

July 27, 2021

U.S. Department of State  
Office of Designation  
SA-44, 6th Floor  
301 4th Street, SW Washington, DC 20547

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission (WVHEPC) consortium of member schools, please accept the following narrative for this year's annual report.

### **Summary of Program Effectiveness & Trends/Changes of the Consortium**

The number of exchange visitors in all J-1 categories decreased dramatically over the last reporting period due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the related challenges of quarantines, travel bans, U.S. embassy closures and limited visa appointments. This decrease does not reflect in any way our continued strong interest in internationalization that compelled us to apply for initial designation to host J-1 students and scholars at our public universities in West Virginia.

Our consortium members continue to pursue partnerships with foreign colleges and universities with the intent of supporting student and faculty exchange and other academic and research collaborations. Our member institutions added five new agreements during this reporting period. Since our consortium was established six years ago, we have increased the total number of active partnership agreements from zero to over 40 with each of our consortium members maintaining regular communication and various levels of engagement with their partner institutions located in over 20 countries.

Six exchange visitors were hosted directly by consortium members during this reporting period. Last year our consortium hosted over 30 exchange visitors which included international students and scholars hosted by third party organizations. All of these visitors play a vital role in helping internationalize our campuses and local communities. Their involvement in teaching, classes, student organizations and community events afford our domestic students and staff the opportunity to engage in dialogue about different perspectives, customs and ways of being. The positive effects of their time among us cannot be understated. As we see more travel bans being lifted and visa appointments opening up with the U.S. embassies around the world, we are hopeful that we will be able to welcome new J-1 exchange visitors in the coming year.

## **Summary of New Initiatives of the Consortium**

- Our “Exchange Visitor Handbook” was revised and updated and made available to our exchange visitors at <http://www.globalwv.org/evp/>. The handbook provides much of the same information given at orientation and serves as an additional orientation/resource. The handbook also satisfies the pre-arrival information requirement set forth in the regulations. Documents and forms used to administer the exchange visitor program were also reviewed and updated.
- Our orientation procedures and processes will continue to be reviewed and improved. All WVHEPC member institutions who host exchange visitors hold an orientation, either in-person or virtually. All new exchange visitors are informed of DoS regulations they are expected to follow, resources at the university/college available to them, life and customs in the United States, community resources, etc.
- We are planning to offer our annual online training workshop in the fall which is an all-day event providing refresher training and updates.
- We are planning to offer statewide training for faculty in Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) this fall to develop more virtual exchange programs with our J-1 exchange partner schools around the world. Some of our consortium members expanded their COIL offerings during this past year and received very positive feedback from their students as you can see from the student testimonials included in the attachment to this report.

## **Staff Used to Administer the Consortium EVP**

There are a total of seven (7) staff used in the administration of our exchange visitor program consortium. Each of our six consortium members has appointed an employee to serve as an ARO. An employee of the WVHEPC serves as the RO to oversee the consortium.

The pages that follow include summaries of each consortium member’s exchange visitor program, organized as follows: 1) Reciprocity (Exchange Visitors & Agreements); 2) Cross-Cultural Activities; 3) Difficulties & Challenges; and 4) New Initiatives & Future Plans. The West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission is appreciative for the Department of State’s ongoing support in this very important work of promoting partnerships, mutual understanding and peace.

Sincerely,



Clark Egnor, Ed.D.

Coordinator of International Programs  
RO WVHEPC J-1 Consortium

## **Reciprocity & Exchange Visitors**

### ***Bluefield State College***

- No in-person exchanges due to COVID-19. Planned J-1 student exchanges through Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange were cancelled.
- 5 Fulbright Scholars based at US host institutions interacted virtually with BSC students, faculty, staff, and administrators through IIE's Outreach Lecture Fund (OLF). See more details about each presentation below under Cultural Activities section.
- Preparations under way to accept a male participant from Germany (sponsored by Cultural Vistas) in 2021-2022.

### ***Concord University***

- 5 non-degree undergraduate exchange students from its partner universities in Korea
- Planned J-1 exchanges through Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange and other third-party sponsors were cancelled.

### ***Fairmont State University***

- 1 research scholar conducting research and teaching in Fairmont's College of Liberal Arts and its Humanities & Italian Program as well as its Architecture Program in the School of Science and Technology.

