

Associated Colleges of the Midwest Mexico Summer Program: Service Learning & Language Immersion



Student Handbook ♦ Summer 2010

*Beloit Carleton Coe Colorado Cornell Grinnell Knox Lake Forest
Lawrence Luther Macalester Monmouth Ripon St. Olaf*

I. Welcome and Program Overview

The ACM Mexico Summer Program Handbook is designed to help prepare you for your summer in Mexico and to give you an initial sense of what to expect while you are there. This is the inaugural year of the program, and the handbook contains current information on various logistical arrangements for your stay. It is, in effect, a reference tool that provides you (and your parents, to whom a copy will also be sent) with the information you need as you make arrangements to participate in the program. It is important that you read it carefully to prepare for the telephone orientation session and then raise any questions you may have either in that orientation session, or individually with the ACM Program Associate, Heather Everst, or the Director of International Study Programs, Carol Dickerman. You should also take it with you when you travel to Mexico, as it contains important contact and schedule information, as well as information about various arrangements for the program.

Program Overview

A modern metropolis of over 22 million people, Mexico City is home to numerous civic organizations working to improve the situation of Mexicans living in one of the planet's largest cities. This commitment to civic action and development through volunteering attracts a diverse cross-section of people to this vibrant urban setting. With a fascinating blend of colonial and Aztec roots, this cosmopolitan capital city of a country of over 100 million inhabitants has historically served as a thriving center for commerce, finance, cultural activities, and the arts not only for Mexicans, but for the Americas as a whole. The program combines an opportunity for immersion in an urban environment where Spanish language and the cultures of Mexico come together, and where a commitment to positive social change is of the utmost importance.

One of two summer opportunities sponsored by the Associated Colleges of the Midwest (ACM), the Mexico Summer Program: Service Learning & Language Immersion takes students into the heart of Mexico City, where they will be immersed in Mexican culture and Spanish language. ACM's partner university in Mexico City is La Salle University, a Catholic university located in the attractive neighborhood known as La Condesa ("The Countess"). Besides operating the country's highest-regarded medical school, LaSalle is especially known for its strong Spanish language programs as well as its service learning placements with non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

In the first days of your stay in Mexico City, LaSalle will work with each student to identify a suitable NGO placement consonant with the student's interests. In addition, students will be given a Spanish language placement test and then enrolled at the appropriate level in intensive Spanish language classes for the duration of the program. A number of lectures on Mexican history, culture, civic action and the non-profit sector, along with an assortment of field trips, will round out the academic experience of living in Mexico. While in Mexico City, students will stay with host families, further immersing themselves into Mexican culture.



View from LaSalle

II. Calendar

Six-week program: June 1 - July 14, 2010

Tuesday, June 1, 2010: Students arrive in Mexico City

Wednesday, June 2, 2010: First day of program

Tuesday, July 13, 2010: Last day of program (6-week program)

Wednesday, July 14, 2010: Students depart from Mexico City (6-week program)

III. Program Arrangements

The ACM Mexico Summer program is designed to integrate service learning and Spanish language acquisition, with placements with a range of NGOs. These placements are augmented with formal language coursework at LaSalle University, excursions to sites in and around Mexico City, and homestays. ACM program participants will be placed in Spanish language classes appropriate for their level of proficiency along with other students enrolled in LaSalle's summer language programs.

Spanish Language

Spanish language courses will meet every morning, beginning on Wednesday, June 2, through Tuesday, July 13, from 9:30 to 12:30 pm at LaSalle. LaSalle is known for its language courses, and its programs attract business people, diplomats, and others who appreciate the intensity of the classes and the seriousness of the approach. Courses are small, enrolling 6 or 7 students at most, and students can expect to make excellent progress toward achieving fluency in Spanish. Although in this first year of the program ACM will not be awarding credits for the program, ACM students may request that a transcript from LaSalle be sent to their home college. We recommend that students who hope to fulfill a Spanish language requirement, pass into a higher level of Spanish, or otherwise receive recognition at their home colleges speak with a Spanish advisor at their home campuses. (ACM can provide syllabi for these language courses upon request.)

NGO Placement

During the first week of the program, students, together with LaSalle staff, will visit a number of NGOs with whom LaSalle has placed students in the past. Students will learn of each NGO's work, opportunities for interns, and the level of Spanish language proficiency recommended for placement with a specific NGO. LaSalle will make the placements in consultation with students individually. Students are expected to be at their placements from 2 to 6 pm, Monday through Friday. All NGOs are easily accessible via Mexico City's excellent system of public transportation. If your home college grants credits for internships and service learning experiences, we suggest that you speak in advance with an advisor or staff member in the appropriate office about requirements for obtaining credit.

In addition to Spanish language courses and the service learning component, ACM has arranged several special lectures for the first week about the role of NGOs in Mexico and recent Mexican history. Students will also participate in a series of excursions planned throughout the program by the Center for International Education at LaSalle (CIEL) to such sites as Chapultepec Castle, the National Palace and the Zocalo, and Cuernavaca. LaSalle will provide a schedule for these trips when students first arrive.



Cristel House

IV. Preparing to Go and Arrival

You will need a passport for your travel to Mexico, and if you do not have one now, you should apply for one immediately, as the process can be slow as summer approaches. If you already have a passport, please confirm that it will be valid six months after you return from Mexico. For information about obtaining or renewing a U.S. passport, please visit the Department of State website: www.travel.state.gov. Fortunately, you will not need to obtain a visa for your stay in Mexico (provided that it is less than 180 days). Instead, you will be issued a tourist visa when you land in Mexico City. If you are a citizen of another country and need to renew your passport, please contact the nearest consulate or embassy; you will also need to contact the Mexican embassy in Washington, DC or the nearest Mexican consulate for information about visa requirements.

