

Features

# Costa Rica

Students immerse themselves in a new culture for an exciting learning experience

**Kaylin Bowers**  
Pilot staff

Every summer, a four-week study abroad trip to Costa Rica is offered to all Gardner-Webb students.

"The classroom can only teach you so much, but in Costa Rica, you really apply what you learn," said junior Kara Houston, who went to Costa Rica last summer.

Being immersed in the culture forces students to learn about that culture.

"Anyone can take a Spanish class here because you can turn it off after an hour or so every day," said junior Matt Marlowe. "In Costa Rica, it's all Spanish all the time and you can't turn it off."

Most of the students, including Marlowe, who also went this past summer, agree that it is worth the trip. Anyone who goes can get six credit hours of Spanish. Classes run

from 8 a.m. to noon during the week, and then the weekends are time for the students to travel around the country.

"You can't beat the deal," Marlowe said. "You get credit hours and a vacation."

This past year, students had the opportunity to visit beaches, volcanoes, hot springs and the jungle.

"Costa Rica is a country of adventure," said Lorielle Ferlita. "If you want adventure, go to Costa Rica." Ferlita is a junior at GWU and went on the trip to Costa Rica this past summer.

The people who went were faced with opportunities to explore and experience living in a Hispanic culture.

Each person stayed with a host family in the same neighborhood; however they were left on their own for most of the day. A typical day would include getting up by 6:30 a.m., catching a bus at 7:15, being in class for four hours,

and having the afternoons to explore the city.

"The first week is hard but you adapt after that," said Ferlita.

The food, language, climate and public transportation were all things the group had to adjust to. Classes were also very unusual.

"We were in the middle of the jungle with mango trees everywhere," said Houston.

The classes consisted of approximately four students and a professor. "The classrooms were like shacks," said Andrew Wright, a junior. "They only had three walls."

The group left their own families and went to live with another family that could barely speak English. Being thrown into a situation like that forces people to learn how to get by. "Everyone should live abroad as a local, not a tourist for at least a month," said Ferlita. "The experience gained from living abroad will give you a

very different view of life," said Ferlita.

The trip this coming summer will be from May 16 to June 12. The total cost of the trip including tuition, a home to stay in, two meals a day, air fare and spending money can range from \$2500 to \$2600.

If you are thinking about going, \$1290 must be turned in to Teresa Phillips by Dec 1.

"If you are considering going, do it, because it's such a great experience," Houston said.

Each person brought back stories, the understanding of a culture and more knowledge from being in Costa Rica. "The

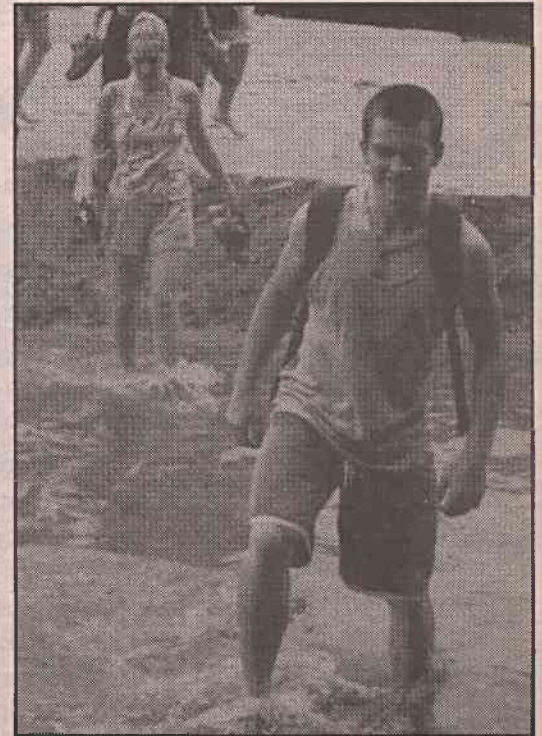


Photo by Sarah Olimb

Jason Bruner (above) was one of the students who went to Costa Rica this past summer for Spanish class credit.

experience is something you will never forget because of the impact it has on your life," said Wright.

For more information, contact Teresa Phillips at [teresaphillips@hotmail.com](mailto:teresaphillips@hotmail.com).

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**HIGHWAY 150 CONSTRUCTION**

Photo by Lee Adams

Bill McKinney of Clark-Ledbetter, a contractor for the NCDOT, uses a bulldozer to grade the embankment next to the new bridge being built on Hwy 150. NCDOT project inspector Brad Hord said that paving on the new section will begin in another week and the road should be open to the public in another two weeks, weather permitting.