California State University | INSTRUCTIONALLY RELATED ACTIVITIES | CHANNEL ISLANDS

Proposal # **504**

Instructionally Related Activities Report Form

SPONSOR: DR. A. CHAPMAN
DEPARTMENT: BIOLOGY
ACTIVITY TITLE: Field Trip to Santa Cruz Island and the Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology
DATE (S) OF ACTIVITY: APRIL 6TH 2013 (WFVZ), MAY 4TH 2013 (SANTA CRUZ ISLAND)

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Attach:
1) Student evaluations or assessments
2) A list of attendees complete with each student major and expected graduation date, and
3) Images demonstrating student participation (up to 6 images)
4) A summary of expenses

E-mail to the IRA Coordinator at lisa.ayre-smith@csuci.edu within 30 days after the activity.

Thank you for your commitment to engaging our students!!

ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

(1) PROVIDE A DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY;

The Channel Islands field trip is an integral component of Biol 433 Ecology and the Environment. The trip includes crossing the Santa Barbara Channel with stops made enroute to look for, and identify, the marine fauna of this region. Once on the island, the students took a guided hike by an experienced naturalist. They were introduced to the unique aspects of the ecology of the many plant communities, and identifying dominant, endemic, and indicator plant species to be found on the island.

Students investigated the ecological characteristics of natural ecosystems and the basic effects of human society upon those systems. Plant and animal distribution patterns in relation to past and present physical and biotic factors were covered. Issues of resource management, population, food production, global environmental problems were also emphasized

(2) HOW DID THE ACTIVITY RELATE TO A COURSE(S) AND/OR LEARNING OBJECTIVES?

This field trip addressed several educational objectives of the Ecology and the Environment course. Namely to:

a. understand the history of the Channel Islands
b. familiarize students with native and exotic species
c. evaluate the methods currently being used to restore the island
d. quantify the effectiveness of the different management strategies adopted and consider their controversial nature.
e. observe and consider the distinct plant and animal communities and how they relate to island biogeography
f. appreciate the islands as a repository for the biodiversity of this region

The WFVZ trip allowed students to appreciate the value of museum collections and gain an understanding of how scientists use these collections to answer hypothesis –driven questions.

(3) WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE STRENGTHS OF THE ACTIVITY?

The hands on component of the trips were the main strength of both activities. Additionally, the activities promoted inquiry based education so the students changed from passive to active learners and scientists.

(4) WHAT WOULD YOU SAY ARE/WERE THE ACTIVITY'S WEAKNESSES?

The logistics associated with planning the activities took a considerable amount of time, but the payoff was well worth it. These two activities were course highlights for many of the students.

(5) HOW WOULD YOU IMPROVE THIS ACTIVITY FOR NEXT TIME?

The trip to Santa Cruz Island should be conducted slightly earlier in the semester so that we could use the experiences and knowledge that we gained from the trip to expand and reinforce other concepts.

(6) WHAT DID YOU LEARN FROM THE PROCESS?

The single most powerful lesson from this trip is that in order to get the students fully engaged you must completely immerse them within the study system and get their hands dirty. Students were able to directly apply the concepts we learned in the classroom and as a consequence obtained a much deeper understanding.

Students on Santa Cruz Island

Summary of Expenses:

Western Foundation for Vertebrate Zoology (WFVZ) Trip
28 participants (27 students and 1 faculty member) x $6 per person = $168

Santa Cruz Island Trip
23 participants (21 students and 2 faculty members) x $54 per person = $1242