

## **WVU's International Programs Coordinates Mexican Exchange for West Virginia Faculty**

West Virginia University (WVU) and the University of Guanajuato (UG) will cosponsor the 6<sup>th</sup> annual Faculty and Staff Language and Culture Exchange from June 2 to 28, 2008. This exchange is open to all eligible faculty members and staff, offering a chance to study the Spanish language and learn of Mexican history, politics, and culture. There are six openings. No language prerequisites are required for enrollment.

This is a unique opportunity to enroll in a well-rounded 4-week professional development program in Guanajuato, Mexico, next June 2008. Early applications are due March 15, along with an initial \$150 deposit towards the full \$325 program fee. Participants are responsible for their roundtrip airfare, health insurance, immunizations, and personal and incidental expenses, and may use frequent flyer miles and/or departmental faculty travel funds.

WVU's Office of International Programs and the WVU Department of Foreign Language's Intensive English Program (IEP) coordinate the institutional exchange. The goals are to improve participants' language skills and to increase cultural understanding between West Virginia and Guanajuato. There are 50 graduates of the program.

In Guanajuato, Mexico, participants are given a tuition waiver, and receive a private room and daily meals at no charge with a Guanajuato host family. WVU's longstanding linkage with Guanajuato University makes this a cost-effective cultural exchange whereas a comparable language program would cost \$3,000 plus roundtrip airfare.

Guanajuato University's webpage is at <http://www.ugto.mx/> Its Centro de Idiomas offers an integrated language teaching approach. West Virginia participants are placed in Spanish courses at three levels: beginner, intermediate, or advanced. Events include cultural arts, dance, ceramics, music, and quilting. International staff arrange meetings between exchange participants to enhance future collaboration.

Living with a local host family adds to this unique experience. Guanajuato staff organizes tours to Mexican locales close to Guanajuato. The city is a UNESCO heritage site with a population of about 90,000. Later in July, 2008, Guanajuato University's faculty participants will arrive in West Virginia for 4 weeks, attend classes in the WVU Intensive English Program, and stay with host families.

Applications can be obtained from WVU's Office of International Programs. Details are described under "Information for Faculty" at <http://www.wvu.edu/~intlprog/> If interested, contact Program Coordinator George M. Lies (304) 293-6955 x6163, or [George.Lies@mail.wvu.edu](mailto:George.Lies@mail.wvu.edu)

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