



International Informant

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Informing you about Oklahoma State's international trade and development efforts

Calendar of Events

- Fall 2011: Wes Watkins Distinguished Lectureship

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Oklahoma State University:
Center for International
Trade and Development

A Message from Dr. Mike Dicks

Nowhere is the divide between rich and poor more evident than in South Africa. Driving along the coast through KwaZulu Natal (southeast coast of South Africa) the vast fields of sugarcane can be seen growing along N3, the major highway running north and south out of Durban, for hundreds of miles. This is for sugar, a major export of South Africa.

During apartheid the major cities such as Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban were off limits to people of color except during the day if they possessed a work permit and were going to or from their place of employment. Because the large cities were the largest source of employment, small communities developed around the cities where rural migrants could commute to and from work.

The large cities are gorgeous, the most beautiful airports I have been in, beautiful homes and boulevards, shopping malls, entertainment, restaurants and spots venues. Just outside the city are communities (townships) with make-shift housing, limited or no access to running water or sewage systems and row after row of small shops selling basic items.

The beautiful neighborhoods in the large cities are now integrated but one wonders at the number of deeply impoverished to those relatively well off. HIV/AIDS is reported to infect 37% of the populace and the largest number of tuberculosis cases in the world comes from this area. Many

school children are unable to regularly attend school because they have parental responsibilities.

In this environment, a group of OSU students has begun an after-school program to provide mentoring, meals and tutoring to two high schools of about 500 students. The focus is increasing retention and test scores. They will be looking for OSU students over spring break and summer to help with programming and development of housing, water wells and gardens. This will be an outstanding opportunity for students to get "on the ground" development experience.

An immediate opportunity is available assisting with the development of vertical gardens at 12 orphanages in Haiti and several villages in Guatemala. In these cases there is widespread malnutrition among young children, in large part because they do not get the vitamins and minerals they need. Vertical gardens would be ideal as the populations are living in extreme poverty and have little or no land of their own. If you know of someone looking to make a difference in the lives of those in extreme poverty please send them my way.



An International Service Experience

Greetings! My name is Jennifer Jensen, Masters of International Agriculture graduate student. This summer I had the opportunity to spend nearly three months from May to August, studying abroad in Mexico, Costa Rica and Nicaragua. The opportunities I experienced provided a unique skill-set while broadening my horizons. My hands-on experiences proved to be very beneficial. The experiences have enhanced my work in the classroom and are a positive boost to my résumé.

Mexico

My adventures began on May 21 when I left for Puebla, Mexico to join the Spanish Immersion Program at UPAEP. Mexico, you may say, isn't that dangerous?! To the contrary of many beliefs, Puebla is a vibrant and safe area that I would recommend to any undergraduate and/or graduate students considering a study abroad program. The program is held at Universidad Popular Autónoma del Estado de Puebla (UPAEP), a prestigious university located 60 miles southeast of Mexico City. Puebla is situated in a broad, high valley that is often known as the City of Angels. In my opinion, this is an accurate title because the city consists of grand cathedrals, a central square known as the El Zócalo – with trendy restaurants, cantinas, shops and coffee shops – nightlife, and some of the kindest people in the world. The

program is a 5-week course that allows students, from across the U.S., to study Spanish and become fully immersed in the culture. The program offers insight to the traditions, history and cuisine of Mexico. Each student is paired with a host family. I, along with my comrade and fellow OSU graduate student Natalia Kovtun, lived with a fantastic family who treated us as their own. They spent numerous hours teaching and laughing with us as we developed the language and discovered the culture. In addition, we had the opportunity to go on weekend excursions to places such as Teotihuacan, a playground of ancient pyramids, Mexico City, beaches of Veracruz, and Cuatzalan – a remote village high in the mountains with stunning waterfalls and remote caves. While I learned Spanish, explored amazing places, and savored the cuisine, I also made lifelong friendships. I left with a sense of accomplishment and pride and am thankful to have had the opportunity to experience true Mexico.

