Central America
CROSSING COSTA RICA, NICARAGUA & EL SALVADOR
January 18-29, 2015 with Professor Bud Wobus
Dear Fellow Alumni, Parents and Friends of the College,

Central America—an isthmus fusing North and South America—contains far more than the beautiful beaches and exotic rain forests that most people imagine. On this exciting journey you traverse Costa Rica, Nicaragua and El Salvador by air, bus and boat in a journey that touches both the Caribbean Sea and Pacific Ocean. We’ll learn about the areas’ active volcanic history as well as its colonial and Pre-Columbian past. Enjoy the region’s soaring mountains, scenic coffee farms, spectacular wildlife, stunning lakes and tasty cuisine.

Traveling with you throughout this exploration of Central America will be Williams’ own geologist and intrepid explorer, Bud Wobus. Bud will make the region come alive with in depth commentary and lectures on the topography, volcanic pattern and geologic evolution of the isthmus. Each day will deepen your understanding of the amazing biodiversity and geology of this region.

Trip highlights include visiting Tortuguero National Park, nesting place of the endangered sea turtle, touring the charming colonial cities of Granada and León, crossing the dramatic Gulf of Fonseca, dotted by islands and volcanoes, relaxing at the secluded Maculis Beach and exploring the unique pre-Columbian Maya site of Joya de Cerén, the “Pompeii” of Central America. Along the way, you will have the opportunity to observe the area’s varied wildlife including sloths, monkeys, tropical birds, caiman, iridescent butterflies and colorful frogs.

Join Bud on an exploration of Central America during its dry season when its lush tropical climates are inviting and the weather is optimal. Bud’s past travel programs have sold out quickly, so I urge you to send in your reservation at your earliest convenience. Please email me at with any questions at RBehr@williams.edu or FAX your your reservation to 925-855-1909.

Kind Regards,

Robert Behr, Coordinator
The Williams College Alumni Travel-Study Program
413-597-4011

Professor Reinhard (Bud) Wobus initiated alumni travel in 1981 when he took a group to Colorado to examine the geology. Every year since our Williams family has enjoyed one of Bud’s trips to some geologically fascinating part of the world. In 2015 Bud moves to Central America and its volcanoes, one of his favorite topics. His past destinations have included Iceland, Hawaii, Patagonia, the Alps, Australia, the Galapagos, the Canadian Rockies, New Zealand, and of course Colorado. Bud has been at Williams since 1966 after receiving his A.B. from Washington University and his Ph.D. from Stanford.
Itinerary

SUNDAY, JANUARY 18
U.S. / SAN JOSÉ, COSTA RICA
Depart today for San José, Costa Rica. Upon arrival, transfer to our hotel. Holiday Inn Escazu or Alta Hotel (Meals Aloft)

MONDAY, JANUARY 19
SAN JOSÉ / TORTUGUERO
Today we embark on a fascinating journey by bus and boat to Tortuguero National Park on the Caribbean Coast. On our way, travel through the immense Braulio Carrillo National Park, a montane forest and then board a boat to cruise the Tortuguero canals to our lodge. Our lodge is located five minutes by boat from the entrance of the park. Remote and surrounded by forest, this comfortable lodge is a delightful get-away. Evergreen or Aninga Lodge (B,L,D)

TUESDAY, JANUARY 20
TORTUGUERO / ARENAL
This morning fly to Arenal located in Costa Rica’s fertile northern lowlands and home to Arenal Volcano. Arenal’s near-perfect conical shape provides a quintessential image of a volcano and it is truly a national symbol and a popular destination. In the afternoon we will relax at our lodge with time to enjoy the magnificent views and explore the grounds searching for wildlife including toucans and monkeys. In the evening relax at geothermal hot springs heated by the volcano. Arenal Springs or Volcano Lodge & Springs (B,L,D)

