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Students embark on first Fijian service-learning trip

On New Year's Day, 16 Fresno State students and two professors will travel 5,900 miles to engage in community development in the village of Naboutini, Fiji.

“Our goal in developing this program was to provide an opportunity for Fresno State students to study abroad while having a meaningful impact through international service,” said Dr. Lynnette Zelezny, dean and associate vice president of the [Division of Continuing and Global Education](#).

The program was co-developed by Alyssa Gutnik and Emily Hentschke, two student assistants in the division. Fresno State is partnering with [Madventurer](#), an international service organization, to work on rural community development.

Through this service-learning project, students will be able to aid development by working on building a community center and engaging in the community through village events, sports, games and educational opportunities. Participants will experience local food, local accommodation and daily life as they are immersed in the local culture.

Students will earn credit for Community Service 101, as facilitated by Chris Fiorentino, director of the [Jan and Bud Richter Center for Community Engagement and Service Learning](#) at Fresno State. Community service by Fresno State students, faculty, staff and administrators during the 2012-13 academic year exceeded 1 million hours for the fourth consecutive year.

Professors Dr. Don Simmons in the Humanics and Sociology department and Dr. Steven Hart in the Literacy and Early Education department will lead the trip with Gutnik and Hentschke.

The students include Arantes Armendariz, Ryan Brisco, Stacy Han, Kassandra Hishida, Whitney Ferdinandsen, Heather Goosen, Kari Kimura, Clarissa Niino, Monica Orona, Maria Ortega, Boris Pavic, Hannah Richardson, Song Vang, and Daniel Ward. They will [blog](#) about their experiences during the trip.

This project was funded by the Division of Continuing and Global Education, the Jan and Bud Richter Center for Community Engagement and Service Learning, the Friends for Civic Engagement, Madventurer, Frosch Travel and Clovis Kiwanis.

For more information contact Russel Statham at 559.278.0333 or rdstatham@csufresno.edu.

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