Proposal to Add Direct-Credit Study Abroad Program: 
CASA-Cuba Program

OVERVIEW
Vanderbilt has recently been accepted as a new member of the Consortium for Advanced Studies Abroad (CASA), a group of 8 “Ivy +” universities working together to develop study abroad programs that are academically rigorous and well connected to the local contexts to provide students with challenging and meaningful immersion experiences.

CASA’s first field site is in Havana, Cuba, in association with the Casa de las Américas (a renowned humanities and social science research institute) and the Universidad de Havana. Vanderbilt has joined as a founding member for the Cuba program; a trial run of the Cuba program with the other CASA members was successfully held in Spring 2015.

The Center for Latin American Studies (CLAS) proposes the addition of the CASA Cuba program as a direct-credit study abroad program for Vanderbilt students. The semester-length program in Havana will provide Vanderbilt students with an unparalleled opportunity to examine firsthand the political, social, economic and cultural issues affecting Cuba in the wake of normalizing relations with the U.S. Through this program, Vanderbilt students will have access to Cuba’s two leading institutions of research higher education (Univ de Havana and Casa de Las Américas). Classes will be in Spanish and taught by Cuban and U.S. academics from CASA members. We anticipate admitting up to 10 Vanderbilt students per semester.

CLAS is the sponsor and institutional home of the CASA Cuba program, but we are working closely with GEO on student recruitment, admissions, and publicity (see attached email of support). The CLAS Steering Committee unanimously voted to approve the program in September (see attached email).

RATIONALE: CASA and CUBA
In early 2015 CLAS proposed to Vice-Provosts Tim McNamara and Cynthia Cyrus that Vanderbilt join CASA as an investing member in the Cuba program. In May 2015, the CASA board of directors unanimously approved Vanderbilt’s request to join the Consortium as an “Investing Member” of the CASA Cuba divisional center. The Provost’s office will be providing the initial $20,000 investment.

We believe the CASA model is a strong alternative to the contract providers such as CIEE. The CASA model is more academically rigorous (by building on the faculty strengths of eight of the country’s top universities), better connected with local institutions and social contexts, and at a lower cost. The consortium virtually guarantees a critical mass of high caliber students that will
allow it to manage rigorous and comprehensive in-country operations. The internationally recognized excellence of CASA institutions provides a strong negotiating position when approaching host-country partners. The strength of the consortium also opens doors for other valuable learning abroad opportunities, including internships, community engagement, undergraduate research, and faculty and graduate student exchanges. Consortium members can take advantage of an existing infrastructure of support to establish short-term programs open to all consortium members or specific to their own institutions.

Cuba makes sense as a study abroad site for Vanderbilt students for several reasons. First, the rapidly changing relationship between Cuba and the U.S. has stimulated a tremendous amount of student interest in the island. This is a propitious moment indeed to launch a Cuba program. Second, Vanderbilt has deep faculty strengths in Cuba, including William Luis (Span and Port), Jane Landers (History), Paul Miller (French and LAS), William F. Robinson (History and LAS). Third, through faculty projects, we have a number of special initiatives (Ecclesiastical and Secular Sources from Slave Societies), Circum-Atlantic Studies Seminar) on Cuba. Vanderbilt may supply faculty to teach program courses, but there is no requirement to do so.

CASA’s Cuba program will provide a unique immersion experience for Vanderbilt students, linking their study abroad to on-campus expertise. This combination of faculty research strength and study abroad immersion can provide students with a singular international opportunity for study. They will achieve a critical understanding of the key issues that face Cuba today while interacting with leading experts in the social sciences, arts, and the humanities. The courses offered through CASA would be attractive to students from a variety of disciplines, and thus enhance holistic immersion experiences (see program description below). CLAS will organize pre- and post-departure briefing sessions involving Vanderbilt faculty (Landers, Miller). CASA provides a week-long program orientation in Miami for all students attending the program prior to arrival to Cuba. (See Logistics and Orientation on page 8 below).

Vanderbilt’s Cuba specialists have expressed their support for the program and this proposal; they concur that the academic content is strong. Prof. Luis visited the program in Havana in May 2015 and has consulted with the program’s academic director. Prof. Miller envisions further opportunities for internships that could provide hands-on experience in music, cinema, dance and plastic arts, as well as sustainable agricultural production and disaster preparedness.

