

Parents' Guide

TO STUDY ABROAD IN

LATIN AMERICA



Study Abroad

ABILENE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

We are excited about the wonderful opportunities that await your son or daughter during their Study Abroad experience. The experience is like the question the 5-year-old boy asked his father: “What is it like to be tall?” The boy was curious, but had no point of reference to truly understand what it is like to be tall. The father may have lifted the boy up to let him experience being “tall,” but this was only a brief experience.

Your son or daughter may not have had the experience of being away from the United States for a substantial period of time. While they may have traveled abroad, it is not the same as living in a foreign culture.

He or she may be asking, “What is it like to *live* in another culture?” They are going with the curiosity, expectation and excitement of living and studying in another country. There will be many opportunities for spiritual, emotional and intellectual growth. The student may feel some anxiety leaving many things that are familiar and going into a situation where things are different in many ways. Their points of reference, those things that are familiar to them, will change.

One point of reference that *does not change* throughout the world is Jesus Christ, and it is the hope and prayer of ACU Study Abroad that this truth will be realized in the students’ lives as they live abroad.

While your son or daughter is in another country, you may feel some anxiety of your own. Please know that this is natural. If you need to talk with someone about this issue, please contact the Study Abroad Office.

The ACU Study Abroad office wants the experience to be enjoyable and safe for all participants. All Study Abroad participants have been provided a copy of the Behavior Contract so they will be aware of our expectations. ACU Study Abroad is designed to benefit all students, and we hope that by having these guidelines, we are providing structure in an environment that is different from any the student has experienced.

Students attending the program are encouraged to engage the culture by interacting with people from the community, while traveling, and through studying about the history and culture of the host country. It is our pledge to assist your son or daughter in getting the most out of their experience in a productive and safe way that glorifies God.



www.acu.edu/study-abroad

“The Latin America Study Abroad experience changed my life. Before I decided to do it, I was skeptical. I cannot start to explain the impact that it had on me, except that the experience will be one I will never forget. I made the right decision to study abroad.”

“Going to Latin America was a turning point in my life, and I learned some valuable lessons I will never forget... I thank God for the opportunity to not only see other countries but my own in a new light. I feel like a much more well-rounded person.”

“Seeing God through people much less fortunate than you is an intense experience. It makes you reflect on your own life and wonder how well you show the face of God in your everyday activities, and how well you show it to people less fortunate than you.”

ACU'S LATIN AMERICA ON-SITE DIRECTOR: Dr. Rhonda Collier

The semester abroad in Montevideo promises to be one of excitement and growth for your son or daughter!

Montevideo is a modern city and provides a unique blend of South American and European cultures. Many people have worked hard to make the ACU semester in Montevideo possible. Continuing in this tradition, Dr. Rhonda Collier will be serving our students while they participate in the ACU in Latin America program.

Rhonda's official title is on-site director for ACU Study Abroad in Montevideo. Collier plays a crucial role in the program, and she works to create a positive experience and atmosphere.

In addition to teaching a course on world literature, she will help students adjust to living in Montevideo, challenge them to grow spiritually through service to others, oversee the living facility, and provide general guidance for living and studying in Uruguay.

A 2001 Fulbright Scholar, Collier studied at the University of Sao Paulo (Brazil). She holds bachelor's and master's degrees in industrial engineering from The University of Tennessee and Georgia Tech University; a Master of Arts in English and a Master of Arts in

comparative literature from The University of Tennessee-Chattanooga; and a doctorate in comparative literature at Vanderbilt University.

She has traveled throughout South America, Africa and Europe and is fluent in Portuguese and Spanish.

Collier's research focus is on the writings of black women in Latin America.

Before being hired by ACU, she was on the faculty at Lipscomb University, serving in the English department. While at Lipscomb, she was a visiting faculty for our ACU in Latin America program. She also has worked for an engineering company.

Collier will assist students in a variety of ways, but even more important, she serves as a Christ-like example to the students.

Living abroad can be stressful, and she will be available to help students through the process of overcoming culture shock and learning through experience about another way of life. Her gifts of administration and service will help create a positive experience for students and faculty.



Study Abroad

Check-in

All fall/spring semester students are required to be on the Abilene campus by the Sunday before leaving on Wednesday for check in procedures with the Study Abroad Office. Students will need to find a place to stay while on campus and will be responsible for their own food during this time.

Students will spend Sunday afternoon, Monday and Tuesday in information sessions; topics covered will include safety and security abroad, travel tips and general information about Montevideo. During this check-in time, students will also take an exam for the International Studies (INTS 241.S2) course titled Introduction to Global Studies (covering the book "Study Abroad Learn Abroad.")

Flight Information

All students must ride on the chartered bus from Abilene to DFW airport on the Wednesday of the first week of classes. Departure for the bus is 9:30 a.m. in order to arrive at DFW airport early for international flights.

Communication

MAILING

The mailing address for ACU's Latin America program is:

Casa ACU
[Student's Name]
Colonia 2073
Montevideo, Uruguay 11000

Packages can be expensive so check the rate with UPS, Global Priority or FedEx. The mail takes about two weeks from the U.S. and four weeks to the U.S.

Small packages (small shoe box or video mailer) may be mailed to the address above. However, any package with a stated value of more than \$50 goes through a customs inspection. As a result, the recipient will probably have to pay 100 percent duty on the contents of the package. Customs inspections require as much as one day so it is best to avoid sending packages. Rates may vary so you may wish to consult the U.S. Postal Service Web site at www.usps.com.

