

Unidad Académica Campesina - Carmen Pampa, Bolivia

Pre-Arrival Handbook for UAC-CP Visiting Professionals & Teachers

We are thrilled that you are coming to the Unidad Académica Campesina-Carmen Pampa (UAC-CP)! Part of what makes the UAC-CP experience so unique for students and faculty are visits from people like you. This handbook was assembled to help you prepare for your trip and to allow you to feel more comfortable and “in the know” once you get to campus. You will find that the UAC-CP is a very busy place, and while we do our best to answer all your questions once you get here, having a basic understanding of life in Bolivia and on campus beforehand goes a long way.

Please read this entire handbook carefully and feel free to let us know if you have additional questions, suggestions or additions. It was created by seasoned travelers and your observations about what you’ve learned traveling will help future visitors to Carmen Pampa.

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1. PRE-VISIT PROTOCOL

The information requested on this page **MUST** be relayed to the UAC-CP in advance of your travel to Bolivia. Hye-Jung Park and Hugh Smeltekop coordinate visits for long-term and short-term professionals.

Hye-Jung’s e-mail address: hjparkcorea@yahoo.com, cell phone: (Bolivia country code: 591) 671-71736
Hugh’s e-mail address: boliviahugh@gmail.com, cell phone: (Bolivia country code: 591) 719-96681

When planning your trip, be sure to contact Hye-Jung to provide the following information:

1. Arrival and departure dates and times (if departure date is known)*
2. Electronically signed Employee Responsibilities and Expectations Form
3. Completed Carmen Pampa Fund News Release Form

*You will be advised prior to your arrival about who will be meeting you at the airport. When considering a travel schedule, note that it is most convenient for UAC-CP staff if you arrive on Sunday or Monday.

2. CONTACT INFORMATION

Please leave a copy of the following information with a friend or relative at home whom we can contact in the

event of an emergency. Hye-Jung and/or Hugh will have a copy of your emergency contact's information including home/work/cell phone, email address and home address that you noted in your UAC-CP Employee Application.

Hye-Jung or Hugh will be your primary contact. If there is an emergency and you are unable to reach Hye-Jung or Hugh by phone and must call the College, please note that calls can be received Monday through Saturday, between 8:00 and 12:00 in the morning and again between 2:00 and 6:00 in the afternoon. Bolivia is four hours behind Greenwich Mean Time, which means that if it is noon in Chicago, it is 2:00 pm at UAC-CP (or 1:00 pm if you are in daylight savings—Bolivia does not use daylight savings time). When calling outside of Bolivia, the number of the College is: 591-2878-1991.

Please note that the receptionist does not speak English. When receiving calls while at UAC-CP, your caller should say your name clearly and the receptionist will attempt to find you, or an English speaker that can facilitate the conversation. Generally, it is difficult to receive phone calls.

Internet is available and readily accessible (but not 100% reliable) in the Guest House. Most people find it most convenient to communicate with friends and family via Skype. Skype calls are free when "calling" from computer to computer and are very reasonable (about \$0.02 US a minute) when calling from computer to a phone in the U.S. Check rates as they apply to your country.

Regular mail arrives in the nearby town of Coroico.

Your UAC-CP Address:

[Your name]
Unidad Académica Campesina – Carmen Pampa
Coroico, Nor Yungas
La Paz, BOLIVIA
South America

Carmen Pampa Fund

If you are having difficulty getting through to the UAC-CP, call or email Carmen Pampa Fund, the U.S.-based fundraising arm of the College, located in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Phone: 651/641-1588

E-mail: info@carmenpampafund.org

Website: www.carmenpampafund.org

3. TRAVEL PREPARATION GUIDELINES

Airline Reservations and Approximate Ticket Costs

Most visitors take American Airlines' daily flight from Miami to La Paz. American Airlines is the only major airline with regular, direct service to La Paz. One flight leaves Miami at approximately 11:00 p.m. and arrives in La Paz around 6:00a.m. Roundtrip ticket costs are approximately \$1,300 and can be booked through an online travel site or travel agent.

