Global Faculty Ambassador
Soltis Center for Research and Education

Chris Houser
Associate Professor, Department of Geography and Department of Geology and Geophysics
Freshman Study Abroad Program

20 students completed field work for GEOG 203 Planet Earth during Spring Break 2009
20 students completed field work for GEOG 203 Planet Earth during Spring Break 2009

Attended lectures and completed exams with their peers

No statically significant difference before trip

Scored half a letter grade higher than their peers on final exam
“I learned everything I learned in the class in that one week.”

“opened my eyes”

“hands-on experience that was better than the classroom”
“didn’t really expect it to be as much fun”

“it was really interesting because you were learning about the stuff that was right in front of you, so it wasn’t abstract or out of a book or off a PowerPoint”
Students were really “close knit” and formed study groups as a result of the program.

After the program she started sitting with other women whom she had met on the program, in the front row, and they worked together to create a long study guide.
“get to know my professors on a more personal level rather than just being a name on a roster”
“remembering all of the work that we did and how much I enjoyed it there really helped me push to the final [exam]... I went into the exam more confident ... because I had worked well in Costa Rica, and I did very well in the lab, so I wasn’t really intimidated by the final.”
Rather do boring labs in the classroom you collect your own data in the field

Real Science
Belize

Soltis Center for Research and Education
Brazil

Soltis Center for Research and Education
Global Faculty Ambassador Program

Interact with faculty, administrators, and staff in colleges, departments, or programs as ambassadors for global engagement at Texas A&M

Focused on a specific topic, issue or challenge: Soltis Center
First Steps

- Identify departments at TAMU and System Schools that can offer programs that are a **natural fit** to the center
- Follow-up with faculty that participated on exploratory trips but did not develop a program
- Identify research opportunities and match with faculty
- Identify the center as a broader impact for research proposals
- Developing an academic and research relationship with University of Costa Rica
First Steps

• Identify departments at TAMU and System Schools that can offer programs that are a natural fit to the center

• Follow-up with faculty that participated on exploratory trips but did not develop a program

• Identify research opportunities and match with faculty

• Identify the center as a broader impact for research proposals

• Developing an academic and research relationship with University of Costa Rica

TAMU Main Campus
TAMU Corpus Christi
TAMU Kingsville
TAMU Commerce
First Steps

• Identify departments at TAMU and System Schools that can offer programs that are a natural fit to the center

• Follow-up with faculty that participated on exploratory trips but did not develop a program

• Identify research opportunities and match with faculty

• Identify the center as a broader impact for research proposals

• Developing an academic and research relationship with University of Costa Rica

TAMU Main Campus
TAMU Corpus Christi
TAMU Kingsville
TAMU Commerce

Recreation Parks and Tourism
Tropical Ecology
Ornithology
Liberal Arts
Science Education
Agricultural Economics
Venom Research Center
Rural Health
Sustainability Minor
Substance Abuse
First Steps

• Identify departments at TAMU and System Schools that can offer programs that are a natural fit to the center

• Follow-up with faculty that participated on exploratory trips but did not develop a program

• Identify research opportunities and match with faculty

• Identify the center as a broader impact for research proposals

• Developing an academic and research relationship with University of Costa Rica
First Steps

• Identify departments at TAMU and System Schools that can offer programs that are a natural fit to the center

• Follow-up with faculty that participated on exploratory trips but did not develop a program

• Identify research opportunities and match with faculty

• Identify the center as a broader impact for research proposals

• Developing an academic and research relationship with University of Costa Rica
First Steps

• Identify departments at TAMU and System Schools that can offer programs that are a natural fit to the center

• Follow-up with faculty that participated on exploratory trips but did not develop a program

• Identify research opportunities and match with faculty

• Identify the center as a broader impact for research proposals

• Developing an academic and research relationship with University of Costa Rica

Water Program NSF IGERT
Meteorology NSF IRES
Geological Sciences NSF PYRE
USAID Central America
Civil Engineering DOE

Identify synergies between faculty research and study abroad opportunities
Ecohydrology of a Pre-Montane Forest:
A Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) Hosted by Texas A&M University
250+ acres of laboratory space

