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**Immersive Leadership: Creating an Experiential Curriculum to Build our Students'
Leadership**

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Summer 2020

Abstract

As a higher education professional, I seek to use creative programming to encourage the exploration of alternative learning opportunities and to enhance student success. My action research project explores the process of creating and implementing an immersive leadership experience for students from start to finish. Through a curriculum based on experiential learning and critical reflection, students explored, learned, and developed a social justice lens and leadership skills. Students also reflected on their engagement with leadership in various spaces such as on the University of San Diego's campus, their home environments, and the Duncan community in Jamaica, where this immersive leadership experience occurred. From this work, I found that students greatly benefit from a deep sense of action within the community when paired with intentional curriculum design to support critical reflection.

Keywords: immersive leadership, experiential learning, international service-learning, community engagement

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Immersive Leadership: Creating an Experiential Curriculum to Build our Students' Leadership

Adventure, risk, and creativity are all valuable qualities for a leader to possess. Bill Taylor, author of the “*Do You Pass the Leadership Test?*” article wrote, “Leaders are happy to zig while others zag. They understand that in an era of hyper-competition and non-stop disruption, the only way to stand out from the crowd is to stand for something special” (2015, p. 1). Studying abroad and service-learning programs are one of many ways that students are choosing to set themselves apart from their peers. The experiences and personal development that can be gained via study abroad and service-learning programs include engaging in intercultural learning, navigating various cultural dynamics, and having the opportunity for applied learning.

One key component to study abroad programs is the experiential learning method often incorporated in the curriculum. I was fortunate enough to participate in five study abroad programs in my undergraduate career, which were all of great impact to me. Each program, while very different, provided opportunities to apply the theoretical knowledge that was being taught in the traditional classroom to the world around me. The intentionality of the curriculum and discussions that accompanied the travel opportunity, in both short and long-term study abroad programs, encouraged critical reflection and challenged me in ways that I would not have gotten in my home environment or traveling as a tourist. The practice of exercising theory to practice in a foreign context added layers of complexity to my learning that simply could not have been achieved in a traditional classroom.

In this paper, I describe the details of my action research project with the Mulvaney Center for Community, Awareness, and Social Action, which had conducted various international service-learning programs in the past. The purpose of my action research study was to better understand the process of creating and implementing an international immersive leadership experience for students from start to finish. The goal of the experience was for students to explore and build their leadership skills through experiential learning methods and critical reflection. I wanted students to focus on their engagement with leadership in various spaces such as on the University of San Diego's campus, their home environments, and communities as well as in the Duncan community in Jamaica where this immersive leadership summit was based. Specifically, my research question was: How can I best collaborate with the Mulvaney Center to create a curriculum for an immersive experience with a leadership lens to empower student leaders? In addition to the research question above, another inquiry manifested from the experience and action research process, which was the following: Will students gain significant learning from the opportunities, interactions, and the applied curriculum using an experiential learning model?

Review of Literature

Aristotle once said, "The things we have to learn before we can do them, we learn by doing them" (1994, p. 14). The value that comes from living through and learning from experience was the heart of my research and was the foundation for many of the scholarly articles I read in preparation for creating my action research. Therefore, the key areas that I was drawn to and reviewed in the literature were the following: study abroad and service-learning opportunities as well as curriculum and program design.

Study Abroad and Service-Learning

In 2013, Grindle explored engaging learning opportunities and programming, particularly from the Center for Awareness, Service, and Action (CASA), also known as the Mulvaney Center, at USD. In Grindle's action research paper the traditional ways service-learning had been practiced and or perceived [where service was a one-way street] was broken down and improved on to include the values of partnership, community, lived experiences, and reflection. These same values from Grindle's research were also the driving factors as to why I believe study abroad is a critical learning opportunity for students. It is an educational approach that challenges traditional approaches to education that might not be as effective or well-received by all students. From this research, I also found the definition of service-learning [in the form of reciprocal community-based learning] that I wanted to incorporate into my curriculum, and which was derived from part of the Mulvaney Center's mission statement: "We honor the wisdom held in communities and strive to learn from and with them through reciprocal partnerships" (Mulvaney, n.d). This concept reminded me of Yosso's *community cultural wealth model*. I wanted to move away from a deficit lens often used against non-European communities. Instead, the curriculum I would help develop would focus on the forms of capital present within the Jamaican community to inspire a new lens and learning for our USD community participants (Yosso, 2005).

Next, I reviewed a study by Petzold, K & Peter, T. (2015) that touched on how students' race and gender can influence access to and participation in study abroad. They found that study abroad opportunities [immersive cultural lived experiences] generate positive outcomes and lead to student success. However, their results revealed that the biggest factors related to study abroad being viewed as a norm are a student's background, social privilege, and the student's

experiences with travel. The concept that study abroad is an additional form of social inequity also influenced how I approached changes to the program application process. From this research, I learned that context matters.

Finally, I reviewed Tovar & Misischia's (2018) study on experiential learning through travel study programs which found that both experiential learning and study abroad had positive outcomes, as well as transformational impacts, on participating students. According to journal entries, the combined hands-on fieldwork and study abroad experience was life-altering. These opportunities exposed students to new experiences and allowed them to learn more about themselves, which encouraged some students' pursuit of a career in the field and or pursue advanced degrees. Results like these are what motivated me to not only want to research this topic, aside from my personal connection and interest but also because I knew I would be creating an opportunity for others through this action research project.

Curriculum and Program Design

Since designing a course curriculum of this magnitude was new to me, I also sought instructional literature to help refine my knowledge on this subject. I wanted to do more than simply determine course topics. I wanted to make an impact. Fink's (2003) *Creating significant learning experiences: An integrated approach to designing college courses* significantly informed my process. It introduced me to course design terminology, which I witnessed in action throughout my educational career. One of my favorite courses that inspired *significant learning* [a term introduced from Fink's research] was a sociology course that explored identity and social roles. The professor in that course encouraged us to name the aspects of what make up our identity. She then challenged us to inquire and take note of others' perceptions and assumed

identities they had placed on us. We engaged in dialogues using our findings and experiences to make connections to one another, and to the course readings. What has continued to stand out to me was the applicability of the learning from the course to our everyday lives; influencing how we show up, are perceived, and treated in our various roles within the world.

I also found the description of how many course curriculums fail to leave an impactful impression particularly informative. Thus, creating a curriculum that lacked connectivity and engagement between the subject matter and the students was something I strived to avoid. Overall, this book prompted many moments of reflection and appreciation for the teachers who had made visible efforts to incorporate more integrative course design (Fink, 2003) into their classrooms and my educational experience. With this in mind, I set forth to similarly, “take a learning-centered approach and design a course systematically” through integrated design (Fink, 2003, p. 68).

Summary

From the articles that explore the topics I am interested in, and throughout my graduate program, I have been exposed to different theories, research models, issues, and limitations encountered in other research. As much as the perfectionist in me hoped I would not encounter the same shortcomings or limitations, the realist or pessimist in me anticipated many things would not go the way I intended. This indeed was the case, but it led to the most transformational growth for myself. Regardless, reviewing the literature available on study abroad and service-learning opportunities, as well as curriculum and program design, helped shape the trajectory of my action research. I am thankful to have been able to draw from previous graduate experiences such as the experiential-based group dynamics leadership course, the foundational college

student development theory course, and the race and gender dynamics course. After conducting a review of the literature, my goal was to develop an immersive leadership summit in an international context while encouraging critical thought through reflection for the participants and myself.

Context

The organizational setting for my action research was the University of San Diego (USD). USD is a private, four-year Roman Catholic university located in San Diego, CA and is known nation-wide as one of the top-ranking institutions for study abroad participation. A 2017 article released by The Power of International Education comparing the top institutions with student international education involvement ranked USD as Number 1. USD's International Center's website reads, "More than 70 % of USD's undergraduate students participate in study abroad programs, including research, internships and community engagement" (USD Study Abroad, n.d).

For my action research project, I worked in collaboration and under the supervision of Austin Galy, who serves as the associate director for the Mulvaney Center for Community, Awareness, and Social Action. The work I was doing with them was on a volunteer basis and my action research project consisted of creating a curriculum for a program they had held in the past. As a volunteer and graduate student, my positionality did not provide any direct ties to the undergraduate population, the primary participant population for my research. Additionally, I was unable to access the type of resources the organization could provide as a formal employee; I did not have the right to access any resources without formally going through the Mulvaney Center.

At the beginning of this endeavor, I faced a lot of pressure for the success of the program. I especially felt like this was the case given that the program had not been active the past few years and I got the sense it could stand to not happen another year and nothing would be remiss. These mental models that I had created added to my sense of responsibility. I felt like my voluntary position was negligible and like I was not truly a part of the center. At times, I felt like I was working without the necessary active support to execute a program of this magnitude, and involvement. Thankfully the relationship and shared goals that existed between Austin and I helped the process go relatively smoothly.

In addition, the dynamic of the leadership team became more cohesive over time and allowed for a lot of learning and growth for me. It was important for me to explore different learning styles, such as immersive, experiential learning. These alternative methods to traditional classroom methods allow students to further reflect on themselves and their surroundings. Further, this type of applied learning deepens understanding, which hopefully influences further application and sharing of learned knowledge. The Mulvaney Center also values these types of alternative methodologies and not only supported me but also challenged me by providing space for me to fail, learn, apply, and prosper.

Methodology I

According to McNiff (2016), Action Research is different from other research methods because it allows the researcher to incorporate themselves into the process, as opposed to approaching research from a supposed outsider perspective. This method's focus is not only the collection of data to simply answer a research question. Instead, it takes it a step further by giving the additional responsibility of critical self-examination and reflection on the researcher.

Which allows for growth, improvement, and the practice of critical thought while also challenging, me [the researcher] to think about the real impact I want to make. Given that my research is so heavily involved both as the researcher creating the curriculum and for the participants involved in the summit, I would be taking a more active and involved approach by using Coghlan and Brannick's three-legged stool method. The three *legs* of Coghlan and Brannick's three-legged stool method consist of comprising "content, process, and premise," which refer to the researcher's critical understanding of the project's topics, the patterns that occur, and how the research explains these (Coghlan & Brannick, 2014, p. 25).

This method can be broken down into four stages of the *Basic Experiential Learning Cycle*: "experiencing, reflecting, interpreting, and taking action" (see Figure 1). I engaged in all four cycles during the experience of creating the curriculum by taking note of advice given in the critical conversations had before the creation of the curriculum. I also noted the hardships, reactions, and thoughts regarding the formalization of the programming going into the curriculum. Then I reflected and interpreted the data by analyzing, questioning and making connections to the significance of the learning to apply it. For the curriculum stage, I developed an overview of the program and conducted a dry run of the program with the project supervisor and other trusted critical friends to learn further and make changes, essentially starting this process over. The experiential cycle of learning is repeatable, so that the researcher may make the adjustments needed each cycle to make the experience better. This was done through four stages as well, which included *diagnosing* the issue, *planning action* [or strategizing a response to the issue], *taking action* by implementing that plan, and *evaluating action* by assessing the impact (See Figure 2).

