

YEAR ROUND STUDY ABROAD PROGRAM IN GUATEMELA FOCUSING ON HEALTH, WELLNESS, AND SOCIAL EDUCATION

We submit for your consideration an Engagement Incentive Grant proposal from faculty in the Dept. of Food, Nutrition, Dietetics and Health (FNDH), College of Human Ecology. Faculty in FNDH are excited about developing a year round engagement project focused on a service learning study abroad program for our students at K-State. As part of our strategic plan, we strongly desire to increase opportunities for students to operate within the political and economic landscape of the 21st century. Our students represent programs in public health nutrition, dietetics, athletic training, sensory analysis and pre-health sciences. We currently have some students participating in service learning projects through professional organizations, through internships, or their own initiative, but none through organized service learning in FNDH. Additionally, we have a low participation rate in study abroad. Our primary goal is for our students to develop intercultural skills to be fully prepared to live and work in a global economy. Our international engagement program will be based in the Lake Atitlan region of Guatemala with the hub being the city of Panajachel. We will send a cohort of students approximately every 8 weeks to spend 4-12 weeks participating in service learning & cultural activities in the Lake Atitlan region. This type of engagement project will be a first for Kansas State University and we hope will provide a model for other programs to follow.

Our focus is on students with junior and senior status because they will be primarily enrolled in our courses and we can provide the flexibility needed, through distance education technology, to be gone for extended periods while enrolled as a student. We have approximately 640 undergraduate students. Students will participate in service learning activities with established non-profits in Guatemala as well as a local Mayan physician. Activities are detailed in the narrative and we are excited about the opportunities that will be presented to our students. The focus population for the engagement is the local indigenous Mayan individuals and families who often are living in poverty, are unemployed or underemployed, have limited education, and may not read and write in any language. They have documented need for education, healthcare, social participation, a connection to community resources, skill building, and business skills; all things our students can assist with. Students will use their academic knowledge and skills to contribute to the wellbeing of the Guatemalan population. Program benefits include: 1) students will grow in self-confidence, self-reliance, their ability to adapt to diverse situations, and their ability to work with diverse populations who do not speak a language they necessarily understand; 2) students will be future local, state, and global leaders who are more respectful of other cultures including varied political and economic systems; 3) partnering organizations will gain energetic student volunteers who are passionate about sharing their time, knowledge, and skill set to improve the health and wellbeing of the indigenous Mayan population; and 4) partnership with Human Ecology departments will positively maximize the impact of multidisciplinary programs.

Key personnel include: Linda Yarrow, PhD, Lead PI, Instructor in FNDH, Registered Dietitian, 2) Edgar Chambers, PhD, Co-PI, University Distinguished Professor at K-State and the Director of the Sensory Analysis and Consumer Behavior Center in the FNDH department, 3) Mark Haub, PhD, Co-PI, Full Professor and FNDH Department Head. Collaborative partners include: Mayan Families Non-Governmental Organization, Jabel Tinamit Spanish school, Dr. Francisco Mendez, KU Medical School, and other departments in the College of Human Ecology. We thank you for the opportunity to submit this proposal and your consideration of it.

Sincerely,



Linda K Yarrow, PhD, RD/LD, CDE

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Project Description: Faculty in the Dept. of Food, Nutrition, Dietetics and Health are excited to develop a year round engagement project focused on service learning in an international community. As part of our strategic plan, we strongly desire to increase opportunities for students to operate within the political and economic landscape of the 21st century. Our students represent programs in public health nutrition, dietetics, athletic training, sensory analysis, and pre-health sciences. We currently have a low participation rate in study abroad and few of our students have experience working with diverse populations. Our primary goals are for our students: 1) to develop intercultural skills to be fully prepared to live and work in a global economy, and 2) to use their educational program knowledge and skills to contribute to the health and well being of the Mayan population.

