FIPSE Grant Awarded!

As of October 1 we are the proud recipients of a Comprehensive Grant funded by the US Department of Education through the Fund for the Improvement of Post Secondary Education (FIPSE). At the annual meeting of FIPSE grant recipients last month the new grantees were informed that the program office received more than 2000 grants of which 126 were funded. Our grant was for three years for a total amount of just under $500,000.

We felt the best chance to get funding from FIPSE was to take a slice of WisTREC and develop it fully. Therefore the proposal was to create a complete community-based Asynchronous Distance Education (ADE) degree program for Family Nurse Practitioners (NP). The School of Nursing at the University of Wisconsin (UW)- Eau Claire will take the lead as the degree granting institution while the UW-Madison School of Nursing will develop pediatric specialty courses for delivery at a distance for NP students, thereby offering pediatric electives with which UW-Eau Claire students can complete their degrees. This will require the development of asynchronous distance courses and cultivation of community partnerships to provide quality education, clinical training, and student support. As part of the community partnerships we will develop scholarly communities, incorporating ADE for lifelong learning for community professionals and students.

FIPSE funds will primarily support two part-time community liaisons - one for the north and one for the south, a part-time distance learning coordinator at UW-Eau Claire, some instructional technology consultant and web developer time, and faculty release time for developing and implementing distance courses. It will also pay part-time salary of the Project Director and the Program Assistant after the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation money runs out for the duration of the FIPSE grant.

Thanks to all who contributed, edited, and wrote letters of support. What a great team I get to work with!

From the PI’s Pen

Hello all,

Well, we’ve just survived our mid-cycle review with flying colors, with the help of Eileen, representatives from the academic programs that are engaging in distance education, and members of the Steering Committee. I’d like to thank everyone for their help and participation. Sally Tom and Jean Johnson-Paulson were quite impressed with our project. They felt we’d made significant progress in the past two years and were especially excited about the collegial, upbeat attitude of all the partners. While I don’t have their report as of yet, I don’t anticipate any significant corrections of our course of action and expect that we will have no reduction in our funding.

I can’t believe it’s been two years since I joined the WisTREC project. We have only two more years left on our Robert Wood Johnson Foundation grant (ending December 31, 2002). The addition of FIPSE money extends the project until September 30, 2003. I feel confident that at the end of that time we will have at least four primarily web-based, asynchronous degree programs: two NP programs (Concordia and UW-Eau Claire), one CNM program (Marquette), and one PA program (UW-Madison). Quite impressive and a great boon to many non-traditional adult students throughout the state and beyond.

I hope everyone enjoys the holidays and gets rested for 2001. With the clock ticking, the influx of extra funds and two new WisTREC staff members we’re going to pick up the pace in all areas. Here’s to another great year!
**Advisory Committee**

At the September Advisory Committee meeting Sally Cutler moderated a discussion about the future of WisTREC and the challenges we face. The goal was to determine what projects or issues should take precedence in distributing WisTREC’s remaining resources. From this brainstorming session 6 areas of focus were identified. They are:

- Recommitment of Partners
- Funding
- Sharing resources
- Change Thinking
- Community Connections
- Sustainability

Appropriate committees will take up these areas of focus and develop plans to address them before the next advisory meeting.

Thanks, Sally, for your extra effort and keeping us on track!

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**Utilization Committee**

The Utilization Committee recently began to examine the need for additional reimbursement training. Feedback from practitioners and employers about the Employment Guide indicated that the sections on reimbursement were especially useful. Many users of the guide requested even more indepth information about this topic. The committee has decided that it does not have the resources or expertise to provide continuously up-to-date information about this. Instead, they are considering creating a basic resource for practitioners that will make it easier for them to get the most up-to-date information by telling them exactly where to look.

Also on the Utilization Committee’s table is the next printing of the Employment Guide. With very few copies left and some policy changes that need to be updated, the committee is expecting to collaborate with provider associations to continually update and reprint the guides. You can expect new copies of the guide to be available sometime next year.

