

The Innovative Initiative Award
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Presents the

Innovative
Initiative Abstracts

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The 2008 Innovative Initiative Award Winner

Wilbur Wright College/Humboldt Park

Carreras En Salud (Healthcare Careers)

Wilbur Wright College in Chicago, Illinois, has a healthcare partnership between a community college and three community based organizations in the Chicago area, aimed to increase the number of bilingual/bicultural (English/Spanish) healthcare professionals in the areas of Certified Nurse Assistant (CNA) to Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) to Registered Nurse (RN). Carreras en Salud uses an innovative career pathway model that helps advance students from lower levels of basic skills to college level certificate and degree programs as well as state licensure. Carreras en Salud utilizes a contextualized curriculum model to help improve the students' basic skills to college levels without the need for remediation classes.

The program has enrolled over 500 students in its first two years and has graduated over 50 CNAs and 86 LPNs. The other students are at different levels within the pathway, including some who have transferred to an RN program.

Carreras En Salud is funded with private foundation dollars at the lower levels of the career pathway, and as the students advance to college levels the Pell grant and Workforce Investment Act (WIA) become the primary sources for those who qualify. Carreras En Salud raises over \$350,000 a year from private foundations to support students by assisting with tuition, fees, learning materials, as well as other non-academic expenses such as childcare, transportation, etc.

and the College of Arts and Sciences as a partnership. There is one full-time faculty member dedicated to the program as lead instructor and advisor. This ensures academic quality and continuity for the program.

Students who earn a Bachelor of Arts in Professional Studies will show gains in writing and critical thinking skills, demonstrate better than average skills in information literacy and communications technology, develop a professional/career development plan whereby information-sharing occurs via feedback obtained through self-assessment and occupational exploration, and prepare a capstone research project that addresses linkages between the program's area of concentration and issues pertaining to the workplace.

The Bachelor of Arts in Professional Studies major will generate new revenue and student enrollment for the university's Orland Park Campus.

Fellow institutions wishing to replicate the program can simply restructure a current program focusing its efforts on theory-to-professional development and applied research.

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Saint Xavier University

Bachelor of Arts in Professional Studies, Organizational Behavior Track

Saint Xavier University recently began offering a new degree completion program for adult transfer students. The Bachelor of Arts in Professional Studies program is offered at the Saint Xavier University/Orland Park Campus. This program is designed for adult learners whose life experience and prior learning would allow them to be successful in an accelerated program and to complete self-directed, instructor-assisted research. Consequently, it is a program structured in an accelerated format and technology-enhanced instruction. It is intended for students who have earned an Associate of Arts (AA) or Associate of Science (AS) degree or the equivalent credit hours of an associate degree.

Courses in the Bachelor of Arts in Professional Studies program are scheduled in eight-week blocks with classes meeting two days per week, daytime or evening track. Students can attend either full-time or part-time. The program employs both face-to-face instruction and technology-enhanced instruction. Students receive instructional materials and syllabi at the start of the program, allowing them to plan ahead and to become fully acclimated to the accelerated format. A critical component in the program is an emphasis on academic and career advising that begins at onset and remains consistent throughout the learning process.

The degree program is designed to serve working professionals continuing their education who wish to take courses in an area of concentration that focuses on content theory, applied research, and real world experience.

This program is uniquely designed to share courses with the School of Continuing and Professional Studies, Graham School of Management,

Carreras En Salud aims to increase the number of bilingual (English/Spanish) Healthcare professionals and to replicate the Carreras En Salud model in areas of high diversity in Chicago and its surrounding metropolitan area. Carreras En Salud targets adult bilingual (English/Spanish) residents in Chicago and surrounding areas with low to pre-college levels of basic skills who are interested in the area of healthcare as a profession. Bilingual, bicultural nurses are critically needed in the City of Chicago communities to effectively satisfy the increasing demand for quality healthcare by the fastest growing minority in Chicago and in the nation. These nurses are also needed to address the growing health disparities experienced by the Latino and other minority populations. The Carreras En Salud Model has been helping to close the gap of bilingual/bicultural healthcare professionals in a city with over 25% percent of Spanish speaking residents.

Carreras En Salud will be a national model for two essential elements in the career and technical education fields: A model for the development of effective partnerships between community colleges and community based organizations, and a model to develop programs with all the support elements needed to effectively prepare the non-traditional low skill adult for skilled jobs that pay livable wages and help them advance in their career goals.

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Illinois Central College

Illinois Central College's Teaching and Learning Center and the "Still-Learning" College

Illinois Central College (ICC) recognizes its employees as a valuable asset. ICC invests in its faculty and staff by providing development programs for all college personnel. The Teaching and Learning Center (TLC) with the help of the ICC Educational Foundation, was established in 2001. The TLC houses "smart classroom" technology and computer stations, scanners, color printers and digital cameras. In February 2007 the Teaching Learning Center was expanded to serve all college personnel, faculty and staff.

The mission of the Teaching and Learning Center was expanded with the intent of providing lifelong learning opportunities for all college personnel. This mission will help move the college forward with its strategic plan. To that end, ICC supports its commitment to excellence in education through providing appropriate learning opportunities for our students and college personnel.

