



## **STUDENT Application Form**

### **SOC Costa Rica Science Trip Student Application**

#### **Course Description:**

The SOC Costa Rica trip will embark on a science driven experience to the research site two hours outside of Liberia, Costa Rica. This site is the brainchild of Minnesota investors who have a vested interest in the ecology and preservation of the rain forests of Costa Rica. While at this site, students will be immersed in a tropical rainforest research program focusing on leaf cutter ants. In addition, students will be exposed to various topics including ecotourism, conservation, organic farming and rainforest ecology. Most importantly, students will become involved in research on Leaf Cutter Ants that is an on-going effort by Dr. Cameron Currie of the University of Wisconsin.

Under the sponsorship of Dr. Currie and Dr. Adrian Pinto from the University of Costa Rica, these students will participate in a research effort to not only generate discoveries relating to these ant colonies, but also to propel the high school students understanding and knowledge of evolutionary microbiology to a level typically not possible until far into the university level biosciences. The students will gain an understanding of how nature can teach us things that otherwise would consume unimaginable years of PhD research time.

#### **Student Requirements:**

Students in grades 9-12 will be able to apply. Depending on the school system, it is best that the student has taken basic biology or chemistry. These students will be selected based on the following criteria: academic history, teacher recommendation, student essay. Students will be required to attend all pre- and post-departure classes. There is a tuition charge for this course, so students will also be required to meet the payment deadlines in full. 16 students selected from a participating school. The school may elect to accept alternates who would fulfill the position if a student drops out prior to the trip departing in the summer months. The alternate might then be the highest priority on the selection list for the follow year.

**Application Process:**

The following requirements are needed to complete your application.

- Application essay submitted to your schools teacher heading the program
- Two teacher evaluation forms submitted (attached)
- Parent permission slip signed and returned

**Essay Question:**

Please answer the following questions in 500 words or less. Your essay will be evaluated on content and composition. This course requires a high level of academic ability; please submit your best work.

**Why is it important to you to have a course abroad instead of a class trip?**

**Why is it important to learn about science in the field over other classroom experiences?**

**How do you plan to use what you learn in this course in your future?**

**How do you hope to bring what you learn back to your community?**