Guatemala, located in Latin America, endured a 36-year civil war that ended in 1996. The war was fought primarily between the government and the indigenous Mayan people. The current indigenous population faces widespread discrimination and limited resources. Additionally, natural disasters such as tropical storms have resulted in the loss of family members, homes, crops, or livelihoods. Health challenges include: 1) approximately 50% of children in Guatemala are chronically malnourished; 2) child mortality is 70% higher among the indigenous population; 3) the overall rate of stunting for Guatemalans is 44% but for indigenous children, it is 58%; 4) 40% of the country lacks access to water and sanitation and has limited access to adequate diet due to lack of finances. Educational challenges faced by Guatemalan rural populations include: 1) approximately 30% of adults cannot read or write; 2) only 22% of children advance past 6th grade because they can't afford further education and are expected to work to help support the family; 3) among the indigenous Mayans, over half do not even complete primary school and only 25% of girls are still enrolled in school at the age of 16. In terms of income, indigenous people are discriminated against related to employment and income and make about half what a non-indigenous worker earns. Finally, half the population lives below the poverty line and 17% are considered extremely poor.

Our program will be based in the Lake Atitlan region of Guatemala with the hub being the city of Panajachel. We will send a cohort of students every 8 weeks to spend 4-12 weeks participating in service learning & cultural activities in the Lake Atitlan region. Our focus will be on students with junior and senior status who will be primarily enrolled in our courses so we can provide the flexibility needed to be gone, using distance technology, while enrolled as a student. We will hire a local Guatemala citizen to provide logistical support for arriving/departing students and to also provide continual support while students are there. This will be a paid position. Functions of the director/instructor will include: coordination of transportation & housing for students; education on local foods; lessons on local customs, money management and the social/economic/political climates; connecting students with partner organizations; providing timely reports detailing activities of students & any difficulties/barriers encountered; routinely making suggestions for program improvement; & appraising K-State of current conditions, such as weather or political issues that could impact schedules.

Engagement Activities: K-State faculty recently spent one week in Panajachel meeting with potential partners. The following student activities were identified: 1) **Mayan Families:** assist in meal preparation for pre-school; provide English tutoring; pre-school reading tutors; nutrition and/or physical activity lessons for pre-school, pregnancy, breastfeeding, adults, elderly, teens, reproductive health, sanitation/food hygiene; assistance with community gardens; food preparation demonstrations; assist in medical clinic; diabetes education; participation in the work training programs for parents of participating children; 2) **Dr. Francisco Mendez:** Dr. Mendez runs a rural health clinic in San Pedro. He also has a mobile clinic that visits other local villages. Dr. Mendez can provide students with valuable observation and hands-on experiences. Students will be able to interview Mayan families in their homes,

assist in taking patient vital statistics, provide health education to patients, and also observe medical procedures such as live births and simple surgeries. A group of local doctors are building a hospital in San Pedro and the future hospital will be a place where students can be involved in basic medical care. Other opportunities include nutrition lessons for various age groups, English/reading tutoring, and physical activity programs; **3) Jabel Tinamit School:** English tutoring, technology and computer skills, assist in organic vegetable garden, cooking lessons, health and nutrition lessons; **4) KU Medical School:** Physicians and medical students from KU Med visit Panajachel annually to provide health services to the Mayan population. Our team met with them in Guatemala and had a very productive meeting about future partnerships to maximize both of our programs impacts. Potential activities include students working with the medical team & conducting research that supports both our missions; **5) Human Ecology departments:** Dr. Shawna Jordan, Asst. Dean in Human Ecology, traveled to Guatemala with FNDH faculty and will be the liaison between FNDH and other Human Ecology departments who see opportunities for their students to participate and provide service to the Mayan community. All identified potential partners have indicated willingness & enthusiasm to partner with FNDH.

Activities Timeline:

Pre-Planning: 2016-March, 2017
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> March/April 2016, initial faculty visit to Guatemala, project development “seeds planted” May-December, 2016: idea developed, contacts made, initial funding sources considered, strategy drafted February/March 2017: 11 faculty/staff traveled to Guatemala to establish formal relationships with partner organizations/individuals
July-September 2017
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of contracts with partnership organizations/individuals Faculty begin planning student activities/curriculum, program promotion to students
October – December 2017
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Faculty travel to Guatemala to visit program partners to ensure program details/activities Finalize contracts with partners Develop Guatemalan director/instructor job description and advertise for position
January – April 2018
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Faculty travel to Guatemala to interview for Guatemala director/instructor & meet with partners Continue to seek additional partnership opportunities Faculty curriculum development meetings and continuation of program promotion
May – August 2018
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial Study Tour of ~10 days with students to create “news”, generate interest, and test procedures Faculty curriculum development proposals reviewed by departmental faculty July – Guatemalan director/instructor hired and begins duties Student activities verified with all partners; program promotion continues
September 2018 – June 2019
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First students depart for Panajachel (Sept) with students departing approximately every 8 weeks Guatemala director/instructor continues to seek out additional partnership opportunities Regular evaluations received from students, Guatemala director/instructor, partners, and faculty