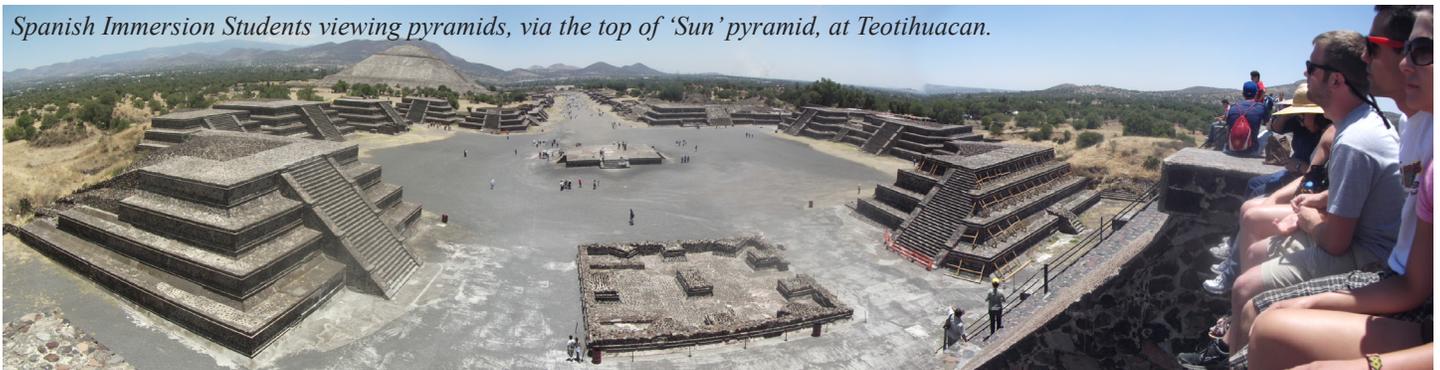
Costa Rica

With tears in my eyes, I said goodbye to my Mexican family and comrades and left Puebla on June 26 and traveled to Atenas, Costa Rica to begin coffee research. Atenas is located 26 miles west of San Jose on the Central Valley's western edge. Atenas is famous for having one of the best climates in the world, "El Mejor Clima

del Mundo" according to National Geographic. I have to confirm this is true, as the daily temperatures are about 80 degrees during the day and pleasant 60's at night. Like Mexico, I was fortunate to have a fantastic host family who were patient, kind and interested in my coffee project; as they also produced coffee.

I teamed with Dr. Mike Dicks, OSU Agricultural Economics Professor, and Dr. Nolan Quiros, Director at the University for International Cooperation in Costa Rica, to gather research pertaining to organic and commercial coffee production. Specifically, organic coffee production is pesticide and chemical free and typically grown within the forest. While commercial coffee, the most common method, is grown on land that has been stripped of its native forest and typically includes chemical and fertilizer inputs. Using my Spanish speaking skills acquired from UPAEP, my research was to determine the cost per acre for each input. In addition to working in the fields; i.e., counting plants, determining species variation and collecting measurements, I gathered information from the farmers to determine their costs and crop yields. Our goal was to determine measurable, non-market benefits and costs that pertain to environmental and community factors. I was fortunate to work with several great coffee producers to achieve our goal. They

Spanish Immersion Students viewing pyramids, via the top of 'Sun' pyramid, at Teotihuacan.



An International Service Experience Con't.

invited me into their homes, often feeding me lunch and enjoying several cups of coffee together. I created great friendships and contacts and look forward to returning for coffee harvest in late December.

Nicaragua

While in Costa Rica, I realized I could easily travel by charter bus to Nicaragua to join Dr. Jeff Sallee and Dr. Sarah Lancaster's summer travel course, Agricultural Development in Nicaragua. On July 7 I made a quick, last minute decision to join the group by taking a bus from San Jose, Costa Rica to Managua, Nicaragua. The nine-hour ride, one way, allowed me

the opportunity to help develop an Agricultural Educational Outreach center. The goal of the center is to serve as a demonstration hub for the surrounding community, teaching them how to supplement their food supply. Our group spent one week in the area of El Crucero, Nicaragua – an economically impoverished area – working and teaching agricultural skills. On the return ride to Costa Rica, I reflected on my time there and was thankful I made the decision to go, as it proved to be very humbling and rewarding.

I returned to Oklahoma on August 4 with a notebook of information,

camera full of pictures and my mind crowded with thoughts. Let me leave you with this thought: if you are a student and have not already done so, take one of the many study abroad opportunities Oklahoma State offers to undergraduate and graduate students of all majors; if you are an alumni, be proud of your accomplishments from OSU; and if you are a faculty or staff member, thank you for helping to provide life changing opportunities and hands-on experiences to students.

Go Pokes and Go Global.

Jennifer Jensen

International Development Service Projects

Africa

South Africa – KwaZulu Natal Spring Break/Summer

- Develop orchard in a skate board park in a rural community. Develop irrigation system from water collection to application, plant fruit trees and work with the community to develop fruit production enterprise.

- Work with a local NGO the delivers after school programs in fine arts, agriculture, sports, entrepreneurship, and academic support.

Sierra Leone – Winter Break/Spring Break/Summer

- Work with an orphanage in Freetown to provide tutoring and or teaching in grades 1-12.

- Manage a small farm facility to educate the local community on vegetable production and irrigation.

- Develop a Poultry layer operation including the procurement of feed, construction of layer houses, use of litter and marketing of products.

- Work with Njala University on various research and extension projects covering a number of different fields of study.

- Assist Njala University in delivering a Youth Leadership Program.

- Develop a mango and avocado orchard.

