SPECIAL RECOGNITION
I wish to thank our project hostesses, Dr. Lisa Wenger, Dr. Jo-Celene de Jongh, and Mrs. Aziza Kalam, University of Western Cape, Faculty of Occupational Therapy, who were most gracious and accommodating. Their attentiveness and hospitality was truly remarkable, especially given the demands of their jobs and families. While I am not an occupational therapist, I look forward to a long and fruitful relationship with the OT Department at UWC.

I would also like to thank Dr. Firdouza Waggie, Faculty of Community and Health Sciences, University of the Western Cape, for providing wonderful office accommodations, and the opportunity to take part in many of the service-learning activities in which the UWC students engage.

Finally, I would like to thank Dr. Rodney Uphoff, Dr. Glen Heggie, and Mrs. Brenda Dennis, whose help and support was essential to the success of this exchange.

INTRODUCTION
This University of Missouri South African Education Program proposal focused on the development of eLearning resources appropriate to health professions programs with particular focus on learning activities that could be used to help students develop inter-cultural competence. It is envisioned that these resources would then be indexed and shared through a web-based repository. I believe that the activities undertaken have accomplished this and a good deal more. I am honored and privileged to have had the opportunity to participate in this exchange of knowledge and culture. A quote from Oliver Wendell Holmes accurately describes my experience as a whole: “One’s mind, once stretched by a new idea, never regains its original dimensions.” The exchange opened my mind to such possibilities in internationalized health education and cross-cultural research that I am certain my career path and personal priorities are forever changed.
GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

My long-term goal in participating in this South African Partnership Program project is to develop relationships with health professions educators that result in higher quality educational and research opportunities collectively. In achieving this goal, I identified the following objectives prior to the trip:

In support of the original UMSAEP project, I will:

1. Aid in the transitioning of current resources to e-learning modules for the UWC OT program, with primary focus on Ethics in Occupational Therapy.
2. Provide developed educational models in health care administration to the UWC OT program and other interested parties.

As this proposal is funded through the South African Partnerships Program, I plan to extend our South African partnerships beyond the University of the Western Cape by:

3. Developing faculty partnerships focusing on teaching and research with individuals associated with health professions programs at other South African institutions, such as the Cape Peninsula University of Technology, and the Groote Schuur Hospital.

Finally, I will address the learning needs for a wide range of health professionals, including introductory level nursing students, identified as a key objective in UMSAEP programming, and introductory occupational therapy students, the targeted health profession of this UMSAEP project, by completing the following goals:

4. Working to develop cross-cultural, technology-mediated learning activities to engage health professions students at both institutions in discussions about the practice and education of health professions.
5. Assisting Dr. Waggie in the development of distance learning modules for UWC’s Health, Development and Primary Health Care course.

ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN

Objective 1: Transitioning of OT Resources to eLearning

While the searchable repository piece of the proposal has been delayed pending system implementation of the Equilla commercial repository, much headway was made toward the development of various learning objects with which to populate the repository. We spent much of the first week focused on this objective. The Occupational Therapy faculty was very new to the idea of providing electronic resources to their students. We started our visit by meeting with the OT faculty and the UWC eLearning professionals. We were introduced to eLearn, UWC’s course management system. This introduction enabled us to demonstrate how we used various tools within Blackboard, the course management system used at MU, and how to configure those tools within UWC’s eLearn system. We fielded many questions regarding accessibility and student expectations for using electronic resources.

In addition to participating in group discussion of eLearning, I personally assisted OT Lecturer Aziza Kalam in transitioning her Kinesiology course resources to the eLearn system (a Course
Management System, CMS). I was able to provide her with some resources on body mechanics that I had previously developed (see Objective 2). We also located several videos online that were useful to her course content and created links to those from the CMS. While the original intent had been for me to work with Dr. de Jongh on the Ethics in Occupational Therapy course, Dr. de Jongh’s schedule did not allow this to be a possibility. I did feel that my contributions to Mrs. Kalam’s course transition were substantial and not hindered by my lesser understanding of kinesiology.

**Objective 2: Sharing UM-developed eLearning Resources with UWC Faculty.**

In my interactions with the UWC faculty, I listened to their needs and offered the resources I had previously developed as they were appropriate to meet the faculty needs. While many of my resources were too specific to radiography to be useful, I was able to share several videos on body mechanics and patient transfer with Aziza Kalam, OT faculty. I also met with Professors Parker and Osman from the UWC Faculty of Dentistry, who expressed great interest in the problem-based learning scenarios I had created. While the resources were not specifically dental related, they could easily be modified to bring attention to the critical role dental hygiene plays in cardiac and vascular health. I provided Professor Parker with copies of all of the case documents I had developed for MU course CPD 3460 – Cardiopulmonary and Diagnostic Applications I.

In addition to sharing my resources with UWC faculty, I also had the opportunity to share my radiography resources with Dr. Jenny Motto, Vice-Dean of Health Sciences, University of Johannesburg, Dr. Penelope Engel-Hills, Senior Radiography Lecturer, Cape Peninsula University of Technology – Groote Schuur Hospital Campus, and Maria Hartnick, Radiography Lecturer, Cape Peninsula University of Technology – Tygerberg Hospital Campus.