### ***Glennville State College***

- No exchanges due to COVID-19

### ***Shepherd University***

- No exchanges due to COVID-19. Planned student exchanges through IREX were cancelled but hoping to re-start the exchange during 2021-22 academic year.

### ***West Liberty University***

- No exchanges due to COVID-19. A J-1 research scholar from Hanbat National University in South Korea had to end his program early and depart the United States before the end of his program due COVID pandemic complications.

## **Reciprocity & Agreements**

***Bluefield State College*** maintains 13 active agreements and is in the process to add four more this year with universities in El Salvador, Slovakia, Tunisia and Greece):

1. National Ilan University, Taiwan (NIU) (2015; extended to 2021)
2. William V. S. Tubman University, Liberia (TU) (2015; extended to 2021)
3. Kazan National Research Technological University, Kazan, Russia (KNRTU) (2015; extended to 2021)

4. Universidad Autonoma de Santa Ana (UNASA), El Salvador (since 2017)
5. Universidad de Oriente (UNIVO), San Miguel, El Salvador (since 2017)
6. Ilia State University (ISU), Tbilisi, Republic of Georgia (2017)
7. Universidade Estadual do Centro-Oeste(UNICENTRO), Brazil (since 2017)
8. University of Oran No.2 (UO2), Algeria (since 2018)
9. European University of Rome, Italy (signed in fall 2018)
10. Alexander Dubcek University of Trencin, Slovakia (signed in spring 2019)
11. Istanbul Medipol University, Turkey (December 2019)
12. Varna University of Management, Bulgaria (June 2020)
13. Fundacao Escola de Comercio Alvares Penteado (FECAP), Brazil (June 2020)

**Concord University** maintains seven agreements:

1. Kangwon National University, South Korea
2. Universidad Anáhuac, Mexico
3. Andong University, South Korea (since 2018-19)
4. Kyungpook National University, South Korea (since 2018-19)
5. Deagu University, South Korea (since 2018-19)
6. Deagu Catholic University, South Korea (since 2018-19)
7. Deagu Haany University, South Korea (since 2018-19)

**Fairmont State University** maintains five active agreements:

1. University of Calabria (UNICAL) in Italy
2. Woosong University (WSU) in Korea
3. The American Campus in Mauritius, Africa
4. Aichi Bunkyo University (ABU) in Japan
5. Tokyo Denki University (TDU) in Japan

**Glenville State College** added one new agreement to raise the total number to three:

1. Universiti Tun Hussein Onn, Malaysia (signed April 2019)
2. Anáhuac University, Mexico (signed July 2019)
3. Southern Luzon State University, Lucban, Quezon Philippines (2020-21)

**Shepherd University** maintains agreements with seven international partner institutions:

1. Osaka University of Commerce, Japan (for student exchange)
2. Nanhua University, Taiwan (one Shepherd faculty member taught at Nanhua in Fall 2019)
3. Anahuac University, Mexico
4. Middlesex College, Jamaica
5. College of Micronesia, Micronesia
6. Okayama University, Japan
7. University of West Scotland, UK

**West Liberty University** signed an addendum to its existing MOU with University of Wurzburg (UW) that facilitates student exchanges between the universities. Through this addendum, two students from UW are planning to attend WLU starting with Fall 2021. West Liberty University has active agreements with the following institutions that facilitate student, staff and faculty exchanges:

1. Jan Kochanowski University in Kielce, Poland (2020)
2. Pukyong National University, South Korea (2019)
3. University of Wurzburg (UW), Germany (2017) + Addendum for student exchanges signed in October 2020.
4. Hanbat National University, South Korea (2016)
5. Wyższa Szkoła Techniczna University (WSTU), Katowice, Poland (2015)

