Study Abroad in the Yucatan—Social Work
Autonomous University of Yucatan (UADY), Merida, Mexico

Empowerment Through Community Engagement and Development
Building Competencies in Cross-Cultural and International Social Work Practice: Options for academic course work and International Service Learning (ISL) for undergraduates and graduates

Program Options and Dates:
1) Semester Abroad for Undergraduates: Winter, 2011 or Spring 2012—Academic study and field placement
2) 3-Hour Credit Course: Winter Session, 2012

Semester Abroad: For Undergraduate BASW Students with medium Spanish language skills
This program provides the opportunity for students to complete one-semester of undergraduate study including academic course work in the social work department at UADY and an international service learning experience to fulfill their field education requirements.

3-Course Hours: This course is an elective for undergraduate and graduate students with a special interest in social work across borders, social work with immigrants and Mexican culture. It is a pre-requisite for the International Service Learning Programs.

Course Format: The proposed course will be modeled on existing Study Abroad Courses in which there is a combination of lectures by faculty at the UADY social work program and field visits that engages students in discussion with practitioners about programs, services and practices that work; the structure of social welfare programs, the requirement of community service by all students upon completion of their studies, and other selected issues that provide the student with an in-depth understanding of the realities of Mexican life, with an emphasis on the most vulnerable citizens. Cultural and artistic visits will also be included.

Focus of Course and Service Learning: This course of study will include a three-hour credit course that provides the student with the necessary information and background on vulnerable populations in the Yucatan, Mexican culture and tradition and the education and practice of social work in Mexico. Field visits and international service learning opportunities will engage students directly with social workers in public services, in non-governmental organizations and local traditional and/or religious community groups. The course of study and service learning will emphasize knowledge and skill-building in community engagement and development that is specific to social work practice in Mexico. Empowerment as a means of addressing discrimination and oppression is a special strength of social work in Spanish-speaking countries and can have an added benefit for US-trained students and social workers that emphasize more individualistic approaches to problem-solving. Specific attention will focus on social work practices in Mexico that engage and empower indigenous populations, vulnerable women, children and their families.

International Service Learning (ISL) - Field Education Opportunities:
1. San Jose Tecoh Health Center: Serves an economically deprived and underserved neighborhood in Merida with a large indigenous and immigrant population.
2. Tizimin Health Center: Provides similar health services as San Jose in a rural area of the Yucatan.
3. Hoy en tu Comunidad: Saturday program that provides a range of services to selected communities in the Yucatan by UADY students from all disciplines.