

Student Handbook

Sustainable Development Semester Abroad in Belize

Spring Semester 2010

January 6-May 2, 2010

Current as of October 26, 2009

The material in this handbook is revised and updated on an ongoing basis. We make every effort to keep it current. For the most current version, go to:

learn.uvm.edu/travel/belize

Some of the information in this handbook comes directly from the Galen University International Student Handbook 2005-2006

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PART 1: INTRODUCTION

Program Overview: Sustainable Development Semester Abroad in Belize

This program focuses on sustainable development, combining academic coursework with service learning. Galen University in San Ignacio, with its commitment to sustainable development, provides the academic framework through classes taught by UVM and Galen faculty. Belize--with its community-based approach to solving problems and its unique natural and cultural resources including one of the most protected and bio-diverse ecosystems on earth and the highest concentration of Maya sites in Central America--provides the "laboratory" in which classroom theories can be applied in a developing-country context.

Program Schedule

Wednesday, January 6	All students arrive in Belize Airport pickup in Belize City
Friday, January 8	Orientation at Galen University
Saturday or Sunday, January 9 or 10	Community service activity
Monday, January 11	Classes begin
Friday, January 29 to Sunday, January 31	Tentative overnight field trip with Galen students to Dangriga and Cockscomb Jaguar Preserve
Friday, February 19 to Sunday, February 21	Three-day, two-night field trip to South Water Caye Marine Reserve
Monday, March 8	Baron Bliss Holiday/No classes Monday
Friday, March 19 to Sunday, March 21	Service field trip to Caye Caulker
Friday, April 2 to Monday, April 5	Easter Recess/No classes Friday or Monday
Friday, April 23	Last day of classes
Monday, April 26 to Friday, April 30	Exams
Sunday, May 2	Last day of program Airport drop off in Belize City

UVM Faculty and Staff

Joni Miller (Resident Faculty Director), Adjunct Lecturer, Department of Community Development and Applied Economics (CDAE)

Joni has a BA from the University of Victoria, British Columbia, and an MEd in Educational Policy Studies from the University of Alberta. She has extensive experience in international service learning and is the co-founder and vice principal of Caye Caulker Ocean Academy in Belize. Joni and the Academy were community service project partners for the 2009 Belize Program.

Jeff Frank (Resident Assistant Director), Adjunct Lecturer, CDAE

Jeff is a graduate of the University of Maine and has completed the course work for an MS in Community Development and Applied Economics from UVM. Jeff was a Peace Corps volunteer in the Toledo District of Belize for two years and was a service learning project partner for the 2007 and 2008 Belize Programs.

Jay Ashman (Academic Director), *Senior Lecturer, CDAE*

Jay received a BA in Political Science at Amherst College and a law degree from George Washington University. He has taught courses in consumer law and policy at UVM since 1977. Internationally, he has worked on consumer issues with governmental and non-governmental agencies in Kenya and St. Lucia as well as Belize, and taught Business Law in Malaysia. He was the resident faculty director in Belize in 2008 and 2009.

Meg Ashman (Program Coordinator), *Extension Professor Emerita and Adjunct Professor, CDAE*

Meg received a BA in English from Connecticut College and an MA in Journalism from the University of Oregon. She has conducted communication training in Kenya and St. Lucia and taught English in Malaysia. Meg taught in Belize in 2007, 2008 and 2009.

Contact Information

Although you will be able to keep in touch with your family through email and phone, if there is an emergency and they cannot get in touch with you, they may be able to reach you at one of the following numbers:

- Martha's Guest House (Martha August, owner): 011-501-804-3647
- Tia Maria (Travis James, manager): 011-501-824-2825
- Galen University main number (ask for Rhondine Petrof): 011-501-824-3226
- Joni Miller cell phone: 011-501-666-4375
- Jeff Frank cell phone: 011-501-666-4399

If your parents need to contact someone at UVM concerning the program, they may call Greg Dunkling at Continuing Education at 802-656-8439.

We will provide all students with a card that has emergency contact information for program faculty and staff, including the contact information for the Embassy.

Guiding Principles

As a community committed to the principles found in "Our Common Ground," we expect participants in the program to treat one another--as well as everyone with whom we interact--with respect. Specific community standards will be agreed upon towards the beginning of the semester, and we will meet regularly to discuss any concerns related to these standards.

As a program focused on sustainability, we believe our own behavior should reflect sustainable practices. Therefore, we discourage buying water in disposable bottles, using plastic bags when purchasing produce and groceries, and using non-degradable containers to take away food. The program will provide students with re-usable containers for leftovers. And we encourage you to bring with you a re-usable bottle for water and a bag or backpack for produce and groceries.

Drug, Alcohol, and Other Policies (also see "Code of Conduct" and "Additional Terms and Conditions" at the end of this handbook)

Alcohol:

The drinking age in Belize is 18. If you decide to consume alcohol, you do so at your own risk. If you abuse alcohol, not only are you risking your personal health, you are risking the relationships our program has with Belizeans and compromising the program. You are a representative of UVM and if you engage in excessive consumption of alcohol and/or public inebriation, we will take disciplinary measures, *which could include dismissal from the program.*

Drugs:

The University's drug policy is applicable to students on this program. The policy can be found at: www.uvm.edu/~uvmppg/ppg/student/drugandalco.pdf

If you use or possess illegal drugs, you not only put the future of the program at risk, you also risk being arrested by local authorities and/or immediate dismissal from the program. If we find out that you are using or in possession of illegal drugs, a report will be submitted to the University and the matter will be processed according to the University's Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities. The Code can be found at: www.uvm.edu/~uvmppg/ppg/student/studentcode.pdf

Note: Although not common, there is evidence of the use of so-called date rape drugs such as Rohypnol in Belize.

Driving/Rental Cars:

Poor road conditions, erratic drivers, and poorly maintained motor vehicles make driving in Belize dangerous. **Because of concerns about the safety of our students, we do not allow students on the Belize program to drive or rent motor vehicles during the duration of the program.**

Cell phones:

For security, the program will provide you with a cell phone. We require that 1) you have your cell phone with you at all times; 2) your cell phone be charged and on; and 3) you have sufficient minutes on your phone to make a call in case of an emergency. If you lose or damage your cell phone, you will be responsible for replacement or repair.

Emergency contact card:

You will be required to have on your person the contact numbers for faculty and staff in case of emergency. (You will be provided with a wallet-sized card with that information.)

Traveling:

When you travel outside of San Ignacio, you must provide Jeff with the following information, in case we need to reach you during an emergency:

- name and cell phone #
- where you are going (location)
- with whom you are traveling (including UVM students' names if applicable)
- contact information (hotel name/phone #)
- how you are getting to and from your destination
- your planned return date/time

Guests:

You may not allow anyone to use your room when you are not there. (See additional terms related to guests under "Housing" in Part 6 of this handbook.)

Violations of policies established in this handbook for the safety of students may result in dismissal from the program.

Pre-departure requirements

The staff of the Belize Program reserves the right to revoke admission to any student who fails to attend the required pre-departure meetings without adequate cause and notice, or who fails to complete required tasks by the scheduled due dates.

PART 2: COURSES OFFERED IN BELIZE

All students are *required* to take the four-credit Applications of Sustainable Development course and the two-credit Maximizing Your Belize Experience course. Students are expected to enroll in a total of 18 credits.

Galen University Cross-Listed Courses

The following Galen courses have been cross-listed as CDAE courses. Since they are in the control of Galen University, we may not know in advance who will be teaching them and cannot guarantee that all of them will be taught in 2010.

Adventure and Eco-Tourism—The focus of this course is adventure tourism and ecotourism, two types of tourism that make up a small but rapidly growing share of the world’s largest service industry. The readings will introduce you to the major themes and concerns of “alternative” tourism in general and to the specific issues evolving in the context of Belize. The latter objective coincides with the final objective of the course--enhanced geographic and cultural literacy regarding Central America and the Caribbean.

Business Communication

Analysis of and practice in writing letters and memoranda for business. Fundamentals of appearance, tone, and psychology in writing are emphasized with special attention to the job application procedure.

Business & Professional Communication

Enables the student to analyze variables that affect communication practices in business, governmental, and professional organizations. Participants experience the common interpersonal, group and public communication situations found in organizational settings and develop skills in interviewing, conducting meetings, interacting in small groups and preparing and presenting informative and persuasive speeches.

Creole Cultures of Belize—This course explores, examines and evaluates the challenges and experiences of the peoples and cultures that have come together to form the modern nation of Belize. What has helped to unite this diverse group of people who form Belize is the process of “creolization.” The various thematic areas to be discussed will include: culture, ethnicity, race, nationalism, identity politics, class, globalization and creolization. These themes and factors as well as others will be analyzed to enable a better understanding and appreciation of the common threads that unites all Belizeans in spite of geographical location; and at times, biological and cultural differences. Students are introduced to the subjects of the processes of globalization, creolization, language formation, identity politics and ethnographic research and hence the complexities of Belizean society as it evolved through time to the 21st century.

Prerequisite: Cultural Anthropology 100

Development: An Indigenous Perspective—Examines and compares the assumptions underlying the western notion of development and the indigenous conception of “development with identity.” Further examines the implications of the indigenous proposal for development workers and institutions and current initiatives in Central America such as Plan Puebla Panama. Includes visits to Maya communities and innovative indigenous development projects in education and natural resource management.

