

# **Promoting International Collaboration Through A Study Abroad Program**

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# Conflicts of Interest and Disclosures

Neither of the presenters have any real or perceived vested interest that relates to this presentation.

# Purposes

- Describe how nursing faculty can initiate an international partnership with limited resources
- Describe a fruitful partnership between our school of nursing and a large regional pediatric teaching hospital in Florence, Italy
- Describe strategies that have been successful in establishing this mutually beneficial partnership

# Shared Vision

- Saint Xavier University (SXU)
- Founded in Chicago by the Sisters of Mercy in 1846
- A private, Catholic institution of higher learning with over 170 years of history in education
- Our Mission, inspired by the heritage of the Sisters of Mercy, is to educate “men and women to search for truth, to think critically, to communicate effectively and to serve wisely and compassionately in support of human dignity and the common good”



<https://www.sxu.edu/about/mission.asp>

# Relationship to Sigma's mission

## **Mission/Vision**

- Sigma supports nurses' efforts to improve the health of the world's people

## **Global Initiatives**

- **Relationship Building** -Sigma encourages nursing faculty/schools to establish and build relationships with key government, healthcare, and education leaders in global regions to support the mission of the organization

# Study Abroad Program Development

- First course offered in 2003
- Maintained continuously since then
- Courses have focused on health care in Turkey, Croatia, Italy, and Ireland
- A goal is to increase students' cultural awareness, sensitivity, and competency

# Study Abroad Courses

- Didactic coursework includes cultural sensitivity and in-depth knowledge of cultures of the country to be visited
- Culminates with an **8 to 10-day short-term immersion experience** in the country of interest
- Helps students to experience the similarities and differences in health care and nursing education in the U.S. and other countries.
- Collaboration between nursing faculty and students from SXU and abroad, and experiences in clinical practice sites overseas

# Strategy: Take a chance and reach out

- Outreach to Italian nurse colleagues
- Initial visit to Florence, Italy and pediatric hospital





# Strategy: Determine leadership

- Start planning approximately 1 year ahead
- Identify faculty in both countries to take the lead in scheduling and organizing activities
  - Collaborate to develop student learning outcomes
- Maintain frequent communication during planning stage

# Strategy: Set specific goals for collaborative activities

- Faculty presentations to the host country are determined by educational needs of the host institution and the expertise of the visiting faculty
- Contractual Bilateral agreements are initiated by both institutions
- Respect for host institution observational experience guidelines

# Strategy: Set specific goals for collaborative activities

Examples of activities:

- Students observe nurses on the unit
- Faculty present to hospital staff and students of host school
- Hospital researchers present to visiting students and faculty



# Strategy: Stay committed

- Faculty commitment: champions are needed for each Study Abroad experience
- Solicit feedback from host institution and from Study Abroad students
- Since 2010, nearly 130 students have participated in Study Abroad experiences in five countries
  - Study Abroad to Italy is one of the most popular courses

# Strategy: Focus on sustainability

- Recognize and celebrate the long-term collaborative relationship
- Reciprocity is important
- October 2018: three nursing colleagues visited us from Italy

# Outcome –benefits for both institutions

- Compare and contrast the health care systems in the United States with those of Italy
- Discuss ways that national health care policies impact the health and health care service delivery in the United States versus Italy
- Identify barriers to access to healthcare services in the United States and Italy
- Discuss nursing education strategies that promote knowledge transfer in the Italian education system
- Experience immersion in a foreign culture to appreciate cultural differences from the perspective of a non-native

# Strategy: Formalize the relationship

- Commitment on both sides to formalizing the partnership
- Written agreement to establish parameters of the relationship
- Keep the conditions broad

# Institutional Support

- Support from Dean and Provost
- Seed money from University for start-up
- Support to market Study Abroad courses
- Centralized office for Study Abroad programs
- Staff support to handle travel logistics



# Study Abroad to Italy Course and Assignment

- 15-week course with six sessions of didactic classroom activities
- 9-day immersion experience in Italy at the end of the semester
- **Journals** kept by students:
  - Reflect on their experiences on the trip
  - Answer five questions to reflect upon differences in healthcare practices, policies, nursing education, and nursing practice in the U.S. and Italy
  - Reflect on changes in their own beliefs and values regarding professional nursing practice as a result of the class and trip

# THEME: “OPENED MY EYES”

## *UNIVERSAL HEALTH CARE – POLITICAL IMPACT*

- Opened my eyes to the pros and cons of universal health care. Healthcare is available to all, including immigrants. “This trip opened my eyes to how healthcare can be so different in other parts of the world” (Student E.Z.)

## *HEALTH CARE POLICIES*

- Opened my eyes about budgeting of resources to different regions of the country and the impact on access to care. “What results is a balancing act between affordability and availability that can be heavily influenced by...healthcare policy...” (Student A.P.)

# THEME: “OPENED MY EYES”

## ***FIRST HAND EXPERIENCE OF NURSING PRACTICE IN ITALY***

- Opened my eyes about differences in patient care, informatics, documentation, nurses' autonomy, and collaboration between nurses and doctors.

## ***HEALTHY LIVING & ATTITUDES***

- Opened my eyes to Italians' increased activity, healthier eating, and less stressed lifestyle. “Italians take the time to enjoy their present days and experiences...Spiritually, I enjoyed witnessing how much Italians value the history of the religion and culture.” (Student A.S.)

# THEME: “OPENED MY EYES”

## *EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS*

- My own beliefs and values regarding professional nursing practice were reinforced by the class and the trip. Inspired me to improve care delivery in the USA. “It is one thing to...google and learn about another country but to see it in person like I have due to this trip really puts it all together” (Student J.K.)

# Outcomes

Hospital and SON visits enabled students to compare and contrast the health care delivery systems across the life-span continuum in the USA with that of Italy.

Students observed and participated in discussions related to pediatric care, chronic kidney disease, and end-of-life care, enabling them to analyze cultural influences on healthcare delivery.

A Study Abroad course that includes didactic sessions and short-term immersion trip **opens students' eyes** to the impact of healthcare policies and culture on healthcare delivery and lifestyle practices.





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