## **Cultural Activities**

### ***Bluefield State College***

- Fall 2020 & Spring 2021 - COVID 19 protocols in place; No public gatherings or events held on campus.
- September 2020: Welcome reception for international students and scholars was conducted virtually by BSC staff, faculty, and administrators.
- August through November 2020 - Promoted Passport to the World and provided funds to acquire 6 US passport for BSC students. US Postal Services in Bluefield and Princeton processed BSC students' passport applications.
- May 2021 - BSC's 8th Annual Agora: A Celebration of Creative Expression. For the second year in a row, this long-standing event was held virtually due to the pandemic. Agora Coordinator Dr. Sudhakar R Jamkhandi reached out to West Virginia creative artists and writers, BSC alumni who were past Agora participants, area high school students, and Fulbright artists who had visited BSC in the past to share video recordings. The response was tremendous as evidenced in the virtual Agora which may be viewed at <https://bluefieldstate.edu/agora/virtual-agora-2021>
- During 2020-21, the following five Fulbright Scholars based at US host institutions interacted virtually with BSC students, faculty, staff, and administrators through IIE's Outreach Lecture Fund (OLF):
  - November 2020 - Virginia Tech Capital Campus based Fulbright Scholar from Tunisia Dr. Manef Bourogaoui discussed "Tunisia Today—Culture, Traditions, and People" and "PV System Integration and Monitoring in Buildings"
  - November 2020: Harvard University based Fulbright Scholar Dr. Saeeda Khanum of Pakistan discussed "Diversity and Inclusion in Pakistan," "Abnormal Psychology in the context of Pakistan," and "Improving Children's Math Performance through Evidence Based Training"

- February 2021 - University at Buffalo, SUNY Graduate School based Fulbright Scholar Dr. Shashi Poddar of India discussed “Vision aided navigation for autonomous vehicles” and “North Indian Cultures, Traditions, and People.”
- March 2021 - Virginia Tech based Dr. Divyapriya Govindraj of India discussed “Applications of nanomaterials to remove emerging contaminants in water” and South Indian Cultures, Traditions, and People.”
- April 2021 - University of Ohio based Fulbright Scholar Dr. Paschalis Nikolaou of Greece discussed “Greek Cultures, Traditions, and People.”

### ***Concord University***

- Hosted a few small gatherings for a mixture of international and domestic students in the International Center.
- Two Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) projects were started with J-1 exchange partner school in Mexico during the spring 2021 semester with the hope of invigorating faculty passion for teaching, engaging students, challenging them to develop cross-cultural and self-awareness, and strengthening relationships with partner institutions. Several students, both international and domestic, participated in the COIL language partners program and the student feedback was very positive. For example, a parent of a student on the autism spectrum told his English professor that the student is loving the course and it has opened his mind with regards to communication difficulties (that he is not alone in his struggles to communicate). See attached testimonials at the end of this report.

### ***Fairmont State University***

- We did not have cross-cultural events on campus during the 2020-21 Academic year. Due to COVID we were limited on offerings on campus and our Director of the Tulasi & Marilyn Joshi Office for Educational Pathways for International Centers & Students (EPICS) resigned from the position during Fall 2020 and we are just launching the search to refill the position.
- Dr. and Mrs. Joshi have made a commitment to international education at Fairmont State by giving money for scholarships and funding for our EPICS office. Thus, we renamed the office in their honor this academic year. Our international students hosted the family while on campus at the “naming” event. Dr. Joshi was a professor of geography at Fairmont State University prior to his retirement and wanted to give back to international studies and student exchange.

### ***Glenville State College***

- Due to Covid-19, Glenville State College had limited courses on campus and did not develop on campus cross-cultural programs.

### ***Shepherd University***

- Cultural Community Virtual Chats. These chats were recorded and posted to YouTube and related to:
  - Asian Moon Festival
  - Nigerian Independence Day
  - Diwali
  - Lunar New Year celebration
- Virtual Country Tours hosted by our International Students
  - Mali
  - Nigeria
  - Niger
- Virtual Embassy visits with ambassadors and attachés and our Shepherd students from the following countries:
  - Niger
  - Mali
  - Ivory Coast
  - Gambia
- Attended virtual recruiting fairs with WV HEPC

### ***West Liberty University*** reported the following:

- “WLU was deeply impacted by the many changes brought by COVID-19, but amongst the disruption and uncertainty, we have looked for opportunities while we learn to adapt, adjust, function and learn how to best help our students through these unprecedented and unique times.”
- Offered individual (one-on-one) international student orientations for each international student attending WLU, some were in person and some were virtual, depending on the student’s preference.
- Offered a month-long TopperFest Opening Orientation program via different virtual platforms to help connect the students with each other and the campus community.
- Many in-person programs were modified to meet COVID safety requirements by gathering virtually for presentations and sharing cultures, including:
  - “International Teatime TO GO” - students had the opportunity to explore and learn about other cultures.
  - “Taste of Home programing TO GO” and the “International Food Festival TO GO” – these two virtual events offered international students and scholars and the community the opportunity to enjoy home cooked meals from different countries.
  - The Global Fair: Study Abroad and International Initiatives event was held virtually to promote internationalization efforts at WLU through exhibits made by faculty and students.

