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CE 594
Reflections on Study Abroad Trip

I had a very positive experience with the CE 594 Study Abroad Trip to Mexico. First of all, it was a very useful teamwork experience. I felt that we had a good teamwork experience. We worked synergistically, being able to use the strengths of each team member. Some were good organizers, some were good communicators, and some were good problem solvers. This enabled us to achieve more as a team than we would have separately. Each one of us had a vested interest in the project, so we all contributed much to the project.

The class also made me more culturally aware. It is very beneficial to be able to meet and associate with people of different backgrounds and cultures. I learned a lot about Mexico and came to love the Mexican people more.

The project itself was very helpful. It was a real world problem (flooding) with no “textbook” solution. We had to approach the project just as we would approach a project in the professional field. We had to compile the necessary information in order to address the problem.

We had the autonomy necessary to solve the problem, but we also had the mentoring and supervision that kept us on the right track. This was very beneficial as real world project experience is somewhat lacking in the civil engineering undergraduate educational experience. I feel more confident in my ability to solve problems for my future employer and clients.

Also, the project was a great teacher of project management and organization. Much planning and organizing was required in order to complete the project with the logistical complications of working internationally. As the world becomes more globalized, it is essential that we understand how to work with teams across borders and cultures.

The Study Abroad Trip was very enlightening and a very good 'capstone' to my undergraduate experience. It offered a place to apply the problem solving principles I have learned throughout my undergraduate career. I especially appreciate the generous donors who provided the scholarships to fund most of the trip. Just as the sign says at the entrance to the BYU campus, "The world is our campus". In this class, I truly felt that it was true, and not just a trite saying. I also felt that this trip has made me more capable to "go forth to serve".