THURSDAY, JANUARY 22
ARENAL / SAN CARLOS, NICARAGUA) / GRANADA
Depart for Granada, Nicaragua via the Pan American Highway traveling around Lake Nicaragua, the largest lake in Central America. Granada, situated along the north shore of the lake, is renowned for its colonial architecture. Founded by the Spanish in 1524 and subsequently razed three times by pirates. It was beautifully rebuilt. Our hotel is in the heart of the historic district. Hotel Darío (B,L)

FRIDAY, JANUARY 23
GRANADA / MOMBACHO
This morning take a relaxing boat ride around the islands of Lake Nicaragua. Strewn across the lake are hundreds of small islands formed from a volcanic eruption that occurred thousands of years ago. Enjoy an afternoon excursion and hike to the Mombacho Volcano this afternoon. Ascend to the top of the volcano by 4x4 vehicle and take a short hike while taking in breathtaking views. Search for howler and white-faced monkeys as well as deer, reptiles, and the endemic Mombacho salamander, found only in this volcano. Enjoy an evening at leisure to explore historic Granada. Hotel Darío (B,L)

SATURDAY, JANUARY 24
GRANADA / MASAYA / LEÓN
Depart for Masaya, known as the city of flowers. We’ll visit the Masaya Volcano and hear its rumbling and observe the fumaroles inside its immense crater. The interior of the volcano is home to green parakeets that have adapted to the sulfur smoke. Continue to the Masaya market to see local handicrafts. This afternoon we arrive in the historical city of León. Our charming hotel is a former convent. Hotel El Convento (B,L)
SUNDAY, JANUARY 25

LEÓN

León was the home of the national poet, Rubén Darío, one of the greatest poets in the Americas. Visit the cathedral Basilica of the Assumption of León, one of the largest cathedrals in Central America and where Darío is buried. We'll also tour the Ruben Dario Museum and some of Leon's architectural jewels, including the Church of the Recolección with its yellow facade. Hotel El Convento (B,L,D)

MONDAY, JANUARY 26

LEÓN / GULF OF FONSECA CROSSING / LA UNIÓN, EL SALVADOR

Visit the fishing village of Potosí; then travel by boat across the Gulf of Fonseca, the most scenic and fastest route between Nicaragua and El Salvador. The Gulf is a fascinating place of rugged beauty, a hidden gem in Central America. Stop for lunch at one of the islands in the Gulf. Arrive at the port of La Unión. Comfort Inn (B,L,D)

TUESDAY, JANUARY 27

LA UNIÓN / MACULIS BEACH / SAN SALVADOR

Depart for San Salvador stopping at Maculis Beach, a private one mile long crescent-shaped beach that is dotted at either end with volcanic boulders. After a delightful beach side lunch, we’ll continue to the cosmopolitan capital city of San Salvador, the second largest in Central America. Located in the foothills of the Quetzaltepec, or San Salvador Volcano, the city has a long and fascinating history, with origins dating back to long before the Spanish Conquest. Our hotel is located in the upscale neighborhood of San Benito. Hotel Sheraton Presidente (B,L,D)

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 28

SAN SALVADOR / JOYA DE CERÉN / EL BOQUERÓN

This morning visit the UNESCO World Heritage and Maya archaeological site of Joya de Cerén. It features a pre-Columbian Maya farming village that was preserved under layers of volcanic ash and is remarkably intact. Continue to the Parque Nacional El Boquerón, which sits atop San Salvador Volcano. Admire its enormous crater, El Boquerón, and take in the incredible views of the capital city. Lunch is at a restaurant with vistas of the Lake Ilopango, a volcanic caldera. On our return, enjoy a city tour that includes the restored Metropolitan Cathedral and elegant National Theatre, plazas and avenues. Gather for a farewell dinner. Hotel Sheraton Presidente (B,L,D)

THURSDAY, JANUARY 29

SAN SALVADOR / U.S.

