



Antigua, Guatemala: August 3rd - August 16th, 2025
Student and Parent Webinar Transcript
Hosted by: Anna Rossi, International Programs Director

Well, it is a great day. And why is it a great day? Because you're here. And the fact that today, tonight is our webinar for future vets in Guatemala. Now, I understand that when you signed up for this program, you believed that you were going to be going to Costa Rica. And that's because at the time, that's where we were going to be. But for reasons that are well above my pay grade, that didn't work out. Our partners, who we had long standing established relations with, had their own set of problems. And unfortunately, they were unable to accommodate us this year. But fortunately, they gave us a wide runway to be able to get you in the room with the same experience in a different location. And that location, my friends, is Antigua, Guatemala. And when I tell you, I had no idea, no idea, the beauty and wonder that this country holds. I am not overselling it, because I was completely spellbound by what I saw on my visit.

Now, we have deep connections in the industry. And thankfully, I was able to connect with a leading institution in Guatemala, the University of San Carlos, and its associates, to be able to comprise the future vets program to our standards within Guatemala. And that was not hard to do, because Guatemala is very biodiverse, and has an incredible amount of species for you to withhold during our time together. Now, the purpose of this webinar is to prepare you for what you're going to see, and to best prepare you for your upcoming journey. I want to start this webinar by assuring you that everything is going to be fine. The sights are something to behold. And I am so excited to share this experience with so many bright, young, future veterinarians, and make this an absolute home run.

I have high standards, and our new partners in Guatemala have exceeded it so far, signed on the dotted line. I personally went through every experience that you will go through. And to the degree of knowledge that I have within the veterinary field, which is not very much, but I've seen past versions of you come through this program and absolutely come out glowing. I know that this is going to meet that same standard. And though my veterinary knowledge is low, my expectation for the experience that you will have and the value that you will take out of this is very, very high. My expectations are very, very high. And I have full confidence in our ability to be able to make this a home run for you, and I cannot wait. So with that, we're going to dive right into our webinar to prepare you for your upcoming journey with us to Central America.

Now, I'll let you do your own research on Antigua and the surrounding areas, but it's beautiful. That's all I got to say. It's beautiful. I felt safe. Moms and dads who were watching this right now.

I see you. I have traveled to 34 countries at this point, and many of them I've traveled to alone. And as a solo, young, still, I think, female, I kind of know what it feels like to be in foreign environments. And I have a high perception of my own personal safety. And this one... did not give me the itch whatsoever on safety. I felt incredibly safe. And I think the State Department would agree. The majority, the vast majority of Guatemala is extremely safe, just like Costa Rica. And it is a tourism rich economy. We personally in the United States have great relations with Guatemala. So they love Americans, they love tourists in general. I felt welcomed and I believe we will be welcomed as well. So just an assurance there, from a safety perspective, absolutely nothing has changed on the expectation of this trip.

Safety is my number one priority and it always has been. And we will do our usual excellence when it comes to overseeing the safety and wellbeing of our students. And to that end, I wanna emphasize that one of the principles of this program is to get a little bit uncomfortable. Now I'm talking to you students. One of the beautiful things about this program is that you are able to be uncomfortable, but you know that you're safe. And uncomfortable and safe are two different things. We want you to get uncomfortable so that you can break barriers, so that you can get to the next level. But we want you to be safe so that you can engage in those activities with full enthusiasm going all out so that you can excel. I hope I made that very clear. My biggest priority is to make sure that you feel safe. And that's what we're here for. Okay, so that's number one. Guatemala, safe, beautiful, and exciting. I'm so pumped.

Let's talk a little bit about important links. Now, by now, you know the [handbook](#) and the [onboarding portal](#) contains everything that you need to know to best prepare yourself for this journey. And the onboarding portal is where you submit forms by the necessary due dates so that we can be prepared for your arrival. And I would like to emphasize how much I appreciate everyone submitting their documents on time. The vast majority of you have done so. It helps us help you. So thank you for that. But if you haven't sent us your passport because it hasn't come in the mail and the application hasn't been returned with an actual physical passport, please send it our way. We need that to be able to facilitate your international flight bookings, which are included in this program, not to mention you won't be able to get into the country if you don't have your passport.

