

## Faculty Report Template

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Proposal title NARRATIVES OF WAR AND RECOVERY: LEARNING FROM SALVADORANS AFTER A CIVIL CONFLICT: AN ALTERNATIVE SPRING BREAK EXPERIENCE FOR SDSU STUDENTS IN EL SALVADOR

Country/ies visited EL SALVADOR

Institution visited UNIVERSIDAD PANAMERICANA and many others

Dates of travel MARCH 13-20, 2004

Number of student participants: SIX; plus pastor of SDSU Wesley Foundation

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

Have all required reports been submitted? N/A

Other funding for this activity available/applied for: \$1000 FUNDED BY CALIFORNIA-PACIFIC ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH; \$625 FUNDED BY FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, SAN DIEGO. These funds subsidized two students' travel expenses and donated funds to two mission projects: the children's outreach ministry of the Union Church, and the local Habitat for Humanity.

Proposal Abstract (75 word maximum): During Spring break 2004, I led 6 SDSU students on an Alternative Spring Break to El Salvador. We met with scholars, educators,

community activists, church workers, US Embassy personnel, artists, and others. They presented lectures and told us their experiences during the civil war, 1979-1992, and how they have overcome divisions caused by conflict.

## **Travel report:**

### **I. Opening/overview of intentions/activity**

Salvadorans have made remarkable progress in moving beyond their twelve-year civil war. Frequently, they are considered a role model for other nations attempting to overcome divisions caused by conflict. Their stories deserve to be widely told and emulated. SDSU students will learn directly about war's effects and aftermath as they listen to narratives of war and recovery from participants in El Salvador.

### **II. In preparation for the trip abroad**

I collaborated with Ricardo Aguilar, artist and past President of the Fundación Salarrué to arrange speakers and logistics in El Salvador. He traveled to SDSU in February to meet potential student participants. We treated the students to a Salvadoran dinner to prepare them for the local cuisine and to answer questions and concerns. I met with all the students for pizza and a video about the civil war and its aftermath.

I emailed/made arrangements for lectures or meetings with the following:  
Joaquín Salaverría, past-Director of the National Archives/coffee finca owner;  
Jeff Jacobsen, pastor of Union Church San Salvador;  
Pedro Piñeda, Cultural Affairs assistant, U.S. Embassy San Salvador;  
Marcy Carrel, USAID contract librarian/recent Peace Corps volunteer;  
Veronica Vides, sculptor;  
Edgardo Quijano, artist and Maya expert;  
Carlos Avalos, director of local Habitat for Humanity;  
Carlos Henríquez Consalvi, director of the Museo de la Palabra y la Imagen;  
Maria Eugenia Aguilar, Maya priest.

### **III. Upon arrival/specific activity**

I arrived the day before the students and Pastor Cooper to ensure all arrangements were made. They arrived on Saturday evening at 7:30pm. Unfortunately they were on a plane filled with observers of the next week's presidential elections; they were detained in customs along with 80 others overnight. They were released at 2pm on Sunday. Overnight there were many phone calls and emails among us, with their parents, with the media, with the US Embassy. The students learned much more about Salvadoran politics than expected! The remainder of the trip went as planned.

On Monday, we visited the Museo de la Palabra y la Imagen to see recovery and preservation of the war's historical resources. We passed by the US Embassy on our way to La Libertad port and surfing beaches. We had dinner with an American living in San Salvador who served in the Peace Corps and now with USAID. On Tuesday, we visited two archeological sites and a museum at Joya de Ceren and Tazumal, accompanied by

Maya artist, Edgardo Quijano. We visited a private home above the crater lake Coatepeque. At 5-7 pm we met some 35 neighborhood children at the Union Church, playing games and sharing experiences. We donated funds provided for the children's ministry by the First United Methodist Church of San Diego. On Wednesday, we spent the day in the rural town Jayaque, building a home with Habitat for Humanity; this allowed students to see how the majority of Salvadorans live. We presented more donations from United Methodist churches for their ongoing construction projects. On Thursday, we had lectures by Veronica Vides, award-winning sculptor, and Maria Eugenia Aguilar, a Maya priest who overviewed contemporary Maya religion and practices. We visited the campuses of the Universidad de El Salvador (UES) and the Universidad Central Americana Jose Simeon Cañas (UCA). At the latter, we visited the site where six priests and two women were assassinated in 1989. On Friday several of us visited the church where Archbishop Oscar Romero was assassinated in 1980. We spent Friday afternoon and night at a Costa del Sol beach to relax before flying out at 1:30pm on Saturday. Exit from the country had no glitches and we arrived safely back in San Diego that night.

