



SHOULDER TO SHOULDER

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

Q. How much would the Nicaragua trip cost me?

A. The student contribution is \$500, with a \$50 deposit due upon acceptance to the program, and the remaining \$450 due after Winter Break. In addition, students should bring spending money for souvenirs, snacks, internet cafes, phone cards and meals in the airports.

Q. Where do student participants stay in Nicaragua?

A. Student lodging and 3 meals a day are provided by experienced home-stay families. All students and faculty are within walking distance of each other and our daily meeting spots. The accommodations are simple, but safe, clean, and trusted. The group will spend one night at a safe hotel in Managua or Granada.

Q. Am I eligible to apply if I do not speak Spanish?

A. Yes. We have partners in Nicaragua to help translate, and we try to pair non-Spanish-speaking participants with participants who are fluent in home-stays and on work sites.

Q. What kind of food do students eat on the trip?

A. Home-stays provide a variety of healthy well-balanced meals, and gladly accommodate any dietary restrictions. Common foods include rice and beans, plantains, mangoes, and locally caught fish. There are plenty of vegetarian options, and there are restaurants and convenience stores nearby.

Q. Is Nicaragua safe?

A. Nicaragua is widely considered to be the safest country in Central America. The political unrest that some still associate with Nicaragua ended in the 1980's, and in our experience, Nicaraguans have been extremely friendly and welcoming. We warn students to avoid bringing valuables, and to safely guard their money, cameras, iPods, phones, or other items that could entice pick-pockets. Home-stays have locks on their main doors and students' rooms. We insist that students use the "buddy system" and we discuss other safety precautions prior to the trip.

Q. When are applications due?

A. For March 2012, applications are due Monday, November 7th, and should be delivered to Lydia Pittman in the Library Office.

Q. Why wasn't I accepted?

A. Every year, more students apply than we have space to take to Nicaragua. We put together a group with a mix of majors, ages, genders, personality types, talents, and skills. Even highly qualified candidates may not be accepted, and this does not mean that we disliked the applicant. We highly recommend that a student who is not accepted re-apply the following year, and/or apply for other service-learning trips at Lasell. This persistence shows us that someone is really interested in international service-learning.

Q. Is there a class I have to take to go to Nicaragua?

A. There is not a course associated with the program, but students are required to produce a self-designed academic component. This could be a linked-credit or honors component opportunity. Alternatively, the academic component may be an existing class assignment, paper, or project, for which the student picks a topic related to the Nicaragua experience. Additionally, participants will be required to attend mandatory meetings in preparation for the trip.

Q. Do I get course credit if I go to Nicaragua?

A. Participating in Nicaragua does not automatically earn any credits; however the academic component provides a good opportunity for any student wishing to earn a Linked Credit, according to the college's guidelines. (Contact Sharyn Lowenstein for details)

Q. What are the dates for the next trip?

A. Spring Break, approximately March 10-18, 2012.

Q. Who do I contact for more information?

A. Lydia Pittman, via Lasell email, in person in the Library Office, or at extension 2207.

