

Aaron Cook

As part of the civil engineering study abroad program, my group was assigned a project dealing with flooding issues in a community about 10 miles outside the city of Zacatecas. This community deals with severe flooding two or three times a year on average. Collaborating with students from the University of Zacatecas, we were able to collect needed information to create a computer model of the water runoff. Based on information this model has provided us, we are now working to create solutions that we can present to the community in need.

Working on this project has been beneficial to me for several reasons. First of all, I was able to use the technical education I have been receiving for the last three years and apply it to a real life situation. Our group had to draw from our collective knowledge to decide on the best approach and work towards a solution. Also, I learned a great deal from working collaboratively with students in Mexico. Our groups had to pay careful attention to communication, as well as project flow and management, which taught me more about team work. I feel that the most beneficial aspect of this course, however, was the opportunity to serve. While we were on our site visit, I was able to talk with people who live in extremely humble circumstances and have experienced flooding problems in their homes for years. I really hope our efforts will help alleviate these problems and improve the lives of the people who live there.

In my opinion, this course is the perfect culmination of a BYU education in civil engineering. It corresponds exactly with the universities aims which state, "A BYU education should be ... intellectually enlarging and character building, leading to lifelong learning and service."