Ecology of a Tropical Forest—Tropical rainforests occupy only a miniscule 7% of the Earth’s surface but they contain more than 50% of all species on our Earth. This course will focus of the ecology of tropical rainforests. In particular, the abiotic and biotic components of tropical forest in addition to the myriad of co-evolutionary patterns/processes between plants and animals will be examined. In addition, we will examine

species and diversity gradients, the structure and function of rainforests, the causes of rainforest decline as well as the sustainable use(s), importance, and conservation of tropical forests.

Environmental/Ecological Economics—Analysis of some of the most important areas of environmental economics. Areas stressed include the economics of pollution control, the application of cost benefit analysis to the environment, the economics of sustainable development, environmental policy development, and global environmental issues.

Environmental Problems—With the burgeoning human population growth and the concomitant need to produce more goods and services, impacts on the environment are at unprecedented levels. This course will focus on global, regional, and local environmental problems in which humans are playing a role. In particular, the more pressing environmental problems such as global warming and climate change, rapid population growth, forest conversion and loss of biodiversity, soil erosion, water availability and quality, solid waste management, liquid waste management, poverty, and desertification will be discussed in detailed. Environmental problems specific to Belize will be a central focus during the course. The varied and often complex causes and issues surrounding these environmental problems will be assessed. As such, scientific principles from the social, ecological, and physical sciences will be introduced in order to provide a context to evaluate these environmental problems. Case studies of successful solutions to environmental problems and their applicability and feasibility to will also be examined.

Introduction to Sustainable Development—Focus on the essence of sustainable development and its four dimensions: environmental, economic, social and institutional. Includes a thorough analysis of the criteria and the indicators of sustainable development and their applicability at a local, national and international level.

Maya Culture and Archaeology of Belize—Provides a survey of the Maya peoples and history of Belize, through archeology, linguistics, and cultural history from pre-history to the present day. Students will be introduced to Maya architecture, art, language, and culture--experientially and through lectures and classes.

Organizational Behavior

Organizational Behavior investigates the impact that groups and organizational structure have on the behavior of individuals within the organization for the purpose of applying such knowledge toward improving an organization's effectiveness. It is concerned with the study of what people do in an organization and how that behavior affects the performance of the organization.

Social Problems in a Developing Country—An introduction to the study of major social problems that a developing country faces. An attempt is made to study the interrelationships of problems and to emphasize sociological causes as well as the effects on the groups and on the person. Topics will include poverty, teenage pregnancy, HIV/AIDS, gender and family violence issues.

Sustainable Tourism—The student will be challenged to explain the current thinking process underlying the emerging international principles of sustainable development in travel and tourism. The focus will be on the pro-active role that both the private and public sectors play in order to achieve solutions and enhance the nature of the travel and tourism product without jeopardizing its future.

UVM courses in Belize: Required

Maximizing Your Belize Experience (2 credits) (Joni Miller)—Use of discussion, readings, and written reflection to prepare for and process the intercultural aspects of living and studying abroad.

Applications of Sustainable Development (4 credits) (Joni Miller and Jeff Frank) —Students work in teams, along with Galen University students, in partnership with local schools, NGOs, governmental agencies and community groups to explore and find solutions to problems identified by their partners. Projects may be new or a continuation of a prior team’s work. At the end of the semester, students submit written reports and make oral presentations to their classmates, teachers, and partner organizations.

PART 3: ABOUT BELIZE AND GALEN UNIVERSITY

About Belize

Geography:

Belize is an area of only 8,866 square miles, about the size of Massachusetts. Until its independence in 1981, Belize was known as British Honduras and is the only English-speaking country in Latin America. It lies on the east coast of Central America in the heart of the Caribbean Basin, bordering on Mexico to the north and Guatemala to the west and south, and flanked by the Caribbean Sea to the east. It has the second-longest continuous barrier reef in the world. The reef has been designated a World Heritage Site.

Belize is divided into six districts: Corozal District, Orange Walk District, Belize District, Cayo District, Stann Creek District, and Toledo District.

The population of Belize—which, at approximately 270,000, is about half the population of Vermont—includes Creoles (African-European), Mestizo (Spanish-Indian), Maya (the indigenous population), Garifuna (African-Indian), Mennonite, Lebanese, Chinese, and East Indian people among others.

Landscape:

From the broad, flat coastal plains, Belize rises to form the Maya Mountains, mountain peaks of more than 3,000 feet and the source of the many rivers that wind through the country. For centuries these rivers were the principal means of transportation within Belize. Moreover, most of these mountains are limestone karst formations, which has left them coursed with caves, caverns, and underground rivers.

Though Belize lacks much true primary tropical rainforest, it does possess large expanses of tropical moist and lowland secondary rainforest, as well as mangrove, swamp, and even highland pine forests. In fact, nearly 65% of Belize is uninhabited, while over 20% of the country and its offshore reefs are considered protected land, private reserve, or marine reserve. The combination of a low level of human population and conscious conservation efforts has been a boon for a wide range of flora and fauna.

Off Belize's coast, the barrier reef is a world all its own. Though the cayes (pronounced “keys”) are little more than low, flat coral and limestone outcroppings, the myriad of underwater flora and fauna here is truly astounding. Colorful angelfish, parrotfish, and triggerfish feed on the multicolored coral. Giant sponges provide homes and feeding grounds for hundreds of smaller fish and delicate coral shrimp. Under the rocks and caverns dwell lobster, moray eels, and octopus. Larger predators like sharks and barracudas cruise the reefs for their plentiful prey, while manta and spotted eagle rays glide gracefully over the sand bottoms and conch thrive in the sea grass. The Gladden Spit area, off the coast from Placencia, is quickly being recognized as one of the world's top spots to snorkel and dive with giant whale sharks, while Belize's three mid-ocean atolls are wonderlands for a wide range of nature-loving adventurers and travelers.

Although it might seem strange to think of it, the cayes also support a unique and endangered forest environment, the littoral forest, as well as rich mangroves. These saltwater-tolerant environments are major breeding and life-support grounds for a broad range of fauna.

Climate:

The overall climate of Belize can be described as sub-tropical. The humidity, while high, is seldom oppressive for long and is most noticeable along the coast. The mean annual humidity is 83%, but many days the humidity is masked by the cooling sea breezes. The Belize coastal area is exposed to southeast trade winds averaging 10-13 knots.

Temperatures in Belize range from 50°F to 95°F with an annual mean of 79°F. November to January are traditionally the coolest months, with a 75°F average and May to September are the warmest, at about an 81°F average. Location is a big factor for temperature, as Cayo to the west—where our program is situated—can be several degrees cooler than along the coast. In the mountains, the coldest days and nights might seem relatively cool and blankets will definitely be needed at night. However, the mean annual temperature in the mountains is a perfectly comfortable 72°F.

About San Ignacio

The twin towns of San Ignacio and Santa Elena, in the Cayo District, make up the country's second largest metropolitan area, with a combined population of approximately 13,000 people. They serve as a springboard to the rest of the district.

Market Day is held every Saturday by the Macal River area; Creole, Mestizo, Lebanese, Chinese, Mennonite, Maya, Guatemalan, and other cultures intermingle. Both English and Spanish are widely spoken.

San Ignacio is home to a number of tour companies that bring visitors to the many Mayan archaeological sites in the vicinity, as well as to the various rivers and forests for birding, canoeing, cave tubing and other adventures. There are also many excellent and inexpensive restaurants in town.

The Mopan River and Macal Rivers--each with a distinctive color and current--converge in San Ignacio (Branch Mouth area) to form the headwaters of the Belize River, which drifts northeast toward Belize City.

About Galen University

Galen University is an independent, community-oriented university chartered by the Government of Belize. Galen offers its own degrees as well as accredited US degrees from the University of Indianapolis. Galen's degree programs include Anthropology, Archaeology, Environmental Science, and Business. Majors in business include international business, marketing, economics and finance, and general business. Completion of an introductory course in Sustainable Development is required in all business programs.

Galen has a fully equipped computer lab with 20 computers as well as four additional computers in the library. All are connected to the internet via satellite and DSL. If you have a laptop with a wireless network card, you can access the internet anywhere on campus--including outside under the palapa!

PART 4: BEFORE YOU GO

Flights to Belize

The group does not travel together. Students are responsible for making their own arrangements for (and purchasing) their air transportation to Belize, leaving from whatever airport is most convenient--or least expensive. Note: You must have a round-trip ticket to enter Belize.

Students are expected to arrive at the airport in Belize City on **Wednesday, January 6**, as we arrange transportation for everyone from the airport to San Ignacio on that date and that is the first night for which your housing in San Ignacio is covered. Students who arrive earlier than January 6 need to make their own way to San Ignacio and cover their own lodging expenses until January 6.

In terms of a return flight, the official end of the academic year at Galen is Saturday, May 1. That is the last night for which housing is covered. The program will provide transportation to the airport in Belize City on **Sunday, May 2**. In the first two years of the program, many students chose to stay beyond that date to travel within Belize or elsewhere in Central America.