ICC's Teaching and Learning Center provides college personnel with information, skills and opportunities to appreciate and grow the attitudes to better serve students through comprehensive professional development support of all college personnel, research-based programs relating to a broad range of topics from foundational to emergent, representation and advocacy college-wide through committee and team participation; strong desire to develop and use cross-functional teams, professional development opportunities aligned with the college's strategic plan, dedicated facilities, staff, and budgetary resources for personnel development, participation in state, regional and national professional development conferences, partnerships with the continuing education division, the Professional Development Institute provides

computers, copies of each math textbook are available so that students can use a book until they can afford to buy one. They can also watch DVDs provided by the publishers of some of the most popular courses so that they can receive instruction on a lesson missed or additional instruction for a lesson not understood.

Currently, most costs are paid out of the math department budget and the division director's budget. This initiative started after the budget proposals had been made last year so the project is limited in terms of funds at this time. Needs have been met, though, as the coordinator and the administration have been resourceful in using funds from the department and applying for grants. Also, a Perkins Grant funded the cost of the computers and College Work Study funds the cost of paying student workers.

The math lab has unlimited potential and possibility in helping our students and the people in the surrounding community. Because there is a dedicated room, ample technology, support staff, and faculty and administrator support, the lab helps many students now and in the future will be able to help the community, many more students, and instructors.

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Rock Valley College

Rock Valley College (RVC) Math Lab

Success and retention in mathematics is an ongoing challenge. The faculty and administration at Rock Valley College (RVC) have been working to increase student success and improve the resources available to math students at the college.

The lab started as a means to serve RVC math students. Quickly, it became apparent that it could be used to help many students, including students in other areas, with math. It has been very popular with students, as evidenced by usage statistics, comments, and exit surveys.

Several goals for the lab have been set including increasing the number and groups of students served, possibly offering services to any community member, offering refresher and study skills classes in the lab, and increasing the hours of operation and tutoring offered so that nights and weekends are covered. Further, as the math department works to improve the developmental math program, the lab's function will grow to accommodate the approved changes. When it started, it was a computer lab with additional faculty tutoring. It has since become a math resource center, growing in its offerings and students served. Its potential is limitless.

Many schools have math tutoring and computer labs. What sets the RVC lab apart is that tutoring is provided for all math classes by the faculty who teach them. RVC has a large, successful tutoring program that is staffed by peer tutors. Many students use the program. What also sets the math lab apart is that it is not just a tutoring center but also a math resource center and classroom. Classes are held in the lab and when they're not, students can use the computers for any math related need. It is helpful to students to have a dedicated lab for this purpose as it can be difficult to get access to a computer on campus. In addition to

training for college personnel, and participation in the Continuous Quality Improvement Network (CQIN) Innovation Curriculum grant.

Some of the opportunities that are offered through the center are seminars, workshops, retreats, discussions, mini grant opportunities, diversity study circles, college wide committees, and leadership training.

The Teaching and Learning Center addresses professional development needs strategically, has an impact on growing future leaders, and changes the college culture to a student-centered learning college community that takes place over time.

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Lincoln Land Community College

HIRE Education Pre-Apprenticeship for Construction Careers

This project was formulated in response to two large concerns within the Springfield, Illinois area. The first issue was the need of local construction industry unions to attract and retain minorities and women in their apprenticeship programs. The second concern was that there was a large number of un-and under-employed minority individuals in the Springfield area. It was determined that a program to prepare minorities, women and other non-traditional groups for entrance into the unions would address both issues. Lincoln Land Community College (LLCC) and local union members met several times to create a curriculum for classes specifically geared toward preparing these students for apprenticeship programs in the local union trades.

This initiative is innovative and unique because it brought to one table all of the construction trades unions (10) in Springfield to determine exactly what common skills and characteristics they were looking for in potential apprentices. The training program that was developed addressed these specific needs. Additionally, through targeted marketing, the specific audience was attracted to the program. This pre-apprenticeship training program contributes to the purpose of ICCHE because it successfully addresses the lifelong learning needs of an at-risk or even post fallen group of individuals. Through this learning experience, individuals were given a second chance, and lives were changed

Training for students includes four weeks of classroom coursework that covers Math for the Trades, Employability Skills, and Job Readiness. This is followed by a three week Technical Skills portion in which students study tool usage, shop safety including OSHA requirements and hands on projects. During the program, representatives from nine of the local unions as well as the teamsters speak to students about their specific union and requirements of the apprenticeship program.

Students are also taken on sight visits to actual union construction areas to see the real world of the trades. Upon completion, participants select which union they wish to become members of, and go through their entrance process, which typically includes skills testing and interviews.

The outcomes included thirteen successful completers of the program/placements in self-sufficient wage level jobs, and this after only the first round of four. Though the students who participated in the program are direct beneficiaries, their spouses, children, relatives, neighbors, community, local businesses and local economy will benefit in the long run, as well. These individuals are no longer collecting unemployment or welfare benefits. It is evident that this community college is seriously dedicated to addressing the learning needs of non-traditional students.

Through DCEO's support (\$300,000), students enrolled in the HIRE Education program not only attend tuition free, they also receive stipends to assist with living needs while attending the program. Once accepted into the union apprenticeship program students will earn from \$10 – 20 per hour plus receive benefits for themselves and their families. The college has put forth resources to ensure a successful program, above and beyond that which is supported by the grant funding.

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