Health, Safety, and Security Inventory for Short Term Projects Abroad 2012

1. Please provide a description of the project, a clear statement of project objectives and the benefits to the students, proposed dates, information on the site including how it relates to the academic program and mission of the sponsoring department/unit and college, and activities and/or excursions involved. Include any country specific issues.

The Proyecto Luis De Lión is an undergraduate collaborative research and service learning project for four students for summer 2012 in Guatemala as part of a year-long service learning project that spans the s12 and f12 semesters. The four students who will be going to Guatemala will be serving as a bridge between the research and planning stages (carried out by fourteen students in my SPAN A341 class in s12) and the implementation phase (carried out by the students in LAS V230 class in f12). They will also be carrying out individual research projects in their time there.

This semester we've been running a service learning project (SPAN A341) in which we are collaborating with a museum, an arts school, and a children's library that are connected with the surviving family of the disappeared author of the novel I just translated (coming out in the fall from U Arizona Press). We have read several of Luis de Lión’s short stories and have been researching the related historical and artistic context of the armed conflict in Guatemala (including the CIA/United Fruit sponsored overthrow of the elected socialist government in 1954 and the forced disappearances of artists in the ensuing years). In addition we have been communicating with the widow and daughter of the assassinated author in order to come up with different potential ways to establish a web presence for these three charitable organizations they run in the village of San Juan del Obispo in Sacatepéquez, Guatemala, the home village of Luis de Lión. The students have researched these elements in direct relation to the literary works produced across Latin America in the context of the dirty wars that dominated most of the countries on the continent in the second half of the 20th century. They have been following the current events in Guatemala with an eye toward the renewed efforts to identify the remains of people found in mass graves and to raise awareness in Guatemala and abroad about the dark period in Guatemala’s history when between 30,000 and 40,000 people were extra-judiciously “disappeared” by agents of the government (with US support) as a political tactic.

Using that information as a foundation, they have written up a questionnaire and used it to begin to understand the vision of the women in Guatemala (María Tula de Leon and Mayari de Leon) in terms of the three charitable organizations they have started in Guatemala. The students have been attending a series of presentations put on by the Donnelly Center to learn about strategies for establishing web presences for charitable organizations and are currently writing up a proposal with different options tailored toward these charities, which will eventually house fundraising mechanisms for the projects in Guatemala.

Next semester the students in LAS V230 will complete the service learning project by implementing the web presence plan and fund-raising mechanisms that best fulfill the vision of our partners in Guatemala. They will then work to establish a sustained relationship between Loyola and these charitable organizations through the service learning office. This is a particularly sensitive project because of the colonial and neocolonial past and present of Guatemala. The students have really responded to this semester’s project and have carried out some really good research that will set up for a successful implementation stage in the fall. The four students who will travel to Guatemala have developed separate research project proposals for secondary projects they will carry out in Guatemala in addition to the work they will be doing with the museum, the school and the library, where they will be working for two weeks with the women who run these charities. Their goals will be: 1) to work with María Tula de Leon and Mayari de Leon in these three charitable organizations 2) to go over the options for the web presence project with these women and design the implementation phase based on these conversations and on their work in the charities 3) come back to Loyola in the fall with a better understanding of the work of the charities on the ground and the political situation in Guatemala so that they can lead the service learning project in
LAS V230 4) CLACS will set up a colloquium for them to present their research when they get back and their paper project for the f12 class will be submitting the related paper for publication.

We have received funding from 1) a service learning grant 2) the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies. In addition we are waiting to hear whether we will receive collaborative undergraduate research funding. I had initially planned to take only 2 students, but their work has been so good and their interest in Latin American Studies so piqued that I would like to double that number to 4. Basically the idea is to pay for their airline tickets and 2 weeks of hostel accommodation (in Antigua, very safe, with a friend of mine who runs a hostel there). I will pick them up at the airport and take them to the hostel, then to the village to meet the women who run the places. They will be working in San Juan del Obispo between July 9-21. They have agreed to take on the other costs of the trip. The idea is that they will be doing research and working with these women to design a web presence for these three charities that the other class service learning project will implement in f12.

