I. About Alternative Break

The mission of Alternative Break is to empower students to progress from members of their community to active citizens through social issue focused education, direct service, and critical reflection.

With education, direct service, and critical reflection as our guide, the Center for Civic Engagement seeks to provide students with dynamic experiential learning opportunities that allow them to explore the world of active citizenship. The Alternative Break program embodies these core values and provides students with avenues of self-discovery and social awareness through service immersion, group development, travel, and cultural exchange.

Alternative Break at the College of Charleston hosts approximately 10-14 domestic and international service immersion trips each year engaging over 100 students in direct service and intentional reflection during the academic breaks. Alternative Break is affiliated with Break Away®, a national nonprofit organization, which provides a curriculum and network for over 100 affiliate schools and more than 400 nonprofit community partners.

Through the devoted efforts of our student leaders and staff members, the Alternative Break program seeks to empower students to expand their horizons of self-awareness and social responsibility. The Alternative Break Leadership Board works passionately for social justice through direct service and a curriculum encompassing topics that fuel the progress of positive social change. From exploring cultural preservation through drum circles of the Quileute Tribe in La Push, Washington, to distributing anti-parasitic medication as part of a public health campaign in villages on the outskirts of Antigua, Guatemala, Alternative Break students continue to embrace the experiences that broaden the scope of their educational experience.

The Nine Components of the Alternative Break Program at the College of Charleston include:

1. Strong direct service
2. Alcohol and other drug-free requirements while on the trips
3. Diversity
4. Education
5. Orientation
6. Training
7. Reflection
8. Reorientation
9. Community Impact
II. Learning Partner Role and Responsibilities

- Participate in all aspects of the Alternative Break experience (i.e. service, cultural excursions, attend pre-departure meetings, etc.)
- Provide support during medical emergencies
- Support facilitation in response to escalating confrontation
- Provide appropriate feedback and guidance with regard to changes in logistics
- Serve in a leadership role if the group must separate for activities at any point

III. Alternative Spring Break 2015 Issues & Communities

Cultivating Connections with Each Other and the Environment: Environmental Justice and Mindfulness
Washburn, TN | Narrow Ridge Earth Literacy Center
This weeklong experiential learning opportunity in the mountains of Tennessee offers students the chance to examine Earth Literacy through spirituality, sustainability, and community. On this trip, you will delve into environmental issues through engaging in organic gardening, conservation projects, and eco-construction projects. In addition, we will emphasize nature-centric activities, such as yoga, hiking, and meditation in order to better understand the importance of Earth’s natural resources and the need for environmental activism.

Refugee Resettlement
Louisville, KY | Kentucky Refugee Ministries
A refugee is anyone who emigrates from his or her home country in order to seek asylum from persecution based on race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a certain social group. The U.S. welcomes approximately 70,000 refugees each year. In 2012, Kentucky welcomed 3% of those refugees, who came from countries including Bhutan, Myanmar, Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Iraq. Kentucky Refugee Ministries (KRM) provides resettlement services for newly-arrived refugees that include interpreter services, cultural orientation, and employment services. We will be partnering with KRM throughout the week to help organize their donation warehouse and assemble the welcome kits of household items that each refugee receives upon arrival.

Affordable and Sustainable Housing
Charlotte, NC | Habitat for Humanity Charlotte
This weeklong experiential learning opportunity in Charlotte, North Carolina will address the nation’s housing crisis through education, direct service, and reflection. In Charlotte alone, there are 87,000 people who live in substandard housing as well as a need for an additional 16,000 affordable homes in the area. Through partnering with Habitat for Humanity Charlotte, we will gain a greater understanding of the housing crisis through participating in home construction and attending educational programing hosted by Habitat for Humanity Charlotte.
Alternative Spring Break Learning Partners

IV. Mandatory Dates

December
Sunday, December 6th | Active Citizenship & Community Engagement/EOT #1 | 3:00-6:00 p.m. | Maybank 100

January
Wednesday, January 13th | Social Justice & Diversity Workshop | (TBA) | 5:00-6:30 p.m.
Wednesday, January 20th | EOT #2 | (TBA) | 5:00-6:30 p.m.

February
Wednesday, February 3rd | Community Impact | (TBA) | 5:00-6:30 p.m.
Wednesday, February 10th | EOT #3 | (TBA) | 5:00-6:30 p.m.
Wednesday, February 24th | Sendoff Meeting | (TBA) | 5:00-6:30 p.m.

March
Saturday March 5th–Saturday March 12th | ALTERNATIVE BREAK
Wednesday, March 16th | Return & Reflect | (TBA)

V. Learning Partner Application, Selection, and Compensation

a) Consideration and Selection
Prospective faculty/staff Learning Partners are encouraged to attend an information session to learn more about the role and are required to review the mandatory dates (see above). Faculty/staff are also encouraged to email the student Site Leaders directly for any specific questions related to experiences of interest. Any interested faculty and staff must submit a letter of interest detailing their motivation for serving as a Learning Partner, the specific trip(s) for which they are interested in serving as a Learning Partner, their approach when working with student leaders, and their desired community impact as a result of participating in the Alternative Spring Break program. Letters of interest are due via email to Chris Ciarcia (ciarciac@cofc.edu) by November 23rd. Letters of interest will be reviewed by the Alternative Break Leadership Board and selected advisors will be notified no later than November 27th. Selected advisors will be required to attend a meet and greet training with student site leaders, TBA.

b) Compensation
The cost of the experience (food, lodging, transportation) will be covered for the Learning Partner. Additionally, a stipend to cover additional expenses incurred due to prolonged travel will be provided to faculty/staff learning partners participating in trips that are 4 days or longer in duration.

c) Adjunct Faculty and Temporary Staff
We will welcome interest from adjunct faculty as well as staff members who have temporary appointments. We do require that any/all Learning Partners have health insurance coverage over the course of the Alternative Break trip (temporary plans are available for a small fee). Additionally, all temporary and adjunct contracts with the College of Charleston must cover the entire duration of the Alternative Break experience (to include pre-departure meetings, etc.).