

CIEE Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic Program

I lived in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic during my junior year in Spring 2006. Santo Domingo is the capital of this Caribbean country on the Caribbean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean, and the Dominican Republic shares the island with Haiti. The weather was amazing. I arrived in early January while it was still temperate and dry. The weather changed to being hot and rainy in early April, but I left in early May while the heat was still bearable.

CIEE Santo Domingo is designed for advanced Spanish students, and a certain number of semesters of college Spanish are required. All of the classes were taught in Spanish. I studied Ancient and Medieval Philosophy, Ecology, Dominican History, and Gender and Development. For biology majors, I would recommend taking classes to satisfy Gen Ed requirements such as history, cultures and peoples, religion, philosophy, fitness, and fine arts. Also there are many science classes about ecology and botany. In my ecology class we focused on the ecology of Hispaniola and the effect of humans on their environment.

However the internship is the unique and most interesting aspect of this program. Along with weekly seminars by local non-profit leaders, each internship is 72 hours of work experience with a Dominican non-profit. Internships are offered in public health, medicine, community development, ecology, environmental sustainability, education, and much more. I worked at the outpatient clinic El Dispensario de San Agustin. A local catholic church sponsors the clinic, and a doctor from the medical school runs it. I worked in consultation rooms and the vaccination room, mostly performing nursing functions such as taking blood pressures and medical histories. I also performed pre-natal check-ups and observed PAP smears. The clinic organizes the community health teams that are responsible for educating the barrios. The teams showed me the communities where my patients lived and worked. It was truly an eye-opening experience.

Traveling on the island is the most AMAZING experience in the Dominican Republic. In addition to all the beaches, there are three mountain chains and a desert. I went to the beach every weekend. I also went whale watching in the Samana Bay of the Samana Peninsula; whale migration pass by the island during February through April. I visited Taino caves that pre-date Columbus's arrival on the island. I hiked and road horses in the mountains near Jaragua; I saw the most beautiful waterfalls. I joined an eco-tour in the southern peninsula near the Haitian border. I boated to Bay of the Eagles, a fragile one-mile stretch of beach in the Jaragua Desert where the government wants to build hotels. I dove into underground caves. It is a beautiful and diverse island, and I highly recommend it.

If you have any questions, please email me at lianne.moore@gmail.com.