The [onboarding portal](#) is also the place where you can submit your upcoming required document, which is the [immunization records](#). And with that, we highly strongly recommend that you submit a record of immunizations against **rabies**, **typhoid**, and get a **tetanus** shot because those are the three things that I would say are at higher risk of contracting from a program such as this. It's just common sense for me to highly recommend that you do that because you will be in contact with animals and in experiences where that is a higher probability than you would be walking down the street in your hometown. Regardless, please submit your immunization record that records all of the immunizations that you've had from your primary care physician by March 31st, and that is on the onboarding portal. December 31st of 2024, we had quite a few other documents that were due, and I, again, appreciate everyone taking care of that. But if anything has changed, and I'm talking about your medical records or medical information, such as

allergies, dietary restrictions, and religious accommodations in the dietary sense that we need to accommodate. We can accommodate basically virtually everything, but we need to know about it. So please, please, help us, help you and submit your updated medical information in regards most importantly to updated emergency contact information, allergies, dietary restrictions, as they are updated. If nothing's changed, nothing's changed. Thank you for submitting it. You don't have to do it again. However, if something has changed, please update it and submit it, right? Next, let's talk about travel and your flight information.

So the good news is here, again, more good news, nothing has changed in regards to where we are leaving from, Miami International Airport, the dates of the program, or the timeframe of when the flights are gonna leave and come back. In fact, our flight back on August 16th returns at the exact same time, 12.05 p.m. on the 16th. But let's talk about departure day. So on departure day, that's August the 3rd, we are departing with American Airlines out of Miami at 6.45 p.m., that's Eastern time, and it's about a three-hour flight. Now, Guatemala is on Central Standard Time. So that means that we are going to leave at 6.45 and we are going to get there at 8.45-ish. Don't hold me to it, okay? But I know we're leaving at 6.45 p.m. on American Airlines on August the 3rd, but I'm not a math major, so don't hold me to that. Your international flights are covered by your tuition, but your domestic travel, meaning how you get to Miami on the 3rd from your home is not. So here's what I need you to do. I need you to be **at Miami International Airport by 1.30 p.m. on August the 3rd** with all of your necessary belongings for the trip. So your bags and your passport and everything else that we've told you to bring, which you can find on the handbook, okay? I'd even recommend coming in the day before, if possible, especially if you live far away. If you are local to the area and you would like to drop off by car, same thing applies. You get dropped at concourse D, departures level by 1.30 p.m. And why is that? It's because this is an international flight, so there's a few hours that are necessary to be able to board that flight. Miami is a big airport, so it's gonna take you time to transfer from your gate when you land, collect your bags, and come to us, okay? Tuition is not covered in the domestic flights, so how you get to us, please arrange it now. I always suggest book early for better pricing.

Now, let's talk a little bit about packing. So what's gonna go in those bags? First of all, you should have three things with you when we're talking about luggage. The first needs to be your checked bag. That needs to be, that is the thing that goes under the plane. That is no more than 50 pounds. Please weigh it because you are responsible for any excess weight baggage fees that may apply. American Airlines and we will cover the price of one checked bag in your tuition up to 50 pounds, but if it's over, it's on you. And you can look at the American Airlines website, but the overweight bag of fees, they're pretty hefty. So I don't recommend that please weigh them. The second thing that you're going to need is a carry-on and that is a rolling bag or a duffel, that is going to be comprised of a few critical pieces that you need to keep near you at all times, as well as a few other things to be able to last you a few days in the off chance that your bag is lost. Has it been known to happen on short direct flights? Yes, it has. Will it happen? Probably not, but this is a really critical thing, folks. Have your critical belongings with you in a carry-on. Third thing is a personal item that is a backpack or a purse or a crossbody bag, a

satchel for you gentlemen. That entails your things that you want to have fun with on the plane, as well as personal items and toiletry items that you may want for the plane.

We're going to talk about a packing list, but this is all in the handbook. So dive down and do it a little bit more granularly in the handbook, all right? So here's what we got. Let's talk about what's going to go in your carry-on. In your carry-on, which is the roller bag, phone charger, pens, small notebook, entertainment for the plane ride, like headphones, also your phone, playing cards. I like playing Uno on a plane, a book, an iPad. You get the point, whatever is your thing. An empty reusable water bottle to refill at the airport, have it empty through security and then post security, you can fill it up with water. A change of clothing for two to three days. Again, we'll talk about what that might look like, broken down, but change of clothing for two to three days just in case your bag gets lost. Prescription medications in the bottle with your name on it, supplements, valuable electronics, and any cash or currency we wish to come with you. Do not put those in your checked bag. Do put them in your carry-on or personal item