Togo - Winter Break/Spring Break/Summer

- Assist a local NGO in expanding a bakery

- Assist a local school in developing classroom equipment, sports fields and student gardens

- Develop a Poultry layer operation including the procurement of feed, construction of layer houses, use of litter and marketing of products.

Ghana - Winter Break/Spring Break/Summer

- Work with Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology on various research and extension projects covering a number of different fields of study.

- Assist a local women's self help group with KNUST faculty and students in developing business plans, and constructing grain processing and storage facilities, pre-school, and health clinic.

Kenya - Summer

- Assist a local Community group in the expansion of a sewing center.

- Assist a local NGO in the expansion of a primary school.

Eastern Europe – Moldova - Summer

- Work with Moldova Agriculture University and xxxxx on various research and extension projects covering a number of different fields of study.

- Work with the Roma in developing youth leadership programs and business opportunities.

- Work with a local community to catalog fruit and vegetable processing methods.

Mexico - Winter Break/Spring Break/Summer

- Work with UPAEP University on various research and extension projects covering a number of different fields of study.

Guatemala - Winter Break/Spring Break/Summer

- Work in small villages to assist impoverished communities in developing water supply systems and food production.

Haiti – Winter Break/Spring Break/Summer

1. Work in orphanages to develop water supply systems and food production.

Multiculturalism vs. Diversity

I grew up, like most of all of us in a monocultural environment; at least this is what I thought my whole life! My life was simple, and I did not have to deal with intercultural, multicultural, or diversity issues, I did not understand the meaning of those words. My family and all my friends looked very similar, acted and behaved the same way, we lived in a safe and protected place. I never was worried or pressured to interact with people that did not look like me or act like me. I never had the curiosity to think that it could be possible, there were different people from different cultures, I definitively grew up in a monocultural bubble!

When I moved to the United States, for the first time I started hearing terms like minorities, diversity, and a lot more that I do not remember anymore. I met people from China, the Middle East, and Native Americans and African Americans, among others. I started realizing that my culture was not the only one or at least it was not the center of the universe. I started realizing that my values, sense of time, family and people interactions were not universals.

To make things worse, my English skills were very limited, and it was my only way to communicate and interact with people in the United States. It was hard for me to be understood, and it was hard to fit in. I did not feel

welcome. I unconsciously decided to isolate myself from the rest of the people, and started just interacting with people from my own culture. It was just so much easier; it was very conformable and less challenging. I was just living in a multicultural environment without making any effort to live in a diverse society.

After my experiences, I understood that even when many people, dictionaries and textbooks make no difference between a multicultural and diverse environment. I need to! Authors like, Caleb (1978) defined multiculturalism as recognizing the presence of diverse ethnicities, races, and/or groups in an organization or society. According to this definition, there is no doubt in my mind that OSU is a multicultural institution. However, to become a diverse institution, we need to do more. Each one of us needs to recognize the presence of different groups and be willing to interact with them (Iowa State University), and this is could be a challenge!

Americans and foreign students, faculty and staff members, we all need to challenge ourselves. We need to start interacting with people who are different from us. I challenge you! Give yourself the opportunity! It will be hard, because we need to understand that our culture should not be the one that rules the world; it is not

the only culture that is right. It will be hard, because we will need to learn how to be respectful. It will be a challenge, because I am not used to eating what they eat, I am not used to talking like they talk. It will be a challenge because it is hard to understand them. It will be a challenge because interacting with people from other cultures simply is unnatural (Bennett, 1993).

However, many people like me understand that the effort to become a diverse person and help OSU to become a diverse institution is worth it. Are you aware that between 10 and 40% of the people assigned to work outside the United States have to be recalled or dismissed because of because their poor performance (Bahawuk & Brislin, 1992)? Do you think that this is because they are technically unprepared? No way! The problem is and will be always (if we do not become a diverse person) the difficulty to work with people from other cultures. Challenge yourself! Give you the opportunity to live in a diverse environment! Promise me one thing, next time you see a person who is not from your own culture, greet him/her, try to make conversation and try to put yourself in their shoes. I promise you that will be hard, but worth it.

Maria G. Fabregas-Janeiro

Fundraising Successes

I just wanted to update you on the



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fair trade booth mentioned in a previous International Informant. We have expanded our collection beyond Sierra Leonean goods to include items from South Africa, Mali, Chile, and Costa Rica. Since our first sales at the OSU Creativity Festival and Earth Day Fair in March, we have been displaying our fair trade items at the OSU Farmer's Market every other week. We have raised over \$700 that will be used to offset expenses for our West Africa development

projects in Sierra Leone, Ghana and Togo. We partnered with the Bartlett Center's Gardner Gallery during its Harms Collection of African Art exhibit. Liberty Galvin and I ran the fair trade booth at the exhibit while Dr. Dicks and several students who participated in his African development study abroad projects spoke at the exhibit's closing reception.

Kate Arroyo