2. Please provide a list of staff/faculty including the names and addresses and biographies of on-site coordinator and participating faculty and staff if non-Loyola. Provide previous experience in host country, language of host country or in related academic area for all faculty. Qualifications of guides/staff in country.

I will be the only faculty member involved and I will loosely coordinate the students’ collaboration with María Tula de Leon (author’s widow) and Mayari de Leon (author’s daughter) for the two week in July. I am from Guatemala (born and raised) and perform most of my research there. I have been working with these two women for the last three years in various capacities. All of my students speak very good Spanish, the official language of Guatemala.

3. Please describe any known religious or local traditions, cultural norms or political attitudes that may necessitate modification of participant behavior and how students will be informed about these cross-cultural differences.

The students have been studying the historical and social context surrounding Guatemala and this project for at least one semester (3 of the students have been involved for more than 2 semesters). We have been meeting once a week for an hour (Wednesdays 3:30-4:30 or Fridays 3:30-4:30, depending on students’ schedule) to conduct additional specific orientation. These meetings will continue throughout the semester.

4. Please give dates and times of pre-departure and on-site orientation meetings.

See above (#3) for pre-departure meetings. I will conduct a mandatory on-site orientation on July 8 and 9.

5. What information do you cover in your pre-departure and on-site orientation sessions regarding health, safety and security issues? (Include any handouts you may have.) Please provide a detailed description of the student living accommodations for this program.

I give a frank assessment of the security dangers in Guatemala and the appropriate behavior to ameliorate these risks. In terms of health, I will hand out copies of Lonely Planet’s section on food and disease risks. The department of Sacatepéquez is low risk in terms of health risks and security issues.

6. Please provide a detailed description of the student living accommodations for this program.
The students will be staying in Tanaah Guest House in Antigua, Guatemala (Callejon de las Animas # 51 Sacatepequez, Antigua Guatemala 03001). I have stayed in this guesthouse numerous times and it is owned by a close friend of mine (Diego Fernandez) and run by another friend of mine (Evelyn Ramirez). The students will have their own rooms and eat breakfast with Evelyn before going out to the village on the bus each day. They will responsible for getting their own lunches and dinners. I will be staying around the corner in a house I lease from Diego. Evelyn knows to contact me at any hour for any emergency.

7. If students are housed with host families, please describe the selection, supervision and evaluation process for the families. *As per Loyola’s emergency protocol, please verify that if the students in your group are to be housed with local families, the families will be informed that they are required to notify the on-site coordinator or director if there is an emergency involving a student. If the students are housed in a residence system or rented house the local housing supervisor will be informed that he or she must notify the on-site coordinator if an emergency occurs.*

See #6 above

8. Do the students need to take any special health precautions?

The only real health danger in this department (Sacatepéquez) is from food borne illnesses. They will be briefed about these and will receive a handout on ways to lower the risks.

9. Are there any State Department or Center for Disease Control Travel Warnings or alerts relevant to your program and how and when do you present this information to the students?

We have already looked at the US embassy in Guatemala’s website and gone through looking for travel advisories. I will print out and provide 1) the US State Department Consular Information sheet 2) the CDC health information for Guatemala and 3) Loyola Education Abroad Emergency Protocol in hard copy form in our last pre-departure meeting.

10. What are the safety and security risks at the proposed program site, and how will these be addressed?

See #5 and #9 above. The main safety risk in Guatemala involves gang violence but it is not a concern in the areas where the students will be housed and working. We have discussed smart behaviors that basically reflect what students should do in New Orleans to be safe. (Don’t walk alone at night, etc.)

11. Are there any ongoing religious, political or ethnic conflicts that could compromise the safety of the program participants?

No.

12. Are there any potential natural disasters (earthquakes, active volcanoes, hurricanes) in the country that could compromise the safety of the program participants? If yes, please explain what the program will do to address these.

Of course natural disasters are always possible anywhere in the world. My handout packet includes briefings on these from the Lonely Planet book. There is also a section on the US embassy website.

13. Please attach a detailed program itinerary.
Weekend of July 6: Students arrive in Antigua and I take them to Tanaah Guest House.

Sunday July 8: welcome dinner and meeting to distribute handouts and to discuss safety procedures.

