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June 16, 2015

N.C. Rep. Graig Meyer to travel with Durham Tech on Cuba study abroad trip

(Durham, NC) – North Carolina State House Representative Graig Meyer will travel with Durham Tech students, faculty, and community members during a study abroad trip to Cuba in October.

Meyer, who represents Durham and Orange counties, will be among 15 participants in the expedition. The study abroad program is an extension of the college’s Center for the Global Learner, which was founded in 2009 to help foster intercultural understanding and the development of engaged global citizens. Meyer is an advisory board member for the Center.

“I am very excited about this community education opportunity,” Meyer said. “It has long been on my personal bucket list to visit Cuba. As our official governmental relations with Cuba evolve, I also have a professional interest in learning about our neighbor.

“Traveling with a group from Durham Tech seems like a great opportunity to learn about the community with a broad cross-section of community members,” Meyer continued. “As the United States seeks to rebuild a relationship with Cuba, I can’t think of a better way to help forge new ties.”

Durham Tech students will be among the first in the U.S. to visit Cuba following President Barack Obama’s announcement in December to increase travel and engagement with the southern country.

Although scholars and some others have been allowed access to Cuba in recent years, Dr. Constanza Gomez-Joines, director of the Center for the Global Learner, said the trip abroad will give Durham Tech students and community members a chance to see the dynamic country during a period of historical change.

“We’re excited about the opportunity to share with students and the community in our mission to broaden our international scope,” Gomez-Joines said. “Because of the changing political relations between Cuba and the United States, I believe that we have a limited time to experience the Cuba of 50 years ago. This will be a life-changing experience for all participants.”

Participants are enrolled in a continuing education class that focuses on Cuban history, culture, politics, and literature. The trip begins October 10 with a visit to Little Havana in Miami, then continues to Cuba where it will conclude October 18.

Durham Tech students have traveled abroad several times in recent years. In 2012 and 2014, students explored Caribbean society and culture in the Dominican Republic. In 2009, the group traveled to Ecuador and stayed with host families in Quito, Ecuador’s capital city. Students toured Buenos Aires and Uruguay in 2008 and viewed the legendary Inca ruins of Peru in 2007.