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**Other Grant News**

WisTREC staff assisted the UW - Madison PA program in submitting a grant proposal to UW - Madison’s DoIT (Division of Information Technology). The successful $30,000 proposal will help create, develop, and implement four multimedia patient simulations, by July 2001, to be used by senior PA students. The virtual cases will be the basis for online discussions through WebCT, allowing the program to bring together students, preceptors, and faculty who are dispersed in clinics around the state in an electronic learning community, incorporating and sharing their clinical experiences.

Congratulations!

In July $7,900 was awarded to WisTREC by Eastern AHEC for the development of Concordia’s web-based courses. These funds are helping pay for WisTREC staff time used to put the material on WebCT. Concordia is currently working on developing 6 courses for web delivery.

Thanks Eastern AHEC!

We are currently in the midst of writing a proposal for another federal grant from the Maternal and Child Health Bureau of the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). The grant program focuses on providing continuing education for maternal and child health professionals through the use of distance education.

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**Distance Education Library**

We now have a variety of books and tapes on distance education topics for you to check out. Available to any WisTREC partners, the books and tapes address topics such as:

- how the internet will change how we learn
- how to plan your online course
- how to develop content
- student interaction and assessment
- winning faculty support for teaching with technology
- estimating costs of teaching by technology
- copyright issues
- funding new technology-based systems
- tools for web-based teaching

For a complete list of materials available and a detailed description of content, contact Eileen at the WisTREC office (608) 262-8755 or go to the WisTREC website: [http://academic.son.wisc.edu/wistrec/related_info/related_info.html](http://academic.son.wisc.edu/wistrec/related_info/related_info.html). We will also continue to add resources, so if you would like to recommend a book or would like information on a specific topic, please give us a call and let us know.
**Internet Delivery Desired**

In May we sent a WisTREC recruitment letter to recent and soon-to-be Collaborative Nursing Program graduates. We also included a survey of distance education needs. Students were asked to rank the importance of distance delivery for them to continue their education on a scale of 1 (unimportant) to 5 (essential) and choose preferred methods of delivery. The results indicate that this group of potential students ranks the importance of distance education very high (4.71) and they prefer internet delivery (30 out of 35 respondents).

![Importance of Distance Delivery]

This means that the distance degrees our partners are developing are much needed and will serve students like these in underserved communities!

**CNM Graduate Practicing in Shortage Area**

LuVerda Martin, the first WisTREC student to graduate from the Marquette CNM program, is proud to be working in a Milwaukee clinic with underserved minorities. She chose to work with this client base because she understands the difficulties they face in getting health care and she expects to act as a role model for other minorities.

Since she started this position with Dr. Cecilia Budarpu in August, LuVerda has found the work to be even more rewarding than she expected because the clinic is extremely busy. She is looking forward to building relationships with the clientele there.

According to LuVerda, the distance learning options that Marquette CNM offered made her education possible. She worked full time during school and believes that the on-line courses were priceless because they allowed her to complete her course work at any time of the day from the comfort of her own home.

LuVerda also applauded the WisTREC Employment Guide she received. She found the sample contract to be extremely helpful as she sought employment and negotiated her own contract. As she becomes an experienced practitioner, LuVerda looks forward to mentoring students like herself and sharing her expertise with the community. Congratulations LuVerda, keep up the good work!

**Welcome Aboard!**

The WisTREC Community Connections Committee would like to announce the addition of Kiah Calmese and Carol Pinkston to the WisTREC team starting December 1st. Kiah is serving as the Community Liaison for the southern half of the state working primarily in the Milwaukee and Eastern AHEC regions while Carol is the new Community Liaison for the north. Both Kiah and Carol are enthusiastic about the work we do and eager to dive in. You can find the contact information for either liaison on the back page of this newsletter.

Please join us in welcoming them to the team!
Calendar of Events

December

12/1 Community Connections Committee, 9:00-11:00
WARF Building, 1st floor conference room

12/6 Utilization Committee, 9:00-11:00
K6/162 Clinical Science Center

12/12 Recruitment, Admissions, & Retention Committee, 9:00-11:00
Audio conference

January

1/4 Steering Committee, 10:00-12:00
Audio conference

1/12 Education Planning Committee, 9:00-11:00
Audio conference

February

2/16 Community Connections Committee, 9:00-11:00
WARF Building, 1st floor conference room

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