## Difficulties & Challenges

### ***Bluefield State College***

- No issues arose pertaining to the J-1 Exchange Scholar Program because BSC has yet to take advantage of this opportunity.
- Overcoming challenges of insurance coverage by using this online tool as needed: <http://www.insubuy.com/international-student-medical-insurance/?affiliateid=overture>
- Challenging to identifying English-speaking faculty from partner institutions in non-English speaking countries who can spend up to an entire academic year at BSC. Foreign partner institutions have similar challenges, namely, releasing full-time faculty to go abroad for scholarly activities and finding substitute (adjunct) faculty who will teach their courses in their absence. Reciprocal exchanges will be a rare occurrence.
- Difficulty finding housing for exchange scholars along with the cost of such housing (i.e., who will cover rental costs?)
- Difficulty to substitute (adjunct) faculty salaries be paid/justified and from what funding source?
- No incentive for partner institutions' students to study at BSC if they do not have English and if they have to pay non-resident tuition and fees. Unfortunately, our state institutions are not geared to handle reciprocal exchanges nor is the state willing to charge in-state tuition for students from partner institutions. Only short-term cultural immersion trips are possible for partner institutions' students.
- Absence of financial support from state government to support salaries for exchange scholars from partner institutions (within BSC budget allocation) or to engage in two-way student mobility with international partner institutions.

### ***Concord University*** reported the following challenges & difficulties:

- We had a small number of exchange students here during the Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 terms. We held our orientation sessions in the International Center with social distancing and masking enforced. At these sessions, we covered the information found in the Exchange Visitor Handbook and the services we offer such as English as Second Language classes, assistance with writing papers/proofing papers, assistance with getting a campus job, driver's license, or social security number. We also assisted students who wanted vaccines when they became available. Students obtained their own health insurance prior to coming to the United States.
- Our biggest difficulty during the Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 terms was the pandemic. We had some exchange students who were supposed to study here for one year, Spring 2020 and Fall 2020. When the pandemic started and our campus closed, these students left and didn't return for the Fall semester to complete the exchange program.
- On-going fears about COVID-19 caused many would-be exchange students to forgo a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to study abroad.



- COVID restrictions prevented us from providing the activities and opportunities we normally provide for our exchange students. However, we were able to have a fun banquet for a mixture of domestic and international students at the end of the semester with food catered by Aramark and international games.

**Fairmont State University** faced the following challenges:

- Typically, orientation is conducted in an assembly-type environment wherein all students (and scholars) come together for a campus tour, meetings with their advisors, and an informal social gathering with the returning international students. However, due to COVID, there was a drop in new international student enrollment, and there was a shift to online engagement rather than face-to-face. As such, new students completed "orientation" through facetime (WhatsApp) phone calls with the Director of EPICS to make sure they were doing well and getting settled. These phone calls occurred 2-3 times over the span of the first three weeks. The same was offered to the new J-1 Scholar (transferred from WVU), but he did not need this assistance, as he was familiar with the area and found comfort and guidance in his department.
- The online handbook was not utilized; the Director of EPICS did not know of the online handbook until spring 2021. When Fairmont State transitioned its J-1 work assignments to the Director of EPICS, Megan Gibbons was still overseeing the responsibility of this work at HEPC, and the online handbook was casually referenced (if at all), but a tangible book was instructed for our use (which we never received).

**Glennville State College** did not report any challenges, but commented, "I need to develop more understanding of the value of a J-1 program on campus."

**Shepherd University** did not report any challenges but mentioned that "COVID restrictions had a major impact on all of our international programs."

**West Liberty University** reported the following:

- The 2020-21 pandemic year has been particularly challenging and has not allowed for any J-1 exchange visitors to join West Liberty University due to quarantines, travel bans, U.S. Embassies closures and limited visa appointments etc.

### **New Initiatives & Future Plans**

#### ***Bluefield State College***

- Existing and future Agreements: Design study abroad curricula in different fields for students of partner institutions for customized short-term study at BSC.
- Sustain cross-cultural activities indicated above.
- Custom design BSC faculty led study abroad for BSC students at partner institutions.

