

“In Jesuit education, the depth of learning and imagination encompasses and integrates intellectual rigor with reflection on the experience of reality together with the creative imagination to work toward constructing a more humane, just, sustainable, and faith-filled world”

Adolfo Nicolás SJ, 2010

Scope

This guideline is relevant to ALL new programs proposed to be carried out in the Dominican Republic under the auspices of Creighton University. Such programs may include, but are not limited to, short immersion trips, service trips, travel courses, research programs, etc. External (non-Creighton University groups must contact Jill Muegge, MA, Interim Director of ILAC Operations in Omaha for discussion of their proposal and may be required to provide similar information as that outlined below.

Purpose

Creative, innovative and scholarly projects that contribute to community capacity and resilience, service enhancement, and/or knowledge development are highly encouraged. The purpose of this document is to provide general guidance for how to conceptualize, design, propose and implement a NEW Creighton University-sponsored program in the Dominican Republic.

Creative project or program design is an iterative process. Therefore, development and approval of a project may not always proceed in a linear fashion following the sequence of steps outlined below. Regardless of order, there must be a plan to address all the steps listed before a project receives final Creighton University approval. Such approval means that the project may be implemented, that University funds or other resources may be utilized and, depending on the nature of the project/program, that fundraising efforts can be channeled through the Institute for Latin American Concern (ILAC) so that tax-exempt receipts can be issued to donors.

Please keep in mind that it is very important to manage participant / community expectations sensitively and carefully. We want to emphasize our commitment to mutuality and collaboration as early as possible in the process and avoid making biased assumptions about our partners' needs and desires or making promises that cannot be fulfilled and risk harming our connections or CESI's reputation. Further, both CESI and Creighton University recognize that although they have many shared priorities, they also are separate organizations that can carry out programming independently from each other. The purpose of these guidelines is to assure that each organization's programs do not have a negative impact on each other.

It is critical that the design of any program be accomplished through a process of dialogue in order to make sure as many implications as possible are addressed to the greatest extent possible. Therefore, it is highly recommended that before you embark in crafting a proposal that you first discuss your idea with designated personnel at Creighton University. Proposals that do not follow this approval process will not be sponsored by Creighton University.

Overall oversight of all Creighton University programming or projects carried out in the Dominican Republic is under the responsibility of the Vice Provost for Global Engagement. The Director of ILAC Operations in Omaha has been designated as the first-line authority to receive requests for projects initiated at Creighton University. The Director of ILAC Operations in the Dominican Republic has been designated as the first-line authority to receive requests for projects initiated by partners in the Dominican Republic.

Once sufficient details are gathered regarding a possible proposal, the respective Director of ILAC Operations will convene a committee that includes the Executive Director of CESI and other specific individuals at Creighton University and at the Centro de Educación Para la Salud Integral (CESI) in the Dominican Republic to review and shepherd proposals through the approval process in order to arrive at a shared recommendation to the Vice Provost for Global Engagement. This committee will determine a match with the partnership's mission and the impact of supporting the proposed activity on existing programs and community relationships. Please also note that the CESI Board of Directors may eventually also need to be consulted depending on the nature of the proposed program/project. Such consultation will be initiated by the project review committee. The individuals proposing the project may be asked to make a presentation to the CESI Board. However, under no circumstances should the Board be approached before the project review committee has first discussed the proposal and made a recommendation for a meeting to the CESI Board.

Through the review process a program will be designated as either a “*Creighton University Project*” or a “*Shared Creighton University / CESI Project*.” These are the only two types of projects that may utilize University resources or utilize the Creighton University name.

A “*Creighton University Project*” is one that will be carried out solely under the auspices of the University and will not require supervision or intervention of CESI personnel or access to CESI projects save room and board at the usual CESI cost. Most often those will be related to academic and/or scholarly pursuits or short-term immersions. A “*Shared Creighton University / CESI Project*” is one that in contrast, does require supervision or intervention from CESI personnel, access to CESI programming, or coordination with projects already being carried out jointly between CESI and Creighton University. Both types of projects may utilize CESI resources such as room and board or transportation when available, but **must be arranged through the Creighton ILAC Office**. Personnel of that Office as well as the Vice Provost for Global Engagement may assist in facilitating contact with other organizations in the Dominican Republic as needed.

Process

1. Preliminary Conceptualization

The first step in consideration of a program/project in the Dominican Republic should include a review of the *Guiding Concepts* of Creighton University's partnerships in the Dominican Republic. This will provide a sense of our commitment to see our partnerships in the Dominican Republic flourish.

2. Project / Program Concept (Design Brief)

Generally the next step should be submission of a “design brief” in writing to a Director of ILAC Operations in Omaha or the Dominican Republic so they can bring it to discussion of the project review committee. The design brief should not be extensive but should contain sufficient details so the committee can determine if further exploration is warranted and if they wish to visit with the person making the proposal. It is preferable that this discussion happen early so that these administrators can connect the right people for a more thorough needs assessment. These individuals can assist in locating resources when needed.

