

**An Evaluation of the
Cooperative Association of States
for Scholarships Program
(1994-2001)**

***Técnicos en Potenciar:*
Global Processes and Local Choices
in Technical Training**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The Cooperative Association of States for Scholarships (CASS) is administered by Georgetown University's Center for Intercultural Education and Development (CIED) under a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). The goal of the program is to improve the human capacity and the potential for sustainable development in eight countries in Central America and the Caribbean by educating socio-economically disadvantaged people. CASS achieves this goal by providing technical and leadership skills to low-income students, as well as primary-school teachers, nurses, and persons with disabilities in approximately 15 different fields of studies, largely determined by the program's assessment of labor force needs in the participating countries. In addition to academic training, CASS students typically receive training in English, short-term internships with U.S. businesses, and visits to and participation in events that expose the students to U.S. political, economic and social systems.

In fulfillment of these objectives, since 1994 (the period of this study) CASS has awarded scholarships to 2,342 individuals from the eight countries, five in Central American (Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama) and three in the Caribbean (the Dominican Republic, Haiti and Jamaica). In determining whom to select for training, the CASS program focuses on students and professionals from disadvantaged populations such as the poor, women, members of ethnic groups such as Maya and Lenca Indians or Garífunas, and people with disabilities.

CASS training takes place in participating U.S. community colleges and universities, including three Historically Black Colleges and Universities and five Hispanic Serving Institutions.

Evaluation Objectives and Methodology

This evaluation focuses on CASS activities from 1994, the year of its last evaluation, through 2001. Pursuant to USAID's scope of work (see Appendix A), Aguirre International designed the evaluation in order to accomplish the following:

- Assess the extent that CASS has fulfilled during the last seven years the terms and conditions of its Cooperative Agreement since 1994, when an evaluation last took place;
- Assess program quality and effectiveness and, to the extent possible, recommend ways to make the program stronger and more cost-effective; and
- Identify new directions that would permit LAC/RSD/EHR and CIED to fine-tune its future training programs in Latin America and the Caribbean.

This evaluation is based upon interviews with individuals thoroughly familiar with the CASS Program in Washington, in three participating countries and at six participating U.S. community colleges. At the CIED office of CASS, the team met with key central office staff, including the Center Director and managers of the domestic and international components of the program.

The evaluation team visited Guatemala, Honduras and the Dominican Republic. In each of these countries, the team interviewed the CASS staff, USAID personnel, business leaders and other knowledgeable persons, and, in two countries, employers of returned graduates. In each country, the team also interviewed many program alumni, singly, in groups, and as part of a formal survey, holding focus group discussions with about 90 graduates and administering a survey to about 316 returned CASS students. At six participating U.S. community colleges, the evaluation team met with and administered a survey to the CASS students currently in attendance, and it met with a variety of CASS administrators, senior college administrators, instructors, internship providers, NGOs where CASS students volunteer, and host families. A more detailed description of the methodologies used to evaluate the CASS Program can be found in Chapter One.

Findings

Findings of the evaluation are discussed in response to the key questions and issues set forth in the Task Order. Further elaboration on each response may be found in Chapter Five.

1. Changes in CASS since Its Establishment in 1985

CASS has introduced innumerable changes to reflect the changing environment and to incorporate lessons learned.

In the evaluators' view, CIED has developed a flexible program that has strived to adapt to changing circumstances, has learned from its experiences, and has reincorporated that learning into its on-going programming.

2. Actions Taken Regarding the Recommendations in the 1994 Evaluation

The CASS program has incorporated changes to address almost all of the recommendations offered in the 1994 evaluation. These include changes in their program offerings, internal management and budgeting.

This evaluation identified two recommendations that were not acted upon. In each case, the evaluation team believes that CASS made appropriate decisions in not implementing the recommendation. The 1994 assessment suggested less focus on students from rural backgrounds. CASS has continued to recruit candidates mostly from rural areas and has done so with no apparent sacrifice in the ability of students selected to successfully complete the program of study.

In 1994 evaluators recommended that CASS students receive at least one course dealing with international development. CASS has not followed up on this recommendation because it views its program as a vocational and leadership training. Some exposure to development principles is provided to students in courses and activities that teach CASS students about the U.S. economic and political systems. CASS students clearly return home with many ideas about reforming systems in their respective countries.

3. Relevance of Training to Workforce Needs and Keeping Tabs on Changing Requirements

CASS's selection of technical areas (subjects) for training adequately reflects the needs of the labor markets in the eight countries.

The evaluators found the CASS system to be effective because the training-needs survey consults with people who know the labor market. The system is simple and inexpensive, and the returned participants find employment. CASS relies on surveys of employers, USAID officials, Labor Ministry personnel and other informed individuals to assess changing needs. The evaluation team's conclusion—the system is effective—is based on interviews with labor market experts in two of the CASS countries about labor trends and needs, a review of available labor force projections, and the obvious employability of CASS graduates.

4. Relevance of Fields of Study to USAID's Strategic Focus

CASS efforts to ensure that its fields of study reflect USAID's strategic priorities appear to be increasingly effective.

CASS appears to have addressed this concern by obtaining Mission participation in the training needs survey and in the interviews of candidates. CASS focus in recent years on training for rural health workers, primary school teachers and construction managers reflects the increased attention the program is giving to USAID strategic priorities.

5. Selection of Fields of Study and of U.S. Colleges

The procedures on which CIED relies to choose new fields of study, schools offering them, and new institutional directions have been effective at advancing the CASS mission in the last eight years.

About every two years, the CASS offices in the eight participating countries conduct a survey to determine local training needs that might be met through education at U.S. community colleges. On the U.S. side, new community colleges approach CIED every year, and occasionally some are brought into the network. CIED's policy is to be committed to institutions that have a proven track record in the quality of programs offered and in effective cost-sharing agreements. Sometimes colleges have decided not to continue with CASS, usually because they cannot offer the services at the rates that CIED is willing to pay. More frequently, the need is to find colleges that can train in a new field of study.

6. Disadvantaged and Underserved Populations

CASS efforts are reaching the appropriate low income and minority populations.

CASS selection has continued its efforts to target low income and minority families, and has an enviable record in recruiting women. CASS has also developed a strong recruitment of students from the most disadvantaged and isolated rural areas of each country, actively recruiting students

from post-conflict areas as well as of African and indigenous descent, and people with disabilities.

7. Impact on U.S. Colleges and Surrounding Communities

CASS has had a strong positive impact on the participating colleges, their U.S. students and the people in the surrounding towns and cities.

Interviews with senior college officials, teaching faculty, local NGOs, business people and host families involved with CASS at six of the participating community colleges indicate that the colleges and surrounding communities feel that they benefit from the CASS program at least as much as the CASS students. Viewed from a purely economic viewpoint, CASS data provided to the evaluation team shows that 75 percent of USAID resources are expended in the U.S. communities where participating colleges are located. These funds flow into all levels of local economies, from the budgets of the community colleges to host families to local service providers.

8. Appropriateness of CASS Assistance Provided by Local U.S. Colleges and Home Countries

The CASS program effectively furnishes many appropriate types of help to students in the U.S. and to the recently returned graduates.

In the site visits to community colleges, the evaluators saw that CASS college coordinators make every effort to ease the difficult transition to American life. They arrange host families for two-year students, provide intensive English training, teach students about transportation, banking, shopping, and other essential skills. Sometimes coordinators arrange free or discounted services at local civic events and institutions. Host families often provide students with winter clothing and take them on sightseeing trips. In many instances, CASS arranges housing for the students.

CASS facilitates students' re-entry into their respective countries through seminars and workshops offered in the U.S. near the termination of their studies and in their countries following their return. CASS sponsored a two-day International Conference on Quality in November 2000, primarily for CASS alumni of the Broome Community College at the Pontificia Universidad Catolica Madre y Maestra in the Dominican Republic that drew 80 participants. Deaf alumni and interpreters have participated in two regional conferences organized by CASS. Several of the Honduran focus-group participants described having received, since returning, short courses for computer training and improvement of skills in English.

9. Transferring Credits to Home Countries and Academic Reciprocity Agreements

CASS graduates continue to experience some difficulty transferring U.S. credits to colleges in their countries, made only somewhat easier by the reciprocity agreements.

CASS students are reporting these difficulties despite the efforts of CIED which reports that it has negotiated, developed, and signed 21 academic reciprocity agreements with local Central American and Caribbean universities. These agreements are designed to facilitate academic credit for community college classes taken by CASS scholars. Nevertheless, many *ex-becarios* who were interviewed indicated that they had received little, if any, credit from local universities for their two years of study in the program.

10. Community and Civic Participation (Strengthen Democracy), Thoughts about the U.S., Employability, Contributions to Professional Fields

The evaluation team's interviews provided many positive examples of changes in participants' thinking about the U.S. and about the democratization process in their own countries.

CASS has also yielded a major impact with respect to the likelihood of obtaining interesting jobs paying livable wages. Data that the evaluation team collected show that participants returned home with a heightened appreciation of democratic values and the importance of participation in the community. Alumni generally considered leadership training to have been an important and effective part of the program. CASS graduates are generally having very successful careers that in almost all cases would not have been open to them without their CASS training. Contributions to professional fields proved difficult to determine.

11. CASS Cost-Share Model, In-Kind Contributions, and Increases in Contributions

The cost-share model is successful, partly owing to substantial U.S. and home-country, in-kind donations.

CASS requests that all colleges participate in at least 25 percent cost-share. Most fulfill this requirement (some sharing more, some slightly less, especially in light of recent state budget cuts) and most do so by waiving international or out-of-state tuition charges. During the last seven years, CASS reports that it has almost always surpassed the 25 percent cost-share requirement. In-kind contributions in U.S. and the eight countries include everything from toiletry kits to free transportation to one-year passes at the YMCA.

12. New Fields of Study and Access and Quality of Services in Rural Areas

CASS's incorporation of several new fields of study appears to have the potential to improve the quality of rural education, health, and housing services.

CASS's new specializations include construction management, disease control, and primary school teaching. Trainees in these fields have only recently returned; thus, an assessment of their contribution is difficult. Nevertheless, the evaluation team's focus group sessions did reveal anecdotal evidence that individuals returning from these programs have incorporated new practices, improved their personal performance, and engaged in activities to train others.

13. Percentage of Candidates from Rural Areas and Returning There

CASS draws the majority of its students from areas outside of the capital cities. The training leads many CASS students to seek employment in more urban areas than those from which they came.

CASS data show that it has achieved its goal of awarding 80 percent of the scholarships to 18-25 year olds from rural areas, and the CASS Employment and Impact Survey suggest that most alumni work or live in rural areas.

When asked about changes in residence since returning home from the U.S., 45 percent of the alumni respondents reported that they no longer live where they lived before their scholarship. Fifty-eight percent of the responding alumni claim to have moved from rural areas to the city. Three percent moved from urban to rural areas, and nearly 34 percent moved from one urban area to another.

14. Acceptance of Certificates and Career Advancement Relative to Non-CASS Employees

Employers in the CASS countries appear to value and to readily accept the CASS degrees and certificates. Interviews with returned participants and with employers suggest that the training helps alumni to advance in their career once employed.

None of the alumni answering questions during individual and group interviews mentioned any problems with employers' willingness to accept the training as part of their preparation for the job. The evaluation team's interviews with employers suggest that returned participants have average to better-than-average job mobility; a number of *ex-becarios* had achieved supervisory positions in less-than-average time at the firm. Some employers found CASS graduates to be exceptional and had hired many as a result of their positive experience. Several employers indicated that they would like to hire additional CASS graduates.

15. Dissemination of New Knowledge and Skills

Interviews with alumni, individually and in focus groups, with their employers, and with specialists in the labor markets indicate that the CASS model of training is successful to very successful at disseminating what has been learned during their academic programs.

Many CASS graduates reported that they had participated in training courses to pass on skills acquired in the U.S. to others. Many teachers in Central America and in the Dominican Republic, for example, talked explicitly about the courses they were giving and the "multiplier effect" that was being produced among classmates and in school districts about learning techniques ("*haciendo el efecto multiplicador de técnicas de aprendizaje a compañeros de escuela y distritos escolares*").

16. Numbers of People Benefiting in U.S. and Home Countries from Training One Student

The training of each CASS student affects many people, both in his/her home country and in the United States.

In the participant's home country, these beneficiaries include the family, friends, employers and co-workers. If the returned participant teaches more effectively, trains others to be more productive or starts a new community service, the impact may reach whole communities. In the U.S., these include people in the college community, host families, businesses the student frequents, businesses where internships are done, voluntary agencies where students volunteer, and the people served by those agencies.

Data collected for this evaluation show that CASS participants are highly motivated and perform well in the U.S. community college environment. They complete their studies successfully and return home to better paying jobs. The program unquestionably is a life-changing event for the participants. It has a major impact on their skills and outlook, enhances their employment prospects, and leads to substantially increased income. They become more productive members of their respective countries' economies, and often help others to be more productive. However, quantifying this impact, comparing it with costs or with alternative investments, would be extremely difficult, a task beyond the scope of this evaluation.

17. Cost Effectiveness of Different Models of Training and Possible Cost Reductions for the CASS Model

Few, if any, training programs are similar to CASS. CASS targets rural, underprivileged young people and requires an in-country staff in order to reach the right kind of participant. This uniqueness precludes calculating cost-effectiveness based on comparisons with others.

Evaluators spoke with the CIED staff and other education and training implementers, such as the Academy for Educational Development, Creative Associates, Partners of the Americas, USAID officials in the home countries, and specialists about other training programs for recent high school graduates from anywhere in the world in technical fields for one or two years at U.S. community colleges. No one could suggest any program similar to the CASS model. What makes it unique is the focus on recruiting 18-25 year olds, most of whom are from rural zones, and many of whom are women, from ethnic or minority groups, or people with disabilities; nearly all are from low-income families.

The ingredients integral to the CASS program and its successes (a high completion rate, a high return rate, a strong work ethic, English language skills, a positive attitude toward the U.S., employable graduates, greater job responsibility and mobility, etc.) are the factors of careful recruitment and selection, intensive ESL, host family support, increasing use of English in technical instruction, and close supervision by on-campus coordinators. These appear to be necessary ingredients to train a young socio-economically disadvantaged person and raise them to a level where they can participate actively and responsibly in a democratic society.

CIED appears to acquire and manage these services in an efficient manner. The evaluation did not see areas where significant additional economies could be realized in the provision of these services.

18. Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) System

An assessment of four of the several CASS survey forms reveals that the M&E system produces clear, adequate, and useful information for USAID reporting needs.

The Aguirre evaluators examined two of three types of CASS questionnaires used to measure students' progress at the colleges and the *ex-becarios*' employment rate and civic participation in their home countries. A survey form used in the home countries to determine future workforce needs and new fields of study satisfactorily meets CASS's planning and reporting needs. The two forms that were examined about students and alumni generate unambiguous and useful information with which CASS can manage and continually improve its programs and fulfill USAID reporting requirements.

The Employment and Impact Survey for two-year ex-becarios includes about 15 easily answered questions about employment, continuing education, community, and leadership activities. The tables in both reports about the survey data indicate that more than 60 percent of the respondents participate in community activities in the localities of their parents' home. Given that 80 percent of the ex-becarios were originally from rural areas, the survey data seem to reveal that most continue to spend much of their times in these areas.

The Students' Evaluation Web Site has functioned for more than three years, belonging to USAID's TraiNet database maintained by DevIs. It presents four questionnaires allowing the measurement of students' opinions about the pre-departure orientation workshops, their experiences after 6 and 20-months of study, and the re-entry workshops on returning home. More than 90 percent of CASS participants fill out the questionnaire, partly due to the many reminders from the Georgetown CASS office and the home-country offices and the less than 10 minutes needed to respond to the questions.

19. Administration, Management, and Planning

The evaluation team found that the CASS program is well designed and managed.

Among the factors that make the program successful, key design and management characteristics include:

- *The motivation of the students.* CASS does an excellent job of selecting students.
- *The role of the community colleges.* U.S. community colleges are perhaps uniquely capable of providing appropriate training to CASS participants in a nurturing, supportive environment. The personal attention given to the students by CASS coordinators, college administrators, instructors, community and church leaders, businesspeople and host families are key to the very positive experience that participants enjoy.
- *Delegation of authority.* CIED delegates considerable authority to the country

coordinators and participating community colleges, making them responsible for much of the decision-making about program implementation. CIED sets policies; it does not “micro-manage” operations.

- *Learning from experience.* The program staff learns from experience and puts that knowledge into practice. Many problems that emerged in the early days of the program have been effectively addressed.

Recommendations

Some of the following recommendations grow out of the findings on the key issues discussed above. Other recommendations in the section below flow from the evaluation team’s observations and analyses. Many of these considerations and recommendations relate to marketing, fundraising, and public relations. Others focus on issues to be addressed by U.S. college coordinators, CIED staff, and host families and on ways to motivate greater contact between colleges, people in the surrounding communities, and the returned alumni.

In-Country Activities

- *CASS should explore the possibility of increasing contributions to the program* through (1) collaboration with PVOs and NGOs such as Partners of the Americas, Ashoka, World Wildlife Fund, Conservation International, and others, and (2) undertaking a campaign in the participating countries to increase public awareness of the program. Private sector organizations are aware of the CASS Program, but perhaps less so of its successes. Increasing public recognition of CASS will increase the marketability of graduates and enhance the potential to generate private-sector financial support for CASS-sponsored activities, tapping into their corporate social responsibility. CASS may wish to revisit some of its past supporters and donors whose contacts may no longer be maintained.
- *Explore and invest in low-cost options to increase CASS visibility in the participating countries.* The CASS Program has a great story to tell about disadvantaged young people who receive an incredible opportunity to experience another world, who come home and find their lives changed forever. During 16 years, as the number of returning graduates increased and their competencies became known, CASS has become increasingly well-known. There is now a limited “brand recognition.” This increased visibility is useful to graduates when they seek employment. Eventually, it might also make it somewhat easier for graduates to obtain credit from local universities for their U.S. studies. And finally, enhanced visibility for a U.S. Government-financed program that provides educational opportunity to low income and minority youths enhances the image of the U.S. and is supportive of U.S. foreign policy interests.

One seemingly simple and inexpensive method to increase visibility would be for each CASS country office to publish and distribute a “CASS in Country Name” pamphlet. This booklet could be used for recruiting applicants, encouraging employers to consider hiring CASS graduates and generally to inform the press and public about the program. Country coordinators might also market CASS more vigorously through publicity

packages, creating a “buzz” through press relations, brochures and other public relations devices.

An effort to make the CASS “brand” better known would provide an opportunity at the same time to expand contacts with and support from the private sector. This might result in private sector sponsorship of publicity kits or in-country alumni activities by the program’s satisfied customers.

- *Explore methods to broaden contacts with local organizations, such as the various Chambers of Commerce in each country.* Appropriately, CASS has created a number of subsidiary in-country programs that support their primary program, such as the Project Formulation and Evaluation (PFE teaches how to conduct development projects in alumni’s home communities), *Técnicas en soluciones empresariales* (TSE, a web-based program in business education), and the Honduras Strengthening Democratic Institutions program. The evaluators feel that, in some cases, these activities may have the potential to be “spun off” as potential sources of ongoing support and funding at the country level.
- *CASS should examine ways to expand its linkages and partnering with other organizations in each country, especially European, Japanese, and other U.S. organizations that may provide resources and funding to underwrite scholarship costs* (for example, Peace Corps, Partners of the Americas, AED, and others). Given the environmental focus of some of the training, World Wildlife Fund or Conservation International may prove to be “natural,” useful partners for follow-on activities or project funding for returned trainees. Legitimate and rated eco-tourist businesses may be suitable partners.
- *Consider creating an Internet-based directory of alumni, which would permit searches by name, field of study, country, year of program, etc.* This could be an important resource to assist alumni in networking with graduates not only from their countries but also in the other seven. Moreover, employers could use the directory to identify potentially qualified workers in their region, and in-country offices would use this resource to guide trainees in the job search. CIED would need to consider standard privacy concerns and would probably need candidates’ permission to include them. It might create a simple data-entry screen in which trainees write the relevant information. Such a website might become one more marketing tool in a “branding” campaign to publicize the customer satisfaction with the product and, in turn, conduct fundraising. It should be noted that CASS has employed an Internet director in El Salvador for the purpose of providing employment assistance.
- *Strengthen alumni associations in some of the eight countries.* For example, the Guatemalan ties and activities lacked vitality or were non-existent. CASS might profitably review what are the “best practices” in Honduras, for instance, that may be useful as lessons for countries where these networks have faltered or become frayed. Branding, publicity, and cause-related marketing for fundraising may increase the value even more of being a CASS product so that all association members have even more incentive to participate in the association. The alumni associations and contacts between

graduates in Honduras and the Dominican Republic are a valuable resource. Beyond the social ties that such associations foster, the evaluators see them as a source for the growth of trainees' "social capital." This relates directly to the goal of fostering democracy, given that it is widely argued that strong social capital leads to greater participatory decision-making and a greater willingness to take part in community affairs and volunteerism.

- *Strengthen the cooperation between CASS and USAID on the selection of areas of study and in other areas.* CASS currently conducts, in each country, a "Survey of Employment Needs," which includes business people, government officers, NGOs, and USAID staff. In most countries, USAID staff offer suggestions. The results of the survey are synthesized to guide the selection of fields of study. However, not all the appropriate staff was, in at least one of the countries, fully aware of the results of the survey and how the decisions mesh with their own strategic planning. CIED might consider involving CASS country coordinators in a greater exchange with USAID after the first phase of field selection is completed, so that they can obtain some feedback from the Missions. This may enhance the awareness of USAID staff about the program's effectiveness at matching new fields of study to fast changing labor market and training needs, bridging any "information gaps" that USAID staff may perceive. The publicity campaign and cause-related marketing would require not only approval but also some collaboration from USAID, a process tightening the linkages between the Mission, its NGO and member network, and CASS.
- *Continue to explore ways to facilitate the transfer of college credits to institutions in the home countries.* The evaluation recognizes that making the transfer of course credits to home countries easier is a challenge with no straightforward way to address. More reciprocity agreements may help, somewhat. CASS presently provides graduates with a notarized, properly authenticated transcript (and diploma where required) of his or her college grades. A long-term solution to this structural educational problem in the eight countries will probably result only from the branding and marketing campaign of the CASS-USAID logo and educational product, perhaps partly conducted along with in-country universities offering similar two-year technical training such as Universidad Galileo in Guatemala (Appendix E, Country Reports).
- *Investigate the possibility of providing some additional, low-cost English training to candidates prior to their travel to the U.S.* This could consist of cassette tapes and manuals, a short intensive course in country, or even a stay with an American family (such as USAID families that might host a student for a week). We recognize that there are certain obstacles to implementing this: the additional cost, logistical challenges, and the fact that it is important that all trainees get the same opportunities. However, we feel that a "head start" in the language by these motivated trainees would be very useful to them as they strive to learn English quickly during their first few weeks in the U.S.
- *Consider maintaining applicant files for a standard period—such as three to five years.* Such standardization in the eight countries would (1) facilitate their tracking of repeat

applicants and (2) provide an ongoing, comparative pool for career tracking and for evaluation, whether by CASS, outside evaluators or disgruntled candidates.

Relating to U.S. Implementation

- *Consider the creation of a more structured leadership-training component.* Leadership training is an important aspect of CASS philosophy; what that means is appropriately variable, given the variety of technical fields. At times, however, the training appears to be submerged in other activities in ways that make unclear which leadership issues are addressed. Clearly, trainees arrive home with skills that contribute to leadership, such as presentation skills, speaking, etc.

The training might include lectures and readings during the pre-departure and re-entry workshops and at least once while in the colleges that help students to sharpen their skills in (1) leadership, (2) management, and (3) entrepreneurship so that all participants become business people in whatever field of study they work. The TSE program may provide a model.

- *Review policies about the selection of host families, especially with respect to language spoken in the home.* The evaluation team noted a wide variety of host family placements and commends the program for its efforts in providing this strong social and civic responsibility dimension. We would concur with the idea that “it takes a community to train a CASS student,” and that the host family alone is only part of the broad cultural experience available to CASS students. However, we would ask campus coordinators to bear in mind the importance of an English-speaking home environment for the trainees as they work to expand host-family networks. This concern is not an issue in many regions where trainees study, such as in the Midwest or Northeast. In Texas and California, though, it appears that many Spanish-speaking students are placed in homes where Spanish is spoken. Admittedly, in some localities the recruitment of host families is a continual challenge. Trainees in English-speaking homes described how important that language experience is for learning English more rapidly.
- *Review whether some state or college regulations may lessen program impact.* CIED and college coordinators may wish to assess the role regulations in Texas play in creating obstacles for primarily Spanish-speaking trainees to register for credit, due to the provision that students must qualify in English to enroll. While the emphasis in the Program on gaining an A.A. degree has lessened in recent years, it may be worth tracking whether the difficulty of accumulating college credits has an adverse impact on trainee educational and career paths.
- *Explore methods to strengthen or build long-term linkages between participating U.S. and Latin American and Caribbean institutions and individuals.* Campus coordinators and CIED might consider investigating low-cost means to encourage greater contact between community colleges (professors, fellow students, host family members) and the returned alumni, especially that based on travel by U.S. stakeholders and friends to the CASS countries. One of the great benefits in the U.S. is the impact that the program has

on local communities where students serve as “friendship ambassadors.” During this time of heightened awareness about “public diplomacy” as a great asset for U.S. international relations, the evaluators heard several stories of visits by community members and friends to alumni at home. Such educational and eco-tourism to the eight countries clearly has a strong effect in building ongoing ties between the U.S., Central America, and the Caribbean, creating strong advocates for the CASS program, perhaps even sources of publicity and funding. CIED might examine how the program can encourage and facilitate those contacts, perhaps through initiatives on the campuses or a travel agency that may be interested in serving as a catalyst for these visits. Aside from encouraging the development of long-term linkages, travel of college staff to CASS countries helps them to understand the environment from which the students come and to which they will return. This understanding will allow the colleges to create programs that will serve the needs of these students. The evaluation team saw evidence of colleges’ strong commitment to enhance international programs, and at least one college president indicated a willingness to entertain the idea of subsidizing the overseas travel of his staff.

Outline of the Report

Following the Executive Summary, this report is divided into five sections and seven appendices.

- Chapter One provides background information about the CASS program and about the evaluation.
- Chapter Two examines the participants’ assessment of their programs, drawing on the survey results and open-ended interviews for the findings.
- Chapter Three reports on the participants’ role in the workforce of their countries, and looks at data on employment, job mobility, and the application of training.
- Chapter Four reviews the participants’ roles in serving as multipliers of the training, their roles in the community, and the ways in which they discuss the impact on their lives of the program.
- Chapter Five presents the evaluation team’s findings and recommendations.

CHAPTER ONE

Program and Evaluation Background

Program Background

The Cooperative Association of States for Scholarships (CASS) is a scholarship program administered since 1985 at Georgetown University's Center for Intercultural Education and Development (CIED). The program is funded through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Agency of International Development (USAID). The goal is to improve the human capacity and the potential for sustainable development in Central America and the Caribbean by educating socio-economically disadvantaged people. CASS achieves this goal by providing technical and leadership skills to low-income students, as well as primary-school teachers, interpreters of sign language, rural health specialists, construction supervisors, nurses, and "persons with disabilities" such as the deaf.

The CASS scholarships are intended to advance the strategic objectives of USAID's Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) Bureau, which manages the program, by:

- improving human capacity based on education in technical careers and training in civic participation;
- strengthening broad-based economic growth and agricultural development;
- promoting high-quality environmental management undergirding long-term sustainability;
- protecting the health of Central Americans and peoples of the Caribbean and stabilizing the population growth in these countries;
- increasing the depth and quality of human resources and of educational and environmental policies; and
- advancing democracy, institutions of civil society, and the understanding of a free enterprise, market-based economy in countries with weak political cultures or voting traditions at risk during years of civil war.

During the 1994-2001 period of this study CASS has awarded scholarships to approximately 2,342 individuals from the 17 countries in Central American and the Caribbean. However, the number of participating countries was reduced to eight in 1996. These countries include the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Nicaragua, and Panama.

The CASS program focuses on students and professionals from living in rural areas and coming from minority groups and/or disadvantaged populations. As a result, the program has recruited high percentages of the rural poor, women, people with disabilities, and members of ethnic groups such as Maya and Lenca Indians or Garifunas.

CASS scholarships last 3-6, 12 or 24 months at some twenty participating U.S. community colleges and universities. During the eight-year evaluation period, seventy-five percent of the scholarships were for two years, and 25 percent were for one year or less. The shorter CASS scholarship programs began in 1995 and increased in importance over the following years. Short programs represented more than 40 percent of scholarship recipients in Fiscal Years 1999, 2000 and 2001. Nevertheless, the two-year scholarship remains the core CASS program. Approximately 244 CASS students are currently studying in the U.S.

CASS has provided scholarships for training in about 46 different fields of study. These fields include, for example, public health/vector control, education of primary school teachers and administrators, environmental protection (watershed management and waste management control), aquaculture, electronics and medical equipment repair, agricultural and industrial engineering technologies, quality control, interpretation of sign language, and many others. Fields of study are determined largely on the basis of the CIED's assessment of labor force needs in the participating countries.

The CASS experience includes considerably more than academic training. CASS students typically receive leadership training, training in English, opportunities to do volunteer work with local NGOs, short-term internships with U.S. businesses, and visits to and participation in events that expose the students to U.S. political, economic and social systems.

CIED has established an extensive system of policies and procedures that govern program operations. CIED has established and refined systems starting with the identification and recruitment of candidates and covering every phase until the participants return home. Indeed, there are also policies and programs to assist the returned participants reintegrate into their societies. CIED has also established and refined its policies for guiding and cooperating with the participating community colleges.

To implement this large and complex program, the CASS Program finances staff positions at CIED at Georgetown University, at eight in-country offices, and at the participating community colleges. Staff directly paid by CIED includes approximately 40 individuals, including 19 at CIED in Washington, D.C. (12 full-time and 7 part-time) and several in each of the eight countries. In addition, CIED indirectly pays some of the costs of CASS coordinators and support staff (approximately 40 people) who administer the CASS training and support programs at the participating U.S. colleges and universities. (The support staff at the colleges¹ seems to vary from one to four or five individuals, depending on the size and complexity of the program.)

Funding

The CASS program is financed by USAID under three cooperative agreements. CASS expenditures during the FY1994-2001 evaluation period total approximately \$102 million, an average expenditure of around \$12.75 million per year. However, due to limitations on USAID

¹ The terms "colleges" or "community colleges" are used throughout this report to refer to the U.S. community, junior, technical colleges; two, four-year colleges; and, one small university that are CIED's partners in the CASS program

resources, expenditures have fallen in recent years. In FY 2001, expenditures totaled \$10.7 million.

The evaluation estimates the average USAID cost to per student-year at slight over \$20,000. The cost to USAID of a two-year scholarship is thus approximately \$40,000. There is also a significant contribution, approximately \$575 per student-month, from participating community colleges. Adding these costs to USAID-financed costs suggest a total investment per student-year of a little over \$27,000. (See Appendix G for a fuller discussion of program costs and financing.)

The Program Cycle

Recruitment

The CASS program focuses on recruiting youth (17-25 years old) and professionals (25-45 years old with three years of employment). The younger group often includes primarily recent high school graduates, many of whom have little employment experience outside of the household. The program seeks to identify youths who are not married, who have leadership ability, community spirit and academic potential. English capability is not a requirement, and most students recruited for the two-year program have little English ability.

The older cohort consists of people currently employed in the occupations that are the focus of shorter CASS training programs. These individuals are often married, and many have children. CASS programs for these participants have provided training in primary education (for 6-12 months), rural health services (for six to twelve months), construction and disaster relief (for six to twelve months, limited to construction supervisors from the Dominican Republic, Honduras, and Nicaragua), and nursing (for four to six months).

Each Fall, CIED meets with country coordinators in Washington, D.C., to draft a recruitment plan in order to achieve the goals of finding candidates who meet these program requirements. Recruitment levels vary from year to year, depending largely on the amount of financing available from USAID. CIED determines the fields of study and the numbers of participants that will be selected from each country. Country plans target priority geographic regions and populations. Country coordinators seek to identify several candidates for the available places. Country coordinators rely on a strong support network—such as alumni, NGOs, community leaders, educators, USAID officials, members of chambers of commerce—to locate potential candidates. The CASS in-country staff occasionally travels to rural areas to meet with support network members to train them about the recruitment policies.

Selection

In January, following the Fall recruitment, country coordinators begin the first of three screening stages to select final candidates, assuring that the goal of three to four applicants for each field of study is reached. During February, the second stage, they review and rank the candidates based on their grades, essays, recommendations, scheduling them for interviews in late February and March. During this third stage, country coordinators organize an interview committee including

USAID officials, potential employers, support network members such as alumni, and private or public sector experts in the technical fields of study for which CASS is recruiting. The committee rates candidates based on experience in the field of study, speaking ability, likelihood of easy adaptation to a new country, leadership potential, community and country commitment, and potential to be a successful cultural friendship ambassador in the U.S. The final selection of the candidates occurs during the annual CASS meeting in April in Washington, D.C. Although the final selection is the responsibility of the representatives of the colleges, the selection represents the combined efforts of country coordinators, CIED staff, and the college representatives who decide on those most likely to be successful.

Language Training and Orientation

Scholarship winners participate in three orientations before leaving for their colleges. During the first predeparture orientation, they go through medical and dental examinations in order to qualify for U.S. J-1 visas and to fulfill other USAID and Georgetown requirements. They participate in an announcement ceremony during which the students' parents, members of the support network, USAID officials, and others accept them into the scholarship program. Parents and family members attend a seminar about CASS. During the second stage of the predeparture, the students receive materials from their colleges which are discussed in a seminar directed by country coordinators, a psychologist, alumni, and guest speakers. Often, CIED staff participates. During the final stage, the students receive airline tickets and final instructions immediately before traveling to the U.S.

All non-native English-speaking students on two-year scholarships begin training in English as a second language immediately on arriving. Some colleges offer technical courses in Spanish for the first few weeks or months. All subsequent course work is in English. Older students on 3-12 month scholarships receive their training in Spanish or French, receiving only training in survival English skills.

The Role of Participating Community Colleges

The U.S. training forms the heart of the CASS program and its reason for existence. Since 1994, the program has depended on about 35-40 colleges. Currently it relies on 15-20 colleges, including three Historically Black Colleges and five Hispanic Serving Institutions. Some of the U.S. colleges offering training to CASS students have collaborated with the program since its start some 16 years ago; others—such as El Paso Community College and Hillsborough Community College in Tampa, Florida—have joined recently. New colleges have joined primarily when they are able to offer training in a field of study that is new to the CASS program; this has occurred in recent years in health, education, and aquaculture. If the training program is to be one year or less, the colleges must be able to provide the training in Spanish.

As noted above, these CIED partner institutions are required to make considerable financial contributions to the program. These contributions average about one-third of the on-campus cost and about one-quarter of the total USAID/CIED expenditure per student.

The colleges provide students with the following: local transportation, room, and board; host families; internships and training opportunities; academic and emotional counsel; formal guidance about leadership; opportunities to contribute to the host communities based on volunteer activities; the chance to be friendship ambassadors and teachers about their home countries; situations in which students become more aware about democracy, gender and ethnic equality, and the environment; and re-entry workshops dealing with the difficulties of returning home and employment skills.

The participating colleges are strongly committed to the CASS program. Senior college administrators indicate that the colleges receive benefits that far exceed their financial contribution to the program. Faculty and community members are very supportive. Occasionally, college staff members visit one or more of the eight CASS countries to participate in candidate selection and to see how their courses fit the country needs.

Preparation for Re-entry and Participant Follow-up Activities

Many of the two-year trainees have participated in regional re-entry conferences. Since the early 1990s colleges close to each other organize meetings for the trainees so that they can practice leadership skills in front of a large CASS group. In 1999, CASS changed the focus of these conferences from leadership to re-entry skills to help participants even more with their concerns about returning home.

Two to three weeks after arriving in their home countries, alumni participate in a re-entry workshop. These workshops help the returned participants to hone further their job-hunting skills and to provide a venue for them to talk about their worries and hopes after being away for two years.

Since 1994, CASS has provided alumni with additional training in four different programs. The first was *Técnicas en Soluciones Empresariales*, a web-based distance learning education in El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, and Panamá. The second was three conferences since 1998 in three different countries for the deaf and interpreters. The third was Project Formulation and Evaluation, training in seven of the countries so that alumni learned how to write funding proposals to obtain the wherewithal to address local, rural community problems. The final one took place in 1999, providing alumni with the training to update their computer skills.

Alumni associations exist in all CASS countries, although these organizations are stronger and more active in some countries than others. These associations provide *ex-becarios* with opportunities for job networking, for participating in community projects and for socializing with friends who have shared similar experiences in the U.S. (See also Chapter 4 and Appendix E, Guatemala Country Report.)

EVALUATION OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

This evaluation focuses on CASS activities from 1994, the year of its last evaluation, through 2001. Pursuant to USAID's scope of work (see Appendix A), Aguirre International designed the evaluation in order to accomplish the following:

- Assess the extent that CASS has fulfilled during the last six years the terms and conditions of its Cooperative Agreement since 1994, when an evaluation last took place;
- Assess program quality and effectiveness and, to the extent possible, recommend ways to make the program stronger and more cost-effective; and
- Identify new directions so that would permit LAC/RSD/EHR and CASS to fine-tune its future training programs in Latin America and the Caribbean.

This evaluation is based upon interviews with individuals thoroughly familiar with the program in Washington, in three participating CASS countries and at six partnering community colleges or universities. At the CIED office of CASS, the team met with key central office staff, including the Center Director and managers of the domestic and international components of the program. The evaluation team visited Guatemala, Honduras and the Dominican Republic. In each of these countries, the team interviewed the CASS staff, USAID personnel, business leaders and other knowledgeable persons, and employers of returned graduates. The team also interviewed many program alumni, singly, in groups, and as part of a formal survey, holding focus group discussions with about 30 graduates and administering a survey to about 316 returned CASS students from a total of 838 who have finished their training. At six participating U.S. community colleges, the evaluation team met with and administered a survey to the CASS students currently in attendance, and it met with a variety of CASS administrators, senior college administrators, instructors, internship providers, NGOs where CASS students volunteer and host families (See Appendix B for discussion of methodologies).

Although CASS recruited and trained individuals from 17 countries under a previous cooperative agreement, this assessment focused only on the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Nicaragua, and Panama. Beyond the logistical and cost considerations that would be involved in traveling to all eight countries, discussions between the evaluation team and the program director led to a consensus that the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, and Honduras represent three clearly contrasting cases in terms of program size, country economic circumstances, and contrasting experiences with reform. What also justified selection of the Dominican Republic and Honduras was that Aguirre evaluated their programs in 1994, providing a longitudinal dimension to the November-December 2001 assessments. The evaluation team considers that its interviews with 316 returnees in two Central American and one Caribbean country yielded a varied and representative view of the program in the eight CASS countries. (See Appendix B for a fuller discussion of the evaluation team's methodology.)

The Aguirre International evaluation team consisted of Roger Rasnake, Senior Research Associate; Tom Judy, Senior Research Associate; consultants David M. Stemper and Gerald Wein; and three in-country coordinators, Fidel Arévalo in Guatemala, Miriam Meza in Honduras, and Tahira Vargas in the Dominican Republic.

Outline of the Report

Following the Executive Summary, this report is divided into five sections and seven appendices.

- Chapter One provides background information about the CASS program and about the evaluation.
- Chapter Two examines the participants' assessment of their programs, drawing on the survey results and open-ended interviews for the findings.
- Chapter Three reports on the participants' role in the workforce of their countries, and looks at data on employment, job mobility, and the application of training.
- Chapter Four reviews the participants' roles in serving as multipliers of the training, their roles in the community, and the ways in which they discuss the impact on their lives of the program.
- Chapter Five presents the evaluation team's findings and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

Participant Assessment of U.S. Training

Introduction: Who Are the Participants in the Survey?

This study partly draws its findings and conclusions from the information provided by 316 CASS alumni who participated in a quantitative survey conducted from December 2001 to February 2002. It also draws on discussions with 90 other persons (some pre-1994 alumni), participants who agreed to take part in in-depth interviews and in group discussions and with others who were involved in program design and implementation. All of the alumni who participated in the survey came to the United States to start their U.S. training at the beginning of FY 1994, and the last came in early 1999. Most of the participants interviewed more extensively were also drawn from that period, although some came earlier. Table 2.1 shows respondents by country.

Table 2.1 Alumni Interviewed from the Three Countries

	DR		Guatemala		Honduras		Total	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Men	43	43	36	40	60	47	139	44
Women	56	57	54	60	67	53	177	56
Total	99	100	90	100	127	100	316	100

N=316

About 31.3 percent (99) of the survey respondents were from the Dominican Republic, 28.5 percent (90) were from Guatemala and, 40.2 percent (127), were from Honduras (Figure 2.1). Fifty six percent were women (Figure 2.2 and Table 2.2). Among the approximately 2,342 graduates of the program from 1994 to 2001, 84 percent received scholarships for 24 months.