No later than December 6 you must e-mail Meg Ashman (meg.ashman@uvm.edu) your flight info (including airline/s, flight numbers, airports, arrival date, and time) to guarantee transportation from the airport to your housing in San Ignacio.

In the past, students have flown on the following airlines:

- American Airlines – Hubs: Dallas and Miami
- Continental Airline – Hub: Houston
- Delta Airlines – Hub: Atlanta
- US Airways – Hub: Charlotte, N.C.
- Taca Airlines – Flies from a number of cities in the US, including New York City

You may want to explore student rates through STA Travel (www.statravel.com) before purchasing your ticket. Sometimes STA offers students more favorable rates. To use STA, you have to purchase a CIEE international student identity card (usually about \$20). However, check fares before purchasing the identity card.

One student in the 2008 group flew to Cancun, Mexico, traveled via bus to the Belize Airport in Belize City. His airfare was several hundred dollars cheaper than what others paid.

In the event your arrival in Belize is delayed, please call Rhondine Petrof at the Galen main number: 011-501-824-3226. If you can't reach anyone at those numbers, try Rhondine's home phone: 011-501-688-7981.

Passport, Visa, and Immigration Requirements

Passports:

You need a valid passport to travel to Belize. It should be valid for one year in the future. You should have applied for your passport by the time you receive your hard copy of this handbook. If you have not, you will need expedited service. You can get information about expedited service at the following web address: http://studenttravel.about.com/od/uspasports/f/passport_rush.htm

Keep a photocopy of your passport ID pages in a safe place at home with family and keep at least one copy in a secure place while in Belize. If your passport is lost or stolen, it is easier to replace if you have the photocopy accessible.

It is important to remember that your passport is your most crucial legal document while you are outside of your country. Treat it with special attention.

Student Visas:

Students holding US passports will not require an entry visa to Belize – you just arrive with your passport and will be given a one month stamp in your passport. **All students entering Belize must have a roundtrip ticket!**

Upon arrival in Belize, you will first go through an Immigration checkpoint in the airport. The Immigration officer will ask for your passport. After passing through Immigration, you will collect your luggage and go to the Customs inspection area, where they will check if you are bringing any illegal items into the country. The airlines usually give you a Customs Declaration form that you can fill out on the plane and you will just hand this to the Customs officer. Sometimes your luggage will be subject to actual inspections.

Since you will be staying more than one month, Galen University staff will take care of having your visitor's permit extended. The fee for this extension is included in your program fee. **If you have two extra passport photos, bring them with you to Belize for this purpose.** (If you don't, you will be able to have photos taken for your visa in Belize.)

In 2009, three students flying from Newark, NJ on American Airlines were challenged at the airport by airline personnel on the basis that their return flight was scheduled four months in the future but they did not have a visa to stay longer than one month. They were required to purchase a one-way flight back to the US before being allowed to board, with the understanding that they would receive a refund at the airline's ticket counter in the Belize City airport. We will do our best to make sure that does not happen again, but you need to be prepared in case something unexpected happens. (That is good advice, generally, for your stay in Belize.) We will provide you with a letter from the administration at Galen explaining that your visitor's permit will be extended shortly after your arrival in Belize.

Travel Health Issues

You should arrange to meet with your personal physician before leaving for Belize to make sure your immunizations (e.g., tetanus and polio) are up-to-date, to have whatever vaccinations (e.g., Hepatitis A) he or she recommends, and to get prescriptions for any medications you may need.

For recommendations as to vaccinations and medications (such as anti-malarials) that you should consider, check the website of the Centers for Disease Control: <http://www.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/belize.aspx>

You and your health care provider must complete the Health Information form (handed out at the first pre-departure meeting), and you must return two copies of it to Jeff Frank by Monday, November 30.

It is not unusual for visitors to Belize (and other Central American countries) to develop some kind of intestinal problem during their stay. You should be prepared to spend between \$50 and \$100 on doctor's visits and prescription medication to take care of the problem. You can minimize your risk by being very careful about what you eat and where you eat, especially when traveling outside San Ignacio. We encourage you to avoid buying food from street vendors.

If you are taking medication, you should bring a 4-month supply of what you will need along with a doctor's note validating what the medicine is and that you require it. Do not plan to receive medicine in the mail, as Customs might confiscate it.

Medical Insurance

The University requires all students to carry health insurance that will pay claims worldwide. We recommend you check with your current health insurance provider to ensure coverage for any possible medical expenses incurred while traveling abroad. The UVM- sponsored student health plan **does** provide this needed coverage. Full-time students registered for nine or more credits can enroll in UVM's student health plan in August or January of any given year by calling UVM's student insurer, Aetna, at 800-225-3375.

You should carry an insurance card with you at all times. For additional questions, contact the Center for Health & Wellbeing Insurance Coordinator at 656-0602.

Doctors in Belize generally will not accept your insurance card for payment. You should expect to pay in cash and bill your insurance company for reimbursement.

Emergency Medical Care:

UVM contracts with International SOS, which responds in emergency situations to coordinate health care and emergency travel services. SOS also provides coverage for medical evacuation and repatriation expenses. You will be provided with an SOS emergency card, which outlines phone numbers to call in the event you need immediate assistance. This card should be carried with you at all times.

For more information about SOS, go to:

<http://www.internationalsos.com/private/vermontU/>

It is important to understand that, although International SOS will offer you travel, medical and security advice and services, as well as on-line access to information which many insurance companies do not offer, **International SOS is NOT health insurance.** Requests for reimbursement for medical care received while abroad should be submitted to your health insurance provider.

Whenever you are traveling or living abroad, you can access up-to-date reports on more than 170 countries worldwide on health issues, medical care and vaccination requirements via the International SOS website-- with a link that is provided on UVM's Global travel health and safety information page (located at http://www.uvm.edu/~oies/?Page=sa_healthandsafety.php) The International SOS website also contains an on-line Personal Locator form for inputting travel and destination information. **We strongly encourage you to complete the form so that this information is available to International SOS and UVM on-call staff should you need to be located in the event of a crisis or emergency.**

http://www.internationalsos.com/members_home/login/login.cfm

Travel Insurance

We encourage participants to purchase additional travel insurance to cover trip cancellations and/or interruptions, baggage loss, etc. You may purchase this from a number of third party vendors.

Housing Fees and Cancellations

Housing costs for the semester (\$1,870/student) are pre-paid by UVM in order to reserve space. If you cancel less than 15 days prior to the scheduled arrival in Belize, you will be responsible for paying for the cost of your housing plus tax.

If you cancel 15 to 29 days prior to the scheduled arrival in Belize, you will be responsible for paying 50% of the cost of your housing plus tax, plus a \$75 handler's fee.

If you cancel 30 or more days prior to the scheduled arrival in Belize, you will be responsible for paying a \$75 handler's fee.

Tuition Refund Insurance

You and your parents should consider purchasing the Dewar's Tuition Refund Insurance for the Spring term (for maximum financial protection). This policy covers refunds if you are forced to withdraw for medical reasons. Here is the link to purchase the insurance for Spring Semester www.collegerefund.com/apps/application1.asp?Id=1567&DIV=1

There is a medical appeals committee that meets a few times a year to consider extremely unusual circumstances that might warrant a departure from UVM's withdrawal/refund policy. The committee would expect, given that there is a higher probability of contracting an illness while on this particular program, that the Dewar's Tuition Refund Insurance would be purchased. It is unlikely that the University would refund tuition due to a student medical withdrawal which would have been covered by the Dewar's policy if the parents had chosen not to purchase it.

Medical Conditions, Physical Limitations, and Traveling

On the Health Information form that you and your health care provider must complete—and that you must submit to Jeff Frank by November 30—you need to inform us of any ongoing medical problems, major or minor, any medications you take on a regular basis pertinent to your health, and any reasonable accommodations you need. You must also inform us of any allergies to medications, foods, or environmental components, and any dietary restrictions. This information will be kept confidential.

Registering with the US Embassy:

Before departure, register your personal contact information on the State Department's website at <https://travelregistration.state.gov> This enables the American Embassy in Belize to contact you regarding security warnings or in the event of emergency.