EMAIL

One of the cheapest, quickest and easiest ways to communicate is through email. Students use the same ACU email address as they do in Abilene. There is a computer lab in the facility where the students can check email.

PHONE

There are two phones in the facility – one for males and one for females on separate floors. Depending on daylight

savings time, please remember Montevideo is two (2) hours later than Central Standard Time. If it is 2 p.m. in Texas, it is 4 p.m. in Montevideo. Outgoing calls can only be placed using a long-distance calling card. The phone numbers:

- Male students' number: 011-598-2-402-4354
- Female students' number: 011-598-2-402-3623

EMERGENCIES ONLY

Students are not allowed to make or receive calls from these phones unless it is an emergency:

- Faculty Phone #1: 011-598-2-400-8444
- Faculty Phone #2: 011-598-2-408-8099

Cost

Tuition, fees, room and board cost the same as for any student studying in Abilene.

Program fee for Montevideo includes:

- Round-trip airfare from DFW to Montevideo
- Ground transportation to and from the airport
- Group excursions (see section "Group Excursions") and educational trips
- Group health insurance including major medical, medical evacuation and repatriation (See the Medical Insurance brochure in the Study Abroad Office for more information.)

Miscellaneous additional expenses

- \$100 to \$300 per weekend of independent travel.
- This costs varies greatly depending on the type of travel. Buses are readily accessible in Montevideo and typically cost 50 cents per ride.
- Based on previous semesters abroad in Montevideo, students spend from \$1,000 to \$2,000 on travel, souvenirs and other expenses. The cost varies and depends on many factors including exchange rates, destinations, etc.
- Textbooks vary depending on the semester and will be purchased **on campus before leaving**. Students need to leave room in their suitcases for the textbooks. Cost of books may be charged to the student's account.

Medical Emergencies

A major hospital is approximately eight blocks away and is called the "Britanico" (British). The Britanico has some English-speaking physicians. In addition, there is a recommended physician who makes house calls and may be used depending on the circumstances. If a student is injured, the Church of Christ (next door) has ambulance service.

Pharmacies are close if a student needs medication.

By law, there is always a pharmacy open in each neighborhood. Brand names are different in South America. If your son or daughter is taking prescription medication, you should arrange for them to obtain medicine from your physician or a written prescription. Prescription medication can be bought in Montevideo, but you will need to know the South American brand name.

Travel

Part of the Study Abroad experience is traveling to various places within Uruguay and surrounding countries. Students must notify the on-site supervisor where they are going and leave a contact number before they leave so that they may be reached in case of emergency, and they are required to travel in groups of two or three. Students who fly while abroad may wish to consult a travel agent to maximize their money.

If students are traveling to Brazil, they are required to purchase a visa either in the United States or in Montevideo.

GROUP EXCURSIONS

Excursions and services related to courses in the fall and spring semesters are included in the program fee and are integrated into the content of the courses taken in Montevideo. **NOTE: All excursions are day-trips only and are subject to change.**

The following are typical excursions for students:

- Iguazu Falls
- Buenos Aires, Argentina
- Colonia, Uruguay
- Punta del Este, Uruguay
- Various historical places in Montevideo (Legislative Palace, Theater, etc.)
- Ranches or estancias

Managing Your Money

The best method for students to access their money while abroad is with a bank debit or check card.

Students should take at least one credit card and either a bank checking card or debit card with ATM capabilities. Pulse ATM cards will work at ATM machines in Montevideo. Fees may be charged for ATM usage, and Cirrus and Pulse exchange rates vary. There is an ATM two blocks from the facility as well as many banks nearby. Travelers checks may be used, though with some difficulty, and the exchange rate will not be as good as an ATM. For extreme emergencies only, personal checks possibly may be cashed.

Another way to manage spending is through on-line banking. If a student uses a bank with this service, they can check their account regularly and have a realistic picture of how much money they are spending.

Part of the process of maturing is learning how to live on a budget, and this will be a good tool for them to monitor their spending. The key to maximizing the use of their money is to set up a weekly budget and be aware of how much is being spent.

A student should be aware of the exchange rate, which varies. You can find information about it at Web sites such as www.oanda.com/convert/classic.

Safety and Security

Safety and security of your son or daughter is of the utmost importance, and the Study Abroad Office will work to make the semester safe and enjoyable for everyone.

For the safety of everyone in the program, the Study Abroad site has a curfew of midnight on nights before classes and 2 a.m. on non-school nights. On-site directors are also careful to choose dependable and trustworthy modes of transportation for group excursions. Should you wish to discuss this further, please call our office.

Behavior Contract

To create a positive and productive semester, all students attending Abilene Christian University Study Abroad programs have signed a behavior contract. See inserted copy for details.

Key People

ON-SITE

Dr. Rhonda Collier, *On-site Director and Faculty for English and International Studies Courses*

Phone: 011-598-2-409-1300 (emergencies only)

Email: drhondacollier@yahoo.com

ON-CAMPUS IN ABILENE

Kevin Kehl, *Director of the Center for International and Intercultural Education*

Phone: 325-674-2710 **Email:** kehlk@acu.edu

Lauren Graham, *Study Abroad Coordinator*

Phone: 325-674-2754 **Email:** study_abroad@acu.edu

Billing questions regarding Study Abroad should be directed to the billing office at 325-674-2643 or 800-460-6228.