

FAQ's -- CSU-LSAMP 2015 COSTA RICA FALL SEMESTER EXPEDITION

Hola! We have received a number of inquiries about the Fall 2015 CSUMB Costa Rica program, and wanted to share with you some frequently asked questions. (If you have additional questions, please send them to us!)

What is the application deadline? The target date to submit applications is April 3. We review applications as they are received, so feel free to submit your application early. If you intend to apply but expect that the application will be a little late, please let us know.

How much does the program cost? Program costs are being covered by the CSU-LSAMP program.

What is covered by CSU-LSAMP? Round-trip airfare, ground transportation in Costa Rica, all lodging (primarily homestays) and meals, books, class and field supplies, all academic classes, health insurance, entrance fees to parks and reserves, snorkeling, guided hikes, excursions, cultural events, and the CSUMB study abroad fee.

What is not included? Tuition (around \$3000) is paid by the student to CSUMB Extended Education. Personal expenses, such as occasional snacks, taxis, souvenirs, and the airport exit tax (which is paid when you leave Costa Rica) are covered by the student. We suggest you budget around \$225-260 for in-country expenses.

Can I use my financial aid? Yes, Federal Aid is allowed by all campuses and a few CSUs allow students to take State aid as well. Contact your financial aid adviser right away.

How many semester units will I earn? 21.

That seems like too many units! I don't know if I can do well with than many units. We think you can. Bear in mind that a semester of tropical field ecology (13 units) and total immersion language study (8 units) is not like a semester of classroom work on campus! The work is hands-on and field-based, and the faculty work closely one-on-one with each student to promote success with the learning outcomes. Students typically find themselves learning at a much higher pace (and loving it!) in this kind of setting.

What courses would I take? The following CSUMB courses: ENSTU 349s: Environmental Interpretation (service learning course); ENV5 350: Quantitative Field Methods; BIO 395: Survey of Tropical Ecosystems; and SPAN xxx: Spanish language (various levels).

Do all participants take the same coursework? Yes, although Spanish is taught at all levels.

Can I take the Spanish coursework pass/not pass? Yes.

What if I don't know any Spanish? No problem; you would start Spanish classes at the beginner level.

What if I already speak Spanish fluently? There are several options available for advanced Spanish speakers; the focus could be on improving writing skills, reading Spanish literature, or mastering a technical vocabulary, for example.

What are the prerequisites for the program? STAT 250 or the equivalent. Check to see what the equivalent would be at your campus.

What if I don't yet have the prerequisite? Talk to us; we will consider waiving the prerequisite on a case-by-case basis, taking into account commensurate experience and probability of academic success.

How will I find out about packing, getting a passport, travel arrangements, and so on? A detailed program handbook will be sent out to each participant by email in early April, and there will be a follow-up skype session with faculty. Participants will receive the information they need, start the preparations for travel, and get answers to any questions they may have.

How do I apply? Contact the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Center (uroc@csumb.edu) for an application form. You will submit the application questionnaire and transcripts (unofficial), and arrange for two letters of recommendation to be sent to via email to uroc@csumb.edu. Once these materials are in hand, a skype interview will be scheduled. You'll know by April 16 or sooner if you are accepted or not.

If you have questions, feel free to write directly to Dr. Diana Lieberman (DLieberman@csumb.edu). We look forward to hearing from you!