded the group is too.”

Setting “Team Expectations” Early On in the Program

A few GTAs shared that they thought the reason the group was able to work so well together was because they had already discussed team expectations early on in the program. As GTA 6 said, “I think this all goes back to the expectations that we wanted and made for each other in the beginning. So, I think the understanding of each other and the trust and everything is

coming from those documents we created together to set forth a good opportunity and good work in GTA.”

For **Appropriate, Effective and Respectful Collaboration** with all members of the diverse CSUF community, the goal of the IEW activity was for GTAs to have the opportunity to engage with each other, but with CSUF faculty, staff and students from different backgrounds and walks of life. The responses for this section were a little mixed.

GTA 6 expressed that they did not collaborate with as wide a group as they thought, stating “I don’t think that we got to collaborate necessarily with multiple diverse individuals from CSUF but I think we tried to acknowledge them in our presentations because each presenter had their own area.”

GTA 1 felt differently, sharing “At the very end we talked to some of the students and one of the students ended up being an international student... Even though in our presentation itself we didn’t collaborate I think at the very end we were able to hear other perspectives from very interesting students from a diverse place. I guess that counts a little.”

GTA 8 learned a very meaningful lesson on teamwork:

“As somebody who kind of grew up appreciating doing projects by myself because I’ve always been surrounded by not the right teammates I guess to put it that way. I’ve been around teammates that would argue, have been super headstrong, wouldn’t really be considerate of other people, or like what their thoughts were and the way that they wanted to do things. To be around a team that’s so flexible and just confident in their abilities and also willing to share their awesomeness with everyone else just made working together very easy. I really appreciate the team for giving back faith into Teamwork and stuff like that because I’m always going up to professors and saying “Can I do this by myself?” but I really enjoyed working with this team. I think I definitely grew there because they’re so easy to trust.”

For **Overall Career Readiness**, the GTAs did not particularly address this topic during the focus group discussion, but it was answered in a separate Google Forms survey. GTA 6 did mention that they felt growth with regards to Teamwork and Collaboration, as expressed in the following, “I’d like to point out the collaboration one...I feel like I grew because we had to take a different path than the usual ‘let’s meet up here’ and then plan an event. I think it was kind of ongoing and we kind of all just did what we could at the times that we could and it showed me that collaboration doesn’t have to be one way. There are many different ways that we can collaborate... Especially since we haven’t even met in person yet. I think that’s huge considering that.”

According to the Google Form survey, GTAs reported experiencing “significant growth” in the following NACE Career Readiness Competencies: Oral/Written Communications; Teamwork/Collaboration; Digital Technology; Leadership; Professionalism/Work Ethic; and Global/Intercultural Fluency

For **Recommendations** on how the GTA experience could be improved using the IEW event as an example, the GTAs overwhelmingly expressed wanting to be given more to do, as evidenced by the following statements:

- GTA 5: "I wanted to contribute more to this event and like nine people doing one Souper Bowl event is a really fun experience but I think if we have this many people I think we can split it into two separate events."
- GTA 8: "I was totally down to do more in some form, shape or capacity."
- GTA 2: "Now that we've done the event and dissected everyone's thoughts and feelings about today, I am more than welcome to do more because I know what we are capable of."

Focus Group 2 Analysis

1. Articulate the impact of their study abroad experience on their academic, professional, and psychosocial (personal and social) development - Yes, outcome overwhelmingly met.
2. Demonstrate overall career readiness through oral and written communications - Yes, outcome met.

In the second focus group, GTAs were broken up into two groups, interviewed for 30 minutes each. With this modification, we heard from all GTAs more equally than in the first focus group.

Almost all GTAs responded positively when asked if the GTA program, specifically through the monthly information sessions and Global Engagement Expo, helped them **articulate the impact of their study abroad experience** on their academic, professional and psychological development, especially by practicing their "Global Titan Story".

- GTA 1: "Even as someone who studied abroad, like multiple times, I didn't really get to sit down and think about what I gained. I know for info sessions, one of our things that we had to do was pretty much tell our Global Titan Story, you know, we had to practice what is our elevator speech and condense all those experiences into one. I think if it wasn't for the ambassador program I don't think I would do that naturally on my own. It kind of took this program to tell me how to formulate my Global Titan Story."
- GTA 2: "If I did not become an ambassador and kind of unload everything I've learned I wouldn't be standing where I am, I wouldn't be you know, telling them all my experiences. I wouldn't have been able to express anything or be able to do public speaking, to be honest."
- GTA 4: "My family didn't very much want to talk about my time abroad so it was just if I didn't become a GTA it definitely would have just been stored somewhere else in my brain until I could finally release it. It's been very therapeutic being able to share it and it has helped me process through what was difficult about the trip and relate that to how I can work on myself during these next couple months, and each time I share I learn a little bit more about myself."

