Final Report for International Programs Grant to Guanajuato, Mexico in Preparation for Student Emersion in Summer, 2010

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Proposal title:
Exploring Special Education in Mexican Schools and Studying Spanish Abroad

Country visited:
Mexico

Institutions visited:
Guanajuato Schools and Venano Institute (University of Arizona & Academia Falcon)

Dates of travel: June 6 to July 2, 2009 AND (if students sign on--June 7 to June 21, 2010)

Number of student participants:
Once the opportunity is secure we will offer the experience to anyone who is taking SPED 527 next spring or in the summer. Next year we will limit participation to 5 students maximum, however, if the experience is successful students will be able to continue to attend and the number will not be restricted.

Previous IP proposals submitted and grants awarded
(list titles, countries and dates): NONE

Proposal Abstract (75 word maximum):

In June, 2009 I investigated and prepared to bring students next June, 2010 including: visiting the schools to prepare a list of appropriate general and special education observation sites, staying with a family as students would do, and attending Spanish lessons at the Verano Institute (University of Arizona AND Academia Falcon in Guanajuato). Students will gain knowledge of Mexican culture, schools, and language while fulfilling the requirements of the one unit SPED 527 course.
Budget Request:

Amount of Request: TOTAL---$1,560

- $368.03 airfare (see attached from San Diego to Leon on Aeromexico Airlines)
  June 6, 2009 AND $390 living expenses ($130 per week)---to investigate schools, institute, and to secure the partnership

Country, Place and Dates of Travel:
Guanajuato, Mexico from June 6 to June 30, 2009 and June 7 to June 30, 2010

Main Institution(s) in destination: Institution Verano and Mexican Schools in Guanajuato

Anticipated number of SDSU student participants (near term and long term):
Once the opportunity is secure we will offer the experience to anyone who is taking SPED 527 in the summer. Next year we will limit participation to 5 students maximum, however, if the experience is successful students will be able to continue to attend and the number will not be restricted.

In preparation for the trip abroad I collaborated with Dr. Todd Fletcher (toddf@u.arizona.edu) and Academia Falcon (academiafalcon@hotmail.com). In advance, I paid $200 for my stay with a family and Dr. Fletcher arranged for me to visit schools so that I can determine which classrooms and settings are appropriate and would be required for students to during their visit next summer. The University of Arizona has already arranged with the Ministry of Education and has a long-standing relationship with Academia Falcon for the Spanish lessons and the habitation with families known as the Verano Institute. Todd Fletcher has now introduced me to all of the administrators and I have established verbal agreements to form our own SDSU Verano Institute there in Guanajuato next June. We will finalize this once we have secured the students to participate in the program next summer. In February I will secure a set of host families for our students and arrange with Academia Falcon for the number of students who will attend.

Why is this particular institution valuable for SDSU?
This program is an established one for over 10 years and is in a very safe and beautiful part of Mexico that will allow students to enjoy the positive cultural and linguistic aspects of Mexican heritage and language. If our students have positive international experiences with families and schools, SDSU is meeting its goals to prepare students for the global marketplace and economy of the future.

Sustainability of project: There a high likelihood that students in the department will be interested in studying Spanish and Mexican Schools in Guanajuato. The fact that they can register and fulfill the requirements of the SPED 527 prerequisite pre-practicum course in the context of this experience adds to the sustainability of the project.
How will this exchange program (or expansion) increase participation by students in international activities, or enhance international learning environments for students? International learning opportunities will be inherent in this project if students participate in that they will live with families, study Spanish with other American students, and visit Mexican schools in Guanajuato.

What students will benefit? Students who attend will benefit in that their Spanish language will be further developed and their knowledge of Mexican schools and culture will be greatly enhanced. They will also receive one unit of prerequisite coursework credit by registering for the SPED 527 in the spring or summer semester.

What will be their activities (e.g. course work, international internships, field research, etc.)? Students will register for and receive a three unit 527 course credit and will be required to visit Mexican schools, write about special education services in Mexico, live with a Mexican family, and study Spanish. This will count for ½ of the course credit for 527. Students will be told at group advising throughout the year about this opportunity once I have prepared the brochure. In the course, students will need to complete assignments such as brief reports on observations for the course and will be required to attend Spanish lessons. Students will receive a grade based on performance on assignments for ½ of the course and will be graded according to the 527 requirements.

When in Guanajuato, students will live with families and take one Spanish lesson each day. They will visit Mexican schools each morning and attend the Verano Institute in the afternoons. Students will provide written versions of their observations in the schools and once a week students will meet in a seminar to discuss the general education and special education school experiences they are observing.

What will be your role in promoting and supporting these activities? I will make up a brochure similar to the one attached here that University of Arizona has available once the details of the arrangements are all known. I will recruit students for next summer, June 2010. I will oversee getting students placed with families and arranging for Spanish lessons and attendance of the institute. I will advise students during recruitment and travel. I will travel to Guanajuato with the students next summer and oversee their assignments and grading for this portion of the 527 course.

All information should be sent to The Office of International Programs via e mail: oip@mail.sdsu.edu