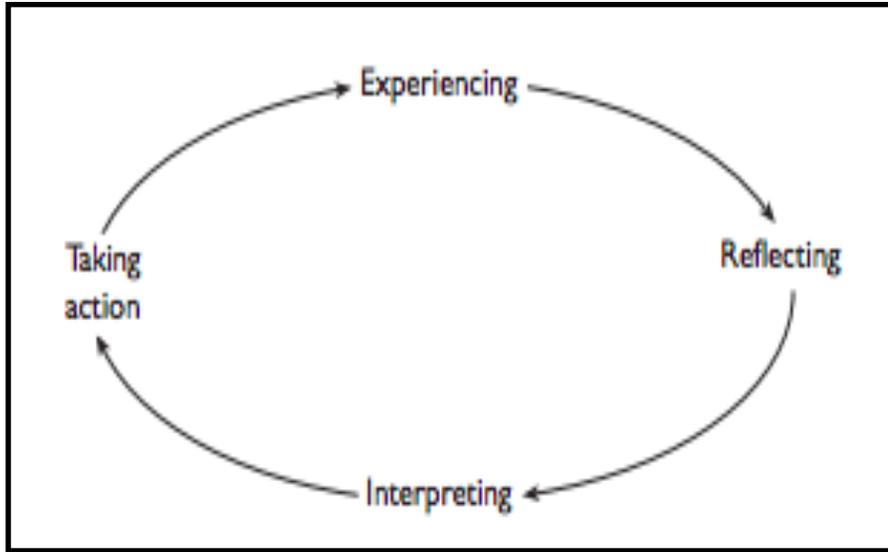


Figure 1
The Experiential Learning Cycle (Coghlan & Brannick, 2014, p. 33)

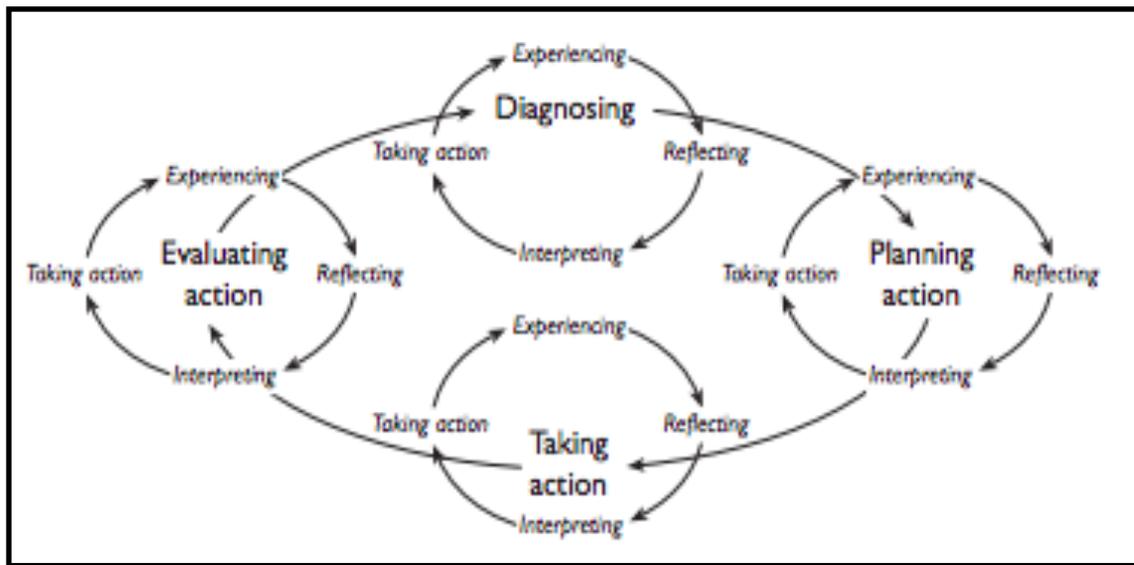


Figure 2
The Experiential Learning Cycle in Action Research Projects (Coghlan & Brannick, 2014, p. 35)

I engaged in the basic experiential learning cycle again for the creation of the action research cycles and planning for the focus group. As for the immersive leadership summit itself, I was not able to engage this action multiple times. All the data collected in this cycle and portion of the research goes toward the overall project to be used as a reference for further studies on this

particular type of experience. Although I thought this model was the best for the type of research I was conducting and was my natural state of doing things as it provides meaningful experiences and data, I also acknowledge that there are challenges and drawbacks to using it. This course of action and method can be a time-consuming process, and a perfectionist's nightmare. The process can essentially be never-ending as the idea of perfection is elusive, and the reality of action research is messy.

Nevertheless, the majority of my learning occurred from the instances where my project did not work out the way intended or planned. This method gave me the flexibility that was needed. It also allowed me ample time to adjust and reflect on the experiences I was having as the action researcher: "Attending to experience is the first step to learning. The second step is to stand back from these experiences and inquire into them" (Coghlan & Brannick, 2014, p. 34).

Methodology II

I collected two different sets of data. One set of data that I primarily focus on more in this study comes from the student participants of the Jamaica Alternative Spring Break Leadership Experience (JASBLE) program. Four students (three undergraduate students and one graduate student) participated in the JASBLE travel experience. All four students self-identified as People of Color (one African-American and three Hispanics/Latinos). The group was comprised of one male and three females. The other set of data consisted of partnering directors, my critical friend group, my direct supervisor, and myself. Both sets of data were collected by quantitative and qualitative data retrieval methods. Specifically, I used surveys, a focus group with interactive activities, the summit experience itself, and critical reflections. I also met regularly with my

project supervisor for guidance, assistance, and an additional pair of insightful eyes on my research.

Pre-Cycle: Needs Assessment

Once I was made aware of the previous programming in Jamaica, I reached out to the different directors for the center. I had informational interviews and used appreciative inquiry to assess if there was an opportunity to collaborate. Through those critical conversations, I learned that the program needed to be reinvented. The service-learning trip to Jamaica, once an annual trip, had undergone a supervision change and had not been put on in the past few years for various reasons. Through more conversations with the new supervisor, Austin Galy, a mutually beneficial opportunity emerged and I was tasked with creating the framework and curriculum for the 2020 program. Thankfully, over the summer, I had participated in an internship where my main task was to create a “diversity, inclusion and equity” training from start to finish; that learning experience and practice helped shape my action plan.

There are many things I anticipated needing to learn throughout the action research process, some of which included creative leadership activities that would facilitate critical moments and challenge the student participants without fabricating experiences for them. Additionally, I needed to learn different methods that would encourage the student participants to engage in meaningful reflection. Something that I had to learn was how to note data that was occurring in the moment and actively reflect on it myself, rather than simply adjusting the plan to meet an expected outcome. With the support of the Mulvaney Center’s supervisor, I had been granted access to student information and permission to conduct the work necessary to enhance

the program. I also worked with my faculty advisor, Cheryl Getz, who supported me by making the original connection to the Mulvaney Center.

The additional information that needed to be gathered included the following: 1) critical conversations regarding logistics, 2) background on the Jamaican community partners, including an understanding of our continuous relationship, and their expectations for us, 3) a review of literature to further base the curriculum in theory, and 4) the overall expectations of the participants. The intended participant group shifted slightly from the beginning of the project to the actual student participants in the end. The main criteria that persisted throughout my research was the target group, which consisted primarily of undergraduate students at the University of San Diego that were already involved or interested in student leadership roles on campus.

When planning for an intersession program originally, we reached out to the directors of various student commons on campus who employ student leaders in their offices. We collaborated with them and asked them to nominate two outstanding students as candidates to apply to the program. With seven partnering offices, we received fourteen nominations. Based on that information we contacted the students via email, congratulated them on their nomination, introduced the program opportunity, and invited them to apply. Unfortunately, we did not receive any applicants but were encouraged by the responses indicating an interest if they were not already committed to other program and travel obligations during intersession.

With that data and other reflections on the selectivity and exclusivity of the participant pool, I proposed expanding the applicant criteria. Instead of further providing opportunities to those exceptional students in specific student spaces on campus and perpetuating a system that rewards those who already have some access to opportunities, I felt it would be beneficial to

open the application to any undergraduate student that is interested in applying to the program. With the support of the supervisor, I created a flyer with the new program details and contacted various student spaces to help promote the program. I utilized my peer network and asked Graduate Students in positions across the campus to promote the opportunity to their students in hopes that the program would get good exposure and people would apply or contact us for more information. I leaned on a close set of people within the USD Higher Education Leadership program as critical friends and shared the action research journey with my support team outside of the SOLES program to get different perspectives. While I know people in both groups were able to challenge me, I still feel that I did a disservice to myself by not having a critical *friend* that was not actually a friend and could support me by challenging professionally.

Cycle 1: Critical Conversations and the Start of the Curriculum Creation

I made it a point to incorporate conversation and intentional reflection as part of my learning process and a major part of the program itself. I began the practice of intentional critical conversation during the pre-cycle needs assessment and continued it throughout the stages of each cycle. These critical conversations were essentially served as deliberate check-in moments with myself, my supervisors, critical friends, and participants. Each check-in was different depending on the needs present at that moment but tended to the same task: assess how things were going and what could be learned from the experiences up to that point. This data was collected in the form of my notes and reflections. By intentionally creating space for critical conversations and applying my learnings from the courses I had taken throughout the graduate program, I was able to grow in this practice. The scope of my reflections became wider while my questions within each check-in became more focused.

Throughout cycles 1-5 of this action research project, I was also creating, editing, and finalizing the program curriculum. In many ways, it was a living document that evolved as the project did. I often found myself adjusting the curriculum according to the group's needs. In the effort of having a finalized curriculum, I also continuously aimed to meet the learning objectives and outcomes that were created from the pillars of the Mulvaney Center along with my research questions. When working with the Mulvaney Center, I used appreciative inquiry (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005) as a framework to better ascertain what worked and made this program impactful in previous years. I was given access to archived program documents and was encouraged to build off of the existing data. I would also be adding my own insight as a higher education graduate student and my personal understanding of travel programming. This allowed me to use a combination of existing documents as a guide and inspiration in forming the structure of the program's curriculum.

Building off foundational aspects like the Mulvaney's core values and other experiences in the past programs, I was able to add intentional reflective practices and a leadership focus to the JASBLE programming. From the learning gained from past program documents and critical conversations with the Leadership team of the Mulvaney Center, I was able to oscillate between the on-going creation of the curriculum and working on the next research cycles. It was during this cycle that I also created the program's learning objectives. I went through the Experiential Learning Cycles of experiencing, reflecting, interpreting, and taking action particularly with the support of my supervisor during this research cycle. Using my existing knowledge base and provided program archives, I began creating the learning objectives that would serve as a skeletal structure for the curriculum and ultimate learning goals. My original draft of objectives served

my prerogative more than that of the intention of the program. I received feedback from my supervisor on the first round of objectives and set to work incorporating more learning opportunities. I tried to find a connective thread and introduce other foci that could amplify the second draft of learning outcomes. During this cycle, I proposed that we move away from scholarly articles and incorporate educational videos instead. My supervisor and I became more aligned and formally finalized the learning objectives for this program (see Appendix N).

Cycle 2: Online Program Application Survey

As a way to get to know the participants and select the best candidates for this particular experience, I created a Google Form survey. The survey was broken up into four sections. The first section contained all the pertinent information about the program and the contact information for myself and project supervisor. The second section then covered the student's demographic information. Following the third section was formatted for short answer questions concentrating on the student's leadership experiences and responsibilities. Finally, the fourth section of the application focused on previous travel experience and projected involvement, if selected for this program, via short answer questions. Overall, the final application survey had a total of thirteen questions; five quantitative questions and eight short story-answer qualitative questions.

Initially I created a nomination survey that was sent to the directors of the partnering offices the Mulvaney Center works closely with on campus for student involvement. From this survey, I planned to incorporate themes and skills [indicated as important to the partnering directors] into the student application and subsequently into the curriculum of the program. I did base some of the initial student application qualitative questions off of the data collected from the

nomination forms. My original intention was to additionally create an exit interview or survey that would assess growth based on the themes and self-perceived skills gained from the program experience. Another plan was to follow up with the partnering director, a month or two, following the experience for a supervisor's assessment of student application of their learnings and their projected future success.

When creating the nomination and nominated application forms, I relied on myself and failed to use the experiential learning model. After creating a draft and then seeking supervisor approval, the nomination forms were sent out. This course of action was indicative of where I was in my own learning process at the time. At this stage of my action research process, I was not applying the theory and methods I had planned to use. Thankfully, I had the opportunity to learn and grow from the experience due to the initial failure of the recruitment process and intersession program. Applying the experiential learning model, in earnest, contributed to not only my growth but the ultimate success of the future cycles of my research.

I used a combination of existing documents as a guide and inspiration to create the survey form. I chose to use the format of a Google Form as it seemed more accessible [easy to share by linking a QR code on the flyers and emails] and the data collection would be more easily configured through the analysis algorithm provided by Google Forms. This platform seemed like an upgrade from the paper application process the program had previously relied on. Aside from the platform, a good portion of the questions from the previous application forms were still applicable. I researched application forms for other study abroad programs, including those from programs I had attended during my undergraduate career, to help identify what things were considered by other offices and institutes. Keeping in mind my research question regarding the

curriculum, I also formulated questions that would feed into the core of the program planning process.

Once I had a draft created, I shared it with my different critical friend groups and my supervisor for feedback. With their input and critical feedback, there were a few things that were brought to my attention. For one, my first draft was too long and was not sectioned off. Instead the form seemed like a never-ending and too-demanding survey. My critical friends informed me of their experience while filling out the forms. Many of them told me that they lost interest and would not fill out the form if they were students, despite the interest in the program. Others focused more on the wording of the questions and were uneasy about the *essay response* sections. From this feedback I changed the response sections to short answer so these questions would be seen as less intimidating. I also added one optional *essay response* section at the end of the application for any student that wanted to elaborate further on a specific question or simply add to their application.

