

**Early International Experience @ CIAPA  
Tulane University Semester Abroad in San José, Costa Rica  
August 25 – December 15th, 2012**



Dear Early Experience Participants,

Congratulations on being accepted to the *Early International Experience @ CIAPA Semester Abroad Program in San José, Costa Rica*. You are a participant in an exclusive, unique study abroad program that we hope will shape your college experience and career.

To finalize your commitment to the *Early International Experience @ CIAPA Semester Abroad Program*, we require a \$200 non-refundable deposit made payable to Tulane University and sent to the *Early International Experience* program office at the Stone Center for Latin American Studies. This deposit may also be made via credit card; please contact the program staff at 504-865-5164 or [ciapa@tulane.edu](mailto:ciapa@tulane.edu) for more information. **NOTE: This deposit will be credited towards your Accounts Receivable Program Fee charge of \$8,700.**

This packet contains important information that will help you prepare for the trip. You should read the general pre-departure information, review the forms carefully, and keep a copy for your records. You should *complete* and *return* the included forms to *Early Experience @ CIAPA*, c/o the Stone Center for Latin American Studies, 100 Jones Hall, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA 70118 **on or before July 13th, 2012** (NOTE: Some forms should be returned ASAP these are indicated on the forms ). There will be information sessions conducted on-line in late July and early August to address any additional questions about the program, but both participants and parents can contact Valerie McGinley Marshall at the Stone Center for Latin American Studies, 504-865-514 or [ciapa@tulane.edu](mailto:ciapa@tulane.edu), at any time.

You should make an appointment with your doctor as soon as possible since the *Physician's Statement Form* requires the signature of a physician.

The following forms require a signature from both the participant and his/her parent/guardian:

- *Agreement for Participation in a Study Abroad Program*
- *Release & Waiver for Participation in a Study Abroad Program*

These forms can be signed electronically or physically, then scanned and returned via EMAIL to [ciapa@tulane.edu](mailto:ciapa@tulane.edu) , faxed to 504-865-6719, OR mailed directly to the Stone Center for Latin American Studies. (See mailing information above and at the bottom of each page of this packet.)

To reiterate, complete and return all forms on or before July 15, 2012. You will receive your program charges on a billing statement from the Tulane Accounts Receivable office on the regular billing cycle of the semester.

Tulane students seeking Financial Aid loans to cover costs of this program should make specific arrangements with the Financial Aid Office, being sure to indicate you are seeking a loan for *Tulane's Early International Experience @ CIAPA in San José, Costa Rica Semester Program*. **All students who will be receiving Financial Aid are still individually responsible for submitting the full payment price by the stated deadline date.**

Please contact Valerie McGinley Marshall using the contact information below if you have any questions about the forms or program.

Once again, congratulations! We are very pleased to have you on our program.

Sincerely,

Annie Gibson, Ph.D.,  
Tulane Resident Faculty Director, CIAPA Costa Rica

The *Early International Experience @ CIAPA* takes place at Tulane University's CIAPA, campus in Curridabat, San José, Costa Rica. CIAPA has a prestigious history as an academic research institution with a distinguished track record in the social sciences with a previous long-term association with Tulane University.

You will find more information throughout this packet, but the following is a summary.

#### **THE PROGRAM INCLUDES:**

- **Program Tuition:** All costs associated with the academic instruction of the program, including courses at CIAPA and the TIDES course for freshmen is covered by your Tulane University payment for tuition.
- **Lodging:** double-occupancy in semi-private rooms at the CIAPA campus, which includes a full bath in room and a study station. Students also have access to a common room with TV, DVD player and a full kitchen where groceries can be stored. **Rooms are available from the afternoon of Saturday, August 25th until the morning/afternoon of Saturday, December 15th. Students must plan on leaving the facility on the 15<sup>th</sup>.** The dorm room fee is covered by your Program Fee.
- **Meals:** Breakfast, lunch and dinner are served at CIAPA most days (with few exceptions, like during our field trips/trips or your free weekend days). The cost of meals is covered by the Program Fee.
- **Medical insurance:** Each student is covered for the entire program length by a travel health insurance policy (with benefits including medical evacuation) unless you opt-out of coverage on the *HTH Health Insurance Enrollment Form*. Each participant will be provided with an insurance policy identity card upon arrival in Costa Rica. For more information or a copy of the corresponding policy, please contact [ciapa@tulane.edu](mailto:ciapa@tulane.edu).
- **Tours and Sightseeing:** At least three extracurricular trips are planned as part of the program to various sights in Costa Rica. These tours are covered and included as part of your Program Fee.
- **Gym/Workout Facilities:** Access to workout and gym facilities are included as part of this program.
- **Laundry Facilities:** Students have access to laundry facilities on the CIAPA campus. Although participants may choose to send their laundry out to a service at their own expense.
- **Airport Transportation:** Transportation from the airport to the CIAPA campus is provided to those student who arrive on Saturday, August 25 during the customary international arrival times. Transportation will also be provided for those leaving on Saturday, December 15. Students should plan to arrive and depart on these days to take advantage of the airport transportation.
- **Local Transportation:** Transportation is also provided to service learning sites and limited area in and around the city of San José.