Soltis Center for Research and Education
Air temperature
Relative humidity
Solar radiation
Wind speed & direction
Soil temperature
Soil moisture (at 3 depths)
Cloud cover
Weir
Finished July 10, 2012
Eddy Flux and Canopy Tower
Power and data lines into the forest
First Steps

• Identify departments at TAMU and System Schools that can offer programs that are a natural fit to the center

• Follow-up with faculty that participated on exploratory trips but did not develop a program

• Identify research opportunities and match with faculty

• Identify the center as a broader impact for research proposals

• Developing an academic and research relationship with University of Costa Rica

Training of Undergraduates

International Collaboration

Service and Outreach
Service and Outreach

Aggies for Global Education
Engineers without Borders
Former Student Association- Waste Management
MSC Fish English as a Second Language
Competency Based Learning

Engineers without Borders

Soltis Center for Research and Education
Competency Based Learning

Aggies for Global Education

Soltis Center for Research and Education
Geoscience Students and Teachers without Borders
First Steps

• Identify departments at TAMU and System Schools that can offer programs that are a natural fit to the center

• Follow-up with faculty that participated on exploratory trips but did not develop a program

• Identify research opportunities and match with faculty

• Identify the center as a broader impact for research proposals

• Developing an academic and research relationship with University of Costa Rica

Meeting with UCR Joint Geology Program Atmospheric Sciences
Common Issues

- Limited knowledge of the center and what it offers
- The center and the forest are not “perfect”
- Assume that the center was fully booked during peak times
- Interested in developing a program but were unsure about how to submit a proposal
- Put off by long lead time required for study abroad proposals
- Not a large enough student interest for course to be offered
- Unaware of difference between field trip abroad and a study abroad
Common Issues

- Limited knowledge of the center and what it offers

- The center and the forest are not “perfect”

- Assume that the center was fully booked during peak times

- Interested in developing a program but were unsure about how to submit a proposal

- Put off by long lead time required for study abroad proposals

- Not a large enough student interest for course to be offered

- Unaware of difference between field trip abroad and a study abroad
Common Issues

• Limited knowledge of the center and what it offers

• The center and the forest are not “perfect”

• Assume that the center was fully booked during peak times

• Interested in developing a program but were unsure about how to submit a proposal

• Put off by long lead time required for study abroad proposals

• Not a large enough student interest for course to be offered

• Unaware of difference between field trip abroad and a study abroad
Common Issues

- Limited knowledge of the center and what it offers
- The center and the forest are not “perfect”
- Assume that the center was fully booked during peak times
- Interested in developing a program but were unsure about how to submit a proposal
- Put off by long lead time required for study abroad proposals
- Not a large enough student interest for course to be offered
- Unaware of difference between field trip abroad and a study abroad
Common Issues

- Limited knowledge of the center and what it offers
- The center and the forest are not “perfect”
- Assume that the center was fully booked during peak times
- Interested in developing a program but were unsure about how to submit a proposal
- Put off by long lead time required for study abroad proposals
- Not a large enough student interest for course to be offered
- Unaware of difference between field trip abroad and a study abroad

Joint programs with other TAMU System and SEC Schools

Endowments?
Common Issues

- Limited knowledge of the center and what it offers

- The center and the forest are not “perfect”

- Assume that the center was fully booked during peak times

- Interested in developing a program but were unsure about how to submit a proposal

- Put off by long lead time required for study abroad proposals

- Not a large enough student interest for course to be offered

- Unaware of difference between field trip abroad and a study abroad

Shorter and less expensive approach to study abroad
150% increase in number of students at center
Support from the International Advisory Board

- Continue to support faculty to develop study abroad opportunities
- Highlight the benefits of international experiences across campus
- Highlight the AFIL program
- Identify means to increase participation by students
Global Faculty Ambassador
Soltis Center for Research and Education

Chris Houser
Associate Professor, Department of Geography and Department of Geology and Geophysics
Dorms for up to 56 students
Kitchen and Laundry Service
2 Classrooms
6 miles from Volcan Arenal

Soltis Center for Research and Education