PART 5: WHAT TO BRING

Traveler Basics

General packing philosophy and suggestions:

- **Travel light:** Travel pros suggest laying out all of the clothing you want to bring and *taking only half*. Of course, do not skimp on those things that you feel you need to make you comfortable. Bring several sets of clothing: clothes for being around town and at campus, and more rugged clothes for field trips.
- **Dress conservatively:** Although some female students at Galen dress fairly provocatively, we discourage our students from doing the same. All of the women in the 2007, 2008 and 2009 groups reported being hassled on the streets of San Ignacio. To the extent that the way you dress sends a message, you do not want to send the wrong message. Female students doing service learning projects at schools need to dress conservatively (no “spaghetti straps,” low necklines, bare midriff, or shorts/skirts well above the knee).
- **Footwear:** You will be walking a lot, in all kinds of terrain, from city sidewalks and beaches to riverbanks and rain forests. Choose versatile shoes: light hiking boots, sneakers, and rugged sandals should do it. Sandals that cover your toes may be preferable to Teva-type sandals for caving and cave tubing. Bring a lot of socks, since dirty socks give blisters. It’s better not to break in a brand new pair of shoes on a program like this.
- **Expensive and breakable items:** Leave jewelry and any other expensive objects at home. Assume that anything that is breakable will break, and anything that is expensive could get stolen or lost – this is not a reason to worry about safety; it is travel common sense.
- **iPods:** Everybody loves their iPods. But not only are they easily stolen, they are also anti-social on long bus rides or when you’re just hanging around. If you choose to bring one, don’t let it interfere with the possibility of interacting with other people. Belizeans are incredibly friendly and outgoing. Don’t miss the chance to learn about them and their country.
- **Clothing for the climate:** Temperatures will vary greatly—from hot and humid days on the coast to cool and dry evenings in San Ignacio. Bring mainly lightweight clothing, but include a sweatshirt and/or light jacket. During the rainy season it rains daily, so bring a small umbrella to stick in your backpack or a light, waterproof/breathable jacket with a hood.
- **Passport and other photocopies:** Give a photocopy of your passport and plane tickets to your parents, and stash a photocopy or two in the different bags you carry (day pack, backpack, etc.). If you are carrying original documents and other valuables, hide them somewhere on your body (like a hidden pouch, available at travel stores). Bring photocopies of necessary prescriptions (eyeglasses, medications, etc.).
- **Baggage restrictions:** Airline policies vary so it is recommended that you check with your particular airline regarding baggage restrictions. Backpacks and duffel bags are preferable to suitcases as they are easier to carry. Bring an extra day pack of some kind to carry your things during field trips. Make sure that items that you cannot do without (e.g., prescription medications) or afford to lose (e.g., laptop computer, digital camera) are in your carry-on bag, not your checked bags.

- **Sleeping bag/sleep sack:** It is not necessary to bring a sleeping bag, as there are very few camping sites in Belize and even the most budget accommodations will have linens. However, if you have extra room in your luggage, you may want to consider packing a lightweight “sleep sack.”
- **Forget something?** Anything you forget, you can most likely buy in Belize or do without. We have been impressed by the number of American products that can be purchased in grocery and other stores in San Ignacio.

MORE THAN ANYTHING, BRING A SENSE OF ADVENTURE. Leave your U.S. expectations at home, and don't get uptight if things don't work out as expected or on time – **BECAUSE THEY WILL NOT!**

What to Pack

Clothing:

As mentioned above, you will need clothes for wearing around campus and San Ignacio and more rugged wear for field trips. Most of your time will be spent in and around San Ignacio, so devote most of your room to items of clothing suitable for town.

You will also need proper attire for the final project presentations. At the completion of your service learning projects there will be formal presentations to your project partners and faculty and staff at Galen. In order to be culturally appropriate, please bring the following: Males—a pair of clean, nice pants and a collared shirt. Females—a skirt or dress, a top with short sleeves, and shoes other than flip flops.

One load of laundry per week is included in your program fee, so plan to bring enough underwear and other clothing to last a week. Here's a *suggested* list of things to bring (in addition to clothes for the final presentation):

- 1-2 pair lightweight pants (note: You'll find that most Belizeans wear blue jeans. However, they are not always best to travel with since they are warm and chafe in hot areas, and when they get wet they take a while to dry)
- 1-2 pair shorts
- 1-2 collared shirts--long and short-sleeve; preferably lightweight and wrinkle-free (long-sleeve shirts are handy for repelling both sun and bugs)
- several t-shirts
- rain gear
- skirts and/or dresses
- sweatshirt and/or light fleece
- hat with brim
- hiking boots/sandals with toes
- sunglasses
- bathing suit(s)
- exercise clothes (if you intend to work out)

Health, Medications, Hygiene:

Pharmacies and grocery stores in San Ignacio carry most of these items. However, it's a good idea to bring an initial supply of the following:

- Sunblock (SPF 15 or higher)
- Lotion for sunburn or dry skin
- Pepto Bismol and/or Immodium

- Band aids or moleskin for foot blisters
- Ear plugs (roosters and barking dogs can be a problem for light sleepers)
- Aspirin, Advil or Tylenol
- Benedril or other antihistamine
- Shampoo, soap, toothpaste, etc. (best to pack these in ziploc bags in case of leakage)
- Personal first aid kit
- Tampons/feminine products
- Small travel towel
- Prescription medicines
- Contact lens cleaner
- Motion sickness pills and/or motion sickness arm bands
- Insect repellent
- Rehydration salts

Miscellaneous:

- Passport (and photocopies)
- Airline tickets
- Cash, traveler's checks, credit/debit/ATM cards
- Laptop computer
- Surge protector for computer
- Waist pack
- Swiss army knife (in your checked baggage)
- Camera
- Travel alarm clock or watch
- Guidebook to Belize
- Extra zip-loc bags
- Sewing kit
- Binoculars and naturalist field guides
- Laundry bag for dirty clothes
- Flashlight/headlamp and extra batteries
- Re-usable water bottle
- Day pack
- Sleep sack
- Inexpensive gifts for Belizean friends (e.g., UVM t-shirts)
- Emergency whistle
- Water purifier/filter (if you plan on traveling off the beaten path)
- Mosquito netting (if you plan on traveling off the beaten path)
- Musical instruments
- Snorkel gear (mask, snorkel, fins)

Textbooks

Books for all courses can be purchased or rented from Galen or found on reserve in the Galen library. Rented textbooks must be returned at the end of the semester or students will be charged the purchase price of the books.

Other Suggested Items to Bring:

Academic supplies:

Notebooks, pens, etc. can be purchased in Belize for about what they cost in the U.S. So if you need to save some space in your luggage, this is one place you can do it. If you are hoping to learn or practice your Spanish, or travel elsewhere in Central America, a phrasebook and/or dictionary may come in handy.

Money:

Local currency is the Belize Dollar, or BZ. One U.S. dollar is worth BZ\$2. You can use U.S. currency everywhere. In the major tourist areas hotels, resorts, restaurants, and tour operators will also accept traveler's checks and credit cards. When using your credit cards in Belize, most establishments will add a service charge of 5% to 12% to your bill. Always make sure that you understand which dollar rate (U.S. or Belize) is being quoted. (**Note: all prices mentioned in this handbook are in U.S. dollars unless otherwise indicated.**)

You should budget for some extra expenses not covered in the program fee: money for going out at night, souvenirs, and other incidentals, including medical care--anywhere from \$500 to \$1000, depending on the level of spending you plan on. You should budget for weekend travel in addition to those sums. You can obtain prices of accommodations from your guidebook.

For more information about traveler's checks, credit cards, and debit card/ATM machines, see below under "Banking/money."

Things You Should ALWAYS Carry With You, in Your Day Pack:

Carry toilet paper or moist towelettes and soapless handwash with you; many bathrooms, particularly in more remote areas, do not have these. Carry these in a ziploc bag, so they don't get wet or spill. Carry your emergency contact card, insurance card, and SOS card. Do not carry your passport or other valuables in your day pack, as they are easily stolen.

Guidebooks:

There are at least six different Belize guidebooks available at most bookstores, including Frommer's, Lonely Planet, The Rough Guide, Insight Guides, and Moon. Much of the information is the same in all of the books, though each one may have a slightly different list of places to stay, eat, visit, etc. You might consider getting together with several other students and each buying a different book.

Safety Deposit Box:

There will be a safety deposit box at Martha's Inn and at Tia Maria. We recommend that you consider keeping your passport, traveler's checks, and other valuables there.

PART 6: WHILE YOU ARE THERE

Housing

Fourteen students will be housed in 5 rooms (4 triples, 1 double) at Martha's Inn in San Ignacio; Jeff Frank will reside in the sixth bedroom at the Inn. Four students will be housed in 2 rooms (2 doubles) at Tia Maria; Joni Miller will reside in a third room at Tia Maria.

Both Martha's Inn and Tia Maria are a short walk from downtown. Each room has its own bathroom and an air conditioner. Each person will have his or her own bed. There is a common area with a full kitchen on the top floor of Martha's Inn that will be used for food preparation and eating, group interaction, and studying. There is a full kitchen at Tia Maria and a covered balcony that will be used for eating meals, group interaction, and studying. Everyone at both residences is responsible for cleaning up after him/herself immediately after preparing food and for keeping the common room neat and the kitchen area clean.

The Inn has a hard-wired internet connection and there will be a router so that you can use your laptop in your room (assuming you have a wireless card). Tia Maria will have wireless internet. You should anticipate, however, that in both cases there will be many occasions when you cannot connect or the system will be extremely slow. (This is one area where you will really need to be able to "roll with the punches.") We will also have a printer at the Inn and at Tia Maria.

Sheets, towels, and one place setting (plate, bowl, mug, glass, silverware) per person will be provided in both residences, as will a weekly supply of toilet paper and soap.

Students will be provided with individual keys and will be expected to keep both interior and exterior doors locked when they go out. Students will be responsible for the cost of replacing a lock if they lose a key. Students are also responsible for costs associated with damage to their rooms or common areas.

