The Tropical Medicine Course is a busy, one-month experience. It is not intended to provide expertise in clinical tropical medicine, as this would require a much longer period of time observing and treating many patients in a tropical environment. Instead, this course will focus on the biological aspects of diseases of the tropics and the role of the environment in the expression of these diseases. However, some clinical cases may be presented in order to supplement the lectures and laboratory exercises.

The first portion of the course will be held at the Wilson Botanical Garden and the Las Cruces Biological Station, one of the stations operated by the Organization for Tropical Studies. The site is located in a typical tropical rain forest environment in southwestern Costa Rica. That experience and the three additional field sites will make important contributions to your overall understanding of the various tropical environment and the ways in which different ecological and sociologic conditions determine the distribution and expression of specific diseases and health care delivery.

Lectures will be given by experts in their respective fields while laboratory sessions will be provided so that you can become familiar with the pathology and laboratory diagnostic methods of the diseases covered.

The Costa Rican faculty are all volunteers and will be eager to share their experiences with you. Therefore, some sessions may be long. We ask that you be punctual for all scheduled events, remain for the entire session, and be respectful in your associations with all participating faculty members.

Since Costa Rica is such a beautiful country with diverse environments, it has many tourist attractions, which you will want to visit. We, therefore, strongly advise that you arrive early or stay beyond the course to satisfy your tourist urge. There may or may not be free time for any tourist events during the course.

Attendance at all scheduled activities is mandatory. Absences can be excused only for documented illness and only by one of the three Course Directors. Unexcused absences will result in an evaluation of “Incomplete” reported to your home institution. Arrangements for accompanying spouses, children, friends, etc. cannot be made while the course is in progress. Those persons may, of course, join you after the course is completed.

You will be guests of the University of Costa Rica and the host families you will be housed with in San Jose. Therefore, your conduct throughout your visit should be appropriate to your professional status. Inappropriate behavior may result in termination of your participation without refund.

Student evaluations will be made based on observations by Course Directors and other faculty of your performance and conduct during the course, as well as a group problem solving examination based on lectures, laboratories and field trips. Grading is on a pass/fail system, but letter grades can be issued if required by your home institution.

Costa Rica has an excellent Public Health system and there is little or no danger of acquiring an exotic disease. You will be informed of any health risks that may develop before the course begins.