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### **“Benefits of the Study Abroad in Mexico”**

There have been many students who have participated in the studies abroad offered by BYU. Those students have had several good experiences participating in studies abroad around the world. The BYU study abroad program has been as beneficial for its students as for the countries that have been visited. The Mexico study abroad is a program which was created by Dr. Nelson; this program has been very productive for the BYU Civil Engineering students and for the Mexican society. As a BYU student and as Mexican, I really had unforgettable experiences and benefits participating in this study abroad in Mexico. Some of these experiences and benefits are: improving and applying the concepts of team and engineering work outside the classroom, and cultural exchange.

First of all, taking the study abroad class helped me to learn more about how to work as a teammate not only as classmate. In the classroom, I learned several team work concepts that I could apply later in a real work, like in the visit to Mexico (Guadalajara and Zacatecas). From my point of view, working as a teammate allowed me to develop better my project and learn a lot from my teammates. My American and Mexican teammates always worked together aiming to achieve the same goal, Water Quality Model for El Cajon Reservoir. They always showed humility to share their experiences with other members of the team. Humility, and how to well organize an engineering project were some concepts that I learned in the Mexico study abroad. Those concepts were useful to work well with my teammates.

Working in Mexico allowed me to apply my engineering knowledge into real environmental water issues, because I saw different type of scenarios, such as water pollution, floods, and urban development. For instance, in Guadalajara city, I could see pollution water problems which have affected the people's health, so my team worked on developing a water quality model for a big reservoir (El Cajon dam). Unlike Guadalajara city, in Zacatecas city I could see floods problems, where some people are planning to develop new urban areas. So, I really proved that all the concepts that I have learned in the classroom could be applied in real life. Also, I was able to see how similar or different the Americans and Mexicans understand and work on engineering projects. It also help me realize which concepts I need to learn, to be able to help the society with this environmental and water issues.

The culture exchange is another great experience that I had working in the Mexico projects, because I was able to learn more about the Mexican and American culture. Before I participated in the Mexico study abroad I had a different opinion about my classmates, because everyone was serious. However, when we started working together I had the opportunity to get to know them better and make good friends. In other words, this study abroad program helped me to know more about the American and Mexican engineering culture.

In conclusion, I think that applying the engineering concepts in real life while we are still students is as important for us as for the society, because we can gain experience faster which can be used later in future jobs. So for all the benefits presented above, I said that I will never forget my study abroad to Mexico, because it helped me to remember who I am, what I have to learn, and where I am going.