Travel Arrangements

Program participants are expected to arrive in Mexico City on Tuesday, June 1. Once you have made your travel arrangements, please complete and return to Heather Everst the ACM Travel form (the blue form in your acceptance materials); this will allow us to inform LaSalle CIEL staff when you will arrive. Once they receive this information, they can provide you with information about your host family. (Please see also the sections on Arrival in Mexico City and on Health and Safety.)

Communication

Email and Computers

You should plan to continue using your college e-mail address and/or a personal e-mail account while in Mexico. In addition, CIEL recommends that you bring your laptop with you. The university has wireless internet as well as computer facilities for students, and few if any homestay families will have high-speed internet connections.

Telephones

Your American cell phone will work in Mexico, although you may need to consult with your service provider about availability (and costs) of using the service in Mexico. CIEL recommends that if you wish to use a cell phone while in Mexico you purchase an inexpensive model and phone card when you first arrive. They will provide you with information about this at the orientation on Wednesday, June 2, the morning after you arrive.

Money

Costs of language classes at LaSalle, the service learning placement, as well as room and two meals with a host family are all covered by the program fee. (For a detailed list, please see the Cost Information Sheet for the Mexico program included with your acceptance materials.) The costs of local transportation, lunches, and miscellaneous personal expenses are your responsibility. With ATM machines now easily available throughout Mexico, you should plan to use an ATM or debit card to withdraw funds in pesos from your U.S. bank account. Before you leave for the program, however, you should notify your bank that you will be abroad and confirm that your PIN will still be valid. (If you neglect to do so, you may find that your bank, fearing that your card has been stolen, will freeze your account after several withdrawals.) You will also want to check on the transaction charges your bank may levy. While the exchange rate is typically good when using an ATM or debit card, you may find that transaction fees are such as to discourage multiple withdrawals of small amounts.

While ATM and debit cards work well, this should not be your only means of getting money—ATM and debit cards can get lost, stolen, or eaten by cash withdrawal machines. You should also bring along some hard currency in dollars—perhaps \$100 and \$200—and a credit card. These can be useful in emergencies or if you travel outside of Mexico City.

Medications and Other Medical Preparation

As part of your preparation to go abroad, please read carefully information from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) about medical conditions in Mexico and the recommended precautions for Americans traveling to Central America. The website is:

[://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/destinationMexico.aspx](http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/destinationMexico.aspx)

You should share this information with your doctor or the physician who signs your Medical History form and your parents. You will want to make sure that you have the recommended vaccinations and are aware of and take precautions against the various health risks in Mexico. Please note that malaria is a risk if you plan to travel in the lower areas of Mexico (e.g., in the state of Quintana Roo); if you plan to travel to those areas, you should speak to your physician or a travel clinic about recommended malaria prophylaxis and when you should begin to take, and end, the medication.

If you take one or more prescriptions drugs regularly, you will want to be sure you can continue this medication while abroad. Speak with your physician about obtaining a supply to take with you. (And please make sure to keep it in its original container, and in your carry-on luggage.) If you cannot get a supply to take with you, you will want to see if this medication can be obtained in Mexico City and to have the generic name. You should not plan to have drugs (of any kind) sent to you while abroad.

Insurance

ACM provides health insurance coverage for all students participating in its programs. This coverage is through HTH Worldwide, a company with long experience and excellent service in providing health coverage for students abroad.

The policy with HTH provides a broad range of coverage for students' medical treatment while abroad. Among the features of the policy are:

- Coverage for both routine office visits and hospitalization;
- No exclusion for mental disorders or alcohol-related accidents or illnesses;
- Coverage for prescription drugs;
- No exclusion for pre-existing conditions (except in the case of pregnancies beginning before the start of the program);
- Medical evacuation coverage; and
- No deductible.

The policy covers students from the day before the start of the program through the day after the program ends, and thus includes the time to travel to and from the program. The coverage is valid not only in the host country, but also for any travel to another country during the inclusive dates of the program—e.g., during program vacation periods.

The policy, however, should **not** replace any coverage you have in the U.S., nor should you discontinue your American health insurance coverage—it provides only limited amounts of coverage for follow-up treatment of illnesses or injuries which begin while you are abroad provides and only for up to 60 days.

The cost of this coverage is included in your program fee, and ACM will handle your registration for the insurance. It is also possible for you to purchase independently additional coverage to extend the days that you will be covered by the ACM policy. (If, for example, you plan to leave early for the program site or to do some traveling after the program, you can extend the policy.) The cost of this additional coverage is \$7.55/week. ACM will be sending to you in the next several weeks a welcome letter and an ID card from HTH; the welcome letter will describe how to log on to [.hthstudents.com](http://hthstudents.com) to view the tools available to you and to purchase any additional coverage. (You will need the ID number provided in the card

and also a credit card to which the cost of the additional coverage can be billed. It is also possible to purchase the additional coverage by phone.)

Remember, medical insurance does not cover personal property. Insurance coverage for loss or theft of personal property may need to be purchased in addition to one's medical insurance.

Mental and Intellectual Preparation

When you first arrive in Mexico, you will undoubtedly be struck by the many new and different sights, sounds, and smells around you. And while you can never really prepare yourself for the full experience of living abroad, you can arrive with some knowledge of Mexico today, its diversity, and its challenges. You'll undoubtedly find your instructors, friends, and host family more knowledgeable about the U.S. than you are about Mexico. The more you can learn in advance about Mexico and prepare yourself for the program, the more you can learn and benefit from discussions with coworkers at the NGO, instructors, and host family members. Your overall experience will be richer for it.

Suggested readings include:

Anita Brenner, *The Wind that Swept Mexico: The Mexican Revolution, 1910-1942*. 1984. (Contains excellent photographs.)

Alma Guillermoprieto, *Looking for History; Dispatches from Latin America*. Pantheon: 2001. (Final chapters, pp. 178-303, are about Mexico.)

Gilbert Joseph and Timothy Henderson, *The Mexico Reader: History, Culture, Politics*, 2003.

