

**Contact Information:**

Name: Richard Davis

Email: DavisRXXXX@XXXX.edu

**Memorandum:**

Date: November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020

To: UHCL Office of the Registrar

From: Richard E. Davis

Subject: Proposal for Travel Abroad Funding

Memo: The current availability of the International Learning programs at the University of Houston Clear Lake have been canceled due to COVID-19. However, the possibility of the program re-opening in Summer of 2021 and onward is likely to occur. Given this, I am applying to receive funding to travel abroad to Singapore. This memo was designed to review the current/previous program and apply some suggested amendments and cost reductions on future programs. As such, I would like to be reviewed as to why I would be a good candidate for this program, based on my suggested updates.

**Current Program:**

The University of Houston – Clear Lake’s education abroad program allows students to a country of their choosing to attend a foreign university or educational program related to their major area of study. The current program offered is 14 days long with an approximate estimated total cost of between \$8,000 to almost \$10,000 USD. This is primarily due to the current recommended lodging, food and other personal expenses.

*Table 1. Expense breakdown (current plan).*

Expenses	Total (\$)
Tuition & Supplies	\$ 1,490.00
Lodging	\$ 2,800.00
Transportation (flight & travel)	\$ 1,537.00
Personal Expenses	\$ 3,000.00-\$4,000.00
Total	\$8,827.00-\$9,827.00

As mentioned, the current plan to stay abroad is heavily invested into lodging and personal expenses that amount to a significant portion of the total estimated cost. For these reasons the budget needed to be rearranged to be more economically cost effective without sacrificing quality of life while abroad. The next section will provide more details.

Proposed Program:

The new program has amendments to food, lodging, travel and personal expenses. Addressing the maximum budget to be below \$5000, the new budget focuses on alternative options to Food, Lodging and Personal Expenses as oppose to the current program’s allocations. By avoiding centrally located hotels and replacing branded food companies and standard restaurants for local hawker centers, as well making conservative choices on travel, like opting for public transport over taxis, the budget can be significantly improved.

The proposed program would start on May 22<sup>nd</sup> and would conclude on June 6<sup>th</sup>. This reservation date is required to gain the lowest airfares offered during this time. The total flight duration is about 24 hours, including layover, as well a loss of approximately 13 hours for time zone changes, arriving in Singapore on the 24<sup>th</sup> at lodging. The hotel is less than 3 miles from the city center and less than 10 miles from the airport, but just far enough outside of the city center (near where the HEX program takes place) to significantly reduce costs.

Figure 1. Approximated airfare cost. (subject to change)

IAH - SIN ⇄ SIN - IAH - 1 Adult					
Departing 22 MAY (SAT) IAH 19:10 Houston	✈ 23hrs 30mins	24 MAY (MON) SIN 7:40 Singapore	Returning 06 JUN (SUN) SIN 2:25 Singapore	✈ 25hrs 5mins	06 JUN (SUN) IAH 14:30 Houston
				Total fare 1 ADULT USD 987.74	<a href="#">View details</a> ▾ <small>Total fare includes discounts, taxes and surcharges</small>

Figure 2. Approximated lodging cost. (subject to change)

Value Hotel Balestier  
Balestier Road

3.3/5 (699 reviews)

\$130  
per night  
\$1,804 for 13 nights  
Includes taxes & fees

Table 2. Expense breakdown (revised plan).  
  
\*denotes expenses based on intimate knowledge of costs from numerous personal trips to same destination.

Expenses	Total (\$)
Airfare (round trip)	\$987.74
Food*	\$250.00
Lodging	\$1,804.00
Transportation*	\$100.00
Tuition & Supplies	\$1,490
Anticipated Total	\$4,631.74
Personal Contribution	\$500.00
Amount Requested	\$4,131.74

## Savings and Benefits:

In comparison to the current program, the revised plan will significantly reduce costs and potentially provide greater opportunities to more students. As an added benefit, encouraging/requiring students to opt for local hawker centers for food as opposed to ordering branded food or restaurants provides greater emersion of the local cultures and cuisines. This may take some students out of their comfort zone, but what better place can there be to do exactly that. As shown in figure 3 below, the revised plan will save approximately \$5,695.

Figure 3. Comparison between the current plan and the new plan.



## Concluding Thoughts:

If the University of Houston – Clear Lake agrees to adjust the current study abroad program will not only significantly reduce overhead costs, but also allow more opportunities to students to enroll. Granting greater opportunities to more students to enrich themselves in another country's culture and learning as well continue to grow a working relationship between countries. Please send any questions to student email listed above.

## Works Cited

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