

ACB Evaluation Executive Summary

Community Public Health Program, CIEE Study Center at FLACSO, Buenos Aires, Argentina

September 2011

The Summer Community Public Health Program is uniquely designed for students to enhance their knowledge of global health issues, actively participate in public health field work, and be culturally immersed in the Spanish language. This is a unique program that creates a niche that few education abroad programs occupy. It prepares students for global citizenship and enhances applications to graduate school, positions future professionals for diverse health careers, and expands knowledge of global public health systems with emphasis on Latin America. Simultaneously, through language instruction which transcends Spanish as a “support tool” to teach public health content, students become increasingly comfortable and competent in spoken and written Spanish.

CIEE has an extraordinary opportunity to continue its reputation as offering the high quality education abroad programs but now it also has the opportunity to position itself as a leader in academically rigorous training in the burgeoning field of health sciences.

CIEE Action Plan

Community Public Health Program, CIEE Study Center at FLACSO, Buenos Aires, Argentina

Fall 2011

Overview

CIEE staff are pleased to provide this Action Plan in response to the Academic Consortium Board (ACB) report on the CIEE Buenos Aires, Argentina Study Center Community Public Health Program at FLACSO. The report of the site visit will be received by members of the ACB at the Fall 2011 meeting.

The Action Plan outlines the key recommendations from the Evaluation and the specific steps CIEE plans to follow to address the recommendation. While the Action Plan is authored by CIEE, staff solicited input from the ACB team leader from the evaluation, Joel Gallegos. The Action Plan should be read in light of the ACB Evaluation and with reference to the detailed description of the program available from CIEE.

The “ACB Plan for Program Evaluation,” the Evaluation report, the Action Plan, and program details are available at www.ciee.org.

Actions

ACB Recommendation

Continue to enhance the Spanish language instruction beyond its original purpose as a tool to teach public health content.

Action

In conjunction with an enhanced implementation of team teaching methodology (see below) resident and instructional staff will look at how to more fully integrate Spanish language instruction into the program and academic experience of program participants, using language instruction opportunities both for acquiring linguistic skills as well as public health knowledge. This will include better utilization of the Virtual Spanish tutorials, improved integration of field site experiences into the content of Spanish language instruction and assignments, and the potential use of reflective assignments that will enhance the way in which language instruction dovetails with public health learning and students' lived experiences in the program.

ACB Recommendation

Fully implement "team teaching" to assure equal emphasis on public health concepts and language acquisition. Clarify universal learning outcomes for the new combined team taught classes.

Action

Resident staff will work with Spanish instructional staff and all instructors of program content courses to design, coordinate and implement the use of the existing team teaching methodology across the program. This will be accompanied by the development and definition of learning outcomes for all courses in which team teaching is implemented. The expanded use of team teaching and associated learning outcomes will be implemented for the summer term 2012 program.

ACB Recommendation

Enforce the minimal language requirement at five semesters of college-level Spanish.

Action

Resident staff will work with U.S.-based program management and enrollment staff to identify ways to better assess applicants' linguistic levels and capabilities, independent of their prior Spanish language preparation as measured by semesters of college-level Spanish. Spanish instructional staff will be asked to provide several alternative measures for assessing students language readiness for the program, and all staff will discuss the potential for utilizing other pre-program assessment tools (i.e. testing, or additional language-related application requirements) to allow early identification of applicants lacking the language skills to succeed in the program.

ACB Recommendation

Improve timeliness and thoroughness of pre-departure communication including adhering to dissemination of admission decisions. Streamline and build in accountability for the pre-departure experience.

Action

The Portland-based Study Abroad Advisor will pay close attention to incoming applications for the program, as application deadline occurs shortly before the normally scheduled program departure date, regularly checking and acting on applications starting two weeks before application deadline. Applications will be reviewed and responded to within 5-7 business days of receipt. All phone and email communications regarding the program will be responded to within 24 business hours.

ACB Recommendation

Market uniqueness of program with CIEE member institutions (e.g., Colleges of Public Health, Pre-med Programs, Nursing, Honors Colleges, Social Science) using testimonials of 2011 Summer participants to assure stability of the program and consistency in enrollment of highly qualified students as well as to stimulate future growth.

Action

U.S.-based marketing staff will prioritize Public Health niche programs for specialized and targeted marketing efforts. Institutional Relations staff will enhance their outreach efforts beyond study abroad offices to department-level advisors and faculty in relevant health science and medical fields. Resident staff will collect marketing material (testimonials, reflective writing, blog entries, images) from past participants for use in various marketing efforts. Program management will consider opportunities for marketing the program through relevant public health events and professional associations through increased presence and participation of the program's resident staff.