On Thursday afternoon, I myself visited with Oscar Armando Moran Folgar, the Rector of the Universidad Panamericana, accompanied by the Cultural Affairs Assistant of the US Embassy, Pedro Piñeda.. We discussed potential collaboration between SDSU and the UPAN. The Rector was especially interested in the social work and education master's programs; we plan to further explore this connection for Salvadoran students to earn their master's degrees at SDSU and vice versa for SDSU students to study at the UPAN. The Rector invited me to teach cataloging in their library science program. I am considering applying for another Fulbright scholarship to teach in fall 2005 when I hope to have a sabbatical leave.

#### **IV. Conclusion, recommendation, and next step?**

SDSU students had an opportunity to travel to a less developed country, to learn about the effects of a war on real people, to see the resiliency of humans after conflict. They saw firsthand the heavy hand of government which detained them without explanation for 18 hours, an unforgettable experience! Several students expressed interest in returning to work longer stints with Habitat for Humanity, and plan to pursue this for Winter Break. Other students may wish to return to serve an internship at the Museo de la Palabra which holds original documents concerning the war as well as literary manuscripts. The museum director eagerly invites other SDSU or CSU participants to serve internships or to research specific collections in that museum.

If a connection is made between SDSU and UPAN, this will allow several students from both institutions the opportunity to live and learn in another country.

The Director of Latin American Studies, Dr. Jim Gerber, says he hopes to continue the connections made in El Salvador for future travel/study programs. Ignacio Ochoa of ISCOR is also making connections at two universities in El Salvador, and he and I are working collaboratively on this.

The Rev. Beth Cooper and I are giving a presentation to the First United Methodist Church on April 15 about this trip and the projects we engaged in with the students. She has been interviewed by United Methodist media reporters and will give other presentations. I am writing an article for the *CRL News* journal and for the SDSU Library's newsletter.

I will be returning to El Salvador in May 2004 to attend the Dia del Bibliotecario professional conference on libraries and librarians. I may return to teach cataloging in fall 2005, and to conduct research on how the people who met with our students have recovered after the war years. Each person has an interesting story to tell, and I hope to continue to collaborate with them.

## **V. Additional Information**

Although this travel/study tour to El Salvador lasted only one week, a shorter period than usually promoted for students to engage with other cultures, I feel it was quite successful and productive. The students met a range of Salvadorans in urban and rural settings; learned about pre-Colombian culture as well as contemporary Maya society and religion; experienced the excitement and fear of change through contested presidential elections; saw historical locations where religious leaders were assassinated during the recent civil war; visited the two principal university campuses to see where Salvadorans study; and enjoyed leisure time at beautiful beaches.

The students had only to pay for their airfare and food, plus \$100 lodging expenses for the week. I had reserved two two-bedroom apartments for three students each at \$10 a night; one student stayed with me across the street in a small hotel. The OIP grant paid my lodging and airfare, also the rental of a van to carry them all around. I personally paid all the entrance fees to museums and archeological sites, plus honoraria to the various lecturers/leaders. So for around \$850-1000 each, the students learned a great deal about this small but important Central American country. The two students affiliated with SDSU's Wesley Foundation received subsidies by my church and our Conference with their airfare; this allowed them to engage in Habitat for Humanity work which they will report on to my congregation and our Conference.

I thank the OIP for the opportunity to lead these SDSU students to El Salvador. I will continue my own connections with colleagues there with future research and teaching projects. I think at least some of the students will return. I hope other SDSU students may want to study at the UPAN or other universities, and perhaps Salvadoran students may study for master's degrees at SDSU. Good foundations for continuing connections have been made and I look forward to future collaborations and additional short travel/study programs.

**All information should be sent to The Office of International Programs via e mail:**

**[oiip@mail.sdsu.edu](mailto:oiip@mail.sdsu.edu)**