**Objective 3: Developing South African Partnerships in Radiography.**

As you can see from the resource sharing objective, I managed to meet with several influential radiographers during my visit. Dr. Jenny Motto is not only Dean of Health Sciences at the University of Johannesburg and former Director of their radiography program; she also serves the International Society of Radiographers & Radiological Technologists as the Regional Coordinator for Africa. In addition to common interests in radiography education, we are both currently conducting research on the ways in which radiographers assign semantic meaning to visual information. This shared research interest holds significant promise for future collaborative studies.

In addition to visiting Dr. Motto in Johannesburg, I also had the privilege of touring both the Tygerberg Hospital campus and the Groote Schuur Hospital campus of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology’s Radiography Program, meeting Dr. Penelope Engel-Hills, Director of the Groote Schuur campus program, and Maria Hartnick, lecturer for the Tygerberg campus program. Both Dr. Engel-Hills and Ms. Hartnick expressed interest in developing student learning activities involving exchange between our programs (both physical and virtual) to enrich the experiences of our students.

I also made contact with Dr. Fozy Peer, Director of Public Relations for the International Society of Radiographers & Radiological Technologists, and Director of Nuclear Medicine, Inkozi Albert Luthuli Central Hospital in KwaZulu-Natal. Although her schedule did not permit a meeting during my visit, she was interested in exploring mutually beneficial partnerships and to assist in connecting with other academic radiographers across the African continent.
Not only was I able to accomplish much toward building radiography partnerships within South Africa and the greater African continent, I was able to do so predominantly in the evening and on the weekends, so that my weekday efforts were focused on accomplishing our goals with UWC.

**Objective 4: Developing Interdisciplinary Cross-cultural, Technology-Mediated Learning Activities.**

During my second week in Cape Town, I spent a greater amount of time with Dr. Firdouza Waggie in the Interdisciplinary Teaching and Learning Unit in the Faculty of Community and Health Sciences. I first met Dr. Waggie during her UMSAEP project in Missouri this spring. Prior to collaborating on the development of the interdisciplinary, cross-cultural, eLearning activities Dr. Waggie and I envisioned this spring, it was important that I explore the intent and culture of the Interdisciplinary Teaching and Learning Unit.

The Interdisciplinary Teaching and Learning Unit has developed a unique approach to health professional education in which all courses are focused on shared appreciation for other health professions and significant service to the community. The foundational courses for all healthcare programs, including occupational therapy, nursing, physiotherapy, dentistry and dental hygiene, social work, dietetics, human ecology, sports, recreation and exercise science, public health and natural medicine, are taught within this service unit. Students learn universal healthcare skills, like vital signs and provision of ethical care, together with pre-professionals from all of the other healthcare disciplines. This organizational strategy results in greater efficiency by eliminating the duplication of effort in each program devoted to teaching these skills. Additionally, students develop camaraderie and respect for health professionals in other fields, contributing to the success of these students in contributing to the health care team. The focus in these courses is on applying the newly acquired healthcare skills in service to the community. The University of the Western Cape is located in an area plagued with poverty and lack of resources. The students in the Community and Health Sciences courses directed by the Interdisciplinary Teaching and Learning Unit go into the area schools and resource centers to assist these institutions in meeting the health and wellness needs of the community. Dr. Waggie allowed me to accompany her as she supervised students engaged in two different community service activities.

The first location we visited was the elementary school in Delft, a Cape Flats community with an unemployment rate of over 70%. The meals served in the school are frequently the only food children attending the school get. The school kitchen is staffed completely by volunteers. Since South Africa is multilingual, each grade level offers a classroom taught in English and another taught in Afrikaans. The choice of classroom language is left up to the parents or guardians. The AIDS epidemic has further compounded the needs of areas like Delft, ravaging the younger adults and leaving orphaned children to be cared for by grandparents and great-grandparents. The UWC students were assigned to a classroom in teams of two and worked with the classroom teacher to develop a series of age-appropriate lessons related to health and well-being. The students then came into the classroom on a weekly basis to teach these lessons to the children. Students’ classroom assignments were partially based on their fluency level in the language spoken in the classroom.
experiences were obviously positive for both the UWC students and the children and instructors of the elementary school. The children were engaged in the topics being presented and the confidence and self-esteem imparted to the UWC students were apparent.

The second location we visited was the UWC Community Rehabilitation Project. This grant-supported facility offers a wide range of support services to the community, from courses designed to help disabled persons develop employable skills, to hospice nursing and counseling services for AIDS victims and their families, to programs to assist young people in resisting or withdrawing from gang involvement. While serving with the Community Rehabilitation Project, students have the opportunity to address health issues ranging from diabetes to drug dependence to basic infection control. Because of the culture of the community, many infirm and elderly people who would be placed in long-term care facilities in the U.S. are cared for in the home. This difficult task is compounded by the poverty level, which results in home environments which are frequently absent of electrical power and running water. Students make weekly home visits to these families and assist with basic caregiving tasks like bathing and bedding changes.

