

Faculty Report

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Proposal title: Community Health Programming and Tourism Development: Student Research Opportunities in Two Communities in the Valley of Oaxaca.

Country/ies visited: Mexico

Institution visited: Instituto Welte para Estudios Oaxaqueños, CENTEOTL

Dates of travel: June 4-7; June 17-August 4, 2008

Number of student participants: 23

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

1. SDSU Fall Semester Study Abroad Field School in Oaxaca, Mexico, in collaboration with the Southwest Center for International Studies and the Instituto Welte para Estudios Oaxaqueños (with D. Carruthers). January 2002.\$1500.00.

2. Latin American Studies Mixteco Language and Culture Area Summer Fieldschool in Oaxaca, Mexico (with J. Gerber, A. Trujillo, G. Talavera). Spring Semester 2003.
\$3262.00

3. Language, Culture, Gender, and Community Health Education in Oaxaca, Mexico. January to June 2004 (with J. Gerber, A. Trujillo, G. Talavera, K. Coleman). \$8040.00

4. Expanding the Oaxaca Program: Internships, Research Development, International Development, and Language Fulfillment (with J. Gerber, A. Trujillo, K.Coleman). 2005.
\$8510.00.

5. Applying Research to Community Needs: The development of nutritional outreach and alternative tourist practices in Santa María Atzompa, Oaxaca, Mexico (with Karen Coleman, Thomas Pasananti, Arion Mayes). 2006. \$11,300.00.

6. Community Outreach and Student Internships in Indigenous Languages of Oaxaca (with Angelina Trujillo, Eniko Csomay, Jim Gerber). 2006. \$7350.00.
7. Community Based Sustainability: Combining community needs with research and training in Santa María Atzompa, Oaxaca, Mexico (with K. Coleman, T. Pasananti, A. Hidalgo). 2007. \$7300.00

Have all required reports been submitted? Yes.

Other funding for this activity available/applied for: Summer salary paid by CAL. TA salary paid by NRC funds through Center for LAS.

Proposal Abstract (75 word maximum):

Five years of continuous field schools in Oaxaca have resulted in community collaborations that focus on: (1) nutritional outreach for bodies plagued by lead poisoning, (2) the development of alternative tourism; and (3) the impact of the recent social unrest on tourist based communities. This funding seeks to continue in the development and implementation of these programs through continued research collaboration of faculty and students from Anthropology, LAS, History, Public Health and Geography.

Travel report:

I. Opening/overview of intentions/activity

The program in Oaxaca is a unique study abroad experience in that it is geared toward applied anthropological field methods of community based service, extensive qualitative research, and sustainable development practices that derive from collaboratively negotiated projects between community leaders and Professor Pérez. As such, it is primarily a graduate program that allows for some high performing and motivated undergraduate students. In 2007 community leadership changed significantly in the primary field site of Santa Maria Atzompa and reflected the social tensions that have plagued the state of Oaxaca since 2006. This left the primary community of the program in a severe economic downturn and the community was torn into three distinct political factions at the beginning of 2008. Thus when colleagues from UC Davis, UC San Francisco and The Ohio State University contacted Professor Pérez about the possibility of collaborating on a project in other communities in Oaxaca for the summer of 2008, the program was expanded to include these opportunities. Fortunately, a short trip to meet the new community leadership in Atzompa was made by Professor Pérez and Alex Hidalgo in early June that resolved any question of intention on the part of SDSU and the 2008 Summer Program proved to be one of the broadest and most comprehensive that we have had in the last six years.

II. In preparation for the trip abroad

The Ethnographic Field Methods Program in Oaxaca 2008 was comprised of two primary field sites: Santa María Atzompa and Zimatlán de Alvarez. All students participated in the seminar series that began in San Diego in May as ANTH 520 Ethnographic Field Methods during Summer Session I and continued throughout their six weeks in Oaxaca on Mondays and Thursdays from 4:00 to 7:00pm at the Instituto Welte para Estudios Oaxaqueños. Throughout the program they received training and access to colleagues and authors of their readings including Jim Grieshop (UC Davis), Margaret Handley (UC San Francisco), Arthur Murphy (UNC Greensboro), Jeff Cohen (OSU), Jennifer Mathews (Trinity U), and Alex Hidalgo (ASU and SDSU) as well as invitations to freely participate in Arizona State University's History Seminar that takes place in Oaxaca.

