

University of Puerto Rico at Rio Piedras

Sierra de Las Minas, Guatemala  
Summer research opportunity

June-July 2017

Linking ecosystem and geomorphic processes to understand the large-scale dynamics  
of tropical mountains mediated by landsliding

Are you interested in learning about plant functional diversity? Do you want to gain experience in a project combining ecology with geomorphology? Do you want to learn about how soil fertility may influence plant traits influencing slope stability? Are you interested in learning how these interactions may influence carbon cycling? Do you want to learn about the relationships between landsliding and climate change? Do you want to learn about new cultures? Well if you answered yes to any of these questions, this summer experience may be for you! Through field sampling of vegetation and soil in two contrasting environments (forest and landslides) this project seeks to understand the dynamics of landsliding and its importance for the diversity and functioning of tropical montane ecosystems. The work will be conducted in the Sierra de Las Minas, a mountain range located in eastern Guatemala that harbors an enormous diversity of plants and is critical in the production of water.

The student participating in this project will learn about field methods and will have the opportunity to develop a research project. Students interested in applying to graduate school in the Fall semester are encouraged to consider the University of Puerto Rico at Rio Piedras as an option.

*Requirements:*

- Desire to gain experience in the field.
- Desire to learn new ecosystems and cultures.
- Interest in outdoor activities.
- Work ethic.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> year of studies in Biology or related disciplines.
- Ideally have taken a course in ecology or field techniques.
- GPA > 3.5
- Knowing Spanish is a plus.

*Application:* We are seeking highly motivated and qualified students. If you are interested in this opportunity please submit the following documents: (a) Letter explaining your interest in participating in this study, (b) 1-2 page essay describing your interests and goals, (c) Curriculum Vitae, and (d) Two letters of recommendation. The person providing the letters should send directly to Dr. Carla Restrepo

Send your application as single pdf file to Dr. Carla Restrepo (crestre@hpcf.upr.edu). Deadline for receiving applications is **February 20, 2017**. For more information about our lab please visit us at <http://tiselab.uprrp.edu>.

**Benefits:** This project brings tangible and intangible benefits. Tangibles include a stipend for 2 months, payment of airfare, lodging and meals. Intangible benefits include the acquisition of new knowledge, experience in a new country, interacting with people from other places, and participate in an innovative project. Depending on students' interests there might be an opportunity to visit the Parque Nacional Sierra del Lacandón, in the heart of the ancient Maya world.