FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the Fulbright-Hays Philippines Group Project Abroad at NIU?
This project, entitled “The Philippines: Ethno-Religious Diversity and Human Rights in a Transitioning Democracy in Southeast Asia,” will bring 12 Illinois high school and community college educators to the Philippines for a four-week study tour. Based at Philippine Normal University in Manila, the program will examine the country’s response to ethnic conflict and local efforts to rebuild democratic institutions and advocate respect for human rights. All participants will develop teaching modules stemming from the seminar.

Do participants have to pay?
The program covers all expenses, including international air travel through a US carrier and room and board in-country. Participants are expected to have a valid US passport.

Why learn about the Republic of the Philippines?
The Philippines is a microcosm of Southeast Asia insofar as ethno-religious conflict and separatism among minority groups challenge the nation-building projects that are underway in young democracies. The Philippines also has strong historical ties to the US as a former colony. It has been a strategic anchor for the US military for over a century and continues to serve as a strategic partner in Southeast Asia. The Filipino population is the second largest Asian American group in the US.

What is the relationship between the US and the Republic of the Philippines?
The US is among the Philippines’ top trading partners and is the largest foreign investor there. The two countries actively participate in such organizations as the UN, Association of Southeast Asian Nations Forum, Asia Pacific Economic Forum, International Monetary Fund, World Bank and World Trade Organization. The US has had a Peace Corps Program in the Philippines for more than 50 years, and most recently has assisted the country in disaster relief and recovery.

Why learn about ‘human rights’?
The state of Illinois was the first in the US to mandate the teaching of genocide and human rights in elementary and secondary school curricula. This program offers an opportunity to infuse hands-on experience with teaching on this subject. Here are some relevant links with information on human rights in the Philippines:

- Human Rights Watch World Report 2014
- Human Rights Abuses in the Philippines
- Amnesty International 2013 Report on the Philippines
- US State Department 2013 Report on Human Rights

What are the goals of the project?
To give educators first-hand opportunities to:
• Experience the rich history and ethno-religious diversity in the Philippines
• Understand the challenges and develop new ways of teaching about human rights through dialogues with Filipino high school teachers/college instructors and local organizations that promote pluralism, social justice and active citizenship
• Interview nongovernmental organization leaders, government/military/police officers about the human rights challenges faced by a developing country
• Acquire basic conversational speaking and listening skills in Tagalog, the national language of the Philippines
• Develop on-site lesson plans and video blogs.

Who can apply and how many participants will be accepted?
Interested northern Illinois community college instructors and high school social and global studies teachers may apply. Six high school and six community college participants will be selected, with preference for instructors from minority-serving institutions.

What does the program expect of participants prior to the trip?
Participants are expected to attend a two-day pre-departure orientation at NIU in May 2015.

What are participant expectations while in the Philippines?
Participants are expected to attend the entire four-week overseas program in the Philippines, complete weekly evaluations, and maintain a journal and a blog. They also will present preliminary curriculum lesson plans to fellow educators in the Philippines before returning home.

What are participant expectations after the trip?
Participants are expected to:
• Write several course modules/lesson plans based on the overseas experience to enhance their existing courses
• Write several course modules/lesson plans based on the overseas experience and relevant to teaching about human rights
• Attend two 2-day follow-up events three and six months after the overseas experience to present course modules and lesson plans to fellow teachers and community college instructors
• Allow finalized lesson plans and course modules to be placed on the outreach and Tagalog pages of the NIU Center for Southeast Asian Studies website for the benefit of educators globally
• Maintain contact with overseas colleagues for future educational partnerships and collaborations.

Do I need health insurance while I am in the Philippines?
Yes. You are strongly encouraged to purchase an International Teacher Identity Card to cover your health insurance and other insurance needs while in the Philippines. Local hospitals and doctors will not likely accept your US insurance. An International Teacher Identity Card costs $25 and Fulbright cannot pay for it. However, you can obtain an
application in the Study Abroad Office at NIU, 4th floor, Williston Hall, or from the STA Travel website.

**What immunizations do I need before I go to the Philippines?**
Please see the recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control. Also, you should bring any prescription medicine with you, along with mosquito repellent.