I went through this process one more time, sending the second draft to my critical friends and supervisor however, I received less feedback through the second round. My initial reaction was one of satisfaction and content, as I felt I had received less feedback because I had made significant improvements to the survey. While there was truth to that concept, there was also another reality to explore. After providing their initial recommendations and thoughts, many of my critical friends were satisfied with their own contribution(s) to my project. As I continued through the experimental model for each research cycle, I found it harder and harder to receive critical feedback from the critical friends that were not connected to USD or higher education.

In the end, we had a total of fifteen student applicants to the JASBLE. The applicants were comprised of fourteen undergraduate and one graduate student. There were fourteen females and one male identifying applicants. My supervisor and I agreed on having a maximum participant occupancy of eight student participants plus the two of us comprising the leadership team bringing the total group number to ten people. We also agreed on a set of student participant criteria. This criteria was based on the highest potential impact the program could have on the student participants and the learning contribution to the USD community. This would be via future leadership roles and continued involvement on campus for students. With this in mind, undergraduate students in their 1st-3rd year at USD were given priority. We also took into account their academic standing and prioritized students who were doing well or showed academic promise through their essay/short answer responses to the application questions.

Once the program application closed, my supervisor and I began the process of deciding which of the fifteen applicants met the criteria and would receive an invitation to move forward in the process. We extended nine acceptance invitations, three waitlist opportunities, and three denials to move forward in the process. Along with an email detailing the decision — acceptance, waitlisted, or denied — was another Google Form survey collecting the student decision as well as medical and emergency contact information. If the student decided to move forward in the process and intended to participate, they were also required to secure their place within the program by providing a downpayment of \$250 toward their program's cost. Unfortunately, from the extended invitations only a few were responded and accepted. No responses were received from three invitations, nor the follow-up communication efforts. Two students responded that they would be recusing themselves from the opportunity due to financial

restraints. The waitlisted students, whom were invited to move forward as accepted candidates, also ultimately withdrew their application for either financial restraints or conflicting plans that were then prioritized. In the end, we had the small but mighty group of four students who comprised the study's participants.

Cycle 3: Pre-Orientation and Focus Group

This cycle is one of the most imperative in regards to group dynamics, in part due to the fact that this was the first opportunity for group bonding. This focus group was the first time participants and the leadership team all were sharing the same space. The goal of this focus group was not only to allow for group bonding and create a brave space environment amongst the group, but also to provide insight on the student's anticipations, fears, and personal areas of growth from engaging in this program. I explored different possible activities and initiatives in hoped of engaging reflection, getting to know oneself and others in the group, and incorporate group building into this time. Some of the options I had planned for the focus group included a mind-mapping activity, an open dialogue, and a four-corners activity based on the themes that come up in the applications and during the mind-mapping activity. This would allow the participants to assist in co-creating the curriculum by sharing their vision of the learning opportunities and allow for any adjustments to be made to the program, where possible.

Prior to the actual focus group, my supervisor and I conducted a pre-trip orientation detailing what students should prepare, and expect, from the program. We partnered with the full leadership team of the Mulvaney Center, including the director who previously ran this program, as well as the director of USD's Study Abroad office. Between all of us, we were able to provide background on the intentions and origin of the program as well as any travel proceedings

sanctioned by the University. Unfortunately, due to the nature of the orientation, it was not very interactive for the students. Knowing that this was somewhat unavoidable due to the vast amount of information the leadership needed to share with the students, I adjusted for the Focus Group to take place in two parts. The first part would take place directly after the pre-orientation and the second on departure day. My intention was to contrast the students' previous role as active listeners by having 2-3 interactive activities.

Thus, I facilitated a quick *presencing* moment to help everyone become more aware of the moment they were in and shift away from the previous setting and role they experienced in the orientation. Then I led an activity using visual explorer cards surveying what leadership looks like to everyone in our group. I asked each student to choose two cards from the table, one with an image showing and another card faced down. Once everyone had chosen their cards, we shared our images, starting with the image chosen in relation to leadership. The descriptions of the chosen image[s] not only described what the image was but also allowed the students to share a anecdote of formal or informal leadership and their relationship with the people in those roles. Then each student explored the connectivity of the image on the card that *chose them*, in other words the card chosen that was faced down. This part of the activity challenged the students to draw connections they might not have anticipated, and in some cases allowed for the group to explore the shadow sides (Jung, 1938) of leadership.

Due to timing and overall reading of the energy from the group, I adjusted an initial plan of a four-corner activity into a Post-It gallery activity. In this activity, I asked the students to write on three large Post-Its, one for each of the following prompts: 1. What are you excited for or what anticipations do you have from this program? 2. What are you apprehensive or fearful of

from this experience? 3. What comes to mind when you see the words *service-based Leadership*? As the students finished expressing their thoughts on each prompt, they could post each note under the label for each prompt that was located around the room. This introduced more movement and also allowed for a sense of anonymity as they posted their notes. Once every note had been placed, the students were encouraged to go around the room, read the notes under each prompt, and see if there were any connections or themes that came up from each group of notes.

There were a number of themes that were present throughout the first part of the focus group. From the visual exploration of leadership, the concept that was reinforced by the group was that of relationship and community. Each student connected their visual representation of leadership to roles of authority, both formal and informal (Green and Molenkamp, 2005), as well as in relation to and with the intent to help or collaborate with others. Themes of symbolism and color were also very present. The students often noted the colors present on their cards and connected to them in various ways. Some students attributed their colors to deeper meaning and other ideologies. One student, who already had some travel experience, noted the shades of blue within their image and connected them to the idea of a world without borders, such as the blues of the oceans. Another connected the empty space in their image as a blank space and white canvas to add color and introduce a personal impact via good leadership.

As student success was one area of study during my research and curriculum building process, I wanted to be intentional about adding leadership and professional application exploration into the program. To do so, and as part of the second part of the focus group, we partnered with USD's Career Center. Through this partnership, the entire team was able to take

the StrengthsFinder test with a guided exploration of the results. I incorporated this additional lens into the journal prompts and critical conversations attained from the summit to help add to the application of learning from the program's experience. I am not sure if this was due to the energy and anticipation of the pending departure or the activities themselves but, from my observations, it seemed like the second portion of the focus group really contributed to the group bonding. The group connected over the StrengthsFinding results and then engaged in 2 group building and problem solving initiatives. Using props and creative story telling, the group was challenged to fit all group members on an increasingly shrinking tarp. This initiative allowed for creative thinking, teamwork, and to break the touch barrier. I followed this with a more challenging initiative that focused on communication, leadership, and teamwork. The group was instructed from a standing position on a small tarp to flip said tarp over without having any member step foot off the tarp.

Up until this point, there seemed to be group unity. During the instructions of this activity, one student indicated that they had done a similar activity. I asked this student to not influence the group with their inside knowledge before commencing. However, as the activity progressed, this student took-up a very active and vocal leadership role. I was apprehensive of this forming dynamic as this student was taking up a lot of space and I was observing other student's leadership efforts being overshadowed. It was because of this concern that I intervened with an unforeseen complication, the most vocal person in the group could utilize all other forms of communication except voice. With this rule in play, more students were able to collaborate and able to complete the task as a group. Unbeknownst to my supervisor or me until later, the student who had been challenged during this last initiative felt silenced. This instance, coupled

with a few other factors discussed in later parts of this paper, created and supported a division between this student and their sense of belonging, alliance within the group.

Cycle 4: Jamaican Immersive Leadership Summit Experience

As a researcher engaging in the leadership summit, I collected data and noted my observations, thoughts, reflections, and experiences. Outside of my own involvement and internal observations, I took notes of observable data externally, noticing challenges and or unexpected changes while also recording the group's reactions to such instances. I also put the programing into action by implementing the curriculum and used cycle 5's data collection method of journals as part of this cycle. This cycle was where the majority of my observable and personal reflection data was derived from. As part of the leadership team managing, facilitating and participating in the shared experiences, this cycle was the most involved and labor-intensive cycle for me.

I considered the departure from San Diego the unofficial start of the JASBLE program week. All but one participant chose the suggested travel itinerary provided to the group during cycle 3. With this being the case, the majority of the group embarked on a red-eye flight to Montego Bay with an early morning layover in New York. Together the group members engaged with one another and continued to bond and solidify a group identity (2016). Unfortunately, one group member missed these unofficial but important group moments. This participant also had two family members who had also decided to travel to Jamaica during this time. When this was brought to the leadership team's attention, we discussed what boundaries were necessary to protect our participants and the integrity of the program's experience (Green and Molenkamp, 2005). We recognized that we could not detain this student's family from traveling to Jamaica at

the same time as our group. Still, we did impart an understanding that the students would have very little free time during the week's programming. It was decided that students would only be allowed to leave the agreed-upon boundaries during designated free time. Thus, it was only during these very limited opportunities that the student would be allowed to join their family or have the family members join us. The authority of the leadership team and the agreed-upon boundaries were increasingly challenge by the non-group participants and the student participant. This limitation became a large part of the JASBLE group dynamic, at least from the leadership team's perspective. The leadership team employed adaptive leadership methods to navigate the challenge (Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky, 2009). It was later agreed that future programming iterations would be closed to all outside non-participating community members.

Upon our arrival to Jamaica, we met with our community partner, liaison, and our other group member, along with their (2) accompanying family members. Since we were all heading in the same direction, the group began the program somewhat pragmatically. We visited a grocery store, exchanged US currency for Jamaican dollars, picked up the week's necessities and collaboratively created a grocery list and limited meal plan for the week. This excursion provided a lot of observable data for the group, from what items where more readily available in the store to the group's likes and ability to collaborate. The small group split up naturally toward familiar pairings, grouping. My supervisor paired off with his old friend and program liaison, the student with their family members grouped together, the other graduate student and I gravitated toward grouping together, while the remaining two students from the same undergraduate year had shared a class previously. It was very interesting to see the group split so easily; as we met in different aisles and collaborated around certain ingredients for the planned meals, the group

easily came together well. The rest of the day was more focused on settling in the house accommodations and having a group dinner at a local eatery with our community partner.

The leadership team coordinated and planned for 2-3 activities and opportunities to engage with and within the local community. A typical day during the JASBLE would look like a community engagement, service based learning opportunity in the morning, free time around mealtimes, group relations and leadership work in the afternoons, and an excursion or socio-cultural activity in the evenings. Depending on the day's load, some group time was dedicated toward watching the related Ted Talks and a discussion for additional processing to accompany the day's journal prompt. Major experiences included continuing and contributing to a garden project proviso USD groups had begun in years prior at the Duncans All Age School. We also joined the Duncans All Age School to celebrate Earth day. Each student led a class in a poem and art activity. The JASBLE group then created a Relation Tree of Life out of all the Duncans student's contributions. Excursions allowing us to connect with nature and appreciate Jamaica's natural island beauty or learn more of the socio-culture history of Jamaica, such as swimming at Glistening Waters and a Great House *Plantation* tour we also incorporated into the program. We also engaged in group relation work by participating in a group initiative of Communication Break Down then examining what happened using a BART and StrengthFinder framework. On the last evening, in lieu of an activity, we had a dialogue processing the week and giving the participants an opportunity to make meaning of their thoughts around the week's programming, experiences, and learnings.

With being so engulfed in the management of the program and the implementation of the curriculum, I feel like I failed to engage in some of the relationship-building work the JASBLE

program was based in. I know that I would have never been able to succeed in having executed this program alone. After reflecting, I feel that there was space for me to develop a deeper connection with the Duncans community and our partners there. I believe my multiple roles throughout the JASBLE program impacted how I showed up.

My supervisor provided insight on the leadership's roles early on to the participant group during cycle 2's pre-orientation. He allocated the authority to me and proceeded to enact his authority in more of a supportive role before the participant group. Despite this, he was perceived as the *adult* and formal authority over the JASBLE program. If I really challenge myself to unpack this dynamic, I can admit that I also perceived things through this lens. Questions about how I view myself as an authority figure along with my mental models around age and gender come up; my supervisor identifies as a male in his early-thirties while I am a female in her mid-twenties. Furthermore -I struggled to balance wanting to be part of the group, and probably even more so liked by the group participants, while also being in a more detached role as a leader.

