


June 01, 2000

To: Dr. Alan Sweedler
Assistant Vice-President for International Programs
Office of International Programs
San Diego State University

From: Hugo Murillo-Jiménez, Ph.D. 
Associate Director
Center for Latin American Studies

Re: Report on the Renewal and Expansion of the SDSU Student Exchange Program
with the University of Costa Rica in San Jose, Costa Rica, July 15, July 30, 1999.

In June 1999, I wrote a grant proposal to enhance international opportunities for SDSU students. My purpose was to travel to Costa Rica to negotiate a renewal and expansion of the existing Student Exchange Agreement between San Diego State University and the Universidad de Costa Rica in San José (UCR). I also proposed a visit to the Universidad Nacional Autónoma in Heredia, and the Instituto Tecnológico de Costa Rica in Cartago. There, I would discuss the possibility of signing exchange agreement with these two institutions of higher education. My proposal was partially funded in the amount of \$1000. Since then, I have traveled twice to Costa Rica, in July, 1999, and in January, 2000. In both occasions I covered the cost of air transportation. I plan to travel to Costa Rica once again in the month of July, 2000.

Visit to the University of Costa Rica

I visited the University of Costa Rica several times between July 15 and July 30, 1999. There, I held discussion with Dr. Manuel M. Murillo, the Director of the Office of International Programs and External Cooperation. In one occasion I met with UCR Rector Dr. Gabriel Macaya. Our discussions centered in the best way to increase the number of student exchanges between both institutions. Not surprisingly, Dr. Manuel M. Murillo pointed out the current imbalance in favor of SDSU in the exchange between both institutions. He and Rector Macaya would like to find ways to help UCR student attend SDSU. Nevertheless, both were very committed to the idea of extending and expanding the exchange agreement between both universities. Dr. Manuel M. Murillo expressed his intentions of visiting SDSU during the fall semester of 1999, or the spring semester of 2000. Due to his busy schedule this visit is still pending.

From my discussions with these official, it was clear that UCR was willing to sign and extension of the existing student exchange agreement until a new, more comprehensive agreement could be negotiated. (In fact, an extension of this exchange agreement was signed several weeks ago). This new agreement could include provisions for the establishment of a SDSU Semester Abroad Program at the University of Costa Rica, Spanish language training during the summer and January, faculty exchanges and joint research projects. In collaboration with Dr. Paul Ganster, I am currently exploring the feasibility of a Semester Abroad Program at UCR.

Visit to the Instituto Tecnológico de Costa Rica (ITC), in Cartago

I visited the Instituto Tecnológico de Costa Rica in Costa Rica on July 27, 1999. This institution enjoys an excellent reputation as the second best institution of higher education in Costa Rica. There I met with Professor Lilliana Abarca-Guerrero, Director of ITC's Office of International Relations and Cooperation. We discussed the different modalities of cooperation and expressed her willingness to sign a cooperative and student exchange agreement between SDSU and ITC. In the past several months I had exchanged e-mail messages with Prof. Abarca-Guerrero. She is now ready to exchange the necessary documentation for signing a cooperative and student exchange agreement.

Visit to the Universidad Nacional Autónoma (UNA), in Heredia

I visited the Universidad Nacional Autónoma, in Heredia, on July 28, 1999. UNA is the second largest State University in Costa Rica. There, I had an appointment with University Rector, Dr. Jorge Mora. Unfortunately, the meeting with Dr. Mora was cancelled because he had to attend other urgent matters. In subsequent telephone conversation with Dr. Mora's office I discussed the idea of signing an exchange agreement between SDSU and UNA. A willingness to do this was expressed by Dr. Mora's aids. Regretfully, up to now I have not been able to make any further progress in this matter. In my next visit to Costa Rica in July 2000, I once again plan to visit with Dr. Mora to hopefully obtain his approval for sign a cooperative and student exchange agreement with his university.