

2008 Education 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
1/24/08	Karen M. Young/ (20) Massachusetts	University of South Carolina/ John Cabot University/ Undergrad, study abroad/ Italy	Rome/ Not Available/ Karen had just arrived in Rome for her study abroad program semester. She was found dead near the Tiber River, a few hundred yards from the Ponte Sisto Bridge. Cause of death was said to be unclear. According to a statement released by the president of John Cabot University, "Initial medical examinations indicated she died of natural causes." Two days before Karen's death, another JCU student, Allesandro Mioni, died in a motorbike accident. http://www.thestate.com/news/local/article14328617.html http://thematthew.typepad.com/the_matthew_online/john_cabot_university/ http://thematthew.typepad.com/the_matthew_online/2008/01/jcu-mourns-the.html	Karen was an accounting and finance major. She'd grown up living and traveling the world, and was known as a "sociable, fashionable world traveler." Karen was attending USC on an academic scholarship. She hoped to become an international businesswoman.

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			http://laurensinrome.blogspot.com/2008/01/email-from-president.html	
2/11/08	Matthew R. Atwood/ (21) New Hampshire	Keene State University/ Center for International Studies-LaTrobe University/ Undergrad, study abroad/ Australia	Melbourne, Australia/ Fall with Unintentional Injury/ Matthew fell through a glass window. His arm was deeply cut and he bled to death. Matthew's roommate was brought in to identify the body. The roommate reported being told by police that Matthew's death was regarded as accidental, possibility due to a deep wound under his arm. http://www.topix.com/forum/city/exeter-nh/T7L9C9DV0V707B62M http://www.seacoastonline.com/article/20080212/NEWS/802120421	Matthew was a safety studies major, traveling abroad for the first time. He had not been in Australia long. Friends said, "[Matthew] had such a good heart...always helping...[and the] voice of reason." Just days before his death, he sent this text message to friends, "Just smile and breathe."
3/20/08	Katherine ("Katie") Sherman/ (21) Massachusetts	University of Massachusetts, Amherst/ Living Routes/ Undergrad, study abroad/ India	India/ Disputed: Intentional Injury, Suicide versus Intentional Injury, Homicide/ Indian authorities called Katie's death a suicide by hanging. Fellow students were told the same, and for months that is what they believed. However, Katie's family disputed these finding. With the assistance of US Senator Edward Kennedy, plus the results of a second	Katie was fascinated by people of the world and wanted to help everyone everywhere. She planned to become a photographer for National Geographic and contacted them for recommendations about how to accomplish this goal. They advised her to travel extensively, and also take

		<p>autopsy, the FBI became involved in Katie's case. Senator Kennedy wrote to the US embassy, "The autopsy and investigation in India were inadequate, and the cause of death was probably murder. I urge you to take appropriate action to see that a full investigation is conducted." The Indian case commenced and ended "inconclusively, for lack of evidence." Six years later, after another Living Routes student safety incident—this time, a serious but non-lethal incident in Costa Rica—U-Mass concluded that Living Routes had not been forthcoming with facts. The university suspended its affiliation agreement with the study abroad program, and Living Routes ultimately closed its program.</p> <p>http://www.masslive.com/news/index.ssf/2009/05/family_of_former_umass_coe_d_di.html</p> <p>http://www.masslive.com/talk/index.ssf/2010/09/katie_sherman_wanted_a_name_in.html</p> <p>http://www.lowellsun.com/todaysheadlines/ci_12394530</p>	<p>photos. Toward that end, Katie engaged in student travel programs in Scotland, Ireland, Eastern Europe, Nicaragua and India.</p>
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			https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2014/01/28/study-abroad-provider-living-routes-close-after-losing-its-affiliation-umass-amherst	
5/10/08	Kenan Mehra/ (21) North Carolina	Delhi University/ Student status unclear, possibly post-program direct enroll/ India	<p>New Delhi, India/ Intentional Injury, suicide versus homicide/ In April of 2008, Kenan’s family traveled to India. While there, Kenan rented a room near Delhi University to engage in philosophy research. When friends noticed that Kenan hadn’t responded to calls for over 36 hours, they alerted the landlord, who notified police. The door to Kenan’s room was broken down. He was found with stab wounds to his neck, and news reports suggested he’d been dead for as long as two days. A murder investigation was registered with the police. Further information has not been located.</p> <p>http://www.thaindian.com/newsportal/uncategorized/indian-american-student-found-killed-in-delhilead_10047986.html</p> <p>http://www.sify.com/news/indian-american-student-found-killed-in-delhi-</p>	A North Carolina resident, Kenan had graduated in philosophy (presumably from a US-based school) and was planning to pursue a master’s degree in the same. (We have not been able to obtain further information.)

