

Appalachian

STATE UNIVERSITY

Appalachian and the Community Together (ACT)
Department of Student Programs

231 Plemmons Student Union
ASU Box 32118
Boone, NC 28608-2118

(828) 262-2193

Fax: (828) 262-2937

October 10, 2011

Dr. Laurie Ramirez:

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to you for accepting the challenge and professional development opportunity of traveling with 14 students to the Dominican Republic to work with the Sister Island Project as a "Learning Partner" for the International Alternative Spring Break program, coordinated through ACT. Your expertise and talents, hard work, and sense of humor were extremely appreciated by both the students and me.

I would also like to highlight the important work you have done to further the mission of the University. Appalachian's fundamental mission is to discover, create, transmit, and apply knowledge to address the needs of individuals and society. It is also stated that the University's mission is achieved by providing undergraduate students a rigorous liberal education that emphasizes transferable skills and preparation for professional careers and that by being a part of the ASU community, we accept our responsibility to be actively involved in addressing the educational, economic, cultural, and societal needs of the changing region, state, nation, and world. The students who were enrolled in this course were clearly impacted in a unique and significant way during their International Alternative Spring Break experience and you as the Learning Partner played an essential role in assisting students in achieving these goals and becoming more influential global citizens. The post experience evaluations reflected significant growth, new awareness and understanding, and inspiration supporting that this experience you helped to create is truly in line with the Appalachian State University's Mission and Vision.

Here is just a sampling of what students reported:

- 100% felt a strong connection to the people in the country to which they traveled
- 92% reported that the IASB experience helped to shift or solidify their future goals
- 100% were motivated to learn a second language
- 100% were likely to get involved in service to their own community
- 100% were likely to do international service again in the future
- 92% reported increased confidence in international travel
- 100% felt they understood basic cultural influences and differences in the country they studied/traveled to
- 100% reported they learned more about their privileges as an American

As a Learning Partner for I-ASB, it is clear that you were able to connect with students in a way that the classroom environment does not often allow. Traveling internationally, 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 faculty and I hope it has helped to further inform your pedagogy and will inspire future international and service-learning ventures. I would be remiss to highlight all of the time and energy you volunteered to give the 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 with you and all of Academic Affairs as we work to develop students holistically and further the mission of our great institution.

This time commitment included the following:

- Minimum of 10 hours of meetings with student Peer Leaders, faculty Learning Partners, and the Director of ASB
- Minimum of 10 hours of class periods before and following the trip (including Friday afternoons, Saturday mornings, and Sunday nights!)
- Saturday, March 5th-Saturday, March 12th—full participation in daily on-site service and cultural experience in the Dominican Republic

Sincerely,



Kate Johnson
Associate Director for Community Service
Appalachian and the Community Together (ACT)

Cc: Dr. Michael Jacobson, Chairperson, Curriculum and Instruction
Dr. Charles Duke, Dean, Reich College of Education
Dr. Michael Mayfield, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education
Dr. Lori Gonzalez, Provost for Academic Affairs