

I. PROGRAM OBJECTIVES, GOALS, AND BENEFITS

Objectives: The objective of the pilot program between Centro Universitario UNA in Belo Horizonte, Brazil, and FIU will be to establish a sustainable, well-founded, comprehensive semester-long exchange program that will expose students in underrepresented fields abroad to intensive language training, community engagement, and continuous academic collaboration, and that will serve as a model program for successful student exchange partnerships for UNA, FIU, and institutions in the Americas.

Goals: Enhance UNA's capacity to host exchange students and to provide long-term academic exchange opportunities for US students going to Brazil. 2) Increase US student community engagement locally (in Miami) and globally (in Belo Horizonte) through sustainable, long-term academic, team-oriented, community engagement projects. 3) To bridge the gap that currently exists between students of underrepresented fields in study abroad and their capacity to communicate and become immersed in two critical host cultures.

Benefits: For Student Participants from FIU and UNA: Long-term exposure to a host country's culture and language; long-term engagement in the host and home country's community; development of global competencies and skills that will further enhance the students' success in their undergraduate and professional careers. For the UNA Community: Experience and best practices gained from developing a long-term student exchange opportunity for sending and receiving students; awareness for UNA students, faculty, and staff of the benefits of engaging in an international experience; merging of the institution's international programming and its social/sustainable community projects. For the FIU Community: Expansion of FIU's partnerships in the Americas; exposure for FIU students, faculty, and staff, to matters of social responsibility and civic engagement here and abroad; increase of participation and interest on behalf of students who are currently underrepresented in study abroad.

II. ABOUT CENTRO UNIVERSITARIO UNA (<http://www.una.br/>)

Centro Universitario UNA: Founded in 1961, the Centro Universitario UNA (UNA) has as its mission to provide high quality education in an environment to which all want to belong, inspiring students to reach their

goals and potential as individuals, professionals and *agents of transformation* in society. With a focus on sustainability, interdisciplinary collaborations, and team-orientated education, the institution has grown significantly since it first opened its doors 50 years ago. Today, UNA boasts 7 campuses, approximately 18,000 students, and a comprehensive curriculum that includes a Polytechnic Institute, an Institute of Communication and the Arts, and a variety of programs in management, public administration, education, and the environment, to name a few. UNA is located in Belo Horizonte, the capital of Minas Gerais and the third largest city of Brazil. Known internationally for its international dance, theater, and music festivals, Belo Horizonte, similarly to Miami, is a hub for business in Brazil, the region, and beyond. In a similar pattern to that of FIU, UNA has also earned a positive reputation for its engagement in social responsibility, partaking in the Minas Gerais Day of Volunteerism and the Day of Social Responsibility in Higher Education. During the month of July, UNA faculty collaborates with FIU faculty on a summer Portuguese intensive language training program. In previous years, the program has included a “buddy” system for the students in which FIU students have been paired with UNA students for the duration of the program in Brazil. This has become one of the most transformative components of the programs, allowing students to not only further develop their language skills but to become immersed in a culture that is completely different from their own. The Brazilian buddies have had such valuable experiences that they’ve continued to request to serve as buddies every summer.

MAJORS AND ACADEMIC PROGRAMS OFFERED AT UNA IN STEM FIELDS AND EDUCATION:

Accounting
Biomedicine
Biological Sciences (Biotechnology & Environment)
Business administration
Chemical Engineering
Civil Engineering
Computer Engineering
Control Engineering and Automation
Economics
Education (Pedagogy)
Electrical engineering
Environmental Engineering
Foreign trade
Information Systems
Mechanical Engineering

III. GRANT ACTIVITIES AT A GLANCE:

DATES	WORK PLAN: DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES
October 2012	UNA site visit to FIU
November 2012	Promotion of the Pilot Program during International Education Week at FIU and at UNA
February 2013	FIU site visit to UNA
March 1 st 2013	Application deadline for UNA students to attend FIU in Fall 2013
July 2013	FIU Portuguese Language and Brazilian Culture Program at UNA.
August 2013	UNA students arrive at FIU for fall term program service project.
September 1 st 2013	Application deadline for FIU students wishing to attend UNA in Spring 2014
September 15, 2013	Students selected to attend UNA
October 1, 2013	FIU students paired with UNA students for service project
November 2013	FIU and UNA students present during International Education Week
December 2013	UNA students depart from FIU. Post program assessment administered
February 2014	FIU students arrive at UNA. Pre-program assessment administered
March 2014	Service learning projects begin between Fall 2013 UNA students and Spring 2014 FIU students
May 2014	Presentations of service learning projects at UNA
July 2014	FIU students depart UNA. Post program assessment administered
August 2014	Second group of UNA students arrive at FIU. Pre-program assessment administered.
September 1, 2014	Application deadline for FIU students to attend UNA in Spring 2015
September 15, 2014	FIU students selected to attend UNA
October 1, 2014	FIU students paired with UNA students for community service project
October 2014	Planning month for FIU-UNA workshops and visit
November 2014	Visit from UNA to FIU; presentation of student projects and workshops
December 2014	UNA students depart from FIU. Post program assessment administered.
February 2015	FIU students arrive at UNA. Pre-program assessment administered
March 2015	Conference at UNA and FIU (use of technology for sessions) on the results of the project
May 2015	FIU site visit to UNA. Presentation of projects to UNA community; final assessments for infrastructure; development of additional 3-year plan for the project
July 2014	FIU students depart from UNA. Post program assessment administered.

