

PROJECT TITLE

Alumni Immersion Trip to New Orleans

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The Santa Clara University Alumni Association “Alumni for Others” (AFO) program gives alumni and friends an opportunity to work with other SCU alumni on various community service projects. Generally, these projects are only a one day or even a half day commitment during which we support low income schools, churches, and/or social service agencies in need.

However, we are now undertaking the expansion of the AFO program to include alumni immersion experiences. Our first immersion trip will take place in New Orleans from **December 26, 2006-January 3, 2007**.

Our group will be working with Operation Helping Hands which is a volunteer program of Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New Orleans. Their mission is to assist the community in reoccupying their homes that were destroyed by Hurricane Katrina in August 2005. We will be doing demolition work and rebuilding. Of the 2400 homes that need to be demolished, only 950 have been completed and 1450 remain to be done.

The volunteer cost will be \$400 for the week which will help cover the costs of accommodations at Jesus the Lord Retreat Center, some meals, and transportation. Airfare to New Orleans is not included. **We estimate each attendee will be spending up to \$1000** just to cover the \$400 fee plus airfare. Many of volunteers are recent alumni who will not be able to do this without some financial assistance.

In order to avoid raising the overall price of participation above \$1000, we are requesting a Bannan grant to help offset the deficit between the volunteer fees collected and total trip costs. (See below for detailed budget.)

METHODS

Blog

A blog will be created in the days prior to the trip and will serve 2 purposes: a) as a method of promotion to the alumni community and b) as a communication tool for the trip participants. Throughout the trip, the blog will chronicle the immersion experiences of our alumni in New Orleans.

Reflection facilitated by Ignatian Center staff

Integral to the trip experience will be the incorporation of time for shared and personal reflection. Each evening, we plan to have our dinner together followed by a reflection period on our experiences from the day. The experiences of the trip will no doubt elicit new feelings and thoughts and the reflection time will allow for the consideration and expression of these. We will also discuss how to incorporate what we have learned from this immersion experience into our daily life when we return home. Our hope is that alumni will better understand the needs of people in a different part of our country and continue to strive to fashion a more humane and just world.

Presentation to campus community and fellow alumni

Attendees will present reflections and share pictures of the trip with campus community and fellow alumni in order to extend the reach of the “experience” to those not able to attend in person.

Follow-up meeting

Trip participants will get together two months after returning home to discuss the personal impact of the trip and how they have incorporated the experiences into their lives since their return home.

Media

- ◆ March 2006 Alumni Association Update E-Newsletter (reference)
- ◆ April 2006 Alumni Association Update E-Newsletter (reference)
- ◆ August 2006 Alumni Association Web site (page published)
- ◆ August 2006 Santa Clara Magazine (write-up on calendar page)
- ◆ November 2006 Santa Clara Magazine (full page write-up within Director's column)
- ◆ December 2006-January 2007 Blog (detailing day-to-day trip activities and reflections)
- ◆ February 2007 Presentation of Alumni Experience to campus community
- ◆ February 2007 Santa Clara Magazine (Event write-up including personal reflections)

TIME TABLE

12/28	Volunteers Arrive
12/29-12/31	Work Days
1/1	Holiday (New Year's Day is a holiday for Catholic Charities and an opportunity for volunteers to visit the city, witness the devastation directly, and meet with various people to learn about their experiences during the rebuilding efforts)
1/2-1/3	Work Days (depart late afternoon on Jan. 3)

RELEVANCE TO PAST AND FUTURE RESEARCH OR TEACHING OF APPLICANT

Alumni are a vital and active part of the University community. Their participation in University life and the University's mission benefits their alma mater. Their involvement engenders positive feelings towards the University and contributions of their time, talent, and treasure result from those positive feelings.

Background on Project Inception

Alumni were eager to participate in the University's efforts to assist in Katrina relief immediately following the disaster. Alumni made monetary donations, offered their homes and other assistance to displaced students, and contributed to the gift card campaign for the New Orleans area transfer students which SCU hosted that fall quarter.

