

2009 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
1/10/09	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. Dickinson quickly returned surviving students to the US.  <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/ (20)	University of Miami, Coral Gables/	Singapore/ Disputed: Unintentional Injury	Scott was a National Merit scholar who was majoring in neurobiology.

	<p>Georgia</p>	<p>National University of Singapore/ Undergrad, study abroad/ Singapore</p>	<p>versus Intentional Injury, Homicide, crime/ 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. The Monat family expressed doubt in the outcome, speculating that diplomatic and economic interests between the US and Singapore, and particularly between the two universities, superseded a genuine search for and consideration of facts.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-process/article_47e09d88-4cc6-">http://www.redandblack.com/opinion/college-not-helpful-in-grief-process/article_47e09d88-4cc6-</a></p>	<p>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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			<a href="http://5c6f-8f8f-e86770dfc131.html">5c6f-8f8f-e86770dfc131.html</a>  <a href="https://ssristories.org/singaporean-man-denies-supplying-drugs-to-student-the-straits-times/">https://ssristories.org/singaporean-man-denies-supplying-drugs-to-student-the-straits-times/</a>	
4/8/09	Michael ("Mike") Anderson/ (20) Arizona	University of Miami, Coral Gables/ University of Technology/ Undergrad, study abroad/ Australia	Sydney, Australia/ Illness/ Michael died suddenly. News reports indicated he had come down with 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)	University of Florida/ University of Florida/	Namibia/ Drowned/ This was the second year for University of Florida's Namibia	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

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	Florida	Undergrad, study abroad/ Namibia	<p>program. Thad was one of eight students on the 3-month course. On April 9<sup>th</sup>, Thad went swimming in the Kunee 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>had no walls.” In addition to being a 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 rip tide. His body was found two days later. Surviving</p>	<p>Aly was an international studies and philosophy major.</p>

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			<p>students were immediately 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. In Charlie's name, SLU has set up a scholarship, which recognizes exceptional leadership amongst program guides.</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) Mississippi	First United Methodist Church of New Albany/ High School, mission program/ Mississippi	<p>Costa Rica/ Drowned/ Marshaun joined students and chaperones on a church-led mission trip 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. They were climbing rocks, but not entering the water. When a large wave crashed over three students, they were pulled into the water. Two students were saved, but Marshaun was pulled out to sea. A lawsuit ensued. The trial court allowed summary judgment and ruled against the plaintiff. The family appealed, whereupon the trial court was reversed and a jury trial allowed. No further information has been found.</p> <p><a href="http://www.djournal.com/new-albany/news/body-of-new-albany-teen-recovered-off-costa-rica/article_6f40c1d6-cae0-5549-8b03-72cef161a59a.html">http://www.djournal.com/new-albany/news/body-of-new-albany-teen-recovered-off-costa-rica/article_6f40c1d6-cae0-5549-8b03-72cef161a59a.html</a></p>	Unable to find further information about Marshaun.

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			<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>  <a href="http://judicial.mc.edu/briefs/2014-CA-01636-COARESREH.PDF">http://judicial.mc.edu/briefs/2014-CA-01636-COARESREH.PDF</a>	
7/27/09	Jay Thomas Roberson/ (36)	Michigan State University/ Michigan State University/ Undergrad, study abroad, pre-program travel/ Canada	<p>Banff, Canadian Rockies/ 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 an unnamed male student who "did not turn up for his program...he was 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. We believe this student to be Jay Roberson.</p> <p><a href="https://issuu.com/statenews/docs/sndaily.042513">https://issuu.com/statenews/docs/sndaily.042513</a>   <a href="http://www.heartlandfuneralhome.net/obituaries/Jay-Roberson-">http://www.heartlandfuneralhome.net/obituaries/Jay-Roberson-</a></p>	A former Marine, Jay worked as a flight attendant and ski instructor. He was a full-time student at Michigan State University.