Enrique Krauze, *Mexico: Biography of Power; A History of Modern Mexico, 1810-1996*. Harper Collins, 1997.

Julia Preston and Samuel Dillon, *Opening Mexico: The Making of a Democracy*. Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2004.

Websites:

[://www.intercultures.ca/cil-cai/overview-apercu-eng.asp?iso=mx](http://www.intercultures.ca/cil-cai/overview-apercu-eng.asp?iso=mx) (website maintained by the Canadian Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

[://lanic.utexas.edu/la/mexico](http://lanic.utexas.edu/la/mexico) (the "mother of all Latin American studies websites" maintained by the University of Texas.

[.mexconnect.com](http://mexconnect.com). (a popular website for expatriates in Mexico)

[.jornada.unam.mx](http://jornada.unam.mx) (*La Jornada* is a progressive national newspaper, popular with university students and professors, and with perhaps the best cultural reporting on events in Mexico City, and also on issues important to the NGOs where students will be working.

Other Sources of Information:

Music:

Lila Downs, a Mexican-North American contemporary singer, has written and performed lots of compelling music that touches on contemporary Mexican culture and issues. Her discography includes "Border" and "Una Sangre." She is easy to find on the internet.

Paquita La del Barrio, is a Mexico-city singer and a bit of a naughty pleasure. She is much loved throughout Latin America as the woman's response to the Mexican macho. Her songs include expressive titles such as "Rata de dos Patas," sung in honor of a particularly odious male companion. Most Mexicans know a song or two of Paquita's and would get a kick out of North American students with some knowledge of her songs. [://www.paquitadelbarrio.com.mx/](http://www.paquitadelbarrio.com.mx/)

Definitely for the older crowd, but as important a part of the Mexico City's cultural history as Frank Sinatra is in the United States, **Agustín Lara**'s songs are Mexican classics, and you might hear one or two in your time in the Mexico. You can read more about him on Wikipedia, and see a performance on YouTube.

For another window into the world of Mexico City popular music and dance, the film *Danzón* is highly recommended.

If you like classical music, Mexico City is an important stop on the world tours of many artists, and tickets are relatively inexpensive. Classical, chamber and even jazz music is performed most weekends at venues like the Palacio de Bellas Artes, the Centro Nacional de las Artes in Churbusco, and through the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM). For a taste of what's available just through the UNAM, check out [://www.musicaunam.net/](http://www.musicaunam.net/)

Cinema:

You certainly won't miss any of the new summer movies you want to see in Mexico City, but more importantly you have a wonderful opportunity to live in a city with a rich history of its own cinema, and lots of venues where alternative and art-house films are running. The Cineteca Nacional, sponsored by Mexico's culture ministry is a gathering spot for cinefiles, and is easily reached on the Metro system. Films from all over the world rotate constantly, and tickets are very cheap. A really unique place. UNAM also screens lots of independent films in its different cultural venues.

If you want to see Mexico City portrayed in film, beyond *Danzón* (mentioned above), Mexico's beloved tramp, Cantinflás, almost always found his way to Mexico City in his 1940s-1950s misadventures. Recent (and darker) portrayals are to be found in films like *Y Tu Mama Tambien*, and *Amores Perros* (warning: it's about dog fighting).

Travel Guides:

If you are the sort who wants to know every detail about every colonial church and other monument in Mexico, it's hard to beat the Blue Guide series. The Lonely Planet guide for Mexico will provide you with basic information, an historical overview, as well as hotel and restaurant suggestions.

Possibly the most valuable resource you have for self-preparation is other people who have been to this area of the world before. Talking with people about their experiences can reveal a great deal about what to expect. You may want to start with your Off-Campus Studies Director or faculty at your home college. You will find it well worth your effort, and you may be surprised how excited people will be to share their experiences with you.

Suggested Packing List

Documents

- Passport
- Copy of your birth certificate
- ATM card, credit card, cash

Clothing

- T-shirts, cotton shirts, or blouses and long-sleeve shirts, a sweater, and a jacket
- Jeans (without holes) or casual pants (for both men and women)
- Bathing suit
- Shorts, for the beach only.
- “Business-casual” wear for working at your internship
- Outfits for clubs or nice dinners. Something in-between casual and really nice.
- Outfit for dressier occasion. Men should take a dress shirt, slacks and good shoes, and women should have at least one good dress or pants outfit. At least once during the summer you might want to dress more formally.
- Comfortable walking shoes, as Mexico City is a big place where you walk a lot.
- Pair of shoes you won’t mind getting wet such as Chaco, Teva, Merrell, or Crocs.
- Pair of shoes for showering and walking around, such as flip-flops.
- Rain gear, including a tough, plastic raincoat or poncho and a compact umbrella
- Hat (for sun protection. Remember Mexico City’s elevation is roughly 7,600 feet.)
- Underwear and socks. Bring approximately 10 pairs of each.

Personal and Miscellaneous Items

- Toiletry articles, including most U.S. brands, are readily available in Mexico City.
- Portable toilet paper (Charmin makes travel rolls)
- Hand sanitizer
- Glasses or contact lenses + extra pair and copy of your prescription. Contact lens solution is expensive, so you might want to bring a semester’s supply.
- Enough prescription medicine to last your stay and copies of prescriptions (with latin names)
- Medicine for an upset stomach
- Gas-X dissolvable strips or chewable Pepto-Bismol, especially handy when traveling or eating roadside food (which you probably shouldn’t do anyway, but the temptation can be overwhelming).
- A bath towel and a beach towel (do not expect to use your host family’s towels)
- Sunscreen
- Insect repellent containing DEET
- Camera and appropriate film/memory card
- Travel alarm clock/watch
- Backpack for routine daily use in Mexico City (some students bring larger backpacks to use for travel)
- Money belt
- Guidebook and city map. “Streetwise Mexico City” is excellent if you can find it, as it has both streets and public transportation maps.
- Pictures of your family, home, and college to show to your host family and friends in Mexico. These items provide an excellent way for your family to get to know you better and make for good conversation.
- Water bottle
- Comfort candy or food
- Medicine kit with basic items such as Band-Aids, antibiotic cream, aspirin, antihistamine, antacids, etc.