However, several SCU alumni contacted the Alumni for Others office seeking opportunities to join a group to travel to New Orleans to offer hands-on help in the Hurricane relief efforts. Recent alumni indicated that as students they were able to participate in various Immersion trips and they were looking for similar opportunities as alumni. At the time, there were no Association-sponsored options to travel to any areas in need and subsequently reflect on the impact the experience made on their lives.

In contacting other Jesuit universities to investigate what offerings they were making available to their alumni, we discovered that SCU is the first Jesuit university planning to send an alumni group to New Orleans.

Project Effects on Participants and the University

Santa Clara University alumni are men and women for others. The alumni on the trip will serve as ambassadors for SCU demonstrating that our university is committed to offering alumni opportunities which embody the school's commitment to producing leaders of competence, conscience, and compassion.

The alumni experience through this trip will be three-fold:

1. The participation in the active rebuilding of the New Orleans region.
2. The occasion *during* the trip to reflect on this volunteer effort and to discover how to translate these life experiences and lessons to their daily lives.
3. The opportunity *after* the trip to reflect on this trip's impact on their lives in addition to sharing those experiences with the University community and others.

The University's commitment to life-long learning will be evidenced by and through the alumni that participate in this program.

RELEVANCE TO BANNAN INSTITUTE CRITERIA FOR FUNDING

The Bannan Institute's objective of providing opportunities which explore the implications of Ignatian and Jesuit spirituality and mission aligns perfectly with AFO's mission of providing immersion experiences to alumni. The below outlines how this upcoming immersion opportunity will fulfill the Institute's Core Values:

1. To seek and find God in all things

God reveals himself to us not only in prayer, but in the many things we experience in our day-to-day lives. He touches us through our work, through other people, through our experience of joy and beauty, and, perhaps most especially, through our suffering. The alumni who travel to New Orleans will be living and working in solidarity with those who suffered the most from Hurricane Katrina, those who lost their homes and, in some cases, friends and family members as a result of the tragedy. In the sense of camaraderie with fellow alumni, in the physical labor of the task, in the fruitful exchange with a grateful resident, participants will undoubtedly feel the presence of God at work within and around them.

2. *Cura personalis* ("care of the person")

Santa Clara is committed to the education of the whole person. As such, the University endeavors to train its students not just intellectually, but also socially, physically, morally, and spiritually, to become citizens and leaders engaged in society and committed to creating a more humane and just world.

The alumni products of the University demonstrate the fruits of this holistic style of education by the many contributions they make to the world. The immersion trip is yet another way to connect alumni back to the University while also providing them with the opportunity to grow in a variety of ways, as they did during their time at SCU.

But the “care of the person” theme within this particular experience extends outward, beyond the participants themselves. Alumni are reminded of their Christian duty to care for others, especially those most needy and vulnerable among us.

3. The Spiritual Exercises

Immersion trip participants will participate in shared and personal reflection, facilitated by members of the Ignatian Center staff. The opportunity to expand one’s knowledge of Ignatian prayer and cultivate one’s prayer life will deepen each volunteer’s personal relationship with Christ.

4. The service of faith and the promotion of justice

Faithful people, confident in the love and goodness of God, are inspired to enact positive social change. Through participation in this trip, faith-filled alumni will not only be making concrete contributions to the New Orleans rebuilding effort, but will also be participating in an “experience” that will shape—and very likely, inspire—their approach to faith and justice long after they leave Louisiana.

GRANTS OR FELLOWSHIPS RECEIVED DURING THE PAST THREE YEARS

We have received no other internal grants related to this project.

PUBLICATION OR OTHER RESULTS OF MOST RECENT INTERNAL GRANT COMPLETED

Not applicable, per the above.

APPROVAL OF DEPARTMENT CHAIRPERSON

ITEMIZED BUDGET WITH EXPLANATION

Van Rental	2954
Van Fuel	600
Meals for 30 people (\$30 a day x 6 days)	5400
Scholarship for volunteers unable to cover fee	2000
Lodging for 30 volunteers @ (\$150 per person)	4500
<u>Misc expenses (Promo materials, supplies needed for trip)</u>	<u>400</u>
Total Expenses	\$15,854
Income from volunteer payment of \$400 per person x 25	\$10,000
Funds that need to be raised	\$5,854

We would like to ask for a grant of \$5000 to help offset this deficit.

