

2009 Study Abroad Student Deaths

Death date/ Day of week	Name (age) Home state	Home university/ Education abroad program/ Student status/ Country of study	Location of death/ Cause of death/ Details/ News links	About this student
1/10/09	Nathaniel ("Nate") Kirkland/ (20) Pennsylvania	Dickinson College/ Serve the World/ Undergrad, mission program/ Guatemala	Guatemala/ Drowned/ Nate traveled with 17 other students to repair adobe classrooms damaged in a hurricane. Students and staff took a break to go swimming. When the group was leaving the beach, they realized Nate was missing. Lifeguards searched for his body, which was ultimately found. The remaining students were returned to the US "as soon as possible."  <a href="http://www.nbcphiladelphia.com/news/local/Local-Student-Dies-in-Guatemala.html">http://www.nbcphiladelphia.com/news/local/Local-Student-Dies-in-Guatemala.html</a>  <a href="http://cumberlink.com/news/local/friends-and-teachers-remember-dickinson-student-who-died-in-guatemala/article_c6c98c39-074b-5cec-afe1-bd47312c848d.html">http://cumberlink.com/news/local/friends-and-teachers-remember-dickinson-student-who-died-in-guatemala/article_c6c98c39-074b-5cec-afe1-bd47312c848d.html</a>	Nate was a second-year English major at Dickinson. He was a resident advisor and founder of Dickinson's multimedia club.
3/30/09	Scott Monat/	University of Miami,	Singapore/	Scott was a National Merit scholar

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	<p>(20) Georgia</p>	<p>Coral Gables/ National University of Singapore/ Undergrad, study abroad/ Singapore</p>	<p>Disputed, homicide versus medical event/ Scott was found dead in student housing. Initial news reports suggested he'd died of a combination of drugs and alcohol. Ultimately, however, this conclusion came under suspicion and a suspect was identified. A court inquiry convened. After testimony, the case was undecided, though left as an "open verdict"—meaning new information could reopen the case. New information never happened. The Monat family has expressed doubt in the inquiry's outcome, wondering if diplomatic and economic interests between the US and Singapore—particularly between the two universities—superseded a genuine search for and consideration of facts.</p> <p><a href="http://www.themiamihurricane.com/2009/03/04/um-student-found-dead-in-singapore-while-on-study-abroad/">http://www.themiamihurricane.com/2009/03/04/um-student-found-dead-in-singapore-while-on-study-abroad/</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.redandblack.com/opinion/college-not-helpful-in-grief-">http://www.redandblack.com/opinion/college-not-helpful-in-grief-</a></p>	<p>who was majoring in neurobiology. He was a Foote Fellow, and also had received the Isaac Beshevis Singer scholarship, both highest awards at U-Miami. Friends and family said of Scott, "He was always smiling," "an incredible leader [who]...wanted to save lives."</p>
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4/8/09	Michael ("Mike") Anderson/ (20) Arizona	University of Miami, Coral Gables/ University of Technology/ Undergrad, study abroad/ Australia	Sydney, Australia/ Medical Event, illness/ Michael died suddenly, due to a viral infection which caused heart failure.  <a href="http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/azcentral/obituary.aspx?n=michael-edward-anderson&amp;pid=126392411">http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/azcentral/obituary.aspx?n=michael-edward-anderson&amp;pid=126392411</a>  <a href="http://www.themiamihurricane.com/2009/04/08/sophomore-michael-anderson-20-dies-while-studying-abroad-in-australia/">http://www.themiamihurricane.com/2009/04/08/sophomore-michael-anderson-20-dies-while-studying-abroad-in-australia/</a> <a href="http://www.themiamihurricane.com/2009/04/12/letter-to-the-editor-criticism-of-student-death-coverage/">http://www.themiamihurricane.com/2009/04/12/letter-to-the-editor-criticism-of-student-death-coverage/</a>	Michael was an international finance and marketing major. Described as an avid tennis player, interested in health and working out, he was equally interested in understanding other cultures. As a high school student, Michael had served as a student ambassador to Holland.
4/9/09	Thad Hammond Owens/ (27) Florida	University of Florida/ University of Florida/ Undergrad, study	Namibia/ Drowned/ This was the second year for University of Florida's Namibia program. Thad was one of eight	Thad was a wild life ecology and conservation major. A U-F faculty member said of Thad, "He thought the best classroom was the one that had no walls." In addition to being a

