



Friendship Mission Trip to El Salvador

Office of Religious Life

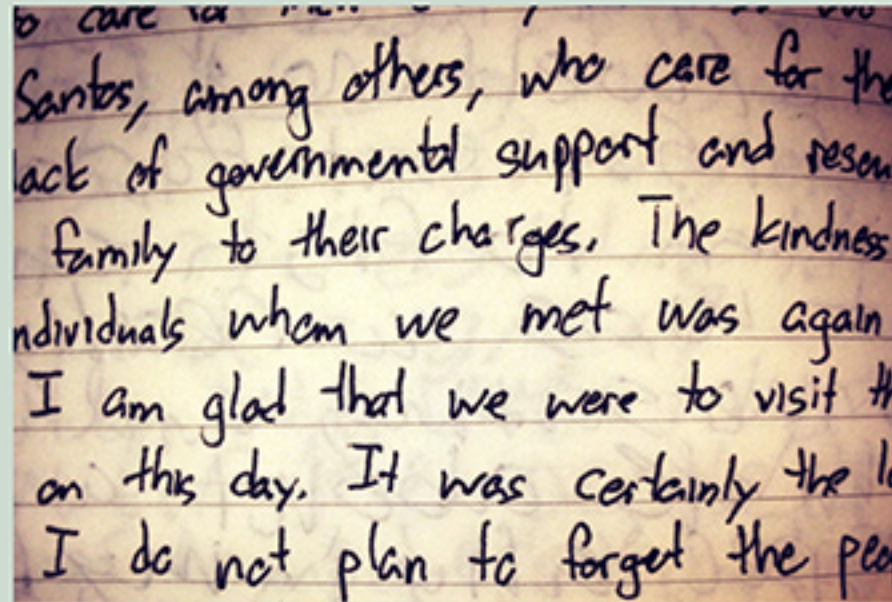
Each Spring Break, the Office of Religious Life and University Christian Ministry (UCM) co-sponsor a mission trip to build bridges of friendship and understanding between students and citizens of other places and countries. This March, seven students traveled to the Colonia 22 de Abril near San Salvador, El Salvador.



WHAT did we want our students to learn?

Students who participate in the Spring Break Friendship Mission Trip will [or will be able to] . . .

- Report increased knowledge of the historical, political, social, economic, and religious aspects of the community in 22 de Abril, San Salvador and El Salvador.
- Identify three factors of increased globalization impacting the country of El Salvador.
- Articulate how their core values have been challenged and/or transformed through this immersion experience.
- Report any increased willingness to make changes in their daily life as a result of participating in this trip.
- Reflect on what they learned about themselves and their personal response when immersed in an unfamiliar environment.



HOW did we measure their learning?

- A values inventory given before the trip.
- A guided journaling experience throughout the trip.
- A paper/pencil evaluation immediately following the trip.
- A focus group 6-8 weeks after the trip.

WHAT did they learn?

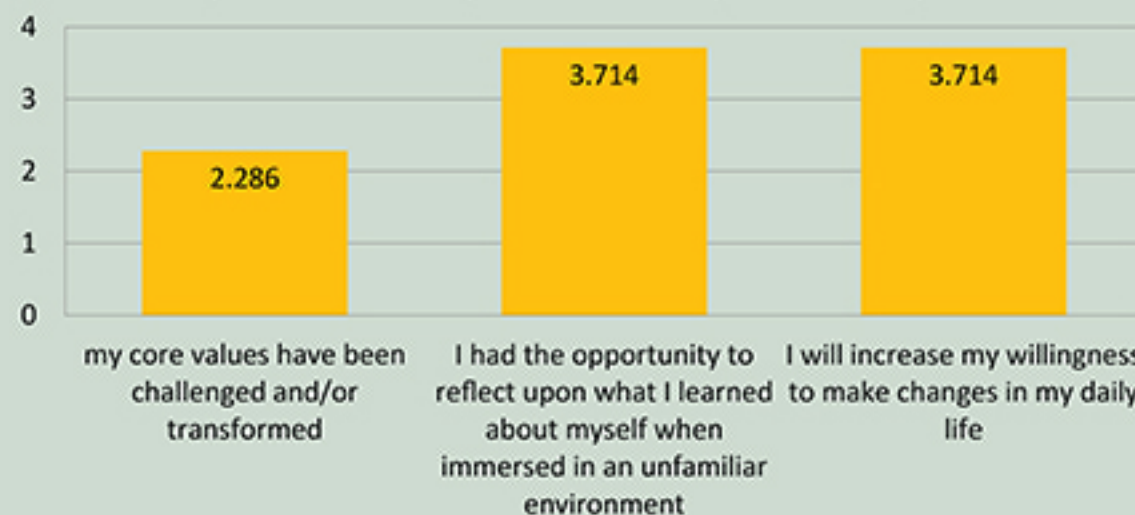
INCREASE OF KNOWLEDGE
As a result of participating in the El Salvador trip I had the opportunity to increase my knowledge of...

Response scale: 1=hardly at all, 2=some, 3=quite a bit, 4=very much



PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT & SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

As a result of participating in the El Salvador trip...
Response scale: 1=hardly at all, 2=some, 3=quite a bit, 4=very much



WHAT did they tell us?

Increase of Knowledge

"Looking back, almost every day here we have partaken in some sort of education regarding the history and politics of modern El Salvador."

"I don't think I've ever actually participated in so much history/politics "immersion" as we've gone through. Even our presentation at UCM...could not inform me about the true historical and political realities here..."

"Being in El Salvador now even is the closest I've been to any war...This forces me to consider my own ignorance about similar situations around the world"

Personal Development & Social Responsibility

"This trip reinforced my [values] but also encouraged me to push them further in my own life."

"Can we truly call ourselves Christian and claim to love and care for others if we ignore the problems of El Salvador?"

"What are the ways I am called to show God's face to others in the community? And what constitutes my community-Evanston? Chicago? The US? The world?"



WHAT are our next steps?

- Anecdotal evidence suggests that students fully process this experience up to many years after the trip. Perhaps scheduling a long-term assessment or forming an alumni group could help us collect and understand this data.
- Students identified that they may have appreciated a prolonged stay in El Salvador or a chance to return in the following year.
- Discovering new ways to engage student's personal response to the trip.