

**Travel Permission Request  
Colombia Summer Internship Placement**

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
Medellin, Colombia

July 1st, 2016 - August 27th, 2016

June 1, 2016

To: Northwestern International Risk Assessment Committee  
From: [REDACTED] Undergraduate, School of Communication  
[REDACTED] Residence Director at Northwestern University

Re: Travel Permission Request for Rebecca Smith

In accordance with Northwestern University's Travel Policy regarding locations subject to a U.S. Department of State Travel Warning, we hereby submit a formal request for permission to allow [REDACTED], a Northwestern undergraduate student, to engage in fieldwork for her summer internship in the city of Medellin, Colombia.

[REDACTED] is pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in Communication Studies, as well as in Spanish. She has 16 years of Spanish language instruction, including 7 quarters at Northwestern. She studied abroad in San Sebastian, Spain in the summer of 2013. [REDACTED] also studied abroad in Lima, Peru, in the fall of 2015 with the IFSA-Butler Peru program at the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú (PUCP).

For this internship, the student is immersing herself in the Colombian culture and workforce to increase professional development in the international public relations and marketing field. After her incredible experiences abroad, [REDACTED] hopes to further her international education, continue to explore South American cultures, and achieve fluency in the Spanish language. This amazing opportunity would give [REDACTED] invaluable hands-on experience in her desired career field of international public relations and marketing. More specifically, she would be located in Latin America, the world's fastest growing region for internet and social media diffusion.

**Funding:**

The student received the Summer Internship Grant Program award from Northwestern, which provides funding for an unpaid internship.

**Internship:**

The student will be working for a Colombia e-learning company called KOIDEAS. She will be performing the company's long-term social media strategy and outreach plan for their clients. The internship will be a full-time job position (unpaid), 9am - 5pm every day of the week.

KOIDEAS is located in El Poblado, the same neighborhood where [REDACTED] will be living. This neighborhood is one of the most modern and safe areas in Medellin. The business is located near a university campus, in a very safe and secure location. Additionally, [REDACTED] will be taking Spanish classes every week to improve her language skills.

One weekend will be spent in Guatapé, a safe town about two hours outside of Medellin. The group will go together (in a private bus for transportation) with an experienced travel guide and their director.

### **Program Location:**

The student is proposing an 8-week internship in Medellin, Colombia to increase professional development and cultural immersion.

The U.S. Department of State updated the Colombia travel warning on April 5, 2016. However, below are some important notes in the travel warning:

- “Security in Colombia has improved significantly in recent years, including in tourist and business travel destinations such as Bogotá, Cartagena, Barranquilla, **Medellín**, and Cali.”
- “There have been no reports of U.S. citizens targeted specifically for their nationality.”
- “U.S. government officials in Colombia regularly travel to the major cities of Colombia such as Bogotá, **Medellin**, Cali, Barranquilla, and Cartagena without incident.”
- “U.S. citizens living or traveling in Colombia are encouraged to enroll with the State Department's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) to obtain updated information on travel and security within Colombia.”

Although the U.S. Department of State has issued a travel advisory in Colombia, the country is still rated at a medium travel and medical risk by the International SOS. On the International SOS maps, Medellin and its immediately surrounding areas are at a medium risk (see Appendix A for maps).

While the travel advisory does state that “no one is immune to kidnapping in Colombia”, that statement is true in any part of the world. However, this student will mitigate the risk of kidnapping or any other dangers through her preparation and cautionary behaviors abroad (listed later under “Individual steps for health/safety”). Some threats of violence do exist in Colombia, and the U.S. Department of State advises travelers to exercise caution and vigilance while abroad, which [REDACTED] will do.

### **Travel Dates**

Departure to Medellin, Colombia

Depart Dallas, TX July 1 at 6:00am / Arrive Ft. Lauderdale, FL July 1 at 9:50am

Depart Ft. Lauderdale, FL July 1 at 10:51am / Arrive Medellin July 1 1:16pm

### Return to Dallas, TX

Depart Lima, Peru\* Sept. 11 at 10:45am / Arrive Ft. Lauderdale Sept. 11 at 5:41pm

Depart Ft. Lauderdale, FL Sept. 11 at 8:25pm / Arrive Dallas, TX Sept. 11 10:19pm

\*The program will end on August 27th, but [REDACTED] will be traveling from Medellin to Lima at the end of her internship to spend 2 weeks with close friends from her previous study abroad experience in the fall in Lima, Peru. This flight is detailed below, and the address and contact information of the family with whom she will be staying is listed in the contact information. In Appendix A, there is also a map of South America to demonstrate the proximity of Peru to Colombia.