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		abroad/ Namibia	<p>students on the 3-month course. On April 9<sup>th</sup>, Thad went swimming in the Kune River and was swept away by strong currents. His body was found two days later.</p> <p><a href="http://www.gainesville.com/news/20090416/uf-student-mourned">http://www.gainesville.com/news/20090416/uf-student-mourned</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/news-journalonline/obituary.aspx?n=thad-hammond-owens&amp;pid=126318297">http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/news-journalonline/obituary.aspx?n=thad-hammond-owens&amp;pid=126318297</a></p>	<p>dedicated ecologist, family said Thad was a gifted musician. U-Florida awarded his degree posthumously.</p>
5/16/09	Aly Zain Lakdawala/ (21) Florida	University of South Florida/ University of South Florida/ Undergrad, mission program/ Costa Rica	<p>Playa Matapalo, Costa Rica/ Drowned/ Fifteen days before his death, Aly graduated from USF with degrees in international studies and philosophy. However, he had previously enrolled to be part of a 14-person student group participating in a university-sponsored mission program. While there, three students went swimming off the southwestern coast of Costa Rica. Aly was caught in a strong riptide. His body was found two days later. Bereaved students were immediately</p>	<p>Aly was an international studies and philosophy major.</p>

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			<p>returned to the US.</p> <p><a href="http://www.tbo.com/news/body-of-missing-usf-grad-found-in-costa-rica-87794">http://www.tbo.com/news/body-of-missing-usf-grad-found-in-costa-rica-87794</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.tbo.com/news/usf-grad-who-drowned-in-costa-rica-memorialized-85265">http://www.tbo.com/news/usf-grad-who-drowned-in-costa-rica-memorialized-85265</a></p>	
6/6/09	Charles ("Charlie") Scanlon/ (21) Ohio	St. Lawrence University/ James Cook University/ Undergrad, study abroad/ Australia	<p>Mossman, Australia/ Fall/ Charlie was hiking with three other students. He fell from the trail and died on the scene. (A SLU scholarship, which recognizes exceptional leadership amongst program guide, has been set up in Charlie's name.)</p> <p><a href="http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/name/charles-scanlon- obituary?pid=178253259&amp;view=guestbook">http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/name/charles-scanlon- obituary?pid=178253259&amp;view=guestbook</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.watertowndailytimes.com/article/20090609/NEWS05/306099981">http://www.watertowndailytimes.com/article/20090609/NEWS05/306099981</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.stlawu.edu/outdoor/c">http://www.stlawu.edu/outdoor/c</a></p>	Charlie was an environmental studies and economics major. He was an active and experienced outdoorsman.

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			<a href="#">Charles-b-scanlon-award</a>	
6/21/09	Marshaun Braxton/ (17) Tennessee	First United Methodist Church of New Albany/ Mission program/ Mississippi	Costa Rica/ Drowned/ Marshaun joined other students and chaperones on a church-led mission trip. The purpose of this trip was to construct a sanctuary in Villa Briceno, Costa Rica, and conduct other mission activities. On the 21 <sup>st</sup> , students went with chaperones to a beach, climbing rocks, but not entering the water. A large wave crashed over three students, pulling them all into the water. Two were saved, but Marshaun was pulled out to sea.  <a href="http://law.mc.edu/judicial/briefs/2014-CA-01636-COAT.PDF">http://law.mc.edu/judicial/briefs/2014-CA-01636-COAT.PDF</a>	[Unable to find further information about Marshaun.]
7/27/09	Male, name unknown/ (36)	Michigan State University/ Michigan State University/ Undergrad, study abroad, pre-program travel/ Canada	Canada/ Drowned/ MSU's student newspaper submitted a FOIA request to better understand the university's study abroad safety record. In the resulting article, student journalists mention a male student who "did not turn up for his program...he was	[Unable to find further information about this student.]

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			<p>assumed to be OK. The following day, the student's mother was notified that he had been found dead at a nearby campground and appeared to have drowned." The student was said to have been kayaking alone.</p> <p><a href="https://issuu.com/statenews/docs/sndaily.042513">https://issuu.com/statenews/docs/sndaily.042513</a></p>	
9/?/09	Ethan Townsend/ (24) Oregon	University of Colorado/ U-Colorado/ Graduate student, research, pre-program travel/ Germany	<p>Sichuan, China/ Medical event, injury/ Ethan was a PhD candidate in physics at U-Colorado. He was on his way to Germany, to attend a conference with another PhD student, Jing Yin. The two went hiking and were killed in a rockslide.</p> <p><a href="http://www.mailtribune.com/article/20090911/news/909110336">http://www.mailtribune.com/article/20090911/news/909110336</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.coloradodaily.com/ci_13294255?source=most_email">http://www.coloradodaily.com/ci_13294255?source=most_email</a></p>	Ethan had received his bachelor's degree in physics and a master's degree in mechanical engineering from Stanford University. His area of research was laser physics and optics.
9/?/09	Jing Yin/ (24) Hefei, China	University of Colorado/ U-Colorado/	<p>Sichuan, China/ Medical event, injury/ Born in China, Jing was a PhD</p>	Jing was due to graduate in May of 2010. Her husband was also a doctoral candidate, at Kansas State

