

**Proposal for a Simpson Experience Abroad Program in
Rosario Argentina
Proposed by the Latin America Program Group
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Rationale

In the past, Simpson College has sponsored semester-long study abroad experiences in Managua, Nicaragua (even numbered years from 2000-2006) and Seville, Spain (Spring 2008). While these programs have served the Spanish program well, the *Comprehensive Plan for International Education at Simpson College* sets forth a vision for Simpson Experience Abroad programs that include a wider range of students and faculty and that allow for partnerships with local universities. Following contacts made by Marilyn Mueller at the request of President Byrd, it has become apparent that the Universidad del Centro Educativo Latinoamericano (UCEL) in Rosario, Argentina, would offer just such an opportunity. Thus, this proposal outlines a plan for developing a semester-long Simpson Experience Abroad at UCEL which would serve as an immersion opportunity both for students specializing in Spanish, and for students and faculty leaders from all disciplines who wish to experience life in a South American country. Locating the program in Argentina affords the opportunity to study in Latin America, yet also provides students contact with European immigrant communities common to that country. Thus, the proposed program combines the best of both of our former options. The partnership with UCEL is ideal for supporting such a project, since UCEL, a Methodist institution like Simpson, has courses designed specifically for foreign students able to accommodate both intermediate and advanced level students. Ideally students will have completed SPAN 101 and 102 before participating in the program.

Design

Timeline. The proposed program is designed to be offered every other Spring semester, starting in 2010. Since we had previously offered programs in Nicaragua and Spain during the Spring semester in even numbered years, beginning a new program during Spring semester 2010 seems logical and best fits our students' needs. When the program in Spain took place in 2008, those students who did not participate were either too early in their Spanish program or not yet prepared for a study abroad experience. Now in 2010, a large group of students will be ready for such an experience. The Semester in Spanish as a Foreign Language session I at UCEL begins in the second week March and ends in at the end of June. Simpson students and the onsite director would arrive in the first week of March and return in July. There will be times designated for independent student travel and exploration, as well as predesigned travel experiences for the group.

Student participants and language proficiency. All students, regardless of major, are welcome to participate in this program. Students should complete SPAN 102 before the beginning of the program in order to be able to take full advantage of the course offerings at UCEL.

Faculty director. A Simpson faculty member will accompany the group and will serve as a program director in conjunction with the office of International Relations at UCEL. His or her specific roles will include:

- serving as a liaison between Simpson students and UCEL personnel, including:
 - helping to troubleshoot and mediate problems by serving as a U.S. cultural informant in cases of misunderstanding,
 - working to ensure a positive learning experience for all Simpson students,
 - working with the Simpson College Registrar’s Office to ensure the transfer of courses and grades.
 - Teaching a 3hr course in his or her specialty in English
- teaching a reflection course for Simpson students that pushes them to analyze their experiences and maximize their cultural learning.
- serving as an advisor to the Simpson students.
- arranging excursions and extracurricular activities in collaboration with the International Relations Office.

Courses. Participating Simpson students will take a daily 2 hour morning class in Spanish as a Foreign Language, specifically designed for intermediate or advanced students. They will take two classes out of three possible options on a MWF rotation in the afternoon. The content of the subject areas will vary from one academic year to the next, and will be offered specifically for international students by UCEL professors. Thus the program will complete 15 hours in Spanish with an extra 1-credit reflection course. (Additionally, students will receive 3 hr credit for May term for a total of 19) Students’ weekly schedule will look like this:

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	
Spanish (2 hrs)	Spanish lab	Morning Spanish (2 hrs)	Spanish lab	Spanish (2 hrs)	(6 credits)
Subject A	Reflection	Afternoon Subject B	Director’s Course	Subject B	
Subject C		Subject C		Subject A	<u>(10 credits)</u>
				Total:	16 credits

Since UCEL offers a wide range of majors similar to the majors at Simpson, students may be able to choose courses corresponding to their major and/or general education requirements that could be used to satisfy those requirements.

Faculty directors will work with the International Relations Office to arrange co-curricular opportunities for cultural learning, which will include travel excursions.

Housing. Student housing will be in host families near the university. The UCEL International Relations Office will arrange student accommodations and will help to locate housing for the

faculty director (and his/her family, if applicable). Students and the faculty director can take advantage of Rosario's public transportation system to be able to get around town.

Excursions. The UCEL International Relations Office will work with the faculty director to plan cultural excursions within the parameters of the program budget, which may include trips to Buenos Aires, Mendoza, Patagonia, Iguazu Falls, and other points of interest in Argentina. Opportunities may also be available to travel to other Spanish speaking countries in South America.