Let's talk about clothing. Five to six sets of scrubs for rotations. They can be any color, any pattern, and I recommend short sleeves because it's hot down there. We will be doing laundry once or twice, more on that later. One of those should go in your carry-on. A full length lab jacket. Short sleeves are okay, long sleeves are okay, but that is for when we do work in the lab. That is also going to go in your carry-on. A headlamp for surgical rotations that is linked to an Amazon page where you can purchase our recommendation. We have no financial kickback on any of the links there, by the way. It's just a suggestion. Surgical cap, reusable or disposable for surgical rotations. Waterproof boots or walking shoes for rotations. I like a good half length waterproof boot for farm-like environments. A lightweight foldable wide brim sun hat. One that might cover your neck when it's hot out. The sun there is quite hot. A lightweight rain jacket. A pair of dark colored boots or shoes that you are willing to get dirty in farm-like environments that are not mud. A pair of sneakers that you like that you don't mind getting dirty, one to two pairs of clean sneakers for touring day. So these are just sneakers that you like to wear. Nothing too expensive, please. Nothing too flashy. That includes jewelry, any fun jewelry piercings. Maybe think about if they're super valuable. Don't wear them when we are out and about. Do not attract extra eyeballs. It's always a really good thing to think about when we're traveling abroad, in any country, really. Two pairs of ankle length jeans with no rips. So ladies and gentlemen, we all know what that means. Just a pair of jeans. Blue jeans or black jeans are fine. But please, no rips, no length other than hitting your ankle. A wide leg is fine, ladies, but not too wide. Not too baggy, just a pair of jeans. Now, I would pack, just to reiterate what goes in your carry-on bag, I would pack a pair of scrubs and a lab coat, a surgical hat, a lamp, a pair of casual clothing, we'll talk about that in a second, and a pair of sweats, hangout clothes, PJs, and undergarments. But I don't need to tell you that.

All right, let's continue down the list. We're also going to need two, one to two. But I say two, if you can swing it. Business casual outfits. And for the gentlemen, we like to say that that looks like trousers or khakis, a collared shirt, laced dress shoes or loafers. And for the ladies, knee length dresses or skirts, trousers, a collared shirt, blouses, flats, loafers, or wedges. Nothing too high on the heels, please, because we will be probably walking on uneven terrain. Note, no jeans other than those nice jeans that we talked about, Shorts that come up higher than your

fingertip lengths, and I mean it, Or skirts that go up higher than your fingertip length. No athletic wear. None of this will be, actually, and jeans included, will be considered business casual. So a little bit nicer, dress to impress for any orientation style lectures, any closing remarks that we may have with our university partners. We're talking about a professional look here.

For our weekend excursions, we're gonna want casual, breathable, warm weather outfits. And that must include long pants and suitable closed-toe shoes for outdoor activities, such as hiking, though it's not set in stone that we'll be hiking, but think about, I'm going hiking, so what would I wear? That's kind of a good thing to get into your head. Pajamas and sweats for hanging out at the hotel, that's totally fine, for lounging, and then the necessary socks and undergarments, a light hoodie or jacket for the plane, and a bathing suit because there is a pool at our hotel, super fun. So the weather in Guatemala in the summer, it can be humid and rainy. Well, it's our summer, for them it's their wet season, it's what they call it. Right now it's their summer, actually, in March. And so it's warm, it's in the mid-80s, starting the day, in the evening it cools off very much, but it's also overcast and humid. So expect hot and humid chances of rain showers, that's why a rain jacket or shell is very, very important, and waterproof shoes, very important.

Let's just talk quickly about laundry service. We will have laundry one to two times per week. The cost for the laundry, it's done by the hotel. I'll give you an update on the amount of cash that you should be prepared to spend out of pocket while on our trip to pay for your laundry, that's something that's not included in the tuition. You can do laundry more than once or twice, if you'd like, also at your own expense, but we prearrange a couple of days a week so that you're able to wash your scrubs, wash all your clothes, and that we don't have to pack for two weeks of clothing, because that's really, I mean, to my knowledge, not possible under 50 pounds, at least for me.

Let's talk about some cultural considerations. I really want to drive home the point of we are visitors in a new country. So when we are outside of the hotel, especially on the weekends when we're touring and integrating with the community, we need to make a good impression. So even though we're in a more casual look, shoulders and knees need to be covered, okay? At the very least, finger length, shorts and skirts. And I'm really serious about this. And I'm going to send anybody that is not dressed appropriately back to their room to go change because we need to be covered at all times outside of the hotel. First of all, for the sun, I don't want anyone getting burnt. We also have further toiletry items in the packing list to include sunscreen and bug spray, by the way, highly recommended. And no jeans or shorts or athletic wear when we're on the weekend. You know, one of the things I really take pride in in this program is the way that we conduct ourselves. We are future professionals. We are not a tour group. And so with that, we do usual inspections of how we all look. And I'm going to make sure that we all look good so that we feel good walking as a group representing our program, our country, and also versions of our future selves that we want to step into. So with that in mind, let's move on.