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		Graduate student, research, pre-program travel/ Germany	<p>candidate in physics at U-Colorado. She was on her way to Germany, to speak at a conference about her research. She and another PhD student, Ethan Townsend, went hiking and were killed in a rockslide.</p> <p><a href="http://www.coloradodaily.com/ci_13294255?source=most_email">http://www.coloradodaily.com/ci_13294255?source=most_email</a></p>	University.
9/23/09	Kenneth Nwannunu/ (21) Georgia	University of Pennsylvania/ East China Normal University/ Undergrad, study abroad/ China	<p>Shanghai, China/ Medical Event, illness/ On September 23<sup>rd</sup>, in a phone call to parents, Kenneth reported having fever, chills and chest congestion. Later in the day, he felt better, so went out with friends, but collapsed. He was taken to a hospital, but was “not treated aggressively.” Kenneth left the emergency room to return to student housing, where he went into respiratory distress and died. An autopsy established that Kenneth had died from bacterial pneumonia with sepsis.</p> <p><a href="http://www.thedp.com/article/2009/11/nwannunu_died_from_pneum">http://www.thedp.com/article/2009/11/nwannunu_died_from_pneum</a></p>	A philosophy, economics and politics major, “He was very articulate...He had everything going for him,” said family friends, “...well mannered, very respectful, very intelligent...very focused.” He was a member of the debate team and also Sigma Alpha Epsilon. He was interested in the international economy and chose China to expand his understanding of global markets. Kenneth aspired to be a lawyer or doctor (like his father, who is a physician and former Nigerian senator). In May, Kenneth was scheduled to graduate with honors.



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			<p><a href="#">onia</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.nj.com/salem/index.ssf/2009/09/kenneth_nwannunu_longtime_allo.html">http://www.nj.com/salem/index.ssf/2009/09/kenneth_nwannunu_longtime_allo.html</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.thedp.com/article/2009/11/nwannunu_died_from_pneumonia">http://www.thedp.com/article/2009/11/nwannunu_died_from_pneumonia</a></p>	
9/25/09	Ben Wieler/ (20) New Jersey	Middlebury College/ IES Abroad/ Undergrad, study abroad/ Spain	<p>Barcelona, Spain/ Medical Event, illness/ Ben was diagnosed with a brain tumor. His family was by his side when he died from complications.</p> <p><a href="http://www.middlebury.edu/newsroom/archive/2009/node/111170">http://www.middlebury.edu/newsroom/archive/2009/node/111170</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.nj.com/news/local/index.ssf/2009/09/middlebury_student_from_madiso.html">http://www.nj.com/news/local/index.ssf/2009/09/middlebury_student_from_madiso.html</a></p>	Ben was described by professors as “bright, conscientious, and thoughtful,” and by friends as “warm, patient, funny, smart, but unpretentious, and always willing to help someone out.” Ben was an economics major and Middlebury College Scholar, a member of the Student Government Association, junior varsity soccer team player, and a Middlebury Admissions tour guide.
10/6/09	Arielle DaCosta/ (20) Massachusetts	Georgetown University/ University of Salamanca/ Spain	<p>Salamanca, Spain/ Not Available/ <a href="http://www.thehoya.com/everyone-wanted-to-be-her-friend/">http://www.thehoya.com/everyone-wanted-to-be-her-friend/</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/bostonglobe/obituary.aspx?n=arielle-k-dacosta&amp;pid=134517505">http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/bostonglobe/obituary.aspx?n=arielle-k-dacosta&amp;pid=134517505</a></p>	A comparative literature major, Arielle was admired as a writer. She was fluent in French and a student of Spanish. She was involved in Georgetown Radio, as a music board director and co-host. Friends said of Arielle, “Everyone who met her...was touched by her

