Cost Efficient International Experiences for Graduate Students

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Abstract

According to Wingenbach, Boyd, and Lindner (2003), it is desirable, and perhaps advantageous, for higher education students to have experiences and first hand knowledge of other countries and cultures. A long term study by Dwyer and Peters (2004) of study abroad participants from the last 50 years provides some very strong indications of extremely positive, personal, educational and career growth among the participants. Many students are reluctant to participate in long-term (semester or summer session) study abroad experiences but are open to short experiences (less than one-week).

There are several barriers to graduate student participation. These include: 1) cost; 2) time; and 3) availability. The purpose of this poster was to present a model for addressing these barriers. Graduate students attending a south western United States university are given an opportunity to participate in an international field trip which is relatively inexpensive, short term, and easily accessible.

The first 3-day, 2-night trip, in 2003, was to Nuevo Casas Grandes in the state of Chihuahua. The field trip has grown each year. In 2006, the 6-day, 5-night trip was to Ciudad Chihuahua with a 3-day, 2-night side trip to a ranch belonging to the Autonomous University of Chihuahua and to Creel. A field trip is planned for November of 2007. Each successive year, the trip has expanded to provide students with more diverse agricultural and cultural experiences. This poster will offer tips on planning, organizing, and conducting an international field trip.

Keywords: Study Abroad, International Field Trip