We're going to talk about managing expenses. So again, everything that you need is included in your tuition. However, there are a few things that are not and that includes your domestic flights, your passport fee is if you had to apply for a passport. Immunizations and laundry and also cash

management for souvenirs and things that you might want to bring back to your family. Maybe as a nice thank you for sending you on this trip and for investing in your future or maybe a little something for yourself if you're self-funding or fundraising. I think that this is a really amazing thing that you're doing. So I think everyone deserves a little treat. And of course there will be many places where we can stop and we can get you just that, plenty of shopping opportunities. I would say that Visa and MasterCard are widely accepted while American Express and Discover are not. So if you're planning on bringing a credit card, make sure you call the bank if that's necessary for you in your account to avoid any security holds and make sure that they know that you're traveling and what dates that you're traveling. Also likewise on a debit card, that's also a really good idea. If you're gonna pull out of an ATM, I recommend that you use a debit card. I do not recommend that you bring American dollars. You can if you'd like, but if someone gives you cash money to bring on the trip and spend and convert, I would recommend while you're in the United States putting it in the bank, depositing it and putting it on a debit card and withdrawing it in the local currency or paying for it with a credit card because it's just better to manage. So that's my recommendation.

Okay, next, we will have communications during the programs and here at the program and this is how it's gonna work. We utilize WhatsApp. It's a app that you can download on Apple and Android from your respective app stores. And it is free, it's a meta product, same owner as Facebook. So if you don't have it, download it, students only. Students only on the WhatsApp group, please. We will send out a link to join by email in early May. And that's how we're gonna communicate from then until the end of the program as a group. And you'll be able to message with your chaperones directly and you'll be able to chat with the group channel as well. I also encourage everyone who, when they arrive at Miami, to hop in there in the group chat, let us know. We're always, we are more than happy to come grab you, if you're a little lost, like where do I go with my bags? I understand it's daunting. If you just wanna stay put in baggage claim, we can come find you. Just hop on the WhatsApp channel and we'll come grab you. That's a good example of how to use it. We'll be doing some introductions in the chat. I'll be posting announcements throughout the program. So definitely critical. **Download WhatsApp, put it on your phone right now and stand by for early May when we send an invitation link.**

Emergency communications for parents. So the communications for parents is that we will have an emergency phone line in addition to our regular admissions line. The regular admissions line, many of you have utilized it and spoken to Reagan in the office. And she's been doing a great job answering your questions. If you have additional questions during normal business hours that are not emergencies and matters of life or death, please give us a call or leave a message if it's after hours and we will return your call at the appropriate time.

If you have an emergency regarding a student that you have on the program, you may contact the, and we encourage you to contact the emergency line 24 hours a day and it will be answered and transferred to the appropriate person on site. Let me give you an example of what I consider a perfect use of the emergency phone line. And here it is. I had a student at one point who wore a monitor on her wrist that monitored her blood sugar. She was diabetic and her mother was connected via phone app to this device, it was very cool. And it would send her

mother an alert if her blood sugar was too low to make sure that everyone knew. And it went off in the middle of the night. And this was actually a trip that I did in Vietnam. And at that time, the alert went off on mom's phone and it was like 1 a.m. for us. And of course, you know, naturally, she was very concerned. So she picked up the phone and she gave us a call. It was answered. We had a chaperone, bang on the door. Everything was fine. I think it was just a little bit of a glitch if I remember correctly. But that's a perfect use of the emergency line, something that we need to know about because it's a medical thing or matter of life or death. That is really important. Otherwise, if it can wait, please, we encourage you to use the standard line because the other, the emergency line is for just that. It is for emergencies. We will let you know what the emergency phone number will be two weeks before liftoff, okay? Now, what can we do to help with the communication here? Encouraging you, students, to check in with your parents regularly, update them on how you're doing, discuss communication expectations before departure. Note that you may want to get, we encourage an international phone plan so you don't rack up roaming charges, purchase a international SIM card, or utilize and or utilize the hotel wifi, which is very good, by the way, very good, I tested it. So make a plan with your families on what platform you are going to use, all right?

So I think we covered most things that are necessary pre-departure. I have the itinerary in front of me of what we're going to be doing. I'm gonna keep it largely to myself for a little bit, but I will share a little bit in a moment of some of the things that we will be doing on a broader scale, and I'll keep you posted with more information, but it looks amazing.

