Alternative Spring Break Learning Partners

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
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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 2016 Issues & Communities

Cultivating Common Ground: Environmental Justice and Mindfulness

**Narrow Ridge Earth Literacy Center | Washburn, TN**

This weeklong experiential learning opportunity 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.

**Student Site-Leaders:** Ale Rios and Shay Gregory

Constructing Relationships and Building Compassion: Affordable and Sustainable Housing

**Habitat for Humanity | Charlotte, NC**

This experience will address the nation’s housing crisis through education, direct service, and reflection. Housing insecurity is a very relevant issue in our country, as nearly 19 million low-income houses in the US have to pay over half of their income on housing. By partnering with Habitat for Humanity, we will gain a greater understanding of the housing crisis through participating in home construction as well as attending the organizations provided educational programing.

**Student Site-Leaders:** Jessa Norton and Sabori Olenja

Stop the Traffic Jam: Combating Human Trafficking in America

**Life of Freedom Center | Miami, FL**

Did you know that every state in the US has reported cases of human trafficking? Many Americans do not think of human trafficking as being this close to home, making more education surrounding the issue crucial in finding solutions. This week-long Alternative Break experience provides participants with a window into the world of human trafficking and sex exploitation. Participants will attend several education sessions and trainings on how to identify and interact with victims of human trafficking.

**Student Site-Leaders:** Aly Skiko and Hillary McLaurin
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IV. Mandatory Dates

December
Tuesday, December 6th First Education, Orientation and Training (EOT) meeting
5:30-7:30 pm

January
Tuesday, January 17th All-participant meeting; 5:30-7:00 pm
Tuesday, January 24th EOT meeting #2 5:30-7:00 pm

February
Saturday, February 4th Pre-service day
Tuesday, February 7th All-participant meeting; 5:30-7:00 pm
Tuesday, February 21st EOT meeting #3; 5:30-7:00 pm
Tuesday, February 28th Sendoff Meeting; 5:30-7:00 pm

March
Saturday March 4th- Saturday March 11th ALTERNATIVE BREAK!!
Tuesday, March 21st Return & Reflect 5:30-7:00 pm
Saturday, March 25th Post-service day

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 should be sent via email to Chris Ciarcia (ciarciac@cofc.edu). Letters of interest will be reviewed by the Alternative Break Leadership Board and selected advisors will be notified by Chris or the Alternative Break Leadership Board. 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.

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.).