

Rutgers University - Camden

It is with great pleasure that I submit a nomination for an Innovations Award for the Spanish Language Immersion Program. Rutgers, School of Nursing Camden has been committed to providing an education that prepares our students to be global citizens with a deep commitment to local communities. The work of our faculty in creating opportunities for short term learning abroad has not only served as a catalyst for curricular change, but also provided a mechanism for other units on the campus to collaborate with the School of Nursing on initiatives that encourage all of our students to understand the impact of health on everyday life, in every location and culture. The mission of Rutgers-Camden is to prepares the next generations of leaders by delivering interdisciplinary and innovative research; rigorous academic programs and civically engaged experiential learning opportunities; and solution-oriented services that change communities. The Spanish Language Immersion program advances all aspects of this mission with distinction.

This program is structured within courses in a way that allows the cost of travel to be included in the student's financial aid package. The Chancellor's Office, through the Learning Abroad Office, provides funding for faculty travel. Despite these mechanisms, some students required additional support for travel abroad. Moreover, faculty wished to incorporate research on the impact of short-term study abroad. The need for additional support prompted an application to the Department of Education/International and Foreign Language Education (DOE/IFLE) grant to expand international studies and foreign language education to Rutgers University Students. Dr. Nancy Pontes, an Assistant Professor in the School of Nursing-Camden, serves as the PI for this project and was successful in securing a grant for over \$550,000 to support expansion and evaluation of the program. Dr. Pontes partnered with the Rutgers Camden, Department of World Languages and Cultures Department, The Learning Abroad Office and the Community Leadership Center to expand the program. As a direct result, existing courses entitled, "Spanish for Health Professionals I and II," were modified to facilitate the delivery of language courses online. A third level course was added in 2018. This third level course will begin in Fall 2018. It is now possible to enroll in these 3 courses and participate in learning abroad or local community activities with Spanish speaking communities to earn a "Spanish for Health Professionals," certificate.

As a result of these activities and innovations, course enrollment far exceeded the original goal of 25 enrollees to 46 in 2017, and 188 students in 2018. Initially, very few nursing students were enrolled in Spanish language courses at Rutgers-Camden, and none were enrolled from our partner minority serving community colleges. Considering that these courses are electives and not required, this increase is encouraging and demonstrates that melding learning abroad in Spanish speaking countries with a focus on health is an attractive mechanism for the recruitment of nursing students. Moreover, in advancing the goal of a baccalaureate degree for all nurses, an appealing mechanism has been created for students from our community college partners to complete their degree and add a global dimension to their education.

The faculty in the School of Nursing are currently working with students in our local community to enhance their communication skills with Spanish speaking residents. Students from the College of Arts and Sciences can practice their language skills with a focus on the language of health care. The School of Nursing recently hired a bilingual nurse practitioner to work one-on-one with the nursing students to strengthen their Spanish speaking ability and better meet the needs of the Spanish speaking community. Dr. Pontes has presented locally and internationally on this project. She is eager to collaborate with others to advance the Spanish Language Immersion Program.

Thank you for this opportunity to highlight innovation in Schools of Nursing. Please do not hesitate to contact me if additional information is required.