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			news-national-jegr70eidbdsi.html http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/tp-newdelhi/Young-NRI-found-dead-at-Delhi-residence/article15221488.ece	
6/10/08	Lisa Tam Chung / (18) Texas	South Grand Prairie High School/ GradCity/ High school, senior class program/ Mexico	<p>Cancun, Mexico/ Vehicular with Unintentional Injury/ Lisa and classmates were on their senior trip with Massachusetts-based graduation travel company, GradCity. Families had been sold a package trip, with special events included. One activity was a snorkeling cruise with a company called Servicios Maritimos. They provided a 73-foot catamaran called Sea Star, plus boating staff. On the day of the incident, students stated, "It felt like we had run aground. The front of the boat was stuck but the back was moving," and "[the boat] started taking on water and started sinking." Boat staff we said to have fled, though later they said they left "to swim for help." Meanwhile, with no GradCity staff on board, parent chaperones and students handed out life vests and everyone began to jump into the water. When a large towboat arrived, it hit Lisa and another student, plus</p>	<p>Lisa was a member of her high school's National Honor Society and yearbook staff. She had been accepted into Baylor University's honors program, and intended to pursue psychology and political science.</p>

		<p>nearly hit several other students. After nearly drowning, Lisa suffered heart and lung failure. She was evacuated to the US, where she was declared brain dead and taken off life support. Others students suffered a “bump to the head,” bone fractures, and panic attacks. In the aftermath, there were questions about whether or not the Sea Star was overloaded. Initial reports suggested that the boat was authorized to carry 80 people, though it was carrying 126. (GradCity, also known as StudentCity, was formed in 1987. It takes approximately 50,000 US students on grad trips each year, with the promotional tagline, “A graduation gift that you’ll never forget.”) Following Lisa’s death, her family filed suit against GradCity.</p> <p>https://www.cbsnews.com/news/girl-dies-after-cancun-senior-class-trip/</p> <p>http://www.mydeathspace.com/article/2008/06/11/Lisa_Chung_(18)_struck_her_head_while_on_a_snorkeling_trip_in_Cancun_and_later_died</p> <p>https://docs.justia.com/cases/federal/di</p>	
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			<p>strict-courts/massachusetts/madce/1:2010cv10943/129444/56/</p> <p>http://media.ca1.uscourts.gov/pdf/opinions/16-1765P-01A.pdf</p> <p>http://blogs.findlaw.com/first_circuit/2017/04/judge-erred-in-ruling-on-issue-not-raised.html</p>	
7/?/08	Adrian Wilson/ (19) New Jersey	Messiah College/ Worldwide Opportunities on Organic Farms (WWOOF)/ Undergrad, study abroad/ Spain	<p>Spain/ Drowned/ Adrian received a grant to attend a 6-week program in sustainability. After a day working on the farm, he went with friends to swim in the ocean. The beach was without lifeguards, though students had not been advised of the dangers. Adrian was caught in a rip tide and drowned.</p> <p>https://www.messiah.edu/offices/development/documents/February2011issuePDF.pdf</p> <p>https://thewayofimprovement.com/2010/02/24/messiah-college-humanities-symposium-day-3/</p>	Adrian grew up in the Bahamas. At the age of 16, he moved to the US and began college. Adrian was interested in sustainability. He had started a community garden at Messiah College. He joined WWOOF in Spain to learn more about community gardening. Adrian was known for having keen insights and putting others before himself.

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			http://spectrumlocalnews.com/nys/hudson-valley/news/2015/09/3/study-abroad	
7/31/08	Keenan Fernandez/ (19) Georgia	University of Colorado/ Passage Project for International Education/ Undergrad, education abroad with independent provider/ Nepal	Kathmandu, Nepal/ Drowned/ Keenan had been in Nepal for six weeks of a nine-week program. She was living with a host family and learning Nepali. Keenan went swimming with friends in the Sundarijal Reservoir, 15 kms northeast of Kathmandu. At about 5:30pm, a current pulled away one of Keenan's friends, a Tibetan student named Kesang Rajyal. Keenan attempted to rescue him, but both students were pulled under. The Passage Project program director said the reservoir is 17-foot deep, with a drain. However, with monsoon season, the water was deeper and the current stronger. Two other students attempted to link hands and reach the drowning students. However, they realized the danger was too great and came out to find help. Two hours later, Keenan's body was found. The coroner ruled she had drowned with a head injury. Kesang's body was located 12 hours later. An independent study abroad program, Passage Project was	Keenan was an integrative physiology major. She was said to be determined, competitive and had an infectious personality. Keenan was known to dress wildly, then engaging with more conservative students. She was also an accomplished swimmer.