So let's just continue down here. So I just wanna let you know that on August the 3rd, we're gonna have a three hour flight to, from Miami to Guatemala City. And then from that airport, we are going to have about a 45 minute bus drive to our hotel, which is just outside of the UNESCO Heritage Site City of Antigua. Packing and travel essentials are a reminder, carry on, must include valuables, medications, your change of clothes, your valuable electronics. Keep that checked baggage under 50 pounds to avoid extra fees. And I recommend that you start hydrating and as soon as you get to the airport, there will be abundant restrooms from the airport all through the end of the program. So hydration, electrolyte packets are strongly recommended. I checked out our hotels in Antico. It's very, very nice. Modern, think a Hilton, a Marriott, nice big wifi, modern amenities, pool, room service. Students are going to be two per room assigned by age and gender. No roommate requests. We will be assigning roommates by age. So you will meet your roommate students when you get to the airport. And boys and girls will be in separate areas of the hotel. All right, meals and dietary accommodations will include most of our meals will be provided by the hotel, breakfast and dinner. Lunch will be onsite at several different clinical locations. We will offer a mix of Central America, American and North American cuisine to keep you engaged and happy, mostly buffet style food. But please let us know again about your dietary restrictions and allergies so that we can assist you in accommodating those things for you.

I just want to give just a brief overview. The University of San Carlos in Guatemala, it's a leading educational institution. We're gonna be doing a lot of hands-on learning experiences not only at the university, but also at associated surrounding institutions, organizations, private entities,

public entities, all around the area, engaging in over 280 species working in the regional reference laboratory for animal health, which is located within the faculty of veterinary medicine and animal science in the University of San Carlos of Guatemala. And these people, they are the gold standard. And I was super impressed with everything that I saw. We're gonna take, it's gonna be incredible. The things that we are gonna see over these two weeks throughout the country, we're gonna do a bit of driving around. So be prepared for time on the buses. The traffic in Central America is a little bit of a bummer, but thankfully we have plenty of time to prepare. So we'll make sure that we plan bus routes accordingly to make sure that we're always on time because that's something that we always are and make sure that we are keeping you guys hydrated and fed and energized.

What I will do in closing of this webinar is first tell you what you need to do for us, and that is to regularly check the emails that we're gonna send you from admissions@allaccessvet.com review and continue to review the handbook for ongoing updates. We will keep you up to date on any updates that are mission critical for you to know now via email, so keep a lookout for those emails. Submit those required documents and of course the one that's due in the immunization records on March 31 of this year. Book your domestic flights right away, please. And if you wouldn't mind, email us a copy of your itinerary so we can see that you have booked it. And if you're driving in, you can also let us know. And then prepare your bags, get ready, time to go shopping. Here's another thing that you need to do. And this is not something that you can do for us necessarily. It's more about what you can do for yourself. This is a huge investment. And I'm talking to students and parents in this one. This is a huge investment in your future and in your child's future. Now I'm talking to the students because that is something that our parents here already know. Students, this is a huge thing, and this is the first step of the rest of your veterinary career. And I wanna be completely frank with you that the ball is in your court on how you are gonna show up. So over those two weeks, this program, we are gonna do everything in our power to provide you a platform for excellence. We're gonna show you everything that you need. It is your time to get in there, to go all out with us, to try new things, to feel new things, see new things, smell new things. But I understand that there's a degree of that that comes with an ounce of discomfort. And that's okay, that's natural. That's something that is a principle of this program. And that's okay, so remember, it's okay to be uncomfortable. That's how we grow. And at the end of the day, I want you to walk away from this program going, this program was where I learned something about myself that changed it all for me. And you are gonna be the author of the rest of this story here. But what you can do for yourself here to be able to prepare for this moment is you can sleep well, you can eat well, make sure that you are your best self when you arrive at that airport. Because when you arrive at the airport, that's the beginning of those two weeks where you're gonna make the best impression on yourself, for your students, your future colleagues in this industry where you're gonna make friends. And this will carry you through the rest of your career, the rest of your life. And I want you to go back home to your parents and your family and say, thank you. That was an incredible experience. And I learned so much. So I'll leave you with that. I'm looking forward to meeting you in a few very short months. If there's anything that we can be of assistance with, it would be our absolute pleasure to do so.

You can give us a call in the office or send us an email and let us know what we can do to help you. We have given everything necessary that you need in the handbook. But if there's something else that you need from us, let us know, we're here for you. All right, ladies and gentlemen, we will be in touch looking forward to seeing you soon. Bye-bye.