In order for a non-UVM guest to enter either residence, a UVM student will have to invite that guest in, meet the guest at the door, remain with the guest at all times, and escort the guest out when the guest leaves. The UVM student who invites the guest in will be responsible for that guest the entire time that guest is at the Inn or at Tia Maria. **Guests must leave the premises by 10 p.m. Sunday through Thursday and by midnight on Friday and Saturday.** Children will not be permitted to be guests. Martha's and Tia Maria's staff have the right to identify specific individuals who may not be guests at the Martha's Inn or at Tia Maria.

Assuming your roommates agree, you MAY have an overnight guest stay with you for not more than 2 consecutive nights. **Martha's and Tia Maria charge \$10 per night for an overnight guest. You must register your guest in advance at the reception desk (Martha's Guesthouse or Tia Maria).** Note that because the reception desks close at 10 p.m., you must register your guest before that time.

Meals

Meal allowance:

You will be given \$120 every two weeks for your meal allowance. This should be more than adequate, even if you eat most of your meals out.

Breakfast:

Breakfast will be provided weekdays between 7 and 10 a.m. at Martha's Guesthouse, about a five-minute walk from the Inn and Tia Maria. You have an allowance of up to BZ \$10 (US \$5). In addition, you may have juice, coffee, or tea. You may choose a more expensive item and pay the difference. You must sign in

each day when you eat breakfast. Breakfasts are nonrefundable and nontransferable; if you miss breakfast, you won't be able to "make it up" at another time or on another day--nor "donate" it to someone else.

Lunch:

You may pack a lunch or eat inexpensively at Galen (e.g., BZ \$3.00 for burrito or chicken with rice and beans).

Dinner:

Students have access to kitchen facilities in the common area to prepare dinner. Most weeks, we will have a group dinner at a local restaurant (the cost of which we will be covered by the program).

Water:

We will provide a water cooler and water at the Inn and at Tia Maria. Students are responsible for keeping the five-gallon water bottles filled.

Laundry

Our arrangement with Martha's provides for one load of laundry per week. You will be assigned a day of the week. If you miss your day of the week or need additional laundry done in a given week, laundry service is provided by Martha's for approximately \$10.00 per load. Note: Laundry service is nontransferable.

Electricity

Belize operates on the 110/ 220 V, 60Hz electrical system (same as the U.S.). Most portable electronics (laptops, digital cameras, video cameras, battery chargers, clocks, etc.) use 110 voltage power supply system. So you will **not** need to buy a converter or an adapter. However, you should bring (or purchase in Belize) a surge protector.

Transportation

Buses to and from Galen University:

Galen University has arranged for a bus to run several times a day between San Ignacio and the University, approximately five miles away. You may choose between the Galen bus and the public bus service, which schedules buses every 30 minutes. The Galen bus is covered by the program; the public bus is at your own expense. **You should not rely on the public bus schedule to get you to class on time as the buses often do not run on schedule.**

Taxis:

Taxis generally have a green license plate, while other plates are white. Be sure to tell the driver where you want to go and ask for the price before getting into the cab. A trip normally costs \$2.50 - \$3.50 within San Ignacio. A trip to campus from San Ignacio generally costs about two to three times that amount. If you do not establish the price in advance, you may end up being charged too much. For safety reasons, the State Department recommends that you only use taxis with green license plates, you do not get into a taxi that is occupied by more than the driver, and you do not let the driver pick up additional fares.

Buses:

Belize's bus service is cheap and reliable and may be the best way to see the country. Buses also provide a great opportunity to meet the locals and learn about Belize. The local buses stop wherever someone wants to get on or off, so they tend to be very slow and at certain times of day are very crowded. Express buses stop only at bus stops in designated towns, thus are much faster. They are also more comfortable and occasionally air-conditioned. On both the express and local bus you should be prepared to stand for much of the trip.

Water Taxis:

Water taxis (commercial boat rides) to Caye Caulker and San Pedro (Ambergris Caye) leave from the waterfront in Belize City, a short taxi ride from the bus terminal. There are now two competing companies: the Caye Caulker Water Taxi (<http://www.cayecaulkerwatertaxi.com>) and the San Pedro Express. You can purchase tickets for the San Pedro Express, to San Pedro and Caye Caulker, from Amigo's Belize in Santa Elena, just across the Hawksworth Bridge from San Ignacio.

Telephones/Cell Phones

We recommend you leave your cell phone at home. The program will provide you with a cell phone that is ready to receive calls. There is no cost for incoming calls. You must purchase your own phone card to make outgoing calls. Phone cards can be purchased in almost any store in denominations of BZ \$5 to \$50. To call the US from Belize, you simply dial 001 and the area code and number. Public telephones are card-operated. Card-operated telephones take a telephone card that can be bought at numerous locations. The country code for Belize is 501.

Mail/Postal Service:

Have your mail sent to you at Galen University at the following address:

[Your Name]

Galen University

62.5 Western Highway

San Ignacio

Cayo District

Belize, Central America

It takes about a week for mail and packages to reach Belize from the U.S. Post Offices are open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. during the week. They offer full postal service to all countries.

Computer/Internet Connection

You will have access to computers at Galen University for e-mail, working on assignments, etc. If you bring your laptop computer (which we recommend), it would be wise to invest in a good surge protector. Wireless connection to the internet will also be available at Martha's Inn and at Tia Maria. There are also many internet cafes in San Ignacio.

There are no computer repair services in Belize that work on Macs. If you are considering buying a laptop to take to Belize, you may be better off buying a PC.

Banking/Money

You should contact your debit and credit card issuers in advance of departure to let them know you will be out of the country for a specific period of time so the bank does not freeze the use of your cards. Banks are doing this more frequently when transactions occur in multiple geographical locations.

You should have multiple methods of accessing cash in Belize, including ATM cards and traveler's checks. ATM cards sometimes do not work in Belize and you will need other sources of cash. Visa, Mastercard, and--to a lesser degree--American Express are accepted. You should have some traveler's checks and some US currency as an emergency reserve. You do not need to worry about having Belizean dollars when you arrive in Belize, as U.S. dollars are accepted everywhere.

You may want to bring two different ATM cards with two different accounts. That will minimize problems if one of the cards is lost or stolen.

There are three banks in San Ignacio that have ATMs that will accept international ATM cards. Always keep some cash available, as during power outages the ATM will not work. At certain times, such as Saturday mornings, there are lengthy lines for the ATMs.

Some more details about the different types of financial instruments you can use are below:

Traveler's Checks:

Traveler's checks are something of an anachronism in light of the number of ATMs available worldwide. However, they remain a safe way to carry money--if the checks are lost or stolen, the company that issued them will replace their full value, as long as you have a record of the serial numbers. Keep the receipt of the check numbers separate from your checks. Traveler's checks in dollars can be exchanged at banks, but you will usually need to show your passport as identification. Sometimes there is a charge per transaction. Larger hotels in tourist areas in Belize may cash traveler's checks without charge.

Credit Cards:

Credit cards are convenient for most purchases, emergencies, and cash advances, although there are usually high interest charges for cash advances. Most major credit cards are honored in Belize (e.g., MasterCard or Visa), but there are exceptions! Many restaurants in San Ignacio don't accept credit cards, and those that do often add a surcharge. When you use a credit card, the exact exchange rate may vary somewhat, depending on the day your credit card transaction is processed. This amount may be more or less than what you thought you were paying at the time of your purchase. You will be billed in U.S. dollars on your statement, and sometimes you will see the foreign exchange conversion listed as well. The interest charged on an outstanding balance adds up quickly, so you will either need to leave someone you trust in charge of paying your monthly credit card bills or arrange to pay them online from Belize.

ATMs:

ATMs are available in most cities in Belize and are a fast way to obtain foreign currency. An ATM card is excellent for international travel because it allows you to withdraw money from your bank account in your country in the currency of the host country. Cards with Visa, MasterCard, Cirrus, or Plus signs are the most widely accepted cards. The ATM will give you a menu choice of different languages and will ask you how much money you want in the currency of the country where you are traveling. The transaction will debit the money from your checking account in your country at that day's exchange rate. There are usually transaction fees, and the fees vary significantly. Some may be as high as \$5.00 per transaction, so don't plan on using the ATM too frequently.

If you have an alphanumeric password, convert it to a numeric password because not all ATMs abroad will have a character set. Be sure to call your bank and check on the fees charged per each transaction. Note that some ATMs may not work with the system (e.g., Honor, Cirrus, etc.) of your ATM card. Check the back of your debit card to know which system your card belongs to. Be sure that you (and someone back home) know your PIN number for ATM or credit cards. It is wise to carry traveler's checks as back-up cash in case your bank card becomes demagnetized.

Loss of Credit Cards

American Express: Call the following number (collect): 336-393-1111

Visa: Call the following number (collect): 410-581-9994

Mastercard: Call the following number: 636-722-7111

Personal Safety

No matter where you are, it is advisable to take suitable safety precautions, such as avoiding poorly lit streets or back streets in town at night. If you feel intimidated or frightened in an area, it is best to avoid eye contact and leave as soon as possible.

The University of Vermont strongly encourages students to follow the following guidelines while studying abroad. **Please read the following very carefully.**

- Use the Buddy System: To ensure your safety we encourage you to identify at least one or two “buddies” in the group who will either always be with you or know your whereabouts.
- We strongly discourage students from traveling alone, especially at night.
- Avoid crowds, protest groups and volatile situations.
- Don’t divulge personal information to strangers.
- Keep a low profile and don’t draw attention to nationality or wealth.
- If you have an accident or are the victim of a crime, report it to Jeff or Joni immediately.
- Don’t invite strangers to your room.
- Don’t get into a taxi if there is anyone other than the driver in the car.