IV. STATEMENT OF NEED:

In March of 2009, the Institute for International Education (IIE) published a document in its White Paper Series on students in the STEM fields and their accessibility, or lack thereof, to study abroad opportunities. Only 16% of all students studying abroad were majoring in a STEM field. Of those, most STEM U.S. students participated in short-term experiences. Conversely, 40% of inbound study abroad students came to the U.S. to pursue a STEM study abroad program. And while U.S. institutions may appreciate this positive trade

imbalance, U.S. students in the STEM fields are at disadvantage when it comes to exposure to the interrelationship between STEM and globalization. In addition, because the study of foreign languages has been eliminated from U.S. K-12 curricula, U.S. students are increasingly at a disadvantage in terms of graduate work in STEM and the most desirable global career opportunities. If sending students from the STEM fields abroad is a challenge at the national level, at Florida International University and in the South Florida community the challenge doubles or triples. Predominantly Hispanic, first generation, part time commuters, our students are juggling school, work, and family responsibilities all at once. In the STEM field the stakes are even higher as the students' programs provide for very little room for them to have an experience abroad. Upon learning about study abroad high hopes immediately deflate, #1 because of the lack of flexibility in the curriculum for students to take courses abroad, and #2 because of the costs that are involved in studying abroad that are simply prohibitive. Nine out of ten students who cancel from a study abroad program at FIU do so because of financial hardship. Out of 500 students going abroad this summer through Florida International University, only 7% are from the STEM fields and only one of those students is going on our Portuguese language training program in Belo Horizonte, Brazil. For FIU, a partnership and long-term study abroad opportunity for STEM students to go to UNA is the natural next step in our four-year partnership with the institution. To date, we've taken four groups of approximately 20 students to UNA for intensive language training every summer for four weeks. With the exception of a handful of students from engineering and biology—four to be exact—most of the students have been from the social sciences. What we have found, however, is that of those four students, two of them were in their first two years of college. This part here is key, because the earlier the students are exposed to a foreign language and a study abroad experience in college, the more likely they will be to come back and give continuity to what they have already started. As such, we have a need and an obligation to our students to now establish a sustainable, long-term partnership that will be more than a 4-week, once a year interaction, but rather a continuous conversation between students from both institutions, guided by faculty and staff from the two as well. The challenge that we are facing at this time is that UNA, while an excellent host in the summers, has not had the opportunity to develop this kind of a

comprehensive program to host students on a semester basis. UNA faces similar challenges as FIU with regards to students in the STEM fields. UNA's engineering students' limited access to study abroad, for example, is for participation short courses that the students take during vacation to go to the UK or Canada. UNA is really interested in developing a robust exchange partnership program such as the one that we have at FIU with so many great institutions around the world. UNA is primarily interested in international student exchange, dual degree and joint degree graduate programs, and an expansion of the short term study abroad program options for their own students. However, UNA has encountered the following challenges along the way: a large number of the students at UNA are not aware of the importance of having an international experience; the cost of the programs as they stand currently may be prohibitive for those students; the relationships that UNA has attempted to build with institutions abroad has been relatively fragile, a result perhaps of the institution's lack of clarity with regards to international programming. That said, as we mentioned earlier, FIU's study abroad program in Portuguese language training at UNA has been a true success summer after summer. It is then evident that with a strong commitment, careful planning, and sound programming, and given the compatibility of the mission and vision of both institutions—both FIU and UNA have a marked focus on social responsibility and community engagement—the two can join in on a collaboration that will be fruitful and sustainable for both institutions and for the students in both communities and throughout the WHA. Additionally, as we look at the organizational landscape of the future, we understand that global citizenship and involvement in one's community go hand in hand with having a successful impact in the outcome of our future as a whole. Research abroad or a traditional study abroad program are helpful but do not suffice. A study published a few years ago by the Forum on Education Abroad's Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad indicated that “immersion in another culture in a service role broadens students' horizons and makes them better adapted to playing an active role in global citizenship (132).” Service provides the students with a more holistic view of their host and home communities, allows them to “contextualize good service as related to development and empowerment (137),” and provides long-term opportunities for engagement. Both FIU and UNA understand, support, and advocate for the interconnectedness that exists between global citizenship, community engagement, and social

responsibility and that is why incorporating a community project into the semester will be so vital to the success of the pilot program.

V. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Florida International University (“FIU”), in Miami, Florida, and *Centro Universitario UNA* (“UNA”), in Belo Horizonte, Brazil, submit this joint proposal for a program to take place between September 2012 and August 2015. This proposal brings together FIU, a U.S. institution with substantial experience providing study abroad opportunities, with UNA, its international counterpart, with limited experience receiving U.S. students, with the shared goal to promote President Obama’s 100,000 Strong in the Americas Initiative. This proposal will expand the capacity of UNA to host U.S. students in a region in Brazil that has been underserved by traditional study abroad programs where a critical language, Brazilian Portuguese, is spoken. Increasing understanding in the region and building closer people-to-people ties will help address common challenges in citizen security, economic opportunity, social inclusion, and sustainability. This will be a three-year program, the first of which will be dedicated to site visits between UNA and FIU staff and faculty for program development. The second and third years will be implementation and assessment years during which UNA and FIU students will be sent abroad for a semester-long study abroad program that will include community engagement projects that will ensure immersion and global competency for the students. This is key to adding continuity to the partnerships that are to be built between the Brazilian and US communities. The program will target students from fields that are currently underrepresented abroad. The total program cost is \$228,508; we are asking the Bureau for \$107,720 and our cost share will be \$120,788. This proposal seeks to share our best practices, experience, and success, as a leading Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI), with UNA, and to serve as a model throughout the WHA, providing a framework for other WHA universities to develop initiatives that will similarly increase their capacity to provide more U.S. students with positive study abroad experiences and together reach President Obama’s goal of 100,000 Strong in the Americas.