Another layer that added to this complexity was my own identities' intersectionalities (Crenshaw, 1996) in relation to the participant group. Race, gender, age and occupational identity of being a (graduate) student played a major role in the small group dynamic. This was especially apparent for the one student of African American descent. This student struggled with their sense of belonging within the program group for various reasons. However, when a one-on-one check-in occurred between this student and myself, racial and ethnic background was a major factor that contributed to their feelings of being othered. It was upsetting to hear about the hurt that was caused, unintentionally by the group's shared background and bonding that had occurred in their

absence. More so, as a leader I felt responsible, especially when the first instance the student referenced stemmed from the limitation I facilitated during the group building activity from cycle 3. Upon hearing these grievances the student had, particularly with some hurt being caused by me, I adjusted the one-on-one to have more of a restorative lens. I acknowledged her pain and apologized for my impact despite that never being my intent. We discussed other aspects of the experience for this student and brainstormed how to make their remaining time more reciprocal and enjoyable for all involved. Despite the challenges that arose during the JASBLE program, the data collected indicates that the majority of the participants gained significant learning and enjoyed the overall experience. In particular, students appreciated experiencing a different reality and value community plays with that Jamaican lifestyle. One student described their experience as such, “My experience in Duncans, Jamaica has tested and taught me many different skills. From the adaptive leadership that was demanded when the set itinerary didn’t workout, to the relationship building that I sought out with new members of a community. [Along with] the humility I learned by experiencing and witnessing the absolute joy of the people of Duncans with respect to their comparably lower economic status, and resources at hand.”

Cycle 5: Journal Reflection Prompts

Based on the experiences of each day, students were expected to reflect and record a journal entry. Journal prompts encouraging particular leadership skills or lenses were provided to assist students to focus their thoughts and encourage intentional critical reflection. The students were furthermore encouraged to explore their observations and feelings through journal writings as they saw fit. The journal was then collected at the post-travel debrief time to be reviewed and coded.

When creating the journal prompts, I took into account and collaborated with my supervisor to coordinate each day's experiences that connected to the learning objectives and outcomes of the curriculum. There were certain themes I wanted to utilize, especially within the context of our host country of Jamaica. One of the most impactful experiences was the dichotomy between our host community in Duncans in contrast to that of Montego Bay. The required reading, *A small place* (Kincaid, 2000), gave new perspectives on Jamaica's relationship with the tourism industry. Another impactful experience was with one of our oldest and primary community partners, the Duncans All Age School, with Jamaica's history of once being a colonized nation, it felt right to expand on the subject through the decolonization of education. The movement away from scholarly articles toward videos of spoken word was our way of taking a step in that direction as a program. Despite this, all the videos chosen were TED talks, which are still a form of formally authorized educational tools. However, the majority of the presenters were people of color sharing from their lived experiences. By using these testimonios (Perez Huber, 2009) as the foundation of this learning, as well as their experience at the Duncans All Age School and the planned activities, our program leaned into the community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005), further empowering their voices and giving power to their knowledge.

While the prompts were planned for and created in advanced, some days of the program unfolded in unprecedented ways throughout the Summit week. Adaptability was key in adjusting the prompt to reflect the learning opportunities based on the experiences of each day accordingly. Whether that meant that the intended activities and subsequent themes of the day were switched with another day or scrapped altogether, it was important to make the situation work best for both our group and the partnering community members and organizations. It was in anticipation

of situations like this that I did not share the prompts in advance. One of the key factors we imparted to the student participants during cycle 3's pre-orientation was to lean into the flow of the Island spirit of Jamaica. We asked them to trust the process and be flexible as the culture in Jamaica reflects an acceptance and easy-going attitude. The group responded well to this challenge despite some students saying that under different circumstances they would not function well under the more flexible layout the JASBLE program took on while in Jamaica. Therefore, in regards to the journal prompts, the group would receive each day's prompt the day of. This was also done to encourage students to journal each day instead of trying to work ahead and attempt to respond to the prompts without building upon their learned experiences each day as intended. See Appendix O for the journal prompts, with the corresponding education tools, from this cycle.

Cycle 6: Post-Travel Reflection Debrief and Program Evaluation

The post-travel debrief was originally comprised of a combination of options including a group discussion, activity and a survey. Depending on circumstances, I also thought of replacing the discussion and activity with a final essay prompt. My hope was to debrief the entirety of the summit experience based on reflections one to two weeks post our reentry to the USD community. Having the space and distance of one to two weeks from the summit before the reflection-based debrief was critical. The goal was to allow students to use the new lens they gained from their experience within their more familiar USD context. Ideally, this cycle would have been focused on storytelling with the hope that sharing the overall impact the Summit had since reentry would highlight the student's sense of what a *normal* reality looks like for them.

Due to COVID-19, the time of reentering our versions of normalcy was severely impacted by the uncertainty of living through a pandemic. Within that timeframe, students who were living on campus (75% of our student participants) were told to vacate their current lodgings for the remainder of the semester. The JASBLE program leadership team recognized that students were navigating unprecedented circumstances and adjusted the original plan to one that was less focused or time-consuming. A discussion session was set up over Zoom, of which three of the four students attended. During this time, we all processed with one another and simply touched base since our reentry. We also invited the Career Center advisor to join our small community again to share knowledge that could help our participants with future success. Together we discussed the applicability and marketability of the immersive experience, in particular the skills gained from the JASBLE program that could be incorporated into our professional lives moving forward. As a group, we shared in community reminiscing of just weeks prior to proceeding through life in a very different manner. Although the topics covered were somewhat different than originally planned, the intention of coming together as a group at least once more was accomplished to an extent. Wanting to still gather as much data as possible, the program evaluation link was shared via email. Students were encouraged to candidly fill out the form at their convenience; only 50% of the JASBLE program participants completed the evaluation. The program's evaluation provided qualitative data that supported favorable outcomes and learnings from the JASBLE program.

Limitations

The entire action research process and experience provided a number of learning opportunities, some of which were more welcomed than others. Initially there was one

outstanding limitation in regards to gaining organizational support from the Study Abroad office on campus. As a first-generation graduate student, I came into the SOLES Higher Education program not having the same social capital and skills like many of my peers. Instead, I relied on the mechanisms that had gotten me to my position as a graduate student at USD in the first place. Having had a challenging upbringing, I learned to be independent. This allowed me to follow my own path and helped me in some cases. Unfortunately, my (hyper) independence also led me to go almost a full semester failing to admit to my faculty advisor that despite my numerous efforts and attempts to gain a position within the Study Abroad office, it was simply not going to happen. I had already spent way too much of the Fall 2019 semester conceptualizing my action research project with no position in a related USD organization that could support my research efforts, when I finally approached my faculty advisor in defeat for help.

Despite intellectually understanding the importance of networking, I trusted my own abilities, which while capable are incomparable to understanding how to proficiently navigate the system of higher education. It was only after all my own capabilities had left me empty-handed that I was able to and allowed myself to receive the support I did not know I needed.

An additional layer that made this circumstance more difficult to navigate was that some of my peers had more access to the USD professional network through the USD Student Affairs SOLES Collaborative (SASC) program, a highly competitive cohort-based program which pairs Master's level Graduate Assistants in the Higher Education Leadership program with Student Affairs supervisors. When discussing my efforts to enter into the spaces on campus that deal with study abroad programming and alternative immersion experiences, these peers would encouragingly add that they had a personal line to the directors and leading professional in these spaces. This

was in contrast to the experience I and other non-SASC students were having. We struggled even getting emails responded to or face-to-face time with student affairs professionals across campus.

Once I was able to secure organization support through the Mulvaney Center, other limitations arose for the program related to the original participant recruitment method for the immersive leadership experience. Given the lack of funding for the project, which was yet another limitation, the original recruiting method involved asking the directors of partnering offices to nominate two of their outstanding student leaders. My supervisor and I reached out to the directors of seven offices where only the *crème de la crème* of an already reduced percentage of the USD undergraduate student population was afforded the option to apply to this opportunity. From those fourteen nominations, not one student applied before the deadline. Although that was discouraging, it also allowed for an opportunity to suggest a more open and accessible recruiting method from which we could obtain participants.

As mentioned above, the financial need and expectation quickly became the next biggest limitation the project faced. With virtually no organizational funding, all costs associated with the program: including airfare, food, housing, transportation, and excursions were all expected to be covered by each individual, student participants, and the leadership team alike. With the ultimate cost of the weeklong all-inclusive program, minus airfare, totaling at \$1,000, many undergraduate students could no afford or justify the additional expense to their existing educational costs. Therefore the financial limitation and lack of accessibility in that regard became the largest reason why participants either decided not to apply in the first place or rescind their interest in attending.

Timing was also a reoccurring limitation throughout the project. With the initial Leadership Summit projected to take place during intersession, our program was in direct competition for student's time and involvement with other programming and educational opportunities. Mainly our program was in competition with the more lucrative travel experiences offered through the study abroad office and or staying on campus taking courses for credit working toward student's academic goals. Moreover, when our recruiting efforts did not yield participants for an intersession Summit, we decided to change the programming to the next possible opening of time in student's schedules. While the competition for student's time and involvement are almost endless, we found that there was more availability and interest for programming during Spring Break. This was so much so that four students who had been nominated in the earlier application process ended up applying for the Alternative Spring Break Leadership Summit.

Timing further became a limitation as the development of COVID-19 unfolded worldwide. We were fortunate to still be able to travel to and fro between our destinations at the time with little interruption to our weeklong in-country programming. Cycle 5, the post-travel reflection activity, however, was deeply impacted due to the precautions USD implemented upon the return of the student population from Spring Break. Although, the transition to remote learning was a necessary precaution against the spread of COVID-19, the lack of on-campus opportunities to implement the Summit's learnings made particular dialogue topics futile. One anticipated topic focused on how students had put their experiences and learnings from the program into action within their context and sphere of influence on campus. Following up with the participants upon our return from the program was also difficult in general, as everyone's

capacity for life set into overload with the trauma that accompanies a pandemic including: unprecedented amounts of uncertainty, fear, and rapidly shifting life plan changes.

Major Findings

My anticipated outcomes consisted of hoping that the Mulvaney Center and the student participants, including myself, would benefit from being involved in the Jamaican Alternative Spring Break Leadership program, Action Research. My intention was for my contributions to the planning and execution of the service-based learning trip for the Mulvaney Center would positively impact future iterations of the program in the years to come. Another anticipation and expectation of mine was that we, as in those who completed the Immersive JASBLE program, would not only enjoy our experiences but also take away valuable skills. More so that we would gain a global lens or a different perspective that we could only get from being challenged, in some way, due to the immersive travel component of the program. The curriculum and research cycles would provide a framework for the students and myself to reflect on and challenge us to examine our own and collective experiences throughout the program's progress. Furthermore the learning objectives, videos, readings, and lessons would provide a leadership toolset that would assist students to stand out as competitive candidates when pursuing future leadership roles and achieve greater success.

Five themes were identified as major findings from the collected data for this research. The five themes, in order of most to least referenced from the journal entries and other research cycle engagements, are Awareness, Community, Social Action, Leadership, and Student Success [Growth]. The three themes referenced most often correspond with the core values of the

Mulvaney Center, which spoke to the long-standing intention of service-based learning experiences provided by the center.

Community

The most significant finding from this study was in relation to the importance of community, in particular, the relationship between sense of belonging and favorable impact of the program. The word community generated the highest word count of coded data from the journal entries. In relation to a sense of belonging however, this data came in second to that of awareness, another significant finding from this study. Nevertheless, in regards to programmatic learning, the students who indicated the most amount of learning, growth, and impact from the JASBLE program credited the sense of community and connectedness. This student provided the following statement in the program evaluation form, "There was an evident sense of community and unity between everyone [in Duncans] which motivated me to continue doing the important work I do in San Diego county."

Conversely, the students who indicated the least amount of learning, growth, and impact from the experience highlighted their sense of otherness from the program and program group. This student's journal entry contrasts the positive aspect of feelings of belonging in one space versus another in this quote. "It felt good to be accepted amongst the [Jamaican] kids for me and my family particularly, because I could sense the feel of relation toward everyone else I was surrounded by as opposed to my traveling group." Analyzing this data caused me to reflect on when I might have felt or seen this in action in other travel programs, experiences, and spaces. At first, my reflections were outward, only recognizing that others had left study abroad programs do to a sense of not belonging. I was resistant to acknowledging the instances when I was the

othered student, self-imposed or not. I was resistant to revisiting the pain associated to feeling less than, less connected, and ultimately unwanted from a program I had been expectant of, even excited for. Upon doing the work and naming the detrimental impacts from a sense of not belonging I have had in my own experiences, I was able to acknowledge big contributors to a dip in my mental health during a study abroad program I participated in at Oxford University. Unfortunately, this feeling is not exclusive to study abroad or international experiences. I also experienced this the freshman year of my undergraduate career while attending Syracuse University. My lack of community and sense of not belonging there lead me to ultimately transfer schools. I have learned from these experiences but they were difficult lessons. Moreover, since I had had these experiences, part of me denied that I would face a similar challenge within my graduate program at USD. Though I was older and wiser and that the smaller fraction of discontent I felt from the program could not stem of the same struggle of feeling *othered*. I can now acknowledge that my graduate experience within the School of Leadership and Education Sciences at USD, while overall extremely productive and beneficial, had been shaped in part by this same dynamic. While I was able to surpass my own mental model regarding my standing by making, finding my place and community within USD I struggled, along with a few other peers, with impostor syndrome and my value compared to others.