As I gained understanding of the students’ experiences in the Interdisciplinary Teaching and Learning Unit courses, I recognized the vast differences between the UWC health professions students and those in the School of Health Professions at MU, not only in background and material wealth, but also in the fundamental concepts of what it means to be a health professional. While these differences offer great learning opportunities, the structure of learning activities must be undertaken carefully and with consideration of the needs of students at both institutions. Discussions regarding the form these activities will take are ongoing with Dr. Waggie and her colleague, Dr. Nariman Laattoe.

**Objective 5: Developing eLearning Support for UWC’s Primary Health Care course.**

The Interdisciplinary Teaching and Learning Unit is much further down the path toward utilizing eLearning resources. Armed with ideas and encouragement from our spring discussions, Dr. Waggie had redesigned the Health, Development, and Primary Health Care course as a web assisted course. This undertaking involved not only restructuring the course itself, but gaining the support of, and coordinating the efforts of, twenty-one supporting faculty members. Her primary need at the time of my visit was assistance in developing and deploying course evaluations to an asynchronously distributed class of over 600 students. I introduced Dr. Waggie to several available survey resources and assisted her in evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of each as they related to her unique needs. Once she selected the resource she felt would be most useful, I assisted her in the design of her course evaluation instrument. As I departed, the instrument was deployed and she was collecting student feedback.

During my time with the Interdisciplinary Teaching and Learning Unit, I also worked closely with Dr. Nariman Laattoe on the Introduction to Philosophy of Care course that she coordinates. It is a course similar to Dr. Waggie’s Primary Health Care course, serving 600 students per term through the coordinated efforts of over 20 faculty members. While we held some brief discussions of possible coordinated learning activities, she, too, was concerned with developing course evaluations for the current term. After she collaborated with Dr. Iyer (Assistant Professor of Occupational Therapy at MU) on
the content of the survey instrument, I assisted Dr. Laattoe in deploying the survey using the same resource selected by Dr. Waggie.

**ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AND INNOVATION**

In addition to undertaking activities which supported the project’s objectives, the itinerary developed by our UWC hostesses also offered several opportunities to build relationships between MU and UWC and expand our vision of what student learning can and should look like.

In fostering goodwill between our schools, I met and exchanged remembrances with Dr. Bharuthram, Vice-Rector, Dr. Mpofu, Dean of Community and Health Sciences, Dr. Persens, Director of the International Relations Program, and Dr. Vivienne Bozaleck, Director of Teaching & Learning.

The Occupational Therapy faculty also offered us the opportunity to witness the ways in which they integrate original research within their program. I attended a class session of the qualitative research design course taken in the 4th year of the baccalaureate program. This course is the second year-long course in research strategies that these students have taken, with the first course focusing on quantitative research design. In both courses, the students are required to develop and carry out original research. In the class we attended, students presented their completed qualitative research studies. The studies were well designed and involved significant data collection and sophisticated analysis. The level of their performance was extremely impressive given their educational level.

Likewise, there is a culture that supports evidence based practice within the Occupational Therapy faculty. During our visit, the faculty held weekly academic development meetings where various lecturers presented either their original research findings or reported recently published studies which impact occupational therapy practice.

**OUTCOMES**

We successfully assisted the UWC faculty in making learning resources available to their students electronically. I have corresponded with Dr. Waggie once, and Ms. Kalam several times since my return, addressing questions and assisting with searches for additional resources. I believe our collaboration on the development of eLearning resources will continue.

Upon reflection on the logistics of having MU students collaborate with students in the Interdisciplinary Teaching and Learning courses, I feel like the specialized radiography courses I teach are not the best fit for such collaboration. I plan to contact my colleagues in the Department of Health Sciences regarding this collaboration opportunity. I believe Dr. Mark Kuhnert and Dr. Allison Kabel will be amenable to the idea.

Finally, I was impressed with the way in which UWC serves not only South Africa, but the entire African continent. Through conversations with Dr. Lisa Wenger, I became aware of a young man from Malawi, who was attending UWC with the goal of becoming the sixth Occupational Therapist in his nation and perhaps someday establishing occupational therapy programming in Malawi. The British sponsor he had secured prior to leaving Malawi had abandoned him, leaving him with debt from one semester of studies and no resources to continue his education. He returned home and sold his home and his car, but still could not pay off the existing debt (about $2,000 US). While his story is likely similar to many students’ at UWC, I was touched by his plight. Since returning to the US, I have contacted both the Student Occupational Therapy Association and Phi Epsilon Kappa Health Professions Fraternity about supporting
this student as part of their philanthropy. Advisors of both organizations were excited about the opportunity and are planning fundraisers for later in the year. I have also decided to provide some support personally, although I am not financially able to support the remainder of his schooling. I am also investigating other avenues of support.

Overall, this was an amazing experience and one that I expect to continue reaping the benefits of for years to come. Thanks again for the opportunity.

Respectfully submitted,

Carla M. Allen
Clinical Associate Professor of Radiography