

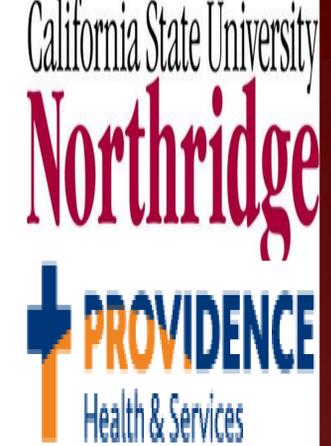


Advancing Students' Competencies in the Health Sciences Through a Breastfeeding Education Program

Award Amount: \$245,000.00

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Problem

- ◉ A sizeable percentage of nutrition professionals lack sufficient basic and advanced breastfeeding knowledge (Figueroa, 2001).
- ◉ Similar deficiencies have also been observed among nutrition university students (Payne, et al., 2007).
- ◉ Lack of adequate knowledge among nutrition professionals in the field has been attributed to limited breastfeeding training (Payne, et al., 2007).
- ◉ According to a study of nutrition professionals, over 75% of them reported their academic breastfeeding training as inadequate (Figueroa, 2001).
- ◉ To address this deficiency, the California WIC Association recently identified the need to incorporate breastfeeding curriculum into the university setting as a priority area of focus (California Breastfeeding Roundtable, 2009).

Goal

To advance future Hispanic dietetic professionals' knowledge and skills in the area of lactation through incorporating lactation education into the undergraduate curriculum in a university setting.

Project Objectives

1. Develop and offer an undergraduate course in lactation education.
2. Develop and offer a lactation education community engagement experience to Hispanic undergraduate nutrition science students which provides students with the opportunity to:
 - ◉ Shadow an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant.
 - ◉ Provide critical breastfeeding knowledge to postpartum mothers prior to their discharge from the hospital.
 - ◉ Provide basic nutrition counseling to breastfeeding mothers.
 - ◉ Receive mentoring from an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant.

Project Outcomes

- ◉ 129 undergraduate students (28 Hispanic) completed a 3 units course in lactation education.
- ◉ 16 undergraduate students (15 Hispanic) completed a semester long lactation education community engagement experience at Providence Holy Cross Medical Center.
- ◉ 16 undergraduate students (15 Hispanic) facilitated 1155 one-on-one breastfeeding education and nutrition counseling sessions at the hospital to mothers prior to their discharge.

Testimonials

The experience of providing breastfeeding education at Providence Holy Cross Medical Center has been an immensely rewarding experience. I have broadened my breastfeeding knowledge, my confidence in advising patients about breastfeeding has increased and many mothers seemed to have been satisfied after our fruitful talks. But most importantly, it has opened doors to other career opportunities, such as becoming a lactation consultant.

Luisa Sabogal, Senior Nutrition Science Student, California State University, Northridge

As a intern, my responsibility was to help educate the mothers what to expect within the first few weeks of conceiving as well as the nutritional implications of her diet with the initiation of breastfeeding. At first, the setting and commotion in the hospital was difficult to take in, and I would fumble around with handouts and assessment papers to provide education. As time progressed and my comfort increased, my shyness disappeared as I developed my own style when working next to the Lactation Consultants. I truly appreciated being part of such a wonderful program where we not only witnessed the breastfeeding process, but also the loving bond between mother and child. The future holds many possibilities and as a result of this experience, I would love to continue in my education to become a breastfeeding advocate as a Certified Lactation Consultant.

Xochitl Valdivia, Senior Nutrition Science Student, California State University, Northridge

Through this experience, I have grown both professionally and personally. This experience has not only broadened my knowledge on the unfamiliar topic of breastfeeding, but has also helped me hone my counseling skills, learn ways to disseminate education and grow comfortable working with diverse populations. This experience has opened my eyes to the beauty of breastfeeding and my desire to breastfeed my own children in the future. Most of all, I am honored to have played a small part in shaping the health and future of the infants I encountered and hope that I can continue to make a difference in the lives around me.

Chanel Villanueva, Senior Nutrition Science Student, California State University, Northridge