- New Agreements: The latest MoUs were signed in 2020 with Fundacao Escola de Comercio Alvares Penteado (FECAP), Brazil, and Varna University of Management, Bulgaria.
- Approved for AY 2021-22: 1 male Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange will study and intern at BSC in 2021 (August -June 2022) with the Feuchtenbergers as host family.
- Third party Exchange scholars/professors (in collaboration with CIES/IIE Outreach Lecturing Fund: This activity may take place in person and/or virtually.
- BSC has been selected to host Fulbright Language Teaching Assistants for Arabic, Portuguese, and Russian in AY 2021-22.
- Passport to the World: If funded by local foundations/civic organizations and/or a WV based corporation, 10 free passports will be issued in 2021-22 in collaboration with the US Postal Service.
- J-1 Exchange Scholars: BSC will make every effort to host exchange scholars from at least two partner institutions to teach at BSC for one or two semesters in AY 2021-22.
- J-1 Exchange students: BSC will encourage partner institutions' students to enroll in the English for International Students program, participate in semester or yearlong programs that include paid internships, and/or short-term cultural immersion study tours.
- Collaborate with BSC's international partner institutions to provide online/synchronous foreign language tutoring for BSC students in AY 2021-22.
- Planning to submit application to host Fulbright Scholar in Residence from the University of Economics in Bratislava, Slovakia (prospective partner institution) in 2022-23.

**Concord University** reported the following future plans:

- We are thrilled with the announcement made by President Boggess that Concord University is planning for a normal fall 2021 semester. Our expectations for the fall include:
  - Face to face learning
  - Residence halls at full capacity
  - Buildings and facilities, including dining operations, the library and fitness center will return to normal hours and increased capacity
  - Spectators permitted at all athletic events
  - Students are encouraged but not required to be vaccinated.
- We're delighted that we've been selected to host a student from Pakistan through the Global UGRAD-Pakistan program. Also, we will be hosting two students from Germany through the CBYX program. We have two students coming from South Korea through exchange agreements with their universities.
- We want to continue the COIL project with Universidad Anáhuac and perhaps offer a faculty-led trip for some Concord students to visit Anáhuac in the summer of 2022.

**Fairmont State University** reported the following future plans:

- We are dedicated to having international students and faculty on our campus. We have launched a search for a new Director of EPICS which will give us a central person to manage these events, as we had previously. We have a new Vice President for Student Success, Ken Fettig, who oversees the division that houses the EPICS office. It made more sense for the EPICS office to be connected to the division that incorporates enrollment management, student life, residence life and admissions.

**Glenville State College** reported the following future plans:

- Work with Academic Affairs to develop a J-1 scholars' opportunity. Glenville State College could develop this program to assist in language development and teaching.

**Shepherd University**

- Continue to build partnerships with other universities, currently under review with Hochschule Mittweida | University of Applied Sciences-Germany
- Our new study abroad director is currently reviewing agreements with universities in Spain and Peru.

**West Liberty University**

- Some of these challenges we faced this past year will likely continue through the coming academic year 2021-2022, but as we see more travel bans being lifted and visa appointments opening up with the U.S. Embassies around the globe, we are enthusiastic and positive that we will be able to welcome new J-1 exchange visitors in the coming year.

## **Attachments**

**Concord University** – Comments from students at Concord University and their J-1 exchange partner school in Mexico, Universidad Anáhuac, who participated in Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) virtual exchanges during Spring 2021:

**Comments from students at Concord University:**

“This class was something that I didn't expect at all in English. All my English classes are basically just different topics covered. I come from a small town so my High School experience was probably different than most people. My classes probably had about 15 people in them and within about a 30-minute drive from my house. This however couldn't be anymore far from the opposite. I didn't know anyone in the class and obviously didn't know anyone from the extended portion of the class. I've also never had a connected class with any student in a different state yet alone another country. There are very few comparisons that can be made when it comes to the aspects of this class. I've learned more about how much harassment

Mexican people have to deal regarding their way of life. People don't understand they're very important and deep meaning in culture. They're oppressed and stereotyped in a very racist manner. People tend to act very myopic and tone deaf when people try to stand up to these heinous acts."

"This COIL class was definitely difficult compared to my other English classes. A lot more essays, way more work that was harder, and I haven't really been doing the work honestly. This class is important, but English has never been my strongest subject, so I always slack off when I know I shouldn't. I personally struggled with the group projects because I'm not a social person, so having the group work didn't work out for me.