After breakfast transfer to the airport for flight home. (B)

Optional Post-Trip Extension to Copán, Honduras

January 29-February 1, 2014

Depart for the archaeological site of Copán, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, one of the great centers of Maya civilization. The ruins, located in western Honduras, are famous for their impressive pre-Columbian art, carvings and stelae. The recently excavated site of “Las Sepulturas” displays some of the purest examples of the Classical Period. On our way to the ruins we’ll stop at lovely colonial village of Suchitoto, El Salvador known for its whitewashed houses and cobblestone streets overlooking Lake Suchitlán. After 2 nights in Copán, we’ll return to El Salvador and check in at a beachfront hotel. Enjoy the remainder of the afternoon by the Pacific Ocean. The next day transfer to the nearby Comalapa Airport for flights home to the U.S. Hotel Marina Copán (2 nights) and Hotel Pacific Paradise (1 night) (3B, 3L, 2D). $1,150 per person, double occupancy. Single supplement $140.
**Costs:**

**LAND PROGRAM COST:** $4,995 (Per person based on double occupancy).

**SINGLE SUPPLEMENT:** $845 (Subject to availability, first-come, first-served)

*Should you request to share a twin room, we will attempt to find a roommate for you. However, if at the time of final payment no roommate is available, the single supplement fee is charged.

**SAMPLE AIRFARE FROM JFK OR BOSTON:** $745*

*As of January 2014 and is subject to change. (Other gateway cities are available)

**COPÁN EXTENSION:** $1,150

Single Supplement: $140

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**Terms and Conditions:**

**TOUR SIZE:** This tour, exclusively designed for Williams College Alumni and friends, is limited to 26 participants on a first-come, first-served basis.

**PROGRAM COST INCLUDES:** Accommodations and meals as specified in the itinerary; all land and water transportation; internal flight by prop plane within Costa Rica (Tortuguero/Arenal); airport transfers; guides throughout; domestic airport departure taxes; entrance fees; baggage handling; bottled water on excursions; gratuities to local guides and drivers; educational program with lecture series and pre-departure materials; services of a professional tour director to assist you throughout the program; coordination; and administration.

**PROGRAM COST DOES NOT INCLUDE:** International and U.S. domestic airfare (quoted separately); meals not specified in the itinerary; personal items such as laundry, fax or telephone calls, liquor, dishes and beverages not part of included meals, room service, passport fees, excess baggage charges, individual transfers, tip to tour director, medical expenses, travel insurance, or deviations from the scheduled tour.

**RESERVATIONS, DEPOSITS, AND FINAL PAYMENT:** To reserve a space on this tour, please mail a deposit of $800 per person payable to "Royal Adventures", along with the completed reservation form to ROYAL ADVENTURES, 9 Crow Canyon Court, San Ramon, CA 94583. Reservations are acknowledged in order of receipt until the maximum enrollment of 26 passengers has been reached. Deposits may be charged to a credit card. Final payment is due October 17, 2014 and must be paid by check. Royal Adventures handles all bookings, ticketing, and invoicing. CST #2009579-40

**CANCELLATIONS AND REFUNDS:** Refunds, less a cancellation fee of $200 per person, are made if we are notified in writing on or before May 16, 2014. Cancellations received between May 17, 2014 and October 17, 2014 are subject to a $500 per person cancellation fee. No refunds are made after October 17, 2014. All cancellations must be made in writing. There are no refunds for unused meals, accommodations, or other trip features.

**INSURANCE:** We highly recommend the purchase of trip cancellation insurance. An application for travel insurance will be available upon confirmation. Neither The Williams Alumni Association nor Royal Adventures accept liability for any airline cancellation penalty incurred by the purchase of a non-refundable airline ticket or other expenses incurred by tour participants in preparing for the tour.

**QUESTIONS:** Please call the Williams Alumni Association at (413) 597-4011. Email: Robert.V.Behr@Williams.edu or call Eric Holman, Royal Adventures (925) 820-6260 or 1-800-453-4754.

