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Student Wins Grant Funding for 3D Health Models

May 16, 2016

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.— Patients at the Community Health Care Clinic (CHCC) can now gain better understanding of their diagnoses, thanks to 3D health models from a Community Engagement Grant written by Illinois Wesleyan University student Stephanie Dizon '16.

As a student in the course "Grant Writing," Dizon and each of her classmates completed a "mini-grant" application on behalf of a community partner. As the winner of the \$500 mini-grant, Dizon's funds will enable CHCC to purchase three 3D health models related to diabetes, cardiovascular disease and hypertension. Healthcare providers will utilize these educational tools during patient check-ups and community education classes held at the clinic.

The goal of the medical models is to aid in increasing patient understanding of their own diagnoses so that they are better equipped to manage their diseases, according to Angie McLaughlin, CHCC executive director. Improvements in the patient health education program will ultimately help patient medication adherence, implementing healthy lifestyle choices, and understanding of their medical diagnoses.

The CHCC provides free primary care, referrals and medications to underserved adult populations in McLean County. The most commonly diagnosed diseases for patients at CHCC are hypertension, diabetes and cardiovascular disease. In her grant proposal, Dizon reported that several best practices studies found visual medical models improved comprehension by reinforcing and illustrating key medical concepts. "If patients are visually aware of the way disease processes occur in their own bodies, this can help prompt behaviors toward healthy life choices," she said.

In the grant writing course taught by Action Research Center (ARC) Coordinator Carrie Mack, students learn about fundraising strategies for nonprofits. Each student is paired with a local organization to research grant opportunities and best practices, and design a program and budget. A key component of the grant writing course is the emphasis on practicality. Open to students from all academic majors, students "write 'real' grants in hopes of raising 'real' money, rather than writing grants solely to learn the process," said Mack.

The grant writing course is offered in the fall and spring semesters. In previous years, grant recipients won funds that supported the IWU Peace Garden, the campus garden plot where crops are grown through sustainable practices; a Community Greening Initiative of the West Bloomington Revitalization Project (WBRP); and books for the WBRP's Book Bike.

"This is one of the most rewarding classes I've taken here at IWU," said Dizon. "Students are taught valuable skills that can be used toward making a greater impact in the community. By the end of the semester, my classmates and I had completed grants to potentially raise nearly \$240,000 for our community partners and their amazing programs. I recommend this course to anyone who's ready to make a difference."

A native of Libertyville, Ill., Dizon graduated from Illinois Wesleyan earlier this month with a major in psychology. At IWU she served state's attorney and JusticeCorp internships at the McLean County Law and Justice Center and worked as a crisis advocate for the YWCA. She also interned at the Dunn Law Firm in Bloomington. At IWU she was vice president of campus leadership and service for Alpha Phi Omega national co-ed service fraternity, a member and tour guide of the Ambassador Club, and a member of Kappa Delta sorority. This month she also completed requirements for Certificate in Emergency Medical Technician-Basic at Heartland Community College. She hopes to work as an EMT to gain patient experience before furthering her education to become a physician assistant.



Stephanie Dizon '16