### Medellin to Lima

Depart Medellin Aug. 28 at 2:35pm / Arrive Bogota Aug. 28 at 3:30pm

Depart Bogota Aug. 28 at 4:45pm / Arrive Lima Aug. 28 at 7:55pm

### **Housing:**

The student will be living in an apartment building, reserved for other program participants. This complex is located in El Poblado, a safe and modern area of Medellin. [REDACTED] will have her own room with a common living space to allow for meeting other participants in the program.

### **Security and Communication:**

The student will have her iPhone with her at all times, which will be connected to Wi-fi at both her apartment and her job location (the two locations where she will spend the majority of her time). This will allow the student to receive emails, texts, and Skype calls for the vast majority of her time abroad. Additionally, the student will have a pre-paid local phone with a SIM card that allows for local calls (and international calls for a fee) at all times. The student will have the contact numbers of her director and International Relations officer (listed in the contacts section below), along with her internship manager (listed below), suitemates, and the U.S. Embassy.

### **Internship Rationale:**

After [REDACTED] amazing experience in Lima, Peru in the fall, she desired to pursue a career in international public relations/marketing. She knew that the best opportunity would be to work abroad before graduation in this field. This internship was the best decision for [REDACTED] because it offers hands-on experience with public relations in a small company in Latin America. The day-to-day work is also completely conducted in Spanish, and the student will be taking Spanish language classes in an academic setting, as well. This internship allows the student to continue her professional development in her desired career field, while also improving her language skills and expanding her international network.

The intern program that [REDACTED] decided to participate in offers locations around the world, and their South America location is in Medellin, Colombia. While Medellin was #35 on the Business

Insider's 50 most dangerous cities in 2014, the city dropped to #49 in 2015, and did not appear on the 2016 list at all. This location is the best fit for [REDACTED] because of various reasons. Medellin, Colombia is the second-largest city in Colombia and the capital of the department of Antioquia. It was recently named the most innovative city in the world. Researchers have identified it as "the model of economic development", the preferred corporate business destination in South America, and it has been referred to as one of the best cities to live in South America. Colombia is also known for having an extremely clear dialect and accent (closest to what [REDACTED] has been learning in an academic setting for 16 years). This linguistic feature will allow her to maximize her learning experience over the summer and to establish fluency for the future.

#### **On-site support for health/safety:**

Upon [REDACTED] arrival on July 1, 2016, a staff member from the Intern Group will greet the student at the airport and drive her to her apartment complex (a 12 minute drive from the airport). Staff will also take [REDACTED] to the airport at the end of her trip. The student will have staff on-site available at all times. These full-time staff members include Erika Londono (the director of the Intern Group Colombia location) and Eileen Von Knobelsdorff, (the International Relations officer). These individuals will be available by phone 24/7 during the entire time when [REDACTED] will be in Colombia. Additionally, [REDACTED] will receive a comprehensive safety orientation upon arriving and all travel within the city of Medellin will occur with the full-time staff members during the first week.

#### **Individual steps for health/safety:**

The student has enrolled in STEP (Smart Traveler Enrollment Program) for her trip to Peru, and will continue to use this service for her trip to Colombia, which will provide email updates regarding travel warnings and alerts. She also follows the Bureau of Consular Affairs on Twitter and Facebook for any updates, as recommended in the travel advisory. In addition, [REDACTED] has received comprehensive safety orientations during her previous experiences abroad, and will receive another safety orientation upon her first day of arrival in Colombia. The student will not travel at night or alone. Per recommendations by the U.S. travel advisory, the student will not use intra-city public bus transportation. She will also only use air travel for inter-city travel, also recommended by the travel advisory (with the exception of the program's private bus to Guatapé). The student's job is located within walking distance of her apartment and she will be shown a safe route to get to and from her job by her director during the first week of her internship. (The student will never travel to or from her job at night/after hours). The student has personal insurance, but will also purchase HTH worldwide for her trip. The student does not and will not use drugs or other illegal substances while abroad. The student will complete the Risk Management course on Canvas. The student will carry an emergency contact card with all of the contact information listed below for emergencies, as well as all stateside contacts, emergency services, HTH recommended hospitals, and HTH insurance. In the case of an emergency, the student's director, the U.S. Embassy (dependent upon the severity of the situation), the committee, and the student's relatives will be notified immediately, and they will

automatically notify the appropriate Northwestern personnel to remain safe. The student will not dress provocatively to bring any attention to herself. The student will not travel alone or at night. If she is going to take transportation, she will not take intra-city bus transportation, and will instead take official taxis with other program participants, or private transportation provided by the program. The student has done extensive research on the area of Medellin, both before she decided to travel to Colombia for an internship, when she was accepted, and when preparing this proposal.