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION
The Consortium for Advanced Studies Abroad (CASA) was incorporated in 2014 as a 501(c)(3) based in Rhode Island. It is a consortium of “Ivy+” universities joining to offer academically rigorous and meaningful study abroad opportunities to students at member institutions. CASA’s mission is to combine resources of the nation’s leading research universities to deliver education abroad opportunities of the highest caliber at reasonable cost.
CASA Members
Brown University
Cornell University
Columbia University
Dartmouth College
Johns Hopkins University
Northwestern University
University of Pennsylvania
Vanderbilt University

CASA’s first divisional center is in Cuba, and Vanderbilt joined CASA as an Investing Member for the Cuba Division. In the future, Vanderbilt students will have the opportunity to participate in the consortium’s other projected programs (next Spain, and then with plans to expand to all continents).

As an Investing Member in the Cuba Division, Vanderbilt appoints one faculty to the Cuba program’s Divisional Executive Committee, as well as two representatives (a faculty representative and an administrative representative) to the overarching CASA Board of Directors. The Divisional Executive Committee provides oversight and approval of the academic, programmatic, and fiscal affairs of its CASA site, and sets forth policies and procedures with respect to tuition collection, student admission, and member responsibilities (see Appendix III and IV, pages 12-13 in *CASA Policies and Procedures*).

Vanderbilt will have the opportunity, but not the obligation, to supply faculty members to program for short visits or semester-long lectureships.

The CASA-Cuba Director is Dr. Rainer Schultz. Schultz received his Ph.D. from Harvard in 2014; his dissertation focused on the transformation of Cuba’s educational system. He was a fellow in the Afro-Latin American Research Institute and the Cuban Studies programs at Harvard and has been a Lecturer at the University of Havana. He previously served for 2 years as the Resident Director of Harvard’s Cuba Study Program in Havana. He is currently employed fulltime by CASA as the Cuba Director.

Dr. Schultz is charged with overall responsibility for administering the CASA-Cuba program, including its day-to-day academic and programmatic management, student advising, liaising with CASA’s partner institutions in Havana and supervision of local faculty and staff. The CASA-Cuba Director is on-site in Havana throughout the year, and will serve as the first point of contact for students in the program.

**PROGRAM AIM AND SCOPE**
Based in Havana, CASA-Cuba provides students direct access to Cuba’s leading institution of higher learning, the **University of Havana**, and to *Casa de Las Américas*, the Cuban government’s premier research institution on Caribbean and Latin American studies, Cuban culture and the arts.
CASA-Cuba, the University of Havana and Casa de Las Américas have worked together to develop a program of study that challenges students to achieve a critical understanding of the key issues facing Cuba today and enables them to interact with some of the country’s leading academic experts in the social sciences, arts and the humanities. Students receive credit-bearing lectures in Spanish from recognized experts on key issues facing the country. The program aims to ensure that students will return to the United States with an invigorated sense of inquiry, a better calibrated critical understanding of the complex situation facing Cuba today, and a wealth of newfound knowledge obtained precisely because of their in-country learning experiences.

COURSES AND FACULTY
Students enrolled in the CASA-Cuba program may enroll in up to four full-time CASA courses, and may also enroll in select courses taught at the University of Havana. Students must enroll in a minimum of 4 courses and maximum of 6 courses (12 to 18 credit hours). Students must take at least two of the CASA courses listed below. Cuban university students are enrolled in both CASA-delivered courses and the University of Havana courses. Courses are in Spanish.

There are currently four courses offered by CASA and taught by the following faculty:

1. Cuban Public Health: Past and Present
   **Dr. Enrique Beldarrain Chaple, M.D., Ph.D.,** is chief of the research department at the Centro Nacional de Información de Ciencias Médicas, and full professor and researcher in the **history of public health at the University of Havana Medical School.** Dr. Beldarrain Chaple has published five books and 46 articles about the history of medicine and epidemics in Cuba.