#### **THE PROGRAM DOES NOT INCLUDE:**

- **Airfare:** The airfare charges are not included in the program cost. Students need to make arrangements to fly into the San José airport (SJO) on Saturday, August 25th and leave on Saturday, December 15<sup>th</sup>. Please provide flight information to the *Early Experience @ CIAPA* program staff and faculty by sending an email to [ciapa@tulane.edu](mailto:ciapa@tulane.edu).
- **Costa Rican exit tax of approximately \$26:** This must be paid in cash at airport prior to leaving San José.
- **Overweight baggage:** This constitutes anything in excess of maximum allowed luggage weight, both going and returning from Costa Rica.
- **Tips / gratuities:** Students may wish to leave modest tips with people who are helpful along the way. While most restaurant bills include a charge for the tip, it is customary to leave an additional 10-15%.

- **Telephone service:** Both local and long-distance calls are charged to students. Students are advised to purchase prepaid calling cards in Costa Rica to save on costs. We also advise all students to contact their cell phone provider for information on international calling and data plans.
- **Taxi/ ground transportation:** Although there is limited daily transportation, students are responsible for expenses incurred getting around town during their free time.
- **Admission to museums, events, etc.:** Students will be responsible for these expenses unless they are part of class time.
- **All materials and personal expenditures.** As at Tulane, students are responsible for purchasing their books and class materials. These will be facilitated by the Faculty Director and staff.
- **Loss/Theft Travel Insurance:** Please note only supplemental travel **medical** insurance is included in program (unless students opt-out of coverage on the *HTH Health Insurance Enrollment Form*). If students/parents would like additional coverage (including insurance for loss of baggage, emergency cash transfers, etc.), it is recommended that students purchase additional insurance.

## **1. ABOUT SAFETY ISSUES IN COSTA RICA**

Costa Rica prides itself as being the most politically stable and democratic country in Latin America. The country has a large tourist industry and *ticos* are very friendly to U.S. citizens. Nonetheless, whenever one travels in a foreign country, basic knowledge of customs and behavior combined with common sense to make for an engaging, informative and safe trip; precautions and alertness can prevent problems. When in San José, you should know where you are going and avoid wandering into unknown areas without a fixed purpose. In general, be careful with your belongings when walking, particularly in tourist areas. Like any large metropolitan city, San José has its share of pickpockets and other crime problems that have increased over the last few years. Caution should be exercised when walking, particularly in the evenings. We recommend carrying a money belt or small wallet/purse that can be easily concealed. Do not carry large sums of cash with you daily. Plan to carry only as much as you may need during one day. There is no need to bring expensive jewelry, etc. on the trip and we strongly recommend that you do not bring any. Carry a copy of your passport at all times and leave the original passport at CIAPA. Use caution as well when traveling away from the city. Travel with a partner; always know where you are going and what route you plan to take. While most people who offer help may be trustworthy, maintain a degree of wariness and do not let your guard down. Use common sense at all times.

It is always good to pick up a map of the city you are visiting. We advise that you purchase a guide book on Costa Rica prior to your departure; the *Lonely Planet* guide is highly recommended. Not all guidebooks offer detailed information; choose carefully and make sure that you get an up-to-date guide book.

You are always welcome to contact the Stone Center for Latin American Studies or the Study Abroad Office regarding specific experiences with safety issues, but please note that the University's official position on safety in Costa Rica is reflected by the State Department and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Please find the Consular Information Sheet for Costa Rica at [http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/cis/cis\\_1093.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1093.html) and the CDC's Health Information for Travelers to Mexico and Central America <http://www.cdc.gov/travel/camerica.htm#country>. This information is not intended to unnecessarily alarm students and/or parents; it is to serve as guidance for travel to the program's specific region. Although all inherent dangers may not be eliminated from the study abroad experience, program administrators will do everything in their power to ensure that students receive all the assistance they may need and all possible precautions will be heeded. However, it is essential that students understand that they have a responsibility to act in the interests of their own health and well-being at all times.

