Country Proposal

For

THE INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

—2000—

Costa Rica

Sponsored by
International Policy Students Association

Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy
University of Michigan at Ann Arbor
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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The International Policy Students Association (IPSA) seeks to implement an annual Spring Break Development Program that will provide students with a broad overview of policy making in developing economies. We seek to augment our studies through practical experience and training from a study tour of a developing country.

The focus of this year's proposed program is Economic Development in Costa Rica. We will arrange to meet with government officials, business people, academics, and nongovernmental representatives to learn more about development policies of Latin America and Costa Rica, in particular.

The Spring Break Development Program is an innovative student-led curriculum initiative that will enhance the image of SPP as a leading public policy school. The Program will help to strengthen the international policy track, improve SPP's public image, establish an ongoing relationship with international policy makers, and integrate student and faculty policy interests.

For the first year, IPSA is requesting a grant of $20,195 to cover expenses related to the establishment and implementation of the program.

II. SELECTION CRITERIA

The participants in the Spring Break Development Program will be selected by the four executives of the International Policy Students Association (IPSA) in conjunction with the project advisor, Katherine Terrell. The participants will be chosen based on a one-page application on which the following criteria will be judged in the following order:

- SPP student - Appropriate coursework in international development policy - Interest in developing economics and politics - Commitment to project organization - Commitment to IPSA

No more than 19 students will be chosen for subsidized travel, in addition to one project advisor. All students who wish to participate after the 19 students are chosen or who are students outside SPP can utilize the project's itinerary and facilities, but will be unable to receive subsidized travel.

III. AGENDA FOR THE STUDY TOUR IN COSTA RICA

A. Objective

To learn about policy making in developing economies with Costa Rica as a case study. Our lectures and discussions will address the following issues related to economic development:

§ Economic and monetary policies § Labor policy § Social policy
Costa Rica is at the forefront of these development issues. We seek to enhance our knowledge of international development theory and policy implementation during our week abroad.

B. Why Costa Rica?

Costa Rica is a good example of "successful development." The country has one of the best governments and development programs in Latin America. Costa Rica is also unique in that the country has strong social policies.

From a practical perspective, SPP has a strong relationship with the country. Professor Katherine Terrell can provide introductions to senior governmental officials, and Mr. Dan Turnquist can provide introductions to senior US embassy officials.

C. Pre-travel Preparations

Students will arrange presentations or speakers on issues and problems affecting Costa Rican development, for each week until the trip in February. We expect students to be fully knowledgeable and articulate on the issues facing developing countries, and Costa Rica in particular. A sample pre-trip schedule includes:


D. Spring Break Development Program

The Spring Break Development Program is designed to provide students with a broad overview of policy making in developing economies. The focus of our trip to Costa Rica will be economic development policy, inclusive of macroeconomic, monetary, labor, and social issues. We will arrange to meet with government representatives, business professionals, non-governmental officials, and local scholars, to learn more about policy development, implementation, and evaluation.

While in Costa Rica, students will be required to: 1. Prepare for discussions/lectures/meetings. 2. Develop a survey project to encourage interaction with the local people. Students will be required to formulate a few questions and pose them to the local people. Examples of survey questions include: (1) What are the "people's" perspectives on development policies? (2) Where does the government go from here in terms of development policy? (3) How has the business/economic climate changed over the past few years? Students will be required to share their findings with the group.

In developing the study tour, we have outlined a sample itinerary:

Proposed Itinerary for Economic Development in Costa Rica (Schedule is subject to change)
Day 1: Saturday - Arrival Arrive in San Jose Independent exploration of city

Day 2: Sunday - Orientation Morning: Tour of the city Afternoon: Meeting with local Peace Corps volunteers and US Foreign Service for brief orientation

Day 3: Monday - Economic & Monetary Policies in Development Morning: Meeting with the Ministry of Finance Meeting with the Central Bank Afternoon: Meeting with US Embassy Meeting with representative of multinational company

Day 4: Tuesday - Labor Policy & Economic Growth Morning: Meeting with Unions and Labor Associations Meeting with representative from local company Tour of local company operations (if possible) Afternoon: Meeting with Ministry of Labor

Day 5: Wednesday - The Social Safety Net Morning: Tour of economically depressed areas with international aid/development agency Afternoon: Meeting with local parliamentary representative Meeting with local university professor for discussion on social policy

Day 6: Thursday - Case Study: Tourism as a Development Tool Morning: Travel to rain forest or coastal region Afternoon: Meeting with regional/local development officials

Day 7: Friday - Last Day Free time for completion of survey project

Day 8: Saturday (or Sunday)- Departure Fly home to Ann Arbor

E. Deliverables

Upon returning to Michigan, students will be asked to share their unique experiences with the general SPP community. Participants in the Spring Break Development Program will provide the following deliverables:

1) Detailed report to Dean (including findings and expenses)
2) WorldView publication
3) Michigan Daily (and possibly Monroe Street Journal) article
4) Article for alumni newsletter
5) Possible external article publications
6) Panel discussion for the SPP and general university community
7) Recruiting tools (including website and video clips)

IV. BENEFITS TO SPP
Traveling to Costa Rica and meeting local government, academic, and business representatives will help to strengthen the international policy track, improve SPP's public image, establish an ongoing relationship with international policy makers, and integrate student and faculty policy interests.

A. Strengthen the International Policy Concentration

SPP has a strong tradition of preparing students by providing opportunities to interact in a real world context. Currently, SPP's curriculum contains an applied policy seminar (APS), which allows students to do public sector consulting work for state and local governments and community development organizations. However, the international policy students are unable to truly interact with international policy players, as the APS has been limited to policy groups within Michigan. Implementing an annual Development Program would strengthen the international policy concentration by including an applied policy component, which utilizes classroom theory in a foreign policy setting.

B. Improve SPP's Public Image & Recruiting

Instituting the Development Program would improve SPP's public image as a leader in innovative professional training. By marketing this program adequately (i.e., video clips on the website, a feature in the SPP brochure, panels to prospective students etc.) SPP can compete with other international policy schools offering overseas opportunities and quite possibly be the first to implement this specific type of international study tour.

C. Establish and Maintain International Relationships

A study tour to Costa Rica would allow the School of Public Policy to develop an ongoing relationship with business, political, and academic contacts. Once a knowledge base of local politics, economy, and social policy has been formed and relationships established, the study tour could evolve to more closely simulate the applied policy seminar. This could be accomplished by putting together a detailed report and oral presentation of our experiences, survey findings, and a list of contacts for the SPP community. This report could be used as a starting point for subsequent tours, which may then be expanded to provide public sector consulting, for interested parties.

D. Integrate Faculty and Student Research Interests

Many SPP students share research interests with SPP faculty, however there is no formal mechanism allowing students and faculty to collaborate outside of the academic environment. By partnering with an SPP faculty advisor, students will be provided the opportunity to explore that professor's research as well as further expand their knowledge of issues related to the policy theme for that year.