

There are several options for organizing a study abroad program:

- A faculty member who has spent time in a country can use his or her experience and contacts to take students back to that country. This is what happened with the Nicaragua dental mission trips.
- An OTC faculty member can work with an existing local organization to organize a trip. The Nicaragua trip, for instance, works with Project H.O.P.E., which provides the translators. OTC's first trip to China was a service learning project, with a local church group going to work in an orphanage in Bautou, Inner Mongolia. The leader of the church group organized the entire trip, and four OTC students and an instructor went along to provide dental care and occupational therapy to the orphans and the staff. We attended the meetings, and made the payments.
- A faculty member can utilize the contacts and arrangements of another community college's similar trip. Jessica Gerard first went on a trip to China with St Louis Community College at Forest Park, then worked with the national tour guide from that trip to create a trip just for OTC. He organizes everything within China, and we pay the contracted fee per student. With 10 students, one instructor's in-China fees are paid, with 16 students, two faculty members go free. We organize and book our own travel to and from China.
- Most faculty members lack these contacts, and rely on an educational travel company. These companies make all the arrangements and the faculty just organize students to get their passports and pay the fees. The faculty members' trips are entirely paid for. Students must pay the fees at fixed intervals, and there must be a minimum number of students going. The firms can be very flexible and allow you to completely customize your group's itinerary. One OTC trip, for instance, planned to tour England to visit sites associated with Jane Austen, with EF Tours. EF Educational Tours is the most popular company among OTC faculty for this option. They have many options, including a customized itinerary, and are very willing to work with faculty, even coming to Springfield to meet with the trip leaders. They have an excellent website that you can explore, at eftours.com. Be aware that the low per student cost initially quoted is for students 20 and under. Most of our student travelers will be over 20, so the trip will cost more than it initially indicates.