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			<p>founded in 2002. In the aftermath of these deaths, a program spokesperson said, "This is the first time anyone has died or had any kind of accident...We had some pretty good procedures in place." The program isn't planning to change its safety protocol because of this accident, adding that Fernandez was on a "free day" when she died.</p> <p>http://www.coloradodaily.com/ci_13101793</p> <p>http://www.dailycamera.com/ci_12949417</p>	
8/4/08	Unnamed female	University of Minnesota/ UMN exchange program/ Graduate student/ Austria	Vienna, Austria/ Illness (presumed)/ The student had a seizure while sleeping and died.	Unable to find further information about this student.
9/1/08 Monday	Terrance Davis/ (20) Arkansas	Georgetown University/ University of Cape Town, South Africa/ Undergrad, study abroad/	Hargerville, South Africa/ Drowned/ Terrance was part of a 10-student group in Cape Town. During an interim one-week break, Terrance and another student traveled 275 miles east of Cape Town. Terrance was walking along a	Terrance was a sociology and performing arts major. He had served as director of publicity for several student organizations, including The Fire This Time, Black Ensemble Theatre and Black Student

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		South Africa	<p>rocky beach, when a “freak wave” dragged him into the water. Rescuers said the weather had been particularly stormy, with “ferocious waves as high as 30 feet.” It is unclear if Terrance’s body was found.</p> <p>http://www.thehoya.com/student-presumed-dead-in-south-africa/#.UkHUjtJQEuc</p> <p>http://www.thehoya.com/a-student-who-shone-a-man-who-loved/</p> <p>http://www.thehoya.com/body-found-at-sea-may-be-davis/</p>	<p>Alliance. He was active in Georgetown’s gospel choir, peer mentorship, NAACP, and Movements of Grace and Black Movements Dance Theater, a joint venture of Georgetown and the Duke Ellington School of the Arts. Terrance had also interned for Senator Mark Pryor (D-AK). Friends remembered Terrance for his big hugs, beautiful singing voice, tremendous energy, and great enthusiasm for the world.</p>
10/3/08	Matthew (“Matt”) Wanetik/ (20) Pennsylvania	Syracuse University/ SU Abroad Strasbourg/ Undergrad, study abroad/ France	<p>Strasbourg, France/ Fall/</p> <p>Matt was in his host family’s home when he fell. News reports said Matt died from a “slip and fall accident.”</p> <p>http://dailyorange.com/2008/10/su-junior-dies-while-studying-abroad-2/</p> <p>http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/philly/obituary.aspx?n=matthew-ross-wanetik&pid=118684005</p>	<p>Matt was a political science and international relationship major. He was a member of Alpha Epsilon Pi fraternity and served as house manager. He was also active in SU’s comedy group and had participated in a national college comedy contest the previous spring. Friends described Matt as filled with faith and perseverance, honest, humble, and helpful.</p>

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<p>11/7/08</p>	<p>Kurt Leswing/ (21) Wisconsin</p>	<p>University of Wisconsin/ Semester at Sea/ Undergrad, study abroad/ Hong Kong</p>	<p>Hong Kong/ Vehicular/ A drunk driver hit Kurt. The driver was estimated to be traveling at 80 or 90 miles per hour. Kurt died before reaching the hospital. The driver, who had a history of drunk driving offenses, was sentenced to 3-1/2 years in prison.</p> <p>https://badgerherald.com/news/2008/11/10/uw-student-killed-in/</p> <p>http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/hkedition/2010-01/12/content_9303329.htm</p> <p>http://www.scmp.com/article/706383/repeat-offender-jailed-312-years-drink-drive-death-student</p>	<p>Kurt was a business major in his senior year.</p>
<p>12/15/08</p>	<p>Cody Lavender/ (20) Arizona</p>	<p>Dartmouth/ Dartmouth Religion Foreign Study Program/ Undergrad, study abroad/ Scotland</p>	<p>Edinburgh, Scotland/ Fall/ Cody had been with others at dinner. Students discussed their plans to visit Paris the following week. Later that evening, Cody fell from a 4th floor balcony. First responders were called, but Cody died at the scene. There were no witnesses. Initial police reports did not suggest foul play, but police were investigating.</p>	<p>Cody was a religion and gender studies student. He served on Dartmouth's philosophy journal, Aporia, and was co-chair of Gender Sexuality XYZ. After college, he planned to teach at Gallup, New Mexico's Navajo Reservation and hoped to eventually become a professor. Friends said, "He gave great advice...He fought</p>

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			http://www.thedartmouth.com/article/2009/01/cody-lavender-10-dies-on-fsp/ http://tucson.com/news/local/crime/dartmouth-student-with-local-ties-dies-in-fall/article_d0dd2961-3a87-5311-b0ab-831e6	for what he believed in.”
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Non-lethal incidents in 2008:

- Near drownings
- Boating incident with injuries
- Suicide attempt
- Stabbing assault, possible hate crime
- Robberies
- Sexual assault
- Fall with injuries