Packing Considerations

Gifts for your host family

It is a wonderful gesture to take a gift to your host family. Choose something representative of your college, town, or culture, but keep it within a moderate price range. Here are some general recommendations:

- T-shirts or pennants from your college or sports teams
- Calendars with scenes of your home state or town
- Specialty foods (wild rice from Minnesota, bread mix, your favorite cake/muffin mix)
- Handmade sweets from your state or region
- Small toys for children (jacks, stickers, matchbox cars, stuffed animals, magic markers)
- Picture books about the U.S. or your home region
- CDs of popular music in the U.S.
- Mugs
- Artwork from your area (small pottery, weaving, watercolors)
- Commemorative coins (such as state quarters) or stamp collections

Luggage

While packing, keep in mind that you will likely return from Mexico with more than you brought, and that airline luggage restrictions can be strict. You will want to check with the airline about baggage allowances (not only weight, but also the number of checked and carry-on bags permitted). You should also keep in mind that you may transport your luggage several times while in Mexico and probably want something smaller for any weekend trips. When you pack your bags, include your name and the program address inside each bag in case it gets lost.

A word to the wise: put your essential documents, all your money, a few health care and toiletry items, prescription medication, corrective lenses and a change of clothes in your carry-on. It is also a good idea to put valuables such as cameras and iPods in your carry-on luggage.

Clothing

Clothing is more complicated when you are in a new and varied culture. It's important to remember that Mexico City (like Chicago, or New York, or London) is one of the world's great cities. Its residents tend to dress well. Mexican men and women dress more conservatively in slacks, sweaters, and darker colors. Urban camouflage is definitely the operative mode. In addition to city street clothes, it's a good idea to bring a dress outfit as you will have occasion to dress up—perhaps to see the Ballet Folklórico Nacional or the opera at the Palacio de Bellas Artes, perhaps to check out a gallery opening in the Colonia Roma—but you won't need a tie or nylons. You may find that you are more comfortable in Mexico wearing clothing that is more modest than you would typically wear in the U.S. And while jeans are fine, make sure that they're relatively new (no holes or rips, please, fashionable or not).

Because of its altitude, Mexico City can be quite cool, particularly when it rains, so even though you will be there during the summer, you should *bring one or two light sweaters or jackets*. Summer is the rainy season, which generally means mid-afternoon showers, often lasting less than an hour. You'll want some sort of rain gear or small umbrella, preferably something lightweight and easily carried. If you plan to travel to the coasts, where the climate will be hotter and more humid, you'll want fabrics that can breathe in the heat.

Passport Security

Do not pack your passport in your checked luggage since you will need to show it several times while in transit.

Photocopy of the photo page of your passport and carry it separately from your passport. Also bring a few extra photos and a copy of your birth certificate. In case of a lost passport, these items will be necessary, and having any of these items sent from home can cause a significant delay. You will be responsible for any expenses incurred in case of loss of your passport.

Especially while you are traveling, it would be safest to keep your passport separate from your wallet in a money belt or other concealed carrier. That way, if you should lose your wallet, you won't have lost your passport as well. This is useful advice both for traveling to Mexico and for travel within the country.

Arrival in Mexico City

You should plan to arrive at the Mexico City airport on Tuesday, June 1, 2010 between 7am and 7pm. A representative from LaSalle will meet you at the airport after you go through Immigration, where you will show your passport and have it stamped, and have cleared Customs, where you will be asked to put your baggage through an x-ray machine. ACM will pass on to LaSalle the travel information you provide so that they know when your flight will arrive, and they will see that you are taken to your host family.

V. Host Country Information

When Hernán Cortes and his men first glimpsed the Valley of Mexico from the heights of the Popocatepétl Volcano, they were almost literally enchanted. Coming from a world where the lore of chivalry and enchantment (à la Don Quixote) were still very much alive, they were very open to being dazzled (and even terrified) by the vision of a magical new city built in and around a huge lake, in a high valley surrounded by mountains. Tenochtitlán, in the center of the lake and the center of Aztec power, and its surrounding cities together were more populous than any city in Europe, surpassed only by some cities in China. The conquistadors—most of whom were career soldiers who had seen a good deal of renaissance Europe—said they had never seen a place to rival the order, cleanliness, and majesty of the civilization they “discovered” in the Valley of Mexico. Certainly, they were repelled and terrified by the religion of the Aztecs centered on human sacrifice, but they nonetheless could not contain their admiration for this (for them) “barbarian” civilization.

The Spanish conquest of Mexico brought destruction and new creation, like the many cycles of conquest that preceded it in the Valley of Mexico. That process continued throughout the 300 years of the colonial era, and continues today. Forever, it seems, Mexico City has provoked both marvel at what is created there, and concern about what is destroyed. In the colonial era, Mexico City became perhaps the richest and most diverse city in the entire Hispanic world, as it served as a commercial and cultural crossroads for a Spanish Empire that stretched from Europe, through the Americas, and to Asia. The Franz Meyer Museum near the Alameda, is wonderful place to see what happened to Mexico’s art and craft cultures when it became a key stopover on the trade route from Europe to the Philippines and China. Since colonial times, Mexicans have been very proud of the “grandeza” of their capital city, even proposing it as a “new Rome” once they came to believe that the Virgin Mary had appeared to an indigenous man on the city’s outskirts. The Basilica of the Virgin of Guadalupe is still a vital reference point for Mexican identity, regardless of religious belief.

