

Benjamin Griggs
Thoughts on Mexico

Being able to participate in the study abroad program to Mexico through the civil engineering department has been a defining moment in my time at Brigham Young University. The skills and knowledge that I gained, coupled with the opportunity that I had to apply my engineering knowledge to a real-world problem already has and will continue to benefit me as I move through my career. This has truly been an amazing experience that I am so grateful for.

Growing up and living my entire life in the United States, I have been very blessed. Comforts that I enjoy and take for granted on a daily basis are not so common in other areas of the world. Drinking out of the tap, having reliable waste-water treatment facilities, and being able to enjoy the beauty of rivers and streams are some of the things that are not so common in the areas of Mexico that we worked. Seeing the conditions of the rivers in Mexico was a real eye-opener for me; the amount of pollution that is dumped straight into the rivers is astounding. I realized that there is so much to be done, and that I have gained some of the skills that can help solve these types of problems. The work that we were able to do in collaboration with the students from ITESO has not solved the problems that exist in the Rio Blanco watershed, but they are laying the groundwork for solutions. This is very exciting to me; to be able to work on a project that applies engineering principles to solve a problem and positively impact the lives of others. If nothing else, this trip helped reinforce my belief that civil engineering is really a service oriented profession. The work that we do really benefits mankind, and that is pretty cool.

Working on a group project is not easy, but when the majority of your group is in another country, it is even harder. Throughout this class, I learned how to effectively communicate and work on an international level; a skill that will come in handy as the global marketplace becomes smaller. I also learned about the importance of protecting our water resources, and what a precious commodity water is. I honestly wish that I had taken more classes in this area; it is something that really interests me, and I hope to be able to do work in this field in the future.

Besides the academic value of the class, I also made some very good friends in Mexico. I also was able to see many things while we were down there and will always remember my time working on this project. The class was amazing and I am so glad that I had the opportunity to participate.