Figure 2.1. Country of Origin

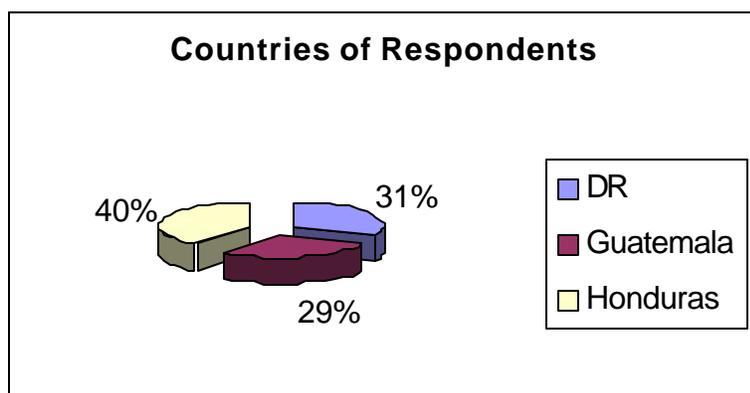


Figure 2.2. Sex of Survey Respondents

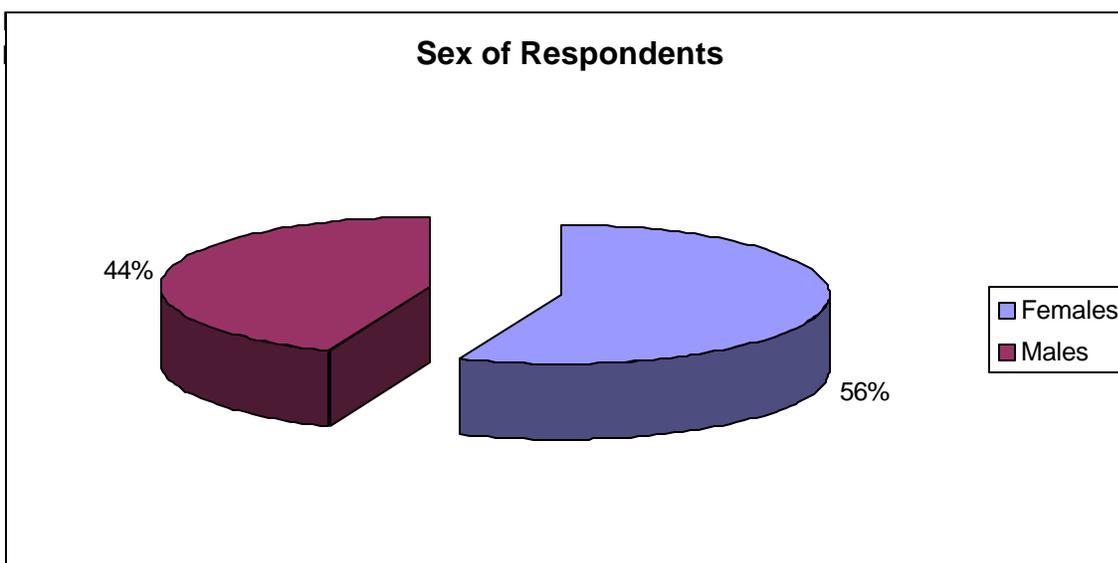


Table 2.2 Men and Women from the Three Countries

	DR		Guatemala		Honduras		Total	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Men	43	43	36	40	60	47	139	44
Women	56	57	54	60	67	53	177	56
Total	99	100	90	100	127	100	316	100

N=316

Program Location and Fields of Study

CASS survey respondents carried out their programs through a range of colleges and universities around the U.S. The illustrative list (from the 2000-2001 Cycles) in Table 2.3 gives examples of the locations and types of institutions partnering with the program, as well as the field of study or studies offered at these institutions.

Table 2.3. CASS Partner Organizations and Fields of Study

COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY	STATE	FIELD OF STUDY
Alamo Community College	Texas	Teacher Training Public Health: Vector Control
Berkshire Community College	Massachusetts	Environment: Watershed Management
Broome Community College	New York	X-Ray Technology Quality Control
El Paso Community College	Texas	Rural Healthcare Services
Florida Community College at Jacksonville	Florida	Industrial Maintenance and Management
Fox Valley Technical College	Wisconsin	Quality Improvement Process Specialist
Harris-Stowe State College	Missouri	Teacher Training
Hillsborough Community College	Florida	Aquaculture
Iowa Western Community College	Iowa	Agribusiness

Kentucky State University	Kentucky	Electronics: Medical Equipment Repair Teacher Training
Modesto Junior College	California	Teacher Training Agricultural Technology
Mount Aloysius College	Pennsylvania	Computer Applications (Deaf Group)
Mt Hood Community College	Oregon	Integrated Natural Resources Technology
Reedley College	California	Agricultural Technology
Scott Community College	Iowa	X-Ray Technology
St. Louis Community College	Missouri	Electronics: Telecommunications
CURRENT ONE-YEAR CASS PARTNERS	STATE	FIELDS OF STUDY
Alamo Community College	Texas	Primary Teachers
El Paso Community College	Texas	Health Care
Harris-Stowe College	Missouri	Primary Teachers
West Hills College	California	
PAST CASS PARTNER INSTITUTIONS SINCE 1994	STATE	
Central Florida Community College	Florida	
Edmonds Community College	Washington	
Hesston College	Kansas	
Hocking College	Ohio	
Kirkwood community College	Iowa	
Missouri School for the Blind	Missouri	
Santa Fe Community College	Florida	
St. Petersburg Junior College	Florida	
University of South Carolina at Sumter	South Carolina	
University of Wisconsin at Marinette	Wisconsin	
Utah Valley State University	Utah	

Overall Satisfaction with Their U.S. Training Program

The overwhelming majority of CASS participants reported that their academic training experience was excellent.

Among the 316 alumni, 91 to 97 percent were "satisfied" or "very satisfied" when responding to questions about eight different aspects of their training. Moreover, based on site visits and interviews, participants were individually enthusiastic about all the venues of training, from Modesto Junior College in California, and Alamo Community College District in San Antonio, to Broome Community College in Binghamton.

The 316 respondents were also asked to think back to their U.S. training experience and rate their levels of satisfaction with eight components of the program (Table 2.4).

- Course content
- Instructor’s competence
- Pace of instruction
- Educational facilities (labs, libraries, etc.)
- Housing
- Medical care
- Services and programs for international students
- General university/community activities

Table 2.4. Satisfaction with Program Components

Program Component	Positive		Neutral		Negative	
	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
Course content	301	95.2%	9	2.8%	3	0.9%
Instructors’ competence	304	96.2%	7	2.2%	4	1.3%
Educational facilities (labs, libraries, etc.)	308	97.5%	4	1.3%	3	0.9%
Pace of instruction	288	91.2%	20	6.3	7	2.2%
Housing	294	92.9%	11	3.5%	9	2.8%
Services/programs for international students	291	92.1%	18	5.8%	4	1.3%
General school/community activities	301	95.3%	8	2.5%	4	1.3%
Medical care	272	86.1%	23	7.3%	18	5.6%
<i>n=313-315</i>						

Here, three components most closely related to the academic dimension of the programs received very high ratings—course content, the instructors’ capacity and competence, and the quality of the educational facilities. In the first two cases, the positive responses were nearly universal. A large majority was positive about the pace of instruction and about housing.

A majority was positive about the programs for international students at their campus, and about six percent were neutral. This appears to be due to the fact that many respondents did not participate actively in programs specifically designed for international students because they remained busy with their academic programs and with their internships and volunteering. With respect to their experience with the U.S. medical system, 12.9 percent were neutral or negative and some 86.1 percent were positive. While medical care frequently gains the lowest ratings in similar surveys, it is important to note that many had little contact with the medical system—and thus had little opportunity to form an opinion—because they were healthy.

There is very little difference in levels of satisfaction between women and men. Women were slightly less satisfied with housing than men, but only slightly more than the statistically significant level.

Assessment of Utility of Training

A majority of respondents evaluated the training as useful and relevant across a range of applications, from improving professional skills to making contacts in the U.S. and abroad.

The 316 alumni rated on a four-point scale, from “not useful” to “very useful,” the utility of their training with respect to the nine areas listed in Table 2.5. These characteristics relate both to professional skills and to networking for career advancement. Included are a self-assessments of leadership abilities and volunteering. Overall, the participants rated the training highly with respect to such work-related characteristics as learning new skills, improving professional abilities, learning to work in a team context, and preparing for career changes. A majority also found the training either useful or very useful for meeting colleagues, both from the region, the home country, and the U.S. A large percentage (80.7%) felt that the training was useful for improving their leadership abilities. No difference in evaluating the overall utility of training existed between men and women. The average of the nine attributes was 3.58—with 4 being very useful.

Table 2.5. The Utility of Training

Program Component	Very Useful		Useful		Somewhat Useful		Not Useful	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Improvement of my professional abilities	237	75	72	22.8	6	1.9	0	0.0
Learning new skills/techniques for work	245	77.5	66	20.9	4	1.3	0	0.0
Learning to work in a team context	232	73.4	74	23.4	6	1.9	2	0.6
Preparation for a career change	218	69	81	25.6	10	3.2	6	1.9
Opportunities to “network,” to meet U.S. citizens in my field	214	67.7	70	22.2	28	8.9	3	0.9
Opportunities to meet other colleagues from my country in my field	173	54.7	94	29.7	35	11.1	14	4.4
Opportunities to meet colleagues in my field from other countries in the region	164	51.9	92	29.1	43	13.6	17	5.4
Improvement of leadership abilities	255	80.7	54	17.2	4	1.3	1	0.3
Volunteering and community work	164	51.9	92	29.1	43	13.6	17	5.4
<i>n=314 to 315</i>								

Internships

Internships were consistently cited by those who had them as a key factor in the success of their U.S. experience.

Among the 316 respondents, 13 (4%) did not participate in an internship; seven alumni failed to answer the question; and 296 (94.3%) percent rated their internship. Twenty respondents (6.3%)

rated it as “ineffective” or “very ineffective;” 22 (7%) rated it as “neutral;” and 256 (81.1%) rated it as “effective” to “very effective.”

The single most important factor in the ability of participants to transform their training experience into concrete applications was the internship (Table 2.6). The success of the internship often depended largely on the motivation and resourcefulness of the participants. As one participant put it, the internship was the way to put into practice the theory of the classroom. In many cases, the program (especially the internship) contributed directly to the career path of the person, in a way that neither employers nor employees could have foreseen prior to their U.S. experience.

Table 2.6. Perceived Effectiveness of the Internship

	Very Effective		Effective		Neutral		Ineffective		Very Ineffective		Total
	Count	% within Gender	Count	% within Gender	Count	% within Gender	Count	% within Gender	Count	% within Gender	
Female	72	43.4	65	39.2	17	10.2	11	6.6	1	0.6	166
Male	58	44.6	59	45.4	5	3.8	8	6.2	0	0	130
Total	130	43.9	124	41.9	22	7.4	19	6.4	1	0.3	296

n=296

From qualitative interviews, we learned that the majority of the participants were placed in reasonably appropriate settings, consistent with their fields of training. Many reported very valuable experiences. Others were less enthusiastic, and about 14 percent of the returnees surveyed were either neutral or found some aspect of their internship experience to be “ineffective” or “very ineffective.”

Examples of the types of internships that participants took part in give some idea of the range of activities that they undertook:

Among 17 of the 99 Dominicans answering survey questions, several worked in quality control departments in businesses, hospitals, and colleges. Some designed websites, while others worked in the packing of industrial and agricultural goods (see country reports—Appendix E—regarding focus-group participants and internships).

Seventy-three of 90 Guatemalan alumni described their internship as a valuable experience. The internships involved work with: frozen fruit laboratories, shrimp farms, installation of computer equipment and learning about the most recent computers, beer making and coffee classification, the Oregon Department of Agricultural Exports, administrative assistant on a cruise ship, the Fresno, California, orchid and flower export center, and a milk pasteurizing and bottling plant (see Appendix E, Country Reports for more details about 19 focus group interviews in Guatemala City).

All 127 of the Honduran alumni described their internships on the questionnaires. Some of their descriptions were about: computer repairs, aquaculture (for example, in the Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute and in Hydrometria, Inc. in Florida), quality control in the Portland Bottling Company or the Bush Beer Company, and in several hospitals and farms (the comments by 36 Honduran focus-group participants appear in the country report in Appendix E).

According to the survey, 94 percent of respondents reported that they had an internship.¹ Some who did not have any sort of internship experience appear to have been on shorter programs. The lack, however, was telling. Based on open-ended interviews, a few cases where longer-term students did not have (or did not arrange for themselves) internships appeared to correlate with training results that were less positive.

It is important to reiterate that the success of the internship program frequently rested with the motivation and resourcefulness of the participant. Many of the reported experiences that were most useful to the participants were those that resulted from their own research, contacts, and initiatives. In cases in which the participants were able to be very specific about what they needed, either they or their program managers at the universities were able to develop positive experiences. Least productive were those internships in which the participants had only a vague sense of what they wanted to accomplish and looked to the university programmers to provide them the internship experience.

The reports of negative cases are, however, few. When the 316 alumni were asked whether they were in contact with people at the workplace where they did the internship, 224 (70.9%) answered "yes." For the great majority, the internships were experiences that gave the participants a view of the workings of U.S. firms or NGOs. This is reflected in the high degree of enthusiasm expressed by many participants about the ways that their internship gave them self-confidence, continuing contacts, and even career benefits back home.

Conclusions

This study has shown that CASS has won high ratings across the board from its participants. Long-term participants generally give it the highest ratings, especially for the academic components of the program.

When survey respondents considered the utility of the training in areas beyond the specific technical content, they also gave high ratings. Long-term participants were likely to give considerably higher ratings to these qualities—working in a team context, preparations for a job change, opportunities to network—than short-term participants.

Finally, alumni generally saw the internships as a key element of their program, one which added a great deal to the overall experience. For many, the internship had a great impact on their subsequent career goals and even on the jobs they took on returning.

¹ This figure may well be low, since open-ended interviews indicated that some who replied “no” to the question of whether they had held internships were, in fact, thinking of formal four-to-eight week on-the-job training experiences, and may not have classified their own practical application experience as an “internship.”

CHAPTER THREE

Findings about Training and Participants' Careers and Institutions

CASS Employment Patterns

Alumni are actively engaged in careers and advancing both in their original fields and in new endeavors. In the CASS alumni survey, 78 percent of men and about 68 percent of women said that they were working when they entered the program (Table 3.1). At the time of the survey (December 2001 to January 2002), 90 percent of all CASS participants were working in some activity. This included 91 percent of the men (127 of 139 surveyed), and 89 percent of the women (157 of 176 surveyed). One of the 316 alumni did not respond to the question (Table 3.2).

Table 3.1 Working before Training by Country

	DR		Guatemala		Honduras		Total	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Yes	48	50	66	73	112	90	226	72
No	49	50	24	27	13	10	86	28
Total	97	100	90	100	125	100	312	100

N=312 of 316 respondents (97 of 99 DR, 100% of Guatemalans, 125 of 127 Hondurans)

Table 3.2. Working After Training by Country

	DR		Guatemala		Honduras		Total	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Yes	89	91	72	80	123	97	284	90
No	9	9	18	20	4	3	31	10
Total	98	100	90	100	127	100	315	100

N=315 of 316 respondents (98 of 99 DR, 100% of Guatemalans and Hondurans)

Of those not working, 21 respondents are actively seeking work. This group accounts for 7 percent of the total respondents. Five alumni (2% of the total respondents) have apparently withdrawn from the workforce for a variety of reasons, including raising children and studying. Indeed, 74 of the survey respondents (41 men and 33 women) report that they currently have *more* than one job or other income-earning activity (30 of which are in Guatemala, 26 in Honduras, and 18 in the Dominican Republic). These figures show that participants are actively engaged in the their countries' labor markets, and are, for the most part, in the prime of their working life.

Participants are dispersed throughout the full range of sectors of the economy. Table 3.3 provides a picture of the employment situations of the survey respondents.

Table 3.3. Detailed Sectors of Employment by Gender

Sector		Female	Male	Total
Self-employed	Count	4	11	15
	% within Gender	9.0	2.6	5.4
Private sector employer	Count	7	3	10
	% within	4.5	2.5	3.6
Private sector employee	Count	89	58	147
	% within	57.8	47.5	53
Cooperative or non-profit organization	Count	9	8	17
	% within	5.8	6.6	6.2
Public sector	Count	42	37	79
	% within	30.3	27.3	28.6
Both public and private	Count	3	4	7
	% within	1.9	3.3	2.5
Other	Count	0	1	1
	% within	0	0.8	0.4
Total	Count	154	122	276
	% within	100	100	100

Table 3.4 groups all employed participants into three broad sectors, where almost 29 percent work in the public sector and nearly 57 percent in the private sector; about six percent work for non-profit organizations.

Table 3.4: Current Sector of Employment

Sector	Frequency	Percent	Cum Percent
Private	157	56.9	56.9
Non-Profit	17	6.2	63
Public	79	28.6	91.7
Both Public/Private	23	8.3	100
Total	276	100.0	100
<i>n=276</i>			

Non-profit organizations include those who work for non-governmental organizations as well as those few who said they worked for cooperatives, autonomous agencies, and universities.

Table 3.5 presents data revealing some of the differences between the three countries. According to the data, more Hondurans work in non-profits or cooperatives and in organizations that are a mixture of public and private funding than in the other two countries.

Table 3.5. Employment Sector by Country

	DR	Guatemala	Honduras	Total
Private	56	43	58	157
	20.3%	15.6%	21%	56.9%
Non-Profit	3	4	10	17
	1.1%	1.4%	3.6%	6.2%
Public	29	15	35	79
	10.5%	5.4%	12.7%	28.6%
Public/Private/Other	1	6	16	23
	0.4%	2.2%	5.8%	8.3%
Total	89	68	119	276
Percent	100%	100%	100%	100%

Participants work in organizations of all sizes. About 10 percent of private sector participants work in organizations under 25 employees (Table 3.6). Neither the respondents' gender nor country are statistically significant factors in the variability among the 205 alumni responses.

Table 3.6 Size of Employing Organizations

Employees	Private	Public	Non-Profit	Public/Private	Total
1-24	20	26	4	13	63
	9.8%	12.7%	2.0%	6.3%	30.7%
25-49	12	11	5	1	29
	5.9%	5.4%	2.4%	0.5%	14.1%
50-99	12	5	3	1	21
	5.9%	2.4%	1.5%	0.5%	10.2%
100-499	31	8	1	0	40
	15.1%	3.9%	0.5%	0	19.5%
500+	39	11	0	2	52
	19.0%	5.4%	0	1.0%	25.4%
Total	114	61	13	17	205
Percent	55.6%	29.8%	6.3%	8.3%	100%

CASS participants are rising up the career ladders. About 49 percent of the alumni interviewed had received promotions (131 of 269 responses and 47 non-responses). Interestingly, there is little difference in promotions based on fields of study, nor does the employment sector matter. Unfortunately, we have no comparative data for the workforce at large to place these figures in context. Of those promoted, about 96 percent felt that these promotions were due to their U.S. training (131 of 137 responses and 179 non-responses), and this did not vary, according to sex, training length, or sector of employment.

In terms of job responsibilities, 94 percent of participants also reported that they had greater responsibilities in their work than they did before their programs (263 of 280 responses). Of these respondents about 96 percent (253 of 265 responses) attributed their greater responsibilities to their scholarship.

More than 85 percent of participants report that their income has increased since returning from their CASS training. The respondent's gender does not condition this increase. While it is normal to see income increase as workers mature and in a context of inflation, about 95 percent

(229 of 241 responses) of those who have increased income believe that it is due to their CASS training.

What stands out in Table 3.7 is that more than 75 percent of the 271 alumni answering this questions work in the field in which they studied (45 non-responses), the great majority being employed in either the public or the private sector.

Table 3.7. Do You Work in the Same Field of Study In Which You Received Training?

	Private	Public	Non-Profit	Public/Private	Total
Yes	119	67	15	18	219
	77.3%	84.8%	88.2%	85.7%	80.8%
No	35	12	2	3	52
	22.7%	15.2%	11.8%	14.3%	19.2%
Total	154	79	17	21	271
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
<i>n</i> =271					

Reasons for changing careers offered by the 20 percent not working in their field of study ran the gamut. Some reported seizing on new opportunities, while others were forced out of positions due to business restructuring, downturns, and even jealousy on the part of supervisors. Five alumni have withdrawn from the workforce for various reasons such as raising their children and studying. The evaluation team heard of—but cannot quantify—several cases of individuals who found themselves unemployed or underemployed when they returned. However, even these cases did not necessarily have negative outcomes, as was the case with several focus-group participants who described their career changes in the Honduran and Guatemalan labor market as owing to their being more of a risk taker after the 24-month scholarship.

Career changes as part of job mobility have increased in all industrial economies; thus, 20 percent does not seem to be a high figure. Most likely, it represents the alumni's efforts to improve their life chances and apply what they learned in countries with unpredictable labor markets.

Both the United Nations (PUND) labor economists and an international business specialist, who has advised CASS in the past, discussed general educational issues that suggest something about what these 20 percent might be thinking about their work lives. The interviewees described one issue as follows: an education policy that instills the values of a culture of not immigrating to the U.S. The CASS *becarios* illustrate to their friends, relatives, and social networks this attitude of "...not giving up on [their country]...", a change for the better that their own lives highlight. Alumni understand this message although the interviewees thought that it should be positively reinforced at times and made known to the general public based on a campaign of social marketing.

The second issue concerns education, stressing that all CASS awardees—as with all young Hondurans—have to consider themselves potential business people and their own bosses, able to generate jobs, risk capital, and establish small businesses. According to the interviewees, this message deserves constant repeating to the potential CASS awardees, *ex-becarios*, and the entire

nation's youth and young adults (see publications by Consejo Nacional de Pequeña Empresa and those of the United Nations, PNUD 2000, page 63, "modernizando la microempresa y reduciendo el subempleo"). Several of the interviewees emphasized that future CASS *becarios* and recent *ex-becarios* need to be "*polivalentes*," trained for many different types of technical work. They also characterized the labor market with three terms that all CASS participants could benefit from learning: *vulnerability*, *immobility*, and *precariousness*. They explained this mantra as follows:

- each sector of the economy that a young worker enters is *vulnerable* due to a lack of a solid base resulting from the increasing productivity of its workers, finances that are free of taxes, debts or other encumbrances, and flexible enough to adjust to market changes, a solid base from which to withstand crises and shocks in the international, national, and sectoral economies;
- workers are *immobile*; they have little or no opportunities to learn new job skills in types of work other than their own, which might have extremely low levels of productivity; and
- conditions of work in a sector are *precarious* in that no one knows how long the job might last; the workplace may be unsafe; and the chances for promotion are limited.

Much of what these interviews revealed seems to be the beginnings of a Creole, Guatemalan and Honduran version of Daniel H. Pink's writings (2001) in *Free Agent Nation: How America's New Independent Workers Are Transforming the Way We Live*. The 20 percent changing careers might be this type of free agent.

In spite of job changes, 81 percent of respondents with jobs said that they continued to work in the same field of study in which they were trained. Whether participants have changed careers, fields of study, and jobs or not, a large majority of the 278 who responded report that their current job is more satisfying than the job they held prior to training, and not one reported that it was "worse" (54 alumni who did not have a job were excluded from the calculation).

Using Training on the Job

Participants offered many concrete examples of how they used their training on the job:

Among the 99 alumni from the Dominican Republic filling out the survey form, 23 answered a question relating to how they use their education in the workplace. Some of these answers included: the introduction of new methods to teach mathematics, starting the first program in environmental conservation techniques, the creation of standards, systems, and manuals about quality control, and strengthening community leadership.

Forty of the 90 Guatemalans responding to the question offered examples of how they are applying their training at work. One respondent described a statistical experiment to measure and control sugar in the company's products. Another mentioned decision making, speaking English, and being punctual. An assistant hotel manager in Antigua helped change the staff's attitude from

traditional, "cold" service to one of value-added service to assure customer satisfaction. A specialist in aquaculture started the firm's first systematic quality control for handling seafood.

Among the Hondurans, 108 of the 127 respondents took the time to write or speak about examples of how their education has changed their workplaces. Some of these examples were: strengthening local leadership skills and self-esteem; conducting the first environmental assessment of the impact of poultry farms in southern Honduras; convincing construction supervisors to apply techniques to measure the resistance of welding, roofing, and plumbing materials; designing a manual about processing fruit by the head of the quality control department; changing the water-quality treatment system emptying into holding tanks; teaching rural residents environmental conversation techniques; organizing three work groups so that the company satisfies occupational and health safety rules; establishing a shrimp farm's analytical program of risks and critical control points (HACCP); streamlining quality control procedures at several firms; reducing significantly bacterial growth by better temperature control in food packing; designing first plans to protect eco-tourist sites; inventing uses for company trash; and transforming laboratory process in paper and ink production in order to meet ISO-9002 standards.

Assessment of Applicability of Training

About 80 percent of the alumni report that they use their training regularly.

The preceding stories show alumni's success in training and in broader, more individual roles. Moreover, they are enthusiastic about their training. The above discussion about career paths suggests that many are working in areas that fulfill their career goals. As we shall see in Chapter Four, there are high levels of appreciation for the opportunity and the life experience that the scholarship provided. However, about 20 percent of the respondents could not say that they applied their training on the job either "a lot" or "a great deal," the two highest points on a 5-point scale (Table 3.8).

Table 3.8. Use of Training

Degree of Application	Frequency	Percent	Cum Pct
Not at all	2	0.7	0.7
A little	19	6.7	7.4
Some	36	12.6	20
A lot	114	40	60
A great deal	114	40	100.0
<i>n=285 of 316 alumni</i>			

Factors Involved in Examining Applicability of Training

CIED and the country coordinators face the "transfer of training" challenge in the design of training and exchange programs. This involves factors that are within the "manageable interest" of the program and factors that are not. Within the program's control are content and pedagogical issues, which can help to ensure that the education received is as relevant as possible to the work activities to which participants expect to return. More difficult issues to control are factors relating to broader institutional issues and workplace environment, such as the jealousy of

supervisors or the failure to introduce technologies that had been programmed. The program can and does influence these, especially in the short-term training programs, by working closely with colleges and universities. Beyond the control of the program, factors which may affect a participant’s judgment of training applicability are macroeconomic factors such as high underemployment of Central American and Caribbean regions or, conversely, rapidly growing sectors which take people into new or unexpected positions.

It should be noted, as we attempt to assess these results, that 12 percent of respondents, in addition to the 80 percent choosing the top ratings, also reported that they use the training “some.” However, the enthusiasm expressed for the training appears to be attenuated when participant’s address how the training is be used.

An analysis of applicability by gender, sector of work, and home country shows no statistically significant differences in the subgroups. While many participants gave reasons why they had difficulty in applying their training, we have restricted the analysis to filter out those who still stated that they were able to use the training “a lot” or “a great deal.” Table 3.9 shows 57 respondents who chose responses from “nothing” to “some,” as what they identified to be the principle obstacles to applying the training. Respondents could select all that applied from the list of eight obstacles. We have calculated the percentages of the total survey population that these numbers represent.

Table 3.9. Obstacles to Applying Training

Type of Obstacle	Total Count	Total % N=316
Present work does not require skills learned in program	31	9.8
No Work in area of training	17	5.4
The training was not applicable to the reality of my country	14	4.4
I do not have the necessary equipment or resources	11	3.5
I do not have authority to put my training into practice at work	7	2.2
There was no work in my area of training	4	1.3
I do not have the support of my superiors or supervisors	0	0
<i>n=57</i>		

The obstacle mentioned by the largest percentage of the 57 respondents was that their present job does not require the skills they learned. Alumni have moved on into new positions and endeavors, and, while 81 percent stated that they continue to work in the same field, the specific tasks required as they progress in their careers may either go beyond what they learned or take them in new directions. As they move into new positions, they assume roles that require them to take on different responsibilities and which may draw less on the specific subjects they studied while in the U.S. This does not necessarily point to a problem in the training *per se*, since it may simply reflect career advancement.

The second and third reasons, which about 10 percent of the respondents mentioned, were the lack of work in their field of study (seven Dominicans, six Guatemalans, four Hondurans) and the training not being applicable to the reality of their country (3 Dominicans, 10 Guatemalans, 1 Honduran). Such obstacles seem to highlight their own lack of authority or of support from their superiors to implement their training. This points to the broader institutional challenges that face any individual who returns from a training program with plans to try to initiate change in what may be an unreceptive environment. This problem often occurs when individuals receive training without a true “buy-in” by the institution or even the immediate supervisors.

The applicability of training is of fundamental importance. It may be, however, that how training is applied must be defined broadly, especially for the long-term participants.

CHAPTER FOUR

Personal Effects of the Training

This chapter examines other aspects of how the CASS Program impacted the lives of alumni. Presented here are survey and interview results with respect to questions about the impact of the CASS Program on leadership qualities, pursuing further study, success in transferring academic credits, the extent to which alumni shared their new knowledge with others, the acceptance of CASS certification by employers and CASS alumni's record with respect to career advancement. This chapter also summarizes findings with respect to alumni participation in community affairs, in volunteer services, and in alumni activities.

Life Changes

Participation in CASS was a life-changing event.

Virtually all survey respondents (99 percent) reported that the CASS experience had significantly changed their lives. Thirteen percent reporting having been changed “somewhat” and 86 percent having been changed “a great deal” (see Table 4.1).

Table 4.1. Perceived Life Change Due to Program Participation

	Count	%
No change	2	0.6
Changed somewhat	41	13.1
Changed a great deal	271	86.3
Total	314	100.0

In response to an open-ended survey question about types of changes that had occurred in their lives, respondents provided an interesting array of examples.

Among the 99 Dominican Republic survey respondents, 13 offered examples of changes in their lives: creation of a more positive attitude, more concern with family well being and the community, greater work capacity, more self confidence and maturity, and establishment of a microenterprise.

Of the 90 Guatemalan respondents, 67 described examples of changes: five to eight examples about development at community and national levels and a strong desire to improve the country, to realize that a person can achieve a lot – “even work at NASA without being a genius, only an engineer,” more self confidence, more realistic and a better decision maker, establish an international consultancy firm, become a doctor given that “I no longer depend as much on God,” work harder helping family and the community, have set goals in order to be responsible, honest and disciplined, better medical attention to patients, set up a business due to being a “risk taker,” and environmental and community protection in the Petén.

Of the 127 Honduran respondents, 12 of the 96 who described changes did so by discussing the environment or construction. Their comments are relevant to the discussion in the final chapter

concerning "New Fields of Study, and Access and Quality of Services in Rural Areas." For example, a woman from one of the country's nine ethnic/social groups works with a deaf institution (*Iglesia de Sordos de Nueva Vida*). Three respondents either said they were better construction supervisors or wanted to teach building techniques to their construction crews. Five respondents mentioned environmental issues; for example, one wanting to design a coastal management plan for the Golfo de Fonseca, which controls toxic waste runoff from nine municipalities polluting the gulf. Another respondent was a medical assistant before the training and now is even more determined to continue a specialization in health services.

The evaluation team's focus groups in Guatemala, the Dominican Republic and Honduras (see Appendix E, Country Reports) offer additional examples of program impact on returned participants

Personal Characteristics

Almost all returned participants report that the CASS experience enhanced their self-confidence, communication skills and other characteristics that are important to leadership and to success in social settings.

A large majority of participants believed that the training experience supported the development of traits needed for leadership in communities and success in the contemporary workplace. Table 4.2 provides an overview of respondents' replies.

Table 4.2. The Impact of the Program on Selected Personal Characteristics

Characteristic	"Useful" or "Very Useful"		No effect		"Very Detrimental" or "Detrimental"	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Self-reliance	303	96.5	8	2.5	3	1.0
Ability to communicate with others	303	96.5	8	2.5	3	1.3
Ability to get along with others	303	96.2	8	2.5	4	1.3
Ability to tolerate change	304	97.1	8	2.6	1	0.3
Willingness to take risks	303	96.2	8	2.6	1	0.3
Ability to speak in public	297	94.6	15	4.8	2	0.6
Willingness to try new things	305	97.2	8	2.5	1	0.3

n=313-316

The table shows that 95 to 97 percent of alumni rated CASS as either "useful" or "very useful" in building these skills. There was no statistically significant difference in results by sex, current sector of employment, or country.

Post-Training Education

Almost 58 percent of alumni have pursued further formal education.

Table 4.3 shows the number of survey respondents who have continued their education (indicated by a positive response). The percentage of men continuing their studies was slightly higher than of women.

Table 4.3. Responses about Enrolling in Courses Since Returning, by Gender

	Men		Women		Total	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Yes	78	58.6	100	56.8	178	57.6
No	55	41.4	76	43.2	131	42.4
Total	133	100	176	100	309	100
<i>n=309 respondents (133 of 139 men, 176 of 177 Women)</i>						

Table 4.4 shows, for 175 valid responses, the kind of programs the participants are undertaking following their return home from the U.S. Sixty (60) percent of the programs are at the undergraduate level and 35 percent are technical or vocational courses.

Table 4.4. Additional Education After CASS

	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Technical/Vocational	61	34.9	34.9
Undergraduate	105	60	94.9
Graduate	8	4.6	99.4
Doctorate	1	0.6	100.0
Total	175	100.0	
<i>n=175 respondents</i>			

Transferring Credits to Home Countries and Academic Reciprocity Agreements

Despite success in establishing agreements with a number of Latin American universities under which they agree to give credit to course work completed in U.S. community colleges, a significant number of CASS alumni experience difficulty obtaining academic credit for their CASS programs.

As many CASS students wish to continue their studies upon returning home, it is important that local universities recognize the work they completed in the U.S. Otherwise, these students will be required to repeat classes already taken. As the granting of such credit has been anything but automatic, CIED has encouraged the development of agreements with universities in CASS countries so that returning participants can receive credit for their CASS studies. In the three countries that the evaluation team surveyed, agreements exist with the following universities:

- *Guatemala* (2): Raúl Landívar and San Carlos Universities;
- *Honduras* (5): Instituto Nacional de Formación Profesional (INFOP), Instituto Superior Tecnológico, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Honduras, Universidad Tecnológico de CentroAmerica, and the Universidad Católica; and
- *Dominican Republic* (5): Instituto Tecnológico de Sto. Domingo, Pontificia Universidad Madre y Naestra, Universidad InterAmericana, Universidad Tecnológico de Santiago, and Universidad UNAPEC.

These are the only credit reciprocity agreements ever to exist between Central American universities and U.S. community colleges.

Many of these universities have regional campuses throughout the country. Some have distance education available to rural areas, significant for those CASS alumni who live in those zones. Most of the public universities are free, and some of the private universities offer discounts to CASS alumni.

Despite the existence of these agreements, CASS students appear to experience significant difficulty in obtaining credit from local universities. Among survey respondents who had completed two-year CASS programs, slightly over half had difficulties using their CASS credits in local universities (see Table 4.5).

Table 4.5. Men and Women's Responses about Difficulties in Transferring Credits

	Men		Women		Total	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Yes	31	46.3	45	54.2	76	50.7
No	36	53.7	38	45.8	74	49.3
Total	67	100	83	100	150	100

N=150 (67 of 139 men, 83 of 177 Women)

Table 4.6 shows that there was some variation in responses between the three countries. Forty-six (46) percent of Dominican respondents reported having had problems, 48 percent of Hondurans and almost 59 percent of Guatemalans.

Table 4.6. Difficulties in Transferring Credits by Country

	DR		Guatemala		Honduras		Total	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Yes	23	46	27	58.7	26	48.1	76	50.7
No	27	54	19	41.3	28	51.9	74	49.3
Total	50	100	46	100	54	100	150	100

n=150 (50 of 99 DR, 46 of 90 Guatemalans, 54 of 127 Hondurans)

In addition to these survey responses, the evaluation team received feedback on this issue during the focus group sessions it held with returned participants in the three countries visited. The following paragraphs summarize the comments from those participants.

- *Dominican Republic.* Despite reports that some Dominican universities have agreed to honor U.S. academic credits, the lack of acceptability of U.S. community college credits in Dominican universities remains a serious problem for returning CASS students. Many of the focus group participants said they had difficulty, some receiving no credit whatsoever for their U.S. studies. To receive any credit at all for those studies is typically a long and often expensive process. One participant suggested that Dominican universities view this as an opportunity to generate income. Another mentioned that his two semesters of accounting in the U.S. had covered the material of six courses at local colleges, but that he would be lucky to get credit for two. Private Dominican universities are the most willing to consider giving

credit for U.S. study; none of the participants indicated that they had received any significant credit for their U.S. studies from a public sector Dominican university. Instead, those that had continued their studies had found it necessary to start over at the beginning in order to pursue a university degree. The Dominican labor market, it was often remarked, recognizes the value of the North American educational experience far more than do Dominican universities.

- *Guatemala.* Many of the 19 participants in the in-depth group interviews experienced large difficulties in transferring credits to Guatemalan universities. Some mentioned it being so difficult that it was simply easier to avoid trying to do so at local institutions. One of the 19 responded, "It cost me a little to have my course credits accepted. I advanced my studies one year here in Guatemala based on these credits. It would be better to have a four-year degree because that's what the work context demands." A second respondent supported this answer by saying: "The technical education did not help much. What helps the most is knowing English and having studied in the U.S. A two-year technical degree leaves out of the labor market because this demands that one have a four-year degree." As in Honduras, some Guatemalan alumni believe that CASS should provide scholarships for complete undergraduate degrees.
- *Honduras.* Most of the 36 participants in three in-depth group interviews agreed that private colleges in Honduras more easily accepted their credits than public universities such as the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Honduras. Apparently, the public ones require not only a notarized copy of the degree but also a detailed and notarized description of course content, something most U.S. schools seldom provide. According to one participant, officers of the alumni association are trying to solve this problem.

Some returned participants expressed frustration about not having received a scholarship for four years. One ex-participant agreed with this opinion, but acknowledged that it sounded "selfish" to ask for a doubling of the scholarship length, surely reducing the number of awards for others. These frustrations seen to exist partly due to the difficulty of transferring U.S. credits to Honduras, to competing with others with four-year degrees, and from a lack of prestige or legitimacy for two-year technical degrees.

Multiplier Effect

U.S. Experiences and Knowledge Shared with Others

About 28 percent of the alumni reported sharing their knowledge with others.

Participants were surveyed about the sharing of the experiences and knowledge acquired during their U.S. training with others in their home countries. Sharing, in this instance, refers to teaching, relating the experience, or discussing what they learned. Ninety of the 316 respondents indicated that they had shared their experience with others. Survey data show that men and women and both short-term and long-term participants had shared their training in both formal and informal settings, and participants from three distinct sectors of employment (public, private, and non-profit).

Women shared their knowledge and experiences somewhat more than men. Women comprised 56 percent of the survey but 60 percent of those who reported sharing what they had learned. The numbers of those sharing by sector of employment reflected the distribution of CASS graduates in those sectors, although the private sector seems to afford somewhat greater opportunities for sharing than does the public sector. Sixty-three (63) percent of those who shared their knowledge are employed in the private sector whereas only 57 percent of CASS graduates are employed in that sector, and only 22 percent of those who shared their experiences currently work in the public sector although that sector has absorbed a little over 28 percent of the graduates surveyed.

Participants recounted numerous examples of how they had shared their training:

- *Guatemala*. Examples included two teaching English, math, and computer skills; giving lectures to families and colleagues at work; running a cultural institute; planning and conducting fundraising for community development projects; helping the sick; and motivating young people to become involved in local programs.
- *Dominican Republic*. Examples included teaching English and computer skills; training educators, farmers, and eco-tourist guides; sharing the experiences with the community; helping to prepare community leaders; and training colleagues in mathematics and statistics.
- *Honduras*. Examples included "...having a multiplier effect among my classmates and in school districts about learning techniques" ("*haciendo el efecto multiplicador de técnicas de aprendizaje a compañeros de escuela y distritos escolares*"); teaching English and computer skills, working with ecological projects, improving workers' building skills and offering training in telecommunications. The evaluation teams in Honduras and Guatemala heard at least a dozen trainees use this expression about multiplier effect.

Participation in Community Activities

Virtually all returned CASS students (315 of 316 respondents) participate in volunteer community activities.

Seventy-four (74) percent of the respondents said that they contributed either more or the same to community service as they did before their training program. The effect of CASS in this regard is more pronounced among men: 77 percent of the males said they contribute the same or more to their community since training compared with 71 percent of the females (see Table 4.7).

Table 4.7. Changes in Men and Women's Volunteer Activities Since CASS

	Female	Percent	Male	Percent	Total	Percent
Fewer	47	29	30	23	77	26
Same Number	27	17	35	27	62	21
More	88	54	66	50	154	53
Total	162	100	131	100	293	100
<i>n=293 (131 of 139 men, 162 of 177 women)</i>						

Similarly, the effect was greater among those graduates who are working in the public sector: 84 percent of public sector employees said that they contributed either more or the same to community service as they did before their training while that rate for non-profit employees is 82 percent and 69 percent for private sector employees (see Table 4.8).

Table 4.8. Changes in Volunteer Activities by Place of Employment

	Private	Non-Profit	Public	Private/Public	Total
Fewer	55 (39%)	3 (19%)	10 (13%)	2 (9%)	70 (27%)
Same Number	25 (17%)	0	16 (22%)	7 (32%)	48 (19%)
More	63 (44%)	13 (81%)	50 (66%)	13 (59%)	139 (54%)
Total	143 (100%)	21 (100%)	76 (100%)	22 (100%)	257 (100%)
<i>n=257</i>					

The current volunteer activities of the CASS participants take many forms. Participants were asked to list three categories in order of importance to them. The most important are (in the order mentioned) education (literacy programs, adult education, tutoring, mentoring), humanitarian and charity, and religious activities. Table 4.9 shows the percentage of respondents who volunteer in a number of key categories.

Table 4.9. CASS Participants and Volunteer Participation

Forms of Volunteer Participation	Percent
Attendance at community meetings	29.1
Helping to plan activities, events or projects	23.4
Training others	38.3
Participating as an officer, leader, director, or coordinator of events, activities	47.5
Assuming formal leadership/administrative role (officer, project manager, etc.)	49.7
Participating as a group representative in activities outside the community	58.9
<i>N=316</i>	

Leadership in the Community and Workplace

When asked if their CASS training program helped them to become more efficient as community leaders or leaders in the work place, the respondents answered affirmatively, with 95 percent of the men and 94 percent of the women saying "yes" (see Table 4.10).

Table 4.10. Men and Women's Responses About Becoming a Better Leader

	Men		Women		Total	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Yes	129	95	155	94	284	94
No	3	2	4	2.5	7	2
Don't know	4	3	6	3.5	10	4
Total	136	100	165	100	301	100
<i>n=301 (136 men and 165 women)</i>						

These very positive responses were consistent across countries, gender and sector of employment.

Community and Civic Participation: Strengthening Democracy

Several questions on the survey form probed the alumni's thinking about issues related to the democratization of their countries. Table 4.11 shows that returned participants tend to be very supportive of democratic principles and institutions. Ninety-seven (97) percent “agree” or “strongly agree” that citizens should have equal rights and protection under the law. Ninety to 93 percent expressed supporting views on other key questions about democratic institutions.

Table 4.11. Men and Women's Measures of Democratic Process

Statements	Strongly or Somewhat Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree		Total	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Citizens Should Have Equal Rights and Protection Under Law	0	3 1.7%	4 2.9%	3 1.7%	36 26.1%	46 26.1	98 71%	124 70.5	138 100%	176 100%
Important to Vote in Elections		2 0.6%	8 5.8%	10 5.7%	44 31.9%	53 30.1%	83 60.1%	111 63.1%	138 100%	176 100%
Legislature Should Write and Pass Laws and Government should Execute Them	3 2.1%	2 1.2%	11 8.0%	16 9.1%	46 33.3%	77 44%	78 56.5%	80 45.7%	138 100%	175 100%
Independent Media Matters in Democracy, Publicizing Good and Bad Actions of Individuals, Firms, Governments	1 0.7%	3 1.7%	7 5.1%	15 8.5%	43 31.2%	58 33%	87 63%	100 56.8%	138 100%	176 100%
Free, Fair Elections with All Political parties with Equal Media Access and Resources Crucial for Democracy	1 0.7%	4 1.6%	12 8.7%	8 4.5%	52 37.7%	75 42.6%	73 52.9%	89 50.6%	138 100%	176 100%
<i>n=315</i>										

The evaluation team also discussed democratization with the participants of focus groups. The results of those discussions are summarized in the following paragraphs.