Although you may have heard otherwise, hitching a ride is not safe. **DO NOT HITCHHIKE.**

Health & Emergencies

Prescription Drugs:

If you are taking any prescription drugs, PLEASE ensure that you pack a sufficient supply to last through your stay, in their original, clearly labeled containers. For safety reasons, it is best to carry these on your person and not in your checked baggage, along with a copy of the original prescription. If you have a history of significant medical problems, wearing a medical alert bracelet while on your trip is a good idea.

Travelers' Diarrhea:

Travelers' diarrhea is one of the most common ailments afflicting visitors to Central America. It is caused by certain bacteria that contaminate food and water and is very common in this area of the world. You should bring along an anti-diarrhea drug to be taken at the onset of the symptoms. If the symptoms continue for more than 2 or 3 days, seek medical attention. To minimize your risk, when outside San Ignacio and resort areas frequented by tourists, avoid tap water, unbottled beverages, or drinks with ice, and avoid raw vegetables, unpasteurized milk, and raw or undercooked poultry, fish, or meat. **YOU REDUCE YOUR CHANCES OF GETTING SICK IF YOU REGULARLY USE HANDWASH, ESPECIALLY BEFORE YOU EAT A MEAL.**

H1N1 (“Swine flu”):

It’s important to be aware that the excitement of study abroad, changes in food, changes in lifestyle, etc. may cause stress and/or make your immune system not as strong as usual (e.g., if you're not sleeping as well or eating as well or if you change your exercise routine).

The following SOS website addresses the things travelers should be doing with respect to H1N1. The most important step you can take with the flu is prevention!

www.internationalsos.com/pandemicpreparedness/SubCatLevel.aspx?li=3&languageID=ENG&subCatID=92

Medical Services:

We hope that you will not have any health problems while you are in Belize but IF YOU ARE NOT FEELING WELL, SPEAK WITH JEFF AND JONI or someone at Galen University and they will make suggestions as to what you should do.

Emergency Contact Information:

- Police, Fire, Ambulance: 911

Medical Care in San Ignacio:

- For treatment of non-emergency medical problems, contact Dr. Godoy at St. Gabriel's Medical Center on Benque Viejo Road (just up from the police station in San Ignacio) at 824-2566. Hours are Monday to Saturday, 4:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. If you call this number between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., his assistant will give you Dr. Godoy's emergency number.
- If Dr. Godoy is unavailable, contact Dr. Armando Betancourt on Theodoso Ochoa Street at 804-3618. Dr. Betancourt's hours are Monday to Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. to 9:00 pm. and Saturdays 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. In an emergency, call 604-9872.
- In case of a serious medical problem, contact Belize Medical Associates, a private hospital in Belize City, at 223-0302/0303/0304 <http://www.belizemedical.com> You may need to travel to Belize by private ambulance, which is located in Spanish Lookout. The phone number is 660-6000 or 600-0911.

Pharmacy:

There is a pharmacy in San Ignacio called The Pharmacy. The pharmacist, Ruth Gutierrez, was trained in the U.S. It is a fully stocked pharmacy that can fill most prescriptions.

Phone: 824-2510

Newspapers

Popular weekly newspapers include Amandala, Reporter, Belize Times, Guardian, San Pedro Sun, Placencia Breeze, and The Star. These can be bought in various stores throughout the country. For an online version of each of the newspapers and other news sources, go to:

<http://belizenews.com/>

Eating Out in San Igancio:

Eating Out:

Dining out in San Ignacio offers a variety of tastes—everything from Indian and Chinese dishes to Italian, Lebanese, and Belizean cuisine. Small restaurants in and around San Ignacio are great for reasonable meals and soaking up the local flavor.

Some of the places the previous groups of students enjoyed include:

- Martha's Kitchen & Pizza House (not just for breakfast!)
- Erva's (the best and biggest burritos in town)
- Hannah's (local dishes and curries)
- Serendib (Sri Lankan)
- Cayo Twist (soy ice cream)
- Amore Mio (fresh pasta and pizza)
- South Indian (delicious—and cheap—shakes as well as Indian food)

Tipping:

It is customary to tip 10% unless it is included in the bill.

Staying Cool in Cayo

Particularly towards the end of the semester, it will be hot in Cayo. In April, highs will be in the 90's. There are a number of places you can cool off. Many students take the 20-minute walk up the hill to Cahal Pech Resort, where for US \$2.50 you can swim in their pool. It also tends to be breezy and cooler up there. The San Ignacio Resort Hotel also has a pool and is closer, but a bit pricier. There are also a number of places to swim in the Macal and Mopan Rivers. However, we strongly discourage you from swimming in the Macal River below the Hawksworth bridge, as the water quality there is very poor due to runoff from the towns of San Ignacio and Santa Elena.

Working in Belize

International students may not work in a paid position while in Belize. You may be asked to sign a statement to this effect before leaving the US or on arrival in Belize. Should you work or seek employment, your visa may be revoked by the Department of Immigration and you may be deported from Belize.

Traveling Outside Belize

Students may not travel outside Belize during the program period (January 6 – May 2) unless you complete a travel waiver prior to departure. Even having signed a travel waiver, students may not travel to a country where there is a State Department Travel Advisory. Before or after the program period you may travel freely within Central America or elsewhere.

Note: Although Guatemala is a very popular place for students visit, before you go you should be aware of all of the risks associated with travelling in Guatemala. We encourage you to read the State Department Consular Report on Guatemala.

Student Code of Conduct and Support Services While on UVM Study Abroad Programs

A. Student Code of Conduct

1. General Principles

- a. Students on a UVM study abroad program are representatives of the University of Vermont. Their behavior reflects upon both the program and UVM. In addition to the specific provisions below, it is expected that students will behave in a manner that reflects positively on the program and UVM.
- b. UVM policies, including the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities, apply to students during their study abroad program.
- c. While UVM's "Protocol for Medical Emergencies Involving Alcohol and Other Drugs" ("Protocol") applies only to on campus incidents, we endorse the "Got Your Back" principle it establishes: *Health and Safety is the most important concern for the UVM community. Students should NEVER hesitate to get help for themselves or for a friend over fear of "getting in trouble."* The Protocol is at <http://www.uvm.edu/~dos/?Page=students/gotyourback.php&SM=students/studentmenu.html>

2. Violation of the law of the host country

A violation of any host country civil or criminal law is considered a violation of UVM's Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities ("Code"), regardless of whether or not the offense is prosecuted in a court of law in the host country. The Code is at <http://www.uvm.edu/~uvmppg/ppg/student/studentcode.pdf>

3. Alcohol

While UVM's Student Alcohol and Other Drug Policy ("Policy") states that a student must be 21 years of age to possess or consume alcohol, the legal drinking age of the host country will be determinative. All other provisions of the Policy remain in effect. The policy is at <http://www.uvm.edu/~uvmppg/ppg/student/drugandalco.pdf>

4. Illicit Drugs

The provisions of the Policy relating to illicit drugs are applicable to students on study abroad programs. The Policy applies to both use and possession of illicit drugs.

5. Procedures in cases of alleged violation of the Code or other UVM policy

- a. In cases of a violation of the Code or other UVM policy, the incident will be documented and a report will be submitted to the Center for Student Ethics and Standards. The matter will be processed according to the Code.

- b. Students should be aware that VIOLATION OF A UVM POLICY CAN RESULT IN DISMISSAL FROM THE STUDY ABROAD PROGRAM. A student dismissed from a study abroad program as a result of violating a UVM policy is ineligible for a refund of tuition and fees and is responsible for any additional costs arising from the dismissal.

B. Student Support Services

1. Housing

Students who experience housing-related problems or concerns should speak with the resident UVM student services support staff, who will discuss the matter with the appropriate housing liaison.

2. Medical Care

Students who experience medical-related problems or concerns should speak with the resident UVM student services support staff, who will assist in obtaining appropriate medical care.

3. Mental health/counseling

Students who experience mental health-related problems or concerns should speak with the resident UVM student services support staff, who will assist in obtaining appropriate mental health care or counseling either in person in the host country or by telephone with counseling center staff at UVM.

Additional Terms and Conditions for the Belize Semester Abroad Program

In consideration for my participation in the Belize Semester Abroad program, I agree to the following terms and conditions:

1. Conduct

All students are required to abide by the rules of UVM, including those outlined herein and the *Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities* (www.uvm.edu/~uvmppg/ppg/student/studentcode.pdf). Program faculty will take appropriate action, including dismissing a student from the program, for conduct that is found to be in violation of UVM rules and regulations, or which is otherwise detrimental to the welfare of the study abroad environment. Students dismissed from the program under this provision shall not receive a refund for tuition, program fees, airfare, or any other expense incurred by the student as part of this program. Students asked to leave under this provision shall return home at their own expense.

2. Housing

2.1. Guests

2.1.a. Definition of a Guest

A guest is defined as any person who is not enrolled in UVM's Study Abroad Program.