Arrangements were made for a team of students to work in the archives on Tuesday and Thursday of each week in Atzompa from 10:00am to 2:00pm by Professor Pérez and Alex Hidalgo at their preliminary meeting in early June with the Presidente Municipal and his cabildo. Veronica Miranda, the teaching assistant for the program, arrived on May 18th to begin initial follow up interviews with last year's promotores in the nutrition program and to initiate the steps for the group that would participate in the nutrition outreach program in this year's class.

A collaborative agreement was reached between Professors Grieshop, Handley, Cohen and Pérez to initiate long term research on the issue of lead poisoning in food products originating in the communities governed by the municipality of Zimatlán where Grieshop has done research and where many migrants originate who are currently located in the area that is serviced by health clinics under the auspices of Professor Handley in Seaside, California. Professors Grieshop and Handley had originally contacted Professor Cohen for aid on the issue of migrant health and Professor Cohen directed them to Professor Pérez once he learned that the issue was lead poisoning from Oaxaca. Thus the collaboration was born and funding for the materials, housing of the students in Zimatlán, and travel of the other professors and Evan Rubin, project leader, were born by grants from Cohen and Grieshop. Student training and expertise on the topic is the milieu of SDSU. (Note: OSU, one of the top schools in the nation in Anthropology has one previous SDSU MA student in their doctoral program from the SDSU Oaxaca program, Bernardo Rios, whom they accepted in 2007 and Nidia Merino, a McNair scholar from the Oaxaca Program was accepted into their doctoral program for the fall of 2008).

Conference calls with Angel Vazquez, Director of CENTEOTL were made by Jim Grieshop and Professor Pérez in May and June to discuss and agree upon the nature of our collaborative project, arrange for student housing, and secure office space for the students to work during the week.

III. Upon arrival/specific activity

Students were broken into various groups that attempted to reflect their general interests but also the dynamic of the projects. Returning students who were not registered for credit and who there to conduct their own research are not included in this report description unless they also participated in these activities.

List of Participants (All participants are Graduate students unless otherwise noted):

LAS

Rubin, Evan (Project leader in Zimatlán)*

Gwynne, Ryan

Hilburn, Michael

Espinoza, Rebeca (MA/MPH)

Persinger de Matos, Miriah (MA/MPH)

Orrison, Valerie (MA/MPH)

Smith, Jennifer (MA/MPH)

Rohman, Joy (MA/MBA)

Meckel-Parker, Krissy*

ANTHROPOLOGY:

Miranda, Veronica (TA)*

Anderson, Ryan*

Merino, Nidia*

Merino, Nadia

Adams, Rachel

Giacinto, Adam

Ramos, Marcos (Undergraduate, McNair)

Gonzalez, Cristina*

Santiago, Velma (Undergraduate, McNair)

Sanchez, Maribel (Undergraduate, McNair Geography/Anthropology)

Medina, Carlos (Undergraduate)*

OTHER UNIVERSITIES (Open U Registration):

Talavera, Carolina (Undergraduate, UC Santa Cruz)

Gerber, Monica (Undergraduate, Reed College)

Rodriguez, Norma (UT San Antonio)*

*Indicates returning student from previous program.

Santa María Atzompa

We focused on two primary areas of inquiry and collaboration this year: nutritional outreach to combat the effects of lead poisoning, and the preservation of their archival materials and the elicitation of oral histories in preparation for their community museum.

Archival and Oral History Team:

Unfortunately, rare and important materials that we had digitized in the previous year including three lienzos with dates from the 17th, 18th, and early 20th centuries along with

two Libros de Nombremientos from the 19th century have gone missing during the turn over of governance. Fortunately we did digitize these and have excellent copies. This work is what proved to be the key to evidencing our neutrality and commitment to the community and paved the way to our access to additional materials this year. Five students were assigned to the archives and elicitation of oral histories. They included: Michael Hilburn, Carolina Talavera, Maribel Sanchez, Marcos Ramos, and Ryan Gwynne, who served as the team leader. Velma Santiago participated at times in this project but was in Oaxaca for only a month before moving on to her primary research site in Guerrero.

The team completed the digitizing of the birth records from the 19th century; completed the inventory of the records currently stored in the archives; and moved most documents by topic into acid free storage boxes. We elicited the oral histories of almost all living past Presidentes Municipales but could not complete the most recent past president due to the still complex political issues; completed the living curanderas (female healers) in the community; began the elicitation of myths and legends from several key informants including the current secretario and the comisario de ejidatarios and received the name and permission to interview the holder of the last cofradia of the community. We completed several additional female elders as well.