- GTA 5: “[The GTA Program] also has helped me with that elevator pitch in being able to use my experiences in the program, to be able to cultivate a story of myself that really includes the international aspect.”
- GTA 6: “I would definitely say that being a GTA where we have training and we have the tools to get our message across in the way that we are aiming for and respectfully with everyone helped.”
- GTA 7: “It's given me a platform to be able to tell the story, and I think that when you have that platform with other people who share similar values and experiences of it, of course, you know it elevates you being able to talk about it, so I don't think it would have been the same [without the GTA program].”
- GTA 8: “Because we have to give these info sessions every month and the more interactions that I think I get with students, the more comfortable I begin to feel speaking.”
- GTA 9: “Becoming a GTA really did help my Global Titan Story and build the elevator pitch. Personally I didn't know what that was when I first joined. I was like "oh, there's something called an elevator pitch... And if I didn't join GTA I would never have done this, I would just be still rock bottom just saying what I missed and what I want to go back to, not really reflecting how much I have improved.”

For **Overall Career Readiness**, GTAs expressed that the monthly information sessions and Global Engagement Expo helped with the following competency areas: Oral/Written Communication; Professionalism/Work Ethic; and Career Management through self-awareness and **confidence** in the skills they are developing and feeling more professionally prepared.

For **Oral/Written Communication**, many GTAs have expressed feeling growing confidence in this competency. GTA 9 said, “I definitely see the improvement since the beginning. Before I used to be super nervous, I would stutter. I'll be like “um... this, um... that, but now I'm gaining more **confidence** and trying to make myself more comfortable, especially in a virtual situation.” GTA 8 shared, “I don't think I would be at least as confident, or **becoming more confident** in my oral communication skills as well as career readiness as I would be if I was not a GTA.”

For **Professionalism/Work Ethic**, GTAs expressed growing development and confidence in this area as a result of the monthly information sessions and events like the Global Engagement Expo, but from the GTA program overall. According to GTA 7, “I feel like these events have given me more **confidence** in a professional setting... I think getting that experience, where it feels like I have to maintain that professional aura, where it feels like I have to have my ideas and concepts together, has been particularly helpful from these monthly info sessions, and then the events we participated in.” GTA 5 shared, “Right, yeah definitely, the Global Engagement Expo has, and what we do in GTA in general, has really professionalised all the concepts, the things, and experiences I've had in the past, especially in terms of oral communication.” GTA 8 elaborated on a necessary skill that we have not heard about previously before, “Being a GTA has really helped me in terms of... really trying to stay on top of my emails. Even how I address folks in my email, it makes me more mindful of how I phrase things or how I address people... being prompt with my responses, as much as I can, as much as I am able to at the time.”

For **Recommendations**, while GTAs 2, 6 and 8 said they felt they were doing enough as GTAs for events like the Global Engagement Expo, the remaining GTAs felt like even more could be done (on their part):

- GTA 5: “I want to find ways to improve the workflow of our team and... just making it more efficient, making it more engaging for us to do so.”
- GTA 1: “Maybe allowing the space where we can sort of have time to brainstorm new ideas or events, because I personally really enjoyed our Souper Bowl.”
- GTA 9: “Just having that space, where we can just sit down together and think of some kind of event idea, just to do a student to student engagement, where we can just talk to them.”
- GTA 4: “Another idea was an E-gaming sport different like breakout room, we can do. Something specific that a GTA could teach on, so like a dance class maybe that could be virtual, it's its own cooking show that's particular to a certain country. Like I keep on going back to a skit idea, that I think can be really funny just along those lines and kind of like specific to where the GTA studied abroad.”

Focus Group 3 Analysis

1. Demonstrate creativity, critical thinking and problem-solving - Yes, outcome met.
2. Establish your own measurement for success - Yes, outcome met.
3. Develop overall career readiness - Yes, outcome met.

Feedback regarding program and activity remained positive despite a third change to our focus group style. GTAs were more critical about their individual performances and projects.

Table of Ambassador Projects

GTA	Project Description (Creativity & Problem-Solving)	Need Being Addressed (Critical Thinking)	Measurement for Success
1	A social media handbook	“Back when I was working at the Study Abroad office... this was definitely something that we needed because I don't think we ever had a handbook or something. It was usually like the student assistants training other student assistants when they were handling social media. That's sort of how it went and you just kind of learned, as you go.”	“Yes, it's effective, but I haven't seen it in use yet.”
2	[Global Titan Story &	“The purpose of this website is	“Personally, I think

