

Nicaragua alumni

Alumni Spotlight

The SUSI experience: Young Leaders

By Martha Sánchez, SUSI for Young Leaders alumna



Photos: tour of the Grand Canyon in Colorado; visit to the General Assembly of the United Nations in New York; teamwork exercise on the rapids of the Deerfield River; visit to the Empire State building in New York.

My name is Martha Sánchez; I'm 21 years old; I study Diplomacy and Political Sciences in Managua and I'm a SUSI Leader in Nicaragua.

After I was selected for the SUSI program 2012, along with 19 youth from 7 different countries of Central America and the Caribbean, I learned about U.S. history and government, shared experiences from my country, made new friends, and lived unforgettable adventures.

One of the main topics of the program was Democracy, no doubt one of my favorite themes given my professional profile. The U.S. electoral system presented very interesting elements not only for me or my Nicaraguan classmates, but for all the participants,

We attended talks about the importance of equal representation of minority and majority groups in the upper and lower houses of the U.S. government, the different perceptions of democracy, and the origins of the U.S. Constitution. We also covered the approval of the 27 constitutional amendments that in the Constitution's 225 years of existence progressively achieved the broadening of the rights of an individual in the U.S., thus diminishing the differences based on race or gender.

A combination of SUSI program themes and reflections inspired the project "The U.S. and Nicaragua: Youth Working for Democracy," after my return. My Nicaraguan classmates and I designed this



project to share what we learned about Democracy and Human Rights, especially those of women and the LGBT community. This proposal was presented in Washington, D.C. during the SUSI exchange experience and approved by the U.S. Department of State and Institute of Training and Development (ITD), the organization that

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manages the SUSI program in the U.S. The project took place in October 2012 with 50 active young and active college leaders from the National Autonomous University of León and Managua. It generated discussions on the topics of democracy and encouraged participants to identify elements in the U.S. context that could contribute to the processes undertaken in Nicaragua. To us, this project represents one of our main tasks and commitment to follow up on the SUSI program in Nicaragua.

Strengthening our leadership skills, increasing our knowledge of U.S. history and polishing team building skills were also tackled during the program. These courses were without a doubt reinforced by the various activities we participated in such as the raft ride in the rapids of the Deerfield River in Massachusetts, the guided visits to highly influential multilateral organizations like the United Nations in New York, the tour to the touristic commercial area and one of the most visited sites worldwide-Times Square, the guided trips to iconic monuments such as the Statue of Liberty, the September 11 Memorial in New York and the Empire

State Building, and the excursion to Sonora Desert.

Besides all the knowledge we gained and the places we visited, the friendships we made with each of the participants were what made this experience unforgettable. After August 2012, everyone has a new brother or sister in each Central American country.

To try to describe the SUSI experience in one word would be impossible, but without a doubt it has been



one of the best experiences I've lived!

STATE ALUMNI *Register NOW!*

Are you interested in the Internet and education? How about innovation or entrepreneurship? Can you guess which website Bill Gates uses to teach his own children at home? Have you heard of the Khan Academy or its founder Salman Khan?

Salman Khan wants to talk with you, **State Alumni** members, during an exclusive VIP webchat on Wednesday **November 14, 2012**. He will be answering questions only from State Alumni members so submit your questions now!

Date: Wednesday November 14, 2012

Time: 9:00am Washington, DC time

Website: State Alumni members may interact with Dr. Khan on the State Alumni website (non-members may only watch on [CO.NX website](#)).

For those who have not heard of the Khan Academy, here is a sample video from [YouTube](#) and some trivia.

- * Khan Academy is one of the largest online education resources today with 200 million lessons delivered through 3500 videos.
- * Dr. Khan was one of Time Magazine's 100 Most Influential People for 2012.
- * Khan Academy has 190 million views of its YouTube channel (compared to MIT OpenCourseWare's 40 million views!).
- * The YouTube videos are available in multiple languages, including Turkish, Urdu, Swahili, Hindi, Arabic and more.

Can't make it to the event? No problem. [Click here](#) to submit your questions in advance. Then watch the recording later!