Awareness

In accordance with the Mulvaney Center's core value of awareness, our students displayed their ability to grow in awareness. In fact, from the journal entries alone, this aspect of their learning was demonstrated the most and generated the highest number (35) of coded data. They did so by not only taking in the initial moments of learning something new, but they were

able to analyze those moments and experiences from a new context. Furthermore, they took that knowledge and reflected inward with the intention of studying one's own impact within their own communities and larger world community at large.

One significant experience during the program was leaving the community of Duncans and visiting the tourist strip of Montego Bay. The lifestyles and observable values between these two communities were in sharp juxtaposition to one another. The student's reflection from this experience fully displayed the internal work of becoming aware of the social injustices that they, at times have been perpetrators of as well. This student began to unpack this in one of their journal entries saying, "The experience in Montego Bay was, for the most part, a completely opposite experience than that of Duncans...[in contrast of being in community] I felt wrong to even be in that space. Everywhere I looked there were people working as servants for a tip and it made me think of all the times I've been the person they're working for." Another student connected their reflection and entry to the required reading, *A Small Place* (Kincaid, 2000) stating, "Reading about Antigua and the [cultural] impact of tourism helped me consider how I am showing up in the space and how I act when trying to immerse myself in the culture." This student furthers their reflection by creating an action plan later on in the same journal entry. They mentioned it gave them a, "motivation to do something about it and not contribute to the problem. Moving forward I anticipate creating meaningful, authentic relationships and being intentional about my actions in Jamaica, and future travels."

Social Action, Leadership, and Student Success, Growth

Social Action and learning from the combined experiences from this program is another of this research's major findings, coming in as third most referenced 25 times from the coded

data within the journal entries. The Mulvaney Center's community engagement approach inspired the activities our group engaged in within the Duncans community, but it was the student leaders' actions and intentions to "continuously reflect a larger sense of responsibility toward others" (Mulvaney, n.d.) that marks this as significant learning for the students. As a contributing factor to executing social action, leadership skills were introduced and practiced during this program. Leadership skills were coded for 11 times from the journal entries. I also paid attention to and coded for statements of applications of learnings within a professional context, which can be projected as indicators of further success. This finding was least referenced and the most nebulous to code for, however from the journal entries, including a post-travel profession application cover letter prompt, student success was referred to 9 times from the coded data.

Of the participants who completed the program evaluation assessment form, the data reflect a favorable feedback and 100% indication of significant learning. One student summarized the experience they had beautifully in their final journal prompt saying, "As a participant of the Alternative Spring Break in Jamaica, I learned about tourism and travel. Tourism is not actively taken on [as] a role with in community, rather it is reinforcing western consumerism into cultural spaces. The immersion aspect of this trip has further strengthen[ed] my own knowledge of community engagement and the strength I have in creating reciprocal relationships. I was given the opportunity to apply leadership pedagogy to my own experiences and reflect on my own takeaways."

Recommendations

There are many factors that I would consider successful to the change efforts contributed from this research. The top two factors of success I would like to contribute to include more experiential learning efforts being incorporated into student programming, and curriculum, along with an increase in immersive international programming. If my Action Research were to be used for future students embarking on academic journeys, including the subject matter of study abroad programming, curriculum building, experiential learning, and or leadership development, I would also consider that an indication of change or impact that this action research would have had. With that being said, there are recommendations that I have for future iterations of this program in particular. The timeframe of Spring Break seemed to work favorably and provides an alternate programming option during Spring Break for students. I would recommend that this type of experience continues to use this timeframe. Another recommendation, based on practices that seemed to benefit the program, would be to continue to promote, advertise, and recruit the program to a larger group of students, potentially even including graduate students. This practice and course of action would support more equity and accessibility for the entire USD student population.

Additional efforts to make this program and type of programming more accessible would also be to have the opportunity funded or in a format that could be covered by financial aid. Although the Center applied for a grant, the program was not given the funding necessary to assist any of the costs for students. Financial barriers were the main contributing reason students were unable to participate or dissuaded from applying in the first place. Many of the inquiries we received during the early stages of the application process were if there was any financial

assistance or opportunity for their financial aid plan to assist in the costs. Additionally, the program did not offer any other incentives outside of the learning experience itself and program coordination. If the JASBLE program was taken as a 1-unit credited course during the Spring semester student's financial aid packages would be able to assist in covering the program cost making it more accessible to all students interested. Making the program for credit would also incentivize students to fully participate in the assignments and post-travel activities.

One of our program's challenges was that we, the leadership team, allowed for outside community members in the form of a participant's family members to engage with our group during the same timeframe. This influenced the affiliated participant's sense of belonging and negatively impacted not only their experience and engagement, but it also impacted the entire group's ability to be a cohesive unit. I would strongly recommend not to open the program or experience to outside affiliated community members. The participant group, leadership team, and the community members, along with the community partners should be the only stakeholders involved in the program. Parents, family members, friends, and others should not be given access to engage or interfere with the process and group throughout the JASBLE program. This limitation of outside access will allow for more opportunities of group bonding and cohesion, as well as lessen the chances of any students feeling othered or not interested in engaging due to their group loyalties. Thus strengthening the possibility of future cross-collaboration and partnership once back at USD campus.

Personal & Professional Growth

My professional expectation was to grow my own skills set by navigating the challenges of creating and implementing an entire program, from start to finish, with grace. I hoped to learn

how to successfully put together an experiential-based curriculum to be implemented abroad. I was aware of how big of an undertaking this project was as well as the fact that as things change it was imperative to be able to adjust and pivot to the needs of the participants, communities we engage with, national and international policy and safety and ourselves as facilitators. I, additionally, hoped to make a positive impact through this leadership summit experience. Through this project's completion, I hoped to learn that our students have gone on to use the experiences had as leverage in their careers and potentially would have had experienced a critical moment that led to newfound understanding of themselves, leadership or life.

One of the biggest lessons I learned was to ask for help. It sounds exceedingly simple but it was a lesson I was taught again and again throughout this process. I described earlier in this research why asking for help does not come naturally to me, along with this, I also tend to struggle to receive help from others. Prior to this endeavor, I would ask for help when push came to shove; after this experience, it is still not second nature, but I am more cognizant of my strengths and weaknesses. I now can put my knowledge into action and assist others and myself by using my strengths while accepting the support of others and their strengths. I continue to challenge and unlearn the preexisting mental models that would tell me that asking and receiving help was a failure. Instead, I have come to learn that it is an act of courage; it allows for more viewpoints and diverse thought to be incorporated into the mix.

Furthermore, another lesson I learned was to not fear failure, rather I learned to appreciate the opportunity for redirection in the form of *failure*. After the initial rejection from one of USD's offices, I had considered my efforts a failure and my time wasted. However, I am now incredibly appreciative of the opportunity, support and guidance I was given from the

Mulvaney Center. I was given the autonomy to have creative freedom and license to create the JASBLE program. I have come to embrace *trusting the process* and have learned to process perceived failure much better due to this experience. Overall I grew and learned from my own capabilities in drafting professional forms of communication to group and program management along with developing and strengthening my leadership skills, including in no small part, adaptability. Other skills that I was able to practice and learn included, curriculum design, program assessment, coordinating with community partners, arranging and managing international group travel logistics, understand program budgeting and financial management, along with strengthening my group facilitation and communication skills.

Conclusion

Using the experiential learning cycles during the formation through the assessment of the JASBLE program was the best way I could collaborate with the Mulvaney Center to create the curriculum for an immersive experience with a leadership lens to empower student leaders. Moreover, the data collected throughout the program and from the assessment measures support that students gained significant learning from the opportunities, interactions, and the applied curriculum using an experiential learning model. The students greatly benefitted from the deep sense of connection with the Duncans locals and were able to pair their developing awareness and social lens with the action of service and further engaging with the Duncans community. The addition of the intentional curriculum design to support critical reflection from multiple layers assisted the depth of knowledge and impact the JASBLE program had on its participants. Students, and I, were able to walk away from this program with a wider global lens and an expanded social awareness on top of practiced leadership skills that can assist them in their

future endeavors and success. On a personal and professional note, as a higher education professional, I have been privileged to have been able to create programming that encouraged the exploration of alternative learning opportunities, enhanced student awareness, facilitated reflection, and contributed to student's overall growth from this lived experience.

Additional lessons I learned include another lens to use to shift my perspective. A key example of this comes in the form of reexamining perceived rejections and failures as simply redirections and opportunities for learning and growth. I also acquired a better understanding of using the skill set of leaning into one's support system and network. Much of my personal and professional learning mirrors the major findings of this study. Through community, one can find a sense of belonging and achieve more than relying on one's own strengths. To grow, one must first be willing to do the work and become aware of the areas of growth they contain. They must then take action and apply their learning, especially if they hope to successfully take up a leadership role. I was able to do this and gain invaluable knowledge and insight through the multi-pronged process of creating, implementing, managing, and assessing the JASBLE program as part of my Action Research project process.

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Appendix A: Email to partnered USD Commons Directors

Dear friends,

As many of you know, our center has had a long standing relationship - shout out to John and others - with our friends and partners in Jamaica.

Similar to years past, we're hoping host a collaborative and educational student leadership experience this January, identifying stellar students from the following seven areas: **BSRC, UFMC, LGBTQ+, Women's Commons, SSS, Changemaker Hub, Mulvaney Center, and AS.**

Because we are still very early on in the process, we're asking for each of you to please nominate two students who you feel are ready for an international immersive leadership experience such as this. Please feel free to send Kim (copied) and I the names of your nominees and we will invite them to then apply. Ultimately, because of costs and logistics, we will only be selecting one student to represent each of your following areas.

Kim and I are also in the process of exploring various fundraising models as these international immersive experiences can be somewhat costly. Using a bit of a mixed methods approach to get there, we're wondering if each department would be willing to chip in to sponsor your representative student.

We can assure you that it will indeed be an amazing opportunity for students as Kim and I are developing some great new curriculum and learning outcomes for the experience!

As always, thank you for your time, and we look forward to hearing from you soon.

Kind regards,

Austin P. Galy, M.A. (*he, him, his*)

Assistant Director, Mulvaney Center for
Community, Awareness and Social Action

Appendix B: Student leader nomination survey form

Leadership Summit Nomination

This form is to gain a better understanding of the student leaders you have nominated to proceed in the process to attend an immersive experiential leadership summit in Jamaica. As part of this experience the selected students will also be part of a action research study. The purpose of this study is to engage with student leaders and create a transformational leadership curriculum in an immersive international setting and study the learning/living impact.

Your participation will indicate which leadership skills the nominated students have demonstrated and that you would like to see improved on that can be gained from their participation in this opportunity.

We thank you for the time, attention and participation in filling out this form and investment in your student workers.

First Choice Nominee *

Short answer text
.....

Second Choice Nominee *

Short answer text
.....

What leadership qualities or skills have you observed from each of the student employees you have * nominated?

Long answer text
.....

For the next few questions please rate each of the following skills in order of which skills you * would like to see focused on.

	Communication	Creativity	Responsibility	Managing Fee..
1st	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2nd	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3rd	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4th	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If there is any additional information you would like to share with us. Please use this space to add to your form response.

Long answer text
.....

Appendix C: Email to nominated student leaders from partnering USD student life offices

You have been nominated by your supervisor to move forward with the application process to attend an Experiential Leadership Summit. This opportunity will be over a weeklong immersion summit in Jamaica. As part of this opportunity you will also be a participant in a research study a fellow USD graduate student will be conducting. The purpose of this research study is to best create an interactive leadership curriculum and understand the impact the immersive international experience has on your learning.