We were also fortunate in that Professor Pérez had visited San Pablo Huixtepec with Dr. Jim Grieshop in early June and found their newly renovated Palacio Municipal with its organized archives and community museum a perfect example of what the possibilities for Atzompa were and thus arranged for a fieldtrip with the officials of Atzompa. Prof. Pérez, Ryan Gwynne, and Michael Hilburn took the Presidente Municipal Juan Ortiz Reyes, Secretario Clericio Clemente, and their driver to San Pablo to meet with their Presidente for a tour. It was an extremely successful trip that resulted not only in additional discussions for future collaborations between Huixtepec and SDSU but also for the community of Atzompa.



Rebeca, Ryan, Carolina, and Michael working on the archives.



Ryan, Carolina, Maribel, Michael, and Velma hard at work.



Professor Pérez and Consuelo Páz during an oral history (Carolina taking the photo).



Presidente Municipal of San Pablo Huixtepec, his assistant, Prof. Pérez, Ryan Gwynne, and the Presidente Municipal, Secretario, and driver from Atzompa (Michael Hilburn taking photo).

Nutrition Outreach Program:

The Nutrition Outreach Program was a continuation of the program that was initiated in 2006 through a collection of local recipes that were modified to enhance nutritional content utilizing local ingredients that would combat the effects of lead poisoning. This included increasing calcium, protein, and Vitamin C in each recipe without increasing cost, modifying textures, or changing the flavors drastically. A food fair was held in 2006 that reintroduced the recipes with these modifications to an overwhelmingly positive response. In 2007 a program of nutritional outreach, recipe enhancement, and cooking lessons was introduced with the intention of training local women to promote the program and train other women to do the same. Unfortunately this was the same year as the political upheaval and the women found themselves as divided and subject to factionalizing as the rest of the community. After Veronica Miranda's initial interviews in May before the rest of the group arrived, we determined that the best approach would be to form two different groups this year. We continued to work with an older women's group that focused on general nutrition and issues of diabetes, anemia, gastrointestinal distress especially prolonged diarrhea but we added to it additional topics that asked for including menopause, cervical and breast cancer, and alcoholism. We also turned our attention to a highly silenced but very important group, young mothers and newly married women, many of whom live with their mother-in-law. For them we also focused on general nutrition, diabetes, anemia, and gastrointestinal distress but we also trained them on nutrition for pregnancy and lactation, prematernal health, postpartum health, and infant and early child nutrition.

The older women's group proved much more difficult as in-fighting and factions continue to plague the group dynamic. For those that completed the program it was very rewarding and we introduced three local ingredients that are more economical than traditional sources of protein and iron: soy, amaranth, and chia. From this group a small collective has started to produce and make available for the larger population soy milk from the dried soy bean and dehydrated soy products. The collective needs a sponsor and we introduced them to the microfinance group at CENTEOTL in Zimatlán but it may be some time before CENTEOTL has a promotora available for the Atzompa area.

The Young Mothers Group was much more consistent and open to the training, responding openly and readily to each training session. Post interviews demonstrated a very hopeful outcome as many of the young women indicated that while it may be difficult for them to find the time to hold classes with other women as we had done, they do intend to promote the information through more informal means but with the same formality in materials. That is, they understand the importance of using the materials we provided them in the instruction and intend to use them but they cannot imagine themselves holding formal classes. Instead, they will have informal and much smaller groups over as friends and then bring out the presentation binders. Follow up demonstration proved that they are quite adept instructors and it was exciting for us to see them shine in their roles as teachers.

Veronica Miranda, Krissy Meckel-Parker and Professor Pérez met formally with the Presidenta del DIF (Desarrollo Integral de la Familia) and her five member committee in late June to present the program and ask if they would be interested in being formally trained in the program in 2009. They were overwhelmingly pleased and interested and

arrangements were made to train them as a group in 2009 utilizing the same format we have used to the present: home training, recipe preparation of a new recipe that utilizes one of the new ingredients and/or modifies a local recipe for nutritional impact, followed by instruction. We will, however, train them on how to implement the program to a larger audience without such food preparation so that they can offer it to large groups in the auditorium. We explained the importance of recipe training and what we have learned about women's lack of training in food preparation and how much of this has played into their inability to adequately feed their families. We also, however, understand that many do not have the money to "cooperate" or share in the cost of communal food preparation that we have done when we administer the program. This is an issue that the DIF women must face as they administer this program on a larger scale and that we will need to work with them in addressing in next year's program. We will thus continue to work on a small scale with home based programming and a community scale with the DIF women in future summer programs.