The Zika virus has continued to be a medical concern around the world, as well as in Colombia. However, the CDC has specific recommendations (see relevant links) for travelers going to a country that has had cases of the Zika virus. Per these recommendations, [REDACTED] will wear mosquito repellent during her stay in Medellin, and will treat her clothing with permethrin (a pesticide used to kill insects and mosquitos). The student will be staying in an apartment with air conditioning and sealed windows/doors to keep mosquitoes outside. Additionally, the student is not pregnant or trying to become pregnant, and the CDC has declared that the virus does not affect future pregnancies once it has exited the body. While the CDC does recommend practicing these enhanced precautions, it does not call for complete avoidance of travel.

Please see letter of endorsement from [REDACTED], Residence Director at Northwestern University, which will be available at the time of the committee meeting.

## **RELEVANT LINKS**

U.S. Travel Advisory:

<https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/alertswarnings/colombia-travel-warning.html>

CDC Overview of Zika virus in Colombia:

<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices/alert/zika-virus-colombia>

CDC Country Profile: Colombia:

<http://www.cdc.gov/globalhealth/countries/colombia/default.htm>

International SOS Maps of Risk:

<https://www.internationalsos.com/risk-outlook>

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

THE INTERN GROUP

[www.theinterngroup.com](http://www.theinterngroup.com)

U.S. Contact: (718) 878-6393

Erika Londono, Colombia Program Coordinator

[colombia@internlatinamerica.com](mailto:colombia@internlatinamerica.com)

+573205667368

Eileen Von Knobelsdorff, International Relations Officer

[eileenvk@theinterngroup.com](mailto:eileenvk@theinterngroup.com)

## KOIDEAS

Jose Manuel Soto, Manager

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Company phone: +5743661649

Office location: Calle 4 Sur N 43 A 195, Oficina 336  
Medellín, Colombia

## HOST FAMILY IN PERU

Mariana Jeronimo y Alfonso Castillo Torrivilla

+51988886930

Avenida Panamericana Sur 264

Distrito de Barranco, Lima, Peru 15063

## EMERGENCY CONTACTS

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

## U.S. EMBASSY IN COLOMBIA

Calle 24 Bis No. 48-50

Bogotá, D.C. Colombia

Mailing address: Carrera 45 No. 24B-27 Bogotá, D.C. Colombia

Telephone: +(57) (1) 275-2000

Emergency After-Hours Telephone: +(57) (1) 275-2701

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[ACSBogota@state.gov](mailto:ACSBogota@state.gov)

## NORTHWESTERN CONTACTS

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

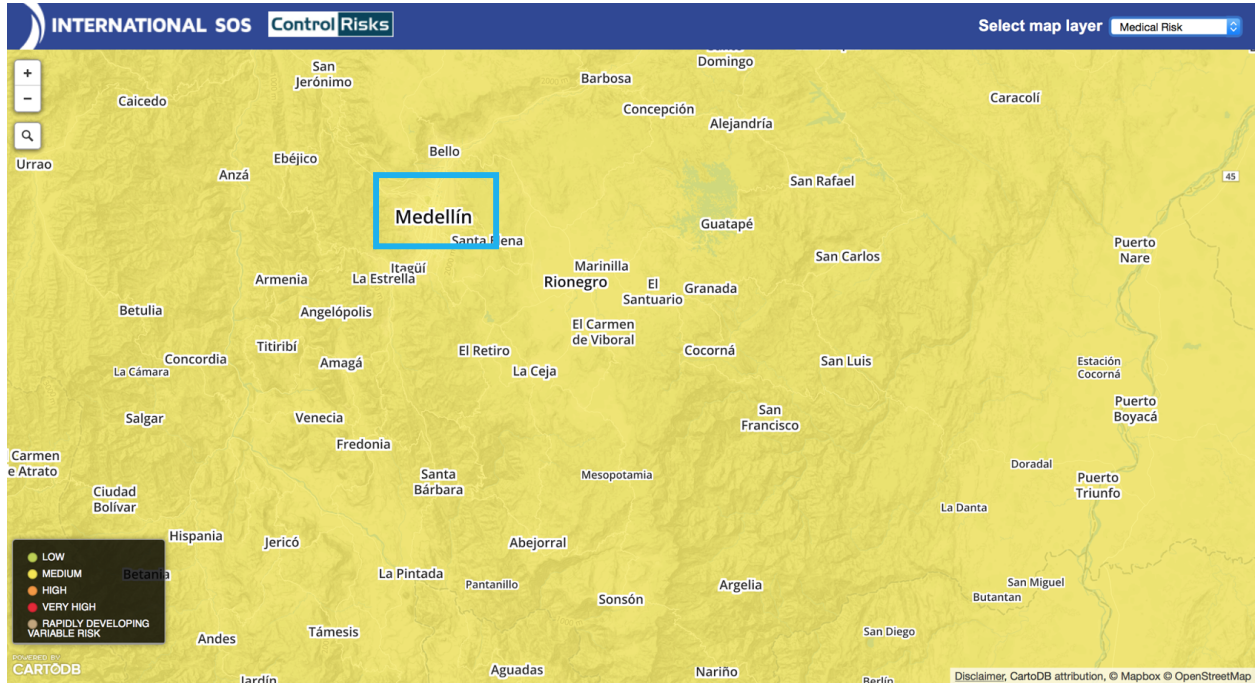
[REDACTED]