- *Dominican Republic.* Focus-group participants returned with a heightened appreciation of democratic values and the importance of participation in the community. Nevertheless, most graduates feel powerless to influence the national efforts to strengthen democracy. Alumni are focused on their jobs, families, and, to a much lesser extent on, small-scale community activities; none claimed to participate actively in the larger political process. In response to questions about leadership training, alumni generally considered it an important and effective part of the program. This training has helped them both on the job and in community activities. No criticisms of this component of the program were expressed.
- *Guatemala.* With respect to leadership training, several of the 19 focus-group participants described it as "positive and enriching." One respondent expressed other participant's thinking on saying that "It was positive, giving us the chance to use the freedom one posses. These activities are directed at making us into leaders, someone who serves and motivates others." Another participant stated "It has a multiplier effect, like a seed that bears many fruits in others due to our example." Three of the 19 did not participate in any sort of leadership training in the U.S. Another only received one lecture about leadership one month before returning to Guatemala. Many of the women spoke about leadership in terms of stronger self-esteem and willingness to speak up to defend a "woman's" point of view.

Several of the 19 participants agreed with one participant's comment: "I am now more aware about the diversity of cultures and opinions, and this is an excellent way to understand more about the overall diversity among peoples and know how to deal with confrontations which might arise due to such differences. I think this attitude can help us democratize our country." Another said, "I learned about the concept "public well-being" (*concepto del bien común*) and to seek the development of others." Another participant responded, "Because of the CASS experience I am more tolerant and have learned to respect others' opinions, and this multiplies due to our example; others try to imitate our behavior of being tolerant." Two others said that this comment was identical to their way of thinking. Another participant linked leadership training to democratization of Guatemala: "People with whom I interact feel friendly with me and expect a lot from me. Both of us can help each other and, thus, together, we can help make our country a greater one. I can now count on my background including a positive mental attitude." Several respondents mentioned being more socially aware now than before. One respondent said, "The problem is that we used to believe that people don't change but I now know that change starts with every one of us. It all of us begin change with ourselves, in our homes and families, then we will democratize this country." Several mentioned teaching their children and those of others about gender equality and not throwing trash on the ground, two ways to make the country more democratic in the long run.

- *Honduras.* At least participant used the leadership training to compete and win a trip to a regional leadership conference in Oklahoma. Another received an expense paid trip to the Leadership Center of the Americas. During a presidency of the international club at the community college, one participant organized fundraising events to send money to the

Honduran victims of Hurricane Mitch. One alumnus spoke about leadership in terms of knowing better how to "market" her beliefs in the most persuasive way to convince others. Others simply mentioned feeling much more self-confident. A woman said that many alumni were from conservative families in which women were submissive and silent. She said that if she had never left her hometown she would have always remained silent rather than learning how to disagree politely with others and defend her viewpoint.

Regarding democracy, based on experiences of watching a jury trial and being an officer in the university student association, one participant believed that the way people debate issues in the U.S. is a notion about which Hondurans and its politicians need to learn more. Another emphasized learning about national budgetary issues, civic participation, transparency and accountability in political decision-making, concepts that helped him make a more informed choice of candidate in the country's November 2000 presidential elections. One participant followed up this discussion with the comment that he previously voted for a political party or based on candidates his family had always voted for but now selected the "best qualified candidate." Another stated that although most Honduran politicians might be dishonest, he plans to become involved in local politics in two to three years because the country needs a new type of politician.

Alumni Activities

Ninety-two (92) percent of survey respondents indicated that they were aware of the existence of national or local alumni association (see Table 4.12).

Table 4.12. Awareness about the Existence of Alumni Association By Country

	DR		Guatemala		Honduras		Total	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Yes	97	99	76	87	113	90	286	92
No	1	1	11	13	12	10	24	8
Total	98	100	87	100	127	100	310	100

n=310 (98 Dominicans, 87 Guatemalans, 100% Hondurans)

About 60 percent of respondents indicated that they had participated in activities of an alumni association. Interestingly, participation varied by country: 64 percent in Honduras, 57 percent in the Dominican Republic and 55 percent in Guatemala. Although higher participation rates might be desirable, these rates should be considered quite high in view of the geographic dispersion of CASS graduates and the difficulty and cost of transportation (see Table 4.13).

Table 4.13. Participation in Alumni Activities by Country

	DR		Guatemala		Honduras		Total	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Yes	57	60	41	55	72	64	170	60
No	38	40	34	45	41	36	113	40
Total	95	100	75	100	113	100	283	100

n=283 (95 Dominicans, 75 Guatemalans, 113 Hondurans)

Some former CASS participants spoke with emotion of the ties that the association fostered. Others spoke about concrete opportunities in which the association membership came into play.

In open-ended interviews, several cases were mentioned when an individual had lost a job and he or she called on fellow participants to help locate a new one. One former program coordinator also saw the association as providing an important network of contacts that would assist in the return and readjustment of participants. Others, however, said that they had “heard” that an alumni association existed but had no contact with it beyond the meetings.

As with any such general-purpose organization, the issue of sustainability is intimately related to that of purpose and vision. For many CASS participants, they enjoyed the chance to see fellow participants that the association provided, but they did not feel that it filled a need in their own career advancement or social life. Some observers mentioned that people are simply too busy, that they are now in the most productive years of their lives and it is difficult to find time since they work long days. Others felt that they noted a change in the overall attitude of the alumni themselves. In the early years of the program, most were so pleased and excited about the prospect to study in the U.S. that they felt a very strong sense of gratitude and loyalty to the program. In later years, as more opportunities appeared, both for further education abroad and as new career possibilities developed in competition with the idea of further study, participants were perhaps less focused on the program itself as an object of loyalty and more focused on their own careers. Many said that they had other means to keep in contact with fellow alumni, through e-mail and visits.

Post Training Residence Changes

When asked about changes in residence since returning from the U.S., 140 of 312 (45%) survey respondents indicated that they no longer live where they did before the scholarship. Obviously, 55 percent returned to their previous residence.

Another survey question asked respondents to identify, if they had moved, the type of region they had moved from and to. Responses, shown in the following table, indicate that 58 percent of those who had moved had gone from rural to urban areas and another 34 percent had moved from one urban area to another urban area (see Table 4.14).

Table 4.14. Changes in Post-CASS Residence

	Count	%
Urban to Rural	4	3
Rural to Urban	77	58.3
Rural to Rural	6	4.5
Urban to Urban	45	34.1
Total	132	100
<i>n=132</i>		

Another question about residence changes asked why alumni had moved. Nine of the 99 alumni from the Dominican Republic answered with responses describing job searches, personal improvement, children's education, better telephone service, construction of a home, marriage, and to become economically independent from the family. Among the 127 Hondurans, 15 answered this question with responses about business opportunities, marriage, lack of work in the field of study in that region, keep studying, safer place to live, due to Hurricane Mitch, and to develop better family relationships. Eight of the 90 Guatemalan alumni answered by mentioning

residence changes due to: home purchase, movement to Guatemala City to study at the USAC, employment searches, better jobs and places to study, marriage, family moved, and to earn a better salary.

Employers' Acceptance of Certificates and Career Advancement Relative to Non-CASS Employees

It is reasonable to assume, based on interviews and data collection in three countries, that employers readily accept the degrees and certificates. Interviews with 14 employers in the three countries revealed that the trainees advance in their careers as fast (in three cases, faster) as non-CASS employees.

Contrary to focus-group participants' comments about difficulties transferring credits, none of the alumni answering questions during individual and group interviews mentioned any problems with employers' willingness to accept the training as part of their preparation for the job. Several did mention the difficulty of competing in labor markets where many job applicants have four-year degrees. Yet they would go on to say that even with this handicap their skills in English and internships in U.S. companies while studying in the U.S. helped to level the playing field in employment searches.

The four interviews in the Dominican Republic questioned employers about 18-19 trainees. All have average to better-than-average job mobility; at least three having achieved supervisory positions in less than average time at the firm. As in the other two countries, several employers would like to hire additional CASS graduates. In Guatemala, four interviews discussed the performance of 11 to 13 trainees, two of whom were deaf. Their supervisor characterized their work achievements with the most colorful description of any of the interviewed employers: "good production, they arrive here to do what everyone is supposed to do on arriving which is not to waste time and to get to work" ("*buena producción...viene a lo que es, vienen a lo que vienen que es trabajar y no perder el tiempo*"). One of the most telling indicators of the trainees performance relative to non-CASS employees was the mistaken belief by one employer that the evaluator was calling to offer more trainees rather assess the performance of those already hired. The supervisor spent most of the interview insisting that he would hire as many trainees as CASS could send him. Four interviews with Honduran employers of 9 to 11 trainees revealed that several employers promoted trainees more quickly than non-CASS employees due to their skills in English and a "can-do" attitude.

Job Comparisons

Tables 4.15 and 4.16 compare alumni responses about their jobs before and after training by gender and by country.

Table 4.15. Men and Women's Responses About Comparisons of Their Present Job with The One Before Training

	Males		Females		Total	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Better	94	78	102	70.3	196	74
Same as Before	4	3.3	7	5	11	4
Worse	5	4	3	2	8	3
N.A.	17	14.2	33	12.5	50	19
Total	120	100	145	100	265	100

n=265
N.A. for unemployed before or after training

Table 4.16. Country Comparisons of Present Job with The One Before Training

	DR		Guatemala		Honduras		Total	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Better	48	60	47	68	101	87	196	74
Same as Before	4	5	3	4	4	3	11	4
Worse	2	2	5	7	1	1	8	3
N.A.	26	33	14	20	10	9	50	19
Total	80	100	69	100	116	100	265	100

n=265
N.A. for unemployed before or after training

Among 265 respondents, 74 percent answered that compared to their pre-CASS job their present one was better (more than 70 percent of the males and females). Employers have promoted about 48 percent of the alumni (52 percent of the men and 46 percent of the women). A few more Dominican Republic alumni have received promotions (59%) than Guatemalans or Hondurans (43 and 44 percent, respectively). Among the 138 alumni with promotions, 96 percent attributed it to the training (56 percent of the women and 44 percent of the men, no statistically significant difference by country). Regarding increases in work responsibilities, 280 of the survey participants (94%) answered the question with a "yes" response (no difference between women and men or by country).

About 96 percent of the respondents attributed this to their training (no statistical difference between men and women; 96 to 98 percent of the Dominicans and Honduras attributed it to the training while only 90 percent of the Guatemalans did so). When asked about changes in salaries, 281 survey participants answered the question; 86 percent having received increases (no statistically significant difference between women and men or between the three countries).

CHAPTER FIVE

Findings and Recommendations

Findings

Findings of the evaluation are discussed in response to the key questions and issues set forth in the Task Order.

1. Changes in CASS since its 1985 Establishment

CASS has introduced innumerable changes to reflect the changing environment and to incorporate lessons learned. A few of the many constructive changes include the following.

- CASS began operation in 17 countries and now is in 8, a change that reflects evolving USAID priorities and economic conditions in the LAC region.
- Pre-departure orientation workshops have addressed problems that students in early cycles reported, and re-entry workshops have been improved to more squarely meet the needs of returning graduates.
- Internships apparently did not exist for the first few years of the program. Now they are required and fully integrated into every CASS training program.
- Strengthening the relation between USAID missions and CASS country offices has benefited the needs of both.
- Congress has reduced its funding, and more cost sharing by in-country and U.S. stakeholders has covered some of this reduction.
- CASS has added new community colleges and fields of study while several colleges no longer participate.
- CASS has awarded more scholarships than ever to students from ethnic groups, women, and the disabled such as the deaf, and more of these are for 3, 6, and 12 month programs in education and construction.

In the evaluators' view, CIED has developed a flexible program that has strived to adapt to changing circumstances, that has learned from its experiences, and has reincorporated that learning into its ongoing programming.

2. Actions Taken Regarding the Recommendations in the 1994 Evaluation

The CASS program has incorporated changes to address almost all of the recommendations offered in the 1994 evaluation. These include changes in their program offerings, internal management and budgeting.

This evaluation identified two recommendations that were not acted upon. In each case, the evaluation team believes that CASS made appropriate decisions in not implementing the recommendation.

Candidate selection criteria. The 1994 assessment suggested less focus on students from rural backgrounds. CASS has continued to recruit candidates mostly from rural areas and has done so with no apparent sacrifice in the ability of students selected to successfully complete the program of study.

Development studies courses. In 1994 evaluators recommended that CASS students receive at least one course dealing with international development. CASS has not followed up on this recommendation because it views its program as a vocational and leadership training. Some exposure to development principles is provided to students in courses and activities that teach CASS students about the U.S. economic and political systems. CASS students clearly return home with many ideas about reforming systems in their respective countries.

3. Relevance of Training to Workforce Needs and Keeping Tabs on Changing Requirements

CASS's selection of technical areas (subjects) for training adequately reflects the needs of the labor markets in the countries surveyed.

The evaluators found the CASS system to be effective because the training needs survey consults with people who know the labor market. The system is simple and inexpensive, and the returned participants find employment. CASS relies on surveys of employers, USAID officials, Labor Ministry personnel and other informed individuals to assess changing needs. The evaluation team's conclusion that this system is effective is based on interviews with labor market experts in two of the CASS countries about market trends and needs, a review of available labor force projections, and the obvious employability of CASS graduates.

4. Relevance of Fields of Study to USAID's Strategic Focus

CASS efforts to ensure that its fields of studies reflect USAID's strategic priorities appear to be increasingly effective.

A concern expressed in the past by USAID program officers about the CASS program was that it determined future training needs with limited consultation with USAID officials and insufficient consideration of their strategic focus for the country. CASS focus in recent years on training for rural health workers, primary school teachers, and construction managers reflects the increased attention the program is giving to USAID priorities. It may be that CASS may still require an improved level of communication with the USAID audience. Having said that, it should be noted that some USAID Missions show more interest in CASS than others, and, CASS, being a regional program, sometimes the needs of the region take precedence over the needs of the individual missions. CASS tends to follow regional trends for training and does not necessarily design programs based on individual mission's priorities.

It is primarily through the CASS training needs surveys that USAID Missions convey their views to CASS about training priorities. The evaluation team understands that the Missions' responses to the survey are guided by their strategic objectives. In the Dominican Republic, this seems the only method used to communicate Mission priorities to the CASS office. However, the Mission

Director was not aware of this exercise, nor that a considerable number of her staff members had been involved.

5. Selection of Fields of Study and of U.S. Colleges

The procedures on which CIED relies to choose new fields of study, schools offering them, and new institutional directions have been effective at advancing the CASS mission in the last eight years.

About every two years, the CASS offices in the eight participating countries conduct a survey to determine local training needs that might be met through education at U.S. community colleges. The survey form used to evaluate training needs for scholarships includes about 15 questions, is simple and easily completed in only a few minutes. The simplicity of the survey instrument helps CASS to achieve a high response rate. In Honduras, the 92 responding individuals and organizations (an 85-90 percent response rate) represented an excellent range of private sector, governmental, and university institutions (from television stations to private business consultants). At least three people in the USAID/Honduras office and four at the U.S. embassy participated in the survey.

In the U.S., new community colleges approach CIED every year, and occasionally some are brought into the network. CIED's policy is to be committed to institutions that have a proven track record in the quality of programs offered and in effective cost-sharing agreements. Sometimes colleges have decided not to continue with CASS, usually because they cannot offer the services at the rates that CIED is willing to pay. More frequently, the need is to find colleges that can train in a new specialized field of study. For example, in 1998 CIED searched for colleges in states with significant Spanish-speaking populations that could provide short-term (12 months or less) training and internship experiences in Spanish. CIED recently signed agreements with El Paso Community College and West Hills College (Coalinga, CA) for health and education training in Spanish. An example of the search for a new partner for two-year training is the 2001 agreement with Hillsborough Community College (Tampa, FL) for training in aquatic food production.

6. Disadvantaged and Underserved Populations

CASS efforts are reaching the appropriate low income and minority populations.

The CASS selection process has continued its efforts to target low income and minority families, and has an enviable record in recruiting women. CASS has also developed a strong recruitment of students from the most disadvantaged and isolated rural areas of each country, actively recruiting students from post-conflict areas as well as African and indigenous descent

The evaluation team's focus groups also sought to explore whether participants thinking and behavior had changed regarding gender issues. Participants generally indicated that they had returned from their CASS training with a heightened awareness of gender issues, and many could cite evidence of their efforts to improve the situation in their countries.

7. Impact on U.S. Colleges and Surrounding Communities

CASS has had a strong positive impact on the participating colleges, their U.S. students and the people in the surrounding towns and cities.

Interviews with senior college officials, teaching faculty, local NGOs, business people and host families involved with CASS at six of the participating community colleges indicate that the colleges and college communities feel that they benefit from the CASS program at least as much as the CASS students. College presidents and deans emphasize that globalization has made it imperative that their colleges, often located in smaller communities in the U.S., expose American students to other cultures and practices. Administrators also point to the role that CASS has played in allowing them to develop new capabilities (e.g., in teacher training) that help their colleges also to better meet local needs. Instructors point to the excellent role models that highly motivated and hard-working CASS students provide to other students. Businesses that take in CASS students as interns say that CASS students are excellent workers and that their businesses get more than they give. Often the local populace learns about the peoples, cultural traditions and practices, history, and geography of students from the Caribbean and Central America by virtue of CASS trainees' participation in community events. Communities also benefit from the extensive volunteer services that CASS students contribute.

Viewed from a purely economic viewpoint, CASS data provided to the evaluation team show that 75 percent of USAID resources are expended in the communities where the participating colleges are located. These funds flow into all levels of local economies, from the budgets of the community colleges to host families to local service providers.

8. Appropriateness of CASS Assistance Provided from Local U.S. Colleges and Home Countries

The CASS program effectively furnishes many, appropriate types of help to students in the U.S. and to the recently returned graduates.

Despite the orientation programs that CASS students receive prior to departing for the U.S., their lack of English makes their initial months in the U.S. difficult. In the site visits to community colleges, the evaluators saw that CASS college coordinators make every effort to ease this difficult transition. They arrange host families for two-year students, provide intensive English training, teach students about transportation, banking, shopping, and other essential skills. Sometimes coordinators arrange free or discounted services at local civic events and institutions. Host families often provide students with winter clothing and take them on sightseeing trips.

CASS provides students with a monthly stipend to cover living expenses not provided directly by the college or host families. Based on the site visits, the level of these stipends is adequate, although many students themselves reported that it was barely so. In many instances, CASS arranges housing for the students. The housing provided is consistent with that typically used by U.S. students.

CASS facilitates students' re-entry into their respective countries through seminars and workshops offered in the U.S. near the termination of their studies and in their countries following their return. CASS graduates report that the re-entry workshops were helpful in preparing them to look for work and to adjust to living in their home countries. Many of the interviewed CASS alumni also commented favorably about having participated in post-scholarship training, such as Project Formulation and Evaluation, *Técnicas en soluciones empresariales* (TSE, a web-based program in business education) and the Honduras Strengthening Democratic Institutions program.

CASS sponsored a two-day International Conference on Quality in November 2000, primarily for CASS alumni of the Broome Community College at the Pontificia Universidad Católica Madre y Maestra in the Dominican Republic that drew 80 participants. Deaf alumni and interpreters have participated in two regional conferences organized by CASS.

Several of the Honduran focus-group participants described having received, since returning, short courses for computer training and improvement of skills in English.

9. Transferring Credits to Home Countries and Academic Reciprocity Agreements

CASS graduates continue to experience some difficulty transferring U.S. credits to colleges in their countries, made only somewhat easier by the reciprocity agreements.

A large percentage of alumni interviewed reported that they had found it difficult or impossible to obtain credit for the studies they had completed as CASS students. Those who had managed to receive some credit typically said that the process had been long, difficult and expensive and that the amount of credit was a fraction of what they had completed in the U.S.

CASS reports that it negotiated, developed, and signed 21 academic reciprocity agreements with local Central American and Caribbean universities. These agreements are designed to facilitate academic credit for community college classes taken by CASS scholars. Nevertheless, many *ex-becarios* who were interviewed indicated that they received little if any credit from local universities for their two years of study under the program.

10. Community and Civic Participation (Strengthen Democracy), Thoughts about the U.S., Employability, Contributions to Professional Fields

The evaluation team's interviews provided many positive examples of changes in participants' thinking about the U.S. and about the democratization process in their own countries. CASS has also yielded a major impact with respect to the likelihood of obtaining interesting jobs paying livable wages. Available data reveal little about the alumni contributions to fields of knowledge, primarily due to most of them having only recently returned.

Data that the evaluation team collected show that participants returned home with a heightened appreciation of democratic values and the importance of participation in the community. Alumni generally considered leadership training to have been an important and effective part of the

program. Nevertheless, most graduates feel powerless to influence the national-level efforts to strengthen democracy, and, among those who participated in the evaluation team's focus groups, none claimed to participate actively in the larger political process. This is not surprising considering the class-oriented societies to which the participants return and the goal of the program—a grassroots initiative, serving people, especially minorities, not included in other U.S. government-funded programs. Like people everywhere, CASS alumni are focused on their jobs, families, and, to a much lesser extent on, small-scale community activities.

The evaluation found that CASS graduates are generally having very successful careers that in almost all cases would not have been open to them without their CASS training. All of the CASS graduates that the team encountered indicated that their training had had a major positive impact on their employment and income.

Evaluators have little information about the trainees' contributions to their fields of study. One reason is that some of the 46 fields of study—such as repair and maintenance technology and laboratory training—are not activities easily evaluated in terms of breakthroughs in efficiency improvements, cost reductions, or increased benefits. One notable exception is *Técnicas en Soluciones Empresariales* (TSE), a CASS-sponsored web-based training program offered from 1996-2000 in four countries. Enrollment reached about 700 participants, among them about 107-127 CASS alumni. CASS data indicate that in 1999, innovations developed by TSE learning teams produced an average of \$50,000 cost savings per project. The companies rewarded this innovation; in 1999 seventy-eight percent of the participants were promoted or their scopes of responsibility increased.

11. CASS Cost-Share Model, In-Kind Contributions, and Increases in Contributions

The cost-share model is successful, partly owing to substantial U.S. and home country, in-kind donations.

CASS requests that all colleges participate in at least 25 percent cost-share. Most fulfill this requirement (some sharing more, some slightly less, especially in light of recent state budget cuts) and most do so by waiving international or out-of-state tuition charges. During the last seven years, CASS reports that it has almost always surpassed the 25 percent cost-share requirement. In-kind contributions in U.S. and the eight countries include everything from toiletry kits to free transportation to one-year passes at the YMCA.

12. New Fields of Study and Access and Quality of Services in Rural Areas

CASS's incorporation of several new fields of study appears to have the potential to improve the quality of rural education, health, and housing services.

CASS's new specializations include construction management, disease control, and primary school teaching. Trainees in these fields have only recently returned; thus an assessment of their contribution is difficult. Nevertheless, the evaluation team's focus group sessions did reveal

anecdotal evidence that individuals returning from these programs have incorporated new practices, improved their personal performance, and engaged in activities to train others.

13. Percentage of Candidates from Rural Areas and Returning There

CASS draws the majority of its students from areas outside of the capital cities. The training leads many CASS students to seek employment in more urban areas than those from which they came.

CASS data show that it has achieved its goal of awarding 80 percent of the scholarships to 18-25 year olds from rural areas, and the CASS Employment and Impact Survey suggest that most alumni work or live in rural areas. CASS defines “urban” to include the metropolitan areas of the national capitals and “rural” as the rest of the countries. Using a definition that further separates rural and urban, the evaluation team’s survey of about 225 returnees in Honduras and the Dominican Republic found that about 38 percent stated that they came from mid-sized towns and small cities, 30 percent from small towns and rural areas, and some 32 percent from urban centers (this figure for urban centers, based on a sample with incomplete numbers, is not necessarily inconsistent with the 20 percent from capital cities reported by CASS).

When asked about changes in residence since returning from the U.S., 45 percent of the respondents reported that they no longer live where in the same place where they lived before their scholarship. Fifty-eight (58) percent of the responding alumni claim to have moved from rural areas to the city. Three (3) percent moved from urban to rural areas, and nearly 34 percent moved from one urban area to another.

14. Acceptance of Certificates and Career Advancement Relative to Non-CASS Employees

Employers in the CASS countries appear to value and to readily accept the CASS degrees and certificates. Interviews with returned participants and with a small sample of employers suggest that the CASS training helps trainees to advance in their career once employed.

None of the alumni answering questions during individual and group interviews mentioned any problems with employers’ willingness to accept the training as part of their preparation for the job. Several did mention the difficulty of competing in labor markets where many job applicants have four-year degrees. Yet they would go on to say that, even with this handicap, their skills in English and internships in U.S. companies while studying worked to their advantage and helped level the playing field in employment searches.

The evaluation team’s interviews with employers suggest that returned participants have average to better-than-average job mobility; a number of *ex-becarios* had achieved supervisory positions in less than average time at the firm. Some employers found CASS graduates to be exceptional and had hired many as a result of their positive experience. Several employers indicated that they would like to hire additional CASS graduates.

The evaluation team was not aware at the time of its fieldwork that CASS students at some participating colleges are not able to earn an associates degree. Thus, the team did not attempt to differentiate between the labor market's (or local universities') acceptance of associate degrees versus certificates of completion. CIED argues that CASS is a workforce development program, focusing on skills rather than degrees. Whenever possible, CASS tries to provide the opportunity to earn an associates degree, and most do. But, their goal is to provide the best training possible in order for alumni to become employed and become successful professionals. The team believes that it would be useful for CASS to review whether students who return from colleges that do not provide associates degrees have more difficulty than those returning with degrees.

15. Dissemination of New Knowledge and Skills

Interviews with alumni, individually and in focus groups, with their employers, and with specialists in the labor markets indicate that the CASS model of training is successful to very successful at disseminating in trainees' home countries what has been learned during their academic programs.

Many CASS graduates reported that they had participated in training courses to pass on skills acquired in the U.S. to others. Many teachers in Central America and in the Dominican Republic, for example, talked explicitly about the courses they were giving and the "multiplier effect" that was being produced among classmates and in school districts about learning techniques ("*haciendo el efecto multiplicador de técnicas de aprendizaje a compañeros de escuela y distritos escolares*").

16. Numbers of People Benefiting in U.S. and Home Countries from Training One Student

The training of CASS students affects many people, both in their home country and in the U.S.

In the participant's home country, these beneficiaries include the family, friends, employers and co-workers. If the returned participant teaches more effectively, trains others to be more productive or starts a new community service, the impact may reach whole communities. In the U.S., these include people in the college community, host families, business the student frequents, businesses where internships are done, voluntary agencies where participants volunteer and the people served by those agencies. The significance of that impact varies from minor to profound. There is no practical way to quantify that impact.

Data collected for this evaluation show that CASS participants are highly motivated, that they perform well in the U.S. community college environment. They complete their studies successfully and return home to good paying jobs. The program unquestionably is a life-changing event for the participants. It has a major impact on their skills and outlook, enhances their employment prospects and leads to substantially increased income. They become more productive members of their respective countries' economies, and they often help others to be more productive. However, quantifying this impact, comparing it with costs or with alternative investments would be extremely difficult, a task that is beyond the scope of this evaluation.

17. Cost Effectiveness of Different Models of Training and Possible Cost Reductions for the CASS Model

Few, if any, training programs are similar to CASS. CASS targets rural, underprivileged young people and requires an in-country staff in order to reach the right kind of participant. This uniqueness precludes calculating cost-effectiveness based on comparisons to others.

In the absence of such comparative (and competitive) benchmarking to identify cost reductions in CASS implementation, Section VI discusses some recommendations about cause-related marketing alliances that might generate new sources of funding.

Evaluators spoke with the staff at CIED and others at the Academy for Educational Development, Creative Associates, Partners of the Americas, USAID officials in the home countries, and specialists about other training programs for recent high school graduates from anywhere in the world in technical fields for one or two years at U.S. community colleges. No one could suggest any program similar to the CASS model. What makes it unique is the focus on recruiting 18-25 year olds, 80 percent of whom are from rural zones, and many of whom are women, from ethnic or minority groups, or disabled; nearly all are from low-income families.

The evaluation team's visits to CASS facilities at CIED, in three participating countries and at six community colleges suggest that there is a high level of cost-consciousness in the program. For example, offices and student housing are modest, the program's overseas staff are all lower-cost host country nationals, and the cost structure at the community colleges is modest in comparison with most four-year universities. At the in-country level, the CASS offices appear to operate modestly and in a cost-conscious way. For instance, the program has recently reduced the costs of the pre-departure workshops in Jamaica, Honduras, and Nicaragua by merging orientations I and II into one phase.

The ingredients integral to the CASS program and its successes (a high completion rate, a high return rate, a strong work ethic, English language skills, a positive attitude toward the U.S. and the people of the U.S., employable graduates, greater job responsibility and mobility, etc.) are the factors of careful recruitment and selection, intensive ESL, host family support, graduated use of English in the technical instruction, and close supervision by on-campus coordinators. These appear to be the necessary ingredients to train a young socio-economically disadvantaged person and raise them up to a level where they can participate actively and responsibly in a democratic society.

CIED appears to acquire and manage these services in an efficient manner. The evaluation did not see areas where significant additional economies could be realized in the provision of these services.

18. Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) System

An assessment of four of the several CASS survey forms reveals that the M&E system produces clear, adequate, and useful information for USAID reporting needs.

The evaluation team examined two of three types of CASS questionnaires used to measure students' progress at the colleges and the *ex-becarios*' employment rate and civic participation in their home countries; no examination was made of the survey instrument dealing with opinions of community college coordinators of CASS programs because the forms have been in use only one year. A survey form used in the home countries to determine future workforce needs and new fields of study satisfactorily meets CASS's planning and reporting needs. The two forms that were examined about students and alumni generate unambiguous and useful information with which CASS can manage and continually improve its programs and fulfill USAID reporting requirements.

CASS routinely conducts an annual post-campus survey of campus coordinators to get their feedback on the program officer's visit to the college, on his or her technical support to and communications with the college over the year.

The Employment and Impact Survey for two-year *ex-becarios* includes about 15 easily answered questions about employment, continuing education, community, and leadership activities. The tables in both reports indicate that more than 60 percent of the respondents participate in community activities in the localities of their parents' home. Given that 80 per cent of *the ex-becarios* were originally from rural areas, the survey data seem to reveal that most continue to spend much of their times in these areas.

The Students' Evaluation Web Site has functioned for more than three years, belonging to USAID's TraiNet database maintained by DevIs. It presents four questionnaires allowing the measurement of students' opinions about the pre-departure orientation workshops, their experiences after 6 and 20-months of study, and the re-entry workshops on returning home. More than 90 percent of CASS participants fill out the questionnaire, partly due to the many reminders from the Georgetown CASS office and the home-country offices and the less than 10 minutes needed to respond to the questions. The four questionnaires require responses to 13-16 questions about personal development, leadership, community activities, housing, future employment and study plans, and a few other topics. Some to most respondents take the time to write answers in the general comments section.

19. Administration, Management, and Planning

Since 1994, CIED, and the country and the college coordinators have made the appropriate decisions regarding the recruitment and selection of candidates, fields of study, colleges providing the training, pre-departure and re-entry workshops, and training for alumni. These seven years of effective fine tuning of an educational product have transformed many of the CASS graduates into what one Guatemalan governmental official described as risk takers, catalysts, and empowerment technician ("*técnicos en potenciar*") in community relations in rural areas.

The evaluation team found that the CASS program is well designed and managed. Among the factors that make the program successful, key design and management characteristics include:

- *The motivation of the students.* CASS does an excellent job of selecting students.

- *The role of the community colleges.* U.S. community colleges are perhaps uniquely capable of providing appropriate training to CASS participants in a nurturing, supportive environment. The personal attention given to the students by CASS coordinators, college administrators, instructors, community and church leaders, businesspeople and host families are key to the very positive experience that participants enjoy.
- *Delegation of authority.* CIED delegates considerable authority to the country coordinators and participating community colleges, making them responsible for much of the decision-making about program implementation. CIED sets policies; it does not “micro-manage” operations.
- *Learning from experience.* The program staff learns from experience and puts that knowledge into practice. Many problems that emerged in the early days of the program have been effectively addressed.

Recommendations

Some of the following recommendations grow out of the findings on the key issues discussed above. Other recommendations in the section below flow from the evaluation team’s observations and analyses. Many of these considerations and recommendations relate to marketing, fundraising, and public relations. Others focus on issues to be addressed by U.S. college coordinators, CIED staff, and host families and on ways to motivate greater contact between colleges, people in the surrounding communities, and the returned alumni.

In-Country Programs

CASS should explore the possibility of increasing contributions to the program through (1) collaboration with PVOs and NGOs such as Partners of the Americas, Ashoka, World Wildlife Fund, Conservation International, and others, and (2) undertaking a campaign in the participating countries to increase public awareness of the program. Increasing public recognition of CASS will increase the marketability of graduates and enhance the potential to generate private-sector financial support for CASS-sponsored activities.

Explore and invest in low-cost options to increase CASS visibility in the participating countries. During 16 years, as the number of returning graduates increased and their competencies became known, CASS has become increasingly well known. There is now a limited “brand recognition.” This increased visibility is useful to graduates when they seek employment. It might eventually also make it somewhat easier for graduates to obtain credit from local universities for their U.S. studies. And finally, enhanced visibility for a U.S. Government-financed program that provides educational opportunity to low income and minority youths enhances the image of the U.S. and is supportive of U.S. foreign policy interests.

One seemingly simple and inexpensive method to increase visibility would be for each CASS country office to publish and distribute a “CASS in Country Name” pamphlet. This booklet could be used for recruiting applicants, encouraging employers to consider hiring CASS graduates and generally to inform the press and public about the program. Country coordinators

might also market CASS more vigorously through publicity packages, creating a “buzz” through press relations, brochures and other public relations devices.

An effort to make the CASS “brand” better known would provide an opportunity at the same time to expand contacts with and support from the private sector. This might result in private sector sponsorship of publicity kits or in-country alumni activities by the program’s satisfied customers.

Explore methods to broaden contacts with local organizations, such as the various Chambers of Commerce in each country. Appropriately, CASS has created a number of subsidiary in-country programs that support their primary program, such as the Project Formulation and Evaluation (PFE teaches how to conduct development projects in alumni’s home communities), *Técnicas en soluciones empresariales* (TSE, a web-based program in business education), and the Honduras Strengthening Democratic Institutions program. The evaluators feel that, in some cases, these activities may have the potential to be “spun off” as potential sources of ongoing support and funding at the country level.

CASS should examine ways to expand its linkages and partnering with other organizations in each country, especially European, U.S., and Japanese organizations that may provide resources and funding to underwrite scholarship costs (for example, Peace Corps, Partners of the Americas, AED, and others). Given the environmental focus of some of the training, World Wildlife Fund or Conservation International may prove to be “natural,” useful partners for follow-on activities or project funding for returned trainees. Legitimate and rated eco-tourist businesses may be suitable partners.

Consider creating an Internet-based directory of alumni, which would permit searches by name, field of study, country, year of program, etc. This could be an important resource to assist alumni in networking with graduates not only from their countries but also in the other seven. Moreover, employers could use the directory to identify potentially qualified workers in their region, and in-country offices would use this resource to guide trainees in the job search. CIED would need to consider standard privacy concerns and would probably need candidates’ permission to include them. It might create a simple data-entry screen in which trainees enter the relevant information. Such a website might become one more marketing tool in a “branding” campaign to publicize the customer satisfaction with the product and, in turn, conduct fundraising. It should be noted that CASS has employed an Internet director in El Salvador for the purpose of providing employment assistance.

Strengthen the alumni associations in some of the eight countries. For example, the Guatemalan ties and activities lacked vitality or were non-existent. CASS might profitably review what are the “best practices” in, say, Honduras, that may be useful as lessons for countries where these networks have faltered or become frayed. Branding, publicity, and cause-related marketing for fundraising may increase the value even more of being a CASS product so that all association members have even more incentive to participate in the association. The alumni associations and contacts between graduates in Honduras and the Dominican Republic are a valuable resource. Beyond the social ties that such associations foster, the evaluators see them as a source for the growth of trainees’ “social capital.” This relates directly to the goal of fostering democracy,

given that it is widely argued that strong social capital leads to greater participatory decision-making and a greater willingness to take part in community affairs and volunteerism.

Strengthen the cooperation between CASS and USAID on the selection of areas of study and in other areas. CASS currently conducts, in each country, a “Survey of Employment Needs,” which includes business people, government officers, NGOs, and USAID staff. In most countries, USAID staff offer suggestions. The results of the survey are synthesized to guide the selection of fields of study. However, not all the appropriate staff was, in at least one of the countries, fully aware of the results of the survey and how the decisions mesh with their own strategic planning. CIED might consider involving CASS country coordinators in a greater exchange with USAID after the first phase of field selection is completed, so that they can obtain some feedback from the Missions. This may enhance the awareness of USAID staff about the program’s effectiveness at matching new fields of study to fast changing labor market and training needs, bridging any “information gaps” that USAID staff may perceive. The publicity campaign and cause-related marketing would require not only approval but also some collaboration from USAID, a process tightening the linkages between the Mission, its NGO and member network, and CASS.

Continue to explore ways to facilitate the transfer of college credits to institutions in the home countries. The evaluation recognizes that making the transfer of course credits to home countries easier is a challenge with no straightforward way to address. More reciprocity agreements may help, somewhat. CASS presently provides graduates with a notarized, properly authenticated transcript (and diploma where required) of his or her college grades. A long-term solution to this structural educational problem in the eight countries will probably result only from the branding and marketing campaign of the CASS-USAID logo and educational product, perhaps partly conducted along with in-country universities offering similar two-year technical training such as Universidad Galileo (Appendix E, Country Reports).

Investigate the possibility of providing some additional, low-cost English language training to candidates prior to their travel to the U.S. This could consist of cassette tapes and manuals, a short intensive course in country, or even a stay with an American family (such as USAID families that might host a student for a week). We recognize that there are certain obstacles to implementing this: the additional cost, logistical challenges, and the fact that it is important that all trainees get the same opportunities. However, we feel that a “head start” in the language by these motivated trainees would be very useful to them as they strive to learn English quickly.

Consider maintaining applicant files for a standard period—such as three to five years. Such standardization in the eight countries would (1) facilitate their tracking of repeat applicants and (2) provide an ongoing, comparative pool for career tracking and for evaluation, whether by CASS, outside evaluators or disgruntled candidates.

Relating to U.S. Implementation

Consider the creation of a more structured leadership-training component. Leadership training is an important aspect of CASS philosophy; what that means is appropriately variable, given the variety of technical fields. At times, however, the training appears to be submerged in other

activities in ways that make unclear which leadership issues are addressed. Clearly, trainees arrive home with skills that contribute to leadership, such as presentation skills, speaking, etc.

The training might include lectures and readings during the pre-departure and re-entry workshops and at least once while in the colleges that help students to sharpen their skills in (1) leadership, (2) management, and (3) entrepreneurship so that all participants become business people in whatever field of study they work. The TSE program may provide a model.

Review policies about the selection of host families, especially with respect to language spoken in the home. The evaluation team noted a wide variety of host family placements and commends the program for its efforts in providing this strong social and civic responsibility dimension. We would concur with the idea that “it takes a community to train a CASS student,” and that the host family alone is only part of the broad cultural experience available to CASS students. However, we would ask campus coordinators to bear in mind the importance of an English-speaking home environment for the trainees as they work to expand their host-family networks. This concern is not an issue in many regions where trainees study, such as in the Midwest or Northeast. In Texas and California, though, it appears that many Spanish-speaking students are placed in homes where Spanish is spoken. Admittedly, in some localities the recruitment of host families is a continual challenge. Trainees in English-speaking homes described how important that language experience is for learning English more rapidly.

Review whether some state or college regulations may lessen program impact. CIED and college coordinators may need to assess the role regulations in Texas play in creating obstacles for primarily Spanish-speaking trainees to register for credit, due to the provision that students must qualify in English to enroll. While the emphasis in the Program on gaining an A.A. degree has lessened in recent years, it may be worth tracking whether the difficulty of accumulating college credits has an adverse impact on trainee educational and career paths.

Consider investigating low-cost means to encourage greater contact between community colleges (professors, fellow students, host family members) and the returned alumni through increased contact in the home country. One of the great benefits in the U.S. is the impact that the program has on local communities where students serve as “friendship ambassadors.” During this time of heightened awareness about “public diplomacy” as a great asset for U.S. international relations, the evaluators heard several stories of visits by community members and friends to alumni at home. Such educational and eco-tourism to the eight countries clearly has a strong effect in building ongoing ties between the U.S., Central America, and the Caribbean, creating strong advocates for the CASS program, perhaps even sources of publicity and funding. Staff might examine how the program can encourage and facilitate those contacts, perhaps through initiatives on the campuses or a travel agency that may be interested in serving as a catalyst for these visits. Aside from encouraging the development of long-term linkages, travel of college staff to CASS countries helps them to understand the environment from which the students come and to which they will return. This understanding will allow the colleges to create programs that will serve the needs of these students. The evaluation team saw evidence of colleges’ strong commitment to enhance international programs, and at least one college president indicated a willingness to entertain the idea of subsidizing the overseas travel of his staff.

APPENDIX A
Scope of Work

Statement of Work for an Evaluation of the CASS Program

A. Background

The Cooperative Association of States for Scholarships (CASS) project, implemented by Georgetown University's Center for Intercultural Education and Development (CIED) since 1989, is a cooperative agreement between the Center and USAID's Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean. CASS is a follow-on project to the Central American Scholarship Program (CASP), also administered by Georgetown University between 1985 and 1989. To carry out the objectives of the project, CASS receives support from USAID as well as from the U.S. communities and educational institutions that host the program and from businesses and organizations in the eight participating countries in Central America and the Caribbean. The current five-year agreement became effective on 6/1/98 and terminates on 5/31/03. USAID is contributing \$53 million to this activity, to which CASS (in concert with its counterparts) proposes to provide a cost-share match of \$13.25 million.

The purpose of the CASS Project is to provide a broad-based cadre of leaders and potential leaders in LAC countries with technical skills, training, and academic education for positions in a variety of sectors, including education (primary school teachers and administrators), health (prevention, diagnosis and treatment of communicable diseases), environmental protection, broad-based economic growth, agriculture, and working with people with disabilities (particularly the deaf). These sectoral emphases are intended to complement the strategic objectives of USAID and help meet the human resource development needs of LAC countries.

