

SAN JOSE, COSTA RICA

SARAH SCHOENHAAR

Program: UW Spanish Language in Costa Rica, Summer

Sarah's Major: Spanish

Academic Life: All of the classes I took were with other UW Madison students with a maximum of five students each in my classes. Overall I had a good experience with my Spanish professors. My professors were excellent and very skilled in teaching grammar. We were also able to go on the occasional excursions to restaurants if there was time. In conversation class, I learned more in the two-week class than I did in some four-month UW semesters.

Housing: I lived in two homestays during my time abroad: my first one with two 70 year-old sisters who had grown up in the countryside. Their accents and dialects were very different from those of younger Ticans, and were often difficult to understand. I decided it wasn't for me and changed houses midway. My second family was extremely welcoming. I lived with a woman and her two adult children. She was a great cook, and asked a lot of questions, which helped my Spanish comprehension improve.

Study Abroad and Future Aspirations: As I hope to become either a translator or interpreter, it will be important that my future employers know I had some experience abroad. They will also know that I not only know the language, but that I understand Latino culture much more than someone who hadn't had a similar experience.

Most Memorable Moments: There were only 8 of us on this program, and we all became close friends and did everything together whenever possible. My Spanish language also improved.



Sarah visiting an animal refuge in San Jose.

“I learned that my Spanish was good enough that it was rarely a struggle to get my point across.”