For other general information about the country you can visit the Costa Rican Tourism Board at <http://www.visitcostarica.com/ict/paginas/home.asp?ididioma=2>. Also, the US Embassy's site in San José is at <http://sanjose.usembassy.gov/>.

## **2. CULTURAL RESPECT**

Please use your Spanish whenever possible; Costa Ricans are friendly and receptive to foreigners trying to use the language. Also, please remember that this is a different culture than your own. Things may be done in a manner very different from that to which you are accustomed. Flexibility, a sense of adventure, and a willingness to adapt to and enjoy new experiences are necessary to get the most out of this program. Students must keep in mind that they are guests during their stay in Costa Rica and they must behave accordingly. **Your status as a visiting student does not excuse you from complying with civil, criminal, and cultural rules.**

## **3. GETTING AROUND TOWN**

Transportation is provided to and from events specifically included in the schedule, such as scheduled weekend field trips and class field trips, travel to service learning sites, and a limited schedule of service to sites within San José. The student must provide all other transportation, incidental or recreational. San José is accessible by bus or taxi, as are the other cities in the greater metropolitan areas – Alajuela, Cartago, Heredia, Escazú. CIAPA is located near Curridabat, a suburban zone at the eastern edge of the city, in a high-scale residential area. Most local universities are located in nearby San Pedro. The downtown area of San José, home of such cultural institutions as the National, Gold, Jade, and Art museums, can be reached in about twenty minutes by bus.

## **4. REGISTRATION**

Please make sure that you **fill out and return all forms on or before July 15th**. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us at [ciapa@tulane.edu](mailto:ciapa@tulane.edu). PLEASE NOTE: Participating students **SHOULD NOT** register for classes through Gibson Online; the Program Administrators will enroll all students directly with the Tulane Registrar's Office.

## **5. CLASSES**

The classes, syllabi and the requirements are provided for under separate cover.

## **6. HOUSING**

Students will be housed at the CIAPA campus. The rooms are new and modern, with two beds for double occupancy, but with individual privacy. All rooms have full baths, study stations and ample closet space. Telephones are located on each floor. Electrical voltage is the same as in the United States; no adapters or converters should be needed. There is a common room with television and DVD player. There is also a laundry room with a washer and dryer for student use. The compound is located in a residential area in which students can go running or walking for exercise. Walmart (formally called the *Hypermas*) is located a block and a half away so that students can easily go shopping for snack foods and miscellaneous things they may have forgotten back home. In addition, there is a new shopping center which has opened very close to campus with a coffee and tea house, a book store, restaurants and various other shops and boutiques. All students will also have access to an athletic club located very close to the CIAPA campus.

## **7. MEALS, FOOD AND BEVERAGES**

The program fees include and provide for three meals most of the days (with few exceptions, like during your free weekend days and our weekend trips). During weekends, meal service will depend on scheduled weekend trips and student preference. Meal times are coordinated with class schedules, community service schedules, and group preferences. All meals will be served in the main dining room which is a comfortable, open, but covered, area. These meals are for program participants and CIAPA staff/visiting lecturers only. Students may not invite outside guests to partake in these meals unless specific permission has been given by the Faculty Director ahead of time.

Costa Rica offers a variety of food that you should enjoy while you have the chance. For those craving the staples of American food, most fast-food chains can be found close-by. Prices are generally about the same or slightly less than in the U.S. It is recommended that you drink bottled water. Students are, of course, encouraged to experience local food on their own; the on-site program administrators will be happy to provide a list of restaurants worth visiting.

## **8. CLOTHING AND MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS TO BRING**

It is a good idea to dress in a somewhat reserved, casual manner rather than being flashy or provocative. Costa Rican social customs are more conservative and formal than those in the United States. Your behavior and dress should reflect this difference. Please dress appropriately for events, and with consideration of Costa Rica sensibilities.

