

GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP TASK FORCE

SUMMARY AND UPDATE ON THE LATIN AMERICAN EDUCATION PROGRAM

Brandon Lewis
Earth Science Department

OVERVIEW

Santa Monica College is actively engaged in the advancement of global citizenship. With this goal in mind, we are developing an integrated, multi-disciplinary Latin American Education Program that will serve as a model for subsequent international programs throughout Asia, Africa, and Europe. The goals of the Latin American Education Program are 1) to foster an educational environment that not only embraces cultural diversity, but also commits to the pursuit of global knowledge and understanding, 2) to identify the dynamic processes by which social, cultural, and ecological subsystems articulate within Latin America, 3) to engage in productive and meaningful service learning activities, and 4) to increase the marketability of our students in regard to international career opportunities.

Key to the development of global citizenship is participation in an international education program that physically and intellectually embeds the student within the complex social fabric of another culture. Toward this end, curriculum is structured within a holistic framework to provide integrated and complementary course instruction. Students intensively examine the respective Latin American culture with an appreciation toward the manner in which the natural, cultural, and economic landscapes articulate. As such, our aim is to produce a generation of individuals who are cognizant of, and sensitive to, the concerns and dynamic processes that have shaped these vibrant peoples.

EXTENDED YUCATAN COMPONENT

As many of you know, the region first designated for the Latin American Education Program is the “Extended Yucatan.” We have already run successful programs in Belize and Guatemala and are now expanding into eastern Mexico. In fact, Dr. Eric Minzenberg and I just returned from Merida, Mexico, where we successfully initiated program development for the Winter of 2010. Mexico was, and remains, a primary objective within Central America. In fact, I firmly believe that the long-term success of the “Extended Yucatan” program depends on the incorporation of this country. Mexico provides greater opportunities for inter-institutional agreements (e.g., joint instruction and student/professor exchange programs), allows for the incorporation of the Modern Language Department, and allows us to connect on various levels with the rich Mexican heritage so prevalent in our community.

During the first two years of the Latin American Education Program, study abroad opportunities will be offered during the Winter and Summer sessions. The projected course schedule is provided below:

Summer, 2008:	Belize	Archaeological Field Techniques
Winter, 2009:	Belize/Guatemala	Physical Geography Environmental Sciences Introduction to Archaeology Archaeological Field Methods
Summer, 2009:	Guatemala/Belize	Peoples and Power in Latin America History of Latin America
	Belize	Archaeological Field Techniques
Winter, 2010:	Mexico	Cultural Anthropology Nursing/Allied Health
	Belize	?
Summer, 2010:	Mexico	?Creative Writing ?Latin American Literature ?Spanish
	Ecuador	Archaeological Field Techniques

POINTS OF DISCUSSION

Successful implementation of the Latin American Education Program (and by extension any study abroad program) requires consideration of many organizational factors. Below I forward 3 items of discussion for the Global Citizenship Task Force. I am hoping that the collective insight of the group will help to provide direction on these issues.

- 1) What are the benefits and drawbacks of establishing two home bases in the Yucatan versus one (i.e., Mexico and Belize/Guatemala or just Mexico)?
- 2) How do we standardize and formalize departmental involvement and professor selection?
- 3) How can we increase Latino student participation AND incorporate/involve local communities, interested individuals, and small businesses?

1) Two Home Bases Versus One

A few perceived benefits of having two bases:

- provides for a greater representation of the Yucatan cultures
- allows for more diversification of course offerings

- permits the establishment of numerous institutional ties
- creates logistical expertise in two loci which may allow greater program growth

A few perceived benefits of having one base (probably Mexico):

- in depth understanding and familiarity of the region
- allows us to maximize inter-institutional ties
- increases the frequency of student/professor exchange programs

2) Department and Professor Selection

Our goal is to provide diversified course instruction in Latin America. Toward this end we would like to establish a committee of individuals who will review program/professor submissions. Professors interested in participating would be required to submit well in advance (possibly 10 months).

Possible Considerations/Criteria for Selecting Applicants

- commitment to the advancement of Global Citizenship
- knowledge of region
- ability of at least one professor to speak Spanish
- possible experience in international education programs
- realization of time commitment involved both prior and during trip
 - pre-trip marketing
 - being on-call 24 hours a day while providing instruction
- trying to balance (over the long-term) female/male and ethnic representation
- realizing the importance of the individual's problem-solving techniques, crisis management abilities, adaptive flexibility, etc.

3) Increasing Latino participation and incorporating the Latino community

In hopes of addressing both of the above concerns, I have formed a Sub-Task Force to investigate creative and productive ways to insure success. This task force, at present, consists of Daniel Cano, Patricia Ramos, Roberto Gonzalez, and Brandon Lewis. I believe that the Latin American Education Program, in particular, and the Study Abroad Program, in general, should strive to be as inclusive as possible. Our goal is to develop creative plans by which Latino involvement is not only encouraged, but serves to advance their respective educational career. Importantly, the concept of a "directed" sub-task force could be employed by each regional study abroad program.