By the way, did you notice that our webchats now have a chat roll? So you can not only ask Dr. Khan questions but also chat with one another while viewing the event!

All this and more. Only on State Alumni.

What's going on...

Recent Alumni News

➔ **Strengthening Youth Ambassador Alumni**

From Sept. 17-19, Youth Ambassadors alumni from 2011-2012 attended a three day seminar to strengthen skills that will contribute to a proactive participation in their communities. The topics addressed were: young entrepreneurship, youth leadership, citizen participation and cross cultural understanding. During the event, organized by our partner Georgetown CIED, alumni discussed the importance of registering in State Alumni website and enjoying the benefits. At the closing of the event, the alumni formed three groups that later received around US\$400 each for materials to carry out social projects in their communities.



➔ **Alumni participation highlighted in regional workshop!**

IVLP Alumni Luis Valladares and Maria Jose Diaz traveled to Costa Rica from Oct. 1-5 to participate in the regional enhancement seminar on Youth Empowerment and Citizen Security. Due to their extensive experience in specific fields of interest, they each participated as a seminar panelist. Luis Valladares talked about promoting youth leadership through civil society and Maria Jose Diaz addressed the rights of the young man, the young woman and women.



➔ **Alumni from Bluefields meet new Public Affairs Officer (PAO) and talk about their U.S. experiences.**

On Oct. 10, alumni from Bluefields city met with the new PAO. The meeting provided an opportunity for the alumni to talk about how the exchange experience affected their views and opinions.



➔ **Alumni in Action: SUSI for Young Leaders alumni talk about democracy issues!**

Oct. 11, SUSI alumni Martha Sanchez, Ingrid Cisne and Elvin Rodriguez replicated what they learned during their exchange experience in the SUSI for Young Leaders program with their classmates. Each of the three alumni chose one topic that had the most impact on them – Democracy in the U.S., U.S. Constitution, and Women and LGBT Rights. The alumni met with 50 college students for a half-day workshop in the colonial city of Leon to talk about these concepts, to receive feedback on these issues, and to promote debate on how these themes relate to Nicaragua's social and political context. The alumni implemented this project with funds they received from the exchange program.



➔ **UGRAD Alumnus visits local university to promote the UGRAD program.**

UGRAD alumnus William Chamorro visited UNAN Managua on Oct. 18, to promote the UGRAD program to 30 students from this university. The visit was organized by SUSI for High School Educator alumnus Ricardo Mendieta, who also works as a TEFL teacher at UNAN. The activity featured a promotional video in which Francisco Sevilla, another UGRAD, talked about his experience in the UGRAD program. William followed the video presentation by talking to the students about his experience at the University of Arkansas. The students were enthusiastic about the program and, after the presentation, several students approached William to talk one-on-one.



➔ **Facebook webchat with UGRAD Alumni Sara Guevara was a hit!**

On Oct. 25, Sara joined Embassy staff to encourage students to apply to UGRAD. The event was conducted live via the U.S. Embassy's Facebook page with our fans. Sara chatted away about her own experiences during her exchange. Ambassador Powers came by to greet Sara during the chat. The program was seen by 167 people, 20 of whom asked questions and participated actively in the exchange.



Photo Gallery



UGRAD alumni Victor Silva y Walter Gomez during a college fair, FICA, at UCA.



Fulbright alumna Margarita Montealegre talking about her photos to the audience.



Inst. of the Americas alumna, Dora Gutiérrez, talking about her Exchange experience at her school.

Calendar of Activities for Nov.-Dec.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
4	5	6 	7	8	9	10
11 	12 Embassy Closed	13 https://conx.state.gov/vcfl	14 https://conx.state.gov/vcfl	15 Youth Amb. program submission deadline	16	17
18	19	20	21	22 Embassy Closed	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30 UGRAD program submission deadline	1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21 	22

VISIT OUR WEBSITE
Exchange Opportunities



Happening NOW!

Youth Programs

Accepting applications for the following programs:

⇒ [Global Undergraduate Exchange Program](#)

⇒ [Youth Ambassadors](#)

<http://spanish.nicaragua.usembassy.gov/es/index.html>

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<http://www.facebook.com/embusanic>