

**Faculty Development Grant  
Final Report (4a)  
“Nicaragua – Faith and Hope”  
May 10, 2004  
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We both extend our most sincere appreciation for the \$2,000 of support received through this Faculty Development Grant (4a) for our Spring 2004 course “Nicaragua – Faith and Hope.” Due to unexpected increased travel costs, this venture would not have been possible without assistance from this Faculty Development Grant. The money received was used to partially cover instructor travel, lodging, and food costs during the weeklong trip to Nicaragua with Augustana students. We have attached as a separate document <Nicaragua 2004 final costs.xls> a complete accounting for the course. All bills have been turned into the business office. There are no outstanding bills or receipts.

The on-campus course (four weeks before break and two weeks afterwards) and ensuing trip (during Spring Break) was a great success as judged by an assessment of student achievement of our course goals. The initial goals of this course were to:

1. Introduce students to the history, politics, economics and culture of Nicaragua and their collective effect on Nicaraguan society
2. Help students understand and examine approaches to strengthening the existing companion synod relationship between the ELCA SD Synod and the Nicaraguan Lutheran Church
3. Provide sufficient background and experience necessary for students to produce and deliver a reflective and integrative presentation following their return to the United States.

We assessed the completion of goals two ways—through conversations with students and also by evaluating the group’s final presentation requirement. First, it was evident through discussions both during and after the trip that each of these goals was accomplished and that additional goals had been met. Our four student participants all expressed that they had returned to the United States with a tremendous appreciation for and a new understanding of Nicaragua due to their assigned readings, in-class conversation, and their firsthand views of life in this country. The readings and discussions that took place prior to the actual trip provided a sound foundation of understanding that proved important when we were visiting historical sites and participating in discussion on Nicaraguan politics, working conditions, women’s rights, and church history. Back in our classroom, many of our discussions were enhanced by the participation of various South Dakota community members, all of who had a special interest in Nicaragua. For instance on a typical Monday night class in addition to the four students and Pastor signed up for the course, we had another 15 community members. Most were from area (Sioux Falls, Watertown, Armour) churches and had recently traveled (or were planning travel) to Nicaragua. They attended our class simply because they wanted to learn more about the country and our companion synod relationship. We in turn learned from them.

Our second way of judging whether students met the course goals was to assess a group presentation by the students. The students far surpassed our highest expectations. They used a PowerPoint presentation to provide a lecture on Nicaraguan history, an explanation of the fair trade coffee process, an overview of issues related to women's work issues, as well as a history of the Nicaraguan Lutheran church and its approach to holistic ministry. The students were clearly well prepared, organized, and professional in their communicating of this information. They also demonstrated a shared sense of responsibility for preparing and delivering the talk. It was all the more impressive to have over 60 people in the audience in Madsen Center 202, which only has 60 chairs. In short, the students provided a content rich presentation that surpassed all of our presentation evaluation requirements to a packed house of students and community members. (The presentation assessment form was provided as part of our original grant proposal.)

In addition to achieving our course goals, we also—in a small way—expanded our identity as a college. Through this course, the college has taken the lead in helping both on and off-campus community members learn about the companion synod relationship between the ELCA SD Synod and the Nicaraguan Lutheran Church. In addition, we became a place not only for Augustana College students to learn, but also a welcoming place for others interested in knowing more about Nicaragua. For our students, the concept of Augustana College was also broadened. Augie students had the fantastic opportunity to observe the role of ELCA missionaries (and recent Augustana graduates) Tom Madison and Justin Mootz as they work with our companion synod in Nicaragua. Each of the trip participants commented that this was one of the most eye-opening and educational aspects of the entire week abroad. Our students clearly began to see that the influence of Augustana College extends far beyond our campus borders, as does the ELCA. We are encouraged to see others working on a January-term course to Cameroon to more deeply examine that country and our companion synod relationship with that church. We expect that it will yield similar expansions of our identity as a college.

In closing, we again thank you for this opportunity to develop such an engaging and exciting opportunity to bring people from two very different countries closer together and to bring Augustana College closer to area church members. Creating these bridges of understanding is fundamental in helping our students, faculty, and friends to better appreciate and understand the challenges and circumstances facing our increasingly interconnected global community.

Respectfully submitted by:

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