

Costa Rica Alumni 2012 Evaluation

Brief description of program:

One week service trip to the Monteverde Region of Costa Rica, targeted to Bennion Center Alumni.

Who was asked to complete survey:

All 17 participants (not the staff partner).

Response Rate: 71% (12 of 17)

Administration Type: Campus Labs Mass E-mail.

Summary of Key Findings:

- Overall the participants were satisfied with the program, including accommodations, educational tours, tourist activities, service work, transportation and meals/food.
- The Chocolate Factory and Family Farm Tours did not receive as positive responses as the other activities, though they were still more positive than not.
- To the statement, "The service I performed was a valuable personal experience," eight respondents "strongly agreed," two "agreed" and two were "neutral."
- Comments also concluded that the program was positive and unique. The following are representative.
 - "The services provided for us were all wonderful, I never once had a complaint about the food. I felt that the work sites were well organized, and transitions between activities flowed smoothly."
 - "For me, I loved that we stayed at the same site during the week because it gave me a sense of accomplishment being able to see the beginning to the end."
 - "The opportunity to live and work amongst people! Also, that we got to see a lot and I didn't have to plan a THING!"
- Two comments indicated the desire to know more about the intensity of the manual labor at the service project.

Actions Taken:

- We plan to keep similar logistical arrangements (transportation, food and lodging). We will decide whether we stay in Santa Elena at the Atardecer or if we return to the University of Georgia's San Luis Research Station (which received positive feedback in 2011). There are pros and cons to each of these scenarios.
- If there is a need to drop any programming activities, they will be the Chocolate Factory and/or the Family Farm Tour (Canitas).

- We will strive to do a more thorough job at “setting the expectations” of the hard manual labor that is an opportunity for those who are up for it. WE will also highlight that there are many work project options and that they are all equally valuable and necessary. Participants should fully understand that they have options and may switch between work projects. Additionally, we will make sure they understand that, if they want to participate in hard manual labor for the week, the option is there and to be prepared.

Which department and/or program goals does this program align with?

Service.

Cultivate and nurture an ethic of lifelong community service and engagement.

- *Cultivate an ethic of community service and life long civic engagement. Expose students to experiential learning opportunities that develop critical thinking and positive action. Support opportunities for meaningful community service in issue areas, such as education.*
- *Recruit volunteers through public relations efforts, promote all special events, while providing opportunities for Bennion Center alumni to be involved in the Center.*

Which Student Affairs goals does this program align with?

- *1.e. Support global citizenship through increased collaboration with international opportunities to promote learning and offer a greater variety of programs (e.g. exchanges, internships with academic credit and service-learning opportunities).*
- *1. b. Improve and promote recreational opportunities.*
- *5. C. Foster opportunities that encourage life-long service and civic participation.*