Monday July 9: meet in the morning and I take them out to San Juan del Obispo via public bus. We meet with María Tula de Leon and Mayarí de Leon to finalize working plans for 2 week projects. Return to Tanaah Guest House and eat dinner together to discuss the next two weeks.

Tuesday through Friday (July10-13): students go to San Juan del Obispo daily to work in library, museum, and school.

Friday July 13-15: Students may choose weekend activities.

Monday July 16-Friday July 20: Students go to San Juan del Obispo daily to work in library, museum, and school.

Friday (July 20): Dinner with María, Mayarí, and Evelyn to celebrate the clausura of the program.

Depending on itineraries I’ll take the students to the airport.

14. Please describe all modes of transportation to be used by the program in the host country for travel, program tours or excursions. Attach any related contracts with transportation companies, travel agents, etc. (You should hire vendors and contractors (e.g. travel and tour agents) that have provided reputable services in the country in which the program takes place.)

I will pick the students up from the airport and bring them to the hostel. I will show them how to catch the bus to the village on the first day and they will be using public transportation daily from then on. (My wife uses this same public transportation alone all the time and her Spanish is not as good as the students’ who will be participating.)

15. Provide an overview of the logistical arrangements, including travel to and from the host country and transportation within the host country for project. Please provide information about the organization making these arrangements and attach any related contracts.

I will be buying the airline tickets for the students, picking them up at the airport, and showing them how to use public transportation between Antigua and San Juan del Obispo.

16. What infrastructure is needed on site? Please provide detailed information on housing, local field trips, etc? How will this be provided? Is there a partner university or institution or travel agent? What are Loyola’s responsibilities? What are host institution responsibilities?

See #6 above. In addition to housing, the students will be working in the museum, library and school in the village of San Juan del Obispo. These arrangements have already been made.

17. Do you have codes of conduct for your program? How do you communicate the code of conduct to your students and the consequences of noncompliance? (It is important that if you have a code of conduct for your program, that you take appropriate action when you are aware that participants are in violation.)
Because there are only four students going on this trip we are handling our expectations for their behavior on an informal basis in our weekly meetings. They have been studying the culture of Guatemala for two semesters (in most cases) and are very aware of proper conduct.

18. In the participant screening process, do you consider factors such as disciplinary history that may impact the safety of the individual or the group? If you do not consider this currently, would you be interested in requiring this?

Yes, we have been studying the discipline in which the students will be engaged in their research projects. (And if this question means problems with discipline that these students have, none have any disciplinary record at Loyola; Furthermore, I have taught 3 of them for 3 semesters and I know these students very well.)

19. Please review the Loyola University Emergency Protocol (http://www.loyno.edu/cie/education-abroad-emergency-protocol) and explain how this will be applied in this project.

We will go over this protocol pre-departure and on-site. We are acquiring funds for appropriate insurance, which we will purchase through CIE.
Debbie,

Yes I can come to that meeting on the 26th. Thank you for inviting me. I'm guessing it'll be in the CIE office?

In answer to your question about the sensitivity of the research: it's no longer an issue like it was, but of course I can't absolutely guarantee that there's not still some lingering resentment. Lots of people are digging up the past these days in Guate (both figuratively and literally) in the interest of truth and reconciliation and nobody (foreigners anyway) has been harmed in at least a decade just for asking questions. I do a lot of that sort of thing myself and the ways things feel in those terms has really changed since I started asking those kinds of questions. Since Bishop Girardi was murdered in 1998 on the heels of publishing the UN reports on the armed conflict, there are lots of oversight groups that have really been able to instil a culture of openness in terms of trying to find out the truth about what happened in those years. Some people are still afraid to talk about it, but the danger is really only perceived on there part and is only a carry-over from the really dark years. I am very confident doing this kind of research these days and the level of questions these students will be asking will not be a problem, though your concerns would certainly have been warranted just a few years ago.

By the way I have a couple of letters from students talking about why the trip is important. Would you like me to forward those to you to include in the packet?

The students names are:

Molly Wagner
Matthew Ghabrial
Erik Miller
Andrea Vice

Thanks for you help on this,

Nathan

Hi Nathan,

Thanks for going into such detail on the application. I only have one question that may not be an issue. If I understand correctly, the students will be doing research projects in addition to the service project. Could there be any problems because of the research the students are doing on disappeared persons?

