

FACULTY REPORT
International Travel
for
Alternative Spring Break- South Africa 2008

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Proposal title Alternative Spring Break – South Africa

Country/ies visited South Africa

Institution visited Witwatersrand University

Dates of travel March 27- April 8, 2008

Number of student participants: 30

Previous IP proposals submitted and grants awarded

(List titles, countries and dates): 8/7

Ghana 1999, 200, 2003

Nigeria, 2005

Alternative Spring Break, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008

Have all required reports been submitted? Yes

Other funding for this activity available/applied for:

College of Arts and Letters

Proposal Abstract (75 word maximum):

Service Learning Project in South Africa involving 30-40 students and faculty persons. Travel to Cape Town, Johannesburg, Soweto and Pretoria. Volunteer at youth centers,

orphanages, middle schools and vocational schools. Students will do physical work (paint, repair, etc) in Kliptown at a preschool supported by the US Embassy and MAD (Making A Different) Foundation. Students will also volunteer at schools for children orphaned by AIDS.

Travel report:

I. Opening/overview of intentions/activity

For the past six years, the department of Africana Studies has taken students to South Africa for an Alternative Spring Break Experience. Students have learned about the history and culture of South Africa and its continuing efforts to develop a multi-cultural society. We have volunteered at youth centers and orphanages. We provide support to children and families devastated by AIDS and poverty.

II. In preparation for the trip abroad

We remain in contact with persons from Miles and Associates, our initial contact. Our contact, however, has expanded to include staff at the US Embassy to work with M.A.D. (Making A Different Foundation). Our relationship with them has grown over the past three years and we are hosted by them and assisted in selecting places where we can work together to make a difference for the young people of South Africa.

We maintain contact by phone and email. During the summer, we host their students in San Diego.

We, also, maintain contact with Every Women's Society - a group of young women at Witwatersrand University. Since 2006, we have visited their campus, engaged in rap sessions, conferences and a live video conference with this group.

While in South Africa, one of the group leaders meets with persons who have new projects for the group to consider. This allows us to remain current in our efforts as we attempt to make a difference. This also allows us to "hit the ground running" while in South Africa with little lag time doing ineffective projects. We have only ten days in South Africa and we make the most of our time.

III. Upon arrival/specific activity

We have a set group of educational activities that are core to our experience (Apartheid museum, District 6, Langa, Soweto, etc.). Then, based on what we learned the year before, we add or subtract from the program.

We begin our travel with an exposure to the history of culture of South Africa before we attempt to volunteer. In a short time frame, we give students a real feel

for the challenge of this nation and an appreciation for his unique history. We do not want students imposing their worldview on the South African. We are there to learn and to share. At the end of the trip, students engage in a day and a half of pure fun – a safari and shopping.

IV. Conclusion, recommendation, and next step?

This project continues to be sold by the students. Upon return, students were waiting to sign up because of what they heard from other students. We continue to expand our horizon. This year a girl scout troop is making blankets to give to children orphaned by AIDS. Our plan is to carry those blankets for her. She was referred by someone who works in the President's office.

We have already begun helping students interested in applying for Fulbright's. Our contacts will be helpful to those students as they travel abroad.

We anticipate having students from South Africa coming to San Diego. The M.A.D. Foundation funds students to attend schools around the world. They are excited about having a real contact at SDSU that can be of assistance to students who travel here to study.

V. Additional Information

Working with the US Embassy has proven to be very fruitful. Currently, I am speaking with our Congress persons about their support of this effort. Being able to offer SDSU internships is exciting and promising for so many disciplines. We have a tentative commitment for 2010 from one of the local congress persons to travel with SDSU to South Africa.