Comfort should be the primary focus for students' fashion concerns. Lightweight fabrics and loose-fitting garments are more comfortable in Costa Rica's tropical climate, although temperatures in San José rarely exceed 75°F. Be sure to bring a couple of pairs of very comfortable walking shoes! A lightweight sweater or jacket may come in handy during the evenings and an umbrella is advisable since the course will take place during the rainy season. Of course, you should bring sunscreen, a hat, sunglasses, a thin rain jacket (slicker) and insect repellent to use mainly during field trips. We also recommend that you choose colors other than black for field trip clothing since mosquitoes in the area are apparently attracted to black. A flashlight with fresh batteries WILL be needed! And do not forget about an alarm clock and a camera! Students should also bring at least 1-2 dressier, business-like outfit for visits to certain organizations (such as the U.S. Embassy).

## **9. PASSPORT**

You must have a valid passport to participate in this program. All U.S. Post Offices have passport applications. When in Costa Rica, carry a copy of your passport with you at all times and leave the original in a safe place. CIAPA will provide a safe for the deposit of any valuable documents or items during your stay in Costa Rica. Please include a copy of your passport with the Acceptance Forms or send a scanned copy to [ciapa@tulane.edu](mailto:ciapa@tulane.edu).

## **10. VISA**

US Citizens will not require a visa to enter Costa Rica. A student visa will be applied for according to Costa Rican law after arrival. All arrangements for the application and paperwork will be handled through the staff of CIAPA and the *Early International Experience @ CIAPA* program staff.

## **11. AIR TRANSPORTATION INFORMATION**

The airfare charges are not included in the program cost. You need to make arrangements to arrive into the San José airport (SJO) by Saturday, August 25 (transportation to CIAPA from the airport will be provided if you arrive during normal international arrival times, please check with the program staff). The dormitories officially close on Saturday, December 15 and transportation will be provided to the airport on December 15 for all departing students. Housing is only available from Saturday, August 25th until the morning of December 15th. Participants (or their parents) must make their own air travel arrangements thereby securing the best price from their particular hometown or other departure city. After you have confirmed and purchased your air travel arrangements, we ask that you submit your air travel information to this office by email to [ciapa@tulane.edu](mailto:ciapa@tulane.edu). We will make this information accessible to fellow participants and their parents if they are interested in knowing who will share their flight to Costa Rica.

## **12. MONEY**

The official currency of Costa Rica is the Colón. It can be purchased at any financial institution or bank directly at the teller, with no paperwork. Some businesses also accept US dollars, although use of the local currency is much more advisable to ensure a fair exchange rate. Current exchange rates are approximately 500 Colones to a dollar. Credit cards are widely used and accepted everywhere. **Students should be advised not to bring travelers' checks** as they are extremely difficult to cash. ATM's serving international bank networks (including U.S.-based networks) are available throughout the San José area. (Several ATM's are even located at the nearby Walmart). **ATM'S ARE THE MOST RELIABLE SOURCE OF CASH DURING THE TRIP!**

The amount of spending money each student brings will very much depend on his/her own spending habits and preferences. Much like in the U.S., it is advisable to use **ATMs** to obtain cash drawing upon accounts based in the U.S.

## **13. MEDICAL CONCERNS**

Costa Rica is known to have an excellent health care system, both public and private. Most basic medications are readily available. However, please read the sections entitled "Medical Facilities," "Medical Insurance," and "Other Health Information" in the provided Consular Information Sheet on Costa Rica for the University's position on medical conditions. Please follow the attached CDC recommendations for standard vaccinations recommended for Costa Rica's region. It is the responsibility of all students to consult with their physician concerning the appropriate inoculations and medications for their trip.

**Be sure to bring any prescription and non-prescription medications you may need. The variety and availability of some products are limited, so consider what you will need for four weeks and bring an extra supply just in case.** If you wear glasses or contacts, we recommend bringing an extra pair/supply. If you take vitamins, we suggest you bring along an adequate supply as well. If you will be taking medication that requires refrigeration or special handling, please notify us in advance so we may make the necessary arrangements. Bring along basic over-the-counter products like aspirin/analgesics, decongestants, in case of summer colds, anti-histamines, band aids, mosquito bite repellents/lotions, medicine for mild stomach ailments, etc. Also make sure that all medications are in properly labeled containers. Of course, the Faculty Director and staff of CIAPA will ensure that a first aid kit is available during all group field trips.

Unless you opt-out of supplemental health insurance on the *HTH Health Insurance Enrollment Form*, the program staff will purchase international health insurance (including medical evaluation and repatriation

benefits) for all students during the program dates in Costa Rica. Program administrators will provide students with insurance policy identity cards which they should carry with them at all times. If students/parents are relying on specific, additional coverage, we recommend that parents check on the status of this additional insurance prior to departure.

