

Center for Global Education

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Safety Notice – Mexico

March 24, 2015

The U.S. State Department last updated the Travel Warnings for Mexico December 24, 2014. Although the travel warning advises against travel to certain locations within Mexico, it does NOT restrict travel to the locations where Augsburg's Center for Global Education and Experience (CGEE) currently offers educational programs. Rather, it simply advises people to exercise caution. Moreover, it states:

Millions of U.S. citizens safely visit Mexico each year for study, tourism, and business, including more than 150,000 who cross the border every day. The Mexican government dedicates substantial resources to protect visitors to major tourist destinations, and there is no evidence that organized criminal groups have targeted U.S. visitors or residents based on their nationality. Resort areas and tourist destinations in Mexico generally do not see the levels of drug-related violence and crime that are reported in the border region or in areas along major trafficking routes.

We encourage people to review the full text of the travel warning at:

<http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/alertswarnings.html>

We are aware some websites are referencing an article that was published citing a Mexican nongovernmental organization as reporting that Cuernavaca "tops the list of Mexico's most violent cities." The report, which is used in this article, raised great concern among people who live and work in Cuernavaca as they believe it distorts the security situation there. What is important to know is the report combined a wide range of categories from robbery to homicide, and even though Cuernavaca does not rank in the top cities by homicide rate, the report combines both robbery and homicide to rank violence. As such, the report distorts the volume of incidents of violence. It is also believed that Cuernavaca, Morelos has less state corruption and therefore less fear in reporting crime which results in higher reporting of crime incidents than some other cities. Most importantly, the U.S. State Department and the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City do not discourage U.S. citizens from visiting or studying in Cuernavaca. Other colleges and universities, such as the University of Minnesota, continue to offer Spanish language and other educational programs in Cuernavaca.

Augsburg's faculty and staff in Cuernavaca closely monitors all reported violence in Cuernavaca, the State of Morelos, and throughout Mexico. There has been no evidence of violence or kidnappings directed at international students, foreign tourists, or foreign residents in any area where CGEE currently does programming.

While students are responsible for planning independent and personal travel, they are urged and advised to read the latest U.S. State Department information to avoid travel to areas of high risk identified in the current Travel Warning. They are also required to inform CGE-Mexico staff of independent travel plans and contact information. The Center for Global Education recommends that all U.S. citizens participating in the Center's programs in Mexico enroll in the State Department's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) which provides the latest updates and travel information from the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate. Participants can register with the U.S. State Department online at <http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/go/step.html>

Augsburg's Center for Global Education and Experience staff will continue to monitor the situation in all areas of our programming and will not hesitate to cancel or reroute programs, if needed, to secure the safety of students and travel seminar participants.

Please contact us at: 1 (800) 299-8889 or globaled@augsborg.edu if you have questions and want additional information.