A “design brief” is a *very* condensed summary of the project/program concept, purposes, participants and needed resources, including existing or probable sources. *A recommended organizational outline of this design brief appears at the end of this document.* Such a brief is especially desirable before investing significant time and effort in developing a full proposal that the committee may not consider viable. Members of the review committee can help identify mission fit and interest in pursuing the

proposal given other priorities. They can also recommend the individuals who should have a say in the shape of the proposal.

Note that discussion about a concept ***does not constitute approval*** of a project/program. At this stage, it is only an affirmation that a concept has potential and that there is interest in exploring it further before making a commitment.

At this point the review committee may also determine whether the project should be developed as either a “Shared Creighton University / CESI Project,” or a “Creighton University Project.” If the committee determines that it does not fall within either of those two categories, CESI may decide to adopt it anyway. In such circumstances it will not be considered a Creighton project and no university resources may be used to carry it out.

3. Background Research

As much as possible, prospective projects/ programs should be informed by empirical evidence after a general approval of the concept of the project/program is obtained. Such evidence may be complemented with expert opinion. A thorough and systematic consideration of published empirical work can aid in identifying possible themes and contraindications, provide material for future brainstorming with partners, and, very importantly, enlighten the partners on potential biases as well as useful outcome measures to be considered in assessment of the effectiveness of the prospective plan. Additionally, such review can point to gaps in existing knowledge that further support the usefulness of the proposed project. An exhaustive written literature review is not required or desired. However, an **addendum** listing the resources consulted will be useful to the review team. ***If the project proponent does not count on resources to complete this step, please contact a Director of ILAC Operations in Omaha or in the Dominican Republic so we can determine if ILAC or GEO personnel can assist with this important step.***

4. Brainstorming and Conceptualization

Once the project concept has been approved for further exploration, the project review committee will facilitate opportunities for intentional inclusion of key local / community voices in determining desirability of the project as well as how it might be implemented. In circumstances in which CESI personnel cannot adequately represent the target community partners, a needs assessment may be essential in order to identify the nuances of community needs, interests and resources. Involvement of the right individuals will help identify any potential barriers for community engagement and offer early opportunity for consideration of intercultural negotiation needs. Discussion with the designated authorities during this phase can help resolve some of these barriers or provide data of community assessments that have already been conducted and which can help inform the current proposal. Ultimately, an important component of this phase – and essential for the evaluation of any potential project/program – will be community feedback.

Because CESI works closely with its community partners, in many circumstances CESI staff may represent the community voice throughout the project design or even make requests for projects. In such circumstances, ILAC-Creighton will seek out possible collaborators at the University that can participate in the program proposal and implementation. A joint proposal review between Creighton University and CESI will still be needed in those circumstances.

In addition to community voice, and as a matter of good community development practice, proposals should be shaped by seeking interdisciplinary perspectives, even if an interdisciplinary team may not be

engaged in implementing the project/program. An interdisciplinary consultation can help identify overlooked aspects or refine details.

It is important during the conceptualization phase to consider HOW the results of the project (i.e. findings, product, etc.) will be shared with CESI, community partner and/or Creighton University at key time-intervals or upon completion of the project.

5. Review / Approval

The final 1-2 page proposal should be submitted in writing (electronically), following the format identified below in the section of “Criteria,” to the Interim Director of ILAC Operations in Omaha. As indicated above this Director will then convene a review committee that includes the Executive Director of CESI and other pertinent CESI and Creighton University personnel. The ILAC Director of Operations will communicate with the primary person making the proposal to obtain additional information, schedule a meeting if needed, or convey the final decision.

Review Criteria

The review committee will utilize the following criteria to determine fit / feasibility of the proposed program in the Dominican Republic. The person making the proposal is responsible for addressing all these criteria and the project review committee reserves the right to reject proposals that do not provide this information. ***Note that the committee may suggest alternative ways to meet these criteria.***