If you have any physical or learning disabilities that might require accommodation, please be sure to contact Valerie McGinley Marshall at the Stone Center for Latin American Studies either via email at [ciapa@tulane.edu](mailto:ciapa@tulane.edu) or 504-865-5164.

#### **14. SHOPPING**

Participants can buy handicrafts and other cultural items in San José and other cities along the coasts. Costa Ricans pride themselves on having the best quality coffee in the world. Shop around before you buy. For more commercial items, malls are located throughout the city and feature small stores as well as large Central and South American chains. These malls also feature U.S. fast food for those who cannot live without their favorite treats for a month.

#### **15. STUDENTS' EXPENSES**

- Airfare
- Exit tax of about \$26 at airport, upon departure from San José
- Bottled water
- Dining outside meal plan
- Meals en route to and from Costa Rica
- Tips/ Gratuities - drivers, bellmen, wait staff, etc.
- Transportation to non-curricular events
- Admission to non-curricular museums, theatres, clubs, etc.
- Telephone calls - local and long distance
- Extracurricular activities/ events

#### **16. TRANSPORTATION**

Several taxi services are widely available in San José. A taxi stand is conveniently located at the Walmart near the program facility. These taxis are clean, efficient, and use official meters. There is usually an extra charge for additional passengers, but it is still cheaper to split the fare among several people.

Public transportation in San José can be crowded during peak hours, but otherwise service is quite acceptable. A local bus stop is within 100 meters of CIAPA. Check your guidebook for frequent bus service to other cities.

We strongly recommend that you only take officially sanctioned and clearly marked taxis. So-called "pirate" taxis may be inexpensive, but they operate illegally. Always write down the taxi number and lock the doors while in the cab. The taximeter establishes fares. The security guards at CIAPA can call taxis for you. Be courteous to taxi drivers. Costa Rican taxi drivers seem to be very sensitive about their doors; do not slam doors when entering or exiting.

## **17. COMMUNICATIONS**

**Telephones-** Each floor has a phone from which students may place or receive local and long-distance calls. No calls are free and international calls placed from San José are over \$1 U.S. per minute to the U.S. and Canada. A somewhat less expensive option is to purchase a calling card in the U.S. or Costa Rica for long distance service and/or an “ICE” card for local service. Cellular phones from the U.S. would need to be reprogrammed in Costa Rica to be of service during the program at an expensive cost. Skype is the best solution for keeping in touch with family and friends in the US.

**E-mail-** Internet is readily available at CIAPA campus for you to use your laptops for email communication. In addition, there are several internet cafés in the San José area, including a McDonald’s not far from the center.

**Postal service-** Postal service from Costa Rica is generally dependable and reasonably expedient, but by no means fast. Please feel free to send post cards and letters, but do not expect them to get there before you do. Costa Rican stamps are quite interesting and make excellent cheap souvenirs. Mail from the U.S. to Costa Rica is also reliable, but given the short duration of the program and possible delays in international mail delivery, we do not recommend trying to receive letters there. The best method of communicating with home is via telephone or E-mail.

Please note that the CIAPA facility’s telephone number is listed at the end of this section (in “EMERGENCY CONTACT FOR PARENTS AND GUARDIANS”).

## **18. FIELD TRIPS / Excursions**

Participants will go on at least three weekend trips. These trips will bring you to some beautiful parts of Costa Rica. It will probably take you deep in the rainforest to Rara Avis, the first Costa Rican ecotourism site. We will try to include in the same trip either one of the national parks or local beaches or volcanic sites, and include a visit to the Monteverde Cloud Forest. As we finalize plans for the semester this summer, more information on the extracurricular trips will be available on the CIAPA @ Tulane website, <http://ciapa.tulane.edu>.

## **19. EMERGENCY CONTACT FOR PARENTS AND GUARDIANS**

Please leave the following numbers with your parents or guardian, so they may be put in contact with you in case of an emergency at home:

Tulane’s On-Site Coordinator’s contact info will be sent in the next several weeks. The Stone Center for Latin American Studies in New Orleans is open weekdays from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. The phone number is (504) 865-5164. In the case of an **EMERGENCY ONLY**, in the evenings and on weekends call Tulane Public Safety at 504-865-5200.

### Contact Information in Costa Rica:

CIAPA

50 meters north of the Hypermas/Walmart of Curridabat,  
San Jose, Costa Rica  
(506) 2271-2755