The CASS program also aims to instill in its students an appreciation for and understanding of the workings of a free enterprise economy in a democratic society, as well as a commitment to public service and civic responsibility. Direct beneficiaries of this program are disadvantaged populations, including the poor, women, ethnic and racial minorities, the disabled and other previously excluded groups in developing countries. This project also endeavors to identify and recruit scholarship candidates who have demonstrated leadership potential, but who are clearly unable to obtain their educational objective in their own countries or the United States without scholarship assistance.

The last in-depth evaluation of the CASS program took place in 1994. This evaluation should assess the effectiveness and impact of activities funded since 1995 (even though the current cooperative agreement began in 1998), as well as whether and to what extent

the CASS program addresses the findings and recommendations of the prior evaluation.

B. Purpose of Evaluation

An external evaluation will assess whether CASS is meeting the goals and objectives laid out in its cooperative agreement with USAID. The evaluation will also examine the CASS model and its effectiveness in achieving the desired objectives. Additionally, it will highlight successful activities, as well as those that have been less effective, so that Georgetown can improve CASS based upon lessons learned. Although CASS's structure and/or management should not be a main focus of the evaluation, these elements should be considered in so far as they may have enhanced or hindered the effectiveness of the overall program.

C. Scope of Work:

1. Objectives

LAC/RSD/EHR expects the contractor to conduct a thorough review of the CASS Program and the activities it carries out. The contractor should identify which CASS programs have been most effective and therefore may be worth pursuing further, and which activities have been less effective and may need to be revised or dropped in the future. Based on the evaluation's findings, the contractor shall identify potential "windows of opportunity" if applicable, for new directions for USAID and/or CASS programming.

2. Tasks

Under this task order, the contractor shall carry out the following:

- a) Provide LAC/RSD/EHR with an evaluation that analyzes to what extent the CASS program has met the terms and conditions of its Cooperative Agreement over the last six years (1995-2001), since the last evaluation was carried out in 1994.
- b) Assess the effectiveness and quality of the CASS program since 1995.
- c) Provide clear recommendations regarding which activities have been most effective and therefore may be worth pursuing further, and which have been less effective and may need to be revised or dropped in the future. Where relevant, the contractor shall make technical recommendations as to adjustments that may be made to improve current programs that are less-than-effective or could be made stronger with fine-tuning or changes.
- d) Identify potential "windows of opportunity", based on the evaluation's findings, for new

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programmatic directions that LAC/RSD/EHR and/or CASS might take to strengthen support for training in the LAC region.

3. Areas for Analysis:

- a) The contractor shall be responsible for designing a methodology for conducting an evaluation of the CASS program. The recommended evaluation methodology will be proposed and submitted to USAID and CASS/Georgetown University in the form of a draft Work Plan to be approved in writing by both parties (see Deliverables Section).
- b) The contractor shall evaluate the full range of CASS activities.

Following is a list of items of particular interest to USAID for inclusion in the evaluation. This list is not meant to be exhaustive -- many other questions and issues could be raised. Other items of interest may be added later as the evaluation methodology is designed, but the following list states those questions that LAC/RSD/EHR deems critical for review in this evaluation:

KEY QUESTIONS:

1. How has CASS changed since its inception?
2. Were recommendations from the 1994 evaluation addressed and if so, how? If not, why?
3. What are the workforce needs of the countries where CASS works? (Note that this analysis should be based on already available labor information from other donors and institutions.) How relevant is CASS's training to meet those labor needs? Moreover, is CASS keeping pace of changing needs?
4. How relevant are the current fields of study to USAID's strategic focus? How does CASS work with USAID Missions to ensure its activities complement Mission and regional needs/priorities?
5. How does Georgetown select fields of study and institutions to support them? How does it identify new institutional directions (e.g. carry out outreach to new schools)?
6. What is the impact of the program on "underserved" populations? These might include the poor, ethnic minorities (people of African and Indigenous descent), women, people with disabilities, rural populations, etc. Is Georgetown successful at reaching out to the disadvantaged populations to whom this project is aimed?
7. What has been the impact of CASS on U.S. colleges? Is there evidence that there is also a broader impact upon U.S. communities?

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8. What types of assistance do both the local colleges and CASS provide to students once they are in the US? When they return home? Is this appropriate?
9. How successful have alumni been in transferring credits gained at US colleges to educational institutions in their home countries? What role have the academic reciprocity agreements secured by CASS played in the credit transfer process?
10. Using available tools, determine how has this scholarship experience changed students' views of the USA, how has it impacted their desire to promote greater democracy (through community and civic participation), how has it increased their employability or contributions they've made to a professional field, etc.
11. How successful is the CASS cost-share model (both in the US and in participating countries)? What has been the in-kind contribution of organizations in the US and overseas to this program? Are there ways these contributions could be expanded?
12. What impact have the new fields (e.g. health, education, and construction) had on rural communities? Is there any evidence that the new fields have resulted in increased access to or improved quality of services in rural areas?
13. What percentage of candidates is recruited from rural areas? What percentage returns to and remains in the rural areas after training?
14. How well accepted is the Associates Degree and technical training certificates in the countries where CASS works? How are employees with such degrees and certificates paid and promoted compared to those with other types of training?
15. How successful is the CASS model at assuring that new knowledge and skills are applied and disseminated in the participating countries? This might entail an examination of U.S. training programs, employment assistance efforts, and follow-on programs once trainees return.
16. Is there any way to assess how many people (in the home country, place of employment, U.S. colleges and community) are impacted by training one person?
17. How cost effective is the CASS model compared to others that are used in the training field? Are there less expensive ways to implement the CASS program?
18. MONITORING AND EVALUATION SYSTEM – Is the current monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan for the CASS cooperative agreement adequate and producing clear and useful information about the program's impact? How could the system provide information more relevant for USAID annual reporting requirements? (Note the

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contractor shall examine the indicators chosen to measure the program's impact and make recommendations as to how to improve the overall M&E system for measuring results and meeting USAID internal requirements.)

19. ADMINISTRATION, MANAGEMENT, AND PLANNING – these should be assessed as they enhance or hinder the effectiveness and impact of the CASS program; as well as how they have changed since the 1994 evaluation.

20. SAMPLE OF PROGRAMS TO BE EVALUATED - The contractor shall review and propose a manageable sample of program activities which might include the following CASS-proposed list:

Visit to Community Colleges:

- **Alamo Community College District (HBCU/HSI):** Alamo Community College District in San Antonio, Texas is comprised of four colleges including one Historically Black College (HBCU) and three Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs). ACCD is also the only college in the CASS network that trains two-year, one-year, and short-term participants. Therefore, all three training models of the CASS Program can be examined.
- **Broome Community College:** Broome Community College located in Binghamton, New York has over 10 years experience training CASS students. They have specialized in the field of Quality Control (of high demand in CASS countries) and have been successful in building alliances with alumni, companies, and universities in CASS countries.
- **Harris-Stowe State College (HBCU):** Harris-Stowe State College is a Historically Black College in St. Louis, Missouri. Harris-Stowe has specialized in training CASS teachers in six-month and one-year programs.
- **Modesto/Reedley (HSI):** Modesto Junior College and Reedley College both located in central California have both been in the CASS network for over 10 years. Reedley has been successful at developing training programs focus on agriculture. Modesto has trained in a number of high tech, agriculture, and education fields for both one- and two-year students.

Visit to Countries:

- **Dominican Republic:** CASS/GU recommends the Dominican Republic for three reasons. First, it is a Caribbean country and therefore is representative of three Caribbean countries in the CASS network (Dominican Republic, Haiti, and Jamaica). Secondly, it was visited during the 1994 CASS evaluation and therefore could be used for a longitudinal analysis. Finally, there is a greater demand for high tech fields in the DR than in other countries allowing the DR to be a point of comparison.
- **Guatemala:** Guatemala is recommended because it has a very large indigenous population from which many CASS scholars have been recruited.

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Agriculture is a large part of the economic system therefore it is representative of the other countries in Central America.

- **Honduras:** CASS recommends Honduras because like the Dominican Republic, it was visited during the 1994 CASS evaluation. CASS has also trained a number of people from indigenous and African descent groups. Finally, CASS has provided additional training in the area of construction management for Honduras to assist in Hurricane Mitch reconstruction.

21. *RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGE:* The contractor shall propose recommendations for what may be done to make the program stronger, in terms of both programming and management. Recommendations shall take into account both successful strategies and activities, as well as those that have been less effective. Any windows of opportunity for new or expanded activities based on the evaluation findings should also be discussed as part of the “Key Findings and Recommendations” section.

D. Relationships and Responsibilities:

Susan Morawetz, in LAC/RSD/EHR, is the manager of the CASS project and is the designated Project Liaison Officer (PLO) for this evaluation activity. Chantal Santelices is the contact for CASS.

The contractor shall brief and/or consult with the PLO on an as-needed basis during the implementation of the evaluation. The management of the program shall be housed in USAID’s Global Evaluation and Monitoring (GEM) Project / Indefinite Quantity Contract (IQC), which is managed by Aguirre International. GEM is set up to monitor and evaluate a broad range of USAID-funded human capacity development activities around the world. Aguirre International also carried out the 1994 evaluation of CASS so is familiar with the program and how it has changed over the years.

E. Deliverables:

1. Work Plan: Approximately one month prior to commencing an evaluation of CASS the contractor shall submit to the USAID Project Liaison Officer (PLO) and the CASS contact a draft workplan describing the proposed methodology for conducting the CASS evaluation. This workplan should identify the countries and programs that the evaluation team will visit, as well as the consultants/staff who will carry out the analysis. Within seven (7) days of receipt of the workplan, the USAID/LAC education team and the CASS directors will meet with the contractor and provide written comments and/or suggestions on the methodology document. The contractor will respond to and/or incorporate comments and provide the PLO with a final Work Plan within the next seven (7) days. The PLO will provide the contractor with written approval to proceed once the LAC/RSD/EHR team and the CASS/GU team have agreed to the final Work Plan.

2. Report submissions

The draft evaluation report should be submitted to USAID by the end of week ____ of the contract, which will share it with CASS for its review and comments. A debriefing will be held with USAID and Georgetown within ___ days of the end of the contract. USAID and Georgetown will respond within 14 working days of receipt of the document. The final report will be presented (electronically and in hard copy) to both within four weeks of receipt of final comments.

The evaluation report should include the following sections:

- a) Executive summary
- b) Key Findings and Recommendations
- c) Review of Issues to be Addressed
- d) Conclusion
- e) Summary of Evaluation Methodology
- f) List of individuals contacted

F. Instructions to Contractors

It is anticipated that this evaluation will take a minimum of four weeks and include the following:

- A minimum of two (2) Spanish-speaking, external consultants
- Travel to a minimum of two (2) countries and three (3) CASS colleges
- No more than two (2) weeks of preparatory work in Washington.

G. Budget:

Per the GEM Task Order, this activity should not exceed \$100,000 including burdened labor and other direct costs.

ATTACHMENT A.

The contractors should consider some or all of the following in carrying out the evaluation:

- Interviews
- USAID/LAC/RSD
- USAID/G/HCD
- USAID/Missions
- Georgetown/CIED
- Community Colleges in U.S
- Current students
- In-country CASS offices and support networks
- Host-country liasons, alumni
- *CASS Documents to review*

In order to familiarize themselves with CASS' s mission, objectives, programmatic evolution, and scope of work, evaluators should review the following documents:

Document related to overview of CASS:

Documents related to accomplishments and previous evaluations of CASS:

Documents related to current activities

APPENDIX B

Discussion of Evaluation Methodology

Discussion of Evaluation Methodologies

Introduction

Evaluation of the CASS program in the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, and Honduras was based on multiple sources of information: interviews with CASS staff, USAID officials, training providers, employers and colleagues, and a survey of participants from the three countries. In-depth interviews were conducted with in-country CASS Coordinators and others involved in the program. Eight focus groups were conducted with about 90 alumni. Using a questionnaire dealing with 15 issues, evaluators interviewed 14 employers of CASS alumni, four in Santo Domingo, four in Honduras (two each in Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula), and six in Guatemala City. An assessment of future workforce needs resulted from interviews with specialists in 14 different institutions (six in Tegucigalpa and eight in Guatemala City) and readings from publications such as the *United Nations Program for Development Annual Reports about Human Development in Honduras and Guatemala*, *The Economist Country Reports*, *Reinterpreting the Banana Republic: Region and State in Honduras, 1870-1972*, and *La Articulación de las diferencias, o, el Síndrome de Maximón: los discursos literarios y políticos del debate interétnico en Guatemala*.

Of the 838 Dominican Republic, Guatemalan, and Honduran CASS alumni completing their studies between 1994 and 2001, 316 filled out a form with 89 questions. Their answers are the bases for tabulations and rankings about respondents' thinking about the U.S. training, and its impact on their careers, lives, and civic activities in their home countries.

A. In-Country Strategy

Ideally, an evaluation should be able to compare those who have received a “treatment,” (in this case, the U.S. based experience of a CASS scholarship) with an equivalent group who has not had this experience. However, this was not possible in the present circumstances. Information about candidates who completed the first or second of three selections processes but were finally not awarded a scholarship—one potential comparison group—was not available. Nor were interviews possible with “terminated” students (awarded scholarships but later withdrawn, usually for behavioral reasons). For example, the Guatemalan office decided not to store applications from previous recruiting cycles, although some of the candidates apply several years in a row. USAID officials provided names of several candidates recruited but not awarded scholarships so that the Aguirre evaluators might interview them about the transparency and objectivity of the recruitment and selection. As with many of the Guatemalan CASS alumni, none of the telephone numbers for the non-awardees were valid, allowing evaluators to interview none of them. While an equivalent comparison group could have been identified from the population at large, the costs involved in organizing this group would be prohibitive. This is especially true if we consider that securing participation in a relatively lengthy probing interview for non-alumni would require a substantial financial incentive. Therefore, the in-country component of this evaluation relied on a survey of returned

participants. The evaluation team interviewed returnees and some supervisors, to establish the case for the role of the program in contributing to the actions and accomplishments that have taken place since the trainees' return.

Since Aguirre International conducted a CASS review in 1994 that included interviews of participants from the earlier years of the program, this evaluation focused on participants who returned from their U.S. training during the years 1994-2001. Therefore, the in-country survey focused on the universe of 838 returned trainees during those years: 274 in the Dominican Republic, 295 in Guatemala, and 269 in Honduras.

Both quantitative and qualitative methodologies were used to collect data for the evaluation. A survey instrument with 89 questions was developed (Appendix C). The survey located 316 participants in the three countries. Although the survey took place during the end-of-the year holidays, the traditional vacation period in Central America and the Caribbean for many CASS alumni and their school-age children with vacations of two months, we were successful in interviewing 99 returned participants from the Dominican Republic, 90 from Guatemala, and 127 Honduran returned participants.

The questionnaire covered such issues as the participants' assessment of the program, information on employment patterns and career advancement, continued educational efforts, current activities in the workplace and community, continued contact with U.S. colleagues, the degree to which the returnees have shared their training with others, and statements of concrete activities and outcomes realized at home that derive from their scholarship program. Focus groups and open-ended interviews with approximately 90 other individuals provided qualitative data about the trainees' activities and impact in their home institutions.

Dominican Republic. The evaluation included three in-depth group interviews, two in Santo Domingo with about 10 participants in each one and one in San Francisco de Macoris with 9 to 10 participants. Each focus-group interview lasted about 90 minutes, was taped and transcribed, and covered 15 to 20 different issues ranging from internships and host families to changes in thinking about gender equality, the environment, and persons with disabilities. A survey of CASS alumni took place with 99 of the 274 post-1994 graduates, receiving the survey form with 89 questions during visits to their homes or workplaces by one member of the team of four evaluators. Four employers of CASS alumni in Santo Domingo answered 15 questions about employee performance. Interviews also took place with USAID mission officers knowledgeable about CASS and its recruitment and selection of candidates, and why their fields of study complement the mission's strategic focus.

Guatemala. Nineteen *ex-becarios* (returned CASS graduates), all living in Guatemala City, participated in two different focus groups, eight in the first and 11 in the second one (7 of 19 were men; all 19 studied in the U.S. since 1994). Evaluators scheduled three other focus groups, one in Antigua where only two women arrived out of a group of seven to eight local *exbecarios* (no reasons offered about the failure to attend), and two in Quetzaltenango for which the *exbecarios* called to cancel

(again, no reasons offered about failure to attend). A survey of CASS alumni took place with all the post-1994 graduates who evaluators could contact. CIED provided evaluators with a list of 295 alumni. Of these, the Guatemala City CASS office had addresses and telephone numbers of 238. Evaluators selected 150 of these 238 names. They reduced the list to 127 due to the deaths of some *ex-becarios* and the travels abroad of others. Inaccurate addresses and phone numbers, travel, work, the December holidays, and other reasons generated large difficulties in locating the alumni. Finally, every alumnus on the original list Guatemala City list was called. Evaluators interviewed 90 of the 238 (295 on CIED's list), most of whom agreed only to a phone interview with one member of the team of five evaluators.

Six Guatemalan City employers of CASS graduates responded to questions about employee performance. Interviews with eight specialists in the country's labor force needs provided the bases to suggest what fields of study will continue to assure CASS graduates of a high degree of employability in careers resolving many of the country's problems. The evaluation also included interviews with USAID mission officers about CASS, fields of study, workforce needs, and the mission's strategic focus.

Honduras. Thirty six *ex-becarios* participated in three different focus groups, two with participants in Tegucigalpa and one in San Pedro Sula (one woman, six men, five with pre-1994 scholarships). The first group from the capital included 16 *ex-becarios* (7 women, 2 participants with scholarships before 1994, one woman awarded scholarships twice). Thirteen *ex-becarios* participated in the second one (eight women, six with pre-1994 scholarships, one man awarded scholarships twice). Only 2 or 3 of the 36 *ex-becarios* lived and studied in the U.S. for less than two years, both being construction supervisors (one female).

The evaluators interviewed about half of the CASS graduates who studied in the U.S. between 1994 and 2001. CIED listed the names of 269 students who completed successfully their scholarships and returned to Honduras. Of these, the Tegucigalpa office provided information on about 243 (190 for two years in about a dozen different fields of study, 8 to study health for one year, 10 for education for one year, and 35 for six months or less of training as construction supervisors). Evaluators reduced the list of 243 by about 30 *ex-becarios* (returned grantees) because they had married and left the country, studied or worked outside of Honduras and no longer had accurate addresses or telephone numbers, or had died (4). Of the 213, evaluators obtained addresses and telephone numbers of 208 alumni.

Evaluators selected 150 names from the list of about 208 *ex-becarios* for interviews. Of these, 127 *ex-becarios* participated in the interviews conducted from early December until January 8, 2002; the others being unavailable due to work, December holiday travels, and difficult to contact resulting from out-of-date addresses and phone numbers. Although the selection of interviewees was not random, participants seemed to include every part of Honduras that *ex-becarios* come from (for example, the Bay Islands in the Caribbean and one of four alumni living in the department of Gracias a Dios) and an equal number of men, women, and members of the country's

ethnic groups, and all the fields of study for CASS has awarded scholarships since 1994, including several for 3-6 and 12 months. The largest group of alumni was from Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula, urban areas where many CASS alumni live due to the employment opportunities.

Evaluators relied on telephone and mail interviews only in a few cases, traveling during December 2001 and January 2002 to the workplaces and homes of more than 90 percent of the *ex-beccarios* for their participation in an interview lasting about one hour. To locate alumni in the departments of Colón and Gracias a Dios required innovative procedures--radio advertisements, telephone calls, messages sent by fax, email, and people traveling to these departments who were friends of the alumni. For example, an official from the Misquitos Association (MOPAWI) traveled to Gracias a Dios, offering to contact the four alumni and deliver the questionnaires to them. As of early January, only one of the four in that department had returned the survey form. In the department of Colón, a friend of one of the Aguirre evaluators was a radio announcer and made public-service announcements, asking CASS alumni in the department to meet with the evaluators. Eight construction supervisors and teachers filled out questionnaires and mailed them to the Aguirre evaluator in Tegucigalpa who then called respondents to clarify some of the answers.

Interviews took place with four employers of CASS alumni (two in Tegucigalpa and two in San Pedro Sula) and with six Tegucigalpa specialists in future workforce needs.

B. Strategy for U.S. Site Visits

From November 2001 until February 2002, site visits were conducted in Binghamton, New York; Reedley and Modesto (central California); San Antonio, Texas; and St. Louis, Missouri, at six community colleges that currently provide CASS training. Interviews were scheduled, when possible, with program administrators, professors, academic advisors, and any other key stakeholders who took part in the program, such as Employment Development Coordinators and Internship Coordinators. The purpose of these interviews was to provide an overall assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the U.S. component of the program (see protocol including 35 questions in Appendix D). CASS staff was also interviewed regarding their participation and interaction with the Program.

APPENDIX C
Alumni Questionnaire

2. ¿A qué grupo étnico o social pertenece Ud.? (Por ejemplo, natural, Cakchikel, Ladino, hispano, criollo, blanco, afro, etc.)

()

3. Cuando Ud. entró en el Programa CASS, su residencia estaba ubicada en un(a)

Centro urbano (01) Pueblo secundario Zona rural (03)

4. Campo de estudio / capacitación en los EE.UU.

()

5. ¿Cuándo empezó su programa académica CASS? ___/___ (Mes /Año)

6. ¿Cuándo terminó su programa académica CASS? ___/___ (Mes /Año)

7. ¿En cuál universidad o “college” de comunidad estudió Ud. en los EE.UU.?

()

8. Cuando salió de [país] para viajar a los EE.UU., ¿se sintió preparado para las clases académicas que dio en los EE.UU.?

Sí (01) No (02)

9. Si contestó **No**, ¿qué más le hubiera gustado saber?

10. ¿Participó en algún curso o programa de capacitación en el idioma inglés en su universidad o “community college”?

Sí (01) No (02)

11. Si contestó **Sí**, ¿durante cuánto tiempo? Meses _____

12. ¿Vivió Ud. con una familia norteamericana durante su programa académica?

Sí (01) No (02)

13. En su opinión, ¿cuáles ventajas o desventajas resultan de vivir con una familia “anfitrión?”

14. Refleje en su experiencia con la beca en los EE.UU., y imagine una regla que va, en un extremo, de “muy insatisfecho” a “muy satisfecho.” ¿Cómo calificaría los siguientes componentes de su programa CASS?

COMPONENTES		Muy insatisfecho o (01)	Insatisfecho (02)	Ni satisfecho ni insatisfecho (03)	Satisfecho (04)	Muy Satisfecho (05)
a)	Contenido del curso	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b)	Capacidad de los instructores	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c)	Ritmo de la instrucción	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d)	Las facilidades de la institución (laboratorios, bibliotecas, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e)	Vivienda	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f)	Los servicios de salud, clínica, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g)	Los servicios y programas para los estudiantes internacionales	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h)	Las actividades generales de la comunidad universitaria	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

15. En su opinión, ¿a qué nivel calificaría Ud. los cursos académicos del Programa? Fueron:

Bajo mis capacidades (Muy sencillos) <input type="checkbox"/> (01)	Más o menos aptos para mis capacidades <input type="checkbox"/> (02)	Más allá de mis capacidades (Muy difíciles) <input type="checkbox"/> (03)
---	--	--

16. Considerándolo todo, ¿cómo evaluaría su Programa CASS? ¿Hasta qué punto está Ud. satisfecho(a) con su programa de entrenamiento en los Estados Unidos?

Muy insatisfecho <input type="checkbox"/> (01)	Insatisfecho <input type="checkbox"/> (02)	Ni satisfecho ni insatisfecho <input type="checkbox"/> (03)	Satisfecho <input type="checkbox"/> (04)	Muy Satisfecho <input type="checkbox"/> (05)
--	--	---	--	--

17. ¿Ha mantenido Ud. contacto con la institución académica en los EE.UU. donde llevó a cabo su programa de estudios, o con individuos en los EE.UU. que conoció en esa institución?

Sí (01) No (02)

18. ¿Participó Ud. en un experiencia práctica de trabajo (una “pasantía”) durante su Programa CASS?

- Sí (01) No (02) (**Salte a 22**)

19. Si tuvo una pasantía como parte de su Programa CASS, ¿qué hizo Ud.?

20. ¿Cómo calificaría el grado de efectividad de la pasantía que tuvo Ud. en relación a apoyar sus estudios?

Sin ningún valor o efectividad <input type="checkbox"/> (01)	Faltó algo de efectividad <input type="checkbox"/> (02)	Neutro <input type="checkbox"/> (03)	Efectivo <input type="checkbox"/> (04)	Muy efectivo <input type="checkbox"/> (05)
--	---	--	--	--

21. ¿Ha mantenido Ud. contacto con la institución en los EE.UU. donde llevó a cabo su pasantía, o con individuos en los EE.UU. que conoció durante su pasantía en esa institución?

- Sí (01) No (02)

22. Si hubiera podido diseñar o mejorar su propia pasantía, ¿qué hubiera hecho para mejorarlo o dotarlo con un mayor grado de efectividad?

EFFECTOS PERSONALES DE LA CAPACITACION

23. ¿Hasta qué punto ha cambiado *su vida* como resultado de su participación en el Programa CASS?

- No ha cambiado nada. (01)
 Ha cambiado algo. (02)
 Ha cambiado mucho o muchísimo. (03)

24. ¿Cambiaron sus *expectativas o aspiraciones o planes para el futuro* como resultado de su experiencia educacional en los EE.UU.?

Sí (01) No (02)

25. Explique, por favor, cómo o en qué manera cambiaron sus aspiraciones o planes para el futuro.

26. Califique o evalúe, por favor, cómo la oportunidad de estudiar en los EE.UU. le afectó en las áreas siguientes, utilizando una escala de “muy dañino” a “muy útil.”

CARACTERÍSTICAS		Muy dañino (01)	Dañino (02)	Ningún efecto (03)	Útil (04)	Muy útil (05)
a)	Confianza en sí	<input type="checkbox"/>				
b)	Capacidad de comunicarse con los demás	<input type="checkbox"/>				
c)	Capacidad de llevarse bien con los demás	<input type="checkbox"/>				
d)	Aptitud para tolerar el cambio	<input type="checkbox"/>				
e)	Inclinación a aceptar y tomar riesgos	<input type="checkbox"/>				
f)	Capacidad de hablar delante el público	<input type="checkbox"/>				
g)	Inclinación a probar cosas nuevas	<input type="checkbox"/>				

27. ¿Cómo calificaría la utilidad de su programa CASS con respecto a las áreas siguientes?

AREAS		Nada útil (01)	Algo (Un poco) útil (02)	Útil (03)	Muy útil (04)
a)	Mejoramiento de mis capacidades profesionales o ocupacionales	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b)	Para aprender nuevas destrezas y técnicas para mi trabajo	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c)	Para aprender a trabajar dentro de un EQUIPO	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d)	Preparación para una carrera	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e)	Oportunidades a crear enlaces, a conocer a estadounidenses en mi área de especialización	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f)	Oportunidades de conocer a otros colegas de mi país en mi área de especialización	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g)	Oportunidades de conocer a otros colegas en mi campo que vienen de otros países en la región	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h)	Mejoramiento de mis capacidades de liderazgo	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i)	Ser voluntario dentro de mi comunidad	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

28. ¿Qué tal es su vida? Abajo se ve una escala que representa un especie de escalera con los varios momentos de la vida interpuestos. Piense en la escalera como una escala que representa como andan las cosas en su vida en forma general. El punto inferior de la escalera es “uno” (1) y indica que “mi vida va muy mal.” El punto superior de la escalera es “diez” (10) y indica que “mi vida está muy bien.” Indique cuál número de 1 a 10 que mejor indica cómo Ud. sentía con respecto a su posición en la vida en aquel momento.

Antes de ir a los EE.UU. (01)	Mientras estudiaba en los EE.UU. (02)	Cuando regresé a mi país (03)	Hoy en día (04)	De aquí a cinco años (05)
10	10	10	10	10
9	9	9	9	9
8	8	8	8	8
7	7	7	7	7
6	6	6	6	6
5	5	5	5	5
4	4	4	4	4
3	3	3	3	3
2	2	2	2	2
1	1	1	1	1

29. Indique, por favor, su grado de acuerdo con los puntos siguientes relacionados a los procesos democráticos y la economía de mercado.

30.

COMENTARIOS		Discrepo fuertemente (01)	Discrepo, no estoy de acuerdo (02)	Neutro (03)	De acuerdo (04)	Muy de acuerdo (05)
a)	Todo ciudadano, quien sea, debe tener los mismos derechos y protecciones bajo las leyes.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b)	Las elecciones libres y transparentes, en que todos los partidos políticos tienen acceso a los medios de comunicación, son fundamentales para un sistema democrático de gobierno.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c)	Es muy importante siempre votar en las elecciones (presidenciales, municipales, parlamentarios, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d)	La legislatura (parlamento) debe encargarse de promulgar las leyes, y el gobierno debe ejecutarlas.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e)	Los medio independientes son importantes para un sistema democrático porque pueden divulgar y hacer público las acciones de individuos, empresas, y gobiernos (buenas y malas)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

EDUCACION

31. Desde su regreso de los Estados Unidos, ¿se ha matriculado en algún curso educativo?

Sí (01) No (02) (**Salte a 36**)

32. Si contestó sí, ¿qué ha estudiado? _____

33. ¿Fue esto el mismo campo que estudió durante su Programa CASS?

Sí (01) No (02)

34. ¿En qué nivel siguió Ud. estos estudios? (Marquen todas las categorías que sean apropiadas.)

- Técnico/vocacional⁽⁰¹⁾
 Bachillerato/licenciatura (Universitario)⁽⁰²⁾
 Maestría (Universitario)⁽⁰³⁾
 Doctorado⁽⁰⁴⁾

35. [Pregunte sólo si el entrevistado participó en un programa de becas de 9 meses o más.] ¿Tuvo Ud. alguna dificultad en que le aceptaran los “créditos” (unidades académicas) en su país?

- Sí⁽⁰¹⁾ No⁽⁰²⁾

36. Para el momento, ¿qué es el nivel más alto de instrucción o educación que ha logrado?

Grado _____ y Número de años _____

37. ¿Ha compartido con otros su experiencia y conocimiento obtenido en su capacitación en los EE.UU.? (Entrevistador: compartir se refiere a enseñar, mencionar, contarle la experiencia).

- Sí⁽⁰¹⁾ No⁽⁰²⁾

38. Si contesta **Sí**, ¿cómo?

39. ¿Con cuántos *colegas o compañeros de trabajo* ha compartido Ud. el contenido de su capacitación en los Estados Unidos, que sea formalmente o informalmente?

Por favor, dé una estimación numérica _____

40. ¿Con cuántas *otras personas-miembros de la comunidad, amigos, familiares*, etc.-ha compartido el contenido de su capacitación en los Estados Unidos?

Por favor, dé una estimación numérica _____

EMPLEO

41. Antes de viajar a los EE.UU. para su Programa CASS, ¿estaba Ud. trabajando o haciendo algo para ganar dinero?

- Sí (01) No (02)

42. Si contestó **Sí**, ¿qué hacía?

43. ¿Está Ud. trabajando ahora, es decir, haciendo algo que le ayuda a generar ingresos / ganar dinero?

- Sí (01) (**Salte a 46**) No (02)

44. Si no está trabajando, ¿está buscando trabajo?

- Sí (01) No (02)

45. Si no está buscando trabajo, ¿porqué no?

- Estoy estudiando (01)
 Soy ama de casa (02)
 Estoy enfermo o sufriendo una incapacidad física (03)
 Por otra razón (especifique) (04)

(Salte a 63)

46. ¿Tiene Ud. personalmente más de un empleo o fuente de ingresos?

- Sí (01) No (02)

47. ¿Para quién trabaja Ud.? (Marque sólo una respuesta, que es **el sector en que el ex-becario considera se ubica su empleo principal.**)

- Por cuenta propia (pequeña empresa, pequeño agricultor, empleador con cuatro o menos empleados) (01)
 Empleador del sector privado (dueño, empresario) (empresa agrícola, fábrica, negocio con 5 o más empleados) (02)
 Empleado del sector privado (empresa agrícola, fábrica, negocio con 5 o más empleados) (03)
-

- Empleado de cooperativa (04)
- Organización privada sin fines de lucro (no gubernamental) (05)
- Empleado del sector público (cualquier organización del gobierno) (06)
- Otro (autónoma, mixta), describa (07)

48. ¿Trabaja Ud. en el mismo área o campo en que recibió su capacitación en el Programa CASS?

- Sí (01) No (02)

49. ¿Qué es el nombre de la firma u organización donde trabaja?

50. Describe su trabajo o puesto actual.

51. ¿Cuántas personas trabajan en su firma u organización? _____

52. ¿Cuántas personas supervisa Ud. personalmente? _____

53. ¿Cuánto de lo que aprendió en su programa de capacitación en los EE.UU. ha podido poner en práctica en su trabajo actual?

Nada	Sólo un poco	Algo	Mucho	Muchísimo
<input type="checkbox"/>				
(01)	(02)	(03)	(04)	(05)

54. Si Ud. escogió “mucho,” o “muchísimo” con respecto a poner en práctica lo que aprendió en su entrenamiento, describa, por favor, **un ejemplo concreto y específico** de algún cambio, cualquiera que sea, que ha podido Ud. llevar a cabo en su trabajo que se debe a la capacitación.

55. Si Ud. escogió “nada,” “sólo un poco,” o “algo” en la Pregunta 53, díganos porqué, por favor.
(Marquen todas las respuestas que son relevantes a su situación.)

- Mi trabajo actual no requiere de las destrezas y conocimientos que aprendí en mi Programa CASS. (01)
- No había trabajo en mi área de capacitación. (02)
- No tengo la autoridad para ponerlo en práctica.. (03)
- No tengo apoyo de mis jefes/ superiores/ supervisores.. (04)
- No tengo apoyo de mis colegas, o mis colegas tienen envidia (05)
- No tengo las herramientas/ equipos/ recursos necesarios.. (06)
- La capacitación que recibí no se puede aplicar a las realidades de mi país. (7)
- Otro Especifique (08) _____

56. ¿Cómo compararía su trabajo actual con el que tenía antes? (marque sólo una respuesta).

Mejor <input type="checkbox"/> (01)	Igual que antes <input type="checkbox"/> (02)	Peor <input type="checkbox"/> (03)	No aplicable* <input type="checkbox"/> (04)
*Sin empleo antes del Programa CASS o sin empleo ahora.			

57. ¿Lo han ascendido en su trabajo actual desde su regreso del programa de capacitación en los EE.UU.?

- Sí (01) No (02)

58. Si la respuesta es sí, ¿cree Ud. que esto se debe, por lo menos en parte, a la capacitación que recibió?

- Sí (01) No (02)

59. ¿Han aumentado sus responsabilidades en su trabajo actual desde su regreso del programa de capacitación en los EE.UU.?

- Sí (01) No (02)

60. Si la respuesta es sí, ¿cree Ud. que esto se debe, por lo menos en parte, a la capacitación que recibió?

- Sí (01) No (02)

61. ¿Han mejorado sus ingresos desde su regreso del programa de capacitación?

- Sí (01) No (02)

62. Si la respuesta es sí, ¿cree Ud. que esto se debe, por lo menos en parte, a la capacitación que recibió?

- Sí (01) No (02)

63. Según su opinión, ¿qué es el logro más importante y significativo en su carrera hasta el momento?

PARTICIPACION EN LAS ACTIVIDADES EN LA COMUNIDAD

64. ¿Participó en actividades voluntarias (organizaciones o proyectos del barrio, comunidad, iglesia, grupos especiales, partidos, sindicatos, etc.) antes de asistir al programa CASS en los EE.UU.?

- Sí (01) No (02)

65. ¿Ha participado en actividades voluntarias desde su regreso del programa CASS en los EE.UU.?

- Sí (01) No (02) (Salte a 69)

66. Si contestó **SÍ**, ¿en qué tipo de actividades comunitarias /voluntarias ha participado Ud. después de su Programa CASS? (**Marque hasta tres respuestas, evaluándolas del 1 a 3 en orden de importancia.**)

- (01) _____ Culturales (actos artísticos, danza, etc.)
 (02) _____ Humanitarias (de caridad, etc.)
 (03) _____ Económicas (construcción de escuelas, camino, posta sanitaria, mercado)
 (04) _____ Cívicas/sindicalistas (Campañas para elecciones, consejos municipales, trabajos de partido)
 (05) _____ Salud (Vacunas, campaña anti-drogas, planificación familiar, etc.)
 (06) _____ Agrícolas (programas anti-pesticidas, recuperación del agua)
 (07) _____ Religiosas (obras benéficas, auspicio de fiestas comunales, etc.)
 (08) _____ Educación (Alfabetización, educación de adultos, etc.)
 (09) _____ Otra Especifique: _____

67. ¿Qué papel ha desempeñado en las actividades comunitarias que más ha participado después de su

capacitación en los EE.UU.? (Marque todas las que correspondan.)

- (01) _____ Asistiendo a reuniones
 (02) _____ Ayudando a planificar eventos/ actividades/ proyectos
 (03) _____ Participando como dirigente/ director/ facilitador de eventos/ actividades/
 proyectos
 (04) _____ Entrenando a otros
 (05) _____ Participando como vocero/ representante del grupo en actividades
 extracomunales (fuera de la comunidad)
 (06) _____ Asumiendo cargos formales de liderazgo o administrativos
 (07) _____ Otro: _____

68. Si está participando actualmente en actividades voluntarias, ¿hasta qué punto ha podido poner en práctica lo que Ud. aprendió en su programa en los EE.UU. en sus actividades voluntarias o comunitarias?

Nada <input type="checkbox"/> (01)	Muy poco <input type="checkbox"/> (02)	Algo <input type="checkbox"/> (03)	Mucho <input type="checkbox"/> (04)	Muchísimo <input type="checkbox"/> (05)
--	--	--	---	---

69. Compare, por favor, su nivel de participación en organizaciones y actividades comunitarias antes y después de su capacitación en los EE.UU. ¿Diría Ud. que participa ahora en menos actividades, el mismo número, o en más actividades, comparado con su nivel de participación antes de su capacitación en los EE.UU.? (marque sólo una respuesta)

Menos <input type="checkbox"/> (01)	El mismo número <input type="checkbox"/> (02)	Más <input type="checkbox"/> (03)
---	---	---

70. [Si respondieron “menos” o “más” a 69] ¿A qué atribuye Ud. el cambio en su nivel de participación en estas actividades? ¿Porqué cambió?

71. ¿Su entrenamiento en los EE.UU. le ha ayudado a ser más eficiente como líder de su comunidad, o en su universidad, o lugar de trabajo?

- Sí (01) No (02) No sé (03)

72. ¿Cómo participa Ud. (o ha participado en el pasado) en las actividades cívicas o en el proceso político en su comunidad, ciudad, región, o país? **(Marquen todos que sean apropiados).**

- Votando en las elecciones gubernamentales (municipales, nacionales) (01)
- Votando en las elecciones no-gubernamentales (empresa, sindicato, asociación)(02)
- Participando en las campañas electorales gubernamentales (03)
- Participando en las campañas electorales gubernamentales (04)
- Postulándome como un candidato en las elecciones gubernamentales (municipales, locales, regionales, nacionales) (05)
- Postulándome como un candidato en las elecciones no-gubernamentales (empresa, sindicato, asociación) (06)
- Ocupando un puesto en el gobierno local, nacional, por elección (07)
- Otro (especifique, por favor): (08) _____

CONOCIMIENTO Y COMPRENSIÓN DE LOS ESTADOS UNIDOS

73. Responde, por favor, con sus opiniones respecto a los comentarios siguientes referentes a los Estados Unidos, tanto positivos como negativos.

COMENTARIO		Discrepo fuertemente (01)	Discrepo, no estoy de acuerdo (02)	Neutro (03)	De acuerdo (04)	Muy de acuerdo (05)
a)	La sociedad norteamericana representa un modelo bueno de la democracia.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b)	Los norteamericanos cuentan con un sistema de leyes y las cortes de justicia para proteger al individuo.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c)	Los países extranjeros no deben meterse de ninguna manera en los asuntos internos de mi país.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d)	Los norteamericanos se preocupan sólo de comprar más y de tener más cosas.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e)	Se hacen decisiones verdaderas y importantes en las elecciones norteamericanas.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f)	Los EE.UU. es un país violento donde la gente no tiene seguridad personal en las calles.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g)	La economía de mercado de los EE.UU. proporciona una vida buena a la mayor parte de sus ciudadanos.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h)	En general, los norteamericanos expresan actitudes de amistad hacia mi país.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

LAZOS INSTITUCIONALES Y PERSONALES CON LOS EE.UU.

74. Con referencia a la lista que sigue abajo, indique, por favor, las variedades de contactos que ha tenido **en los últimos 12 meses**. (Marquen, por favor, todos que sean apropiados.)

- (01) _____ tuve contacto personal con personas de los EE.UU. que residen en mi país (____)
- (02) _____ recibí cartas de norteamericanos (____)
- (03) _____ recibí visitas de amigos norteamericanos (____)
- (04) _____ tuve correspondencia electrónica (“e-mail”) con norteamericanos (____)
- (05) _____ leí revistas y/o periódicos norteamericanos (____)
- (06) _____ he visitado sitios “Web” ubicados en los EE.UU. regularmente (____)
- (07) _____ mantuve contactos comerciales o de negocios con los EE.UU. (____)
- (08) _____ mantuve contactos con personas en instituciones educacionales o universidades en los EE.UU. (____)
- (09) _____ viajé a los EE.UU. por otro motivo que el Programa CASS (____)
- (10) _____ Otro _____ (____)

POST-PROGRAMA

75. Cuando volvió de su Programa CASS, ¿se trasladó su residencia de donde vivía antes de ir a los EE.UU. a un nuevo lugar?

- Sí (01) No (02)

76. Si contestó Sí, ¿a dónde se trasladó? “Urbano” quiere decir

- De una zona urbana a una zona rural (01)
- De una zona rural a la ciudad (02)
- Dentro de la zona rural (03)
- Dentro de la zona urbana (04)

77. ¿Porqué se trasladó?

INTERESES DE LOS EXBECARIOS

78. Hasta que sepa Ud., ¿hay una organización nacional o local para los regresados del Programa CASS?

- Sí (Si contestó Sí, responde, por favor, de 79 a 81) (01)
 No (Si contestó No, salte a 82 y 83) (02)

79. Si contestó **Sí**, ¿participa Ud. (o ha participado Ud.) en las actividades de la organización o en actividades organizadas del Programa CASS?

- Sí (01) No (02)

80. ¿En qué tipo de actividades ha participado?

81. ¿Qué actividades adicionales sugeriría Ud. para la asociación?

82. Si contestó **No**, ¿participaría en una asociación si tal organización estuviera establecida?

- Sí (01) No (02)

83. ¿Qué tipos de actividades debe proporcionar una asociación de ex becarios?