American Airline Reservations:

Flight information: 1-800-433-7300

Baggage information: 1-800-535-5225

La Paz office: 591-2-235-1360 (dial 011 first if calling from the US)

Change of Flight Protocol

Occasionally, visitors may miss a flight or other circumstances arise to delay their arrival. If you have a change of arrival time or date, call and/or email Hye-Jung and Hugh immediately. In the event that you are unable to inform Hye-Jung or Hugh about a missed flight or change of schedule, e-mail them at the earliest possible opportunity, even if you do not yet know your future flight information. If you have not communicated your change-of-flight information, and you do not arrive at the La Paz airport at the scheduled time, Hye-Jung, Hugh, or another person will check email immediately and will work with you to coordinate next steps. Under these circumstances, please try to check your email regularly—at least every hour or so.

If your baggage is lost, contact American Airlines at the baggage information number above.

Trip Cancellations

In the event of certain political situations (blockades, strikes, etc), it may be necessary to cancel or postpone your trip. The decision to cancel is often a difficult one to make and will be made after considering several informed assessments of a situation, but will sometimes be made at the very last minute, relative to your travel plans. It is for this reason that it is essential we have your contact information prior to your departure. At times, it is necessary to cancel trips when there is only speculation of potential political problems. While this is disappointing, please respect our decision. We are not willing to compromise the safety of our visitors, nor our UAC-CP staff.

If your trip is cancelled, please contact the airline to determine the re-booking of your flight or reimbursement of funds if you are unable to postpone your visit. Again, the political situation can change quickly and it may be possible, depending on your schedule, to arrive one or two days after your original arrival date.

Departure Tax

Upon leaving Bolivia, you will be required to pay a departure tax of US \$25, which needs to be paid in US dollars and in cash.

Professional Visitors living and working as residents of Bolivia are required to pay both the \$25 departure tax and a 225 Boliviano tax to leave the country by plane.

Vaccinations

Professional Visitors are encouraged to consult a physician or travel clinic **at least two months in advance of arrival** regarding immunizations. **Documentation of yellow fever is required for the visa.** Additional recommended immunizations for Bolivia are Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B and typhoid. Also, be sure that your tetanus shot is up-to-date.

Anti-malarial medication is not necessary because carrier mosquitoes are not present in areas of higher altitude such as La Paz and Carmen Pampa. They are, however, suggested for visitors who plan for travel in lower elevation areas. Again, please consult your physician or local travel clinic.

Passports and Documentation

The following recommendations are for **US citizens only**.

A passport is necessary to enter Bolivia. If you do not currently carry a passport, apply for one several months in advance of your trip. If your passport expires soon, be sure to apply for a new passport (they must be valid for at least six months beyond your scheduled return date). Make two copies of all important documents (passport, driver's license, birth certificate, health insurance card, personal contact information, etc.). Leave one copy at home and carry the other copy with you in case your documents are lost or stolen.

United States citizens must have a visa to enter Bolivia. There are two types of visas. The visa you must get depends on the length of time you plan to stay in Bolivia.

1. Short-term visitors (**90 days or less**) should obtain a tourist visa. Tourist visas (for less than 90 day stays) can be obtained through the mail from the Bolivian Embassy in Washington, D.C. or upon arrival at the airport in La Paz. For more information, consult the Bolivian embassy's website: www.bolivia-usa.org. The cost of the tourist visa is \$135 US through the Bolivian embassy. This cost may be slightly higher if obtained upon arrival at the airport. For visitors traveling from Minnesota, there is the opportunity to obtain a visa from Gloria Steine, the Honorary Bolivian Consular, in Maple Grove. Appointments can be made by phone: 763-424-0265. The tourist visa to Bolivia is valid for five years.

2. Long-term Visiting Professionals (**90 days or more**) should apply for the *objeto determinado* visa. This visa **must be obtained in the U.S.** from the Bolivian embassy or consular services. It costs \$85. Please consult with Hye-Jung or Hugh if you intend to work at the UAC-CP for more than 90 days. (Visitors staying for longer than 90 days are personally responsible for paying for the process of long-term residency. This process costs approximately \$500 US and includes multiple visits to the city of La Paz).

Medical Insurance

Know the extent of international coverage you have through your medical insurance provider before arriving in Bolivia. Bring copies of important medical records, prescriptions and your insurance card. You may need to talk with your insurance agent to learn exactly what your coverage includes. The following are suggested questions to ask your agent:

- Does the plan include hospitalization for accidents and illnesses while abroad?
- What is the maximum amount of coverage provided?
- What is the coverage for medical evacuation?
- In the event of death, what is the coverage for repatriation of remains?
- Do you need to pay cash up front at a clinic or for a hospital stay? What if you have no money?
- Does the plan cover visits to the doctor or medication prescribed while abroad?
- If you must use your insurance, what do you show as proof of world-wide coverage?
- If you obtain medical assistance while you're abroad, when/how should you inform the agency?
- What documentation of expenses is required? Does the bill need to be in English and the amount of the charges in U.S. dollars?