[joseph.ogeen@northwestern.edu](mailto:joseph.ogeen@northwestern.edu)

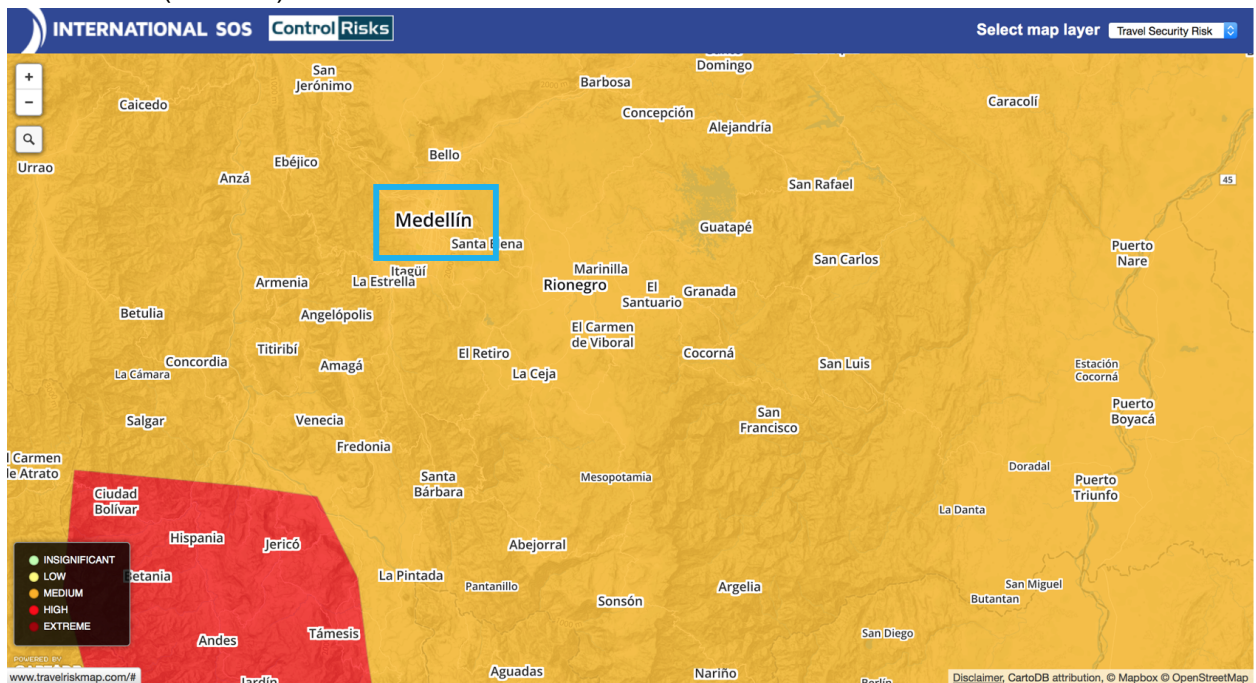
## Appendix A

Blue box indicates Medellin, where the student will be staying

Medical Risk (Medium)



Travel Risk (Medium)





# SOUTH AMERICA