CONCLUSIONES / RECOMENDACIONES

84. ¿Hasta qué punto cumplió el Programa CASS sus expectativas?

Nada <input type="checkbox"/>	Muy poco <input type="checkbox"/>	Algo <input type="checkbox"/>	Mucho <input type="checkbox"/>	Muchísimo <input type="checkbox"/>
----------------------------------	--------------------------------------	----------------------------------	-----------------------------------	---------------------------------------

(01)	(02)	(03)	(04)	(05)
------	------	------	------	------

85. Si su respuesta es “nada” o “muy poco,” explique porqué respondió así.

86. ¿Qué comentarios o recomendaciones tiene Ud. para mejorar el Programa CASS? ¿Cuál aspecto del Programa tenía el mayor valor para Ud.?

87. ¿Cómo compararía su su situación actual (en sus estudios, o en su trabajo, o sin empleo) con sus compañeros de su edad que no participaron en el Programa CASS?

Mejor <input type="checkbox"/> (01)	Más o menos igual <input type="checkbox"/> (02)	Peor <input type="checkbox"/> (03)
---	--	--

88. ¿En qué manera es *mejor* o *peor*?

89. ¿Recomendaría Ud. este programa de becas a otras personas? (**marque sólo una respuesta**).

Sí (01) No (02) No sé' (03)

GRACIAS POR SU PARTICIPACION

Aguirre International quiere agradecerle por su participación en este esfuerzo. Tratamos toda la información que compartió con nosotros con confidencialidad estricta. No identificamos a los participantes por nombre o puesto. Sólo reportamos datos estadísticos agregados, y no utilizaremos su nombre sin su permiso.

Entrevistador: _____

Ubicación: _____

Fecha: _____

Apuntes del Entrevistador
(Útilice el verso de la hoja, se es necesario)

APPENDIX D

Host School Interview Protocol

**CASS Program
Georgetown University**

Protocol for CASS U.S. Host Schools

2001-2002

- 1. University:**
- 2. Faculty Member:**
- 3. Position:**
- 4. Program Role:**
- 5. Years with the Program:**
- 6. Participants' Fields of Study:**
- 7. Length of Training:**
- 8. Approximate numbers of students per year:**
- 9. Process Questions:**
 - How would you characterize your relationship with Georgetown University during the course of this program?**

 - Were there any particular issues that arose in working with this group of USAID-funded students? Visa? Adjustment? Legal? Medical?**

 - Do you have any observations about the process of working with USAID-funded students as opposed to international students studying under other auspices?**

10. Did the participants have any problems communicating in English when they came to the University?

If so, how were these problems addressed?

Were these problems more prevalent in earlier groups or later groups?

11. To what extent do you feel that the participants were oriented for this U.S. academic experience?

Culturally:

Educationally:

Were there any differences between earlier and later groups?

12. In general, how would you characterize their academic performance?

Relative to other international students:

Relative to other U.S. students:

13. What provisions were made for assistance with academic problems?

14. What changes did you observe in student behavior from their time of arrival until their departure in the follow areas?

- a. self esteem
- b. self-reliance
- c. ability to communicate with others
- d. ability to get along with others
- e. ability to tolerate change
- f. willingness to take risks
- g. ability to speak in public
- h. willingness to try new things

15. During the course of their studies, did they have an opportunity to learn about the economic system of the U.S.?

Yes (01)

No (02)

16. We are interested in how frequently CASS participants took part in campus and community activities in the U.S.

How frequently would you say the participants took part in the following?	Never (1)	Occasionally (2)	Frequently (3)
a. Visit a U.S. family other than host family	'	'	'
b. Meet with local community leaders	'	'	'
c. Interact with private business sector	'	'	'
d. Observe/participate in community meetings/ events	'	'	'
e. Attend cultural events	'	'	'
f. Attend church	'	'	'
g. Participate in recreational activities	'	'	'
h. Travel within the U.S.	'	'	'
i. Participate in campus activities	'	'	'
j. Participate in volunteer activities	'	'	'

17. During the course of their training, what do you think the participants learned about the U.S. political system or any of its democratic institutions?

18. Did each participant serve an internship?

19. Did the university or the participant set up the internship?

20. How were these internships monitored?

21. If a participant did not take much initiative in seeking an internship, how did you deal with it?

22. What were the responses to the internships?

From the students:

From the organizations:

23. Have you maintained contact with any of the students since their return to their home countries?

24. What was the nature of these contacts?

25. Is there any plan for follow-up to the participants' program?

26. To what extent do you think that the participants who took part in your programs will be able to implement their new knowledge and skills?

27. Leadership is an objective of this program. Do you feel that this type of program provided the necessary tools for the participants to become leaders?

Why?

Why not?

28. Did you have any unexpected experiences or consequences resulting from this program?

If so, please describe them.

27. How has your University, college, or department benefited from hosting students from the CASS Program?

28. Were there any particular problems surrounding the CASS Program that remained unresolved?

RECOMMENDATIONS

27. What recommendations or suggestions can you make about how to improve the program?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION

APPENDIX E

Country Reports

Dominican Republic

Guatemala

Honduras

Observations

CASS in the Dominican Republic: An Evaluation of Activities from 1994 to 2001

The principal objective of the evaluation team's visit to the Dominican Republic (the DR) was to obtain information from returned CASS participants that would shed light on the issue of program impact. Information was collected through a survey of 99 returned participants and through interviews with CASS staff, USAID staff, about 30 returned participants (who participated in three focus groups), and several employers. This Appendix discusses the team's observations based on its review of documents and interviews. The results of the survey are discussed in the main body of the evaluation report along with survey results from two other countries.

Overview

Discussions with *ex-becarios*¹ strongly suggest that attending college in the U.S. as a CASS student is a life-changing experience, particularly for those who go for two years. For these young people, the opportunity to travel internationally and to visit another country enormously broadens their experience and their horizons. For two-year participants, the opportunity to learn English and a trade, to become computer literate, to obtain some experience working in an American business, to learn how to make friends and to get along in a foreign culture changes their outlook and their employment chances. Returned CASS participants have generally found good jobs, advanced in responsibility, and earned higher incomes as a result of their CASS experience. The CASS program is clearly contributing to Dominican growth, although the evaluation team could not measure the magnitude of that contribution or compare it with other USAID investments.

Dominican teachers who participated in one-year programs have also benefited, but the impact on their lives seems significantly more limited. However, the efforts of CASS teachers to train others may yield a very significant social benefit.

In looking back at their period in the program, *ex-becarios* recollections were dominated by fond memories. Most students reported that the orientations were effective in preparing them for their entry into the U.S, although clearly not all problems were avoided. Most *ex-becarios* expressed very positive feelings toward their host families, although there were some notable exceptions. The fact that some difficult host family situations were apparently allowed to continue for extended periods of time suggests that some CASS campus coordinators may not have dealt with these problems adequately. With only a small number of exceptions, *ex-becarios* were enthusiastic about the quality of teaching and community support. Internships were valuable for most participants, although there were again indications of sporadic problems that campus coordinators did not deal with in a firm fashion. Overall, the *ex-becarios* were extremely enthusiastic about their experience and grateful for having had this opportunity.

Although Dominican participants seem to do well in the labor market, they experience a serious problem with respect to obtaining credit from Dominican universities for their U.S. studies. Many of the *ex-becarios* who participated in focus groups had sought to continue their education after returning, and virtually all of these reported having great difficulty with

¹ The Spanish term "becario," means scholarship recipient. This paper will sometimes refer to former CASS participants as "ex-becarios."

Dominican universities in obtaining even minimal credit for their U.S. studies. The process they described was lengthy and expensive and often unproductive.

The evaluation team observed that CASS operations in the Dominican Republic are well organized and managed by a small team of experienced and dedicated professionals. The CASS team in the DR appears to collect useful data on labor force needs, to take great care in selecting candidates for the program, to work diligently to provide useful pre-departure briefings, to maintain contact with many of its students who are in the U.S., to assist the students to find employment when they return and maintain contact with them. The CASS staff was extremely helpful to the evaluation team in providing data and setting up meetings. The evaluation team did find that addresses of *ex-becarios* were sometime incorrect (a problem that is common to CASS offices and very difficult to resolve) and found some inconsistencies in the program data provided. Also, the team was surprised that there was no document for the public in Spanish that provided an overview of this program in the Dominican Republic.

Key Features of the CASS Program in the DR

CASS activities in the Dominican Republic began in 1989. In the 13 years the program has operated it has sent 559 Dominican students to study in U.S. community colleges. These include 487 (87%) who were sent for two-year programs and 72 (13%) in programs lasting one year or less.

Table 1 on the following page shows the fields shows the fields of study of CASS DR students between 1989 and 2001. The table shows that the fields given most emphasis include business administration, quality control, food technology, education, hotel and restaurant administration, electronics and environmental science. The fields of study are clearly quite diverse, preparing graduates for a wide variety of types of employment. The fields of study have varied over time, presumably reflecting changes in Dominican (or regional) labor demand and perhaps the program's greater attention to fields of particular interest to USAID.

Table 1²
CASS Scholarships in the Dominican Republic
Fields of Study, by Year

Field of Study	Cycle:	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	Totals
	Year:	<u>89</u>	<u>90</u>	<u>91</u>	<u>92</u>	<u>93</u>	<u>94</u>	<u>95</u>	<u>96</u>	<u>97</u>	<u>98</u>	<u>99</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	
Marketing		9	5		5	3									22
Electronics/Computer Repair		6	3	1										3	13
Electronics			7					4	2	8	3	3			27
Hotel/Restaurant Admin.		9	6	6	11	9									41
Business Administration		7	4	4	9	7	11	6	11	3					62
Quality Control		2	10	7	7	4	5		2	6	3	3	2	5	56
Food Science/Technology		2	3	4	8	2	5	12	6	2	4	3			51
Medical Equipment Repair			5		3		2								10
Maint. Technology (Industry)			3		1	1	2		3	3	3		2		18
Interpretation of Sign Lang.				1					1	1	1				4
Telecommunications Tech.					9	7	2				3			3	24
Printing and Publications					3										3
Special Education					1		2		3						6
Agriculture Administration					3		3	5	7	3	5		2		28
Agricultural Technology											2	2			4
Computers for the Deaf					3		3			1	2		2		11
Graphic Design						1									1
Environment/Eco-tourism								2							2
Environment/Water Mgt.								2							2
Environmental Science								5	8	7	3	3			26
Forest Administration									2						2
Computer Science									2						2
Small Business Admin/Devel.										4	3	2			9
Small Bus. Women/Rural											4				4
Math-Science Technology										3					3
Public Health - Vector Control												3		3	6
Medical Laboratory Tech.												3			3
Primary Education												16	17	17	50
X-ray Technology													4		4
Construction Management													6		6
Community and Rural Health													3	3	6
Natural Resources Mgt.													3		3
Industrial and Eng. Tech.														3	3
Totals		35	46	23	63	34	39	32	47	41	36	38	41	37	512
Subtotals 1989-93 1994-2001						201								311	
Scholarships Granted		82	46	22	43	39	40	38	48	41	42	42	42	34	559
Subtotals 1989-93 1994-2001						232								327	

²The table shows (at the bottom) some inconsistency between CASS data on students by subject area per year and CASS data on scholarships granted per year. The evaluation team was unable to clarify these numbers. In this study, we have assumed that CASS gave 327 scholarships to Dominicans during the 1994-2001 period.

Geographic Origin of CASS Scholarship Recipients. These students are drawn from all regions of the country. The following table shows the origin of the students by region.

Table 2
Region of Origin, CASS Becarios in the DR

South	North	East	Northeast	Capital District	Total
122	192	114	53	78	559
22%	34%	20%	10%	14%	100%

The CASS program is intended to reach young people from low-income families, particularly those residing in rural areas. In the DR, the CASS program has defined “rural” to include every place other than the two largest cities, Santo Domingo and Santiago. Since the DR includes many population centers that most people would not consider to be rural, this study (see survey question #3) used three geographic divisions: major urban centers (CASS’ definition of urban), secondary cities (other urban areas having more than 5,000 people) and rural. (The results of the evaluation team’s survey are summarized in the main body of the evaluation report.)

Survey of Returned Participants

From 1994 to 2001, CIED data on the CASS Program show that it provided scholarships to 327 Dominicans. However, some of these are still studying in the U.S., and others have returned so recently that it would be too early to review the impact of their studies. Georgetown University’s Center for Intercultural Education and Development (CIED) thus provided to Aguirre International a list of 193 Dominican CASS graduates who had studied during this period and who had returned at least six months prior to the study. Aguirre International determined to interview 99 participants, slightly over half, of these returned participants.

The list of 193 returned participants was reduced by 30 Dominicans who, according to the CASS office in the Dominican Republic, were out of the country or would for other reasons not be available or appropriate to interview. These included 12 Dominicans who had married persons from another country and who were now living in that country, and smaller numbers who were working or studying out of the country (nine), who had left the CASS program without completing their studies (seven) or who were traveling for unknown reasons (two). The evaluation team found this interesting as it provides an indication of the number of students who for one reason or another were not currently contributing to the Dominican economy.

In refining the database of graduates for the survey, the evaluation team also eliminated the small number of CASS graduates who are deaf, as interviewing them would have required additional time and expense. The team divided the remaining returned graduates into four groups by their current residence and assigned an interviewer to each group. Each interviewer was given a list of 35-40 graduates from whom they were required to interview 25.

Anticipating some difficulty in arranging interviews prior to the December holidays, the evaluation team decided to allow the interviewers to interview any of the people on their respective lists. To avoid an urban bias in the interviewees selected (as they would presumably be easier for interviewers to reach and to meet), the team established a two-tier

payment system, with interviewers receiving a premium for interviews with graduates in more distant areas.

The interviewers all had previous experience. They were trained and actively supervised by an Aguirre International consultant with extensive survey experience. The interviewers succeeded in conducting 99 interviews. Interviews took place during December 2001 and January 2002. (As noted above, the evaluation team has integrated the results of the surveys in the Dominican Republic, Guatemala and Honduras and reported the results in the main text of the CASS evaluation.)

Employer Interviews in the Dominican Republic

The evaluation team interviewed four Dominican employers located in the Santo Domingo area. This small sample of employers was not random (as the small number of firms visited would in any case have prevented a statistically valid study). Rather, the team sought to interview companies that had several graduates of the CASS program to see what positive attributes these firms saw in CASS graduates. Thus, there was presumably a bias toward firms with favorable views of CASS. The four companies visited currently employ more than a dozen CASS graduates, and those firms have previously employed other CASS graduates who subsequently moved better jobs elsewhere.

None of the CASS graduates employed by these firms had worked for the same company prior to going to the U.S. This is not surprising as most of the Dominicans selected to go to the U.S. under this program have little, if any, employment histories. Thus, because the employers could not comment on changes that had occurred as a result of the program, it was difficult to attribute work attitudes, leadership skills, and other traits to the program.

All of the employers interviewed were very pleased with their CASS graduates. Firm #1, a very successful Dominican company employing four CASS graduates indicated, "They all do excellent work." In technical areas, they have formed a nucleus that has provided training to upgrade the skills of others. English has also proven useful; even though the company produces exclusively for the domestic market, the CASS graduates' English ability has proven very useful for reading literature and computer programs. All four have shown good interpersonal skills. In terms of leadership, two of the four have unusually good skills. The upward trajectory of these *ex-becarios* has been good, for some more so than others, and equally to or better than other employees' upward mobility.

A second large and successful Dominican company that the team visited employs six or seven CASS graduates, but the person interviewed was familiar with the performance of only one CASS graduate. That graduate has risen rapidly in the firm. He now supervises nine people directly and assists in the supervision of more than 150 others. The firm noted his good work habits and leadership skills.

Firm #3, a U.S. export-oriented firm with almost 600 Dominican employees, currently employs three CASS graduates. The team interviewed the American plant manager who was very familiar with their work. The plant manager indicated that the firm does not have difficulty finding Dominicans with good technical training. However, CASS graduates are "a step ahead in their practical, business-related skills and outlook." CASS graduates tend to know how to collect and organize data, to analyze problems, to write reports and to make coherent presentations. Their English and leadership skills are also important assets. The

firm's CASS graduates have performed very well, and all three now have supervisory positions.

Firm #4, also a U.S. firm that produces in the DR for the U.S. market, currently employs five former CASS participants. Of the firm's 1,500 employees, most work in assembly, clerical or maintenance positions. There are also 75 technicians, 58 supervisors, and eight managers. CASS graduates enter either as technicians or in clerical positions. Of the firm's five CASS employees, all but the most recent graduate (who joined the firm about seven months ago) have moved upward within the firm to better positions and higher pay. Their rate of progress has been good to excellent. Two are now in supervisory positions earning three to four times their starting salaries. At least one of these is likely to be promoted to one of the firm's small number of managerial positions. The firm screens candidates with an entry exam on which CASS graduates typically score very high. Among the skills that distinguish CASS graduates on the job, the firm's representative mentioned problem-solving, English language, and computer skills. The only concern that the firm expressed about CASS graduates is that they sometimes come to the firm with unrealistic expectations – expecting to start in supervisory or managerial positions. This firm previously employed eight other CASS graduates who have moved on to better jobs in other private sector firms.

Overall, the employers seem to view the CASS graduates as exhibiting skills that make them particularly valuable employees. Certainly, the technical training they bring back is valued. So also are their English language ability and the added maturity, confidence, leadership and problem-solving skills.

Focus Groups Findings

The evaluation team conducted three focus groups in the Dominican Republic. These included two in Santo Domingo and one in San Francisco de Macoris. Two of the groups included CASS graduates from the period 1994 to the present, and the third was composed of graduates from earlier cycles. Earlier graduates were included to see if the perceptions about the value of the program and the experiences in the labor force and as community leaders would change after the CASS graduates had been out of the program longer. Of the two groups of recent graduates, one was composed predominantly of students who had completed two-year associate degrees in community colleges and the other predominantly of Dominicans who had completed shorter programs in education or health. The focus groups thus afforded the team an opportunity to hear from participants with a wide variety of experiences.

Participation in the focus groups was excellent both from the perspective of the number of CASS graduates that came and in terms of their active participation in the discussions. In general, the *ex-beccarios* were extremely positive about their experience and grateful to the program, to CIED, to USAID, and to the United States for giving them that opportunity. One graduate, a young man who is now the warehouse supervisor of an international company producing in the DR, summed up what a great many graduates clearly thought by describing his CASS scholarship as “a life-changing event.”

Despite their very positive overall experience and outcomes, the graduates recounted many experiences that had been difficult and, sometimes, quite unpleasant. From these, many suggestions were put forward.

Preparation for Overseas Study

Most Dominican participants thought that CASS had provided excellent pre-departure briefings and that these had been invaluable in preparing them for the U.S. Many *ex-becarios* indicated that the briefing had helped them to avoid problems and embarrassing situations.

Some participants indicated that it would have been useful to have had English language skills when they arrived. This view was particularly expressed by Dominicans who participated in the shorter programs (12 months or less). Since the courses offered to these participants were in Spanish, the participating colleges provide these students with only limited English language training. A number of participants found this to be a problem. Some found difficulty in the activities of daily living (e.g., buying food). Others found difficulty in the work-study aspect of the program. Teachers, for example, mentioned having spent time observing classrooms where they could not comprehend the instruction and could not interact with their mentors.

Several focus group participants suggested that it might be useful for CASS to require some English language training. One suggestion was that CASS select students some months earlier to permit them to undertake some preparatory English course. To avoid discouraging candidates with few resources, CASS might offer to subsidize such in-country training.

Participants from the Dominican Republic receive not only preparation about the U.S. environment but also training about the other CASS countries sending participants. Participants from the DR indicated that they felt better prepared in this sense (i.e., in knowing about other CASS countries) than the CASS students that they had met from other countries, and that this had been helpful.

Programs of Study in U.S. Community Colleges

Most of the students arrived in the U.S. with little English-language ability. Participants indicated that the English-language program that they took in the U.S. was effective and permitted them to move to regular programs of study. Some participants indicated that they would like to have continued studying English but were prevented from doing so.

Most *ex-becarios* rated the technical program of studies highly and believed that they had learned a great deal. Many returned *becarios* become involved in teaching others. Some noted that the academic program was well balanced with non-academic activities.

However, a few CASS graduates indicated that the content did not match their needs very well. Several of the teachers, for example, considered that the content was considerably below their level of preparation and experience. (The team noted, however, that these same teachers were now giving seminars around the country to spread new pedagogic technologies to others.) Several other participants noted problems with one or more particular courses, e.g., “We had already learned the mathematics [being offered to us in the community college] in [Dominican] secondary schools.” Sometimes there was an inconsistency between the program content and the students’ expectations, presumably reflecting a need to strengthen pre-departure briefings in this area. (CASS may well have already addressed this. The evaluation team believes that pre-departure briefings in recent years often rely on returned participants who can accurately prepare departing students for many aspects of the programs they will encounter.)

CASS students reported a mixed situation with respect to the program's flexibility, apparently reflecting differences between the participating community colleges and programs. Some graduates indicated that they have added courses of particular interest to them; a number of other participants indicated that they were prohibited from adding to or changing their academic programs (e.g., to permit further studies of English or some technical area of particular interest). *Ex-becarios* with this complaint tended to see their campus coordinators as the villains, suggesting that person failed to use available funding in a flexible manner to benefit the CASS students.

The returned participants generally rated teaching quality in their community colleges quite highly. A partial exception was the Dominican teachers who studied in the U.S.; they praised the Puerto Rican teachers (teacher trainers) they had encountered, but they were quite critical of many of their other teachers.

One-year CASS students, many of whom have spouses and children, were critical of CASS' prohibition against students returning home during the period of study. These graduates argued that this requirement placed an undue hardship upon them, as there was little to do during holiday periods, and the airfares to the DR (and to other CASS countries) were modest.

Internships

Former participants described highly varied experiences with internships. Most were extremely positive. Many focus group participants indicated that internships had provided an opportunity to apply what they had been studying and to see how things worked in practice. These graduates had learned a great deal and had been treated well. For many, this was an opportunity not only to learn technical skills, but also to see how a business operates and what is expected of employees. A few graduates noted that their experience with U.S. firms had facilitated their ability to find employment with U.S. firms with operations in the Dominican Republic. Several graduates who had studied rural health had valued the opportunity to work directly with needy people in the U.S.

For a number of others, the assignment to firms or institutions was far less than ideal. A number of the Dominican teachers reported that they had no opportunity to practice their skills, sometimes had difficulty with the language of instruction that they were observing, and had little opportunity to meet and talk with the American educators. A few participants reported that they were assigned to a type of business that had little or nothing to do with their courses of study. One participant said that he spent a month watching videos and movies, even though he claims to have reported this to his program coordinator at the end of the first week.

Volunteer Work in the Communities

The observations regarding community service activities were mixed. A few participants described them as important learning experiences, and many of the *ex-becarios* were pleased to have helped out in the communities where they were studying. However, not many seem to have found their volunteer work to have taught them very much, and some felt exploited by the experience. One graduate, for example, was not pleased to have been required to rise at 2 a.m. to paint houses for the poor. Another graduate suggested that the volunteer work had a

high opportunity cost, reducing time that could have been more usefully spent interacting with U.S. students.

Leadership Training

Returned participants generally view the leadership training as an important and effective part of the program. This training has helped them both on the job and in community activities. No criticisms of this component of the program were expressed.

Host Families

The majority of focus group participants reported that they had had excellent experiences with their host families. The families had helped immeasurably to educate the participants about American social and cultural norms and to provide them with many opportunities to experience American culture. Many returned CASS participants maintain contact with their host families, and a significant number of the American hosts have subsequently traveled to the DR for a visit. Expressing a sentiment that was not uncommon among returned participants, one graduate said simply, “My [host] family adopted me.”

Dominican participants often felt that their expectations about American families, thanks to the CASS preparation, were considerably more accurate than the host families had of the arriving students. Several participants seem to have been somewhat offended initially by host families who expected that their students might never have ridden in a car and to rarely have eaten meat. They suggested that CASS needed to do a better job of briefing host families.

Other *ex-becarios* reported problems with their host families, some seemingly fairly serious. Several reported that the diet of the hosts was unusual and that they were obligated to follow the same regimen. Two participants indicated, for example, that their hosts ate little other than salads and would not allow them to use the kitchen to prepare other dishes. Several others reported that there was a lack of clarity about what food and other consumables they were permitted to touch (to help themselves to). One participant in a focus group drew considerable laughter and some sympathy when she described her host family’s practice of allowing the family dog to eat off of the same dishes used by family members. A number of participants indicated that their host families had been very controlling and overly protective, unduly limited the student’s freedom of activity. On the opposite side, a small number of participants indicated that, although they shared a house, they hardly ever saw their host family.

A number of students who had experienced difficulty with their host families had changed to another family. This seems to have been helpful, although time-consuming. One unfortunate student summed up a series of disastrous experiences, “I lived with three separate families, and it was terrible!”

Role as “Friendship Ambassadors”

Dominican participants took this responsibility seriously and view it as an important and successful part of their overall experience. Clearly, the program educated many Americans about this Caribbean neighbor and left many Americans dancing the *meringue*. Dominican

participants took this responsibility seriously and view it as an important and successful part of their overall experience.

Views on Gender Equality

Dominican participants returned home with a heightened appreciation of gender issues. Focus group participants indicated that the DR was making progress in this area, but that there was considerable room for improvement in areas such as salary parity, equal access to jobs, and the treatment of pregnant women in the workplace. One participant remarked how surprised she had been to see women driving buses in the U.S. and indicated that this was not currently possible in the DR.

Acceptability of U.S. Academic Credits in the DR

Despite reports that some Dominican universities have agreed to honor U.S. academic credits, the lack of acceptability of U.S. community college credits in Dominican universities remains a serious problem for returning CASS students. Many of the focus group participants said they had difficulty, some receiving no credit whatsoever for their U.S. studies. To receive any credit at all for those studies is typically a long and often expensive process. One participant suggested that Dominican universities view this issue as an opportunity to generate income. Another mentioned that his two semesters of accounting in the U.S. had covered the material of six courses in the DR, but that he would be lucky to get credit for two.

Private Dominican universities are the most willing to consider giving credit for U.S. study; none of the participants indicated that they had received any significant credit for their U.S. studies from a public sector Dominican university. Instead, those that had continued their studies had found it necessary to start over at the beginning in order to pursue a university degree. The Dominican labor market, it was often remarked, recognizes the value of the North American educational experience far more than do Dominican universities.

CASS Reintegration Workshops

Focus groups participants viewed these workshops as important and effective for reintegrating graduates into the Dominican culture and in helping them to find employment. As in the pre-departure briefings, participants found that the opportunity to hear from CASS graduates who had already gone through this experience was particularly useful.

Several graduates noted that the workshops had occurred too late – some two months after their return to the D.R.

CASS Graduates' Role in Strengthening Democratization and Community Development

Graduates reported that they returned with a heightened appreciation of democratic values and the importance of participation in the community. Nevertheless, most graduates feel quite powerless to influence the process in the D.R. CASS graduates are focused on their jobs and their families, and to a much lesser extent on small-scale community activities; none claimed to participate actively in the larger political process.

Determination of Priority Areas for Study

CASS country offices conduct an annual market survey to determine local training needs that might be met through training in U.S. community colleges. The CASS survey form³ is simple and can be completed in a few minutes. Were this not the case, few would be completed and returned to the CASS office. The simple form is appropriate for CASS needs.

The information obtained in each participating country is transmitted to Georgetown where it is compiled and analyzed. CIED takes the survey results, compares them with the offerings of participating community colleges, and determines the areas that CASS will offer in the following year. The results are then shared with the LAC Bureau's COTR for the CASS program.

In the past, a USAID concern about the CASS program has been that it did not appear to give sufficient importance in determining training areas to USAID country strategic. CASS appears to have addressed this concern by consulting with the various USAID Missions. In the DR, for example, CASS desire to respond to USAID is shown by the prominent role it asks the Mission to play in the demand survey. The DR CASS office shared the results of the survey conducted for the 2001-2002 cycle. There were forty-one responses including 13 from the for-profit private sector, four from NGOs, 13 from government organizations, seven from USAID, one from the U.S. Embassy, one from the Peace Corps, and two from organizations that the evaluation team was unable to identify. The large number of responses from USAID testifies both to CASS/CIED's efforts to consider USAID priorities and to the interest of Mission staff in ensuring that the program does so.

CIED's efforts in this regard are commendable. However, because USAID interests are disaggregated and then merged into general demand data and run through a process totally controlled by CIED, it is difficult to know to what extent CASS training actually reflects USAID's strategic objectives in individual countries.

A minor modification in the current process (primarily on the USAID side) might help to strengthen the relationship of CASS and USAID training priorities. The proposed change would require that LAC Bureau's COTR for CASS to play a somewhat greater role determining CASS training priorities. In order for this to occur, the COTR would need data from the Missions about their priorities so that s/he would be able to represent the Missions in a dialogue with CIED on this question. Mission Program Offices might, for example provide information to the COTR on Mission training priorities. Alternatively, Mission officers responding to the CASS training needs survey might simply send a copy of their response to the COTR. With this information about Mission priorities, the COTR could then become a more active participant with CIED in determining annual priorities and allocations. It would be important, as well, that the COTR then summarize the process and results and report back to each of the Missions. Such a synthesis would alleviate lingering concerns that the CASS program is operating outside of the USAID strategic framework.

Information on the CASS Program in the Dominican Republic

³ The author assumes that the form utilized in the DR comes from CIED and is the same form utilized in each CASS country.

Information about the CASS program in the DR can be found in the files of the organization, in the memory of the director, and buried in CASS publications that cover the region. The evaluation team did not see any publication that allows the USAID Mission in the DR or other interested parties (e.g., CASS graduates, local universities and employers, the GODR, evaluators) to obtain information on the number of Dominican students who have gone to the U.S. with CASS sponsorship, areas of study, student performance in the U.S. or after returning to the Dominican Republic, or on other program variables. Besides meeting these needs, such a publication in Spanish, updated annually, would help to market the program to a variety of Dominican audiences. This kind of report might also include a description of the activities of the alumni association.

CASS in Guatemala: An Evaluation of Activities from 1994 to 2001

Introduction

Nineteen *ex-becarios* (returned CASS graduates), all living in Guatemala City, participated in two different focus groups, eight in the first and 11 in the second one (7 of 19 were men; all 19 studied in the U.S. since 1994). Evaluators scheduled three other focus groups, one in Antigua where only two women arrived out of a group of seven to eight local *ex-becarios* (no reasons offered about the failure to attend), and two in Quetzaltenango for which the *ex-becarios* called to cancel (again, no reasons offered about failure to attend). A survey of CASS alumni took place with all the post-1994 graduates who evaluators could contact. Georgetown provided evaluators with a list of 295 alumni. Of these, the Guatemala City CASS office had addresses and telephone numbers of 238. Evaluators selected 150 of these 238 names. They reduced the list to 127 due to the deaths of some *ex-becarios* and the travels abroad of others. Inaccurate addresses and phone numbers, travels, work, the December holidays, and other reasons generated large difficulties in locating the alumni. Finally, every alumnus on the original list Guatemala City list was called. Evaluators interviewed only 90 of the 213 (295 on CIED's list), most of whom agreed only to a phone interview with one member of the team of five evaluators.

Six Guatemalan City employers of CASS graduates responded to questions about employee performance. Interviews with eight specialists in the country's labor force needs provided the bases to suggest what fields of study will continue to assure CASS graduates of a high degree of employability in careers resolving many of the country's problems. The evaluation also included interviews with USAID mission officers about CASS, fields of study, workforce needs, and the mission's strategic focus. The evaluators spent one day training the interviewers (five women and one man, three of the women being bilingual Maya-Spanish speakers, two being twenty somethings and university students), conducting practice interviews with three CASS alumni living in Guatemala City.

Focus Groups

Nineteen *ex-becarios*, all living in Guatemala City, participated in two different focus groups (seven men and twelve women). Evaluators scheduled two other focus groups: one in Antigua, where only two women showed up out of a eight local *ex-becarios* focus group recruits, and two recruits were scheduled for a focus group in Quetzaltenango, but called at the last moment and cancelled.

Participants discussed about 17 different questions, dealing with the CASS experience in the U.S. (issues such as the host families, volunteering, internship, leadership training, etc.) and nine dealing with issues concerning changes in their lives since returning (difficulty in transferring U.S. college credits to Guatemala, role in strengthening democracy, the CASS alumni association, changes in thinking about the country's

environment, gender equity, and ethnic groups and minorities such as the deaf). Each focus group lasted about 90 minutes, was taped (after participants consented to do so), and transcribed.

The following synthesizes the comments of the 19 participants, highlighting their suggestions about possible changes in CASS. Several *ex-becarios* mentioned ending up in U.S. communities where most residents spoke primarily Spanish, an obstacle slowing their learning of English. All stated strongly that the quality of education at the U.S. colleges was top notch, instilling in them a value of being more competitive with themselves, always demanding more of themselves and worrying less about whether they know more than others in their cohort. For example one described the education as follows: "the best part (*lo bonito*) was that there was theory and practical experience." Several stated that learning English was the most notable outcome and, to a lesser degree, learning to be more independent, more of an individual. Several of the 19 mentioned the most valuable aspect of the experience being to learn to make it on one's own, improved self-esteem, better relationships with other cultures.

As in Honduras, a few focus group participants believed that CASS awarded some scholarships because the candidate had the "pull" to influence the selection committee's thinking ("Uno de mis objetivos al venir a esta reunión es pedir que se le siga dando el apoyo al programa CASS, a la asociación, que se siga apoyando a los jóvenes de Guatemala, porque en realidad lo necesitamos, que le den el apoyo a las personas que se lo merezcan, porque habían personas que por 'cuello' obtuvieron la beca."). Another participant expressed similar thoughts by saying he knew someone awarded a scholarship who was from a family with money. A person from one of the Maya groups said that he knew of three cases in the last two years of award recipients who live in the city and "have money."

Host Families

All comments were extremely favorable, saying that it was the easiest way to learn English. Two of the 19 lived with Afro-Americans, learning about life in ways that have helped them ever since. Most lived one year with a family and a second as roommates in an apartment with other students, an experience they thought helped them be more independent on returning home. Many alumni are still in touch with their host families six years later; several host families having visited alumni in Guatemala. Several of the 19 alumni mentioned learning to become more "independent," a value that they emphasized few Guatemalan twenty-somethings have. One woman lived in a female-headed household. The 18 months with the 27 year-old mother of a little girl inspired the respondent to learn that women can live well by themselves... "here in Guatemala the situation for women is changing but before it was difficult for them." One respondent described the experience as a chance to learn how to manage time and money. Another participant described the experience as a chance to find out many Americans' behavior is "individualist," which is culturally shocking for Guatemalan's more social behavior although it was not completely negative and something from which the respondent could learn.

Predeparture Orientations

All of the participants thought the preparations were fine. They believed that they arrived at the community colleges better prepared than CASS students from other countries. This comment was similar to one heard several times in Honduras and by the Aguirre evaluator in the Dominican Republic. However, three or four participants mentioned knowing Honduras CASS alumni and thought that they had received better support before going and after returning.

Internships

This work experience ranked as one of the most valuable CASS experiences, several participants suggesting that internships should last longer than a few weeks and occur more than once weekly. Four of the 19 were dissatisfied that about having performed the internship in a type of work completely unrelated to the student's field of study. For example, one of these two worked two weeks packing clothes in boxes that he carried to trucks. Three of the 19 only performed data-entry tasks, an activity allowing little practice of their course materials. Two respondents said that the internship was too short, taking place in the last month of the respondent's 24 months in the U.S. and not fulfilling the 200 hours of internship the college coordinators had promised. The second of these two mentioned only interning two hours weekly for a total of 50 hours. Another mentioned starting an internship repairing hospital equipment although he was studying telecommunications. He mentioned this problem to the college coordinator, who answered that hospital equipment is electronic equipment, and one week later changed the respondent to a more appropriate internship, lasting two months, which seemed adequate to the respondent.

Volunteering and Community Service Activities

Most participants commented that these activities had been useful, learning opportunities. For example, one participant learned about teamwork. One of 19 described it negatively, saying that "it had been misunderstood as a chance to abuse us as a source of free labor in that one activity had been to help repair someone's house during which we were not even offered a glass of water. Even the college coordinators admitted that this had been a mistake. I suggest that the coordinators plan more carefully these activities so that they benefit a community and not simply one person." Three others suggested that students would benefit more from volunteering if there were better guidelines about which activities to select.

Leadership Training

Several of the 19 described it as "positive and enriching." One respondent expressed other participant's thinking on saying that "It was positive, giving us the chance to use the freedom one possesses. These activities are directed at making us into leaders, someone who serves and motivates others." Another participant stated "It has a multiplier effect,

like a seed that bears many fruits in others due to our example." Three of the 19 did not participate in any sort of leadership training in the U.S. Another only received one lecture about leadership one month before returning to Guatemala. Many of the women spoke about leadership in terms of stronger self-esteem and willingness to speak up to defend a "woman's" point of view.

Students' Impact on People in the U.S.

As "friendship ambassadors," many *ex-becarios* identified their biggest contribution to the U.S. as one of helping people learn more about Central and Latin American geography and history: "It was a beautiful experience because we broadened the North Americans' cultural vision." Most of the 19 participants' thoughts are summed up in this one comment: "It was important because we acted like multipliers of our cultures and through that North Americans learned about other cultures without having to travel."

The Environment, Gender Equity, and Ethnic Groups and Minorities in Guatemala

One woman spoke emotionally about how Guatemalan society had discriminated against her when she first opened her own microenterprise, overcoming sense of vulnerability by drawing on self confidence she had strengthened while in the U.S. Another stated that the CASS experience had reaffirmed the notion this respondent left Guatemala with, that all women have the same rights as men. Another female respondent added: "Due to CASS, I am more sure of myself and have another perspective about women in the labor market. Education is the base of everything because it makes us more sure of ourselves."

With respect to gender issues, one respondent said that he now treats women employees he supervises better after having lived in the U.S., saying that "it helps to know another culture in order to imitate part of it in yours."

One woman admitted that the experience had changed her thinking in that she used to believe that men knew more than women. She now realizes that women could do the same activities as men.

One of the participants identified himself as a Mayan Indian, saying that he now has a stronger self-esteem, appreciates other cultures more, and values his own and his home community more now than before. An Indian woman dressed in *traje tipico* (Maya clothing) said that she has a stronger sense of ethnic identity, fights against discrimination of Guatemala's Indians, and values her ethnic group more than previously.

Regarding the environment, several *ex-becarios* described how watching the behavior of people in the U.S. had changed their actions in that they no longer threw trash on the streets and felt badly watching others do so.

Acceptance of U.S. College Credits

Many of the 19 participants in the in-depth group interviews experienced large difficulties in transferring credits to Guatemalan universities. Some mentioned it being so difficult that it was simply easier to start from zero at local institutions. One respondent mentioned that the course credits did not help him find work, although he had pushed himself in the U.S., due to his lack of work experience. One of the 19 responded, "It cost me a little to have my course credits accepted. I advanced my studies one year here in Guatemala based on these credits. It would be better to have a four-year degree because that's what the work context demands." A second respondent supported this answer by saying, "The technical education did not help much. What helps the most is knowing English and having studied in the U.S. A two-year technical degree leaves us out of the labor market because this demands that one have a four-year degree." As in Honduras, some Guatemalan alumni believe that CASS should provide scholarships for complete undergraduate degrees.

Re-entry Workshops

One of the 19 participants said that the workshops "...had given us some guidelines about how to get into the labor market, helping us a lot due to our lack of work experience and that the workshops were practical." Several thought that the practice interviews were the key to their having found work. Most evaluated the workshops as useful, although one stated the workshop had partly "confused me about the salary level I should strive to earn and I had a difficult time finding work and then only found a job earning a low salary." Another said that the workshops had given her realistic salary expectations. She spent three months finding her first job after the scholarship and earned less than she had before going to the U.S. One year later she is now earning much more. She mentioned knowing alumni who had obtained well-paid jobs shortly after returning but had "bad" attitudes and lost them and are now unemployed.

Two of the 19 participants said that their workshops had occurred several weeks to two to three months after their return. They suggested that future workshops be scheduled for immediately after the *ex-becarios'* arrival. Apparently, as in Honduras, these participants were unaware that the country office can only schedule the re-entry workshop once the entire cohort of returnees have arrived which can be any time between June and August during any one promotional cycle.

Strengthening Democracy

Several of the 19 agreed with one participant's comment: "I am now more aware about the diversity of cultures and opinions and this is an excellent way to understand more about the overall diversity among peoples and know how to deal with confrontations, which might arise due to such differences, and I think this attitude can help us democratize our country." Another said, "I learned about the concept public well-being (*concepto del bien común*) and to seek the development of others." Another participant

responded, "Because of the experience I am more tolerant and have learned to respect others' opinions and this multiplies due to our example and others try to imitate our behavior of being tolerant." Two others said that this comment was identical to their way of thinking. Another participant linked leadership training to democratization of Guatemala, "People with whom I interact feel friendly with me and expect a lot from me. Both of us can help each other and, thus, together, we can help make our country a greater one. I can now count on my background including a positive mental attitude." Several respondents mentioned being more socially aware now than before. One respondent said, "The problem is that we used to believe that people don't change but I now know that change starts with every one of us. If all of us begin change with ourselves, in our homes and families, then we will democratize this country." Several mentioned teaching their children and those of others about gender equality and not throwing trash on the ground, two ways to make the country more democratic in the long run.

Alumni Association

The alumni in Antigua as well as most of the 19 in the Guatemalan City focus groups agreed that association is weak. Many commented that communication among alumni is difficult; some are "individualists who once back in the country completely lose their values about serving others." Another said, "I live too far away from Guatemala City to come to the meetings here and almost never receive any news about the association." One respondent suggested that the association should keep up with the *ex-becarios'* efforts to find jobs and that the association helps very little to do this. Another, from one of Guatemala's ethnic groups, does not participate in the association because it's too "centralized," doing little outside the city and nothing for the rural education of the Maya peoples.

Another participant was involved with the association in 1997, saying that it only had a treasurer and a vice president. Alumni do not attend the meetings because few are notified about them because few bother to update the databases with changes in their telephone and addresses. To this comment, another added that the association's weakness is the alumni's fault who lack the interest or time to support its activities.

Interviews with Guatemala City Employers of Ex-becarios

The evaluation team interviewed six employers in or near Guatemala City. All were satisfied with the CASS employees and had not known them before their scholarship. Telephone calls to four other alumni employers did not result in interviews because the appropriate supervisors were too busy or traveling.