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			<a href="#">23013/#!/Obituary</a>	
9/4/09	Ethan Townsend/ (24) Oregon	Colorado University, Boulder/ U-Colorado/ Graduate student, research, pre-program travel/ Germany	<p>Sichuan, China/ Unintentional Injury/ Ethan was a PhD candidate in physics at U-Colorado. He was on his way to Germany, to attend an academic 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%20emailed">http://www.coloradodaily.com/ci_13294255?source=most emailed</a></p> <p><a href="http://mailtribune.com/news/obituaries/ethan-townsend">http://mailtribune.com/news/obituaries/ethan-townsend</a></p>	Ethan had received his bachelor's degree in physics and a master's degree in mechanical engineering from Stanford University. He was a working towards his doctorate in physics, with a concentration in lasers and optics.
9/4/09	Jing Yin/ (24) Hefei, China	University of Colorado/ U-Colorado/ Graduate student, research, pre-program travel/ Germany	<p>Sichuan, China/ Unintentional Injury/ Born in China, Jing was a PhD candidate in physics at U-Colorado. She was on her way to Germany, to speak at an academic conference about her research. She and another PhD student, Ethan Townsend, went hiking and were killed in a</p>	Jing was due to graduate in May of 2010. Her husband was also a doctoral candidate, at Kansas State University.



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			<p>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>	
9/23/09	<p>Kenneth Nwannunu/ (21) Georgia</p>	<p>University of Pennsylvania/ East China Normal University/ Undergrad, study abroad/ China</p>	<p>Shanghai, China/ 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_pneumonia">http://www.thedp.com/article/2009/11/nwannunu_died_from_pneumonia</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>	<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.</p>

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			<a href="#">9/11/nwannunu died from pneumonia</a>	
9/25/09	Ben Wieler/ (20) New Jersey	Middlebury College/ IES Abroad/ Undergrad, study abroad/ Spain	<p>Barcelona, Spain/ Illness/ During his study abroad, Ben was diagnosed with a brain tumor. His family was flown to Spain. Surgery was performed and the tumor was identified as non-malignant. However, Ben died from surgical 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> <p><a href="https://patch.com/new-jersey/madison/madison-to-remember-late-student">https://patch.com/new-jersey/madison/madison-to-remember-late-student</a></p>	Professors described Ben as “bright, conscientious, and thoughtful.” Friends called him “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/ Undergrad, study abroad/	<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>	A comparative literature major, Arielle was admired as a writer. She was fluent in French and a student of Spanish. Arielle was also involved in Georgetown Radio, as a music board director and co-host.

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		Spain	<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>	Friends said of Arielle, "Everyone who met her...was touched by her wit, intelligence and overall happy demeanor." "She just had a way of seeing the funny side of things," and 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-toney/article_54152208-1499-5949-8eb7-3b33e9fadd9.html">http://www.thefranklinnewspost.com/news/local/gospel-fest-celebrated-memory-of-shalynda-toney/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	Tibet/ Illness/ Morgan was one of 17 study abroad students on this U-A/Nanjing course. Following a program-driven itinerary change, students were taken on a excursion to Everest base camp. The bus first stopped at Lhasa, which was 12,000 feet above	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,

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			<p>sea level. From there, the students ascended another 7000 feet over two days. Several students became sick, including Morgan. For this reason, the bus turned around to descend. However, it did not descent quickly enough to save Morgan's life and 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 the family, stating that U-A had no legal obligation to provide a standard of care for study abroad students.</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>then playing high school football, and in college, performing with U-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 "Helping Parents Heal," a national organization for bereaved parents.</p>
10/30/09	Arun Stewart/ (20)	Brown University/ Tsinghua	Beijing, China/ Fall/	Arun was an East Asian Studies major, with a passion for Chinese

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	Texas	University/ Undergrad, study abroad/ China	<p>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, 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>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 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 in Ara Coeli, touring Basilica Santa Maria, an old church in located at the top of a long and steep flight of stairs. During the tour, 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>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,</p>

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			<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>	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 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