

Evansville Students to Help Create "Green" Energy in the Dominican Republic

The **University of Evansville** is returning to the Dominican Republic.

Barely a year after engineering students helped design a church and athletic complex in Santiago, Dominican Republic, the University is again teaming with Louisville-based G.O. Ministries for a humanitarian project in the third-world nation. This time, the trip will involve a multi-disciplinary project, with students from both UE's mechanical engineering program and the Schroeder Family School of Business Administration making the trip.

The students will leave Evansville January 2, and return January 8. Their trip is being sponsored by UE's Institute for Global Enterprise in Indiana.

"Like our last trip to the Dominican Republic, this new project allows us to partner with G.O. Ministries to help meet a need among a people burdened with many," said John Layer, assistant professor of mechanical engineering and one of the group's faculty advisors on the trip. "This time, however, the project is aimed at helping create sustainable, 'Green' energy – and at helping make that kind of energy available across Santiago and all of the Dominican Republic."

During the fall semester, the mechanical engineering students who will be making the trip have been designing a solar water heating system for a 40-person dormitory in Santiago – one that uses only materials available locally in the Dominican Republic. During the holiday break, G.O. Ministries will build a prototype of the designed system in the Dominican Republic; then, during their January visit, the students will collect field data from that prototype. Throughout the spring semester, the students then will use the field data collected to refine the system based on what they have learned.

Meanwhile, a group of students from UE's Schroeder Family School of Business Administration will travel with the engineering students, in order to collect their own field data. Their goal will be to assess the feasibility of producing and distributing these solar water heaters using resources available in the Santiago area. They then will present their findings, with a series of recommendations, both in the Dominican Republic and to the Institute for Global Enterprise in Indiana upon their return.

"This is a uniquely hands-on opportunity for these students to experience the 'other' side of the globalization reality that exists in a developing country – and to learn about this process within a realm that is beyond the walls of a classroom," said LaShone Gibson, UE director of global business education. "Students will gain an up-close perspective of exactly how their work can create a ripple-effect to potentially enhance the economic development of this Santiago community and impact lives for generations to come."

For more information on the trip, or to set up interviews with Layer, Gibson, and their students, please contact UE Director of News Services Joe Atkinson at (812) 488-2562.