“Supporting Latino, Immigrant and First-generation Student Global Learning”

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Fact: Latino student participation in study abroad programs ranks at the lowest level, in proportion to a growing enrollment throughout the U.S.

In general, U.S. institutions of higher education do not have specific programs to encourage Latino students to study abroad as a career building opportunity.

There is a limited number of institutional partnerships with Mexican and other Latin American institutions, to promote global learning opportunities in the Western Hemisphere.

The importance of these partnerships are a critical challenge for international education administrators and faculty, to develop closer ties in the Americas.
Case Study: The California-Mexico Dreamers Study Abroad Program

In 2014, CSULB Prof. Armando Vazquez-Ramos established the California-Mexico Dreamers Study Abroad Program, a precedent-setting model which allowed 160 Dreamers the opportunity to study abroad in Mexico through 6 travel-study classes, and all returned legally to the U.S. through DACA’s Advance Parole provision.

However, since DACA’s cancellation on Sept. 5, 2017, the program’s 75 applications for the December 2017 group have not been approved, and Advance Parole has been denied to all Dreamers by US-CIS, despite the federal court’s orders.
Dreamers Study Abroad Program

The CMD’s Study Abroad Program pioneered a method that enabled Dreamers to adjust their undocumented standing to permanent resident alien status upon return.

The model facilitated for other colleges and universities to replicate this opportunity for their students (CUNY, CSU Fullerton, University of New Mexico, etc.)

Advance Parole enabled thousands of Dreamers to return to their birthplace after many years to meet their relatives, discover their homeland and study abroad as adults.
Based on the 4-year experience of the CMD’s Study Abroad Program, this model also allowed us to address specifically the critical importance of:

- Providing strategic psychological attention before, during and after the study abroad experience, which became a critically important and integral part of the program.
- Developed the best practices that could serve to address the wide range of emotional, cultural and psychological traits we define as Dreamers’ Immigrant Stress Disorder (ISD).
Psychological Implications of Immigrants’ Studying Abroad

- While the elements and behaviors considered for this assessment are limited to the interaction with program applicants and participants in the CMSC’s study-abroad program experience, the fact is:
  - The Trump era has created an increasingly prevalent Immigrant Stress Disorder (ISD) condition on all immigrants, not only the DACA student population.
  - The fear of massive deportation as well as K-12 incidents of bullying, insults by teachers and rampant discrimination has immigrant families in a state of widespread fear.
CMSC’s Documentaries on Implications of Dreamers’ Study Abroad and Advance Parole

▶ The CMSC has produced several short documentaries based on the CMD Study Abroad Model:

▶ “Sin Raiz” (2015) and “A Dream Come True” (2016), directed by Dreamer filmmaker Lidieth Arevalo, which reflect some of the emotional and cultural clashes encountered by Dreamers upon their return to their homeland found at www.california-mexicocenter.org.

▶ The CMSC’s experience reversing a negative sense that Dreamers often felt the “Ni de Aqui, ni de Alla” syndrome, to a positive “De Aquí, y de Alla” affirmation.
Sin Raiz (2015) and A Dream Come True (2016)

https://youtu.be/HYleju2n5Hk
Psychological Attention for Dreamers’ Studying Abroad

Through a team of psychologists secured by the CMSC, Dreamers in the last 3 groups have benefitted from a unique group therapy intervention:

- To treat their anxiety, fear, worries and apprehensions; before, during and after the CMD Study Abroad Program experience.
- To develop a psychological group therapy approach that has empowered the program’s participants to reconcile the emotional and cultural issues they face before, during and after the life-changing study abroad experience.
- To strategically provide Dreamers with an empowering and maturing growth towards their personal development as more responsible human beings.
While Dreamers are exemplary role models of leadership, determination and resilience, at the same time they share the burden of emotional, cultural and psychological traits, both positive and negative, in terms of:

- Quest for identity and self determination
- Guilt, shame and resentment
- Empowerment and determination
- Motivation and responsibility
- Concern for family status
- Success driven and challenging