Make sure that you have a way to get in touch with your agent from overseas in case you have additional questions. Some cards list a 1-800 number, but remember that number only works if you are calling from INSIDE the United States. You will need a phone number with an area code to call from Bolivia.

If you would like recommendations of health insurance providers that cover people living/working overseas, please ask Hye-Jung and Hugh.

Travel Insurance

Travel insurance can come in handy in case of an emergency. As life in Bolivia is often unpredictable, you may want to consult your local travel agent about options for purchasing a plan for your travel. There are many insurance options for travelers which are generally inexpensive, such as the following:

- **Baggage Insurance.** Including cameras, clothing and incidentals, your baggage is worth at least \$300 to \$500. Simple baggage insurance plans are available at banks and travel agencies. Check your homeowners insurance policy as it may already provide this coverage.
- **General Travel Insurance.** You may want to consider a standard travel policy which not only covers stolen or damaged baggage but will reimburse you for expenses incurred due to travel mishaps such as airline strikes, etc. Again, banks and travel agencies have such policies available.

4. MONEY: FEES, CURRENCY, ETC.

Exchanging Money

Money is easily exchanged from US dollars into *bolivianos* or *Bs* (pronounced 'bees'). The current exchange rate is approximately 7 Bs per US dollar. Dollars can be exchanged for bolivianos in La Paz or Coroico (the closest town to the UAC-CP). Dollars can be changed most easily in denominations of \$20, \$50 or \$100, but the bills must be in perfect condition (slight tears or marks on the bills will not be accepted).

Some professional visitors contribute 350 Bs/\$50 US per month to the Guest House. This covers food, cleaning, and other communal costs. *However, this cost is covered by for by the College for people who are employed as full-time teachers and make a commitment to work at the College for at least one semester.* (Note that there are few opportunities to spend much money at the UAC-CP.)

Also note that currently there are no ATMs in Coroico. Most visitors withdraw money—dollars or bolivianos or both—from the ATM at the airport in La Paz when they arrive. With the exception of hotels, credit cards are rarely accepted in Coroico. ATMS are common in the capital city of La Paz.

If an ATM fails to dispense requested money, copy down the name of the Bank, the location, and the time of the attempted withdrawal in case you find out later that money has been mistakenly withdrawn from your account. Visitors are also advised to consult their credit card companies in advance of travel about service rates for international withdrawals. You should call your credit card company to tell them you are traveling abroad so they do not block your account due to purchases made in Bolivia.

Past visitors have found that check cards offer much lower service rates than credit cards. Credit cards and check cards can be used only at select hotels, restaurants, etc., in La Paz. Travelers' checks are not recommended as many visitors have found them difficult to cash.

Again, before leaving, make two copies of all credit cards front and back. Keep one copy at home, and take the other with you. It will come in handy if your credit cards are lost or stolen.

5. MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION ABOUT BOLIVIA: TIME, CLIMATE, ALTITUDE, DISTANCES AND SAFETY

Time

Bolivia is four hours behind Greenwich Mean Time, which means that if it is noon in Chicago, it is 2:00 pm at the UAC-CP (or 1:00 pm during daylight savings).

Climate

Temperature varies considerably with altitude. During summer (December to March)—the rainy season in Bolivia—daily rains can last for hours at a time.

- **UAC-CP:** The temperature at UAC-CP stays relatively constant at a comfortable 70 to 80° Fahrenheit year round and is a few degrees cooler at night. Humidity is moderate. Note, however, that the weather can change at the drop of a hat, from rainy and cooler to sunny and hot. Be prepared for weather changes with a raincoat or rain poncho, a hat for the sun, sunglasses, and comfortable shoes that are not too hot but good for the mud.
- **La Paz:** Temperatures are also relatively constant throughout the year in La Paz, although considerably cooler at night or in the shade. Average daytime temperatures range from the 50 to 75° Fahrenheit. Nighttime temperatures dip to 32°. Due to the altitude, the air is very dry.

