Latin American Studies in Guatemala
Final Report
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Proposal title: Latin American Studies in Guatemala

Country/ies visited: Guatemala

Institution visited: n/a

Dates of travel: January 8-20, 2009

Number of student participants: 9

Previous OIP proposals submitted and grants awarded (list titles, countries and dates):

April 2000 --- China, to create and exchange program with Sichuan Normal University in Chengdu and Peking University in Beijing.
June 2001 --- Women in China Travel Study, took 20 students and three faculty
June 2003 – Women in China Travel Study award– trip cancelled and funding returned due to SARS outbreak/low enrollment
June 2004 – Women in China Travel Study trip –took 13 students
Dec.3- Jan. 04 -- Women in India Travel Study: Faculty went without students, established links with universities in Hyderabad
Dec. 05- Jan. 06 – Women in India Travel Study: Took 29 students
Dec. 06-Jan. 07 – Women in India Travel Study: Took 30 students.

Have all required reports been submitted: Yes
Other funding for this activity available/applied for: None
Proposal Abstract (75 word maximum):

**Latin American Studies in Guatemala**

Profs. Mattingly and Juri led an immersion, community based service-learning trip to the highlands of central Guatemala. The program was rooted in the tradition of service learning by combining service objectives with learning objectives. This was accomplished by combining service tasks with structured learning opportunities that link together self-reflection, self-discovery, and the acquisition and comprehension of values, skills, and knowledge content.

**Travel report:**

I. **Opening/overview of intentions/activity**

Latin American Studies in Guatemala was a 13-day community-based service learning experience. Students were immersed in a rural community for one week. They also visited several NGOs and important tourist locations in Central Guatemala. The trip was organized in partnership with the non-governmental organization, SHARE Guatemala. Future applicants, and to bring practical application to the campus community.

II. **In preparation for the trip abroad**

To establish the trip we met with Los Niños, a border non-profit agency with offices in San Diego and Tijuana. Los Niños operates a “VolunTours” program that links US universities with other NGOs in developing countries. [http://www.voluntours.org/](http://www.voluntours.org/) They arranged for our trip in conjunction with SHARE Guatemala, a large USAID-funded Guatemalan NGO with a well-developed “Turismo Solidario” (Solidarity Tourism) program. [http://www.shareguatemala.org/](http://www.shareguatemala.org/) During Summer, 2008, I was in Guatemala on personal business, and I was able to meet with the SHARE staff and see their tourism solidario program first hand.

III. **Upon arrival/specific activity**

The entire program was provided by the staff of SHARE Guatemala. This included 5 days of working in a rural, mountain community. Along with teachers, children, and community members, we helped paint the school and plant trees on the school grounds in the community Buena Esperanza. The children performed welcoming and closing ceremonies, and we had several presentations by community members and SHARE staff about issues such as migration, the civil war, and economic development. During the second week we visited Starfish One-by-one, an educational NGO and community library established by SDSU alum Karen Hedricks.

The structure of the thirteen-day program was based on solidarity work projects, lectures by local experts, and visits to the Guatemala City Museums, Pacaya Volcano, Mayan ruins, Antigua and Lake Atitlán. Students spent the mornings working on solidarity work projects, where they labored side-by-side with community members. In the afternoons, they attended lectures by local experts on Guatemalan history and culture,
the Civil War, Mayan culture and Mixco Viejo, migration, human rights and education. While they stayed hotels during a great part of the trip, they spent the last two days living with Guatemalan families.

Prior to the trip, program participants attended two mandatory orientation sessions, which included information about the trip, academic preparation through required readings and discussions, and viewing of relevant videos. Students were required to write a book review before the trip, conduct small-scale research projects while in Guatemala, and write a research paper upon their return. In addition, in the evenings we held discussion sessions for reflection and processing. This allowed students to articulate the impact of their experience, and to make direct connections between the daily activities and the education component.

IV. Conclusion, recommendation, and next step?

Los Niños and SHARE Guatemala are very valuable partners for SDSU, as they provide valuable service-learning programs that require very little faculty effort to develop. Since returning I have met with faculty from Latin American Studies, Philosophy, Women’s Studies and American Indian Studies, with the aim of building additional programs using these providers. During January, 2010, Professor Mark Wheeler will take a group of students to Guatemala where they will consider the ethical issues of community development. All students in the 2009 Guatemala program created Power Point presentations about the trip, and they are willing to visit classes to recruit students for future trips. I believe there is great potential to run several additional programs to Guatemala, as well as to other countries served by Los Niños. Because all details of the in-country visit are provided by the organization, this has the potential to be a versatile and sustainable program model. As director of International Programs for the College of Arts and Letters, I am in an ideal position to ensure this pilot trip is followed by many more.