Veronica Miranda, Rachel Adams, Angeles Enriquez Martinez, Asuncion Enriquez Chavez, Auria Enriquez Chavez, Enedina, Enriquez Lopez, Pati Lopez, Rebeca Espinoza, Isabel Martinez Maldonado, and Monica Gerber at the first meeting of the nutrition program.



Yola, Pati, Alma, and Diana preparing moletes with soyrizo from the Young mothers group.



Women and their guests and the clausura of the nutrition program.



Angeles Enriquez Martinez receiving her certificate of completion along with daughter Lia from Krissy, Miriah, Veronica, and Prof. Pérez.



Isabel Martinez Maldonado, the primary promotora, receiving her certificate from Krissy, Rebeca, Veronica, Rachel, and Prof. Pérez.

Zimatlán

The Zimatlán program was centered on two primary ethnographic inquiries: discovering the extent of the household use of lead based ceramic ware in daily use to correlate in the use of food production for family members in the U.S.; and the dynamics of mealtime and food changes between generations that would aid us in our work with migrant families in San Quintín and the U.S. These two inquiries were embedded within the project needs of CENTEOTL (Centro de Desarrollo Comunitario Centeotl A.C.), an organization dedicated to the improvement of the lives of communities through gender equality, sustainable development, environmental improvement, and the improvement of the lives of the most marginalized, among other issues. One of their most pressing needs was the creation of a website that could be used for local access as well as a site for investors and foundations. Their new web page can be viewed at <http://centeotl.ac.googlepages.com/home> that was created by Evan Rubin with work contributed by our students during their field season. Evan Rubin, who finished his MA in LAS with an emphasis in Anthropology and Educational Technology this last June, lead the project and worked with Adam Giacinto, Nidia Merino, Nadia Merino, Valerie Orrison, Joy Rohman, and Jennifer Smith. These seven students lived with families in Zimatlán Tuesday through Thursday, returning to Oaxaca for class and the weekend each week.

Our students were asked to work within CENTEOTL's outreach program, communicated through promotores and structured through colmenas, or beehives. The colmenas consist of women's groups that have received financial assistance through a microcredit program called Bancomunidad. The students were to learn as much as they could about each group, elicit their stories about the program and its impact on their lives and communities on digital recorders, teach them how to use digital cameras to capture these stories through the lens, and then create mini photostories that would transmit these stories to others using their own patterns of communication. In the end, few of these groups completed the entire process, preferring instead that the students formatted the stories.

They did, however, contribute strongly to the stories, images, and ideas of how their stories were to be conveyed.

The students visited approximately 30 colmenas in communities that they hiked into to see housing projects that were built through communal labor and adobe, water recapture and distribution and a fish farm and hand made wooden toy workshop that has brought new life to the community of La Soledad. The community, a once almost abandoned town of women, children and the elderly, is now functioning and even prospering as they have found a sense of pride in being able to support themselves and their children. While their sense of prosperity is not one that even meets the standards of minimum wage for Mexico, it is enough for them to live comfortably, send their children to school, and obtain local health care.



Evan and Valerie with promotores and women from La Soledad

Other students worked with the primary school children in eliciting stories on intra-generational food preferences and mealtime. These were amazingly rich sequences of information that in the videos come across as funny and charming but also demonstrate that families still live in households of three generations and continue to eat together twice if not three times per day. The meals of comida and cena remain strong and in some families almuerzo is also eaten together while in others neither desayuno nor almuerzo is shared in the morning. The information also tells us that some foods are being lost such as herb based caldos (chipil) but not a single child produced images of junk or fast food as a food preference for any generation or member of the family. Nor did any image contain these products (although a fly did manage to find its way onto a taco, much to the dismay of the mother at the public demonstration!).



Zimatlán group (Jennifer, Joy, Evan, Nadia, Nidia, Adam and Valerie) with children from the videos.



CENTEOTL, A.C.

Centro de Desarrollo Comunitario



Nidia and Nadia giving a lesson to the children who did the videos on intra-generational food consumption.

