****

**VIRGINIA TECH SELECTED TO RECEIVE THE IIE AMERICAN PASSPORT PROJECT GRANT IN SUPPORT OF 1,000 U.S. STUDENTS OBTAINING PASSPORT & STUDYING ABROAD**

**May 20, 2021** – Virginia Tech has been selected by the Institute of International Education (IIE) to receive an [IIE American Passport Project](http://www.iie.org/iiepassportproject) grant that will enable 25 Virginia Tech students to obtain a U.S. passport and support their study abroad journeys. In this inaugural year of the initiative, [IIE announced 40 selected institutions](https://www.iie.org/Learn/Blog/2021/05/IIE-Passport-Project) that, overall, will aid 1,000 U.S. students to procure their U.S. passports and to provide study abroad guidance.

It has long been part of IIE’s mission to increase participation and diversity in study abroad, so that all students can gain the academic and career benefits of international experience. The IIE American Passport Project grant is intended to promote diversity, inclusion, access, and equity in study abroad and to support the [IIENetwork](http://www.iie.org/iienetwork), IIE’s global membership network, in their efforts to encourage students to go abroad who would otherwise not participate in an international experience as part of their college education. For students of limited means, studying abroad can require long-term planning and involve financial hurdles, like the cost of a passport, which could bar them from moving forward.

Through the IIE American Passport Project, IIE plans to have enabled 10,000 students to have passports by the end of this decade**.** Each year, IIE will help 1,000 college students obtain a U.S. passport by awarding funds to approximately 40 U.S. colleges and universities in the IIENetwork. Each institution will identify up to 25 of their first-year students, who are eligible for Pell grants. Eligibility is limited to first-year students to ensure that the students have ample time remaining in their college career and receive guidance from their advisors to map out a study abroad plan.

In this first year, IIE received nearly 200 applications proposing the various ways higher education institutions of all types and locations would be able to utilize the grant to support diverse student populations. At a time when COVID-19 has impacted all aspects of international education, these institutions demonstrate the drive to restart international initiatives they have been planning (either prior to the pandemic or during). For the 40 institutions selected, the IIE American Passport Project provides one critical piece of the multi-faceted effort needed to reach students who are traditionally underrepresented in study abroad: a passport. The selected institutions will provide the innovative programming, engagement efforts, advising, and support for those students they have identified with the goal of sending them on a study abroad program during their college experience.

Virginia Tech’s Global Education Office will and cover the costs for an additional 25 passports bringing together a cohort of 50 students to participate in the program. A Passport Workshop will be offered in partnership with the on-campus Passport Acceptance Facility. The workshop will offer students guided support in submitting their passport materials. Additional mentoring and support will include group study abroad advising, annual social events, pre-departure sessions, and workshops about other funding opportunities including the Benjamin A. Gilman Scholarship.

**About IIE:**

The [Institute of International Education](https://www.iie.org/) (IIE) is a world leader in helping people and organizations leverage the power of international education to thrive in today’s interconnected world. As a not-for-profit with 17 offices and affiliates worldwide, IIE manages 200+ programs with participants from 180+ countries. Each year, tens of thousands of people participate in IIE-managed programs. IIE collaborates with a range of corporate, government and foundation partners across the globe to design and manage scholarship, study abroad, workforce training, and leadership development programs.

The [IIENetwork](http://www.iie.org/iienetwork) is the global membership network connecting more than 10,000 professionals from over 1,500 institutions and organizations to resources, including IIE’s extensive knowledge and decades of experience supporting student mobility and exchange, campus internationalization, and international partnerships.

**About Virginia Tech:**

Dedicated to its motto, Ut Prosim (That I May Serve), Virginia Tech pushes the boundaries of knowledge by taking a hands-on, transdisciplinary approach to preparing scholars to be leaders and problem-solvers.

As the commonwealth’s most comprehensive university and a leading research institution, Virginia Tech offers about 280 undergraduate and graduate degree programs to more than 37,000 undergraduate, graduate, and professional students across the commonwealth and manages a research portfolio of more than $556 million. The university fulfills its role as a land-grant institution by fostering a collaborative environment that integrates technology into all disciplines, so that the Virginia Tech community can serve as a force for positive change around the commonwealth, the country, and the world.

Through experiential learning, future-focused research, and an inclusive, spirited culture, Virginia Tech strives to accomplish the charge of its motto Ut Prosim (That I May Serve).

Virginia Tech has a 2,600-acre main campus in Blacksburg, Virginia; a significant presence across the commonwealth, including the Innovation Campus in Northern Virginia, the Health Sciences and Technology Campus in Roanoke, and sites in Newport News and Richmond; educational and research facilities across the state; a study-abroad site in Switzerland; and a 1,800-acre agriculture research farm near the main campus. The campus proper is located in the New River Valley and is 38 miles southwest of Roanoke.

**For more information, contact:**

IIE: Press@iie.org

Virginia Tech: Rommelyn Coffren, Global Education Office, rccoffren@vt.edu