Altitude Sickness

Altitude sickness can affect those who normally live at low altitudes and ascend approximately 8,000 feet. Visitors often experience altitude sickness in La Paz, nearly 12,000 feet above sea level. Symptoms include headache, nausea, breathlessness, racing pulse, lethargy, insomnia, loss of appetite and dehydration. Altitude

sickness is significantly less prevalent at UAC-CP, at about 6,000 feet, although visitors often feel lethargic in their first few days on campus. To stave off the effects of altitude sickness, drink plenty of water (two liters a day), rest often, eat lightly and refrain from strenuous exercise. Non-aspirin pain relievers and caffeine work well to fight headaches. Some people may want to ask their physician to prescribe something like diamox for altitude sickness.

Distances

La Paz to UAC-CP: Approximately 3 ½ hours.

NOTE: The “Most Beautiful Road in the World” (MBRW)—perhaps better known as the “Most Dangerous Road in the World”—is no longer in use for normal travel. The UAC-CP and public vehicles now use the new, paved road that runs parallel to the MBRW, and is much less dramatic. The new road (called the Cotapata-Santa Barbara road) also has spectacular views and the travel time is still about three hours.

Coroico to Carmen Pampa: The distance is approximately thirty-five minutes by car or a three-hour walk. Public transport is available during the school year and costs 3.5 Bs. Taxis are also available between Coroico and Carmen Pampa, but are relatively more expensive (45-55 Bs, *mas o menos*).

Safety

Relatively speaking, Bolivia is one of the safest countries in South America, but you should take basic precautions, especially in urban areas:

- La Paz: Pickpockets are common in La Paz and often work in teams with elaborate schemes that attempt to distract you. You may be spilled on, or a person may “accidentally” drop something in front of you. If this happens, keep walking. Do not accept assistance from anyone who offers to “help” wipe off whatever has been spilled on you. There are also a growing number of scams that involve thieves impersonating law enforcement officials who demand your identification. Again, keep walking or if you are in a cab, ask to get out immediately. To avoid robbery, wear a money belt and keep no important documents or money in your pockets or back pack.
- UAC-CP is quite safe. To err on the side of caution, please keep your important documents tucked away in your room. If you need items secured, please let someone in the house know, and they will make the appropriate arrangements for you.

6. PACKING LIST

Luggage

One or two pieces of larger luggage is sufficient. Canvas bags and backpacks or hard suitcases with rollers are all recommended. Luggage should be labeled. It should not be locked during flights as routine luggage searches are common and require airport personnel to break locks to open luggage. A smaller backpack or bag is also recommended for short trips or carrying around campus.

Please check American Airlines’ website for current baggage and weight limit restrictions.

Packing Hints

Many UAC-CP visitors have found the following packing guidelines useful.

- Mix and match several items of clothing—pick a scheme like black, brown or navy.
- Each piece of clothing should match at least two other items.
- Do not pack anything you would be upset to lose—such as valuables and jewelry.
- Bring only comfortable shoes that have been broken in.
- Do not bring anything that wrinkles easily or needs to be dry cleaned.

- Roll your clothing in your suitcase to maximize space and cut down on wrinkling.
- Use large-zip lock bags or mesh bags to keep items visible and separate.
- Bring at least a few articles of clothing that will dry quickly.
- Don't forget about the UAC-CP's teacher dress code: **beige shirts!**

Clothing

Dress is very casual at the UAC-CP. As teachers and administrators, visiting professionals are expected follow the College's dress code. They are also expected to wear appropriately modest clothing both inside and outside the classroom or office. Sleeveless shirts and shorts are acceptable, but not recommended for daily wear as bug bites are common and itchy! Low cut tank tops and/or midriff shirts and short shorts/skirts or well-worn clothing with holes are not acceptable.

- **Pants.** Many find the biting insects bothersome and opt to wear pants around campus.
- **Shorts.** For traveling, playing sports, etc.
- **Long-sleeved shirts.** *UAC-CP professional visitors are required to abide by the College's uniform policy when teaching class. All faculty and administrators are asked to wear beige, button-down dress shirts (either long-sleeved or short-sleeved).*
- **Short-sleeved shirts**
- **Fleece jacket**
- **Rain poncho**
- **Warm jacket.** Nights can be cool in Carmen Pampa. It can be quite cold in La Paz.
- **Warm hat and gloves.** Again, La Paz can get quite cold
- **Sturdy sandals with back straps such as Chacos or Texas**
- **Boots and/or shoes for general use or hiking that are good in mud**
- **Slippers or flip flops for around the house or in the shower**
- **Pajamas**
- **Underwear and socks**
- **Modest swimsuit.** There is a little pool an hour's walk from UAC-CP. A suit will be handy if you intend to do some traveling.