In the decades since the success of the 1959 Cuban Revolution, the tiny island has gained a global reputation for its pioneering health system. Although Cuba’s GDP is only a fraction of its northern neighbor’s, the island boasts a lower infant mortality rate than the U.S., and has among the highest life expectancies and doctor patient ratios in the world. In recent years, Cuba’s “medical internationalists” – medical workers sent overseas to help shore up other countries’ health systems or combat new disease outbreaks – have also gained widespread acclaim. What factors account for the seemingly outsized importance of medicine and public health under the Cuban Revolution? What can the study of public health and medicine tell us about broader themes in Cuban history? This course is designed to introduce students to the history of public health and medicine in Cuba. Taking a long historical approach, this course explores both the development of medicine in colonial and early post-independence Cuba as well as recent innovations in Cuban medical care and public health systems. Some topics that students will explore include: the relationship between slavery and medicine in colonial Cuba; the nationalist politics of health in republican and revolutionary Cuba; popular medicine and its relationship to biomedical ideas; and Cuba’s controversial yet successful fight against HIV/AIDS.

**This course has been reviewed by the Department of Medicine, Health, and Society and it has been approved for credit towards the MHS major as an elective (MHS NO-EQ; 3 credit hours).**
2. Cultural History of Cuba
Dr. Ricardo Quizá Moreno, with the assistance of Prof. Gerardo Hernandez. **Dr. Quizá Moreno is full professor and researcher at the University of Havana’s Casa de Altos Estudios**

“Fernando Ortiz.” He has published a variety of books, articles and essays in Cuba, Colombia, Spain and England, including *El cuento al reves: historia, nacionalismo y poder en Cuba* (1902-1930), Editorial Unicornio, La Habana, 2003; *Nuevos voces...viejos asuntos. Panorama de la reciente historiografía cubana*, Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, La Habana, 2005, and *Imaginarios al ruedo: Cuba y los Estados Unidos en las exposiciones internacionales* (1876-1904) Ediciones Union y Ruth Casa Editorial, La Habana, 2011, which was awarded the Annual Award from the Academy of Sciences and the Annual Research Award for Cultural Research Juan Marinello, both in 2012.

This course examines the moments in the history of Cuba that have been key to its national and cultural formation, focusing on the most important aspects of its history, including its social composition, architecture, religion and popular traditions. The concepts of nation and culture, and the country’s notions of identity, idiosyncrasies and Cuban identity will be reviewed by the instructors from a variety of perspectives. Beginning with a review of the principal events of the colonial and republican periods and leading up to the Revolution, the course will focus on those elements that have come to define Cuba in the last 20 years, including its economic development, international relations, social changes and generational conflicts. As a complement to the lectures, students will read a variety of carefully selected Spanish texts, observe audiovisual offerings, observe “in situ” locations of historical and patrimonial importance, visit museums and exchange ideas with specialists on these topics. Field visits associated with the course include the cities of Baracoa, Guantanamo, Santiago de Cuba, Trinidad, Cienfuegos, Santa Clara and Mantanzas.

*This course has been reviewed by the Department of History and it has been approved for credit towards the History major as an elective (HIST NO-EQ; 3 credit hours).*

3. Gender, Race and Inequalities in Cuba: Visions from Cuban Scholars
Professor Marta Núñez Sarmiento, Ph.D. with the assistance of Roberto Zurbano Torres. **Dr. Núñez Sarmiento is a professor of sociology and a researcher at the Center for Studies of International Migrations (CEMI) at the University of Havana.** Her research has concentrated on transition projects for Cuba; women and employment in Cuba; gender studies in Cuba, images of women in Cuban and foreign mass media. At the University of Havana, she teaches courses on sociological research, gender studies and contemporary Cuba. She has served as a consultant for several agencies of the United Nations (1988-2003), for the Association of Caribbean States (1999) and for several NGOs. She is one of the founders of the Cuban Federation of Women.

For more than half a century scholars, journalists and artists from all over the world and basically from the United States have intensely explored Cuba, and their visions have been widely spread by the “mainstream media”. But although Cuban social scientists living in the island have produced their studies while experiencing and being part of the transformations that started in 1959, their works have been scarcely published outside of Cuba. This program summarizes recent studies produced by Cuban scholars on three of the most relevant challenges to eliminate
discrimination in society: gender, race, and inequalities. Although the works refer to historical events explaining the evolution of the present situation in each of these topics, they will basically focus on case studies elaborated since the crisis and reforms of the 90’s in Cuba – following the disappearance of the Soviet Union and the Eastern European socialist countries as well as the strengthening of the US embargo/blockade on Cuba.