When the independence movement began in 1810, Mexico City was wealthier, and certainly grander, than any city in the United States or elsewhere in the Americas. However, as was the case throughout the former Spanish Empire, the country’s initiation into a modern world dominated by northern European countries, and increasingly the United States, was not an easy one. In the 1800s, Mexico City witnessed pitched battles between Liberals and Conservatives, “ins” and “outs,” and Mexican troops and North American and French invaders. Each of these events left marks on the city: there are fewer churches and convents than there were in colonial times, as anti-clerical Liberals saw them as sources of subversion and obstacles to modernization. Chapultepec Castle, on the heights near U. LaSalle, was refurbished by the European royals Maximilian and Carlota, brought to Mexico by French troops in a failed effort to re-establish a monarchy. The Paseo de la Reforma, which stretches out below the Castle, was laid out by Maximilian to give his new capital some of the glory of Paris.

This aspiration to be, instead of the “new Rome” of the Americas, something more like the “new Paris” reached its height in the *fin de siècle* dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz. Díaz promoted railroads, oil exploration, and mining throughout the country, and the modernization of Mexico City. Beautiful 19th century buildings like the Post Office across from Bellas Artes, the Palacio of Bellas Artes itself, the houses you see along the Paseo de la Reforma, and even the Casa Rosada you will come to know well at U. LaSalle are considered to be “Porfirian” buildings—monuments to a generation’s aspiration to, in many ways, cover up the multiple layers of Mexican society and history and put forth instead a new, fashionable, and modern face to the world.

The Mexican Revolution, which from 1910 to 1920 shook the country and reverberated broadly into the Americas and world, is usually interpreted as an effort to re-integrate into the identity of Mexico and its capital city the indigenous and working-class elements the Porfiriato tried to repress. This aspect of the Revolution was particularly evident for a several days at the mid-point of the Revolution, in 1914, as the sandaled troops of Emiliano Zapata from the South, and the riders of Pancho Villa’s “División del Norte” roamed freely through parts of the city that had for so long been closed to them socially. Legend has it that Villa and his men rowdily occupied the elegant “Opera Bar” across the street from Bellas Artes, while Zapata’s troops drank chocolate at the lunch counter of the city’s most elegant Sanborn’s restaurant in the nearby Casa de los Azulejos. After the Revolution, memories of the struggle and of the new groups it had brought to the forefront of

Mexico's identity quickly took shape in an outpouring of public art and architecture. The great murals of Rivera, Siqueiros, Orozco, and O'Gorman, along with the motifs adopted in the art deco buildings you see downtown and even in your neighborhood, the Colonia Condesa, expressed the country's vocation for syncretism---for trying to integrate the past and present, for joining the modern world while not forgetting the depth and richness of Mexican culture.

If you pay attention to the street names of this metropolis, for example, you will also see the impact of the Revolution. There are many plazas, monuments, and streets devoted to the memory of the country's most beloved president---the Oaxacan indian Benito Juárez. It is very difficult to find a street dedicated to Porfirio Diaz. Other streets have interesting names that come from the Revolution. Benjamín Hill street, where the U. La Salle is located, is named after one of the great generals of the Revolution. A nearby street bears the curious name "Agrarismo"---in memory of the agrarian reform movement that was at the heart of the revolutionary struggle. Several stops on the Metro subway system (inaugurated to coincide with the 1968 Olympics) are named to commemorate important people and events in the country's history.

This flowering of Mexican culture made Mexico City a mecca of sorts for artists and countercultural moderns from around the world. "The Enormous Vogue of Things Mexican," as one book describes the phenomenon, brought the likes of Jack Kerouac and other North Americans to "study" for a time in Mexico City in the 1950s, just across Avenida Insurgentes from the Colonia Condesa (where Sears is now). This positive attitude toward the city peaked in 1968, when the world came to Mexico City for the Summer Olympics, to find that, once again, the city's "grandeza" had left many people out and sown the seeds of conflict. The 1968 massacre by government troops of university students at the Tlaltelolco plaza was a watershed in modern Mexican history. This dark chapter has only been brought to light recently, and its memory commemorated in a new museum on the plaza which had been allowed to languish for more than 30 years after that dark October day.

The 1968 student movement signaled frustration with a Revolution that had become corrupt, and which had also corrupted Mexico City in many ways. The new Metro only mitigated the enormous transportation and pollution problems the city experienced as it followed the U.S.A.'s love of the automobile. Aided by endemic government corruption, building standards dropped markedly from the high points achieved in the city's glorious architectural past. This became evident when an enormous earthquake struck Mexico City in 1985, killing thousands of people trapped in shoddily-built structures.

The earthquake and the outpouring of impromptu civic effort on behalf of its victims are usually marked as the birth of the NGO sector (or "tercer sector"---neither government nor private) that you will be learning about and participating in this summer. The tragedy of 1968, the repression of the 1970s, and then the disaster of 1985 demonstrated to many the bankruptcy of the one-party state built by the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI). This state, aptly named the "Philanthropic Ogre" in a famous essay by Mexico's Nobel Prize-winning poet Octavio Paz, had endeavored to co-opt and absorb all independent political movements. The idea of independent, grassroots, non-profit organizations---so much a part of U.S. history and global society today---was not a welcome one to the PRI. The stark necessity of earthquake recovery, according to most observers, broke this inertia and started the city's residents on the path toward independent civic action to address the city's many problems.

In your work, you will learn about these problems and these efforts up-close. As for the problems, Mexico City's can seem a bit overwhelming at times. If you feel that way, remember you are not alone; in particular, pay attention to the incredible creativity, resilience, and hope of the Mexicans who meet these problems everyday. The Mexican view of the world is very different from the standard U.S. view of the world, something which has been captured by many authors, but perhaps by none better than Octavio Paz in his book *The Labyrinth of Solitude*. This millennial culture has developed many resources for dealing with apparently intractable problems---some more constructive than others, no doubt---but resources that can enrich your view of the world nonetheless. To give one brief example from Octavio Paz: Paz said that North Americans believe the world can be perfected, while Mexicans believe it can be redeemed. Interesting. What might that mean in terms of the expectations one brings to the daunting global problems we face? This is just one of the many things (along with much black humor) that you can learn by paying close attention to how "chilangos" (as residents of Mexico City are often called) look at life in their city.