Accomplishment Benchmarks:

Year 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MOU finalized and signed by all partners Full educational plan developed Guatemala director/instructor interviews

- First group of students on one week study tour as preliminary experience of student activities
- Fund raising begins for scholarships for students and funding for on-going program

Year 2

- Guatemala director/instructor hired
- Students depart for Guatemala approximately every 8 weeks; **40-60 students participate**
- Evaluations/feedback received from students, Guatemala director, partners, and faculty
- Seminar presented to College of Human Ecology on outcomes and lessons learned

Collaborative Partners: 1) **Mayan Families:** As an accredited 501©(3) non-governmental organization, Mayan Families' mission is to facilitate sustainable development programs in impoverished communities throughout the Lake Atitlan region of rural Guatemala. Their objective is to stimulate long-term progress through school sponsorships, health initiatives, vocational training and microfinance, while providing emergency aid to those in critical need, 2) **Dr. Francisco Mendez** is a local physician in the lake Atitlan region in the village of San Pedro. He has a broad vision for public and reproductive health. Dr. Mendez is fully Mayan and speaks all 3 native dialects; a skill set that makes him invaluable in the local community, 3) **Jabel Tinamit:** a Spanish language school in Panajachel that is Mayan owned. The school has a newly developed social program designed to boost academic achievement of the local population. They promote reading and provide classes in basic computation and technology, classes to reinforce student's math skills and classes in English and art, 4) **KU Medical School,** Dr. Michael Kennedy, Assoc. Dean of Rural Health Education and Asst. Dean for Student Affairs, 5) **College of Human Ecology departments.**

Potential Impact for All Partners: 1) FNDH Students will experience a different culture, learn language skills, gain better understanding and appreciation for the people and history of another country, and gain understanding of their own cultural values and biases; 2) students will grow in: self-confidence; self-reliance; their ability to adapt to diverse situations; their ability to problem solve local, state, and global issues; and confidence to travel internationally; 3) students will be potential future local, state, & global leaders that are more respectful of other cultures including political and economic systems; 4) Mayan Families, Dr. Mendez, and the Jabel Tinamit school will gain energetic volunteers who are passionate about sharing their time, knowledge, and skill set to improve the health and wellbeing of the indigenous Mayan population; 5) the year round, long-term program will bring economic benefit to the Lake Atitlan region and create relationships that could result in FNDH graduates contributing to the Mayan people and communities on a long-term basis, and 6) partnerships with KU Medical and other Human Ecology departments will positively maximize the impact of multidisciplinary programs. The impact of this engagement project should lead to higher placements in internships, competitive graduate and professional schools, increased job opportunities, and an improved ability of our graduates to function on a daily basis with individuals who are vastly different, yet vitally similar to themselves.

Sustainability: As evidence of commitment to the program, FNDH faculty have traveled to Guatemala to lay the foundation for the program. FNDH has departmental scholarships to help students study abroad. The College of Human Ecology also provides student scholarships. Additional support will be sought from alumnae, businesses, and organizations to enhance scholarship opportunities. FNDH faculty have expressed a desire to establish a university foundation account dedicated to supporting students for this program. Additionally, revenue from credit enrollment in study abroad hours will help support the program and increase the capacity to offer student scholarships. Finally, FNDH will commit to financially and logistically supporting the Guatemala director on a yearly basis.

Amount of Funding Requested: The requested funding is \$10,000. The total funding is \$19,000 and the Dept. of FNDH will provide funds of \$9,000 to cover support of the on-location director and departmental travel plus considerable faculty time commitment to this project.