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## Brownsville, Texas, Clinic Destination for 3 IWU Students in May

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### **Brownsville, Texas, Clinic Destination for 3 IWU Students in May**

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BLOOMINGTON, Ill.--Three Illinois Wesleyan University nursing and biology students will spend next month working at a Brownsville, Texas, health clinic, gaining experience in multicultural health care.

The students are:

■ Zeina Alame, a freshman biology major from Woodridge, Ill., who wants to become a doctor.

■ Sylvia Muniz, a senior majoring in nursing from Chicago Ridge, Ill. Muniz will graduate from IWU on May 5 and take her nursing certification exam in July.

■ Laura Kretz, a junior majoring in nursing from Bloomington.

Alame and Kretz will work at the Brownsville Health Clinic, a facility generally serving low-income Mexican-American patients, as interns for academic credit during IWU's special May Term program when students can opt to take a single month-long course of intensive study on campus, take a travel course in the U.S. or overseas, or work on an internship. Muniz will work as a volunteer.

The trio will work with pediatricians and other health-care workers at the clinic, May 6-31.

"This experience," Alame said, "will help me decide on my future professional course.

"This clinic," Alame added, "provides people with the health care they need to survive. Not everyone receives the basic health care they need because of money--and that's wrong."

Alame expects the biggest challenge she will face in Brownsville is "to see the poverty that might exist there and the lack of health care." She also wants to observe doctors working in emergency situations.

As a high school student, Alame volunteered for the Red Cross and Good Samaritan Hospital, a facility near her home.

"I saw a lot of tense moments," Alame said, referring to her hospital experience. "It was a stressful environment--an environment of extremes."

However, she seems to thrive in that type of environment. "All I ever wanted to do was become a doctor. It's so exciting--it makes me feel like my life is worth something."

Alame isn't interested in a routine medical career. She wants to mix travel with practicing medicine, working with people around the world, teaching them about sanitation and how to take care of themselves. Alame's long-term goal is to launch health-care clinics for those society ignores because of their economic situation--a career goal that she concedes will take much patience and perseverance.

"I wanted to go to the clinic," Muniz said, "because my cultural background is Spanish. It literally will be my first job out of college.

"It will be an excellent learning experience," Muniz said. "I want to see exactly how a clinic like this operates, especially how it handles obstetrics. Eventually, I want to get my master's degree and become a certified nurse practitioner and work in a women's health clinic."

Muniz forecasts that her biggest challenge working at the clinic will be seeing what goes on behind the scenes in terms of securing funding for the facility and the paperwork it takes to keep it going. Recalling her experiences working at a Bloomington prenatal clinic she said: "The director spent a lot of time dealing with fund-raising--I saw how much it takes to provide clients with necessary prenatal care--and that bothered me."

Muniz also wants to focus in Brownsville on prenatal health-care issues, such as making sure pregnant women take vitamins and other medication.

"Sometimes the challenge is to make sure they realize the importance of taking medicine," Muniz explained. "Nurses are educators, but sometimes clients can't do what we teach them because of money."

After Muniz completes her stint at the Brownsville Health Clinic, she intends to look for a permanent job. She has applied for a position at Chicago's Loyola University Medical Center, where she would like to work in the labor and delivery unit.

As a student, Muniz saw three births, the first when she was a sophomore.

"It was such an experience," she recalled. "We cried, it was so amazing."

The work experiences Alame, Muniz, and Kretz will have in Brownsville are the result of professional contacts made by Donna Hartweg, professor and director of IWU's School of Nursing, including Judi Yahn, clinical operations director of the Brownsville clinic and projects like the Hispanic Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, which was conducted in 1982-84 and involved about 15,000 people nationally.

IWU, founded in 1850, enrolls about 1,850 students in a College of Liberal Arts, College of Fine Arts, and a four-year professional School of Nursing. A \$15 million athletics and recreation center opened in the fall of 1994; and a \$25 million science building opened in the fall of 1995. The Carnegie Commission for the Advancement of Teaching promoted Illinois Wesleyan to a "Baccalaureate I" institution in 1994, a classification that places it among 161 highly selective National Liberal Arts Colleges in the annual *U.S. News & World Report* rankings. *Barron's Profiles of American Colleges*, another respected college guide, rated IWU "highly competitive (+)" in its latest edition.