

May 14, 2014



Dear Dr. Laurie Ramirez:

I would like to congratulate you on your willingness and commitment to engage in the exciting experiential education process through the **2014 International Alternative Service Experience Program**, coordinated through ACT. This program works to create opportunities for students to compare “experience with experience” and construct bridges that connect the practical with the theoretical. Many faculty would be unwilling to travel with 14 students and do the challenging work of mentorship and active education. Your work as a “Learning Partner” in the **Guatemala** program over the Spring Break required incredible flexibility, persistence and willingness to serve as an experiential educator and your talents and hard work were extremely appreciated.

As a Learning Partner for iASE, it is clear that you were able to connect with students in a way that the classroom environment does not often allow. Traveling, working tirelessly side-by-side with students for numerous hours a day, then participating in nightly reflections and general discussions is a special opportunity for both students and Learning Partners and I hope it has helped to further inform your pedagogy and will inspire future service-learning ventures. Thank you for dedicating the necessary time and attention to the team building and cultivation of group culture and dynamics necessary for a group to develop interdependence and personal responsibility on such an experience. I am thankful that you were willing to participate in this experience and that your department supported you in this endeavor. I look forward to future collaboration as we work to develop students holistically and further our University’s mission.

**Here is just a sampling of what students reported:**

- 100% reported the experience strengthened or enhanced their sense of global citizenship
- 99% reported the experience increased their ability to work effectively with others who are different from them
- 96% reported that the iASE service had an impact on the community in which they worked
- 89% reported they understand how the service work they did connects with their own life

**This volunteer time commitment included the following:**

- Approximately 15 hours of meetings with iASE student leaders, Learning Partners, and ASE coordinator.
- 4 classes before and following the program (mostly in the evenings & on Sunday evenings)
- Travel dates: Saturday, March 8<sup>th</sup>-Saturday, March 15<sup>th</sup> – on-site service program, fully participating in all service activities and nightly reflection conversations

Again, thank you for all of your time, patience, and dedication that made this iASE experience possible for our ASU students!

Sincerely,

*Heather Jo Mashburn*

Assistant Director for Community Service  
Appalachian and the Community Together (ACT)

CC: Dr. Susan Colby