**RESPONSIBILITY**

Royal Adventures, its owners and employees act only as agents for the various independent suppliers and contractors providing transportation, hotel accommodations, restaurant and other services connected with this tour. Such travel and services are subject to the terms and conditions under which such accommodations, services and transportation are offered or provided, and The President and Trustees of Williams College and Royal Adventures and their respective, employees, agents, representatives, and assigns, accept no liability therefor. The President and Trustees of Williams College and Royal Adventures, assume no liability for any injury, damage, loss, accident, delay or other irregularity which may be caused by the defect of any aircraft or vehicle or the negligence or default of any company or person engaged in carrying out or performing any of the services involved. Additionally, responsibility is not accepted for losses, injury, damages or expenses of any kind due to sickness, weather, strikes, local laws, hostilities, wars, terrorist acts, acts of nature or other such causes. All services and accommodations are subject to the laws of the country in which they are provided. The President and Trustees of Williams College and Royal Adventures reserve the right to make changes in the published itinerary whenever, in their sole judgment, conditions warrant, or if they deem it necessary for the comfort, convenience or safety of the tour participants. They reserve the right to withdraw this tour without penalty. The right is also reserved to decline to accept or retain any person as a member of the tour, or to substitute another qualified leader or special guest. Baggage and personal effects are the sole responsibility of the owners at all times. The price of the program is given in good faith based on current tariffs and rates, and is subject to change. Any tariff, exchange rate, or fuel increases will be passed onto participants. Neither The President and Trustees of Williams College and Royal Adventures accept the liability for any airline cancellation penalty incurred by the purchase of a nonrefundable airline ticket. The air ticket when issued shall constitute the sole contract between the passenger and the airline concerned. As part of the consideration and right to participate in this tour, each participant will be asked to sign a liability release.
RESERVATION FORM

Please make _____ reservation(s) on **Central America- January 18-29, 2015**. Enclosed is my deposit of ____($800 per person). Please make checks payable to Royal Adventures or charge deposit to:

- [ ] Visa
- [ ] MasterCard
- [ ] American Express

Card#___________________________________________________ Exp. ________ Sec. Code ________

Name ________________________________________________________ (As it appears in passport) Williams Class Year ______

Name ________________________________________________________ (As it appears in passport) Williams Class Year ______

Address _____________________________________________________________________________

City__________________________________________________________ State ________ Zip ________

E–mail: ______________________________________________________________________________

___  If possible, please assign a roommate: [ ] Smoker    [ ] Non-smoker

I understand if a roommate is not secured for me by final payment date, I will be charged the single supplement amount.

___  I wish to pay the additional $845 cost for a single supplement.

___  I/We wish to join the optional Copán post-trip extension at an additional cost of $1,150 per person double occupancy or $1,290 Single Occupancy.

I/We have read the Costs and Conditions and Responsibility sections of this brochure and agree to their terms.

Signature ___________________________________________________________ Date __________

Signature ___________________________________________________________ Date __________

*Please return this form with deposit check or credit card authorization to:*

ROYAL ADVENTURES, 9 Crow Canyon Court, Suite 205, San Ramon, CA 94583
or fax to 925-855-1909 or telephone 1-800-453-4754.

WHAT TO EXPECT

This exclusive expedition is designed for Williams alumni and friends who are interested in experiencing Central America’s fascinating blend of cultural and natural history. Travel is by motor coach, 4x4 vehicles, motor boats and small plane. There will be some stair climbing and walking of approximately 1 to 2 miles, occasionally over uneven terrain, at a leisurely pace. Typical temperatures vary with altitude from the hot coastal lowlands to the cooler central plateaus. Although we are traveling during the dry season, some rain can be expected especially in Tortuguero. In order to enjoy this trip, a spirit of adventure and anticipation, along with the desire to experience other cultures and a variety of natural environments are musts. Flexibility is essential since local conditions may require alterations in the schedule. There will be opportunities to explore colonial cities, markets, volcanoes and national parks. Accommodations range from a first-class hotel in San José, Costa Rica, to a deluxe hotel in San Salvador, El Salvador, to comfortable lodges in Tortuguero and Arenal, a Comfort Inn in La Unión, and lovely colonial hotels in Nicaragua.