2020 U.S.-Brazil Innovation Fund Competition on Peace Engineering

Ivonne Santiago, Ph.D., P.E.
The University of Texas at El Paso
International Programs in UTEP’s College of Engineering since 2007

- Dual Masters Programs: 2
- Student Mobility Programs: 1
- Faculty-led Study Abroad Programs: 8
- International Research Experiences for Students (IRES): 3

Courtesy of Dr. Carlos Ferregut
Lessons Learned at UTEP

• Students are more willing to travel internationally when a member of the faculty is with them.

• The number of participating students in short-term programs is larger than in semester-long programs.

Courtesy of Dr. Carlos Ferregut
Where did we start?

2012: First Faculty-Led Study Abroad Program

Name: USA/Peru Study Abroad Program: Global and Regional Sustainability Engineering

Funding Agency: US Department of State

PI(s): C. Ferregut, H. Taboada, J. Espiritu, K. Cheu, C. Chang

Partner: Universidad de Piura, Peru

Going on strong annually since 2012!

2020 and 2021: Virtual Study Abroad Summer Program
Format of our U.S.-Brazil Innovation Fund Competition program

• One week at UTEP and one week at PUCPR
  • Teams worked remotely between sessions

• Some themes covered
  • Introduction to Peace Engineering
  • Team Building activities/ Design Thinking in Peace Engineering
  • Introduction to Peacebuilding
  • Conflict analysis and cycle of conflict: case studies
  • Teamwork: Develop ideas for projects
  • Community Engaged Scholarship
  • Gender Inclusivity and Environmental Justice in Peace Engineering
  • Field Trips to shelters, community organizations, start-up incubators, nature reserves

• Collaborations with
  • Drexel University-Dr. Mira Olson
  • UTEP’s Center for Community Engagement-Dr. Azuri Gonzalez
  • University of New Mexico-Dr. Ramiro Jordan

• Project-Based with Final presentations
Project #1: Restoration activities in Parque San Lourenco in Rio Belem
Project #2: Design of Cart for Carrinheiros, the Eco-citizens of Curitiba, Paraná, Brazil
Key success factors for our program

- Based on existing semester long course to count for credit
- Persistency and commitment of the professors
- Funding, starting with Partners of the Americas
- Strong support from University administrators (President, Provost, Deans and Associate Deans)
- Cooperation of stakeholders within the universities
  - Curriculum committees, Office of International Programs, Study Abroad Program, registrar, financial aid office, housing office, legal office, etc.
- One of the high impact activities on UTEP’s EDGE Program
- Replicability
- Sustainability
- Continued engagement and communication
- Service-Learning opportunities are always attractive to students
- Student’s success takes priority
Success depends on:

• Interested and committed faculty
• Seed external funding like 100K Strong
• Strong support from the upper administration
• Availability of Institutional fee funds for sustainability
Challenges

• Changes in the leadership of the University and College
• Limited staff to support growth
• Some administrators do not properly recognize the value of global activities.
• Need to focus on procuring resources to scale up our global activities
  • Identify more collaborative research opportunities and funding sources
• Involve industry stake holders to identify opportunities and collaborative projects

Courtesy of Dr. Carlos Ferregut
THANK YOU!

Ivonne Santiago, PhD PE
Isantiago@utep.edu