Toiletries

- **Prescription medicine.** Be sure to consult your physician at least two months ahead to request an extended prescription for the time you will stay at Carmen Pampa. Carry medicines in original, labeled prescription bottles.
- **General medicines:** Aspirin/Tylenol, allergy medicine, Pepto Bismol, decongestant, anti-diarrheal prescription such as Cipro, antibiotics, etc.
- **General topicals:** Hand sanitizer, sun screen, insect repellent with DEET, lip balm, anti-itch cream
- **Toothpaste, floss, toothbrush**
- **Razors**
- **Travel packs of toilet paper and tissue.** Again, travel sizes of these items are very convenient.
- **Contacts and contact solution.** If you wear heat-disinfected contacts, you may want to consider switching to chemical as heated water is mainly available only when warmed on the stovetop. Consider bringing extra contacts and a copy of your contact/ glasses prescription, just in case
- **Make up.** If you wear it at home, there may be occasions to wear it at the UAC-CP.
- **Daily vitamins** such as calcium and iron
- **Deodorant / Antiperspirant**
- **Anti-nausea medication** if needed for car sickness

In the case that you should forget any of these items from home, note that most of these things are available at pharmacies in La Paz.

Miscellaneous

- **At least US\$200 in small bills and medium bills.**

- **Pocket knife and nail clipper** (remember to put in checked luggage)
- **Flashlight or headlamp**
- **Book(s)** The Guest House has an excellent selection of books left by past visitors. Feel free to add to the collection.
- **Journal**
- **Favorite recipes.** Limited ingredients are available in Coroico, but you may be able to modify your recipes with local foodstuffs.
- **Wide brimmed hat and sunglasses**
- **Converters/adapters** for American electronics which use 110 volts. The UAC-CP uses a standard current of 220 volts (Note: Newer laptops and digital cameras generally do *not* require voltage converters, while small appliances (hair dryer, curling iron, electric razor) may need one. Check your piece of equipment before plugging it in to see if it indicates 110V or 220V---or both!)
- **Camera, CDs, memory card and other camera accessories**
- **Water bottle.** Nalgene and similar brands are perfect as they don't break and can easily be filled with hot or cold water.
- **Business cards**
- **Extra batteries**
- **Money belt**
- **Office supplies:** pens, notebooks and other materials such as paperclips, small calculator, etc.
- **Address book (small) and envelopes**
- **Inflatable neck pillow, ear plugs and eye blinds** for the overnight flight to La Paz.
- **Maps and guidebooks....** but only if you are traveling around Bolivia before you come to the UAC-CP. We have many Bolivia guidebooks for reference at the Guest House that you can borrow or keep.
- **Spanish/English pocket dictionary**
- **Alarm clock:** travel size battery-powered.
- **First aid & sewing kits**
- **Safety pins and rubber bands**
- **Stationery** for thank you notes
- **MP3 player or an iPod.** We have speakers the Guest House.
- **Pictures of family and friends,** both for you and to share with UAC-CP students
- **Hand sanitizer**
- **Laptop computer**

IF YOU HAVE EXTRA ROOM IN YOUR SUITCASE . . .

Please consider bringing and leaving the following GENTLY USED items for the Guest House: pillows, single/double bed sheets and blankets, towels, etc. Any and all items will be greatly appreciated and put to valuable use.

UAC-CP professional visitors always welcome visitors bearing gifts. Frequent requests include: peanut butter, parmesan or other cheese, chocolate, non-yellow mustard, pancake syrup, etc...

Additionally, family and friends of current UAC-CP visiting professionals often find it helpful to send packages down with visitors, both to save money and assure safe arrival. If you're willing to carry a package, please share your mailing address with Hye-Jung or Hugh at least three weeks before your departure so that they can make arrangements for a package to be sent to you.

7. CULTURAL PRIMER

"Perhaps the greatest power of educational exchange is the power to convert nations into peoples and to translate ideologies into human aspirations."