In the link below, you will find a document further explaining this opportunity and the application questions. Please read this document thoroughly and submit the form to Kimberly Guzman (kguzman@sandiego.edu) and Austin Galy (austingaly@sandiego.edu) by OCT 21st 2019. Take the next steps towards securing your place in the Experiential Leadership Summit and apply today!

[CLICK HERE - APPLICATION FORM](#)

Kind regards,

P.S. Please note that this is a competitive process and candidates will be selected based on reviewal of their applications.

Austin P. Galy, M.A. (he, him, his)
Assistant Director, Mulvaney Center for
Community, Awareness and Social Action

Appendix D: Alternative Spring Break Leadership Summit Participant Recruitment Flyer

SERVICE

ALTERNATIVE SPRING BREAK OPPORTUNITY
Feb 29- March 7

SERVICE LEARNING ● COMMUNITY BUILDING ● EXCURSION TRIPS ● PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

IMMERSIVE LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

JAMAICA

SCAN ME

APPLY

Immersed in the wonderful community of Duncans, Jamaica, we will gain greater perspective of Jamaica's culture & ourselves, with an emphasis on leadership.

COMMUNITY

APPLY- YOU DESERVE IT.

University of San Diego

Appendix E: Application for select nominated student leaders

Section 1 of 4

The Mulvaney Center's International Student Leader Immersion in Jamaica. ✕ ⋮

The international immersion trip is unique in that it is a student-driven trip that will require a significant commitment of time and energy from anyone selected to participate. We will be immersing ourselves in a wonderful community of Duncans, Jamaica, and using this experience to build connections and gain a more intimate perspective of Jamaica's culture and ourselves with an emphasis on leadership.

As part of the program you will also be a participant in an action research study conducted by Kimberly Guzman, a current graduate student working in collaboration with the Mulvaney Center. The study's focus is the creation of an engaging action plan (experiential curriculum) that co-creates immersive leadership opportunities with the communities we will be joining and the impact of the experience. The program will take place during intersession – January 2019 (specific dates Jan 6th-13th)

In preparation for the trip, we'll be convening once as a group during the week of November 18th – and perhaps once more during the week of December 9th – Further meetings information will be disclosed moving forward.

We are approaching this application process as a cross between a traditional and an intentional application process for selecting students to attend this experience. We have worked with each of the Directors in your respective centers. Each of you were nominated because of the amazing leadership qualities that you possess, and your Supervisors had nothing but wonderful things to share. Due to limited space not all applicants will be selected to move forward in the process. We are incredibly excited to share many great conversations and experiences together over the next few months.

*Please also note that you must have your passport squared away before our departure. Be sure to verify that it does not expire within six months of our trip.

For any questions, please e-mail austingaly@sandiego.edu & kguzman@sandiego.edu or visit Austin's office: located in the Student Life Pavilion, room 324

Section 2 of 4

Student Information

Description (optional)

First and Last Name *

Short answer text

Gender *

Female

Male

Non-Binary

Trans

Prefer not to say

Other...

Ethnic Background - Select all that apply *

Caucasian

African American

Latinx / Hispanic

Asian

Middle Eastern

Native American

Other...

Class standing *

1. 1st year
2. 2nd year
3. 3rd year
4. 4th year
5. 5th year
6. Other

Section 3 of 4

Leadership Experience ✕ ⋮

Description (optional)

Please list your campus and community involvement: include a few bulleted responsibilities and any leadership positions you hold. *

Long answer text

.....

List your current class and work *

Long answer text

.....

What leadership qualities do you say are your strengths and areas of? *

Long answer text

.....

What are you able to contribute to this group and the? *

Long answer text

.....

Section 4 of 4

Travel Experience ✕ ⋮

Description (optional)

List the kind of travel experience do you have (nationally and/or internationally) include the purpose of your travels? [Ex: Colombia - to visit family] *

Long answer text

.....

How have those travels affected you on a personal? *

Long answer text

.....

What will this trip mean for? *

Long answer text

.....

What effects, positive and negative, do you think you will have on the communities you will be connecting with? *

Long answer text

.....

Appendix F: Application open to all qualifying individuals

Section 1 of 4

The Mulvaney Center's Alternative Spring Break ✕ ⋮

Immersive Leadership Summit in Jamaica - Application

This international immersion alternative Spring Break is unique in that it is a student development driven trip. As a chosen participant you will have input in the type of experience you would like to have within the constructs of the leadership summit. We will be immersed in the wonderful community of Duncans, Jamaica, and using this experience to build connections, gain greater perspective of Jamaica's culture and ourselves with an emphasis on leadership. You will engage in service learning opportunities, gain professional development skills and enact your leadership in an skills hands manner while in Jamaica. To do so will require time and energy commitments of those selected to participate.

As part of the program you will also be a participant in an action research study conducted by Kimberly Guzman, a current graduate student working in collaboration with the Mulvaney Center. The study's focus is the creation of an engaging action plan (experiential curriculum) that co-creates immersive leadership opportunities with the communities we will be joining and the impact of the experience. The program will take place during Spring Break 2020 - (specific dates Feb 28th- Mar 7th)

In preparation for the trip, we will be convening as a group twice outside of the international immersion experience.

*Please also note that you must have your passport squared away before our departure. Be sure to verify that it does not expire within six months of our trip.

For any questions, please e-mail austingaly@sandiego.edu & kguzman@sandiego.edu or visit Austin's office: located in the Student Life Pavilion, room 324

Section 2 of 4

Student Information

Description (optional)

First and Last *

Short answer text

Gender *

- Female
- Male
- Non-Binary
- Trans
- Prefer not to say
- Other...

Ethnic Background - Select all that apply *

- Caucasian
- African American
- Latinx / Hispanic
- Asian
- Middle Eastern
- Native American
- Other...

Class *

1. 1st year
2. 2nd year
3. 3rd year
4. 4th year
5. 5th year
6. Other

Section 3 of 4

Leadership Experience

Description (optional)

Please list your campus and community involvement: include a few bulleted responsibilities and any leadership positions you hold. *

Long answer text

List your current class and work schedule. *

Long answer text

What leadership qualities do you say are your strengths and areas of growth? *

Long answer text

What are you able to contribute to this group and the experience? *

Long answer text

Section 4 of 4

Travel Experience

Description (optional)

List the kind of travel experience do you have (nationally and/or internationally) include the purpose of your travels? [Ex: Colombia - to visit family] *

Long answer text

How have those travels affected you on a personal level? *

Long answer text

What will this trip mean for you? *

Long answer text

What effects, positive and negative, do you think you will have on the communities you will be connecting with? *

Long answer text

Appendix G: Alternative Spring Break Acceptance Letter

Thank you very much for your interest and application to the Mulvaney Center's Alternative Spring Break. We would like to let you know that this year's pool of applicants were exemplary and we did not come to our decision lightly. We are, however, pleased to inform you that you have been accepted to join us for this unique experience. **Congratulations!**

Your decision to hold your spot on the Immersive Leadership Summit in Jamaica must be confirmed by **01/08/2020**. On the off chance we do not receive any confirmation by the indicated date, your position on this opportunity will be offered to another student. As such, we are very excited to have you join us on this experience and strongly encourage you to communicate your interest moving forward sooner rather than later. For your convenience, we have attached a link to a google form to indicate your decision moving forward. [CLICK HERE TO SUBMIT YOUR DECISION](#)

Please note:

- The dates for the Alternative Spring Break - Immersive Leadership Summit in Jamaica will be from **Saturday February 29th - Friday March 6th**
- In years past we have used mixed models regarding the funding of this type of opportunity. Certain years the program has covered the cost for students while other years students have covered their own costs. Unfortunately, this year after several attempts to acquire additional aid, we were unable to cover the cost of this year's immersion.
 - Program cost estimate roughly around \$1,000
 - \$500 give or take for a roundtrip flight
 - \$500 give or take towards the following
 - **Housing**, the majority of **Meals** for the duration of the immersion and **Transportation** accommodations provided by the program
- If you accept your decision we will require a non-refundable deposit of **\$250** by the date of **01/06/2020**
 - This deposit will go towards the total program estimate.
 - This deposit can be paid via cash or check [made out to Mulvaney Center's Alternative Spring Break] paid to Austin Galy - virtual opportunities will be explored to accommodate those who are not local during intersession
- We recommend each student brings additional spending money, between \$50 - \$150
 - These funds are to cover any miscellaneous expenses they may incur at your own interest
- You will be responsible for your travel accommodations to Jamaica.
 - Our group will fly into Donald Sangster International Airport (MBJ) in Montego Bay.
 - We recommend the following flight, if you would like to fly with the group: [FLIGHT](#) ← Link
- Our group will meet in Montego Bay Airport, Donald Sangster International (**MBJ**) at **1:00pm on Saturday February 29th**

**We know that raising the funds for travel can be difficult. We have linked a few websites that will provide some grassroots fundraising ideas. You can use the time between now and Spring Break to raise funds.

<https://www.gooverseas.com/blog/40-fundraising-ideas-study-abroad>, <https://blog.fundly.com/fundraising-ideas-for-trips-and-adventures/>,
<https://blog.bonfire.com/fundraising-ideas-for-trips/>

For any questions please email austingaly@sandiego.edu or kguzman@sandiego.edu

Thank you,

Austin Galy and Kimberly Guzman

Appendix H: Alternative Spring Break Waitlisted Letter

Thank you very much for your interest and application to the Mulvaney Center's Alternative Spring Break. We would like to let you know that this year's pool of applicants were exemplary and we did not come to our decision lightly. There were a limited amount of spaces for this opportunity and we are unable to offer you a position at this time. We would like to offer you a position on our **waitlist**.

If you are interested in accepting a position on the waitlist for the Immersive Leadership Summit in Jamaica please do so by **01/08/2020**. We encourage you to communicate your interest moving forward sooner rather than later and we will contact you if any spaces become available, until **01/12/20**. For your convenience, we have attached a link to a google form to indicate your decision moving forward. [CLICK HERE TO SUBMIT YOUR DECISION](#)

Please note:

- The dates for the Alternative Spring Break - Immersive Leadership Summit in Jamaica will be from **Saturday February 29th - Friday March 6th**
- In years past we have used mixed models regarding the funding of this type of opportunity. Certain years the program has covered the cost for students while other years students have covered their own costs. Unfortunately, this year after several attempts to acquire additional aid, we were unable to cover the cost of this year's immersion.
 - Program cost estimate roughly around \$1,000
 - \$500 give or take for a roundtrip flight
 - \$500 give or take towards the following
 - **Housing**, the majority of **Meals** for the duration of the immersion and **Transportation** accommodations provided by the program
 - We recommend each student brings additional spending money, between \$50 - \$150 -- these funds are to cover any miscellaneous expenses they may incur in their own interest
- If you receive an offer to get off of the waitlist we will require a non-refundable deposit of **\$250** by the date of **01/10/2020**
 - This deposit will cover the costs associated with your housing, food and transportation accommodations provided by the program
 - This deposit can be paid via cash or check [made out to Mulvaney Center's Alternative Spring Break] paid to Austin Galy - virtual opportunities will be explored to accommodate those who are not local during intersession
- You will be responsible for your travel accommodations to Jamaica.
 - Our group will fly into Donald Sangster International Airport (MBJ) in Montego Bay.
 - We recommend the following flight, if you would like to fly with the group: [FLIGHT](#) ← Link
 - Our group will meet in Montego Bay Airport, Donald Sangster International **(MBJ) at 1:00pm on Saturday February 29th**

**We know that raising the funds for travel can be difficult. We have linked a few websites that will provide some grassroot fundraising ideas. You can use the time between now and Spring Break to raise funds.

<https://www.gooverseas.com/blog/40-fundraising-ideas-study-abroad>, <https://blog.fundly.com/fundraising-ideas-for-trips-and-adventures/>,
<https://blog.bonfire.com/fundraising-ideas-for-trips/>

For any questions please email austingaly@sandiego.edu or kguzman@sandiego.edu

Thank you,

Austin Galy and Kimberly Guzman

Appendix I: Alternative Spring Break Denial Letter

Hello,

We want to thank you very much for your interest and the time put towards submitting an application for the Mulvaney Center's Alternative Spring Break. It was a pleasure to learn more about your skills and experiences. We would like to let you know that this year's pool of applicants were exemplary and we did not come to our decision lightly. However, there were a limited amount of spaces for this opportunity and, unfortunately, we are unable to offer you a position.

Please, consider applying for other leadership and involvement opportunities through the Mulvaney Center in the future. You were a very competitive applicant and we would love to work with you in the future.

