



**THE MEXICAN AMBAR: A SOLID
RESPONSE FOR A WORLD HEALTH
EMERGENCY AND INTERNATIONAL
EDUCATION**

NAFSA – Region III

Dallas, Texas, October 27, 2009

RISK MANAGEMENT

- Local vs. Global
- International Education
- Safety
- Health
- Communication
- Logistics
- Helicopter parents
- Media
- Decisions
- Leadership
- The prestige of the agenda



THE MEXICAN AMBAR

- Tech of Monterrey
 - Traditionally a host institution for foreign students in Mexico.
- UT Dallas
 - Traditionally a Texas institution sending students to Mexico during summer.
- H1N1 influenza in each case
 - Circumstances.
 - Alert levels.
 - Implications.
 - Decisions.
 - A collective lesson.



H1N1 AND UT DALLAS

- UTD – Guanajuato Summer Spanish Program
 - June 8 – July 3, 2009.
 - Six credits: language and culture of Mexico.
 - Sixteen students registered.
 - Since 1996 the UT Dallas has offered summer courses in the Spanish language, history and culture at the University of Guanajuato.
- April 27, 2009. Non-Essential Travel Limited.
 - UT Dallas, in conjunction with other UT System institutions, acted on a UT System advisory to limit non-essential travel to Mexico in the wake of the H1N1 flu outbreak that has threatened health in that country as well as in limited areas of Texas.



H1N1 AND UT DALLAS

- May 5, 2009. UT Dallas Spanish Program Relocated to Argentina.
 - The program in Guanajuato, Mexico was instead in Buenos Aires, Argentina in response to warnings from The Centers for Disease Control and the UT System about non-essential travel to Mexico because of a widespread outbreak of H1N1 flu there.
 - By relocating to Buenos Aires, it was avoided any major disruptions for the students' summer plans.
 - No UT Dallas students was studying in Mexico.



H1N1 AND UT DALLAS

- The Jose Ortega y Gasset Foundation (FOGAT) in Buenos Aires agreed to be the host institution.
- The same dates for the Mexican program were planned for the Argentina program: June 8 to July 3.
- UT Dallas agreed to cover the air fare difference for the 16 students because Buenos Aires is a longer flight than from Dallas to Guanajuato.
- FOGAT identified host families in Buenos Aires for the students who enrolled in the six-credit hour program.



H1N1 AND UT DALLAS

- May 7, 2009. Restrictions on Non-Essential Travel to Mexico Lifted
 - The UT System lifted its restrictions on non-essential travel to Mexico following a decision by the Centers for Disease Control to downgrade its original warning to avoid travel there.
 - The CDC instead issued a Travel Health Precaution for Mexico with recommendations to avoid contracting the H1N1 flu while visiting Mexico.
 - The situation did not change. Because of prior commitments, the summer program took place in Buenos Aires from June 8 to July 3.



H1N1 AND UT DALLAS

○ **June 12, 2009. Pandemic Declared**

- The World Health Organization (WHO) said the H1N1 flu virus has now reached pandemic levels with outbreaks of the virus being reported in more than 70 countries.
- WHO's decision to raise the pandemic alert level to Phase 6 is a reflection of the spread of the virus, not the severity of illness caused by the virus.
- The University did not restrict travel to other countries, but students, faculty or staff with plans to travel overseas for study abroad or other University business needed to register their trip on the [International SOS web site](#).
- Travelers were advised to follow the prevention guidelines issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.



H1N1 AND UT DALLAS

- Aug. 28, 2009. H1N1 Flu: Back-to-School Precautions
 - With the start of the new academic year, health officials were warning college students that they were a high-risk group for contracting the H1N1 Flu virus.
 - H1N1 did not go dormant through the summer months and was/is still highly contagious, [Student Health Center](#).
- Oct. 8, 2009. Office of the Provost Encourages Healthy Practices.
 - The UT Dallas Office of the Provost urged students to take steps to protect themselves and others in the wake of H1N1 pandemic. Students who had symptoms or were exposed to someone who had H1N1 were / are encouraged not to attend class. Instead, students can contact their instructors and make arrangements to keep up with coursework, including exams, until they can return to class. Instructors need to be prepared to work with students to ensure that their education continues uninterrupted.



UTD - GUANAJUATO SUMMER PROGRAM IN BUENOS AIRES. BEHIND THE SCENE

- Identification of the host institution: *Fundación Ortega y Gasset*.
 - Reliable
 - Legitimate
 - Accessible
 - Location in town
 - Infrastructure
 - Networking of families
 - Cost
 - Content of the program
 - Credits



UTD - GUANAJUATO SUMMER PROGRAM IN BUENOS AIRES. BEHIND THE SCENE

- The institutional consensus
 - Office of the Provost
 - Office of Undergraduate Studies
 - Financial Aid
 - Records
 - Communications
- About students
 - Mutual responsibility
 - Pre-departure orientation session
 - Willing to face a different concept
 - Guanajuato vs. Buenos Aires
- About the academic leadership
 - Design: *Culture & Identity of Argentina* course.
 - SACS
 - Flexibility for mobility.
 - Housing.
 - Cost.



UTD - GUANAJUATO SUMMER PROGRAM IN BUENOS AIRES. BEHIND THE SCENE

- About University of Guanajuato
 - The importance of communication.
- About host families
 - Arrival of UT Dallas officials to Buenos Aires one week in advance to interview families and inspect homes. Around Buenos Aires, discovering its coffee shops.
 - Approval for program's hospitality.
- About international education protocol
 - No change: international health insurance, SOS emergency cards, etc.



UTD - GUANAJUATO SUMMER PROGRAM IN BUENOS AIRES. BEHIND THE SCENE

- The Argentine panic
 - Welcome to Buenos Aires!
 - Sanitary control, mask, gloves, etc.
 - Suspension of flights between Mexico and Argentina.
 - First cases of H1N1 (in Argentina).
- Despite everything...
 - Students had a remarkable different academic experience, returning to the U.S., while the number of H1N1 cases was increasing in Argentina.
 - None was infected.
- A successful experience!