2.1.b. Student Responsibility for Guest(s)

All rules and regulations set forth by UVM and the Department of Residential Life will apply to all students and their guests. Students are responsible for their guests' behavior and conduct while abroad in a UVM program.

2.1.c. Hosting Guest(s)

2.1.c.1. Host Responsibility for Guest(s)

In order for a non-UVM guest to enter Martha's Guest House (hereinafter "Martha's"), a UVM student will have to invite that guest in, meet the guest at the door, remain with the guest at all times, and escort the guest out when the guest leaves. The UVM student who invites the guest in will be responsible for that guest the entire time that guest is at Martha's. **Guests must leave the premises by 10 p.m. Sunday through Thursday and by midnight on Friday and Saturday.** Children will not be permitted to be guests. Martha's staff has the right to identify specific individuals who may not be guests at Martha's.

Students hosting guests must do so in a responsible manner. The rights and property of students and UVM personnel must be protected from unwanted intrusions and vandalism. When a student has a guest, he/she assumes responsibility for the conduct of the guest and is responsible for any damage or loss of property caused by the guest.

2.1.c.2. Absence of Student Host

A guest may not occupy a room and/or bed space in the absence of his/her host.

2.1.c.3. Permission to Remain Overnight

A guest may only remain overnight in a room if he/she has the permission of all assigned occupants of the room. It is the responsibility of the student host to ask for and obtain permission from his/her roommates(s) for the guest to remain overnight. Overnight is defined as the hours between 10:00 p.m. through 9:00 a.m. the following morning. In advance of staying overnight, a guest must register at the reception desk at Martha's and pay a fee of \$10 per night.

2.1.c.4. Length of Stay

To ensure the rights of all students, guest(s) may only stay a maximum of two consecutive nights, given that the student host has obtained permission from his/her roommate(s). After two consecutive nights, there must be a seven day intermission between the last overnight visit and the next visit.

2.2. Personal Property Insurance

UVM cannot purchase insurance for students through individual or group plans. It is strongly recommended that all students obtain appropriate insurance for personal property, through a company such as CSI Insurance Agency, Inc. (www.collegestudentinsurance.com). Students are encouraged to keep a record of their personal belongings, including serial numbers. For safety reasons, personal effects cannot be placed in hallways, stairwells, bathrooms, or other common areas of Martha's.

2.3. Room Entry

2.3.a. Room Entry for Maintenance Work

While UVM respects the privacy of students living in study abroad accommodations, a student's right to privacy in study abroad accommodations is limited in some circumstances. In order to provide efficient service, Martha's staff reserve the right to enter rooms between 9:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. without advance notice whenever maintenance work is required. Martha's staff also reserve the right to enter rooms whenever an emergency arises in order to make needed repairs or take corrective action.

2.3.b. Room Entry for Cause

2.3.b.1. Justification for Room Entry

Martha's staff reserves the right to enter any room to ensure the health and safety of all students. Martha's staff and UVM faculty/staff are authorized to enter and inspect a room or suite upon reasonable cause if he/she believes that a violation of any UVM health and safety policy or provision of these Terms & Conditions has occurred. Grounds for reasonable cause to enter include, but are not limited to the following: the sight or odor of smoke of any kind; the sight of illegal substances; a tip from a reliable source that illegal substances or a weapon are in a room.

2.3.b.2. Staff Designated to Enter Room

Martha's staff and UVM faculty and staff are authorized to enter rooms at Martha's if there are circumstances giving rise to a reasonable belief that a violation of policy has occurred and in the event of an emergency.

2.3.b.3. Room Entry Procedure

Before entering, Martha's and UVM faculty/staff will first knock and announce who they are and that they intend to enter. If no response is received, the door will be unlocked and UVM faculty/staff will announce their intent to enter. The student(s) occupying the room, if present, will be told the purpose of the entry and provided an opportunity to voluntarily produce any item or substance for which the entry has been made. Any inspection will be limited to that which is reasonably necessary to either confirm the presence of an illegal or prohibited item or policy/code violation, or to determine that no imminent risk to health or safety appears to be present.

2.4. Smoke-Free Study Abroad Experience

All study abroad locations, including student rooms, are smoke-free. Smoking is also not allowed within twenty-five (25) feet of any study abroad building. Smoking any substance or creating smoke through the use of incense, candles, or other scented smokeproducing items is strictly prohibited in all study abroad locations.

2.5. Quiet/Noise Policy

2.5.a. Students' Rights Related to Noise

Noise that unreasonably disrupts roommate(s), student(s), and neighboring community members at any time or that violates "Quiet Hours" or "Courtesy" policies is prohibited. This includes amplified sound (e.g., facing stereo speakers out windows, use of megaphones, electronic instruments and/or equipment, microphones, etc.). Students are expected to respond to requests to reduce noise at all times. All parties present in a room or suite documented for noise will be presumed to be contributing to the disruption and are subject to follow-up by UVM faculty/staff.

2.5.b. Quiet Hours

Each student has a responsibility to know and follow the Quiet Hours policy for the study abroad accommodation in which he/she lives. Sunday through Thursday from 10:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m. is regular designated quiet hours. Quiet hours are from midnight to 8:00 a.m. on Friday and Saturday. When quiet hours are in effect, noise should not be heard outside a room or suite.

2.5.c. Courtesy Policy

It is expected that students will respect requests to curtail noise. If requested, noise should not be heard more than five feet from outside a room or building.

2.6. Pets

For reasons of health and sanitation, students are not allowed to have pets in study abroad locations.

2.7. Access to Study Abroad Buildings

For the security of the students, study abroad buildings are always locked, except those that house administrative offices, dining facilities, classrooms, or common use areas when in operation. Guests must contact students to meet them at the entrance and escort them into the building. Doors should not be propped open at any time. This compromises the security system and is a violation of the student conduct code.

2.8. Room and Building Keys

2.8.a. Security

Students are issued a room key when they check in to Martha's and to Tia Maria. Duplicating room keys compromises security and is not permitted. Exterior doors are unlocked using the student's key. Students should keep their doors locked, carry their key(s) with them at all times, and refrain from loaning their key(s) to anyone.

2.8.b. Lost Key Fines

Students who lose their key(s) must pay the replacement cost of the key(s). Students must contact UVM faculty/staff as soon as a key is lost. Lost room or building keys will result in a fee of \$20 which will be billed to the student's account.

2.9. Room and Common Areas: Condition, Damage, Maintenance

2.9.a. Responsibility for Room

Students are responsible for the condition of their room. If a room is vacated by students and the room is left in a condition that makes it unfit for reassignment, the students will be charged a fee, billed to the student's account, for the cleanup and preparation of the room. Damage to or theft of furnishings will be billed to the assigned student(s) account.

2.9.b. Responsibility for Common Areas

Students are expected to take every precaution to assure that common area property is not abused. Lounge furniture is considered common area property for use by all students and may not be removed from common areas. A student found to have lounge furniture in his/her room may be held accountable through UVM's judicial process.

To protect both the rights of students to sleep and study, as well as the condition of facilities, students are to refrain from sporting activities including but not limited to skateboarding, rollerblading, and ball or Frisbee throwing in hallways, lounges, and common areas of Martha's and Tia Maria.

2.9.c. Unassigned Damage

Students sharing a room, suite, floor, hall, landing, column, or complex are held jointly responsible for losses or damages beyond normal wear and tear where individual responsibility cannot be determined. **Unassigned damage charges cannot be appealed and will be billed to the student's account.**

UVM faculty/staff and students work together to keep study abroad accommodations clean and well maintained. Study abroad accommodations must be kept clean for health and safety reasons. Each student is responsible for the care and cleaning of his/her own room and the common areas.

2.9.d. Custodial Service

Students are expected to be respectful of custodial staff and the work they perform at all times.

2.9.e. Maintenance and Repairs

All necessary repairs should be reported to the resident UVM faculty or staff, who will then discuss the situation with Martha's staff and with Tia Maria's staff.

2.9.f. Structural Changes

No structural changes can be made in a room, including but not limited to: nailing loft supports directly to the walls; removing existing built-in equipment; and removing closet doors, bookshelves, fixtures, and wardrobes. Any damage that is caused as a result of unauthorized structural changes or removal of equipment will result in the student responsible being assessed a repair or replacement charge, which shall be billed to the student's account.

3. Cell Phone and Emergency Contact Card

3.1 Cell Phone Requirements

As part of UVM's study abroad program in Belize, UVM will provide each student with a cell phone. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that adequate minutes have been prepaid on the cell phone account by the student. Students are required to carry their cell phone during the entire study abroad experience. Students must ensure that the cell phone is always on, contains enough battery charge, and contains sufficient pre-paid minutes for UVM faculty/staff to contact the student at any time.

The cell phone is the student's responsibility and any loss or damage to the cell phone shall be billed to the student's account.

3.2. Emergency Contact Card

Students are required to have on their person the contact numbers for faculty and staff in case of emergency. (Students will be provided with a wallet-sized card with that information.)

4. Driving

Poor road conditions, erratic drivers, and poorly maintained motor vehicles make driving in Belize dangerous. Because of concern about the safety of our students, students are not allowed to drive or rent motor vehicles for the duration of the program.