For any questions please email austingaly@sandiego.edu or kguzman@sandiego.edu

Thank you,

Austin Galy and Kimberly Guzman

Appendix J: Student Decision —Travel Information Survey

Section 1 of 4

Mulvaney Center’s Alternative Spring Break in Jamaica - Decision and Emergency Information

Form description

This form is automatically collecting email addresses for University of San Diego users. [Change settings](#)

First and Last NAME *

Short answer text

Phone number *

Short answer text

Please confirm or deny your position on this Alternative Spring Break Opportunity *

Confirm my current position

No - I will not be able to join the group

After section 1 Continue to next section

Section 2 of 4

Untitled Section

Do you have any conditions [medical or allergies] that could impact your health or experience? *

After section 2 Continue to next section

Section 3 of 4

Untitled Section

Please list all pertinent information - including medical conditions, food (including food restrictions)/medication/environmental allergies *

Section 4 of 4

Untitled Section ⌵ ⋮

EMERGENCY CONTACT: Name *

EMERGENCY CONTACT: Relation *

EMERGENCY CONTACT: Phone Number *

EMERGENCY CONTACT: Email *

Appendix K: Pre-Orientation Presentation

Things to Keep in Mind

- Hold space for what is
 - Island time culture
- Remember that you will be a GUEST in another country.
- You are on this trip to learn about and experience Jamaican culture, customs, and ways of life.
- Therefore, you are not entitled to anything and Jamaicans don't owe you anything.
- Treat the people you encounter with RESPECT, and they will treat you the same.

Note: You will be responsible for all the belongings you bring

Safety Tips!

Jamaica is full of friendly and helpful people. "You are more likely to be mugged in New York than in Montego Bay." Still, it pays to be smart wherever you go.

- Don't bring anything you would be afraid of losing
- Don't dress flashy or look like a tourist
- Petty Theft/pickpocketing occurs in crowded areas
- Keeping wallets in front pockets
- Handling your bank roll discreetly
- NEVER GO ANYWHERE ALONE. But, just like in Mission Beach, it's stupid to take unnecessary chances.

Room & Board

- Home stay of a friend of ours named Melvin Thompson. (Melvin, or "Taxi")
 - Please respect him, his home, and his neighbors.
 - Keep Melvin's house clean.
- No need to bring a sleeping bag unless you want one. Recommend a "sleep pack" a small fleece sleeping bag, which you can get cheap at Target.
- There will be at least 1 group dinner, which will be covered by the Center during our trip.
- You will be responsible for some of your meals. Budget ~\$5 a day
- Thankfully our host is a great cook and loves to prepare meals for us

Valid Passport

- Expiration date post travels
- Make two photocopies of passport identification page
- Photocopy front & back of driver license and credit cards you plan to bring in your wallet
- CASH (exchange USD \$1 = JD \$135)
- Register with nearest Embassy
- <https://travelregistration.state.gov/for-home.asp>

Arrival Info

Feb. 28th - Mar. 7th

- Customs - to avoid any problems, tell the customs officials that you are there for a vacation and staying in a rented villa in **Duncans Silver Sand Tarmac**
- Out of customs you can safely wait outside of the airport, there's even a bar called "the Groovy Grouper" right outside and a patty stand.
- Do not accept a ride from anyone outside of the airport.
- Please meet & wait patiently for the group at the above mentioned "Groovy Grouper" around 1:00pm on Feb 29th.

What will make up our Experience?

Daily

- Discussions
 - Based on readings, videos & experiences
- Service Project, Visits & Events
 - Community partners
 - Community Building
- Leadership Activity & Self Exploration
 - Group & individual work

Experiences & Excursions: Markets, Great House Tour, Hikes, Swimming Hole

Next Steps:

**Expect an email with a PACKING LIST

- Next payment - \$250
- Paid to the Mulvaney Center by FEB 25th
- Pre-Departure Meeting FEB 28th 2:40pm
 - Receive Kincaid Book & Journals
 - Take Strengths Assessment - Group Reading
- FUNDRAISING (if needed)
 - Letter writing - sample
 - Odd Jobs

Thanks!

ANY QUESTIONS?

You can find us at

- austingaly@sandiego.edu
- kguzman@sandiego.edu

Appendix L: Part I & II: Dialogue and open discussion prompts with Activity Descriptions

Focus Group Script with all student leader participants

Part I:

- o The group will engage Leadership activities.
 - Image card activity
 - o With the following prompt: pick an image/card that represents leadership to you.
 - o With half the deck faced up and half faced down students are instructed to choose one upward facing card and allow a down facing card to choose them.
 - o Once cards are chosen the students will share their cards to the group and connect their definitions of leadership in relation to their cards.
 - Post-It Gallery of thought
 - o For each of the following prompts:
 - What are you excited for or what anticipations do you have regarding this program?
 - What are you apprehensive or fearful of from this experience?
 - What comes to mind when you see the words *service-based Leadership*?
 - o Students will write their thoughts onto post-it notes.
 - o Students will then post their post-its under the respective prompts around the room. Then they will walk through the gallery of thought silently. Ideally students will form connections and discover themes that are present for the group in a way that protects everyone's anonymity.
- o The group will then engage in a dialogue unpacking each of the activities and the topics covered in them.
- o The group is given access to the StrengthsFinder test for Focus Group Part II

Part II:

- o StrengthFinder Results with the Career Center
- o Group Building and Problem Solving Initiatives
 - Shrinking Island
 - o Group must stay on the *Island* (a tarp) that continuously shrinks without having any group member fall off the island
 - o Highlights group unity and creative thinking
 - Flip the Ship
 - o Group must flip the *Ship* (a tarp) while all members are actively standing on the tarp. No member can fall off of the ship while it gets flipped.
 - o Highlights group work, problem solving, and team/shared leadership

Appendix M: Alternative Spring Break - Leadership Contacts and Program Description

The Mulvaney Center's Alternative Spring Break Immersive Leadership Summit in Jamaica Syllabus

Instructors



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Experience and Study Description

This international immersion alternative Spring Break is unique in that it is a student development driven trip. As a chosen participant you will have input in the type of experience you would like to have within the constructs of the leadership summit. We will be immersed in the wonderful community of Duncans, Jamaica, and use this experience to build connections, gain a greater perspective of Jamaica's culture and ourselves with an emphasis on leadership. You will engage in service learning opportunities, gain professional development skills and enact your leadership skills in a hands on manner while in Jamaica. To do so will require time and energy commitments of those selected to participate.

As part of the program you will also be a participant in an action research study conducted by Kimberly Guzman, a current graduate student working in collaboration with the Mulvaney Center. The study's focus is the creation of an engaging action plan (experiential curriculum) that co-creates immersive leadership opportunities with the communities we will be joining and the impact of the experience. The program will take place during Spring Break 2020 - (Feb 28th- Mar 7th)

The purpose of the study was to explore the process of creating and implementing an immersive leadership experience and consider its impact. Through a curriculum based on experiential learning and critical reflection, students explored and gained a better understanding of their social justice lens and leadership skills. Students reflected on their engagement with leadership in various spaces such as at the University of San Diego, their home environments and communities, as well as the Duncans community in Jamaica, where the immersive leadership experience took place. Data was collected through surveys, critical conversations from focus groups, and facilitated conversations from activities done throughout the program, along with daily reflection journal entries. My findings indicate that the immersive and action-oriented nature of the program highly contributed to students learning when intentionally paired with a critical reflection-based curriculum.

Appendix N: Alternative Spring Break - Learning Objectives & Readings and Videos

Learning Objectives

Critical thinking & Independent Learning

- Asks relevant/deep questions pertaining to experiences at hand
- Able to connect learning from group experiences, the Service-Learning experiences and personal experience (in the context of their own lives) from which to self express

Community Responsibility

- Participate in service component provides experiential understanding of the importance of community service and social justice/action

Cultural Competency

- Gain an understanding of systemic causes of social problems (eg: poverty, racism, sexism, ect.).
- Self-aware of own culture and better understanding/awareness of their role in creating social justice
- Value and respect of differences

Personal Impact

- Articulates and comprehends personal values and perspectives
- Commitment to self-reflection and expression

Professional Development and Leadership

- Develop capacity for introspection and open dialogue for strengthening one's leadership potential
- Identify personal strengths, leadership style and articulate their international experience into a professional gain for future employers

Readings and Videos

Readings:

(Required)

- Kincaid, J. (2018). *A small place*. London: Daunt Books.
- Green, Z. and Molenkamp, R. (2005). *The BART System of Group and Organizational Analysis: Boundary, Authority, Role and Task*

(Optional)

- Life, B. (3014). *How To Talk Up Your Travel Experience in Your Next Job Interview*. Business Insider.
 - <https://www.businessinsider.com/how-to-talk-up-your-travel-experience-in-your-next-job-interview-2014-9>

Videos:

- Learn to Travel -- Travel to Learn: Robin Esrock at TEDxVancouver
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S0TemxiMdw>
- Principle: Balcony and Dancefloor - Brian Tarallo
 - <https://youtu.be/7qUiMHb1Rkk>
- Pedagogy of the Decolonizing - Quetzala Carson - TEDxAlberta
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IN17Os8JAR8>
- Decolonizing the Curriculum - Melz Owusu - TEDxUniversityofLeeds
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zeKHOTDwZxU>

Appendix O: Alternative Spring Break - Assignment Descriptions and Journal Prompts

Assignments and Activities

1. Focus Group & Pre-Departure meetings
 2. Read Book pre-departure & watch Ted Talk videos
 3. Reflection discussions and critical conversations
 4. International experiences
 - a. Reflection journal entries
 5. Submit updated resume
 6. Post travel assessment
-

Immersion Week Experiences and Reflective Journal Prompts Schedule

Day 0 - Friday 28 - Experience what is (Arrival day)

- Soak in everything and simply experience and adjust -- be ready to reflect
- **NO JOURNAL PROMPT**

Day 1 - Saturday 29 - Intent

Reading: *A Small Place*

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S0TemIxiMdw>

Activity: On a completely blank page in your journal write 1-3 sentences describing how you plan to be intentional during this alternative spring break experience.

Journal Prompt/Critical conversation:

- What were your thoughts on *A Small Place*?
 - What emotions did this reading bring up and did it change your perception of Jamaica and the experience you anticipate to have?

Day 2 - Sunday 1 - Connecting with Community (Church, CBD, Group dinner home)

Activity: Communication breakdown CBD

Article: BART PDF

Journal Prompt:

- Please analyze one or more experiences you had today using the BART (boundaries, authority, role, task) framework. Explain any reactions, feelings or dynamics you noticed or have since come up.

Day 3 - Monday 2 - Leadership Styles (All-Age School Garden, Glistening Water)

Video: <https://youtu.be/7qUiMHb1Rkk>

Journal Prompt:

- We briefly introduced the concept of using a balcony and dancefloor lens to process experiences. Linked is another brief overview. Think back to the events of today and reflect on what you were feeling in those moments (dancefloor). Take a moment to think about what else was going on around you, what did you notice objectively (balcony)?

**Day 4 - Tuesday 3 - Decolonization & Decolonizing Education
(Lead School Activity, Great House)**

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IN17Os8JAR8>

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zeKHOTDwZxU>

Journal Prompt:

- Highlight 3 moments from today that were meaningful for you and unpack them, why did the standout?
- Connect at least one of those moments to decolonizing education

**Day 5 - Wednesday 4 - Tourism/Culture
(Montego Bay Afternoon - Group Dinner)**

NO Video or Reading

Journal Prompt:

- Reflect on your thoughts, emotions and things you noticed from your visit to Montego Bay. Name some of the aspects that contribute to the juxtaposition between Montego Bay and Duncans.

**Day 6 - Thursday 5 - Pro Dev -Experience/Pair Share
(Hike, Fisherman's Wharf & Community shared cultural Dinner)**

Journal Prompt/Reflection Activity:

- How do you want to implement your experience and learning to your life moving forward?

Day 7 - Friday 6 - Travel day

- NONE

POST: 8-10 Days post travel - Saturday 14/Monday 16 - Google Form Evaluation

- <https://forms.gle/nEr4uUKBthjnxhxx7>

**POST: 10 Days post travel - Monday 16 - Application
(Zoom meeting)**

Activity Preparation:

- Write a paragraph that you could later put into a cover letter describing your Alternative Spring Break experience. Include the skills you have learned and/or put into practice this past week back in your academic/work settings.

