Academic Initiatives Stipend Proposal

The University of Wisconsin-La Crosse has a unique perspective in terms of valuing international education. As graduate students in a health professions program, we have little time to incorporate an international experience into our curriculum. However, in the Occupational Therapy (OT) Program we are given an opportunity to travel to Scotland to expand our knowledge of our profession.

In the spring semester of 2009, first and second year OT students have the option to participate in an elective International Perspectives of OT class. First year students have the option of hosting students from The Robert Gordon University (RGU) of Aberdeen, Scotland; while second year students have the option of traveling to Scotland.

There are six UW-L OT students who will be traveling to Aberdeen during spring break 2009. We will be attending OT classes at RGU, which will be taught by RGU faculty members. In addition, we will be staying with OT students from this university. Observing OT professionals in various areas of practice within the U.K. healthcare system is also part of this experience. We will share this information with students and local clinicians through:

1. A poster presentation at the UW-L Study Abroad Expo
2. A poster presentation at the OT Awareness Day
3. A PowerPoint presentation for the Pre-Occupational Therapy Club

Study Abroad Expo – February 17th, 2009

At the Study Abroad Expo we will present a poster that highlights our upcoming travels. We will be discussing our International Perspectives course, which includes the hosting and travel option for participating students. Our travel itinerary and information on Scotland’s healthcare system will be presented in hopes to motivate other students interested in healthcare careers to consider studying abroad during their college experience.
**Occupational Therapy Awareness Day – April 10th, 2009**

The Student Occupational Therapy Association presents an annual Occupational Therapy Awareness Day. We host a distinguished lecturer and local clinicians in order advocate for the practice of OT. Our poster will be displayed by the sign-in table, and we will be available during break times in order to explain and answer questions. We hope to share what we have learned during this unique experience with clinicians and students interested in gaining an international perspective of OT and varying healthcare systems.

**Pre-Occupational Therapy Club Presentation - April 2009**

During a pre-occupational therapy club meeting, we will share our PowerPoint presentation with future occupational therapy students. We hope to instill an appreciation for international travel and promoting a unique aspect of the UWL OT program. The presentation will display photographs, cultural information, and our clinical experience abroad. We will also be addressing any questions regarding the OT program and studying abroad.

Our proposal offers a unique perspective in that studying abroad is not always an option for graduate students. This opportunity will be highly beneficial for us and our classmates as it will expand our knowledge of our profession and support our future practice in occupational therapy. UW-L emphasizes the importance of international studies and we would like to take full advantage of this one of a kind opportunity that has been presented to us.

Thank you for considering our proposal and supporting the occupational therapy program’s emphasis on international experience.

Alaina Hackbarth                      Hillary Larson                      Claire Jones