5. Traveling

5.1. Traveling Outside San Ignacio

When a student travels outside of San Ignacio, he/she must provide the resident UVM faculty or staff the following information, in case the student needs to be reached during an emergency:

- Name and cell phone number
- Where student is going (location)
- With whom student is traveling
- Contact information (hotel name/phone number)
- How student is getting to and from the destination
- Student's planned return date/time

5.2. Traveling outside Belize

Students may not travel outside Belize during the program period (January 6 - May 2) unless they complete a travel waiver prior to departure. Even having signed a travel waiver, students may not travel to a country where there is a State Department Travel Advisory.

I agree to comply with all of the terms and conditions stated in the *Student Handbook: Sustainable Development Semester Abroad in Belize*.

Student Signature

Print Name

Date

UVM Belize Semester Transportation Agreement

It is the understanding of UVM that you will make your own transportation arrangements to and from Belize, as UVM has not made group arrangements. It is therefore understood that you accept full responsibility for travel arrangements and for the associated costs. Further, UVM is not responsible for any bodily injury or property damage, which may arise out of these arrangements.

It is the understanding of UVM that group arrangements have been made for local ground transportation for Wednesday, January 6, from the Belize International Airport to San Ignacio and for Sunday, May 2, from San Ignacio to the Belize International Airport. If you do not arrive on January 6 or depart on May 2, you will be responsible for arranging and paying for your ground transportation. UVM is not responsible for any bodily injury or property damage, which may arise out of these alternative arrangements.

Please affirm your understanding by reading and signing the statement below:

I, (*please print name*) _____ accept full responsibility for making my own transportation arrangements to and from Belize and for making my own arrangements for local ground transportation if I travel on dates other than those indicated above. I will not hold UVM, its trustees, agents, or employees responsible for any bodily injury, property damage, or other incident which may arise out of my own travel arrangements. I understand that I am responsible for paying for trip protection insurance to cover any cancellations and bodily or property damage.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Participant's birth date: _____

**The University of Vermont
Office of International Education**

Living/Learning Center, B-162

Burlington, VT 05405

Telephone: (802) 656- 4296 Fax: (802) 656 – 8553

OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION PARTICIPANT HEALTH INFORMATION

The information requested will allow the University of Vermont to better assist you should health concerns arise during your study abroad experience, particularly in the event of a health emergency. Because mild, pre-existing health disorders can become serious under the stresses of life while studying abroad, it is important to have a health care provider evaluate any conditions which might limit your ability to successfully undertake the study abroad program. UVM will make every effort to accommodate health needs abroad and to ensure that suitable care is available. However, *some destinations may not be advisable for individuals with certain health conditions*. The information below will be shared with on-site program staff.

INSTRUCTIONS:

You must complete parts **1, 2, and 3**. **You** must sign/date in box under item #4.

Your health care provider must complete and sign item #5

You must make a copy of the completed form. Return the original **plus** the copy to Jeff Frank, the Belize Semester-abroad Program Resident Co-director, by Monday, November 30.

1. Participant Name (*please print*): _____ UVM ID#: _____
(Last) (First)

Country and Program Name: Belize Semester-Abroad
Program _____

Term(s) of participation: Academic Year Fall Winter **x Spring** Summer Year: 2010

In case of an emergency during the study abroad period, the OIE may need your emergency contact. This contact information is collected through OIE's online forms and can be updated at any time. Please make sure this information is current at all times.

2. **Regular health care provider** (personal physician, group practice, etc.): _____
Office phone number: _____

3. You are required to accurately address points **a** through **d** below, attaching additional pages as needed, and endorse the italicized statements immediately following. All responses are requested for the sole purpose of assisting program staff in meeting emergencies and any special health needs.

a. If you require accommodations or support services while abroad because of a disability, please provide a full description of what arrangements may be needed, as well as verification of the disability from the ACCESS Office.

b. If you have any drug, food, or other allergies, please identify them, your reactions if exposed, and the recommended treatment plans.

c. If you have any dietary restrictions, please give details.

d. If you regularly take medications, please identify them, and be sure to bring with you to your program site an adequate supply of each, in pharmacy-labeled containers.

4. You are strongly encouraged to consult with the UVM Travel Clinic or a qualified health care provider to ascertain any needed immunizations and medications for your time abroad. You are also encouraged to seek medical advice regarding H1N1 flu prevention and care strategies.

Participant Statement of Accuracy and Signature:

All responses that I have given on this form and attached sheets are true and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I understand that failure to supply true and accurate information may result in my dismissal from the program. I will provide the program coordinator with the necessary medical clearance to participate. I will notify the program coordinator of any relevant changes in my health that occur prior to the start of the program and that may affect my ability to participate. I also acknowledge that Continuing Education, as well as on-site program staff, may (but are not required to) take action, including dismissing me from the program, if they believe that I have failed to comply with the terms of any medical clearance required for my participation, if applicable, or that such action is appropriate under the University of Vermont's Medical Withdrawal Policy. I understand that my failure to disclose information that later requires my dismissal will result in me bearing all resulting financial consequences to return home.

Signature of Participant

Date

5. Instructions to the Participant's Health Care Provider: You are asked to evaluate the individual's health and respond below as appropriate. Please take into account that living and studying in a foreign environment frequently triggers unexpected physical and emotional stress, which can exacerbate otherwise mild disorders. It is important that the participant be able to adjust to potentially dramatic changes in climate, diet, living arrangements, social life, and study demands that may seriously disrupt accustomed patterns of behavior. Moreover, although health care in many places is readily available and of sufficiently high quality, the participant may be going to a location where treatment is difficult to obtain and/or less reliable. In some instances, the participant often will not have convenient, if any, access to the kinds of resources and support she/he may be dependent on at home.

On the basis of my knowledge of this student's health, I (please check language that applies)...

- find no medical or psychological contraindications to her/his participation in this study abroad program.*
- recommend against his/her participation in this study abroad program.*
- support his/her participation in this study abroad program, but only under the following conditions:*

I have discussed my response above with the participant, have given appropriate counseling, and am returning the form to the student.

Signature of health care provider/specialist

Date

Printed name of health care provider/specialist

Business Street Address

City

State

Zip Code

Business Phone

Consent and Release Form

I, _____, give the *Department of Community Development and Applied Economics (CDAE)* and the *University of Vermont (UVM)* permission to use my name, likeness, image, voice, and/or appearance as such may be embodied in any pictures, photos, video recordings, audiotapes, digital images, and the like, taken or made during my involvement in class and class-related activities, as well as activities I take part in as a member of any officially recognized student group, including study abroad. I agree that *CDAE* and *UVM* have complete ownership of such pictures, etc., including the entire copyright, and may use them for any purpose consistent with the *CDAE & UVM* missions. These uses include, but are not limited to illustrations, bulletins, exhibitions, videotapes, reprints, reproductions, publications, advertisements, and any promotional or educational materials in any medium now known or later developed, including the Internet. I acknowledge that I will not receive any compensation for the use of such pictures, etc., and hereby release *CDAE*, *UVM*, and their agents and assignees from any and all claims which arise out of or are in any way connected with such use as made by me, on my behalf, or by my relations.

I have read and understood this consent and release.

I give my consent to *CDAE/UVM* to use my name and likeness to promote the *CDAE* program, *UVM*, and/or their activities.

signature

date

I do not give my consent to the *CDAE/UVM* to use my name and likeness to promote the *CDAE* program, *UVM*, and/or their activities.

signature

date

**Belize Semester Abroad Program in Sustainable Development
ACCEPTANCE FORM, Spring 2010**

Name: _____

Student ID #: _____ Email: _____

Fall '09 Address: _____

Fall '09 Telephone: _____

_____ **Yes! I intend to enroll in the Spring 2010 Belize Study Abroad program.**
I am enclosing a non-refundable \$500 deposit made out to "University of Vermont."

_____ **No! I do not plan to enroll at this time because...**

Checking the first option above indicates your intent to participate in the program and to adhere to all UVM and program-specific policies while in Belize. We have highlighted one particular policy below. Please read and consider it very carefully before deciding to accept the offer to participate in the program:

Possession or use of illegal drugs is a violation of UVM policy. A student found in possession of or using an illegal drug will be reported to the Center for Student Ethics and Standards. If a student is suspended from UVM as a result, he or she will immediately have to leave the Belize program and forfeit all tuition and program fees. We reserve the right to suspend a student immediately for actions that endanger him/her or other students or that place the Belize program at risk.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

NOTE: The staff of the Belize Program reserves the right to revoke admission to any student who fails to attend the required pre-departure meetings without adequate cause and notice or who fails to complete required tasks by the scheduled due dates.

Housing Fees and Cancellations

Housing costs for the semester (\$1,870/student) are pre-paid by UVM in order to reserve space. If you cancel less than 15 days prior to the scheduled arrival in Belize, you will be responsible for paying for your housing plus tax costs.

If you cancel 15 to 29 days prior to the scheduled arrival in Belize, you will be responsible for paying 50% of your housing plus tax costs, plus a \$75 handler's fee.

If you cancel 30 or more days prior to the scheduled arrival in Belize, you will be responsible for paying a \$75 handler's fee.