—J.W. Fulbright

“Bolivian time”

The Bolivian time-table is always subject to change, which means not everything happens when it is scheduled and sometimes, without warning, it doesn't happen at all. The best way to deal with unpredictable schedules is to accept that you are on “Bolivian Time” and go with the flow. Embracing “Bolivian Time” can be a good opportunity to take a break from the fast pace of American life and enjoy the moment.

Social Graces

Greet people individually when you meet them and say goodbye individually when you leave. If the greeting is male-female or female-female, Bolivians will often press their right cheek to yours with a small kiss when they meet you or say hello. Greetings between men consist of a combination of handshakes and pats on the shoulder.

Accept Bolivians' offers of food, drink or small gifts. However, don't feel obligated to eat or drink something you think could cause illness.

Be conscious of rural Bolivians' hunger. Please do not eat in front of UAC-CP students or local community members, unless you are at a meal or in an environment where everyone has food. Often people have not eaten. If you must eat around or with students—on a nursing trip to the rural communities, for example—please bring sufficient food along to share with everyone, as others may not have food.

Even if you know only a little Spanish, speak it with Bolivians. They are generally very patient listeners and will try to help you speak.

The Aymara

Between fifty and sixty percent of Bolivians are of Indigenous heritage and speak either Aymaran or Quechua. The native people of Bolivia are often called *campesinos* because they live in the *campo*, or rural area. Until the 1950s a significant portion of the Aymaran people lived in slave-like conditions. Many students at UAC-CP speak Aymara or Quechua as their first language. *Campesinos* living in Carmen Pampa and the surrounding communities speak Aymara.

Visiting rural communities

Visits to nearby rural communities can be arranged. These visits provide dramatic insight into the lives of Bolivians who are poor. If you go, note that the first and perhaps only language of most people in rural communities is Aymara. Please tell a member of the Guest House if you are interested in a rural community visit. If an opportunity arises for a visit, they will coordinate it for you.

Local food

Bolivian meals typically consist of a bowl of soup, followed by a meat dish that includes at least two forms of carbohydrates, such as breads, potatoes or rice. Many fresh fruits and vegetables are available. Be sure to have a *salteña*, Bolivia's most popular and unique pastry.

Bolivians wish each other “bon appetite” with the word *provecho*, the reply to which is *gracias*. *Provecho* is said both before and after a meal.

Shopping

Visitors can find nearly every handicraft in La Paz in the shopping area around San Francisco church. If you want to spend time shopping in La Paz, please let Hye-Jung and Hugh know, and they will arrange your schedule accordingly. Clothing can also be purchased in La Paz. Bartering is acceptable in La Paz.

Gift giving

Gift giving is not expected in Bolivia. However, if you'd like to give gifts, UAC-CP suggests you bring a few small gifts such as pens or postcards to share with select professors and students you meet at UAC-CP. Please

do not bring many gifts and/or distribute them broadly, as this reinforces the stereotype that visitors are rich, and it can build an expectation of gift-giving for future visitors.

8. ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS AND VISITING PROFESSIONALS AT CARMEN PAMPA

The primary focus of this discussion is dating/romantic relationships between visiting professionals and Bolivians, particularly UAC-CP students and thesis students.

The purpose of this discussion is not to dictate morality. We welcome discussion of the sexual mores and values of contemporary popular culture, traditional Bolivian society, and Franciscan Catholic Social teachings, upon which the College was founded.

Falling in love is a real possibility for a variety of reasons.

Most visitors to the UAC-CP desire to enter into the heart of their new culture. Key to your success during this time as an employee of the UAC-CP will be building cross-cultural friendships on a level deeper than those which a tourist or passive observer would build. Living and working at the UAC-CP, people have the rare opportunity to experience a genuine closeness to our students and townspeople that other visitors do not. This is a rich reward, but one that also places visiting professionals in a position of vulnerability—there is always the possibility of falling in love.

For young adults, the building of intimate significant relationships is a primary part of establishing one's identity. Many visiting professionals at the UAC-CP arrive from a college subculture in which dating is a high priority. It is unrealistic to assume this desire will vanish when you arrive in Carmen Pampa. In fact, these needs may be especially heightened at times when a person feels alone and is surrounded by young, attractive peers—as may be the case for you at the UAC-CP. Sometimes, when we are actively pursued and told how beautiful/handsome we are, it can be intoxicating. (This is true not only for the young).