	Resources] Website	for students who want to go abroad, for those that are kind of like the outlier (like the ones who don't have a typical four to five year college experience) because I didn't have that or I didn't go through that."	it's a success, just because I created the thing."
3	No longer with program at this point - Student graduated the semester before	NA	NA
4	Project 1: I worked with Aileen to help make the program portal a little bit easier to read and navigate Project 2: SAGE Presentation at Black Student Orientation	Project 2: "Comparatively, like we learned at our University training, there's a big gap in study abroad demographics. I wanted to see what one of the causes was and address it to see if it makes an impact."	Project 1: "Just by narrowing down the options, I think it is easier to use. It's hard to tell if there is a difference, but I think it is easier to look at." Project 2: "With my second project it is hard to know right now how impactful it is because we are at the beginning stages. I think it could be."
5	SAGE Diversity Virtual Resource Center for Male Students	"My Ambassador Project was tackling a gender gap issue with studying abroad. $\frac{2}{3}$ of study abroad students are females and $\frac{1}{3}$ are male. There definitely is a discrepancy there. I wanted to attack this program by bringing together different resources to create a website that different students can look at. It will bring awareness to the problem and it will show that it is possible for male students to study abroad."	"In the long-run I think it will be impactful."
6	SAGE conversation video	"I guess it was noticing that even though we do have all	"I think it was effective, it has a

		these resources out there, that people might not know or are unaware of what the processes are like”	potential to be effective.”
7	Pre-departure game night	“I think it's really important if all the pre-departure students [who] are going abroad, you know those are all people with similar interests to them, even if they're not going to the same place... it's a great connection to have and to want to come back and be involved with the SAGE office. I'm sure it'd be very beneficial and keep them kind of mentally stable in a way.”	“So, in theory, it should have been very impactful, but because only [GTA8] came (*laughs) it wasn't impactful. It should have been.”
8	GTA peer advising website	“As an IP Ambassador as well, we do peer advising things as a group and in shifts every Friday, from nine to five. That's kind of where I found that it will be a really cool concept to be able to do peer advising but with the GTA folks because I think they would also get a lot out of the experiences that I've gotten being an IP Ambassador.”	“The time that we launched this was kind of you know too late, since the school year just finished... but I think it has potential.”
9	Social media processes and organization	“Since I'm part of the social media committee, we have emails coming in on a weekly basis about posts being created, and I just felt like it was getting overwhelming at one point. So, I didn't want someone to be always making one post, I just want to make sure it's assigned to everybody. Basically some kind of organization and community platform for all of us so yeah.”	“I say it's effective and successful so far in seeing how we've been organizing our roles.”

For **Overall Career Readiness**, different GTAs were able to gain and develop skills they found relevant to their interests and prospective career fields (Career Management) through this experience, and several strengthened their Digital Technology competency based on the nature of the projects.

- GTA 1: “Definitely, 100%. The reason I say this is because I do want to work in higher education and students professionally... I think a large part of serving students is making sure information is accessible and you're giving them the resources they need to be successful... I definitely do see this Ambassador Project giving me insight to what I'm probably going to be doing in the future. And it's kind of comforting because I did it now, I know that I completed it, I'm able to do it. So, it kind of gives you a little bit of confidence, like if I ever have something similar where I'm building maybe like a website for something, I'll be able to do it because I've done it already.”
- GTA 2: “For me, I 100% gained transferable skills and knowledge... the practice of selling my brand or explaining my brand or using it for my elevator pitches... I think that's a skill that I kind of got to explore in this project. In business school or at Fullerton, a lot of my professors would harp on, “you better find your voices on linkedin, you better make sure you can sell your brand or sell your personal brand”... I think I finally understood what that meant when I was doing this project. So, I think that's a very valuable skill that I got to develop or kind of explore.”
- GTA 3: Already completed GTA program by this point.
- GTA 4: “Yes, I picked up some skills that are transferable, such as getting out of my comfort-zone. I feel really proud that I followed through with something I haven't done before. I saw a need, especially through the website that would benefit from being modified, problem-solving would be the transferable skill. Communication with the future presentation has been developed throughout the semester and I will be able to apply it outside of the Ambassador project.”
- GTA 5: “I think I have gained transferable skills. One was project-management... I will definitely be using project-management in the future. For sure time-management... Another thing I gained is being more aware of different inequalities or injustices that are in our lives.”
- GTA 6: “The main thing I recognized from this project was recognizing the need that I saw... Being aware is something that I'll carry on to my professional life. I think this project really helped me with that and even just the whole year as GTAs we were really focused on being aware and recognizing who our audiences are and all the people who we have to reach out to. And then obviously learning how to produce a video, now I am interested in that and I'll definitely like to build on that. That really helped me recognize that interest of mine.
- GTA 7: “Yeah, I definitely feel like event coordinating is a skill transferable to my future... understanding what resources you have, all those things are very transferable to real life job application type things. So, it's definitely something I'll take with me and especially because I want to work in a field like this so I'll definitely use it.
- GTA 8: “Communication skills was like a huge thing that I think improved throughout the duration of this project, but I also think just gaining confidence more personally like in my abilities to not only lead, but to also create. With the other GTAs, I felt a lot more confident and comfortable in sharing information and sharing ideas because I knew

what I was talking about. I learned that as long as I'm informed on what's going on, then I have a lot to say... I also learned to utilize my strengths when I'm doing any projects or working in a team setting... Technology skills is something that I gained because I mean I've had to work with this project with the Google sites... Having that more proactive mindset and taking initiative. I really hope that I could take that with me once I graduate into my career and just kind of say yes to things more and to put myself more out there which is hard.”