Students also worked with a youth group from San Pablo Huixtepec to produce a photostory about their work on reforestation and volunteer work. All of these photostories will aid CENTEOTL in promoting their work among other communities as they serve as a tool that allows others to see and hear local people communicate in a manner that belongs to them rather than a professional produced product that is intended as a marketing tool for funders or investors. Thus the projects serve both to reinforce those that are already working with CENTEOTL in providing them affirmation in what they are doing and as a tool that they can use to promote to others what they are doing in a more formal and consistent yet relaxed manner.

In addition to the photostories and local ethnographic work, Maribel Sanchez worked with Salvador Gomez, from Zimatlán. They conducted surveys of vendors at the Abastos and Veinte de Noviembre markets in Oaxaca City over a one month period to determine the sources of chapuline production. This was an important survey as it is the off season

in Oaxaca, evidencing what we have long suspected: that chapulines are not coming from Oaxaca but rather from Puebla and thus the lead contamination may not just be a Oaxacan problem but also a larger problem within Mexico. They also collected samples from each vendor that is tagged according to its source for lead testing at a later time. They also produced an informational video of their project that was shown at the final exhibition at CENTEOTL. Nidia Merino and Nadia Merino also conducted household surveys on ceramic use in chapuline production. They will use this data as part of a larger project on our work in tracing lead exposure to food production.

The students completed their time at CENTEOTL with a final exhibition on Wednesday evening, June 23rd. Their families were invited to attend as they demonstrated the videos that each child produced as well as the longer videos that were produced for the community of La Soledad, the reforestation program in San Pablo, the volunteer program Dos Pasos, and the production of amaranth with CENTLI. Their videos can be seen at <http://centeotl.ac.googlepages.com/home6>. While there are currently only a few of their videos up, we hope to have the rest of them up soon.



Zimatlán group in a field of amaranth.

In addition to the videos, a new cooperative from Atzompa, the fruition of almost 15 years of work, brought ceramic produced with a borax phosphate glaze for each of the families as gifts from the students. The new cooperative, Barro sin Plomo, consists of only 25 members and will be working with CENTEOTL and SDSU to try and promote the ceramic in the upcoming summer program. This was a new collaboration that we initiated on the night of the exhibition and was warmly welcomed by the community; a clear indication of the need and desire for the product.



Guillermo Enriquez Chavez discussing Barro sin Plomo with families at the CENTEOTL Exhibition.

IV. Conclusion, recommendation, and next step?

The field school in Oaxaca has been an extremely successful program in terms of training graduate and highly motivated undergraduate students in applied research. Sixteen different MA theses in Anthropology, LAS and Public Health have been or are currently being written on research from these summer programs of which six students have gone on to doctoral programs where they will continue their research in Atzompa or Oaxaca; two undergraduate senior theses have been done that resulted in one student being accepted to Cornell and another choose between four doctoral admission offers (UCSB, Michigan, Iowa, and Ohio); four students have been accepted into our McNair program; twenty nine students have presented at professional meetings; and one student received a Fulbright based on her involvement in 2004. Three of my students have won Sally Cassanova PreDoctoral Summer Internships in 2008 as part of their Fellowships as a result of their work in Oaxaca.

As noted in my report for last year's funding, I published one article that directly acknowledged funding from OIP and have recently submitted a jointly authored paper with Karen Coleman and Kim McDougal (MA student) that acknowledges OIP. All research is conducted under 3 IRB protocols that I hold except for those students who are conducting individual research as a result of prior experience in the area. These students submit and obtain their own IRB protocol for data that will be used in their MA theses, professional presentations, and future publications.

The recent collaborations with UC Davis, UC San Francisco and Ohio State University have expanded the program into Zimatlán where we have committed to another four years. Unfortunately Stuart Aiken was not able to join us this summer due to conflicts with his work in Ireland and the upcoming conference with ISYS in August but our joint student, Maribel Sanchez, worked diligently and we plan on future collaborations.

V. Additional Information

A final offer was bestowed on SDSU when Professor Pérez was asked to be an "Invitado de Honor" along with Dr. Nelly Robles García of the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia (INAH) at the Gueleguetza Popular 2008 in Atzompa. The letter from the Presidente Municipal and the Ayuntamiento recognized all that we have done to preserve, promote, honor, and transmit the traditions, culture, and history of the community and in that vein asked that we honor them as guests alongside the mayor, the president of the land commission, and other mayors and political figures from the seven regions that attended.