- A telephone interview with Firm #1 was about two of CASS' five deaf alumni who have worked several years in this U.S. subsidiary of a Guatemalan contractor (recently established firm with dozens, perhaps hundreds of employees) for data entry of health and medical insurance forms for U.S. fortune 500 companies. The supervisor evaluating the two alumni had managed them for about four to six

months and knew little to nothing about the CASS scholarship. The alumni's career advancement was between the same and faster when compared with other similar, non-CASS employees. What stood out most among the supervisor's answers was the response to the question about how the firm had benefited most from the employees' U.S. training program "good production, they arrive here to do what everyone is supposed to do on arriving which is not to waste time and to get to work" (*buena producción...viene a lo que es, vienen a lo que vienen que es trabajar y no perder el tiempo.*).

- A telephone interview about an alumnus working for two years at Firm #2, a cement factory (founded many years ago, employing hundreds), revealed that the supervisor wanted to hire more people like the CASS employee who, apparently, has a gift for "getting along with people" (*un don de gente*). The supervisor commented favorably that the employee offers good suggestions about how to solve data-processing problems. The alumni's career advancement was, when compared with other similar, non-CASS employees, faster. The supervisor said that he would hire any CASS graduate with experience in technical drawing and technicians and mechanics knowledgeable about cement machinery.
- An interview in the office of Firm #3, a 20 year-old Guatemalan subsidiary of a U.S. multinational, indicated that it employed about 35 technicians to maintain and sell security systems for businesses and airports. The supervisor offered the job to the CASS alumnus one year ago after interviewing five *ex-becarios* of which only this employee accepted the offer. He knew a lot about the CASS two-year program. The alumnus' career advancement has been similar to that of other non-CASS employees. The firm has an adequately trained staff to meet needs. To the question about how has the firm benefited from the employees' CASS training, the supervisor responded, "The training gave him a can-do attitude, confident with customer relations, although introverted with other employees, good at customer satisfaction." He suggested nothing about ways to improve the CASS program, asking only that more Guatemalans be given the chance to study in the U.S. in that only one percent receives such training yet more than 10 percent need it.
- A phone interview with a supervisor at Firm #4 dealt with the performance of one of five alumni at this firm (recently established with about 400 employees) contracted by the USDA to experiment with insects. One proxy indicator of the firm's satisfaction with CASS employees was that the Aguirre evaluator had a hard time convincing the supervisor that the interview was about employees' performance, not about offering more recent graduates to work there. The firm wants to hire two more like the CASS staff, although he mentioned having enough adequately trained employees to meet the goals of the firm's business plan. He had six CASS graduates, hiring five and not the sixth due to the person's lack of the correct work attitude.

The supervisor knew a lot about CASS training, directing the CASS employee since March 2001. What he most liked about the training was the internship, practical experience distinguishing CASS from non-CASS employees. The career advancement of the five CASS graduates is faster than other non-CASS employees. Regarding the firm's greatest benefit from the CASS training, he said that it changed their attitude, giving them a more positive one of "getting things done," and "nothing impossible," a view that contrasts markedly with the average work attitude of non-CASS employees. He trusts these employees to make the most appropriate technical and managerial decision to resolve problems, whether the supervisor is there or not. His suggestions for improving CASS are that the graduates resumes are too similar, need to be tailored more to each *ex-becario's* background, and that the internships should be stressed even more in the letters of recommendation. He would like to see CASS work even more at recruiting high-school graduates from small towns. Regarding future fields of study, he answered that his firm needs managers that know how to work with employees with low levels of education, high school or less; for example, how to tell an employee that the manager wants a 20 percent sample from 100 insects is easy but harder to communicate to less educated employees if the sample is 20 percent of 156 insects.

- A telephone interview with a supervisor at Firm #5 was about the performance of one CASS *ex-becario* in a four-year old company with 250 employees making school uniforms for a U.S. multinational. The textile manufacturer has an adequately trained staff among whom were one, perhaps two other CASS alumni, one of which the supervisor knew. The respondent had managed the employee, whose career advancement has been faster than non-CASS employees, for about six months. What has most benefited the company from the CASS training was that the employee "...catches on to new ideas and procedures quickly." He identified as the most useful aspect of the training the students' learning about high, professional work standards, and the communal living experience (*convivencia*) of being in the U.S.
- Firm #6 was a producer of soft drinks and food products, an older company with hundreds of employees. The telephone interview was about a recent CASS returnee who started there about six months ago and has been managed by this supervisor for two months. The firm had another CASS employee, considered by everyone a good performer, who was there for a while and has now left the company. The manufacturer has an adequately trained staff but still needs to hire more appropriately trained people. Although this CASS graduate studied small business administration, the *ex-becario* did not work in this field for the company. Regarding the greatest benefit of the training for the company, the interviewee mentioned the employee's language skills in English and knowledge of computer programs.

Fields of Study and the USAID Strategic Focus

The Guatemalan CASS office conducts a survey to determine local training needs that might be met through training in U.S. community colleges. The survey form used to evaluate training needs for scholarships in 2001 and 2002 is simple, easily completed in only a few minutes, and appropriate for the predicting the country's training needs. Such simplicity guarantees a high response rate, about 90 percent of the 63 organizations and individuals asked to answer the questionnaire returned it. The 63 participants represented an excellent range of private sector, governmental, and university institutions (journalists and specialists in microfinance to private business consultants) from throughout Guatemala. At least two people in the USAID office participated in the survey. The form of about 15 questions is appropriate for CASS information collection needs and consultation with its primary and secondary stakeholders.

A previous USAID concern about the CASS program was that it determined future training needs with only little consultation with USAID officials and their strategic focus for the country. Indeed, officials characterized the overlap between the strategic focus and the CASS fields of study as, until recently, "very little." During the last recruiting cycle and survey of future training needs, CASS appears to have addressed this concern by consulting with and working closely with several mission officials, who participate in the survey and in the interviews of candidates. The Aguirre team interviewed two of these officials who said they were satisfied with the way the CASS efforts complemented those of the USAID mission. Thus, the CASS coordination with USAID, one of its most significant stakeholders in all consultations, is clearly highlighted by the prominent role it asks the Mission to play in the survey of training needs, recruitment of candidates, and interviewing. The local office transmits this survey data to Georgetown for analysis. Georgetown takes the survey results, compares them with the offerings of participating community colleges, and determines the areas that CASS will offer in the following scholarship period of two years. The results are then shared with the LAC Bureau's COTR for the CASS program.

As in Honduras, interviews with candidates took place in 2001 in several different parts of the country. The interviewers included CASS alumni, USAID officials, educators from the education and health ministries, and specialists from the Instituto de formación técnica.

Workforce Needs and CASS Alumni as "Risk Takers and Catalysts"

Aguirre interviews took place with one manufacturing association in textiles and maquilas, two governmental ministries, two U.S. governmental representatives, a labor economist with the United Nations, a health economist at a governmental and private training institution, INTECAP (*Instituto Técnica de Capacitación y Productividad*), and a labor market specialist at AGEXPRONT (*Asociación Gremial de Exportadores de Productos no Tradicionales*). Several of the interviewees stressed that the country is witnessing a sharp worsening (*agudización*) of the economic crisis, one which another interviewer described as an "economic calamity." The crisis has resulted partly from the

collapse of international coffee prices (Guatemala is Central America's largest producer, now drowning in cheap coffee), a regional drought wiping out maize and bean fields for tens of thousands, and the economic recession among the country's major trading partners, particularly the U.S. and Mexico.

Although less than two percent of the economically active population is unemployed, 33 percent is underemployed in that these employees want to work more hours and cannot; or believe that they cannot find more work. Several interviewees commented that the government and private sector lack a clear vision of the nation's economic future, partly because the state has always been weak and done little to provide appropriate technical education to Guatemala's youth so that productivity rates increase, particularly for agricultural and maquila sectors. Public high schools are of low quality and few are free or inexpensive. The lack of an economic plan for sustainable development is a major structural weakness of the labor market. The following is based on the comments from eight different interviews and the analysis of documents provided by the participants.

- The president of the American Chamber of Commerce of Guatemala seemed to know little about CASS, preferring to describe the successes of the Universidad Galileo from which he suggested that CASS might learn something. Apparently, one of these successes includes teaching Guatemalan Army soldiers to build their own homes so that when they leave the Army they might work as construction foremen helping to solve the national crisis of low-income housing. The Aguirre evaluator called dean's office at the Universidad Galileo several times to speak with the assistant dean who was recommended by the chamber of commerce. During the two days left to finish the evaluation, no one in the dean's office had time to meet and discuss future training needs.
- The second interview was with a USAID official who said the candidates and the fields of study for CASS used to be selected "very independently" from USAID's strategic focus. The official mentioned that recently the two programs have started to complement each other a little more, CASS "coinciding" more with the training needs identified by USAID's network of member institutions.
- The third interview was with a labor and political specialist from the U.S. Embassy who knew nothing about CASS. He discussed the following types of work as probably continuing to generate jobs: low-income housing, bamboo (particularly for construction), telephone-line technicians, shrimp for export (apparently described in a *New York Times* article in November 2001), certified gourmet, organic coffee growers (production, classification, and packaging for export and to take over the role of foreign middlemen and roast, grind, and package), and non-traditional farming of cold weather export crops (Chinese cabbage, broccoli, snow peas—products also mentioned in Honduras as growth sectors).
- The fourth interview was with a specialist at the education ministry who has collaborated with CASS for four years in recruiting, interviewing, and selecting

rural candidates for one-year teaching scholarships at the Alamo Community College District in San Antonio. The ministry has a strong commitment to CASS: while they study in Texas, it pays for teachers' salaries. The specialist was satisfied with the candidates' profile in that all are from rural areas and low-income, and most are women and from ethnic groups. Five scholarships had been dedicated to Garífuna teachers, but this specialist said that size of this ethnic group is small and that only two were awarded. He characterized the selection and interviews as rigorous and transparent, with no one's "pull" ("*cuello*") or influence helping candidates to obtain an award. Moreover, the education minister had told him to tell the Aguirre evaluator that the minister was "very satisfied" with CASS. The Texas curriculum seemed sound, excellent for Guatemala's needs, given that the country's recent educational reform receives some attention by Alamo's professors.

- INTECAP (*Instituto Técnica de Capacitación y Productividad*) was the fifth institutional interview. A health economist, who knew little about the CASS program, discussed some of the achievements of the Swedish development agency (Apoyo sueco para el desarrollo intergral, ASDI) as examples of future training in rural health. The country needs technicians and advocates (*promotoras de salud*) for dealing with family violence, reproductive problems among teenagers, the health concerns (such as outbreaks cholera and dengue fever) of the country's migrant farm laborers and of Indian women, and ethno or folk medicine (seven municipalities have handicraft workshops for the processing medicinal plants and more should exist).
- Two labor market specialists and several of their reports were the source of information resulting from the sixth interview at the United Nations Program for Development (UNDP). The reports included *Mercado de trabajo y pobreza en Guatemala*, which is based on the 1998-99 *Encuesta de Ingresos y Gastos de las Familias*, and the UNDP's 2001 publication, *Guatemala: El financiamiento del desarrollo humano* (www.onu.org.gt/indh2001). One of the specialists knew a lot about the CASS program, describing the alumni as "risk takers and catalysts." This information reveals training needs in the following fields: eco-tourism, gourmet coffee and its packaging, non-traditional agricultural products, textile maquila, forestry, health workers to prevent epidemics (*promotoras de salud*, now done by volunteers), and construction supervisors to build low-income housing (partly a result of the lack of governmental policy about such housing).
- The seventh interview was with a sociologist who is director of one of the labor ministry's most significant training programs. He knew nothing about CASS and, hearing the scholarship described, characterized it as exactly what the country needs to produce--two-year graduates who are technicians in empowering small-scale communities (*técnicos en potenciar pequeñas comunidades*). One of the ministry's large-scale ideas is the farming of maize near large tree plantations. International funding would underwrite partly the cost of helping Guatemala become, like Costa Rica, a storage area (sink) for the planet's excess carbon,

allowing other nations to meet their Kyoto requirements. Such a plan would generate jobs for forest technicians who would work for small associations of maize producers living in the country's hundreds of villages. He also suggested technicians in ethno-medicine.

His most noteworthy suggestion was the training of technicians in health and workplace safety issues who would work with export agriculture or maquilas in the clothing industry. Such technicians would help assure the compliance of the products and workplaces with labor, health, and safety standards required by the U.S. Department of Labor, the World Trade Organization, and ISO 9000. The Universidad Galileo, opened about one year ago in Guatemala City, is now offering courses in such a specialization, a field of study that CASS coursework in quality control might easily adopt.

- The labor specialist for clothing maquilas at AGEXPRONT (*Asociación Gremial de Exportadores de Productos no Tradicionales*), the eighth interviewee, suggested training similar to what the Ministry of Labor sociologist suggested, although neither knew the Aguirre evaluator had spoken with the other interviewee. The maquilas in the Guatemalan apparel and textile industry have a large capacity to grow and generate jobs requiring little formal education. According to the industry specialist, they are proud of providing work for Indian women (70% of the maquila workers) in rural areas who are widows of men killed in the country's civil war. However, human rights and anti-sweatshop advocates accuse the industry of unfair labor and workplace practices. According to the AGEXPRONT specialist, the industry wants to hire technicians who have training in human resources and health and safety issues in the workplace. Such a technician would be sensitive to the issues confronting Indian women on the factory floor while helping the firm comply with international standards for air and water quality, and worker safety and appropriate labor conditions. Although the Universidad del Valle de Guatemala offers an undergraduate degree in textile engineering, the industry spokesman believed that a two-year degree could provide technicians in workplace safety and health that clothing industry need to hire.

CASS in Honduras: An Evaluation of Activities from 1994 to 2001

Introduction

Thirty-six *ex-becarios* participated in three different focus groups, two with participants in Tegucigalpa and one in San Pedro Sula (one woman, six men, five with pre-1994 scholarships). The first group from the capital included 16 *ex-becarios* (7 women, 2 participants with scholarships before 1994, one woman awarded scholarships twice). Thirteen *ex-becarios* participated in the second one (eight women, six with pre-1994 scholarships, one man awarded scholarships twice). Only 2 or 3 of the 36 *ex-becarios* lived and studied in the U.S. for less than two years, both being construction supervisors (one female).

The evaluators interviewed about half of the CASS graduates who studied in the U.S. between 1994 and 2001. The CIED office listed the names of 269 students who completed successfully their scholarships and returned to Honduras. Of these, the Tegucigalpa office provided information about 243, 190 for two years in about a dozen different fields of study, 8 to study health for one year, 10 for education for one year, and 35 for six months or less of training as construction supervisors. Evaluators reduced the list of 243 by about 30 *ex-becarios* (returned grantees) because they had married and left the country, studied or worked outside of Honduras no longer had accurate addresses or telephone numbers on the list, or had died (4). Of the 213, evaluators obtained addresses and telephone numbers of 208 alumni.

Evaluators selected 150 names from the list of about 208 *ex-becarios* for interviews. Of these, 127 *ex-becarios* participated in the interviews conducted from early December until January 8, 2002; the others being unavailable due to work, December holiday travels, and difficult to contact resulting from out-of-date addresses and phone numbers. Although the selection of interviewees was not random, participants seemed to include every part of Honduras that *ex-becarios* come from (for example, the Bay Islands in the Caribbean and one of four alumni living in the department of Gracias a Dios) and an equal number of men, women, and members of the country's ethnic groups, and all the fields of study for CASS has awarded scholarships since 1994, including several for 3-6 and 12 months. The largest group of alumni was from Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula, urban areas where many CASS alumni live due to the employment opportunities.

Evaluators relied on telephone and mail interviews only in a few cases, traveling during December 2001 and January 2002 to the workplaces and homes of more than 90 percent of the *ex-becarios* for their participation in an interview lasting about one hour. To locate alumni in the departments of Colón and Gracias a Dios required innovative procedures--radio advertisements, telephone calls, messages sent by fax, email, and people traveling to these departments who were friends of the alumni. For example, an official from the Misquitos Association (MOPAWI) traveled to Gracias a Dios, offering to contact the four alumni and delivery the questionnaires to them. As of early January, only one of the four in that department had returned the survey form. In the department of Colón, a friend of

one of the Aguirre evaluators was a radio announcer and made public service announcements, asking CASS alumni in the department to meet with the evaluators. Eight construction supervisors and teachers filled out questionnaires and mailed them to the Aguirre evaluator in Tegucigalpa who then called respondents to clarify some of the answers.

Interviews took place with four employers of CASS alumni (two in Tegucigalpa and two in San Pedro Sula) and with six Tegucigalpa specialists in future workforce needs.

Impact of CASS on Honduran Education

Based on interviews at the Consejo Hondureño de la empresa privada and *Instituto nacional de formación profesional* (INFOP), governmental officials and others changing post-high school educational programs examined the CASS model of two-year, technical degrees and drew on parts of it to promote the recent Ley de Educación Alternativa no Formal. "Flexibility" is the term used by many observers about the CASS model, easily customized to the changing employment and training needs and, according to many, an uncommon trait of the country's national educational programs.

Interviews with Honduran Graduates (Ex-becarios)

As discussed in Appendix B, the Aguirre International evaluators interviewed 127 of the CASS graduates who studied in the U.S. between 1994 and 2001. During 7 years, CASS awarded 269 scholarships. Of these, the Tegucigalpa office had information about 243: 190 for two years in about a dozen different fields of study, 8 to study health for one year, 10 for education for one year, and 35 for six months or less of training as construction supervisors.

Focus Groups

Participants discussed about 17 different questions, dealing with the CASS experience in the U.S. (issues such as the host families, volunteering, internship, leadership training, etc.) and nine dealing with issues concerning changes in their lives since returning to Honduras (difficulty in transferring U.S. college credits to Honduras, role in strengthening democracy, the CASS alumni association, changes in thinking about the country's environment, gender equity, and ethnic groups and minorities such as the deaf). Each focus group lasted about 90 minutes, was taped (after participants consented to do so), and transcribed. Every *ex-becario* was eager to talk, one interview lasting almost two hours.

All 36 were extremely satisfied with their scholarship and time in the U.S. and thankful to CIED, USAID, and people of the U.S. for having given them this life-changing experience. One answered, when asked about what was most important about CASS that he learned to be concerned (*aprender a preocuparse*) about his country's well being. Another answered the same question, saying that he had learned how to share knowledge of what he knows how to do. One *ex-becario* summed up the thinking of many others on

answering the same question: all feel that they owe Honduras something. Another said that the best part of CASS is that they recruit and award scholarships to only low-income candidates, people who "are diamonds in the rough and CASS is their sculptor." He said that most Hondurans have the intelligence to benefit from an education like CASS but unfortunately not all Hondurans have the same opportunities. According to one woman, the re-entry workshops and tips for looking for employment are so useful that she feels "committed to CASS and in its debt for the rest of her life." Regarding CASS's most significant aspect, several mentioned the strong program structure and rigorous and transparent selection of candidates for the award. Several comments about CASS's greatest value relate to sustainable development: learning to work as a group, teamwork with other scholarship holders from different parts of Honduras and elsewhere in Central America and the Caribbean.

The following synthesizes the comments of the 36 participants, highlighting their suggestions about possible changes in CASS. A few *ex-becarios* had the erroneous impression that most scholarships were awarded to candidates from Tegucigalpa, suggesting that CASS needed greater geographical coverage. Other participants disagreed. Several *ex-becarios* mentioned ending up in U.S. communities where most residents spoke primarily Spanish, an obstacle slowing their learning of English.

Host Families

All comments were extremely favorable. Most lived one year with a family and a second as roommates in an apartment with other students, an experience they thought helped them be more independent on returning to Honduras. One participant had problems with her first family (they allowed no use of the kitchen from Friday at 6PM to Monday at 6AM and she had little money or language skills), changed family, and still is in touch with them 16 years later.

Predeparture Orientation

Everyone thought the preparations were fine. They believed that they arrived at the community colleges better prepared than CASS students from other countries.

Internships

This work experience ranked as one of the most valuable CASS experiences, several participants suggesting that internships should last longer than a few weeks. One woman characterized her internship as of little value, suggesting that internships be more tightly linked to course work and better organized.

Volunteering and Community Service Activities

All participants commented that these activities had been useful, learning opportunities.

Leadership Training

At least participant used the training to compete and win a trip to a regional leadership conference in Okalahoma. Another received an expense paid trip to the Leadership Center of the Americas. During a presidency of the international club, one participant organized fundraising events to send money to the Honduran victims of Hurricane Mitch. One *ex-becario* spoke about leadership in terms of knowing better how to "market" her beliefs in the most persuasive way to convince others. Others simply mentioned feeling much more self confident. A woman said that many *ex-becarios* were from conservative families in which women were submissive and silent. She said that if she had never left her home town she would have always remained silent rather than learning how to disagree politely with others and defend her viewpoint.

Students' Impact on People in the U.S.

As "friendship ambassadors," many *ex-becarios* identified their biggest contribution to the U.S. as one of helping people learn more about Central and Latin American geography and history.

The Environment, Gender Equity, and Ethnic Groups and Minorities in Honduras

Most of the men agreed that seeing men cooking and women working at construction sites in the U.S. has made them more aware about gender issues in Honduras. Indeed, because of the six months with CASS, one of the male construction supervisors has started to hire female brick masons who often are more efficient workers than men. What most changed during his time in the U.S. was his thinking about women and their role in the workforce. Because of two CASS scholarships, one *ex-becario* has now worked for several years helping low-income Honduran women become microentrepreneurs. One female student specializing in small-scale agricultural management overcame her stereotype about only men driving tractors and milking cows and now does both. Most *ex-becarios* were articulate about the difficulties of the Honduran deaf.

Regarding the environment, several *ex-becarios* described how watching the behavior of people in the U.S. had changed their actions in Honduras in that they no longer threw trash on the streets and felt bad on watching others do so.

A black nurse spoke elegantly about health issues and drug abuse in the country, particularly among youth and ethnic groups in rural areas.

Acceptance of U.S. College Credits

Most participants agreed that private colleges in Honduras more easily accepted their credits than public universities such as the Universidad Nacional Autonomy de Honduras. Apparently, the public ones require not only a notarized copy of the degree but also a detailed and notarized description of course content, something most U.S. schools seldom

provide. According to one participant, officers of the alumni association are trying to solve this problem.

Some expressed frustration about not having received a scholarship for four years. One agreed with this opinion, although admitted that it sounded "selfish" to ask for a doubling of the scholarship which would reduce the number of awards for others. He also stressed that the scholarship had changed his life "180 degrees." These frustrations seem to exist partly due to the difficulty of transferring U.S. credits to Honduras, to competing with others with four-year degrees, and from a lack of prestige or legitimacy for two-year technical degrees.

Re-entry Workshops

All of the post-1994 ex-becarios stressed that these had been useful in preparing themselves to work and live again in Honduras. Several of the pre-1994 becarios received either little or no training on returning, stressing that their transition would have benefited from such workshops. For example, several credited the workshops for helping them develop realistic expectations about salary levels and work responsibilities, even to accept a low-paid job to obtain experience. One participant said that the workshops helped him be more humble about looking for work and negotiating salaries, thinking in terms of the local currency and not a salary in dollars.

Three to five of the 36 participants said that their workshops had occurred several weeks to two to three months after their return. They suggested that future workshops be scheduled for immediately after the ex-becarios' arrival. Apparently, these participants were unaware that the country office can only schedule the re-entry workshop once the entire cohort of returnees have arrived which can be any time between June and August during any one promotional cycle.

Strengthening Democracy

Based on experiences of watching a jury trial and being an officer in the university student association, one participant believed that the way people debate issues in the U.S. is a notion about which Hondurans and its politicians need to learn more. Another emphasized learning about national budgetary issues, civic participation, transparency and accountability in political decision-making, concepts that helped him make a more informed choice of candidate in the country's November presidential elections. An ex-becario followed up this discussion with the comment that he previously voted for a political party or based on candidates his family had always voted for but now selected the "best qualified candidate." Another stated that although most Honduran politicians might be dishonest, he plans to become involved in local politics in two to three years because the country needs a new type of politician.

Alumni Association

The association helps an organization dealing with children with AIDs and another with older people. Also it has provided several focus-group participants with information about employment opportunities. One novel idea was that the alumni association would like to conduct a marketing campaign to make the association better known to all *ex-becarios* and other Hondurans. Accordingly, the first step is to design a website and seek USAID approval to combine its logo with one of CASS so that everyone recognizes the CASS educational "product."

One *ex-becario* credited the association with convincing him that it is better to achieve goals by working together than individually. Since returning, one participant has moved twice in Honduras, always relying on alumni for tips about where to rent and seek employment. One of the association founders said that in 16 years the most noteworthy contributions of the alumni have been in helping needy people, strengthening friendships among the *ex-becarios*, and networking for jobs.

Interviews with Honduran Employers of *Ex-becarios*

The evaluation team interviewed two employers in Tegucigalpa and two in San Pedro Sula. All were satisfied with the CASS employees and had not known them before their scholarship.

Firm #1, in San Pedro Sula, specialized in telecommunications, was about seven to eight years old, and employed 19 people. One *ex-becario* worked there six years ago, another was with them a few months years ago, two are currently with the company, and none of them were there before receiving the CASS award. The employer spoke specifically about one *ex-becario* he has known for the 10 months. The *ex-becario* has a positive work attitude and is persistent at getting the done and has a career advancement similar to non-CASS employees. He emphasized that employees needed to shift quickly from one responsibility to another in the company, a skill not all employees had yet developed and one the *ex-becario* was a little better than some and could improve more. Employees needed to improvise a temporary solution to technical problems, exhaust their abilities to solve them, and then seek help from supervisors. The employer suggested, based on what he heard about the *ex-becario's* internship, that internship should last longer. He described some of the *ex-becario's* behavior in ways that sounded like false expectations in that the *ex-becario* had arrived at the job expecting to sit behind the desk and supervise others rather than going out to the field to climb tall radio towers. He noted that this attitude seemed to be changing.

Firm #2, also in San Pedro Sula, hired an *ex-becario*, who was not in the company before the scholarship, one year ago as a quality control specialist. The supervisor was most impressed with her good work attitude, willingness to get along well with other employers, and be a "quick learn" about the maquila industry about which the *ex-becario* had no previous knowledge. She identified the *ex-becario's* spoken and written English as her greatest skill. Her one suggestion was that CASS should advertise more often and

throughout Honduras so that potential employers know about the quality of the CASS educational "product." (See also general recommendations in this report about marketing CASS).

Firm #3, a Tegucigalpa business, had several dozen employees, was more than 10 years old, and specialized in civil and industrial engineering. The employer thought, based on the *ex-becarios'* comments, that the CASS recruiting and selection of candidates were transparent, thorough, and systematic. He said that the CASS employee had started the job with false expectations about salary and responsibilities in the firm but had become more realistic over the many months since returning to Honduras and the new job. An industrial engineer graduated from UCLA in the late 1960s, the employer described the salaries in his sector as being "deprimidos" (stagnant, frozen), an engineer earning about the same in 2001 as this employer had two decades ago. The employer's comments about CASS returnees arriving with false expectations were similar to provided by an *ex-becario* who studied in the late 1980s and participated in CASS workshops preparing students to start the scholarship and adjust to Honduran lifestyles and work two years later. He agreed that some students returned with an overly optimistic sense of how much they should earn and what responsibilities they deserved but thought that the reentry workshops of the last few years better prepared the *ex-becarios* for the realities of the national labor market.

Firm #4, a beer company in Tegucigalpa with hundreds of employees, hired two quality control *ex-becarios* two years ago (neither having been in the firm before CASS). An excellent work attitude (*abnegados en su trabajo*, sacrifice whatever for the job) and spoken and written English were the skills most important for these *ex-becarios'* supervisor. In fact, she was more impressed by their work attitude than their knowledge about quality control, which she characterized as being more than adequate. The company has already promoted one of them to be a supervisor of a quality-control department. Both employees's careers were advancing quicker than similar non-CASS employees. The *ex-becarios'* supervisor would have liked both of them to know a little more about statistics, microbiology, and personnel and other management issues but added that their CASS preparation made the firm's future training in these topics relatively easy.

Workforce Needs

The evaluators interviewed six specialists in six different institutions, ranging from the USAID to educators at a private university and business owners in the city's chamber of commerce.

An interview with a member of a foundation specializing in investments for and development of Honduran exports revealed the country needs more twenty something's with two year degrees like those of CASS and the Universidad José Celio del Valle (Tegucigalpa), one of the few offering such programs. He believed that two-year, technical degrees are still poorly understood. He suggested a social marketing campaign to change the general public's evaluation of two year degrees. This foundation official

thought that diesel engineering technicians are needed as are better prepared construction foremen like the 30 or so already awarded CASS scholarships. He and other foundation officials recently participated in a workshop about future Honduran labor market needs organized by Harvard's Michael Porter and Jeffery Sachs, among others. Four sectors mentioned in the workshop were tourism, forest products, highly value-added agro-industrial products (for example, Chinese vegetables carefully packaged for Miami restaurants), and light assembly maquiladora production of clothes completely manufactured and packed in Honduras (see also *Honduran Highlights*, www.hondurasinfo.hn for 2001 quarterly reports concerning mining as becoming third largest export sector and agricultural maquilas). He mentioned the design of clothes as a possible two-year specialization as well as quality-control specialists familiar and World Trade Organization and ISO standards.

Conversations with an educator at Universidad José Cecilio del Valle, who previously advised CASS about training needs, emphasized one specific field, elementary and high school mathematics teachers. She referred to a recent article in the city's newspaper, *El Heraldo* (December 4, 2001, page 10, "Sólo 2 mil de 15 mil alumnos pasaron matemática en la universidad") about teaching university math courses to freshmen. She described a recent conference she had attended by a Japanese researcher from Japan's International Cooperation Agency who lectured about solving this problem of poor performance through by better preparing elementary school math teachers.

An interview with members of Cámara de Comercio e Industria de Tegucigalpa (CCIT) generated the following suggestions about future labor market needs and the training of twenty somethings:

- quality-control specialists in the production of wood and metal office furniture, in the aquaculture, processing, and packaging of tilapia fish (or frogs and river shrimp), and in pottery handicrafts for export; and
- forestry engineering, wood products, and reforestation.

The Aguirre evaluators interviewed two labor economists at the Honduran office at the Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo (PNUD). Many of their comments are the results of the research for and writing of PNUD's annual publications, *Informe sobre el desarrollo humano en Honduras 1999: el impacto humano de un huracán* and the 2000 report: *Por un crecimiento con equidad*. They suggested that quality control specialists and technicians are needed in the following: non-traditional farming products and packaging (for example, oriental vegetables for Miami restaurants), eco-tourism, low-income housing, dairy products (Olancho recently conducted the country's first dairy-products fair), shoes and other leather products, and traditional or ethno-medicine. Interviews with specialists in microentrepueship and planners at INFOP (*Instituto nacional de formación profesional*) mentioned most of these same workforce needs.

Fields of Study and the USAID Strategic Focus

The Honduran CASS office conducts a survey to determine local training needs that might be met through training in U.S. community colleges. The survey form used to evaluate training needs for scholarships in 2001 and 2002 is simple, easily completed in only a few minutes, and appropriate for the Honduran needs. Such simplicity guarantees a high response rate, about 85-90 percent of the 92 organizations and individuals asked to answer the questionnaire returned it. The 92 participants represented an excellent range of private sector, governmental, and university institutions (television stations to private business consultants) from throughout Honduras. Several filled at the questionnaire and wrote one to two page, single-spaced letters describing training needs, for example, in the management of environmental risk after the Hurricane Mitch. At least three people in the Honduras AID office and four at the US embassy participated in the survey. The form of about 15 questions is appropriate for CASS information collection needs and consultation with its primary and secondary stakeholders.

A previous USAID concern about the CASS program was that it determined future training needs with only little consultation with USAID officials and their strategic focus for the country. CASS appears to have addressed this concern by consulting with and working closely with at least three mission officials, who participate in the survey and in the interviews of candidates. The Aguirre team interviewed two of these officials who said they were satisfied with the way the CASS efforts complemented those of the USAID mission. Thus, the Honduran CASS' coordination with USAID, one of its most significant stakeholders in all consultations, is clearly highlighted by the prominent role it asks the Mission to play in the survey of training needs, recruitment of candidates, and interviewing. The local office transmits this survey data to Georgetown for analysis. Georgetown takes the survey results, compares them with the offerings of participating community colleges, and determines the areas that CASS will offer in the following scholarship period of two years. The results are then shared with the LAC Bureau's COTR for the CASS program.

General Recommendations about Honduras

One of the institutions seldom participating in the survey of training needs is the *Cámara de Comercio e Industria de Tegucigalpa* (CCIT). Based on interviews with four of their directors and members, the CCIT would like a more active role in CASS. It wants to be more involved in determining the future training needs, offering the services of its labor specialists and economists. CCIT wants to participate more in the recruitment, selection and interviewing of candidates, and job placement of the recently returned ex-becarios. They want to strengthen (*afianzar*) and refine (*afinar*) the relationship between CITT's as many as 2,000 associates and CASS.

Both the United Nations (PUND) labor economists and an international business specialist, who has advised CASS in the past, discussed general educational issues that CASS may want to consider. These might be covered in lectures during the orientation workshops before leaving for the U.S., during the re-entry workshops, and perhaps at the

U.S. community colleges. The interviewees described one issue as follows: an education policy that instills the values of a culture of not immigrating to the U.S. The CASS becarios illustrate to their friends, relatives, and social networks this attitude of "...not giving up on Honduras..." a change for the better that their own lives highlight. Ex-becarios understand this message although the interviewees thought that it should be positively reinforced at times and made known to the general public based on a campaign of social marketing. The second issue concerns an education stressing that all CASS awardees--as with all young, twenty something Hondurans--have to consider themselves potential business people and their own bosses, generating jobs, risking capital, and establishing small businesses. According to the interviewees, this message deserves constant repeating to the potential CASS awardees, ex-becarios, and the entire nation's teenagers and twenty-somethings (see publications by Consejo Nacional de Pequeña Empresa and those of the United Nations, PNUD 2000, page 63, "modernizando la microempresa y reduciendo el subempleo"). Several of the interviewees emphasized that future CASS becarios and recent ex-becarios need to be "*polivalentes*", trained for many different types of technical work. They also characterized the labor market with three terms that all CASS participants could benefit from learning: vulnerability, immobility, and precariousness. The explained this mantra as follows:

- each sector of the economy a young worker may enter is **vulnerable** in that each sector lacks a solid base resulting from the increasing productivity of its workers, finances that are free of taxes, debts or other encumbrances, and flexible enough to adjust to market changes, a solid base from which to withstand crises and shocks in the international, national, and sectorial economies;
- workers are **immobile**; they have little or no capacity to learn new job skills in types of work other than their own which might have extremely low levels of productivity; and
- conditions of work in a sector are **precarious** in that no one knows how long the job might last, the workplace is unsafe, and the chances for promotion are limited.

Much of what these interviews revealed seems to be the beginnings of a Creole, Honduran version of Daniel H. Pink's writings (2001) in *Free Agent Nation: How America's New Independent Workers Are Transforming the Way We Live*.

One of the interviewees suggested that the Honduran office needs a donation of a newer computer system. This person also believed that the office would operate with even greater efficiency if the Peace Corps were to assign it a volunteer with strong educational and practical experience in business and management.

Most employers agreed that the CASS education taught the *ex-becarios* how to continue teaching themselves, a notion in Spanish that translates with the precision of a laser beam, "enseñar a aprender."

Some Observations about Country Contrasts

Academic Issues

Eight in-depth group interviews with about 90 alumni across the three countries revealed that many wanted to take more courses at the colleges, perform more volunteer activities, and work more hours more often in their internships. Evaluators further probed them with questions posed as trade-offs, for example, "how many less hours of class study and volunteering might a student agree to in order to increase the time invested in the internship?" Although most of the alumni seemed to want more of everything, they did not respond with a strong preference ranking the activities. Perhaps future CASS questionnaires should ask returnees to rank the activities in terms of trade-offs in time and benefits.

Several alumni in Guatemala and Honduras seem to misunderstand the CASS purpose in that they are frustrated that the scholarships did not underwrite a four-year undergraduate degree rather than a two-year of study. Aguirre suggests that the departure and re-entry workshops emphasize even more why the scholarship funds only 24 months of study.

Alumni Association

Compared with alumni in the Dominican Republic and Honduras, Guatemalan CASS alumni are different. Their association is weaker than that of their counterparts in the other two countries. They cancelled two focus groups and only two of eight arrived for a third. They have not kept up to date their addresses and telephone numbers in the Guatemalan office; thus, they were hard to contact about participating in the interviews. When contacted, most of the respondents agreed to interviews only by telephone, being too busy to speak with enumerators willing to travel to their homes or workplaces whenever convenient to the respondent. In the other two countries, evaluators had to rely on telephone interviews in only a few cases among several hundred interviews. Compared with alumni from the other two countries, more of the Guatemalans seem to have left their country to live in the U.S. What makes the Guatemalan case noteworthy is the assumption that the values represented by the CASS alumni are representative of those of many, perhaps most, non-CASS Guatemalans.

A simple explanation about the Guatemalan differences is not readily apparent. Guatemala's size and population are many times larger than any of the other seven countries (D.R., 8.2 million population, GDP per head, \$1770, area of 48,000 sq km, median age, 23.9 years; Guatemala: 10.8 million population, GDP per head, \$1,640, 109,000 sq.km. median age, 17.8 years; Honduras: 6.1 million population, GDP per head, \$740, 112,000 sq. km, median age, 18.8 years). Topographically, it is more rugged and distances are longer between towns and cities. Guatemala City is the primary urban center, ranked several times higher on the settlement pyramid of cities to villages, overwhelming the others much like Caracas and Buenos Aires do their national landscapes. One of the most likely explanations would combine these "sufficient

conditions" in any explanation with the indispensable "necessary" ones of extreme ethnic stratification and recent emergence from decades of civil war.

One of these necessary conditions seems to be part of the metaphor making up a joke told to one evaluator in Honduras, one that is common in many parts of Latin America. When asked which aspect of all the CASS experiences had the greatest value, one exbecario answered that it was having learned while in the U.S. to work with others as a team, teamwork that this respondent liked as part of his collaboration with the alumni association. The respondent continued by saying that understanding the value of teamwork had changed his behavior in that he now joined in on less *cangrejas* ("crab antics") in which many Hondurans participate. The evaluator was not completely sure of the meaning of *la cangrejera*, asking the respondent to explain it. The term derives from the way crabs in a barrel, in trying to crawl out, pull one another back down the sides. In Honduran seafood markets, sellers never keep a lid on a barrel of Honduran crabs, only doing so when they are selling crabs from the U.S. because, when one of these reaches the top of the barrel by climbing up on the backs of others, that crab reaches down to help others escape. Many Central Americans talk about people behaving like these crabs with the expression "se armó la cangrejera." It might be that Hondurans and Dominicans have moved further away from the individual psychology of "crab antics" than Guatemalans. Thus, CASS students from this country may still need to make even larger cultural changes so that they and all Guatemalans work as a team to improve the country.

Perhaps CASS in Guatemala can undertake a social marketing campaign on the radio, TV, and in the newspapers highlighting its graduates' training that helps them create a dedicated sense of teamwork to help the country (*sacar adelante la patria*).

Management Changes

In Honduras, one of the institutions seldom participating in the survey of training needs is the Cámara de Comercio e Industria de Tegucigalpa (CCIT). Based on interviews with four of their directors and members, the CCIT would like a more active role in CASS. It wants to be more involved in determining the future training needs, offering the services of its labor specialists and economists. CCIT wants to participate more in the recruitment, selection and interviewing of candidates, and job placement of the recently returned *ex-becarios*. They want to strengthen (*afianzar*) and refine (*afinar*) the relationship between CITT's as many as 2,000 associates and CASS.

APPENDIX F

Site Visit Reports

**Alamo Community College District
Broome Community College
Harris-Stowe State College
Modesto Junior College
Reedley College
St. Louis Community College**

**CASS EVALUATION
SITE VISIT TO ALAMO COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT
San Antonio, Texas
January 23-25, 2002**

Overview

The Alamo Community College District (ACCD) hosts both one-year and two-year CASS programs. The program is administered by a very competent staff, and it enjoys generally strong support from the ACCD administration, the faculty and the community. (One exception seems to be a lack of English-speaking families willing to host CASS students.) The program appears to be academically strong, and it provides a large amount of practical job experience. CASS students work hard and do well. Despite their struggle with English language, the CASS students enjoy their experience and exploit the many opportunities for learning and personal growth that the ACCD-CASS experience offers.

The only noteworthy concern is that, unlike other participating colleges and universities, the two-year ACCD program is separate from the college's regular academic offerings and does not grant degrees. The evaluation team believes that this feature somewhat limits the interaction of ACCD CASS students with other (non-CASS) students, although the program administrators ensure that many other opportunities to mix are present. The evaluator could not determine whether the fact that ACCD cannot grant AA degrees to CASS participants in any way impedes their future success, i.e., as compared with CASS students returning home from other participating CASS institutions that do grant degrees. The evaluation team recommends that Georgetown's Center for Intercultural Education and Development (CIED) review this issue if it has not already done so.

Introduction

ACCD, located in San Antonio, Texas, consists of four two-year community colleges: St. Philip's College, San Antonio College, Palo Alto College, and Northwest Vista College. The ACCD is currently host to two groups of CASS participants:

- 18 post-secondary students who arrived in August 2001 to undertake a two-year program of studies in public health/vector control.
- 17 Central American primary school teachers who arrived in San Antonio in January 2002, only 13 days before the Aguirre team visit, to improve their teaching skills.

This report summarizes the information collected and observations during a two-day visit (spread over three days) that an Aguirre International evaluation team member made to ACCD in January 2002. During this visit, the evaluator met with the CASS participants, the CASS administrative staff, University administrative and support staff, instructors, a host family member, the supervisor of an NGO in which CASS students provide

volunteer service and the supervisor of a site where CASS students have carried out internships. (A list of individuals interviewed is provided at the end of this report.)

CASS Program Management at ACCD

The CASS office is located near the center of San Antonio. It is not physically located on any of the four ACCD college campuses, but its central location is reasonably convenient for the CASS students.

The CASS staff includes program director (40%), separate CASS coordinators for the one-year and two-year programs (60% and 80% time, respectively), two assistants and a person devoted to the extensive CASS community service program. All staff members are fluent in both English and Spanish. The coordinators, who have the major responsibility for the students, are very personable and clearly have excellent relationships with the participants. The staff works very hard to create a program and an environment in which the young CASS students have a positive experience in the United States.

The CASS operation at ACCD appears to enjoy the services of dedicated, well organized, experienced and capable staff. As a result, the program is managed professionally and generally runs smoothly. The coordinators are very much aware of what is going on with each student and act promptly to address problems that arise. As in any program involving people, problems do develop. One problem present at the time of the evaluator's visit was that the new teacher training program just beginning was suffering from several last minute changes in schedule and classroom scheduling problems. The team expects that the ACCD CASS staff will have resolved these problems well before this report is disseminated. The evaluator did not learn of any persistent problems that the staff could address but did not.