Mexico City, however, is currently in a phase of renewed self-confidence, and perhaps even a renewed phase of "grandeza." The Centro Histórico, never abandoned but certainly much neglected for decades, is completing an impressive series of renovations. Nightlife has returned with improved public safety, and it is difficult to think of a more vibrant place to spend a

Sunday than on the Zócalo with its constant stream of political and street theater, free concerts, and unrivaled people-watching. The Alameda, just a short walk from the Zócalo, suffered great destruction in the 1985 earthquake. Today, it is again the site of one of the great public parks of the city, surrounded by examples of Mexico's well-earned international reputation for brilliant architecture. As the Paseo de la Reforma, which begins near the Alameda, winds its way westward, past Chapultepec Castle and through Chapultepec Park, and up into the prosperous neighborhoods known as Las Lomas, one is impressed at the incredible wealth and power symbolized by the homes and offices of those who manage Mexico's participation in the global economy. A bit of Park Avenue and Wall Street—mixed together, of course, as just about everything in Mexico. On the other hand, one wonders: is this new flowering of “grandeza” on Reforma hiding something, covering and excluding some aspect of this incredibly diverse society. And what might come of that?

In the classroom at U. LaSalle, at home with your Mexican family, and in the streets of this metropolis, the capital of the largest country in the Spanish-speaking world, we invite you to attend closely to the many, many layers of this ancient society and city, and to become one of those few North Americans who not only appreciate, but allow themselves to learn from and be transformed by what one historian called the “Many Mexicos” that await us just south of our border. Adelante!

VI. Health and Safety

You will be living and studying in a larger city than that of your home college (and perhaps even your home state!), and you'll find clear contrasts to what you have become comfortable with at home. Some of the differences, particularly with regard to safety, are due to the fact that you're in an urban setting with risks like those of other large urban areas. Mexico City is a world unto itself in many ways, with neighborhoods (like La Condesa) that feel very safe almost all of the time, and neighborhoods where outsiders (Mexican or foreign) simply don't go unless accompanied by someone who understands the place well. Other, health-related risks are endemic to tropical areas of the world, including Mexico, and are, by and large, preventable. And keep in mind too that the two biggest risks to your health and safety while abroad are the same as in the U.S.: traffic- and alcohol-related incidents.

For information about health and safety in Mexico as a whole as well as about Mexico City itself, two very useful websites are those of the U.S. Department of State and the Centers for Disease Control. These can be found at:

wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/destinationMexico.aspx

http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1139.html (The Consular Information Sheet contains information about visa requirements, safety and crime, and road conditions, among other things, while the Background Notes are more like an almanac entry, providing a summary of Indian politics, history, the economy, and basic statistics.)

Health

In addition to the pre-departure preparations for managing your health while in Mexico (see above under "Medications and Other Medical Preparations" in the section on "Preparing to Go and Arrival"), you need to take precautions to maintain your health in Mexico. Probably the biggest risk to your health in Mexico is from badly prepared food (e.g., undercooked) and untreated water, leading to stomach and intestinal upsets. The CDC pages on travel in Mexico recommend monitoring what you drink and eat. As a rule of thumb it is generally best to drink bottled water and to avoid eating salads or fruit that you cannot peel, or any food on the street; eating local yogurt in the first days of your visit will help your digestive system adapt more quickly to local micro-organisms. In addition, in Mexico City, you may experience some shortness of breath due to the altitude (c. 7,600 feet, a half mile higher than Denver) during the first week, and need to adjust your activities accordingly.

Mexico City has good medical facilities, especially in the "better" areas of the city such as La Condesa, and the staff at CIEL in LaSalle can recommend bi-lingual physicians if you need to see a doctor while you are on the program.

You should be aware that, in case of illness or injury involving hospitalization or a series of visits to a doctor's office, ACM reserves the right to inform the person you designated as an emergency contact.

Safety

In Mexico City you will be living in La Condesa, a pleasant and safe area of the city known for its many cafés, bookshops, and parks. All of the family placements are in this area and a few minutes' walk from LaSalle University itself. It is both safe and convenient to walk to LaSalle in the morning for your classes. In traveling to the NGO where you will be placed, you can use public transportation, either by surface bus or the excellent subway system. Although American newspapers have been full of articles about drug-related crime, this is predominantly in the northern parts of Mexico and especially in cities bordering the U.S. The major risks to you in Mexico City are similar to those in other large cities: pickpocketing and other forms of theft. It is also worth keeping in mind that the single biggest risk to your safety is from over-consumption of alcohol, which affects your judgment and ability to perceive and respond to dangerous situations. LaSalle will be discussing safety in greater detail in the orientation session when you first arrive, but there are several general rules which you should observe:

- Take only authorized taxis; at the airport when you first arrive, you will see stands for authorized taxi companies. You'll also find taxi stands (*sitios*) in the neighborhood where you live and should plan, when taking a taxi, to take one from such a stand. They are a bit more expensive than the small green VW bugs you see on the streets, but have a reputation for greater safety.
- Do not wear expensive jewelry or carry more money than you need for whatever activity or errand you are doing. If you are carrying your passport and/or credit card, keep it separately from your money.
- Use ATM machines only during the day and in secure areas—e.g., in banks; do not use an ATM on the street. An excellent, safe place to use an ATM, to find a free bathroom, and to be a part of a Mexico City institution is at the Sanborns drug-store/newsstands/restaurants that you will find about every 5th block in Mexico City. They are clean, well-lit, open late, and usually have everything you might need (and some things you didn't know you needed until you saw them there).
- In taking public transportation to your NGO location, watch your purse or pockets carefully.
- In the evenings or if traveling on weekends, go with another person and plan to return home together. Make sure your host family knows where you will be and when you will return.
- Do not participate in any demonstrations; this is both illegal and unsafe.