This course has been reviewed by the Department of Anthropology and it has been approved for credit towards the Anthropology major as an elective (ANTH NO-EQ; 3 credit hours).

4. 21st Century Latin American Literatures

Susana Haug is Professor of Literature, Faculty of Arts and Letters, University of Havana. She is the recipient of a number of important literary awards and her work has been included in diverse anthologies of contemporary literature in Cuba, Spain, Brazil and Mexico. She contributes frequently to Cuban and foreign journals and magazines and her work has been translated into Italian, French and Portuguese.

The Latin American “boom” resulted in an unprecedented revolution in Spanish language literature. The eyes of the world turned to a production of novels and stories by a group of authors who began publishing in the 1960s and constituted (and may continue to constitute) the literary version of “Greenwich mean time.” In this course, we will explore the directions taken by Latin American literature after the boom and focus on the literary production of younger authors, particularly those who began publishing in the 21st century. We will explore their many themes, esthetics, continuities and disruptions.

This course has been reviewed by the Department of Spanish and Portuguese and it has been approved for credit towards the SPAN major as an elective (SPAN NO-EQ; 3 credit hours).

University of Havana Courses

Students can take courses from two schools at the University of Havana: the Faculty of Arts and Letters and the Faculty of Philosophy and History. Students choose from courses in literature, the arts, Afro-Caribbean studies and music in the Faculty of Arts and Letters or courses in Cuban history, philosophy and religion, political sociology and Latin American thought through the Faculty of Philosophy and History. University of Havana courses usually vary in length from 45 to 65 contact hours. Final determinations of semester course load and credit transfer policies are made by Vanderbilt for our students.

All course instruction is conducted in Spanish, and students will be expected to attend classes regularly, participate in group discussion and keep up with all assignments and required readings. Evaluations and assessment will be based on a combination of written assignments, oral presentations, exams, and class projects. Students typically take 4 to 6 courses (12 to 18 credit hours), at least two of which will be the CASA courses listed above.
GRADING
The grades students receive from Casa de las Americas are A, B, C, D, F. Those grades will be accepted as reported. The grades students receive on their transcripts from the University of Havana range from 5-1 (5 being the best). For these grades, we will use the following conversion chart:
5 = A
4 = B
3 = C
2 = D
1 = F

EXCURSIONS AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES
Throughout the semester, courses are complemented with special seminars and guest lectures by respected experts from other key research centers, including the Centro de Estudios Demográficos, Cuba’s premier research organization focusing on demographic studies and social research, the Instituto de Estudios de la Economía Cubana and the Centro de Investigación de la Cultura Cubana Juan Marinello. In addition, interested students will be encouraged to carry out focused research projects that will engage them with recognized Cuban experts in given disciplines and connect them with local archives, museums, and key cultural organizations. Mid-semester, the group will undertake an academic field visit across the island, passing through Guantánamo, Baracoa, Camagüey and Santa Clara, before arriving at Santiago, Cuba’s second largest city. In each city visited, students will be guided by academics who will introduce them not only to the history and architecture of the city but also to its leading intellectuals and artists. Santiago has a distinctly Caribbean and Afro-Cuban flavor that is evident in its musical traditions, architecture and, for many residents, its religious practices. The city offers a fascinating historical and cultural juxtaposition to Havana.

CASA will also organize a variety of special topic-based lectures, exhibitions, recitals, readings and local field visits that expose students to the tremendous cultural mosaic of Cuba. Topics may include Cuban music, gastronomy, religion, race and ethnicity, sports, and politics and will capitalize on CASA’s extended network of contacts throughout Havana. For interested students, extracurricular activities may include community-based volunteer opportunities. Additionally, students will be able to find dance and music instructors easily and will have the city of Havana’s free and low cost concert and performance repertoire at their disposition. Each semester, the program will provide students with access to major cultural events that will take place in and around Havana.