College and Community Support for the CASS Program

ACCD and the community provide a very welcoming environment for the CASS program. San Antonio is a city with a high percentage of Hispanic population and a city that makes a concerted effort to welcome and encourage cultural diversity.

The ACCD provides strong support, including financial resources to the CASS program. Financial support includes partial funding and all benefits for the CASS administrative staff, some teaching costs and indirect costs. A review of ACCD's budget for the current two-year program shows that ACCD's share totals almost 30 percent of the costs incurred at the college. If one adds the costs incurred at CIED and by the country offices (approximately 33% of training costs), the college's contribution equals approximately 23 percent of the total cost of the students' program.

ACCD's support for CASS reflects its vision and strong commitment to international programs. This commitment starts at the highest levels of the ACCD system. College administrators view the CASS program as making a variety of positive contributions to

the ACCD system. In a world moving rapidly towards “globalization,” those administrators believe that ACCD students need exposure to peoples from different countries and cultures. CASS helps ACCD to make that possible. CASS also allows the college to move into new curriculum areas. Developing the CASS teacher training program, for example, moves the college into a new technical area it would in any case like to pursue. Although teacher training typically occurs in four-year institutions, ACCD administrators seek to offer to the public new routes for earning a teaching credential to assist professionals (including retired people) seeking to move into second careers in teaching.

Features of the ACCD’s CASS Programs

Like programs at other participating community colleges, the CASS programs at ACCD are intensive. Although regular full-time college students typically take course loads involving perhaps 15 –18 class hours per week, CASS students are typically in class more than 30 hours per week. This occurs largely because CASS students take many courses in English (i.e., English as a Second Language or ESL) in addition to a full academic program. It is quite remarkable that the CASS students are able to carry this number of semester hours successfully. That they do so is a tribute to the students themselves, to their seriousness and willingness to work hard. It is also a tribute to the effectiveness of the CASS selection process and to the very supportive ACCD personnel involved. One professor in the ACCD CASS public health program indicated that, despite their problems with English, the CASS students function “pretty much on a par with other students.”

An unusual feature of ACCD’s CASS programs is that they are stand-alone programs, sometimes drawing on the college’s regular program content and instructors, but not part of the college’s regular course offering. ACCD has been forced to adopt this unusual programming policy because, under Texas law, students must pass an English language and mathematics competency test before they can be admitted to regular college classes. CASS students would not be able to pass these exams, at least not until they had been studying in the U.S. for some time. Thus, ACCD must set up special courses outside of the regular ACCD course offering for its CASS students.

This anomaly has several implications, some positive and some negative. First, it means that each of ACCD’s CASS groups take the same courses at the same time. This is not an unusual characteristic of CASS’ short programs (in Spanish) at ACCD or at other colleges, but it is unusual for participants in two-year programs. On the positive side, as only CASS students are present in the classroom, instructors can more readily adjust the program content to make it relevant to the environment and problems incurred in the participating CASS countries. Further, the rate at which instructors present materials can be geared to the CASS students’ abilities, including their increasing capacity in English.

However, the fact that classes do not have non-CASS students present limits CASS students’ opportunity to interact with American students and with other international students. Another concern is that ACCD’s CASS students have little, if any, opportunity

to take electives, i.e., to make their own selection of courses outside of the core program. Finally, unlike their counterparts in some two-year programs at other colleges, ACCD's CASS students cannot earn an Associates Degree when they complete their work.

Internships. In addition to the rigorous program of classroom instruction, the ACCD strives to give the students practical workplace experience. CASS students in the one-year teacher-training program have the opportunity to observe and contribute in primary school classroom situations in the San Antonio area. CASS students prepare lesson plans and teach under the supervision of experienced bi-lingual educators.

CASS students in the two-year programs have extensive opportunities for on-the-job training during the school year and during summer internships. To enable this to occur, the ACCD CASS staff has developed relationships with a variety of service providers. The CASS public health students from the 1999-2001 cycle, for example, made weekly visits during one term to facilities such as the San Antonio Metro Health District Chest Clinic, the Metro Health District, the Texas Center for Infectious Diseases, the Santa Rosa Health Care WIC, a TB clinic and others. Students also completed a six-week summer internship at these or similar sites. (Internships for public health students are discussed below.)

The supervisor at a site that has offered internships to groups of CASS radiology students was enthusiastic about CASS students and about the internship program. The program emphasizes the kinds of radiology work (e.g., bone work, use of barium) that might be done in CASS countries, although some of the equipment may be newer and more sophisticated. The supervisor has found CASS students to be highly motivated and is sure that they acquire skills that will be highly useful in their respective countries.

Short Courses: Teacher Training Program

Teacher training is not a course of study normally provided by ACCD colleges. Thus, to meet CASS needs, the ACCD created a program especially for the teachers from Central America and the Caribbean. Expertise to design and teach the program has been drawn from ACCD's own staff working in child development and related areas, from the University of Texas and other sources.

CASS-sponsored teachers typically have minimal English language competency and slightly less than a year for this program; thus, instruction is provided in Spanish. The program has been successful in finding competent Spanish-speaking instructors.

Although their courses are taught in Spanish, ACCD provides participants with an intensive four-week period of ESL training designed to permit them to get around San Antonio, to shop and to carry out other activities. ESL continues through later stages of their training at the rate of five to eight hours per week.

The teacher training program gives considerable emphasis to bilingual, bi-cultural education. Such programs are quite common in the San Antonio area, and the ACCD

program provides the CASS students with practical experience in schools with such programs. ACCD believes that the environments from which many of its students come are also bilingual and bi-cultural, making this focus particularly appropriate.

The Two-Year Public Health/Vector Control Program

ACCD describes this program as preparing students to provide basic health care, preventive medicine and sanitation control services that reduce the transmission of communicable diseases. Emphasis is on prevention, detection and treatment of major health threats, such as tuberculosis, malaria and dengue fever. These program objectives would appear to be highly complementary with USAID strategic objectives in the region.

About 80 percent of the program content is the same as ACCD's public health Associate Degree program. This AA program was modified to reflect the environment in Central America. The program emphasizes practical skills, and many of the instructors are practitioners rather than academics—a factor that the academic director considers a major strength of the program. The program also offers considerable “hands-on” worksite experiences—including more than 500 hours over the course of the two-year program working with public health organizations in the San Antonio area. Worksite experience begins in the first semester and increases to one day per week in the third and fifth semesters. The sixth semester includes a seven-week internship at a public and community health facility.

The CASS students' lack of English language ability does impede the progress of learning in this program (and other programs), particularly during the first few semesters. A professor in the public health program stated that, because of this problem, he often had to repeat course material several times. The students universally viewed their lack of English as their biggest problem.

One senior person working in the public health program noted that students sometimes arrived at ACCD with false expectations about the program, e.g., that they were going to become nurses. He suggested that pre-departure orientations might be strengthened by providing students with more complete information about the content and objectives of the programs that they were going to attend.

Volunteer Activities

CASS students at ACCD are expected to participate very actively in volunteer community programs, perhaps somewhat more so than do students at other participating CASS institutions. For one-year students such as the teachers, each student is expected to do 100 hours of service. Two-year students are expected to complete 150 hours of service. The CASS office maintains detailed records of the organization assisted, location, types of work done, and time contributed by each student.

The CASS office maintains contacts with many organizations in order to identify a wide variety of service opportunities. These activities often are simply providing manual labor

to support community activities, and they may have little or nothing to do with the career the participants are pursuing. Nevertheless, the students learn about a great deal about leadership, volunteerism and community action; they meet and make friends with outstanding citizens, and the students enjoy participating, citing it as one of their favorite activities.

The evaluation team explored with the ACCD CASS staff whether it might be possible to find volunteer activities more closely aligned with the students' courses and whether students might work during months with the same organization in order to learn organizational and leadership skills. Efforts in this direction have been made, but a variety of practical problems prevent much progress. Health students, for example, cannot administer simple health screening measures because of fear of litigation.

A meeting with the director of one of the community volunteer organizations confirmed that the participation of CASS students is highly valued. They work hard and make an important contribution. Their Spanish language capability is often an asset in dealing with the less affluent areas of San Antonio. The students, in turn, learn that not all Americans are wealthy and that there are a multitude of programs (which is not to say sufficient) for addressing such issues. Participation in this and similar programs, according to the director, helps the CASS students to learn community-organizing skills.

Housing

Participants in the two-year program spend the first nine months with host families. Data gathered from questionnaires completed from the two-year students and from the evaluators meeting with them indicate that their experience with host families was typically very positive. These families provide an enormous service in helping newly arriving CASS students to learn about the U.S. and how to function effectively in this new environment. Frequent comments refer to "being like a second family," "protecting us," "advising us," and "taking us around the city."

In some cases, host families also play an important role in helping CASS students to learn English. However, this seems to occur less frequently in the ACCD program than in other CASS programs because most ACCD host families are Hispanic in origin and speak mostly Spanish in the home. In a meeting with the evaluation team, the participants commented that the fact that their host families spoke Spanish made their (the participants') first few weeks in San Antonio easier. However, most of the participants indicated that they think it would be better to have English-speaking host families so that they would learn English more quickly. The ACCD CASS staff unfortunately has had difficulty securing English-speaking families to serve as host families.

Several CASS students mentioned a specific host family problem that would appear to warrant some intervention by the CASS coordinator. In that case, four male students are living in a house recently acquired by a host family, but the family does not live there. Aside from shelter, the students seem to be receiving none of the traditional benefits provided by a host family. The students have little contact with family members. The

students do not seem to mind having to prepare their own meals, but report that the host family is not fulfilling its responsibility to use the CASS funds provided to it to purchase food for the students.

Male participants in the teacher training program and in the second year of the two-year program live in apartment units. Apartments are shared, typically with four participants from different countries to an apartment. These accommodations are modest, similar to those typically used by college students.

Women participants in the two-year program spend the second year in a dormitory facility administered by Catholic nuns. The female students interviewed (who were still living with host families) indicated that they would prefer to live in apartments where they would enjoy greater freedom.

Because the ACCD is located in a major urban area and its four colleges are located from one end of San Antonio to the other, transportation can be an issue. The CASS Coordinators provide the students with bus passes, and the students become quite proficient and comfortable taking buses to and from class. However, the round-trip commute to ACCD's Northwest Vista College, where the public health students take classes three days a week, takes several hours.

Participants' Perspective on the Program

The evaluator met with both short- and long-term groups of CASS students. Both groups were very positive, pleased with the program and honored and grateful to have been selected to participate. Since the teachers had arrived only two weeks prior to the evaluation team's visit, they had limited observations. Except where indicated, the opinions conveyed in the following paragraphs were those of participants in the two-year program.

Pre-departure orientations. Participants in both groups indicated that their in-country orientations had been very helpful. These had largely prevented any serious culture shock when they arrived.

English language problems. For virtually all participants, the biggest problem in adjusting to the U.S. is English. Almost all participants—93 percent of the one-year students and 88 percent of the two-year students—indicated that they struggle with English and that their lack of skill is a problem for them. A professor, whom the team interviewed, indicated that the participants' lack of English meant that he often had to repeat things two or three times and that this obviously slowed the class considerably.

The discussions with the students explored briefly the question of whether CASS students might be given some English language training prior to departing for the U.S. Since the students come from many locations within their countries, often not from the principal cities, the availability and quality of English programs was recognized as a constraint. An alternative could be an intensive residential program in a central location, but this would

involve time and expense. Another alternative could be to distribute cassettes and written materials. Participants generally felt that they would have taken advantage of any such opportunity had it been offered.

Personal objectives. Both of ACCD’s groups of participants completed a survey about their U.S. training experience. Their survey responses ranked their most important reasons for coming into this U.S. study program. From five possible reasons, both groups selected having an interesting learning experience and developing their leadership capabilities as the two most important motivating factors. The participants indicated less interest in the other options: to help them with their careers; to network and make professional contacts in their field; and to develop friendships and social relationships with U.S. citizens.

Program difficulty. The participants were asked to characterize the degree of difficulty of their studies, with the ratings ranging from very difficult to very easy. Among the two-year public health students, 47 percent felt that their studies were “just about right.” The other 53 percent were distributed roughly evenly between somewhat too difficult (24%) to somewhat too easy (29%). This suggests that the degree of difficulty is quite appropriate. The teacher training group had not been at ACCD long enough to respond to this question.

Most CASS participants want as much English as they can acquire. ACCD provides a considerable amount of ESL training to both one-year and two-year students, although the course work for one-year students is in Spanish. Two-year students are under great pressure to learn English quickly, as courses are given in English. ACCD provides ESL training to the two-year students throughout their stay in the U.S. The ACCD coordinators are ESL specialists and pay considerable attention to this aspect of the program. As indicated above, difficulty with English is probably the participants’ greatest concern.

Impact of the program on students’ attitudes and leadership abilities. The participants were asked to rate how the opportunity to study in the U.S. affected them in several areas. The following table provides the responses of the two-year participants. The data show that the students view the program as making a positive contribution to their personal characteristics and social skills.

		Positively affected (01)	No effect (02)	Negatively affected (03)
a.	Self-reliance ¹	N.A.	N.A.	
b.	Ability to communicate with others	71%	29%	
c.	Ability to get along with others	68%	32%	
d.	Ability to tolerate change	68%	32%	
e.	Willingness to take risks	61%	39%	

¹ Because of a printing error, most students did not respond to this item.

f.	Ability to speak in public	65%	35%
g.	Willingness to try new things	72%	38%

As the following table shows, participants felt that their study in the U.S. would help them to have successful careers and to contribute to their communities.

I think that the CASS program will:	Not useful (01)	A little useful (02)	Somewhat useful (03)
a. Improve my professional abilities			100%
b. Teach me new skills/techniques for work			100%
c. Prepare me for a career			100%
d. Give me opportunities to meet U.S. citizens in my field		17%	83%
e. Give me opportunities to meet other colleagues from my country in my field		28%	72%
f. Improve my leadership abilities			100%
g. Encourage volunteering and community work			100%

Learning about the U.S. Eighty-two (82) percent of the participants indicated that they had already learned something about the U.S. economic system. Eighty-eight (88) percent said that they had learned about the U.S. political system and its democratic institutions.

Meeting others. Participants were asked to identify categories of people with whom they spent time after classes. In the order in which they responded, the CASS two-year participants spent most of their time with:

- a) other CASS students
- b) host families
- c) U.S. students
- d) other international students—not CASS participants
- e) other students from their respective countries

A closer look at the responses to this question reveals a surprising diverse range of responses about host families. About half the students said that they spent the largest share of their free time with their host families. However, four students said that they spent almost no time whatsoever (rated last) with their host families, and two others said they spent very little time (rated #4) with their host families. These results, the team believes, may reflect host family problems described above.

All of the two-year students reported participating in campus and community activities. All respondents also thought that they would be more active as a volunteer in their community when they returned home from the U.S.

Because the participants are in the early stages of their year-long program, they had not yet participated in internships.

**Persons Interviewed at Alamo Community College District
January 23-25, 2002**

- Eduardo Conrado, District Director, International Programs
- Ruth del Cueto, International Programs Coordinator (CASS Coordinator for Two-Year Programs)
- Armando Cortez, Community Development Coordinator, JOVEN (volunteer site)
- Marie R. Henriquez, International Programs Coordinator (CASS Coordinator for shorter programs)
- Fred Lott, Practicum Supervisor for Radiographic Technician Program, University Hospital Clinic
- Julia Jarell, Health Program Technical Specialist
- Fernando Martinez; Director, Support Services, Christus Santa Rosa
- Peter Myers, Instructor and host family
- Dr. Ken Norbury, Instructor in the CASS Public Health Program, Northwest Vista College
- Maria Rivera, Program Assistant (for one-year and shorter programs)
- Ida Trevino, Volunteer Activities Facilitator
- Ferderico Zaragoza, Ph.D., Vice President of Administration, St. Philip's College

**CASS EVALUATION
SITE VISIT TO BROOME COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Binghamton, New York
December 3, 2001**

Broome Community College (BCC) forms part of the New York State community college system. It has been a host school for Georgetown University's Cooperative Association of States for Scholars (CASS) Program participants for twelve years. As part of the CASS Program evaluation for USAID, an Aguirre International evaluator visited the BCC campus to meet with CASS participants, CASS administrative staff, University administrative staff, support staff, and instructors. This Site Visit Report reflects the information obtained and observations made during the course of a one-day visit.

Meetings were held with the following individuals at BCC:

- Dr. Alberto Miller, Director of Contracted International Programs
- Ms. Maria Gonzalez, CASS Program Assistant
- Five faculty members who directed and supervised the Quality Assurance Program
- Two faculty members who directed the X-Ray Technology Program
- Dr. Donald Dellows, President of Broome Community College
- Thirty-five CASS participants in two group meetings

BCC currently hosts two CASS groups, 18 students of the 2000 Cycle who are in the second year of the X-Ray Technology course, and 17 students of the 2001 Cycle who are studying Quality Assurance. Students in both groups represented the full array of CASS countries: the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, and Nicaragua.

The X-Ray Technology group was completing their third semester of study at the time of the site visit. This group is deeply involved in both academic work and in practical training, and all were working weekends—and had just begun spending two weeknights—at local hospitals, assisting radiology technicians and learning their trade. The Quality Assurance participants were finishing their first semester in the program, and were taking academic courses and, with the exception of the Jamaicans, English as a Second Language. During this first year, Spanish- and French-speaking students were able to study mathematics in their native language, but were rapidly moving to full-time use of English.

The CASS Office

The CASS Office was located in the Mechanical Building in a suite of faculty offices, close to classrooms and centrally located for other buildings on campus. The CASS Director, Dr. Alberto Miller, has a small faculty office, and adjoining that is a somewhat larger office with a conference table and working space for the Program Assistant. During my meeting with the Director, a number of students stopped in for various errands, and they appeared comfortable and at ease there. Both Dr. Miller and Ms. Gonzalez clearly have warm relationships with the great majority of CASS participants from both cycles. Many of the participants have lockers near the office, and it apparently is a place frequented by most CASS participants. Beyond the role of the

Office as a provider of a number of services to the students, it also appears to be a place that fosters a sense of community and belonging.

The Quality Assurance Program: Academics and Its Role in the Community

Quality Assurance has become a signature program in the CASS system, and this is largely due to the leadership of the CASS Director at BCC, Alberto Miller. His administrative and leadership role is supported, however, by a strong faculty contingent that has created a curriculum that provides strong analytical and practical skills. QA has a strong mathematics component, and CASS students are required to advance rapidly and succeed in these courses. Faculty members noted that some students (they mentioned the Jamaicans and Haitians) tend to come better prepared than the students from the Spanish-speaking countries, whose backgrounds require greater work. Faculty members mentioned that it is the inability to master the mathematics that presents obstacles to some CASS participants. If they are unable to pass the program's required math courses, they may seek additional help and re-take the key examinations. In the end, if they do not pass these courses, they may not be able to earn the Associates degree, in which case they would be awarded a certificate. Most, however, do succeed in finishing the courses successfully.

The program provides both theoretical and practical training, including Sigma Six, ISO 9000 and ISO 13000, and other standards programs. A capstone course the fourth semester draws on the courses throughout the program. Students take a quality assurance project and develop it with the tools they have mastered, with groups of four or five students working together. They develop the approach towards an open-ended problem, apply tools, and present the results to faculty and fellow students.

Dr. Miller took on the program when it was first created and established ties early on with the local Binghamton section (or chapter) of the American Society for Quality. The ASQ is made up of quality specialists at area industries, largely with an engineering and technical background. Most QA experts entered their specialty through four-year and graduate training; the BCC two-year AAS program is one of the few in the country that provides QA training in this form and is something that the ASQ members want to promote.

Over the years, therefore, the ASQ Chapter has taken a great interest in establishing strong ties with the BCC QA program. The student members became an official student chapter of ASQ. They meet on campus as a local unit, are invited to attend the section's monthly dinner meetings, and are in charge of the program for the October meeting. The Binghamton ASQ has also established an annual awards ceremony in which an alumnus or alumna of the QA program, since returned home for several years, is given a short scholarship to come again to BCC. The section, with some additional funding from CASS, covers the travel and living expenses of the annual winner. The honoree is the featured speaker at the awards ceremony at the October meeting and is given the opportunity to describe the state of QA in his or her country. The person is also given the chance to carry out a specific project, perhaps related to work in the job held at home. Most importantly, the honoree is a powerful role model for the current students, who meet someone who preceded them in the program and who has since returned to his or her home country and become a quality assurance technician.

The active role of the BCC contingent in the local section of ASQ led the membership of the section to recruit Dr. Miller for a more active leadership role. For the past several years, he has served as Vice-chair and now as Chair of the chapter. He has also recently taken on an expanded role for youth membership of ASQ at the national level, and is examining ways in which student or youth chapters may be founded internationally among CASS alumni. At the time of the site visit, Dr. Miller was examining the possibility of sponsoring a new chapter in Honduras.

The Radiology Program

While the QA program has been a mainstay for CASS at BCC, X-ray technology is new and is likely to be a one-time program there. CASS has reduced the number of programs at its member schools as resources have declined, and BCC was not scheduled for a QA group in the 2002 Cycle. However, it provided the capacity for a radiology program, and CASS selected BCC for the assignment. Subsequently, however, CASS intends to continue its radiology training at another institution.

BCC developed a specially tailored program for the radiology students with a high proportion of practical experience. Two faculty members traveled to Guatemala and to the Dominican Republic to learn firsthand what constraints their students were likely to face once they returned home. Based on that, the program has focused on the kinds of equipment that students will encounter on the job in Central America and the Caribbean, and on the techniques that they will use. The program provides coursework in pathology, first aid, equipment operation, terminology, physics, and positioning. Most importantly, the course designers chose to place great emphasis on the standards of protection against radiological exposure that should be implemented, since their observations on their trip showed them that technicians in the region are paying little attention to protection. BCC has a new radiological facility with a range of machinery that is appropriate for the CASS students. The program also has well-established ties with local hospitals and clinics, and it is able to get the students (both CASS and regular program) a great deal of practical experience at these institutions.

Role of CASS Students on Campus

Perhaps one of the most intriguing aspects of the site visit was the degree to which CASS has enriched the international dimension of campus life. From the president on down, there is a strong commitment to bring international students to BCC. As both faculty and administrative staff pointed out, Binghamton, although a city of immigrants, has not had strong basis for international ties. Its student population is overwhelmingly from the area. CASS and other international initiatives have brought contacts with the outside world. The President, who states that he had focused little on the international dimension of education in his previous positions before coming to BCC, has become a leader in advocating for an education that is able to impart the kind of perspective that will help students operate in the context of a globalized economy. Indeed, in a recent contribution to an edited collection "TITLE," Dr. Dellows wrote of the impact of such programs of CASS on community colleges in general.

CASS students act as “lay diplomats” in a variety of ways. Most are members of the International Student Organization, where they sponsor activities with other international students. Special events are organized in which the students share information about their home countries. CASS students go out into the community as well. For instance, the day of the visit, a number of CASS students were scheduled to join in a videoconference with local high school students to describe their homes and discuss their countries’ customs and realities.

As previously mentioned, the QA students also provide an international dimension to the local section of the American Society for Quality. This tie led, in November 2000, to the first international “Quality Assurance Conference” in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, sponsored by Georgetown University’s Center for Intercultural Education and Development (the implementer of CASS), the Binghamton section of ASQ, and BCC. The conference brought together QA alumni in the Dominican Republic with representatives of all three sponsoring institutions to discuss trends and advances in quality assurance. The goal is to make this an annual event in different alumni countries, although it was not repeated in 2001, cancelled, as were so many other events, after the September terrorist attacks.

The international focus represented by CASS has led also BCC to organize faculty trips to Central America, the Caribbean, and to Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union (where other exchange activities have been carried out). The president has accompanied other faculty on trips to Guatemala and, as mentioned, to the Dominican Republic in which CASS alumni from BCC were visited.

Finally, key aspects of the impact of CASS students on campus mentioned by nearly everyone interviewed were: their enthusiasm, their dedication, and the degree to which they worked hard and devotedly in their classes. Faculty and administrators alike felt that CASS participants were a compelling example to other students of the importance of applying oneself in their academic programs. A refrain repeated throughout the day was, “If only our U.S. students were as dedicated (or “half as dedicated”) as the CASS students.”

Internships

Quality Assurance: For those in the QA program, internships have long been an important aspect of the training. The local chapter of the ASQ has worked closely with the Program Director to provide CASS students with opportunities to enter into the work world. Internships have been organized at Universal Instruments, General Electric, Crowley Foods, ENSCO, and other companies in the area. Not all students are able to take part in an internship; those who are weakest academically may be required to concentrate more on the basic coursework. Even these students will likely have the opportunity to “job shadow” someone for a period of several weeks, if they do not achieve an internship. The CASS Director reported that in the last QA group, graduating in the spring of 2001, ten of the group of 17 had formal internships.

Radiology: By the time the radiology students reach their third semester, they are spending up to 30 percent of their time in direct work-related experience. In a field that requires extensive practical as well as theoretical training, the program provides work experience at area hospitals that provides ongoing hands-on activities. It should be noted that these students must meet a

range of requirements placed on them as they serve in the hospitals which place a burden both on their time and their budget, such as obtaining several sets of the uniforms used and making sure that their uniforms are cleaned and ready when they need them. Several commented that this presented challenges to them.

Service Learning

Beyond those activities directly related to their academic and technical training, CASS participants take part in a range of community service activities. Mentioned in the site visit were fundraisers such as walks, community clean-ups, work with volunteer charity groups, and volunteering to run errands on election night. In the group discussions, several participants also mentioned that they had also informally helped out elderly neighbors of their homestay families, raking leaves and performing other such services. The participants spoke very positively of these experiences and had apparently recognized that volunteering is both part of their program and a strong value for many U.S. citizens. Several said that they would like to volunteer even more, but the very active schedule of class and practical experiences left them with little time.

Host Families

For the X-ray Technology students, who had left their homestay families already a year earlier to move into shared apartments, the question of host families was not a burning issue. Several said that they maintained ties with their families. Their comments on the homestay experience were generally positive. For the QA students, the homestay was much closer, for they were either still living with families or had just ended that period of the program. The range of opinion expressed was generally positive, though some spoke of the constraints of living with a new family and the lack of independence they felt.

Group Discussions

The site visit was scheduled for a Monday, the only day when students of both cycles are on campus. This permitted the evaluator to meet with nearly all the students in two group meetings, held by cycle. Many of the comments made in that context have already been reported, as discussions ranged over such topics as academics, life on campus, community service, and their interest in internships. The students were cordial and lively in their discussions. No significant negative issues arose in the discussions beyond those that frequently are mentioned in such discussions: the difficulty of adjusting to the U.S. diet and the rigors of the weather. Several mentioned that they felt that the living allowances were too small and noted that they had heard that the maintenance rates had not changed for some years. No one mentioned severe hardships that they experience as a result. A few also talked about the difficulties of living with a U.S. family and their happiness to be living on their own.

Survey Results

After the evaluator departed, students filled out a survey in either English or Spanish asking about their views of the program, and the completed questionnaires were forwarded some days later. Thirty-three of the 35 CASS students at BCC completed the survey.

CASS students at BCC indicated that their most important reason for coming into this U.S. study program was to improve their leadership abilities: 43 percent put that in first place, and 30 percent in second. The next most important reasons were that they felt it would help them with their career (30 percent put it first) and to have an interesting learning experience (26%). Of the five choices offered, the least important reason for accepting the scholarship was given as friendships and social relationships with U.S. citizens.

In terms of their adjustment, 69 percent of non-English speakers said that they had, and most continue to have, difficulties with English, though many mentioned that they were working hard to overcome their difficulties. About 45 percent overall said they were having some struggles with their classes, and many of these specifically mentioned mathematics as the source of their difficulties, and a number stated that they had not had an adequate background. However, most expressed confidence that they could overcome the challenges.

Participants were asked to rate how the opportunity to study in the U.S. affected them in several areas. The following table indicates their responses.

		Positively affected	No effect	Negatively affected
a.	Self-reliance	79%	21%	
b.	Ability to communicate with others	81%	19%	
c.	Ability to get along with others	73%	21%	6%
d.	Ability to tolerate change	82%	18%	
e.	Willingness to take risks	85%	15%	
f.	Ability to speak in public	79%	18%	
g.	Willingness to try new things	85%	12%	3%

Although about half of the participants had been in the CASS Program for only three months, in that time they and their second-year colleagues had great hopes that their U.S. study would affect them positively, as noted in the following table.

		Not useful	A little useful	Useful
a.	Improve my professional abilities			100%
b.	Teach me new skills/techniques for work	3%	3%	94%
c.	Prepare me for a career	6%	23%	71%
d.	Give me opportunities to meet U.S. citizens in my field		26%	74%
e.	Give me opportunities to meet other colleagues from my country in my field	6%	23%	71%
f.	Improve my leadership abilities			100%
g.	Encourage volunteering and community work		3%	97%

Participants were asked to identify categories of people with whom they spent time after classes. As in other cases, the order in which the CASS participants reported spending most of their time:

- a) their host family;
- b) other students in the CASS Program;
- c) other students from their home country;
- d) international students—not CASS participants; and
- e) other U.S. students.

About 60 percent reported that they had learned something about U.S. political life, and about 70 percent said they had learned about the U.S. economy. Most were able to give examples related to local situations and to political values. All 33 reported that they had been involved

Observations

Without discounting the activities and achievements of the radiology curriculum, the heart of the CASS program at BCC has been the two-year program in quality assurance. CASS has played an interesting role at BCC not only in building and sustaining a unique program at the community college level in quality assurance. It has also been important in developing leadership in the American Society for Quality both regionally and nationally. It is a successful effort and serves as an exemplary case in how CASS can impact both local campuses and the home communities of the CASS participants.

CASS continues to play a valuable role on the BCC campus in strengthening the international dimension of its student body. The presence on campus of CASS students has led faculty and community members to expand their own understanding of Latin America and the Caribbean, and has led to many additional ties to the region. In return, BCC provides the CASS students with rigorous and well-conceived programs of study that appear to prepare them for technical jobs on their return home. The Director and the Program Assistant are both well suited to working with the participants and have proven their effectiveness both in supporting them and in taking advantage of the participants' presence to enrich the campus community.

**CASS EVALUATION
SITE VISIT TO HARRIS-STOWE STATE COLLEGE
St. Louis, Missouri
November 27, 2001**

Harris-Stowe State College in St. Louis, Missouri, is currently a host school for two groups of Georgetown University's Cooperative Association of States for Scholars (CASS) Program participants. As part of the CASS Program evaluation for USAID, an Aguirre International evaluator visited the Harris-Stowe campus to meet with CASS participants, CASS administrative staff, University administrative staff, support staff, and instructors. This Site Visit Report reflects the information obtained and observations made during the course of a one-day visit.

Meetings were held with the following individuals at Harris-Stowe State College.

- Jaime Torres-Rivera, CASS Coordinator
- Angel M. Heredia, CASS Program Assistant
- Dr. Henry Givens, President, Harris-Stowe State College
- Dr. Gretchen Lockett, Interim Vice-President for Student Affairs and Institutional Support
- Dr. Yolande Diaz Olmos, Instructor, Human Relations and Interpersonal Communications, International Programs
- Miguel Endara, Instructor, Computer Programming, International Programs
- Clint Willett, ESL Instructor, International Programs

Two one-year CASS groups were observed in training at Harris-Stowe State College.

- Cycle 01: Twenty (20) Central American primary teachers, who arrived in St. Louis in January 2001 and were preparing to depart for home countries in mid-December.
- Cycle 02: Seventeen (17) Caribbean and Central American primary teachers, who arrived in St. Louis in August 2001, who were undergoing survival English training and computer training.

Cycle 01: Central American Primary Education Teachers

The Central American group is comprised of primary school educators from five countries: El Salvador (7), Honduras (4), Nicaragua (3), Guatemala (3), and Panama (3). The Caribbean and Central American group is comprised of seventeen (17) primary school educators from the Dominican Republic. All twenty (20) participants were employed at the time of their selection for the CASS Program. All were teachers and employees of the public sector in their respective countries.

The course of study is Primary Education with modular courses in learning styles, multiple intelligences, reading readiness and beginning reading, mathematics and science,

teaching methodology, child psychology, community resources, curriculum development, human relations, community health, computer applications, and English as a Second Language. Participants receive 24 credit-hours for their participation.

Although their courses are taught in Spanish, upon their arrival at Harris-Stowe, the Central American participants spend two weeks of full-time intensive ESL training, which provides fundamental English language skills. Following their intensive ESL, the participants are provided 15 additional hours per week of language training. Students perform on six levels and advance in appropriate classes relative to their proficiency. Clint Willett, their ESL instructor, was very pleased with the progress of the participants and was encouraged when he learned that they had used songs that he taught them in their visits with students in St. Louis classrooms.

An informal arrangement between Harris-Stowe and the University of Puerto Rico's Science and Engineering Resource Center provides Spanish-speaking math and science instructors who travel from Puerto Rico to Harris-Stowe to present workshops and courses with the latest techniques in the fields of math and science. All pertinent materials are provided both in Spanish and in English. Participants receive 24 credit hours for their participation.

Participants attend seminars on decision-making, child abuse, alcohol and drug abuse, and leadership. These are supplemented with visits to established institutions where they observe these issues and how they are addressed.

Internships

During the yearlong training, all participants serve internships with various St. Louis public schools, Jennings Schools, or East St. Louis Schools Districts.

The CASS Office

Harris-Stowe State College has outgrown its current buildings. Land has been obtained and funds have been raised for a building program that will include, among other structures, a new education building. The CASS office at Harris-Stowe is located off-campus, but within view of the campus. It is the center of life for the students. Their content instruction and language instruction takes place in the classrooms at the site. It is also the site of their counseling and administrative activities.

Housing

Participant housing is located in apartment units, with four participants to an apartment. Each apartment houses from two to four individuals of the same sex but from different countries. The apartments are located in downtown St. Louis across from City Hall, the main post office and major tourist sites. They are within a few minutes walk to public bus and rail transportation.

Service Learning

Participants perform a number of hours of Service Learning experiences with St. Louis area civic and community institutions. The experiences involve professional practical and leadership/community service activities, incorporating the CASS four-part model of preparation, action, reflection, and transference.

Friendship Family

Families from the Harris-Stowe faculty and staff and other families from the St. Louis area actively support participants through the Friendship Family Program. These families and friends invite participants into their homes for meals and for holidays. They often provide them with needed winter clothing and take them on sightseeing trips. Each participant has either a friend or a friendship family during his or her stay at Harris-Stowe.

Enrichment

The CASS staff makes every effort to involve the groups in professional enrichment as well as community and civic-oriented activities. Participants are active in their respective churches, provide Spanish language classes to adults, assist in community service clinics, and participated in state and local government seminars. Participants attend the St. Louis Symphony, local concerts, repertory theatre, and local ethnic societies. They also serve as hosts to new CASS members by assisting new arrivals with their orientation.

Participants receive yearlong scholarships from the local YMCA, which is near their apartments. They use the facilities and take part in community events sponsored by the YMCA.

During their Spring break, the participants were taken to Chicago to visit a special Hispanic school where teaching is achieved through and done in both Spanish and English. While in the area, they attended a number of educational institutions and museums.

It is the goal of the CASS staff to keep the participants busy and involved so that there is little time for homesickness or anxiety. Weekly meetings are held with all participants to discuss personal matters, their academic progress, housing or transportation problems, or any other topics of concern.

CASS Relations with Harris-Stowe

Mr. Torres has obviously cultivated good relationships with the Harris-Stowe administration. The President of the institution, Dr. Henry Givens, soundly endorsed the CASS Program, finding it a great complement to the school and the community. He expressed his hope that CASS participants would continue to be placed at Harris-Stowe. The new Interim Vice-President for Student Affairs and Institutional Support has a

different agenda than the president. She is looking to find savings in the school budget and sees the CASS Program as a potential target, especially the expense of flying Puerto Rican instructors to the US for the instruction of the CASS students. Mr. Torres has demonstrated to her that the cost of hiring U.S. professors and providing salaries and benefits would be much more than the cost of bringing the Puerto Rican professors to the U.S. Puerto Rico assumes the salaries of these instructors. It appears that the CASS program, with strong backing from the President, is a welcome asset to the college.

Group Discussion with Participants

I met with the 20 participants in an informal group discussion at the CASS office near Harris-Stowe. I found the participants, who were both teachers and school directors, to be quite articulate and focused in their discussion. They were proud of the CASS Program and their participation in it. They felt that they had accomplished what they set out to do and, for the most part, their expectations were fulfilled. They were anxious to get back to their countries and try to implement their newly-acquired knowledge and skills.

While several of the participants felt that they might be constrained by resources in their schools, most felt that they had the support of their principals (directors) and other teachers. They felt that this, coupled with what they learned about bringing parents and private sector interests into the school community, would enable them to implement much of what they learned.

The participants stated that the instruction they received modeled the instructional methods that they were expected to employ in the classroom back home. They had a good understanding of interactive learning and were taking tools and materials home with them to assist in its implementation.

The participants had kind words for the CASS staff and for the citizens of St. Louis who made them feel welcome and appreciated.

Participant Survey Results

Nineteen (19) of the twenty participants completed a post-training survey about their U.S. training experience. Their survey responses ranked their most important reasons for coming into this U.S. study program. From most important to least important were:

- a) to have an interesting learning experience;
- b) to develop their leadership capabilities;
- c) to help them with their careers;
- d) to network and make professional contacts in their field; and
- e) to develop friendships and social relationships with U.S. citizens.

The participants were asked to characterize the degree of difficulty of their studies. Fifty-eight (58) percent felt that their studies were “easy.” Thirty-seven (37) percent

characterized their studies as “just about right.” Out of the 19 respondents, only one student characterized his studies as difficult.

The CASS participants wanted as much English as they could acquire, and many aspired to become fluent in it. However, the program was designed to offer only survival English; there was no opportunity for immersion. Mr. Torres, however, managed to find the resources to continue English instruction throughout most of their stay—some 80 percent beyond the required amount of instruction. The participants reported that they had some difficulty communicating in English at some time during their stay in St. Louis.

The participants were asked to rate how the opportunity to study in the U.S. affected them in several areas. The following table indicates their responses.

	Positively affected (01)	No effect (02)	Negatively affected (03)
a. Self-reliance	74%	26%	
b. Ability to communicate with others	79%	21%	
c. Ability to get along with others	79%	21%	
d. Ability to tolerate change	90%	10%	
e. Willingness to take risks	79%	21%	
f. Ability to speak in public	90%	10%	
g. Willingness to try new things	85%	15%	

As they were nearing the final weeks of their year-long CASS Program, the participants felt that their U.S. study would affect them positively, as noted in the following table.

	Not useful (01)	A little useful (02)	Somewhat useful (03)
a. Improve my professional abilities		6%	94%
b. Teach me new skills/techniques for work			100%
c. Prepare me for a career		6%	94%
d. Give me opportunities to meet U.S. citizens in my field			100%
e. Give me opportunities to meet other colleagues from my country in my field			100%
f. Improve my leadership abilities		6%	94%
g. Encourage volunteering and community work		6%	94%

Note: One participant did not respond to this survey item.

During the course of their studies to date, over fifty (50) percent of the participants learned something about the economic system of the U.S. Seven participants reported that they had not learned anything about it, and two did not respond to the question.

When asked if they had learned about the U.S. political system or its democratic institutions, fifty-eight (58) percent said that they had learned about it, and forty-two (42) percent did not learn about it.

Participants were asked to identify categories of people with whom they spent time after classes. In the order in which they responded, the CASS participants spent most of their time with:

- a) other CASS students;
- b) other international students from their countries;
- c) friendly families;
- d) other international students—not CASS participants; and
- e) other U.S. students.

Eighteen (18) CASS participants reported participating in campus and community activities; one participant did not respond to this item on the survey. All of the nineteen (19) respondents to the survey thought that they would be more active as a volunteer in their community when they returned home from the U.S.

In regard to internships, all of the participants took part in a 4 to 6-week internship in a local public school, observing and participating in the teaching process. Some were placed in schools that had U.S. teachers teaching Spanish language. In those instances, the participants actually taught the Spanish classes.

Cycle 02: Dominican Republic Primary Education Teachers

Much of what was discussed about the preceding Cycle also applies to the Cycle 2 participants. The seventeen participants (8 male and 9 female) arrived at the Harris-Stowe campus in August 2001 and were still undergoing intensive language training and computer training. All seventeen participants were employed at the time of their selection for the CASS Program. All were teachers and employees of the public sector in the Dominican Republic.

I met with them as a group in the Harris-Stowe administration building where they were receiving computer instructor taught by Miguel Endara, a graduate student from the nearby St. Louis University. He found that this group of participants had better computer skills than previous groups, although there were great gaps between the novice and the more advanced participants. He tried to take the students from the level at which he found them and bring them to the highest skill that he could in the time that he had with them. While I was speaking with the group, Miguel was asked by one of the Central American students to help her out with a problem that she was having with the computer in a nearby computer laboratory.

The Dominican Republic teachers appeared to be older and more experienced (3 to 16 years of teaching experience) than the Central American students. They spoke freely about the educational systems in their country, and were proud of the fact that they were

recognized as having one of the best educational systems in the region and the only system that offered universal kindergarten.

Their survey responses indicated that their most important reason for coming into this US study program was to have an interesting learning experience. The second most important reason was that it might help them with their careers. Other considerations were the development of leadership abilities and friendships and social relationships with U.S. citizens. Of the five choices offered, the least important reason was given as networking and making professional contacts in their field of study.

The participants were asked to characterize the degree of difficulty of their studies. Forty-seven (47) percent felt that their studies were “easy.” Thirty-five (35) percent characterized their studies as “just about right.” Three individuals felt that it was “very easy.” Out of the 17 respondents, only one student reported experiencing difficulties in his studies.

As noted before, the Dominican Republic participants were still in intensive English language training. Therefore, it was not surprising that fourteen (14) of the seventeen (17) participants had some difficulties in communicating in English.

Participants were asked to rate how the opportunity to study in the U.S. affected them in several areas. The following table indicates their responses.

		Positively affected (01)	No effect (02)	Negatively affected (03)
a.	Self-reliance	75%	25%	
b.	Ability to communicate with others	93%	7%	
c.	Ability to get along with others	87.5%	12.5%	
d.	Ability to tolerate change	87.5%	12.5%	
e.	Willingness to take risks	81%	19%	
f.	Ability to speak in public	69%	31%	
g.	Willingness to try new things	81%	19%	

Although the participants have participated in the CASS Program for approximately three months, in that time they had great hopes that their U.S. study would affect them positively, as noted in the following table.