Could you come to the Education Abroad Committee meeting on Thursday, April 26 at 10:30? You don't have to, but if any question come up, it would make it easier.

Could you send me the names of the students? That way as soon as this is approved, I can set the students up with the online waivers.

Thanks and let me know if you have any questions and if you can come
Hi Debbie,

I am attaching the Health, Safety, and Security Inventory for Short Term Projects Abroad 2012 filled out for the Proyecto Luis de Lion. Letters of support are forthcoming from the department and college, but I thought I'd send this along so you'd have some time to look at it before your meeting next week. If you get a chance and can take a look at it in time to give me suggestions for how to improve, I'd be grateful. If not, I understand that you have a lot going on at this time.

I will send along the letters of support soon. As I understand it, these are the only three things you need before that meeting next week, right?

Thanks,

Nathan

Hi Nathan,

Sorry for the delay in sending this. Ric and I developed the attached policies and procedures for running a short-term programs and the questionnaire that you need to complete. The entire process will have to be approved by the Education Abroad Committee at our meeting on April 26 as well as your responses to the Health, Safety, and Security Inventory for Short Term Projects Abroad 2012 before we can approve students going abroad.

I think everything is self-explanatory but if you have questions, let me know.

Best,

Debbie

On Mar 22, 2012, at 8:58 AM, Nathan C Henne wrote:

Hi Debbie,

On Apr 17, 2012, at 10:39 AM, Nathan C Henne wrote:

Hi Debbie,

Best,

Debbie
I've gotten some funding (and am trying to get more) for a couple of students to do a small project in a village in Guate this summer. It is part of a Service Learning /collaborative research project with a museum, an arts school and a children's library that are connected with the disappeared author of the novel I just translated (and coming out in the fall). I'm wondering if you can give me the quick and dirty on what kinds of forms they will need to sign for liability release for me and for Loyola. The idea is to pay for their airline tickets and 2 weeks of hospedaje (in Antigua with a friend of mine who runs a hostel). I will pick them up at the airport and take them to the hostel, then to the village to meet the women who run the places. The idea is that they will be working with these women to design a web presence for these three charities that another class service learning project will implement in f12. My current class is researching and writing up some optional plans this semester and the students who go on this trip will be working with the women there to figure out the best plan to implement in f12. The students will also be volunteering in the museum, school and library and will be carrying out a personal research project (related to the disappeared or some other aspect of the civil conflict or indigenous movements in Guate). Once I take them out there on the first day, I will be trying to leave the planning and execution stages completely up to them and our Guatemalan partners. So really it's not that I'm taking them on this trip; it's just that I've gotten some funding for them for airfare and a bed to sleep in. I want them to use what we've done this semester and take the initiative for how to spend the two weeks they've committed to. (The students who will be going are quite responsible.)

With this limited amount of information can you tell me if there is a sort-of catch-all release of liability form that would be appropriate for them to sign? Or do you need more info? If the latter, would you prefer to ask for follow-up info re email or would you like me to make an appointment to come see you?

Thanks,

Nathan

Nathan C Henne, PhD
April 19, 2012

To: Education Abroad Committee:
From: William J. Farge, S.J., Chair
        Department of Languages and Cultures
Re: Student Travel to Guatemala

I am writing this letter to express the Department of Language and Culture’s support for the travel opportunity for four LAS students to go to Guatemala this summer with the Proyecto Luis de Lión. This trip and the associated contact with people in the village of San Juan del Obispo in Guatemala is an excellent opportunity for these area studies students to put into practice all of the things they have been learning over the years in the classroom. All four of the students are either majors or minors in our department, and Dr. Nathan Henne knows them very well as a result of having taught them in consecutive semesters.

Dr. Henne has solicited and won money from three different sources to be able to make this trip possible for these students, and we feel strongly about the important influence that travel in the area of study has on preparing our students for their professional careers. In addition, the goals of the service learning/collaborative research projects in which the students and Dr. Henne will be engaging during their time in Guatemala reflect the values of both our department and our Loyola Jesuit identity.

We fully support this project of Dr. Nathan Henne’s in association with these classes in our department and we urge you to support it as well.

Sincerely,

Fr. William Farge, S.J. Chair