This English class was something that I was not prepared for in the least. Throughout high school I never experienced anything like this, and we never did much foreign exchange or interaction. I often do miss being able to read novels and do book analysis's and having different types of essays to write. This class honestly cannot be compared to any of my other English classes that I have taken because it has been way more challenging and has really forced me out of my comfort zone countless times. It was not a bad class, but it has been a major adjustment to get used to."

"My personal experience with the coil class that I had this semester it was fun. it was a different experience than what I thought it would have been. Getting to know other students from another part of the country, learning some of their culture, history, and different things they enjoyed was fascinating!"

"Even though our groups only lasted a few weeks and there were only a couple days we had to meet, I thoroughly enjoyed the COIL class. It allowed me to view into depth other cultures than the ones I am used to everyday. I feel as I have learned more about classes in other regions than mine. My favorite part was the Facebook tasks. With all the questions, I was able to see other's belongings, favorite food, favorite movies, and really learn about their culture I think these COIL classes are the most interesting thing I have had in class this semester. It was remarkably interesting and fun meeting new people and different accents. My group was truly spectacular, both Fernanda and Teddy are great people with whom I was able to work very comfortably and with whom I had a lot of fun. I can say that thanks to this class I have a couple of new friends with me."

"It is my first time experiencing an English class where the projects are supposed to be completed as a group. It has been a very nice experience. I am glad that I had it because it I am sure it is more of an experience than taking a normal ENGL 101 class. In general, I like writing, so I enjoy English classes but this one has been my favorite. If I had to point out why, it would be the fact that I have been getting more than enough help and all the work that I have done have been read properly and appreciated."

“When I saw the names of Karla and Songha, I instantly thought that language was going to be a major issue. Once again, I was completely wrong. Karla, who lives in Mexico, speaks very fluent English. Also, she is very quick to pick up on words she does not know. Songha, who is from Korea, also speaks very fluent English and has very good grasp of the English language. I really enjoyed this collaboration. It was very different than anything I have taken part of in any class before. I have done a very limited amount of group projects to this point in my academic career. I liked getting to experience something new. I feel it helped my writing to have two other people to ask for help and advice. I believe this project also helped my communication skills. Having two groupmates that are not native to American let me learn about new cultures, and gain experience with foreigners. I have not had much exposure to anyone that is not from America.”

“I thought this class would be like every other English class I had taken. Turns out that it was more exciting than that! In this COIL class we had students from Mexico joining us. I thought that was so cool and that it would be a wonderful experience. It was a wonderful experience; we got to meet some new people and hopefully made some new friends. Though there may have been some bad experiences, but mine was wonderful. My group worked well and was understanding when one of us could not make it a day we decided to zoom call for our weekly assignment. Even though my group worked well, I still think there can be some improvements made for this class.”

“This class was one of the best I ever had. Even though there were issues with communication and interaction, this class was a success. In addition, it able to reach the goal of being an enjoyment (at least for me and my group partners) while learning how to write properly. Improving the quality of vocabulary for Concord University students and ANAHUAC students.”

***Comments from students at Universidad Anáhuac:***

“To begin with, I am studying at the Universidad Anahuac, I had to take the English course and within the course, I participated in the COIL program, which was quite a stressful experience. However, I also learned a lot about how to write an essay in English correctly, at the beginning I was not too fond of the program and, to be honest, I tried to withdraw from the course. As the weeks went by, I met my teammate and, I liked being able to talk to an American, because it was a way to improve my English language skills. Whenever I was wrong about something, she would always try to help me and to understand what I was trying to tell her, which I thought was great, because many times, we tend to think that American people are racist towards us. When I finished this horrible analysis project, our teacher told us that we had practically finished the program. I was happy and at the same time sad that I would no longer work with my colleagues from Concord. Without a doubt, I enjoyed this English course a lot although I had some problems, I am happy and the most important thing is that I finish this project with new learnings and more importantly, with new friends.”

“COIL was a unique experience. I had never had a class where we have to speak with people who always had spoken English and I was scared at the beginning, I didn’t think that I was ready to do this because I tend to be very shy and I didn’t like the idea of meeting people who don’t speak Spanish but I calmed down and thought “this is going to be a great opportunity to probe myself and see what I have been learning this years.”