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Proposal title: **SDSU Exchange Programs in Mexico**  
Country visited: **Mexico**  
Institutions visited: **Universidad de las Americas, Puebla (UDLAP) and Universidad Iberoamericana (IBERO) in Mexico City**  
Dates of travel: **January 2 – 15, 2014**  
Number of SDSU student participants: **None**  
Number of non-student participants: **None**

**Proposal Abstract**
I will travel to Mexico to meet with faculty at UDLAP, for which we have a specific SDSU student exchange agreement. I will also meet with faculty at IBERO to learn about their educational system in the arts and discuss the possibility of a future exchange agreement or methods of students attending IBERO independently. During the visits, I will discuss methods to promote exchange opportunities, collaborative projects, research opportunities and summer programs. This trip is timely because the numbers of art and design students on exchange programs in Mexico have dwindled in recent years.

**Travel report:**

I. **Overview of intentions/activity**

I met with faculty and staff at UDLAP, an institution that we have had a specific SDSU student exchange agreement. (Professor Robert Pozos, and I facilitated this exchange agreement in 2000). Over the years, the faculty and staff at UDLAP have changed and the numbers of students studying abroad at UDLAP have dwindled. The personal connections with current personnel that I now have re-established will facilitate continued institutional connections.

In addition to meeting with UDLAP academic personnel, I was hosted on a tour of the beautiful gated campus, academic units, art and design studios, residential facilities and recreational amenities. I also visited the surrounding towns of Cholupa and Puebla, in which students also take up residence, socialize and engage in cultural activities. The touring included visits to museums, galleries, artisan shops, restaurants, music venues and folk dance events.

I also met with faculty at IBERO to learn about their international exchange interests and programs and in the art and design. We discussed methods to promote exchange opportunities at our mutual institutions, collaborative projects, research opportunities and summer programs. I found myself quite interested in working with IBERO since it is located in Mexico City, where we currently have no exchange programs in the arts and the numbers of art and design students on exchange programs in Mexico have dwindled in recent years.

At IBERO, I was also hosted on a tour of their campus gallery, academic units, art and design studios, and recreational amenities. Similar to UDLAP, this was also a gated community. I also
visited surrounding Mexico City. The touring included visits to museums, galleries, artisan shops, restaurants, and music venues. These social and cultural activities would be of intense interest for SDSU exchange students.

II. In preparation for the trip abroad

In preparation for the trip I corresponded with the following faculty and staff at UDLAP and established an on campus itinerary for my visit:

- Marianne Ramos Schulze, Head of International Office at UDLAP;
- Giovannina, Head of Study Abroad programs,
- Nayeli Herrera Soto, Director, International Office; and
- Dr. Sonia Gisella Aguirre Narváez, Head of Visual Information Design Department.

I also corresponded with Dave Rudel, Assistant Director, Education Abroad at SDSU regarding his interest in establishing articulation agreements on specific courses at UDLAP.

I also corresponded with the following faculty and staff at IBERO:

- Sonia Fernández Orozco, Assistant Director for Academic Liaisons;
- Martin Scheer, Assistant Director of Student Mobility;
- Professor Jorge Meza Aguilar, Director of Department of Design;
- Juan Fernando Donoso, Coordinator, Interactive Design Program;
- Mariam Bujalil, Head of the Fashion and Textile Department

Via their web sites, I researched the academic programs in art and design at both UDLAP and IBERO. I learned which programs would likely be of mutual benefit to our mutual students on exchanges. I also researched the area around the universities and planned an itinerary of touring the areas to learn about cultural, recreational and logistic opportunities in the areas.

I met with Rebekah Fuganti in the SDSU Office of International Programs to learn that we indeed had an exchange agreement with UDLAP in place but few students have participated in recent years. She also indicated that could explore an exchange with IBERO but it might be difficult to get it approved since the demand for study abroad in Mexico is currently low.

III. Upon arrival/specific activities

At UDLAP, I met with:

- Nayeli Herrera, Director of the UDLAP International Office
- Marianne Ramos, Head of Academic Exchange
- Giovannina Howden, Head of Special Programs
- Dr. Clemencia Corte Velasco, Head of Art History and Curatorship Department
- Dr. Sonia Gisella Aguirre Narvaez, Head of Visual Information Design Department
- Professor José Luis Jaspeado Escalona, Head of Architecture and Interior Design Department

Campus tour was provided by:
- Alma Reyes, Incoming Student Coordinator
- Edgar Valdés, Incoming Special Program Coordinator

Professor Juan Hermida Camacho, Head of the Arts (includes Theater, Dance, Music, Artes Plásticas) Department was not in our meeting, but based on my areas of interest, he is very interested in sharing information with me to start exchanging art students in the near future.

In the meeting we agreed that there was mutual interest in promoting students for both of our campuses to exchange students. We determined that since we have similar programs and courses, most classes in art and design will articulate with no problem. There was a concern about the art history classes. Most of them are in Spanish and students from SDSU will need to be fluent in Spanish to get the most out of the classes (a few are taught in English). They felt that language would not be an issue in the art and design studio classes (many of which are taught in English).
I showed them how to access SDSU syllabi which are now available on-line through the SDSU Library. Faculty at UDLAP will readily provide syllabi for courses that we have interest in.

I was also introduced to the numerous summer and short course programs, which caters to international students that SDSU students could pursue independently.

At IBERO, I met with:

- Sonia Fernández Orozco, Assistant Director for Academic Liaisons;
- Martin Scheer, Assistant Director of Student Mobility;
- Professor Jorge Meza Aguilar, Director of Department of Design;
- Juan Fernando Donoso, Coordinator, Interactive Design Program;
- Mariam Bujalil, Head of the Fashion and Textile Department

In the meeting we agreed that there was mutual interest in establishing an exchange agreement between SDSU and UDLAP and promoting students for both of our campuses to exchange students. IBERO has many exchange programs with institutions around the world and are used to hosting foreign students. We determined that since we have similar programs and courses, most classes in art and design will articulate with no problem and that language would not be a problem since many courses are taught in English and most faculty are fluent in English.

I was most impressed with the Interactive Media Arts, Fibers and Graphic Design programs. Should we establish and exchange program, students in these areas would surely benefit from the experience.

IBERO also has numerous summer and short course programs, which cater to international students, that SDSU students could pursue independently.

IV. Conclusion, recommendation, and next steps

The trip was quite successful. Faculty and staff at both UDLAP and IBERO were cordial, hospitable and quite interested in exchanging students with SDSU. We agreed to mutually promote exchanges at our end. At UDLAP, we already have an agreement in place so we just need to promote the study abroad opportunity to our students. At IBERO, we can promote the study, but the only option at this point is through independent programs or in the special summer and short course programs. Should SDSU decide that an exchange agreement with IBERO would be acceptable, I am confident that IBERO would be interested in the agreement and that students would be interested in the program. It this time, there are no SDSU exchange programs in Mexico City in the areas of Art and Design.

The tours UDLAP and IBERO beautiful campuses, facilities and surrounding neighborhoods provided me with a sense of comfort and security for our students. They are clearly safe, comfortable and pleasant academic environments.

V. Additional Information

SDSU students from any major interested in studies in Mexico are encouraged to contact me. I am interested in pursuing an exchange agreement with IBERO. In the future I also hope to develop a faculty led program to Mexico.