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Proposal title: “The Brazilian Health System”

Country/ies visited: Brazil


Dates of travel: March 27-April 7, 2014

Number of student participants: 20

Previous IP proposals submitted and grants awarded: Preparation for ‘Brazilian Health System’ 2012, Brazilian Health System 2013

Have all required reports been submitted? Yes

Other funding for this activity available/applied for: NA

Proposal Abstract (75 word maximum): As part of the HHS 350 course, 19 undergrad students and one PhD student mentor visited the hospital facilities of the Fed. Univ. of Rio de Janeiro, the offices of the Rio Municipal Health Department, two clinics of the Rocinha Rio das Pedras Community Family Health Centers, the FIOCRUZ (research) Foundation, the Casa do Saber, and several historical and natural environment sites around Rio. Lectures included the health system, political and historical review of the system, development of family health center system, impact of the World Cup and Olympics on Brazilian urban health and economics.
Travel report:

I. Opening/overview of intentions/activity
This study tour intended to introduce health sciences students to the Brazilian health system. This system guarantees the right to health care to all citizens through the national constitution. In addition, the system is now employing a comprehensive approach to primary care development within the poor communities of Rio (favelas). Students participated in lectures and discussions at key Brazilian health institutions (hospitals, clinics, public health departments, research agencies) and had an opportunity to discuss with Brazilian professors and medical students the history and political environment in which the health and educational systems function.

II. In preparation for the trip abroad
A. SDSU has a signed Memorandum of Understanding with the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ), where Dr. Novotny has had ongoing research collaborations. In addition to UFRJ faculty members, we collaborated with the Undersecretary’s Office of the Municipal Health Department of Rio de Janeiro, the President of the FIOCRUZ Foundation, and the coordinator in charge of Family Health Center development in Rio communities. Finally, we had a special lecture from Professor Christopher Gaffney (geostadia.com), a geographer and Visiting Professor at the Federal University of Flumenense who studies urbanization and political change; this took place at a Rio think tank, the Casa do Saber.

B. Email contacts
1. Fernanda Carvalho de Queiroz Mello, Director of the Pulmonary Unit, UFRJ, fcqmello@hucff.ufrj.br
2. Debra Foguel, Provost, UFRJ, foguel@bioqmed.ufrj.br
3. Dr. Betina Durovni, Deputy Director, RDJ Municipal Health Department, bdurovni@gmail.com
4. Dr. Elizabeth Soares, Municipal Health Department, eccsoares@gmail.com
5. Dr. Valeska Figueiredo, Coordinator CETAB, FIOCRUZ, valeskauf@ensp.fiocruz.br
6. Dr. Vera Luisa Cost y Silva, ENSP FIOCRUZ, vera60yo@gmail.com
7. Francisco Inacio Bastos, Senior Researcher FIOCRUZ, francisco.inacio@icict.fiocruz.br
8. Professor Christopher Gaffney, geostadia@gmail.com
9. Dr. Abraham Miranda, Health Attache, US Embassy Brasilia, Abraham.Miranda@hhs.gov
10. Marise Isidoro, Tour Guide,

III. Upon arrival/specific activity
We met with the student group on March 30 to review and confirm the agenda for the week. This was at a historical restaurant, where the classic bossa nova song, ‘Girl from Ipanema’ was written. The week’s schedule is attached. Contacts had been confirmed at UFRJ, FIOCRUZ, and the Municipal Health Department. The student group included nursing students, public health students, social work students, and other health sciences
students enrolled in HHS 350. In addition to the health-related lectures and visits, we planned a hike in the nearby Floresta da Tijuca (a restored Atlantic Rainforest Park, biggest in the world), and visits to a samba club, the Botanic Gardens, the Corcovado Christo Statue, the Sugarloaf Mountain, the downtown business district, the Lapa entertainment district, the Santa Teresa Arts District, the Copacabana Night Market, and the beautiful beaches of Ipanema. The students stayed (with the PhD student mentor) in a hostel in Ipanema (Casa Bonita…once the home of Antonio Carlos Jobim), a very safe neighborhood.

IV. Conclusion, recommendation, and next step?
UFRJ and FIOCRUZ are major research institutions with which SDSU PhD students and faculty have been collaborating. The infectious disease specialists there focus on TB, and we have conducted funded research collaborations with them already. CES leaders visited Rio to recruit language students the week prior to our visit. We believe the students attending this tour were deeply impressed with the Brazilian health system and had very good, high-level look as well as a community-based look at how primary may be implemented in poor communities. The Brazilian contacts were all enthusiastic about continuing similar activities in the future. UFRJ and FIOCRUZ are great partner institutions, and could be the site for Fulbrights, research exchanges, and clinical rotations. FIOCRUZ is very interested in ‘sandwich’ research training programs, as they are the home to the National School of Public Health. We will be following up with tobacco-related research activities as a result of this trip. Graduate students in public health, social work, nursing, and ENS may be particularly interested in research collaborations and international learning opportunities at FIOCRUZ. I will continue to develop collaborations at UFRJ, FIOCRUZ, and the Rio de Janeiro Municipal Health Department going forward.

V. Additional Information
We also made a very important contact at the US Embassy, the health attache, Dr. Abe Miranda. In addition to general diplomatic support, he will be able to welcome contacts in Brasilia with the Ministry of Health and other agencies.