ACADEMIC CALENDAR
The CASA-Cuba program operates Spring and Fall semesters, and the program’s academic calendar aligns nicely with Vanderbilt’s semester calendar. Program orientation begins the second week of January or last week of August, with classes beginning in late January or early September; classes end the second week of May or the third week of December. Students meet in Miami, travel to Cuba together, and then receive a 5-day orientation at the program site. Dates for 2015 Spring and Fall semesters are outlined below.
Spring 2016
- January 17: Student cohort meets in Miami, Florida by 3p.m. for the welcome dinner.
- January 19: Group departs Miami for Havana, Cuba.
- January 21 – 31: Five day orientation conducted by CASA-Cuba and Casa de las Américas
- January 28: CASA classes and University of Havana classes begin
- May 14: Classes end
- May 16: Program officially ends; students depart as a group from Havana to Miami.

Fall 2016
- August 29: Student cohort meets up in Miami, Florida by 3pm for the welcome dinner.
- August 31: Group departs Miami for Havana, Cuba.
- August 31 – Sept. 4: Five day orientation conducted by CASA-Cuba and Casa de las Américas
- Sept. 1: CASA classes and University of Havana classes begin
- December 18: classes end
- December 19: Program officially ends; students depart as a group from Havana to Miami.

LOGISTICS AND ORIENTATION
Students meet as a cohort in Miami and travel to Cuba together with CASA-Cuba Program Director Rainer Schultz, and travel as a group from Miami back to Miami at the end of the program. Students are responsible for making their domestic travel arrangements to Miami, but group travel arrangements from Miami to Havana will be made by CASA-Cuba. Students are given a pre-orientation in Miami. Upon arrival in Cuba, students are given a week-long orientation to prepare them for their time in Cuba, including excursions around Havana.

The one-week onsite orientation geared toward providing students with an introduction to the city of Havana through both a pre- and post-revolution lens so that students will be prepared to understand basic social, political and cross-cultural elements that will be a part of their everyday lives. Field visits throughout Havana during this first week help students become comfortable navigating their way through their host city.

Students are not allowed to join the program early or stay in Cuba once the program ends; all program participants travel to and from Cuba together with the Program Director.

ADMISSIONS
Vanderbilt students wishing to attend the Cuba program will apply through GEO. CLAS will work with GEO to design a program-specific application, and will be involved in the review of applications and admissions decisions. Applications for the Spring semester are due October 1; applications for the Fall semester are due March 15.

Students who wish to apply to the program must:
1) Hold a 2.75 cumulative GPA
2) Have completed at least 2 semesters at Vanderbilt
3) Have completed SPAN 3303, or be able to demonstrate at least an intermediate level of Spanish proficiency (this may be done with an Oral Proficiency Exam delivered by CLAS)
4) Be in good academic and disciplinary standing at Vanderbilt

In terms of program capacity, top priority is given to students at institutions who are Division Members for a given program (Vanderbilt is a Division member for the Cuba program, thus our students will receive priority), followed by students at CASA member institutions who are not Division Members. If space allows, students from non-CASA institution may be accepted to the program. We anticipate sending up to 10 Vanderbilt students per semester. (See Policies and Procedures, page 4).

There is no formal limit on the number of students Vanderbilt can send to the Cuba program. If, however, we are deluged with dozens of applications, students will be prioritized according to majors represented by the CLAS program (Spanish and Portuguese, MHS, History, and Anthropology) and then by year of study.

CASA and Casa de las Américas will coordinate with the Cuban Interests Section in Washington, DC to obtain the necessary student visa for students accepted to the program.

Non-discrimination: As with all Vanderbilt University programs this study abroad program will not discriminate against individuals on the basis of their race, sex, religion, color, national or ethnic origin, age, disability, military service, or genetic information in its administration of educational policies, programs, or activities; admissions policies; scholarship and loan programs. In addition, the program will not discriminate against individuals on the basis of their sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

HOUSING AND MEALS
All students (with no exceptions) will share living accommodations in one of two residences: The Casa de Las Américas guest residence and an additional modern guest residence located just across the street contracted by CASA. Both are safe, clean and secure residences located in the Vedado district, within walking distance to Casa de Las Americas and the University of Havana. Students will share ample bedrooms that are air conditioned, with modern toilets and showers. Washing machines are located on the premises of both residences. Bottled water will be provided.

Students will be provided with breakfast and dinner each day. Dinner will be taken in the Casa de Las Americas guest residence. Students must budget for approximately $5.00 to $10.00/day for mid-day meals taken outside of the guest residence (see Program Costs below).

