

Indigenous  
Students on Study  
Abroad:  
Conducting  
Research in Costa  
Rica with the  
Ngäbe

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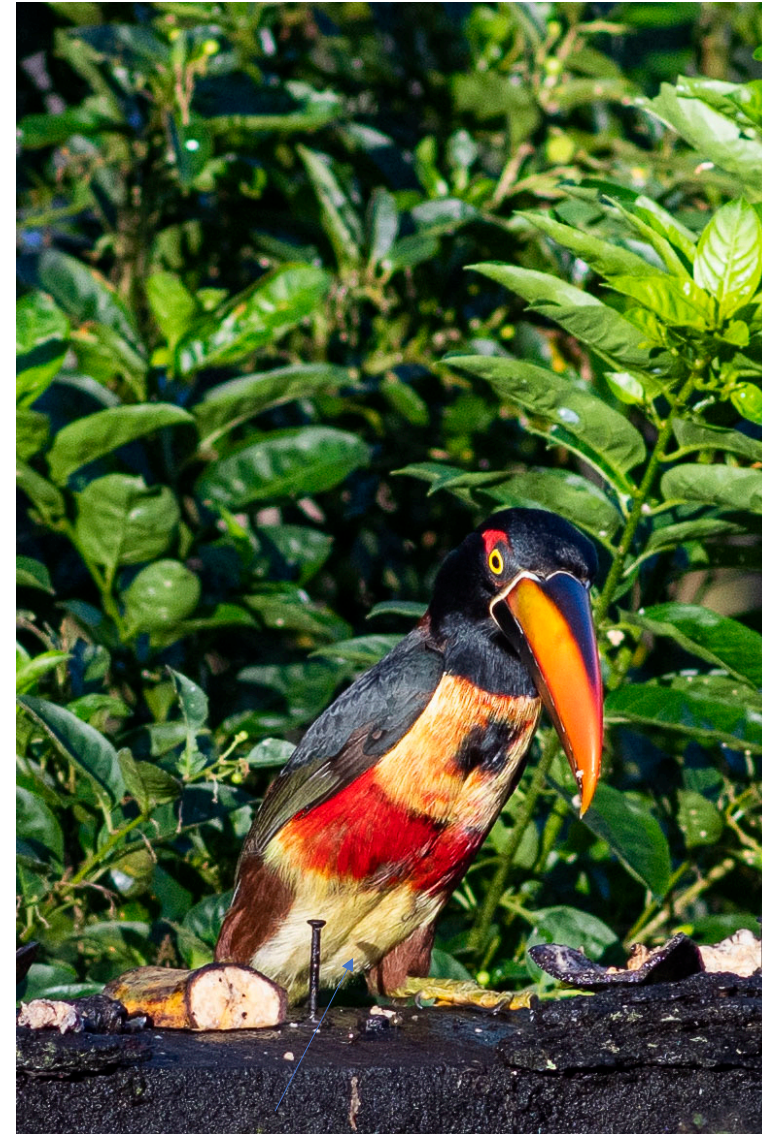
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# The logistics

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- 7 days at the Las Cruces research station
- 12 undergrad students from across the US, all STEM majors
- 7 mentors
- 7 research projects







## Previous research/paper

- An Indigenous Intercambio Program: Empowering Underrepresented STEM Students to Participate in Scientific and Cultural Exchange Through Study Abroad
- Authors: Jessica Black, Stephany RunningHawk Johnson, Denise Silfee, and Celestino Mariano Gallardo
- This work done with Heritage University, 2 students, in Panama





## A different type of study abroad

- Social justice in study abroad programming
- Creating equity in participation
- Anticolonial framework
- Host community needs and wants



## Research questions

- What does having an international research experience do for Indigenous students? (personally as well as educationally)
- How important is the cultural exchange between participants?
- For students, how important is it to have an Indigenous mentor?
- What did US participants learn from the Ngäbe and how do they view study abroad/international work differently as a result of this experience?
- Did students change their plans/thoughts/ideas about further research or graduate school as a result of this experience?





## Focus on the cultural

- Student to student
- Student to mentor
- US Indigenous groups to Ngäbe





## Methods

- Followed students, mentors, and Ngäbe around for the week
- Interviews
- Posters and presentations







Time spent  
building  
relationships

# Initial data analysis

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- This is very preliminary!
- Students see themselves in different ways in a different country
- Spending this time with a group of Indigenous scholars is hugely impactful for the students and the mentors
- Mixed data on the importance of having an Indigenous mentor
- The multiple cultural exchanges going on were invaluable to participants
- Having the Ngäbe present was incredibly important and we could structure this better in the future





## Next steps

- More interviews!
- More data analysis!
- More papers!
- More research!





Thank you!

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- The Center for Indigenous Health, Culture & the Environment at Heritage University