Among the information that you will receive from LaSalle during the orientation is 24-hour emergency telephone numbers as well as contact information about recommended taxi companies. Carry the laminated card they provide with you at all times and add the telephone numbers to your cell phone address book.



view of LaSalle bus terminal

VII. Program Facilities

The ACM Summer Service Learning & Language Immersion program in Mexico City partners with the Center for International Education (CIEL) at LaSalle University. Located in La Condesa neighborhood (or *colonia*), LaSalle enrolls some 10,000 students and is especially well known for its medical school, recognized as the second best in Mexico. The area around LaSalle is very safe: the Mexican White House, *Los Pinos*, is located nearby, as is the Ministry of the Economy and the party headquarters of the Partido de la Revolución Democrática (PRD), one of three main political parties in Mexico. Students participating in the ACM program will have access to all of the facilities at CIEL and LaSalle: in addition to classrooms and computer facilities at CIEL, LaSalle also has a good library and excellent exercise facilities (including an Olympic-sized pool) available to program participants.

CIEL will make the home-stay placements (see the next section on Housing Arrangements), provide orientation when students first arrive, and introduce students to the various NGOs with whom they will be placed. They will also be arranging a series of site visits and program excursions for ACM students together with other participants in their summer programs. You will find the staff both knowledgeable and supportive.

VIII. Housing Arrangements

The housing stay, with Mexican families, is integral to the ACM program, providing students with an opportunity for cultural immersion and for enhancing Spanish language proficiency outside of the classroom and service learning contexts. Housing placements will all be in La Condesa neighborhood, within a short (and safe) walking distance of LaSalle. LaSalle has worked with these families over many years, and all are experienced in receiving American and other international students. You will receive information about your host family before you leave the U.S. and should share this information with your parents or guardians at home. When you first arrive, you will go directly to the house or apartment where you will be living.

Families are important units within Mexican society, and living with a host family provides an important window onto Mexico that would otherwise be missing from a student's experience abroad. For many students, it is the aspect of ACM programs that they most miss when they return home. At the same time, however, like the more academic aspects of a program, it demands a level of commitment and work (not to mention sensitivity) to make the arrangement work. The host families feel responsible for the students placed in their homes (in their "care," as many of them see it) and in return expect that students will treat them with the respect and courtesy they expect of their own sons and daughters.

No matter how much you prepare for the difference between college study on your home campus and your summer in Mexico, there will be surprises and adjustments to make. The success of your stay with a Mexican family will depend upon your ability to observe and adapt to a lifestyle very different from what you are accustomed to. If you experience any problems or concerns, please let CIEL staff know right away. They can help you adjust or bring these concerns to the host family. The differences you encounter will include food, household routine, amount of privacy and personal space, and protocol. You may also hear political attitudes you've never heard at home. Sensitive areas may be some of your family members' views of feminism and religion, among other issues, and attitudes toward the U.S. Rather than attempting to change your host family's attitudes, listen courteously and express your own views in a polite, low-key fashion; and remember too that one or another perspective isn't necessarily correct.

In your Mexican home you should keep in mind the courtesy expected of a guest. **No matter what country you're in, it's polite to let your hosts know when you're going out and when you'll be back. Try to establish a schedule which does not disrupt your host family's routine.** Find out when you're expected to be present for meals and other family events, and find out what your household responsibilities are. In some ways, staying with a Mexican family is like being back in your parents' home again. **You may have to remind yourself that you are in Mexico to learn from your Mexican family and friends, not to make them adapt to your expectations and preferences.** Being constantly alert to what is going on around you is tiring at first, especially where using a foreign language means that just speaking requires effort.

In all this, we remind you that your home stay is an important source of *experiential learning*. The experience may make you recognize preconceived notions about contemporary Mexico. It may sensitize you to cultural differences more subtle than you had anticipated. It will most certainly challenge you to see life from someone else's point of view and to stretch your own culturally-shaped perceptions. It will not necessarily be a simple task, but you will be richly rewarded if you are open to exploring the possibilities for learning that surround you in Mexico.

IX. Getting Around Mexico City

You have several transportation options in Mexico City: bus, subway, and taxi. For most daytime trips, you will likely take the bus or subway. Mexico City's public transportation system is extensive, and it links many parts of the city. As with public transportation in any major urban area, you will need to be careful with purses, wallets, and any bags you may carry. In the late evening, you may wish to take a taxi—but please make sure it is an “authorized” one, chosen from the list of recommended taxi companies provided by CIEL, or from an official taxi stand (which can always be called by phone if you are not close to a stand).

Traffic in and around Mexico City, especially during the workday, is very heavy, and what should be a short trip can, quite literally, take hours to get from one place to another. Within La Condesa, you'll find it easiest to walk—e.g., between your homestay and La Salle—while public transportation will likely work best for getting to the NGO where you will be placed. One Sunday a month, you can witness and join the great spectacle of Mexico City's residents taking over its great avenues on bicycles, roller-skates, you-name-it, as the city police close several major arteries to traffic. Bikes are available for rental in the Condesa neighborhood, if you want to try this out.

CIEL staff will provide you with a subway map as well as guidance in making your way around the La Condesa neighborhood. They can also suggest places you may wish to visit in and around Mexico City during your free time on weekends. LaSalle has already planned several weekend trips at the beginning of the program, so we suggest that you wait to plan other travels until you arrive on site, meet other program participants, and review the schedule of trips CIEL has drawn up. And please always travel with at least one other person.

Your Return Date and Getting to the Airport

The earliest date you can return home from Mexico City is Wednesday, July 14. (If you are staying for an additional two weeks, that date will be two weeks later.) CIEL staff and/or your host family can suggest how best to get to the airport for your flight.



Subway station

X. ACM Program Rules and Policies

The Associated Colleges of the Midwest (ACM, is a consortium of 14 small liberal arts colleges in Illinois, Wisconsin, Iowa, Minnesota, and Colorado. ACM's programs reflect the academic standards and policies of its member colleges, and the standards and rules in the paragraphs which follow are applicable for all of ACM's off-campus study programs.