	Not useful (01)	A little useful (02)	Somewhat useful (03)
a.			100%
b.			100%
c.		6%	94%

d. Give me opportunities to meet U.S. citizens in my field	6%	94%
e. Give me opportunities to meet other colleagues from my country in my field	6%	94%
f. Improve my leadership abilities	6%	94%
g. Encourage volunteering and community work		100%

During the course of their studies to date, thirteen (13) participants learned something about the economic system of the U.S. Three reported that they had not learned anything, and one did not respond to the question.

When asked if they had learned about the U.S. political system or its democratic institutions, sixty-two (62) percent said that they had learned about it. Thirty-eight (38) percent had not yet learned; and one person did not respond to the question.

Participants were asked to identify categories of people with whom they spent time after classes. In the order in which they responded, the CASS participants spent most of their time with:

- a) other CASS students;
- b) other students from the Dominican Republic;
- c) other international students—not CASS participants;
- d) a friendly family; and
- e) other U.S. students.

All seventeen (17) CASS participants reported participating in campus and community activities. All of the participants felt that they would be more active as a volunteer in their community when they returned home from the U.S.

Because the participants are in the early stages of their year-long program, they had not yet participated in internships.

Observations

Because the CASS office is located off-campus, participants are physically isolated from the rest of the student body. With instruction taking place at the CASS offices, there are limited opportunities for the CASS participants to relate to U.S. students. The CASS staff makes great efforts to overcome this distance by encouraging the participants to become involved in campus activities, but the physical separation remains until such time as the new buildings are constructed.

The CASS staff appears to be heavily engaged with the students and their welfare. Mr. Heredia acts as counselor, advisor, and father-figure. Mr. Torres administers the program, interacts with the college, and taps community resources (time, money, trips, tickets to cultural affairs, etc.) to provide the participants with many opportunities and experiences beyond the basics of the program.

The optimism and enthusiasm of the participants, both those about to depart as well as the new arrivals, augurs well for their return home and successful implementation of their new skills and knowledge.

**CASS EVALUATION
SITE VISIT TO MODESTO JUNIOR COLLEGE
Modesto, California
January 28-29, 2002**

Overview

Modesto Junior College (MJC), a long-term participating community college in the CASS program, currently hosts 33 CASS students in a two-year Agriculture Technology group (16) and a one-year Teacher-Training group (17). CASS students at MJC take an intensive program involving more than 30 hours of instruction per week. Student performance is excellent. CASS students are very highly regarded by and have close relationships with the college administration, faculty and the community.

Introduction

MJC has been working with Georgetown University's Center for Intercultural Education and Development (CIED) on CASS and its predecessor programs since 1987. MJC has provided training in fashion merchandising, graphics technology, agribusiness, forestry, food sciences, agriculture technology, agriculture science, and teacher training.

MJC is currently hosting two CASS groups:

- A two-year group of 16 Central Americans to study agriculture technology. Students completing the program receive an Associate of Arts (AA) Degree. This group that arrived in August 2001, about five months before this evaluation.
- A one-year group of 17 Central American teachers working to improve their teaching skills. Recipients receive a certificate of completion in pedagogy skills. This group of students arrived in January 2002, only two weeks before this evaluation.

This report summarizes the evaluation team's observations on the basis of a two-day visit to the campus. During this visit, the evaluator met with the CASS administrative staff, the CASS participants, University administrators, instructors, two host families, the supervisor of an NGO in which CASS students provide volunteer service and the supervisor of a site where CASS students have carried out internships. (A list of individuals interviewed is provided at the end of this report.)

The CASS Program at MJC

The CASS program at MJC is managed by the Workforce Training Center. The Coordinator appears to have established harmonious and effective working relationships with college administrators and staff, host families, NGOs and employers – all of whom are enthusiastic contributors to the program. Students are productive, happy and achieving superior results.

English language difficulty. As at other CASS program sites, students experience considerable difficulty with English.

For students in the two-year program, MJC seeks to create an environment in which students are encouraged and helped to learn English as quickly as possible. When students arrive, MJC provides an initial intensive ESL program. For the first one and half months, MJC provides all regular course work in Spanish. After that time, ESL instruction continues, and all course work is in English. Host families are English-speaking, and the Coordinator insists that students speak only in English when they are on campus. The program also assists the students to become involved in extra-curricular activities where they will usually be required to speak English.

For students in the one-year teacher-training program, MJC provides an initial two weeks of intensive (six hours daily) ESL Survival Skills program. During the following three and half months, the program provides eight hours of ESL instruction per week. During the remainder of the year (except when the students are doing classroom observation or internships), the program provides six hours per week of instruction.

Student performance. MJC's CASS students have an outstanding reputation with the faculty, administration and the parts of the larger community with which they come in contact. Faculty members often spoke in glowing terms about their enthusiasm and commitment, noting that they role models for the U.S. students.

CASS students take remarkably large course loads. During the first semester, two-year students take 22 hours of ESL and 11 course hours. These courses go to 15 and 18 hours, respectively, during the second semester. CASS students frequently ask and receive permission to take more than the normal maximum 17 course units per semester. Because of their heavy course load, some MJC CASS students are awarded more than one AA degree and, sometimes, one or more certificates of achievement at the end of their two-year stay.

Students' success is due in part to the individual attention and support the CASS administrators and the faculty provide. MJC also provides the students with a studies skills course. MJC staff, however, give the major credit to the students, who are hard-working and committed. The staff also gives credit to CIED and to the country offices for an effective selection process.

College and Community Support

MJC and the Yosemite College District strongly support MJC's participation in the CASS program. Senior administrators point out that CASS is an important component of MJC's international program under which about 120 non-American students are currently studying. The international program reflects MJC's commitment to a harmonious multi-cultural, multi-ethnic environment, exemplified by its mottos, "embracing diversity" and "beyond tolerance."

There is a widespread perception that CASS students are a very positive influence on campus. One instructor and administrator noted that, “They help to create a wonderful learning environment and enrich the classroom environment for everyone.”

A review of the budgets for the current MJC CASS programs shows that the college provides approximately \$196,000 (29% of the costs) for the two-year program and \$75,000 (22% of the costs) for the one-year program. The college’s senior administrators indicated that they do not regard provision of this budgetary commitment to the program as a problem. Indeed, in response to a query from the evaluation team, the MJC president indicated that he thought that the college might be able to support some travel of key instructors to Central America so that they could understand the region’s problems.

CASS and college administrators did note that the program was somewhat more difficult to manage and to maintain when interruptions in regular programming occurred. Specifically, they noted that CIED had skipped sending a two-year group to start in year 2000. They indicated that interruptions in the program force managers to release resources (e.g., key people) that may then be committed when the CASS program needs them again. The interruption in programming also created some financial strain.

MJC and CASS enjoy very strong community support for this program. Members of the community provide homes, sponsor social activities, provide clothing and furniture, welcome the students into community activities and offer internships.

MJC’s Two-Year Agriculture Program

The first semester, CASS students take “stand alone” courses, i.e., courses in which only CASS students participate. This allows instructors to adjust for language problems and to give CASS students an opportunity to adjust to an American educational environment. After that, CASS students participate in mainstream courses where they are forced to speak English.

Most of the courses in the curriculum are prescribed. However, students can add to this program, and many do. The short summer semester is particularly a time when CASS students can take elective courses.

The program takes a “hands-on” approach, requiring the students to work extensively with the animals and in the fields.¹ CASS students also participate actively in the Young Farmers program. They have, for example, learned animal judging skills and have competed successfully in contests with American students from MJC and other schools. Participation in these activities provides opportunities to learn more about agriculture, to work closely with instructors and other students in a non-classroom environment, to improve their English, and to become involved in community activities. One instructor noted that, “CASS students are deeply involved in field days, barbecues, career days, leadership seminars – it’s a total experience.”

¹ The day prior to the evaluation team’s visit, the CASS students had spent several hours in the field learning and practicing proper techniques for pruning fruit trees.

Internship program. The program includes a six-week internship during the summer of the second year. CASS students have a reputation for being good workers and are welcomed by a variety of local employers. Transportation to and from the worksites has been a problem, but creative solutions have been found.

The evaluation team visited a reference laboratory² where students from several CASS cycles have served as interns. The director noted that CASS students interview for their internships as if they were applying for a regular job. They are well prepared. According to the director, the CASS students are significantly better than the young people that the firm actually hires for similar positions. Were it possible, he would hire just about all of the CASS interns that he has had. He has been impressed with their maturity, ability to learn quickly and good attitude (e.g., their willingness to take on any job and to work long hours). The firm does not just see its provision of a worksite for MJC's CASS interns only as a community service; the company benefits because the CASS interns are productive and set a good example for others. "Productivity increases when they are with us," he noted.

Students' Volunteer Activities

Volunteer activities are an important component of the MJC CASS program. One-year students are expected to do 50 hours of service and two-year students do 100 hours.

Student Housing

Students in the two-year program are housed with host families for the first nine months. Some of these host families become like second families to CASS students, and long-term relationships are formed. MJC favors families where English is spoken in the home and is generally successful in this regard.

Almost all of MJC's CASS students currently living with a host family view this arrangement as highly beneficial. Most have never lived outside of a family environment, and this living arrangement feels comfortable to them. Most students also commented that the host families are teaching them about the U.S. and helping them to become proficient in English.

Although the host family program at MJC seems to be working very well, the evaluation team did note the existence of at least one current host family relationship that appeared far from ideal. That family reportedly skimps on food and makes little effort to make the students feel welcome or to ease the difficult transition that CASS students encounter. Several interviewees questioned whether the host family in that case volunteers only for the payment it receives from MJC.

² This private sector laboratory tests thousands of food and beverage samples daily for possible contamination.

CASS/MJC places the one-year students and two-year students following the period with host parents in apartments. Apartments have three to five CASS students. To the extent possible, the program tries to mix students from different countries. The students purchase their own groceries, prepare their meals, clean the apartments, do their laundry, etc.

The two-year students take full responsibility for their housing during this period. They save for security deposits, rent their own apartments, pay the utilities, and find their own furniture. This is undoubtedly a major learning experience for the students, most of whom have never before had to seek accommodations. The evaluation team considered the apartments in which the students live to be modest but adequate, typical of what American students might commonly occupy.

Participants' Perspective on the Program

The evaluation team met with each group of students (16 in the two-year program and 17 in the one-year program), and each student responded to the team's questionnaire. At the suggestion of the CASS Coordinator, the meeting with the two-year students was conducted in English. (The Coordinator requires that these students speak only English while on campus.) The evaluator noticed that, although the students often used questionable grammar and sentence structure, they expressed themselves remarkably well given the short time that they had been in the U.S.

Participants were asked to evaluate how the opportunity to study in the U.S. affected them in several areas. Responses from the one-year group were often of marginal value as they had been in the U.S. for such a short period. Except where indicated, the following data reflect the interview and questionnaires of the two-year group.

Students were asked a number of questions to obtain their views on how they have benefited to date from the CASS experience. The following table shows that from a low of 63 percent to a high of 100 percent (depending on the trait) respondents felt that they had benefited by improving their abilities with respect to this specific set of life skills.

		Positively affected (01)	No effect (02)	Negatively affected (03)
a.	Self-reliance	81%	19%	
b.	Ability to communicate with others	88%	12%	
c.	Ability to get along with others	82%	18%	
d.	Ability to tolerate change	94%	6%	
e.	Willingness to take risks	63%	37%	
f.	Ability to speak in public	88%	12%	
g.	Willingness to try new things	100%		

Asked to look toward the longer-term effects of the program, the participants felt that their U.S. study would affect them positively, as noted in the following table.

	Not useful (01)	A little useful (02)	Somewhat useful (03)
a. Improve my professional abilities		6%	94%
b. Teach me new skills/techniques for work		6%	94%
c. Prepare me for a career		12%	88%
d. Give me opportunities to meet U.S. citizens in my field		56%	44%
e. Give me opportunities to meet other colleagues from my country in my field		19%	81%
f. Improve my leadership abilities		19%	81%
g. Encourage volunteering and community work		12%	88%

Note: One participant did not respond to this survey item

A comparison of these ratings with other colleges in the team’s survey suggests that the low rating to the question d. about “meeting U.S. citizens in my field” is likely to rise after participants have been in the program longer.

During the course of their studies to date, over 63 percent of the participants reported that they had learned something about the economic system of the U.S. The students claim to have learned particularly about the role of the agriculture sector in the U.S. economy. Only 25% of the respondents claimed to have learned something about the U.S. political system.

Participants were asked to identify categories of people with whom they spent time after classes. The students’ responses to this question were quite consistent: three-quarters of the respondents indicated that they spent the largest share of that time with their host families. The second response in almost all cases was “with other CASS students.” As with CASS students at other colleges, MJC’s CASS students tend to interact more with each other than with American students on campus.

All of the CASS participants reported participating in campus and community activities. The activity most often mentioned was Young Farmers. Other activities mentioned included the international club, church and volunteer activities, an international festival, folk dances and presentations, and sports. All of the respondents to the survey thought that they would be more active as a volunteer in their community when they returned home from the U.S.

**Persons Interviewed at Modesto Junior College
January 29-30, 2002**

- Mark Anglin, Agriculture. Instructor
- Mark E. Bender, Ph.D., Dean, Agriculture and Environmental Sciences
- Gordon Brock, Silliker Laboratories of California (internship site)
- George Boodrookas, Dean of Community and Economic Development
- Lilia Davis, Assistant to the CASS Coordinator
- Elizabeth Martinez, Instructor in Teacher-Training program
- Richard Nimphius, Agriculture Instructor (former Dean of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences)
- Bill Scroggins, Vice President, Instruction
- Bennett Tom, Ed.D., Vice Chancellor, Educational Services, Yosemite Community College District
- Aida Trejo, Assistant to the CASS Coordinator
- Paul B. Vantress, Director, Workforce Training Center
- Dr. James Williams, President, MJC
- Elizabeth Orozco-Wittke, Manager, International Contract Programs

**CASS EVALUATION
SITE VISIT TO REEDLEY COLLEGE
Reedley, California
January 30-31, 2002**

Overview

Reedley College is currently hosting fourteen CASS students in a two-year Agriculture Technology program. The college's program is intensive; students work hard, and their performance has been very good. The program enjoys excellent college and community support.

Introduction

With a student body of about 5,000 students, Reedley College (referred to simply as Reedley) is located in a small town in the agriculturally rich San Joaquin Valley. The college is currently hosting a two-year CASS group consisting of 14 Central Americans studying Agriculture Technology. The students arrived in August 2000 and are now well into their second year of studies.

An Aguirre International member of the CASS evaluation team visited the ACCD from noon on Wednesday, January 30 and Thursday, January 31. The CASS coordinator had prepared an extensive program of interviews, including meetings with CASS participants, the CASS administrative staff, University administrators, instructors, a community NGO with which CASS students participate, two host families, and the businesses where CASS students carry out internships. (A list of the individuals with whom the evaluator met is provided as an annex to this report.) This report reflects the information obtained and observations made during the course of that visit.

The CASS Office

The CASS office at Reedley is part of the Agriculture and Natural Resources Department. The CASS coordinator has a Ph.D. in agriculture and has previously taught agricultural in a university setting. These factors contribute to the strong collegial relationship that exists between the CASS coordinator and the Department's faculty and to the Agriculture and Natural Resources Department's strong sense of ownership of the Reedley CASS program. Equally important, the CASS students understand that they are full participating members of the Department family.

Together with the community, the CASS office organizes extensive activities to help the students to learn and to adjust to the U.S. environment. For example, the program ensures that students learn about shopping, how to make phone calls, doing banking, etc. There are frequent social functions, outings to movies and to community events and field trips to locations around the state.

Compared to coordinators at other campuses, the high level of technical expertise of Reedley's coordinator allows her to be more actively involved in the educational content of the program. The team's limited observation suggests that her relationship with the CASS students is somewhat different than that at other campuses – more that of an educator and less of a parental surrogate.

College and Community Support

Both the college and the community at Reedley strongly support the CASS program. Senior college administrators indicated their delight in having the CASS students on campus. Reedley College's president emphasized the energy and positive outlook that CASS students bring to the college and to the community. He believes that the benefits to the college far outweigh the college's financial investment.

The college expressed no concern about continuing its financial and human resources commitment to the program. Indeed, in discussing ways that the program might better serve the needs of CASS students, top college administrators indicated that it might well be possible to provide financial support so that professors could visit CASS countries.

As Reedley did not receive a new group of CASS students in 2001, it now has only the one group currently on campus. Skipping a cycle makes Reedley's participation in the program somewhat more difficult. According to the President and Business Manager, there are economies of scale in having two groups. Also, it becomes somewhat more difficult to maintain the human resources the program requires, e.g., to teach a first-year course in horticulture, when CASS only needs the course every other year. Another advantage of having a new class of CASS students each year is that the experienced students are available to help the newcomers during their first months on campus.

Community support for the CASS program is extensive. This support comes from individuals and families, local organizations (e.g., the Lion's Club), and businesses. Thanks to these efforts, CASS students are kept busy with a wide variety of educational, social and cultural activities. Not only, for example, do the coordinator and the community organize trips to allow the students to ice skate and play in the snow, community and faculty members arrange to provide warm clothes without which the trips would be impossible.

Some ardent CASS supporters at Reedley—including faculty and host families—have organized three visits to CASS countries. These trips, which have a primary focus on seeing students who have already returned home, are organized and paid for by the travelers. Of course, these visits also serve to educate the visitors from Reedley about the environment from which the CASS students come.

The Training Program

As at other CASS partner institutions, Reedley provides the students with an intensive ESL program upon their arrival. During the first semester, courses are set up specifically

for the CASS students. After the first semester, CASS students are “mainstreamed.” Even while struggling with English, the students embark on a very intensive course program. It is not unusual for students to be in classroom situations (including in the fields or barns) 35 hours/week.

Students take a wide variety of agricultural courses. These include, for example, machinery management, general livestock, agriculture sales and communication, fairs and exhibitions, integrated pest management, agriculture accounting, plant science, soils, orchard management, farm management and agriculture technology. Students also take a number of other courses to develop better writing skills, to develop computer skills and to learn about U.S. institutions and ideals.

As one might expect in an agriculture program, the Reedley program is typified by a very “hands on” approach. In addition to the course work and practical activities they require, CASS students participate very actively in Future Farmers of America (FFA). Each student participates in an internship program, although Reedley has reduced the length of internships from six to three weeks. This action was reportedly taken because the program managers found that students often lost interest during longer stays. The team heard good reports about previous cycles of CASS students’ performance in internships. The current cycle had not yet reached the internship point in its program.

Students are happy with the Reedley program. They indicated that they felt that their teachers were excellent and that Reedley was a very good place to study agriculture. Students particularly noted that they liked the very practical nature of the program. (See additional student comments below.)

CASS students do extremely well in the program. In meetings with many of the program’s instructors, the evaluation team consistently heard about the positive attitudes, hard work and excellent performance of the CASS students. Last year, 13 of 20 agriculture department graduates who received “gold keys” at graduation were CASS students.

Housing

CASS students spend their first nine months with a host family. As Reedley is a small town, the pool of families from which the program can draw is smaller than at many other colleges. Although many farm families would welcome CASS students and this would be very appropriate for agriculture students, transporting the students to and from school would be a difficult problem. As public transportation is generally not available, the college seeks families who are not distant from the college campus. Students often commute to school on foot or by bicycle. With a limited number of qualified families volunteering, Reedley places two students with about half of the families volunteering.

Some of the families speak only English, and others are bilingual. Most host families play an important role in helping students to improve their English language skills.

The families also play an extremely useful role in teaching the students about customs and norms in the U.S. The host families include the students in family activities and often take them to see things outside of the Reedley area. Many become like second families to the students, and a number of host families have traveled overseas to visit their former students. Many of the host families have joined together to form an international club to make the students feel welcome. The club sponsors weekly dinners or other activities. Reedley has several extraordinary host families, at least two of which have served in this capacity ten or more times.

Students' reaction to host families is typically extremely positive. There were comments from several sources, however, that at least one family that has volunteered several times largely ignores the students and seems to be motivated by the monthly stipend that the college provides.

The host families that were interviewed were pleased to participate in the program and clearly became very close to their students. Their only suggestions were to the effect that efforts might be made to find more host families and that those selected be ones where only English would be spoken.

Reedley's CASS students spend their second year in a student dormitory. The students expressed a wide variety of opinions about life in the dorms: some students were quite content, while others were quite dissatisfied. The criticisms included:

- Poor cafeteria food and limited opportunity to make their own food;
- Too noisy to study;
- Lack of cleaning equipment (e.g., vacuums) and other students lack of cleanliness;
- Failure to observe the rules (e.g., about quiet hours)
- A lack of privacy.

Some of the students, aware of procedures at other CASS colleges, indicated that they would like Reedley's CASS students to have the option of renting apartments.

Volunteer Activities

Perhaps because of the small size of the community, CASS students at Reedley have limited opportunities to do volunteer work. Virtually all of the volunteer work being done is at the "Nearly New" store of the Mennonite community. The program encourages volunteerism and the students do participate. However, Reedley does not require that students perform at least a specified minimum number of hours, as is the case at some other participating CASS colleges. Reedley's CASS students participate frequently in FFA programs, some of which involves considerable time after school and on weekends.

Participants Perspective on the Program

Each of the 14 participants completed the evaluation team's survey instrument.

Students ranked their objectives in coming to the U.S. from most important to least important as follows:

- a) to develop leadership capabilities;
- b) to have an interesting learning experience;
- c) to develop friendships and social relationships with U.S. citizens
- d) to network and make professional contacts; and
- e) to advance their careers.

The participants were asked to characterize the degree of difficulty of their studies from very difficult to very easy. Only one characterized the program as “very difficult.” The most common response (eight of the 14 respondents) said it was “difficult,” and the remainder qualified it as “just about right.”

As at other colleges participating in the CASS program, the most common problem experienced is with English. Eight of 14 students reported that they were having problems communicating in English.

The participants were asked to rate how the opportunity to study in the U.S. affected their skills in several areas that are important to successful careers and to future leadership. The following table shows their very positive responses.

	Positively affected (01)	No effect (02)	Negatively affected (03)
a. Self-reliance	86%	14%	
b. Ability to communicate with others	100%	0%	
c. Ability to get along with others	79%	21%	
d. Ability to tolerate change	79%	21%	
e. Willingness to take risks	79%	21%	
f. Ability to speak in public	86%	14%	
g. Willingness to try new things	93%	7%	

In assessing how they felt that the program would affect their future careers, the students assessed the following possible program benefits:

	Not useful (01)	A little useful (02)	Somewhat useful (03)
a. Improve my professional abilities			100%
b. Teach me new skills/techniques for work		7%	93%
c. Prepare me for a career	7%	21%	79%
d. Give me opportunities to meet U.S. citizens in my field	7%	36%	57%

e. Give me opportunities to meet other colleagues from my country in my field	36%	64%
f. Improve my leadership abilities		100%
g. Encourage volunteering and community work	14%	86%

During the course of their studies to date, 12 of the 14 students indicated that they had learned something about the U.S. economic system. Examples of the things that they had learned about included the role of cooperatives, how the U.S. treats depreciation, and the importance of competition in eliciting the best quality and lowest price.

Eighty-two percent of the students indicated that they had also learned things about the U.S. political system. They had learned, for example, about the process of setting farm policies, about elections and about the acceptance of diversity in the U.S.

Participants were asked to identify categories of people with whom they spent time after classes. CASS participants spent most of their time with:

- a) other CASS students;
- b) other U.S. students
- c) other students from their countries;
- d) other international students—not CASS participants; and
- e) host families

In comparison with the responses that the evaluation team received at other college campuses, Reedley students seem to spend more time with U.S. students. This probably reflects the fact that the CASS program at Reedley is fully integrated into the regular college program.

As noted above, the students were generally very positive about their host families. Among the positive factors, the students cited the help they received with English and in understanding and operating in the U.S. culture. Several noted that the families had offered an excellent environment to live and study. About a third said that it was like having a second family that cared for them.

All CASS participants reported participating in campus and community activities. The most common activities reported were volunteering in the Nearly New store, participating in FFA field days and attending agricultural shows.

When asked if they had recommendations to improve the program in the future, the students offered the following suggestions:

- Find host families who are committed to helping students;
- Tailor course content more to the conditions in CASS countries;
- Give students more information about the college they will be attending;
- Improve the coordinator's communication with host families;
- Improve communication between the country coordinator and the college coordinator;

- Clarify the roles of and relationship between the coordinator and CIED;
- Clarify the role of the coordinator with respect to the students;
- Develop a specific course on leadership;
- Utilize only ESL teachers who are native speakers of English; and
- Permit students to go home for Christmas holidays during the second year.

**Persons Interviewed at Reedley College
January 30-31, 2002**

- Bill Beal, Host Family and International Friends
- Gene Blackwelder, Business Manager, Reedley College
- Dave Clark, Instructor in Mechanized Agriculture, Agriculture and Natural Resources Department
- Thomas A. Crow, President, Reedley College
- Janice Englebright, Host Family and International Friends
- Michelle Ganci, Internships/Follow-on
- Dave Lopes, Instructor of Agriculture Projects, Agriculture and Natural Resources Department
- Ralph Loya, Instructor of Animal Sciences, Agriculture and Natural Resources Department
- Katy Miller, Internships/Follow-on
- Terri L. Porter, Ph.D., International Education Coordinator (CASS Coordinator)
- Joe Russo, Associate Dean of Instruction, Occupational Education/PE-Health
- Tim Smith, Instructor in Plant Science, Agriculture and Natural Resources Department
- Bud West, Chair, Agriculture and Natural Resources Department

**CASS EVALUATION
SITE VISIT TO ST. LOUIS COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Florissant Valley Campus
St. Louis, Missouri
November 28, 2001**

Introduction

The Florissant Valley Campus of St. Louis Community College in St. Louis, Missouri, is currently a host school for a group of Georgetown University's Cooperative Association of States for Scholars (CASS) Program participants. As part of the CASS Program evaluation for USAID, an Aguirre International evaluator visited the Florissant Valley campus to meet with CASS participants, CASS administrative staff, University administrative staff, support staff, and instructors. This Site Visit Report reflects the information obtained and observations made during the course of a one-day visit.

Meetings were held with the following individuals at the Florissant Valley campus of St. Louis Community College.

- Dr. Denise Minnis, International Program Manager
- David West, CASS Coordinator
- Ann G. Ernst, CASS Program/Activities Manager
- Dr. Gustavo Valadez Ortiz, President of Florissant Valley Community College
- Dr. Patricia Donohue, Vice Chancellor for Education
- Dr. Sarah Perkins, Dean of School of Engineering
- Dr. Ashok Agrawal, Chairman, Engineering and Technology
- Dr. Thomas J. Bingham, Program Coordinator, Engineering and Technology
- Dr. Dale Gerstenecker, Associate Professor of Engineering Graphics
- Jeanne Fountain, Advertising, Manufacturing Center Project Coordinator
- Eight CASS participants

The CASS Cycle currently attending the Florissant Valley campus of St. Louis Community College consists of seventeen (17) participants from the Caribbean and Central America enrolled in a two-year program in Basic Electronics and Telecommunications. The participants represent the countries of Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, and Jamaica.

The participants, all high school graduates, arrived at Florissant Valley in August 2001, and are undergoing English language training and mathematics. Courses in electronics and related technical fields will begin in January 2002. The course of study is basic electronics and telecommunication. Students will learn to break down and repair computers and other electronic instruments. They will learn to machine-tool boards, do wiring, test equipment, and set up telecommunications systems.

Courses are taught in English and the participants receive a semester of English language training, along with language support services as they progress through the program. In

addition to the English language classes, the participants receive computer training and mathematics. Haitian students as well as Central American students receive English language training.

Internships

During their two-year program, the participants serve internships with local companies in their field of training. The instructors anticipate having to search harder for internships for the current group of students since several companies in the area that have provided internships in the past have experienced drastic cutbacks and some have completely shut down.

The CASS Office

The CASS office is located in the Engineering Building on the campus of Florissant Valley, in close proximity to the classrooms and laboratories that the students attend. The participants seem comfortable with the CASS office staff. While I was visiting, several students walked into the office to get questions answered or just to say “hello.” David West, the CASS Coordinator, was only recently hired but demonstrated good knowledge of the program and seemed to have the right attributes to coordinate this program. The President of Florissant Valley, Dr. Gustavo Valadez Ortiz, expressed his confidence in Mr. West, as did the Dean of the School of Engineering, and the head instructor for the program, Dr. Thomas J. Bingham.

Service Learning

During the course of their two-year program, participants will perform a number of hours of Service Learning experiences with St. Louis area civic and community institutions. The experiences will involve professional practical and leadership/community service activities.

Host Families

As is the case of two-year CASS Programs, all of the participants live with host families for the first year of the program. They move out into apartments for the second year. In a couple of instances, two participants are with one family. These families from the local community actively support the participants, not only by providing room and board, but also by providing transportation to them, taking them sightseeing, and involving them in their school and civic organizations. They also help to provide them with winter clothing and other personal needs. The CASS office does extensive dialogue with the host families to minimize or forestall any problems or negative behaviors.

Host families are encouraged to notify the CASS office if they notice any potential problem. One such situation occurred when a CASS participant purchased a rather expensive CD and tape player. The host family called the CASS office concerned about the participant spending so much of his allowance that he might not be able to meet his

expenses for the month. The CASS staff called the participant in for counseling and they worked out a budget together.

Enrichment

The CASS staff makes every effort to involve the groups in professional enrichment as well as community and civic-oriented activities. Participants are active in their respective churches, provide Spanish language classes to adults, assist in community service clinics, and participate in state and local government seminars. Participants perform ethnic dances from their countries and sing at gatherings of civic and social groups.

The participants are encouraged to take part in the athletic and social events at the college, and they claim to be taking advantage of these opportunities.

CASS Relations with St. Louis Community College

The president of Florissant Valley, Dr. Gustavo Valadez Ortiz, is a genuine supporter of the CASS Program and its aims. He has met many of the participants individually and he keeps an open door for all of the students. Dr. Denise Minnis, who is the supervisor of the CASS Coordinator, David West, has managed the program most recently. She is located at the St. Louis Community College main campus. Dr. Minnis stated that she will continue to take an interest in the CASS Program and will continue to assist Mr. West in his assumption of duties with the program.

Group Discussion with Participants

The Aguirre International evaluator met with the eight participants in an informal group discussion at the CASS office at the Florissant Valley campus. He found the participants to be quite articulate and focused in their discussion. They were proud of the CASS Program and their participation in it. They felt that they had accomplished what they set out to do and, up to this point in the program, their expectations were fulfilled. Most felt confident that they would be able to find jobs upon their return home and would be able to implement much of what they had learned. Only one of the eight participants was employed at the time of selection for the CASS Program. He was employed as a house cleaner in his country. All of the others were recent high school graduates.

The participants stated the instruction they received was quite different from their classroom experiences in their home countries and that they had a different (more informal) relationship with their U.S. instructor than they had with their teachers back home. The participants praised the Florissant Valley CASS staff and the citizens of St. Louis who made them feel welcome and appreciated.

Cycle 02: Basic Electronics and Telecommunications

The seventeen participants arrived at the Florissant Valley-Stowe campus in August 2001 and were undergoing intensive language training, mathematics, and computer training at the time of the site visit.

The Aguirre evaluator met with eight of the participants (2 Jamaicans, 2 Haitians, and 4 Central Americans) as a group in the Florissant Valley administration building. He spoke with them informally and administered the CASS U.S. Participant Survey.

The participants, although very young (16 to 24 years of age), were relatively mature and quite serious about their scholarship and about getting the most out of it. They had committed themselves to returning to their countries and helping in development efforts at home. The conversation was conducted in English and the participants seemed quite comfortable with that. They spoke freely about the educational systems in their country and about their experiences in the U.S. Many were very sympathetic with the U.S. about the September 11th terrorist attack, and one Haitian youth said that it surprised him how it made the U.S. citizens unite and take pride in their country.

Survey Results

Their survey responses indicated that their most important reason for coming into this U.S. study program was that they felt it would help them with their career. The second most important reason was to have an interesting learning experience. Other considerations were the development of leadership abilities and making professional contacts in their field of study. Of the five choices offered, the least important reason for accepting the scholarship was given as friendships and social relationships with U.S. citizens.

The participants were asked to characterize the degree of difficulty of their studies up to this point in time. Six participants (75%) felt that their studies were “just about right,” and two participants (25%) characterized their studies as “easy.” None of the participants felt that it was “very easy.” Out of the eight respondents, only one student reported experiencing difficulties in his studies. Upon further questioning, it appeared that this difficulty centered on the students’ frustration with learning English fast enough.

Five (5) of the eight participants said that they had difficulties in communicating in English. They cited listening difficulties and pronunciation as problematic areas. One Jamaican student, speaking in perfect English, said that many people in the U.S. had difficulty understanding her because of her Jamaican accent.

Participants were asked to rate how the opportunity to study in the U.S. affected them in several areas. The following table indicates their responses.

		Positively affected (01)	No effect (02)	Negatively affected (03)
a.	Self-reliance	63%	37%	
b.	Ability to communicate with others	100%		
c.	Ability to get along with others	75%	25%	
d.	Ability to tolerate change	88%	12%	
e.	Willingness to take risks	37%	63%	
f.	Ability to speak in public	37%	63%	
g.	Willingness to try new things	75%	25%	

As the participants progress through their program, they will have opportunities to speak in public and become more comfortable in taking risks. It is anticipated that more positive responses in these areas will take place over time.

Although the participants had been in the CASS Program for approximately three months, in that time they had great hopes that their U.S. study would affect them positively, as noted in the following table.

		Not useful (01)	A little useful (02)	Somewhat useful (03)
a.	Improve my professional abilities			100%
b.	Teach me new skills/techniques for work	12%		88%
c.	Prepare me for a career	12%		88%
d.	Give me opportunities to meet U.S. citizens in my field	12%	75%	13%
e.	Give me opportunities to meet other colleagues from my country in my field	37.5%	12.5%	50%
f.	Improve my leadership abilities		12%	88%
g.	Encourage volunteering and community work	12.5	12.5%	75%

During the course of their studies to date, four of the eight survey respondents (50%) learned something about the economic system of the U.S. The other four participants reported that they had not learned about the economic system up to this point in their program.

When asked if they had learned about the U.S. political system or its democratic institutions, over sixty-two (62.5) percent said that they had learned about it. Thirty-seven (37.5) percent had not learned about the U.S. political system and democratic institutions up to this time.

Participants were asked to identify categories of people with whom they spent time after classes. In the order in which they responded, the CASS participants spent most of their time with

- a) their host family;
- b) other students in the CASS Program;
- c) other students from their home country;
- d) international students—not CASS participants; and
- e) other U.S. students.

All eight CASS participants reported participating in campus and community activities. One participant was late for our meeting with the group because he was attending track and field practice. Another student was elected Vice-president of the Florissant Valley Engineering Club (Society for Mechanical Engineering) and another as Secretary; all of the CASS participants are members of the club.

All of the participants thought that they would be more active as volunteers in their community when they returned home from the U.S.

Because the participants are in the early stages of their two-year program, they have not yet participated in internships.

Observations

The CASS Program at Florissant Valley seems in good hands. There is strong administrative, faculty, and community support for the program. The physical plant of the school, and especially the Engineering School, appears to be spacious and well-equipped. The CASS Program seems to be well-situated within the academic program. The faculty is experienced in working with international students. The faculty takes great pride in its facilities and its ability to provide relevant hands-on training for the participants, which will stand them in good stead when they return home. They are taught to fabricate parts and equipment which may not be readily available in their countries.

Except for some frustration with the speed of learning English, the students seemed happy with their studies as well as their adjustment.

One area which the CASS program school might look into is how to involve the CASS participants with other U.S. college students to a greater degree. This may, indeed, happen in time because it is still early in the program, but the CASS Coordinator should examine some strategies for making this happen.

It might be helpful for the new CASS Coordinator, David West, to get to know the CASS Coordinator at Harris-Stowe, Jaime Torres. As a new coordinator, Mr. West might benefit from the experiences of Mr. Torres, especially the way he takes advantage of and

leverages opportunities from the local community and businesses to benefit the participants.

APPENDIX G

Programming Trends and Costs

APPENDIX G

CASS Programming Trends and Costs

USAID has provided three successive cooperative agreements to CIED to support the CASS and its predecessor program. Table G.1 shows CIED expenditures (of USAID funds) to support the program during the eight-year evaluation period, FY 1994-2001. These expenditures totaled \$102 million. Expenditures peaked in FY 1995 at \$14.4 million. The lowest annual level of expenditures, \$10.7 million in FY 2001, reflects a decrease in USAID funding under the most recent cooperative agreement.

Table G.1.

Total CASS Costs from CASS II and CASS III, FY 1994-2001 (\$ thousands)									
FY	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	Total
	\$13,738	\$14,374	\$12,958	\$12,457	\$11,486	\$13,543	\$12,720	\$10,700	\$101,976

Of the \$102 million expended during this period, \$15 million supported students who began their studies prior to 1994, and \$87 million supported students who began their studies in the 1994-2001 period. Of that latter amount, \$83.5 million (96 percent) financed the program's U.S.-based training and the administrative structure to support that training. The remaining \$3.5 million (4%) were used for in-country programs, such as TSE or courses for returned participants.

CASS expenditures for U.S.-based training are divided into two large categories: training costs and administrative costs. "Training costs" include all costs (including administration) incurred at the participating colleges and include the students' international travel. "Administrative costs" include all of the costs incurred at CIED and by the in-country CASS offices. Of the \$83.5 million of CASS II and CASS III expenditures on U.S.-based training during the eight-year period of this evaluation, \$59.7 million (71.5%) were for costs at the colleges and \$23.8 million (28.5%) were expended for the activities at CIED and the country offices. However, some of the reported expenditures under "administrative costs" were used to support students whose training costs were financed under CASS I. For this reason, these figures probably underestimate the share of costs for on-campus activities and over-estimate the cost of Georgetown-based and in-country¹ support functions (and student travel). CIED indicates that the ratio of on-campus training costs to those other support costs has been fairly stable at 3:1. The evaluation team used this CIED ratio in the following analysis of per student costs.

¹ "In-country" in this paper means in the countries from which CASS students come.

Table G.2 shows the number of students who started training during the FY 1994-2001 period and the corresponding number of student-months of training and costs. These costs were financed under the second and third USAID cooperative agreements.

Table G.2.

CASS Student Trends and Costs, FY1994-2001												
CASS Students							Costs (millions)					
	No. of Students			Student-Months			Training Costs			Total Costs (1)		
	Total	1 Yr.	2 Yrs.	Total	1 Yr.	2 Yrs.	Total	1 Yr.	2 Yrs.	Total	1 Yr.	2 Yrs.
Grant II	1,254	206	1,048	26,089	1,483	24,606	\$37.4	\$2.0	\$35.4	\$56.0	\$3.0	\$53.0
Grant III	1,088	387	701	20,778	4,175	16,603	\$22.3	\$4.6	\$17.7	\$27.5	\$5.7	\$21.8
Totals	2,342	593	1,749	46,867	5,658	41,209	\$59.7	\$6.6	\$53.1	\$83.5	\$8.7	\$74.8

Table G.2 shows that 2,342 participants were selected for U.S. training during this period. Of these, 593 students (25%) were sent to the U.S. for one year or less of training, and 1,749 (75%) were sent for two-year programs. The shorter programs, of course, assumed a smaller share of the total student-months of training (12%) and training costs (11%).

Table G. 3 shows that, although the two-year program remains the largest component of the CASS program, shorter programs have increased in importance during the evaluation period.

Table G.3.

Numbers of New CASS Students, by Length of Program and by Year									
	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	Totals
One Year or Less									
CASS II		30	30	48	18	80			206
CASS III					36	103	141	107	387
Totals	0	30	30	48	54	183	141	107	593
% of all students	0%	11%	11%	18%	17%	54%	51%	43%	25%
Two-year Programs									
CASS II	322	253	249	224					1,048
CASS III					270	156	135	140	701
Totals	322	253	249	224	270	156	135	140	1,749
% of all students	100%	89%	89%	82%	83%	46%	49%	57%	75%
Totals, All Students	322	283	279	272	324	339	276	247	2,342

Table G.3 shows that, in the most recent three years, shorter programs have represented more than 43-54 percent of students sent to the U.S. under the program. Under CASS II shorter-term programs accounted for 16 percent of the students selected and 5 percent of

the costs; under CASS III shorter-term participants represent 36 percent of the participants and 21 percent of the costs.

Utilizing the figures in Table G.2, we can divide total on-campus training costs (\$59.7 million) by the total number of student-months of training provided (46,867) to calculate that the average on-campus training cost/student-month is \$1,274. Adding CIED's administrative costs would raise that figure to approximately \$1,700 per student-month. The CIED (or USAID) cost of a 24-month training program thus averaged about \$40,750, or approximately \$20,375 per year, including all tuition and fees, maintenance allowances, and associated expenses for maintaining a student in the program.

These figures do not include the financial and in-kind contributions provided by the participating colleges or communities. On the basis of a review of the budgets of programs at two of the colleges, the evaluation team estimated these contributions to be about \$575 per student-month or about \$13,800 for a two-year student, i.e., almost 50 percent of the amount of on-campus training costs financed by USAID.² This suggests a total cost from all sources of \$54,550 for a two-year program.³

Observation

The evaluators were unable to identify an academic program that is comparable to the CASS Program. High school graduates, rural and underprivileged persons, and persons with disabilities are not the targets of most U.S. training programs. Nor do other programs provide an in-country staff to identify and recruit the target population, employ full-time campus coordinators, offer ESL training, arrange for host family support, facilitate volunteer service activities, coordinate internships, provide leadership training, encourage participation in school and community activities, and provide follow-on support upon return to the home country.

The following data show some examples of *annual* costs of academic programs in the following: a U.S. public university, a U.S. private university, and the Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs (BECA) Freedom Support Act Undergraduate Program. (Note that the university costs are for a nine-month academic year, while the CASS Program costs are for a twelve-month program.)

- University of Maryland: \$15,052 annual in-state tuition; \$23,124 annual non-resident tuition (does not include recruitment, language training, pre-departure, follow-up, internships, volunteer service, travel, enrichment, etc.)

² This estimate is consistent with CASS/CIED data that indicates college contribution's to be equal to slightly over 45% of the USAID/Georgetown share.

³ This analysis implicitly assumes that the "opportunity cost" for the students' time spent in training is zero. Since many of the students would have been employed in some productive activity, the "economic cost" of the CASS training is in fact somewhat higher.

- Johns Hopkins University (graduate study one year): \$38,310 (does not include recruitment, language training, pre-departure, follow-up, internships, volunteer service, etc.)
- BECA Freedom Support Act Undergraduate (one year): \$21,000 with cost share; \$28,000 without cost share (includes travel and orientations, but does not include recruitment, administrative costs and overhead)