Optional Reading:

- <https://www.businessinsider.com/how-to-talk-up-your-travel-experience-in-your-next-job-interview-2014-9>

Facilitated activity:

- Partnered with Career Services (Robin)
 - Strength's follow-up 15-20 min
 - How to add Study Abroad/International Service/Alternative Spring Break to resume
 - Review cover letter paragraphs - international experience marketing to prospective employers-programs

Appendix P: Alternative Spring Break - Calendar/Schedule

Immersion Week Schedule						
Alternative Spring Break 2020 – Duncans, Jamaica						
Jamaica Student Leadership Immersion						
Austin Galy & Kim Guzman						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					February 28 3-4pm Strengths w/ Erin Career Dev. 4-5pm Focus Group Overnight departures for morning arrival in Jamaica	February 29 Airport pick-up 12pm-1pm Travel, late lunch and housing arrangements Group Reflection & Book Discussion: "A Small Place" 3-4pm Community Welcome Dinner 6pm
March 1	March 2	March 3	March 4	March 5	March 6	March 7
Attend: Community Church; Q&A with Community partners 9:30- 4pm Late lunch at house Falmouth Marketplace -6:00-7pm Family Dinner with Melvin Thompson: Local Community Leader & Politician 8pm	Attend: All Age & Infant School 9am-2pm Lunch: Local Fisherman & Community Leader: Richard Delisser 2-4:30pm Historical Tour Rose Hall: 6:30-8 pm Dinner and Facilitation Planning 8-10pm	Attend: All Age & Infant 9am-12pm Free time for lunch Attend: All Age & Infant 1-3 pm Group Leadership Reflection: Examining social dynamics & what's coming up for us? Community Dinner Excursion: Glistening Waters 8-10pm	Group breakfast & Critical conversation 9-10am Travel to Montego Bay 10-11:30am Montego Bay observation/free group time 11:30-5:30pm "Rebel Salute" Reggae Immersion led by Ezekiel 5:30-7pm Community Dinner: Host and Q&A with Sophia Fyne	Historic Jungle Hike facilitated by community leader: Kemar Morris 9:30-1:30am Free time for lunch Closing Critical Conversation & Reflection: Purpose and intention Setting Group Activity dinner Farewell with Community Leader	Airport Departures: 8-10 am	

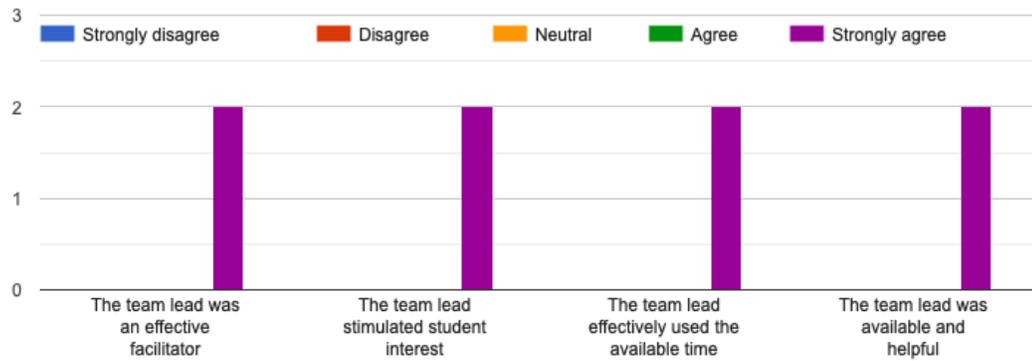
As of February --, 2020
Calendar is tentative and may change to accommodate organizational visits and guest lectures.

Appendix Q: Alternative Spring Break Journal Data Coding Key

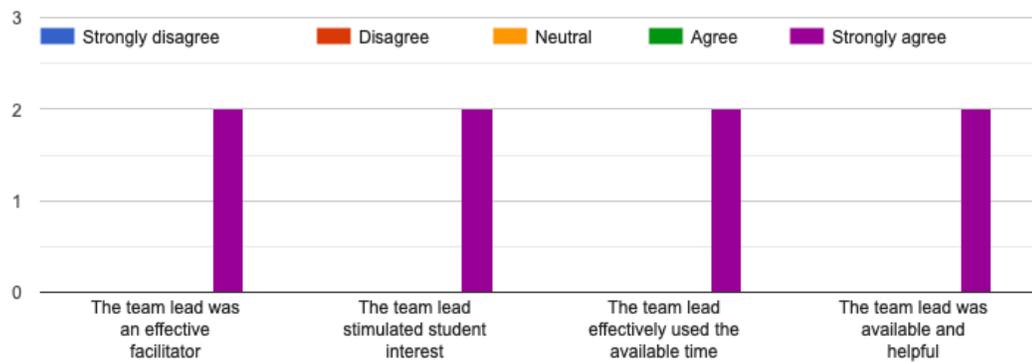
		JOURNAL CODING				
		TOTAL	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
	<u>AWARENESS</u> • Critical reflection	(35)	15	10	6	4
	<u>COMMUNITY</u> • Sense of Belonging	(30)	11	10	7	2
	<u>ACTION</u> • Experiential Learning	(25)	8	10	4	3
	<u>STUDENT SUCCESS</u>	(9)	5	1	2	1
	<u>LEADERSHIP</u>	(11)	5	3	0	3

Appendix R: Alternative Spring Break - Program Evaluation Google Form

Skill and responsiveness of the team lead [Austin]

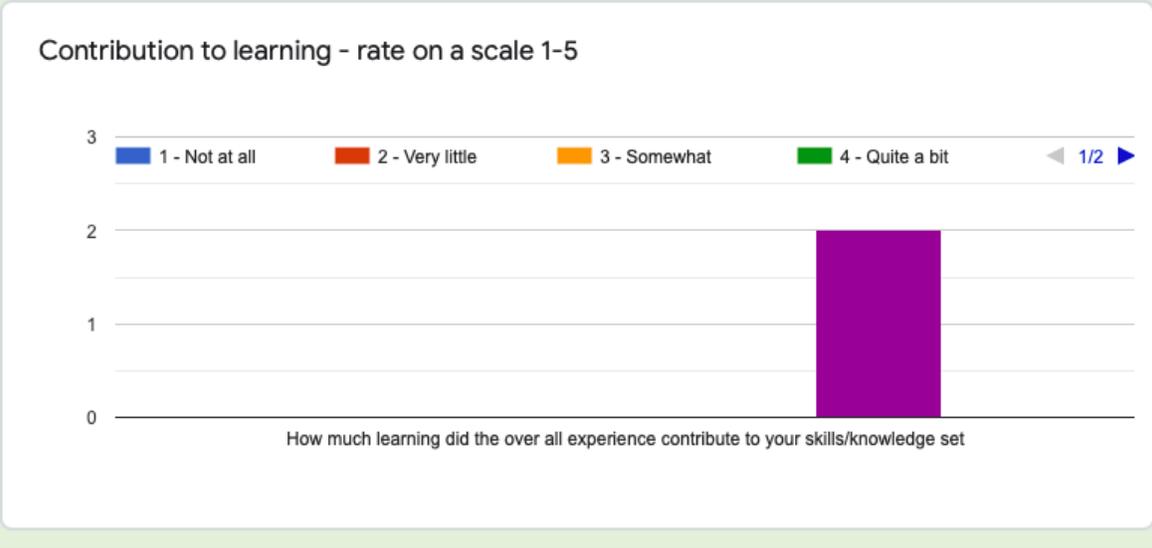
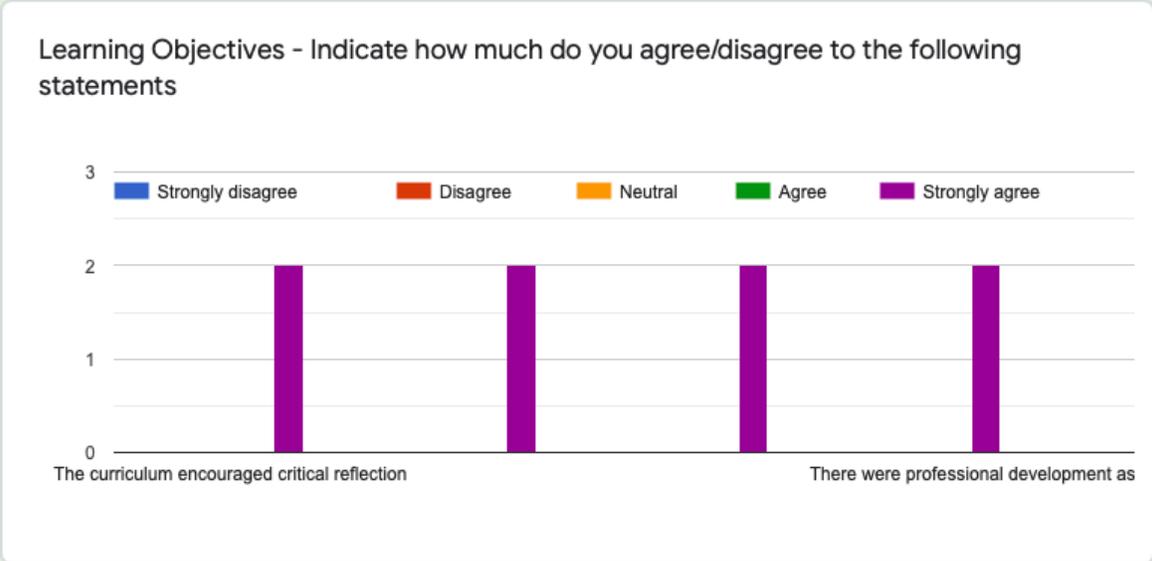
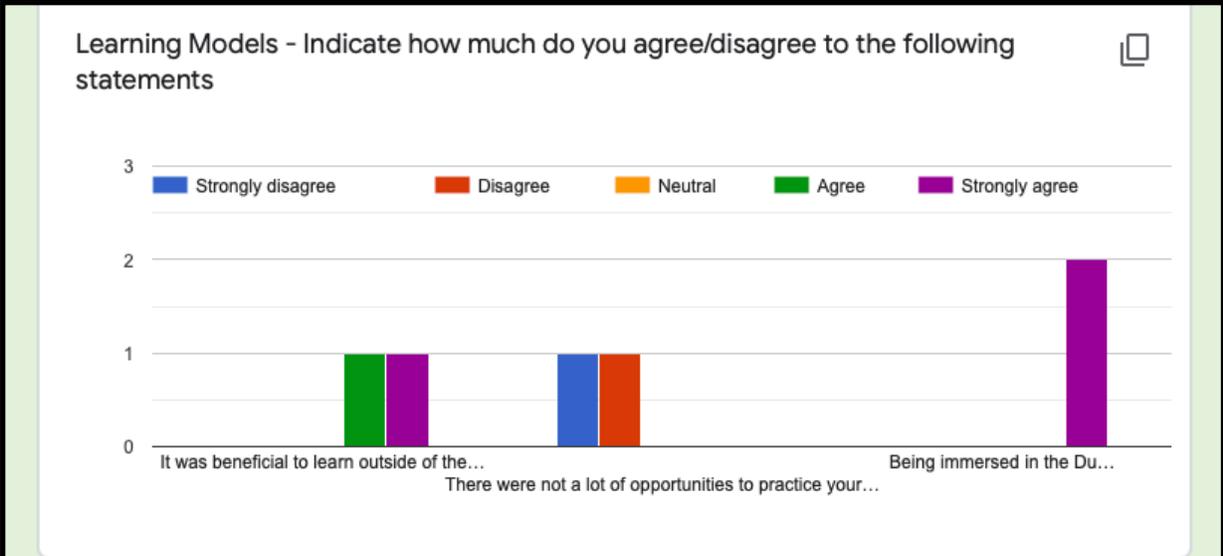


Skill and responsiveness of the team lead [Kim]



Level of engagement - rate on a scale 1-5





What aspects of this experience did you find the most valuable or led to the most growth?

2 responses

I really enjoyed volunteering at Duncans All Age School and engaging with the community of Duncans. There was an evident sense of community and unity between everyone which motivated me to continue doing the important work I do in San Diego county. They did not have an individualistic mindset and showcased how important it is to lead with your heart.

Being able to witness the connectedness that flows through the community of Duncans was absolutely eye opening in displaying what true compassion looks like. In comparison to the average neighborhoods or housing developements that exist in the United States, the raw display of one's willingness to help someone else that was shown throughout this community in Jamiaca was in almost a complete opposition. The people of Duncans show nothing but love for one another to the most pure degree- and I believe this is the most valuable lesson anyone can learn.

Appendix S: Jamaica's Alternative Spring Break Leadership Experience 2020 — Images