Emotional entanglements can happen surprisingly quickly. By a second or third meeting, what at first had seemed simply an interesting friendship might already call for a step back...to reflect.

Some things to consider:

- **Inequality.** There is an inherent imbalance between the partners in a cross-cultural relationship, since they come from and will ultimately be living in completely different worlds. As much as we hate to acknowledge it, is important to accept the fact that our status as North Americans or Europeans is an inflated one. Consider our advanced publicity—the image of our cultures that is portrayed in the media. Consider our education and future earning potential. Consider the options we have, e.g. a seriously ill person can be flown to the U.S. where the best treatment is available.
- **Platonic friendships.** Non-physical personal relationships between men and women are not common in Bolivian culture and society. To presume that such a relationship will occur on a long-term basis is unrealistic. The good intentions of a solitary person will not reverse the cultural and societal norms of male/female relationships on Bolivia.
- **Role of women.** Women are particularly vulnerable because blatant patriarchy is the norm in Bolivian society. In many cases here, if a man and woman are publicly seen alone together, the presumption is that they are sexually involved with one another.

Men are not exempt from responsibility. We do not want to perpetuate a climate that degrades women. An attitude of respect for local women and brotherly concern for female visitors would be consistent with our mission. Such empathy has been for many male visitors a moment of growth, as they witness, and more importantly listen to, the experiences of female companions.

- **Fairness.** Is it fair to the Bolivian national for a visitor from another country to enter a romantic relationship that should be based on equality and commitment when these two values are so drastically challenged from the start?
- **Self-deception.** It is said that the rich person never knows his real friends. Though we may never have considered ourselves rich, we appear so in this environment. The North American or European is a very desirable friend.
- **Disruption to the Guest House and Visiting Professional Community.** Professional visitors at the UAC-CP live together in shared space. They commit themselves to support their fellows and be supported in difficult times. This means members of the community agree to honest dialogue with each other in hope that people of various backgrounds and personalities do not just “get along” but also assist each others’ journey.
- **Status of future visitors.** Our actions and choices will directly affect the people who come after us—how they are perceived and how they will be welcomed. A small village has a much longer collective memory than a large urban center or a transitory college culture. Our actions will impact the future effectiveness of the UAC-CP in helping the community. It would be unfortunate to perpetuate the perception that foreigners come here and take what they desire of this country’s riches and beauty then depart with little regard for what they’ve left behind.
- **Objective of visiting professionals.** Love calls us to invest ourselves in many people, especially those who are powerless, suffering, and poor. In contrast, a romantic relationship implies an exclusive investment in one other person. This, too, is a sacred investment that most people pursue in some chapter of their life. Each visiting professional is asked to consider whether s/he can put this important human concern (i.e. the pursuit of exclusive romantic relationships) on the backburner for a time. Are you willing to focus your emotional energies on the people that we, together, are dedicated to serving?

TO BE A WELL PREPARED TRAVELER AND CONSIDERATE GUEST IN BOLIVIA . . .

- Travel in a spirit of humility and with a genuine desire to meet and talk with local people.
- Do not expect to find things as you have them at home. You have left your home to find difference.
- Do not be too serious. An open mind and a sense of humor is the beginning of a wonderful experience at UAC-CP.
- Do not let others get on your nerves. You have come a long way to be a good ambassador for your country, to learn as much as you can and to enjoy the experience.
- Know where your passport is at all times.
- Do not worry. It can take the fun out of your Bolivian experience!
- Do not judge the people of Bolivia by the one person with whom you have had trouble. This is unfair to the Bolivian people as a whole.
- Remember that you are a guest in Bolivia.
- Cultivate the habit of listening and observing, rather than merely hearing and seeing.
- Realize that other people may have ideas, lifestyles and concepts of time which are very different from yours—not inferior, only different.
- Be aware of the feelings of local people to prevent what might be offensive behavior.
- Taking photographs must be done with respect. Always ask before taking a photograph of a community member or student.
- Make no promises to new local friends that you cannot fulfill. This is especially important around UAC-CP. If you want to do something special for people you meet, talk about its feasibility with members of the community who have more experience before suggesting it to your new Bolivian friend. This includes even such small things as promising to send pictures of local people that you have taken.
- Devote some time to daily reflection in order to gain a deeper understanding of your experiences.

Last updated: August 2011