HEALTH AND SAFETY
Students are not permitted to participate in the program without valid U.S. health insurance. Students will either need to demonstrate that they have health insurance independently or
purchase continuing coverage through their home university. If a student is currently covered by a plan through her/his home university, the student may be provided the option to continue this coverage while abroad. If not, the student will need to present evidence of coverage to the home CASA institution before traveling abroad.

All students participating on the program will also be automatically covered by a supplementary travel assistance plan administered by International SOS, whose services range from telephone advice and referrals to full-scale evacuation by private air ambulance. International SOS has more than 3,500 professionals in 24-hour alarm centers, international clinics and remote-site medical facilities across five continents.

No vaccines are required for Cuba; however, we recommend that students visit the CDC website for suggested vaccinations.

Cuba’s health system is run by the government, and there are virtually no private facilities. Generally, the standard of medical care in Cuba is good, although the quality of medical facilities and availability of medical supplies may vary throughout the island. Relative to other parts of the country, a higher standard of care is available in Havana, especially at the Hospital Hermanos Amejeiras and Hospital Cira García. This latter facility caters principally to foreigners and is significantly better-equipped than others on the island. English-speaking doctors practice at this hospital. Hospital Cira García also has a pharmacy with basic medications and imported drugs. Because international or very specialized drugs may be difficult to obtain, it is recommended that students bring a supply of any prescription medications they require, and that they know the generic (chemical) names of any medications.

Students and parents can find security and safety information about study abroad locations at the following websites, and, based on the information provided, can make informed decisions about whether to participate in a study abroad program.


Information for parents of students planning to study abroad: https://webapp.mis.vanderbilt.edu/studioabroad/index.cfm?FuseAction=Abroad.ViewLink&Parent_ID=1B2A7A72-9014-5C31-1BB54ED9994A1C4F&Link_ID=F1718224-C0A5-99AF-CF2F75ADD82D02


If a health concern arises during the program, students will contact the on-site CASA Center Director, Rainer Schultz, as the first point of contact. He will work with colleagues on the ground to ensure that students receive the health care needed. All health-related matters will be reported to students’ respective home university.
Students will be required to sign a written code of conduct for use of the residence and, as part of the on-site orientation, will be provided with clear instructions as to the importance of adhering to Cuban cultural and societal norms and to strictly abide by any and all Cuban policies governing their conduct as visitors to Cuba. Under no circumstances will students be granted permission for independent housing.

Crime rates in Cuba are extremely low; still, caution should be taken to adhere to local standards of decency and safety as reviewed in the orientation.

TUITION AND FEES
The cost for the Cuba program is **$18,700**, which includes housing, partial board, excursions, and round-trip airfare between Miami and Cuba. The maximum number of credit hours is 18; above this tuition will increase on a per credit hour basis.

As a Division Member of the Cuba program, Vanderbilt students receive a discounted tuition rate ($13,500 vs. $24,196; this may vary annually based on enrollments). The housing cost includes accommodations and meals for the pre-orientation in Miami, lodging in Cuba (see above), and breakfast and dinner each day. This makes the program very affordable as Vanderbilt’s semester tuition would cover all of the above, which would be billed to Vanderbilt by Brown.

Cost breakdown:
1. Program Tuition for Vanderbilt students (as CASA members): $13,500
2. Housing: $4,200 (includes breakfast and dinner daily; meals in Miami)
3. Round-trip Airfare from Miami to Cuba: approximately $1000

Total Program Fee billed to Vanderbilt by Brown: $18,700 (2015-2016 figure). This falls within the 87% of Vanderbilt tuition that can be used towards the cost of study abroad programs.

Additional Direct Student Costs: Students would be directly responsible for visa fees, airfare or other transportation to Miami, one meal per day, and personal expenses. **Direct student costs** should total approximately $1500-$2000, and can be broken down as such:

1. Lunches: $600
2. Local transport: $300
3. Books: $250
4. RT Airfare to Miami: up to $600 depending on origination
5. Personal expenses: $200

Detailed pricing information for the program is available here:
http://www.brown.edu/academics/college/special-programs/international-study/pinpoint-your-program/location/brown-cuba/cuba-program-costs-201516