1. The purpose(s), goal(s) and participants (population) in the program/project are well-defined (includes intended outcomes/impacts, assessment plan, communication strategy, etc.).
2. The proposed project/program is consistent with Creighton University’s and CESI’s shared mission.
3. The proposed project/program is the result of (***or has clearly identified a plan for***) a process through which the culture, social networks, ecological conditions, economic contexts, demographics, history, experiences, and needs of the community were identified and evaluated through direct participation of key leaders of the community. In other words, the community’s assets, strengths and readiness to participate have been clearly considered and integrated into the planning.
4. The proposal clearly identifies resources needed for success. Depending on the nature of the proposal, plans for long-term viability should also be articulated, including an explanation of the capacity of the various partners involved to supply the needed resources (i.e. funding, participants, and so on) throughout the longevity of the proposed project/program.
5. If the proposed project/program will rely on individual donations or corporate gifts, an explanation should be included about the mechanisms in place that will assure the funds will reach the intended parties for the intended purposes. Note that Creighton University cannot issue tax-exempt receipts for projects that have not undergone an approval process and been designated as “official” Creighton projects. Further, while Creighton University is glad to accept donations for specific projects/programs, Federal and State regulations prohibit refunds for unused funds. Such unused funds will only be used for similar or related projects in the Dominican Republic.
6. The proposed project/program has built-in explicit mechanisms for community input and self-determination. The proposal should reflect respect for community diversity and culture, and explicitly minimize potential participation barriers. In other words, the proposed program/project directly or indirectly supports communities in identifying their own issues, naming the problem, developing action

areas, implementing or modifying strategies and evaluating outcomes.

7. The potential benefits of the proposed project/program to all partners are clearly articulated. In other words, there is transparency in regards to the benefit that the community, CESI and Creighton University will each derive from the project/program. The proposed project/program should directly or indirectly result in the mobilization of community assets and develop community capacity.
8. The proposal timeline includes clear start/stop times or milestones when it will be evaluated. Criteria for termination of the project as well as strategies for exit should be articulated.
9. Research projects will require proof of Creighton IRB approval before initiation. Requests for letters of research sponsorship or hosting should be sent to René Padilla, Ph.D., Vice Provost for Global Engagement at RenePadilla@creighton.edu. Depending on the nature of the intended research, consultation and review may also be sought from local organizations in the Dominican Republic, such as the Pontificia Universidad Católica Madre y Maestra (PUCMM) in Santiago.
10. The respective Creighton University school / college deans and/or line administrators over personnel involved in the development and deployment of the proposed project must be in support of the assignment of Creighton resources (i.e. faculty/staff time, funds under their purview, utilization of Creighton University's name, etc.) for the proposed project or program. Note that decanal or administrative support does not automatically mean the project/program will be approved to be carried out in the Dominican Republic.
11. Relevant Creighton University departments or units have been consulted and associated policies and procedures followed. For example, if the proposed program is a credit-bearing academic service-learning course, the proposal has been developed with input from the Office of Academic Service Learning and in consultation with the Encuentro Dominicano Academic Director. Likewise, if the proposed project is related to sustainability practices, the Office of Sustainability Programs should be consulted.

Commitment to Sustainability

Given Creighton University's commitment to sustainable practices, preference will be given to programs that intentionally and explicitly utilize sustainability as a strategy for project planning and decision-making. We request that projects be first mindful of our planetary boundaries and limited natural resources, then consider how cultural and social structures are situated in specific ecological (both environmental and sociological) contexts, and finally consider economic implications of the proposal.

Donations and Fundraising

As stated above, no fundraising activities should begin before a proposed project is approved. Once a project is approved a fundraising plan must be discussed with the ILAC Director to make sure it conforms to Creighton University policies and Nebraska and Federal guidelines. ***ILAC will not receive funds for projects that have not been approved and will not issue tax-exempt receipts until the fundraising plan has been reviewed and approved.*** Use of Creighton University's name in fundraising activities for projects that have not been approved may result in disciplinary action.

Please contact the ILAC Director for Operations in Omaha to discuss any questions about fundraising.

Recommended Design Brief Organization

The “design brief” should be a *very* condensed summary (maximum 2 pages, 12 point Times New Roman font, single spaced, paragraphs separated by two spaces, 1” margins all-around) organized in the follow headings to facilitate review:

1. Title of proposal.
2. Date of submission.
3. Names, affiliations and contact information for project/program sponsors.
4. Period of intended (tentative) program implementation with start and end dates.
5. Description of the proposed project or program, including objectives, methodology, and significance.
6. Explanation of how the proposed project or program is consistent with the ten criteria listed above.
7. Budget, including identification of source and a reasonable estimate of the financial support required to conduct the project or program, as well as a justification of budget expenses. Typical budgets include direct costs such as salaries/benefits or per diem costs, equipment, materials and supplies, travel, publication costs, consultant fees), and indirect costs (such as administrative expenses), and any cost sharing (cost expected to be borne by Creighton University and by CESI).
8. List of any references of empirical support cited in the proposal as an addendum outside the design brief’s 2 page limit. This may be added after submission if GEO assistance is needed in conducting a literature review.
9. Signature (Note that decanal or supervisor approval and signatures may need to be sought after review process).
10. Attachments:
 - a. Letters of support from other institutions that may be involved (can be obtained after review of the project/program “design brief” described above).
 - b. CV or biographical sketch for all key project personnel that provides insight into their expertise to carry out the proposed project or program.

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