- GTA 9: “My skills overall really improved rather than gaining any because this is something I'm really familiar with. Organizing, creating, and developing because I'm always constantly doing ideas, bringing them up, and putting them together. It really pushed those skills further on, and this was the baby of it all.... I think my communicative skills have gotten stronger... Just basically using that sort of new skill of managing and maintaining and just checking in on everybody and communicating, those skills have come up a lot more, and they were a lot weaker back then.”

For **Recommendations**, GTAs did not state explicitly how the Ambassador Project could be improved. Suggestions and recommendations for improvement came more in the form of self-critiques, with GTAs stating what they would have done differently.

Results Discussion

Overall, the GTAs perceived that the GTA program activities supported their skills development and progress toward achieving stated [program outcomes](#). Through the process of varying focus group designs, GTAs mostly responded with positive feedback when discussing GTA activities and achieved outcomes. Some surprising and/or significant takeaways of the GTA activities and program as a whole:

- The “**Team Expectations**” activity, where GTAs discussed and created “House Rules” or “Rules of Engagement” for each other, that was done early in the GTA program had a strong impact on the team dynamic, especially during the IEW event. Without the presence of the GTA program supervisor, GTAs had to discuss expectations they would set to help keep them accountable to each other. They then signed the document with their signatures.
- The “**Global Titan Story**” component of the monthly information sessions is demonstrably a signature activity and product of the GTA program. As expressed by the GTAs, it helped many strengthen their Oral/Written Communication skills, provided reflection, and for some proved therapeutic.
- By allowing GTAs to craft their own Ambassador Project, **the GTA program helps participants prepare for a wide range of fields** (e.g. higher education, business, event planning, videography, etc.).
- GTAs expressed gaining more **confidence** in their professional skills and experience as a result of participating in the GTA program.

Recommendations for program improvement: Some GTAs expressed wanting to be given more responsibility and/or more autonomy over activity ideas.

Program retention and recruitment: The program successfully retained committed GTAs and recruited a new Ambassador for the fall 2022 program term, in spite of not having new alumni to draw from, because study abroad/away programs were suspended from March 2020 through July 2021.

- Three (3) of the four (4) GTAs in the current cohort decided to extend their program through fall 2022.
- The fourth, newest GTA was the AIG Student Assistant and was inspired by the extensive and intimate interactions with the GTAs participating in this AIG project to join the GTA program. This new GTA was eligible based on participation in multiple, virtual study abroad programs that were brought online during the travel suspension period, which differs from the other GTAs, who previously participated in mobility programs.

Implications on teaching, curriculum, pedagogy, and/or practice

Participating in the AIG Grant and conducting the three focus groups was an invaluable opportunity for the GTA program. It gave SAGE and the GTAs a chance to reflect, discuss and process the work being done on the program. Prior to conducting the focus groups, the GTAs would move from project to project throughout the year without a chance to discuss their impact or how they could be improved. A significant amount of data about the program and about how GTAs experience the program was captured this year. ***Moving forward, dedicating a GTA meeting after projects will be incorporated into the program for pedagogical and assessment purposes.***

One other consideration for how the GTA program may be improved is by creating a system for allowing GTAs to work on varying levels. There were consistently a handful of GTAs who wanted to be able to do more, while some GTAs felt that the amount of work and projects was enough. Some also expressed the desire for greater autonomy over program ideas and coordination. ***SAGE will explore ways to allow GTAs to tailor the program to meet their needs and interests.***

Since the impact of the GTA program on its participants' professional development proves significant, ***it would be beneficial to solidify it as a signature SAGE program via the following actions, which SAGE will explore with EIP and campus partners:***

- More programmatic structure (e.g. designating it as a HIP, internship or service-learning opportunity, or providing a certificate at completion)
- Allocating more resources (funding, staff support, intra-departmental collaboration) to its operations and further development

This project assessed the GTA program and outcome achievement consistently over a full academic year for the same participants (e.g., eight (8) out of nine (9) GTAs participated in the focus group series). ***For logistical purposes and circumstances, SAGE now runs shorter, semester-long GTA terms, and program outcomes may/will need to be adjusted accordingly.***