Program Fees and Refunds

As outlined in the separate sheet on Program Payment Policies included in your acceptance materials, you will be responsible for the program fee for your program, and can expect to be billed directly by ACM before the beginning of the program. The \$250 deposit, required to reserve a spot for you on the program and due within 15 days of acceptance, will be deducted from the total program fee. Although you will not be receiving credits for the program, and are thus not eligible for financial aid, it is worth consulting with the off-campus study office, scholarships office, and/or career or internship center about the possibility of special funding through your college for which you might be eligible. Although most schools do not provide financial aid over the summer, some have special funding set aside for summer activities including service learning projects.

Please review carefully the information about program-specific costs contained in the Cost Information Sheet for Mexico Summer. It will provide you with detailed information about costs included in the program and additional expenses (e.g., for airfare) for which you need to budget.

If you withdraw from the program at any time before the program begins, you will lose the \$250 deposit and will be charged for any unrecoverable expenses already incurred on your behalf. If you leave a program once it has begun or are sent home for cause (please see the Study Abroad Contract), the program fee cannot be refunded. And finally, please be aware that you are liable for any expenses for medical care as well as damage to hostel, hotel, or other housing during your time on the program and that ACM will bill you for such costs.

ACM Policy on Sexual Harassment

I. Policy

It has been and remains the policy of the Associated Colleges of the Midwest (ACM) that sexual harassment of students and employees is prohibited. Violation of this policy may result in discipline or dismissal of students or discipline and discharge of employees. However, allegations of sexual harassment are serious and may be extremely prejudicial to the alleged offender. Accordingly, allegations not made in good faith may subject the complainant to disciplinary action.

II. Sexual Harassment Defined

Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical behavior of a sexual nature when (1) submitting or refusing to submit to such conduct is used as a basis for any decision affecting an individual's academic status or employment, or (2) such conduct has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive educational environment.

III. Grievance Procedure

Any student who believes that he or she has been subjected to sexual harassment has recourse to informal and formal grievance procedures designed for the purpose of investigation and resolution of such allegations. Informal grievance resolution is encouraged although not required prior to initiating the formal grievance procedure.

As a preliminary matter, any student who believes that she or he has been sexually harassed should report the incident promptly to any of the following:

Director of the program in which the student is enrolled or other appropriate local staff
or faculty member
Director of International Study Programs at ACM Chicago office, Carol Dickerman
Director of Chicago Programs, Sally Noble
Vice-President of ACM, John Ottenhoff

Assistance in presenting a grievance may be obtained from another employee or student. However, attorneys or other third persons may not participate in any facet of the grievance procedure unless ACM and all interested parties otherwise agree.

Informal Procedure

An informal procedure is designed to resolve sexual harassment allegations without having to invoke the formal grievance procedure. This can be initiated through contact with any of the staff named above. The goal is to resolve the problem through discussion with the student, the alleged offender, and any other relevant persons. The student and/or staff member grievance officer may elect to terminate the informal procedure if it appears that no progress is being made in resolving the dispute and initiate a formal procedure.

Formal Procedure

1. Students who wish to lodge a formal complaint must sign and submit it in writing to any staff members named above within 120 days of the alleged harassment.
2. Thereafter, the President of ACM (or if the President is the alleged offender, the Chair of the Board of Directors) shall assign a grievance officer to investigate the complaint and report his/her findings to a grievance board comprised of the President, the investigating grievance officer, and one other grievance officer selected by the President. No employee accused of harassment may serve on the grievance board.
3. The investigation shall include interviews with the complainant, the alleged offender, who shall be informed of the allegations against him/her, and other relevant persons. The grievance board may supplement the investigating officer's investigation by itself conducting interviews and reviewing relevant evidence.
4. Within 21 days after the investigation concludes, the grievance board shall decide by majority vote whether the complaint allegations are supported by substantial credible evidence. It shall then inform the complainant and alleged offender of its decision.
5. Any disciplinary or other corrective action resulting from a violation of this policy shall be determined in accordance with ACM disciplinary procedures.

IV. Third Party Harassment

Any student who has been sexually harassed by a third party (i.e., vendor, guest speaker, internship setting) should report the incident promptly to any grievance officer who will then investigate and attempt to resolve the problem.

V. Confidentiality

All complaints and investigations of sexual harassment shall be handled in a confidential manner and shall be disclosed only to persons having a legitimate need to know. Grievances and documents will be maintained separately from other student files.

VI. Non-Retaliation

Complaints made in good faith under this policy shall not result in any adverse action against the complainant, nor shall any person who participates in good faith in an investigation be treated adversely because of such participation.

Nothing in this policy precludes an individual from pursuing any legal remedies available to him/her.

ACM Policy on Personal Abuse

Personal abuse, whether oral, written, or physical, exceeds the bounds of appropriate discourse and civil conduct. Harassment of another because of his/her race, sexual orientation, ethnic background, religion, expression of opinion, or other personal characteristics is prohibited. ACM students who engage in such behavior may be disciplined and/or dismissed from a program.

ACM Policy on Dual Relationships

A dual relationship is one in which the faculty/staff member has both a professional and a romantic or sexual relationship with a student. This includes relationships which appear to be mutually consensual. However, the inherent inequality of power between student and faculty/staff creates an unacceptable conflict of interest in a supervisory, educational or advisory context. For this reason, dual relationships between faculty/staff and students who participate in the same program should be avoided. If a relationship nonetheless develops, the faculty/staff member is expected to remove him/herself from supervisory or advisory responsibility for that student, or face disciplinary action.

ACM Policy on Discrimination

The Associated Colleges of the Midwest does not discriminate in the operation of its educational programs, activities, or employment on the basis of sex, race, creed, national origin, age, sexual orientation or disability.