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				wit, intelligence and overall happy demeanor,” “she just had a way of seeing the funny side of things,” “She was full of love for others, always complimenting people and building them up.”
10/11/09	Shalynda Toney/ (21) Virginia	Hollins University/ Arcadia University/ Undergrad, study abroad/ Italy	Rome, Italy/ Vehicular/ While crossing the street, a motorbike hit and killed Shalynda. News accounts indicated that the driver was drunk.  <a href="http://www.thefranklinnewspost.com/news/local/gospel-fest-celebrated-memory-of-shalynda-tony/article_54152208-1499-5949-8eb7-3b33e9fadd9.html">http://www.thefranklinnewspost.com/news/local/gospel-fest-celebrated-memory-of-shalynda-tony/article_54152208-1499-5949-8eb7-3b33e9fadd9.html</a>	Shalynda was months away from graduating with a degree in international business.
10/20/09	Morgan Boisson/ (20) Arizona	University of Arizona/ Nanjing Normal University/ Undergrad, study abroad/ China	China/ Medical Event, illness/ Morgan was one of 17 study abroad study abroad students on this program. Morgan and fellow students were on a school excursion to Everest base camp. The bus first stopped at Lhasa, which was 12,000 feet above sea level. From there, the students ascended another 7000 feet over two days. Several students	Morgan was an East Asian studies major and French minor, with aspirations to obtain a master’s in international business. He was born in France, spoke French, and had traveled extensively while growing up. Morgan was a scholar-athlete, having earned his black belt in Tae Kwan Do at a young age, then playing high school football, and in college, performing with U-

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			<p>became sick, including Morgan. For this reason, the bus turned around to descend, but not quickly enough to save Morgan. He died from altitude sickness. In the aftermath, the family filed suit (Boisson v. University of Arizona and Tibet Tours Company). In 2015, the Arizona appellate court ruled against them, saying that U-A had no responsibility.</p> <p><a href="http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/azcentral/obituary.aspx?pid=135255350">http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/azcentral/obituary.aspx?pid=135255350</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.azcentral.com/story/ejmontini/2015/04/05/morgan-boisson-helping-parents-heal-university-of-arizona-mount-everest/25246601/">http://www.azcentral.com/story/ejmontini/2015/04/05/morgan-boisson-helping-parents-heal-university-of-arizona-mount-everest/25246601/</a></p>	<p>A's cheer squad. He was an honor roll student and the recipient of the Marine Corps Distinguished Scholar Athlete Award. "Morgan was everyone's friend," family said, "He will never be forgotten." (In the aftermath of Morgan's death, his mother co-founded a national organization for bereaved parents, "Helping Parents Heal.")</p>
10/30/09	Arun Stewart/ (20) Texas	Brown University/ Tsinghua University/ Undergrad, study abroad/ China	Beijing, China/ Fall/ Arun was attending a function near Tsinghua University. The gathering was on the top of a 20-story building. Arun lost his footing and fell. Arun's parents were planning to come to China the following week,	Arun was an East Asian Studies major, with a passion for Chinese language and culture. Linguistically, he was accomplished enough that he could convey humor through a type of Chinese dialogue called "cross talk." Arun's language professor called him "one of the

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			<p>to celebrate their son's 21<sup>st</sup> birthday.</p> <p><a href="http://www.browndailyherald.com/2009/11/02/student-dies-in-rooftop-fall-while-abroad/">http://www.browndailyherald.com/2009/11/02/student-dies-in-rooftop-fall-while-abroad/</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/dallasmorningnews/obituary.aspx?page=lifestory&amp;pid=135877206">http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/dallasmorningnews/obituary.aspx?page=lifestory&amp;pid=135877206</a></p>	<p>very few brightest students I have taught...with a very ambitious plan for the future." Arun wanted to write and perform as a popular entertainer in China, as a way of enhancing cultural understanding. He had received a grant fellowship through Brown. Friends said he had "swagger, but was always humble," "an unapologetically genuine person."</p>
11/13/09 Friday	Robert Stone/ (19) New York	Marist College/ The Lorenzo de Medici International Institute/ Undergrad, study abroad/ Italy	<p>Florence, Italy/ Fall/ Students were touring an old church, Basilica Santa Maria in Ara Coeli. Located at the top of a long and steep flight of stairs, Robert fell and died.</p> <p><a href="http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/marist-college-student-robert-stone-dies-falling-steps-studying-italy-article-1.418829">http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/marist-college-student-robert-stone-dies-falling-steps-studying-italy-article-1.418829</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.nbcnewyork.com/news/local/New-York-Student-Dies-in-Italy-Fall-70175927.html">http://www.nbcnewyork.com/news/local/New-York-Student-Dies-in-Italy-Fall-70175927.html</a></p>	<p>Robert was a political science major, interested in human rights and the plight of children in the developing world. He loved photography, history and community service. Friends remarked, "BBC World was his favorite television program." The previous year, Robert had studied in South Africa and maintained a blog, writing, "There were times when I felt like I was in paradise, and then there were others when I asked myself what am I doing here? And then there were those times when I realized how grateful one can be to see the things that we saw and have the opportunity to</p>

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				experience.”
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Non-lethal incidents in 2009:

Druggings

Kidnappings

Sexual assaults

Robberies

Illnesses

Natural disaster with injuries

Falls with injuries

Students missing, later found

Student arrested and charged with murder