



Amanda Blake, a graduate student in the department of Family and Consumer Sciences, tied for first place in the College of Health and Human Development's CAMINO* Thesis Talks competition held on Friday, February 13 as part of CSUN's Annual Research and Creative Works Symposium.

Amanda received her undergraduate degree from CSUN in Journalism and after years in the workforce, she returned to pursue nutrition and dietetics with the intention of becoming a registered dietitian. In order to earn a Master of Science degree, Amanda partnered with Elizabeth Sussman, PhD, RD to work on a thesis.

Amanda's thesis focuses on vitamin and mineral supplementation to improve outcomes in patients with kidney failure. More specifically, Amanda and Dr. Sussman are looking to improve quality of life and antioxidant status in dialysis patients. During the three month trial, dialysis patients were supplemented with either vitamin C, vitamin C with selenium, or placebo. Throughout the study, blood was drawn to measure antioxidant markers, nutrition information was collected, and a quality of life survey was completed as a pre- and post-test measure. After months of preparation and countless hours driving back and forth to Riverside, CA, Amanda and Dr. Sussman completed the data collection last December.

Preliminary results showed an improvement in plasma vitamin C levels in participants who received supplementation. Data analysis will continue in the coming months.

To present her work, Amanda applied for Thesis Talks, an engaging series of eight-minute TED Talk-style presentations from graduate students in health care and related fields. Amanda placed first, tying with Jae Lim from the department of Kinesiology, winning a \$200 stipend and recognition for her hard work.

"Amanda exemplified success by not only taking the award for first place, but by sharing her scholarly research in a very engaging, connected, and motivating way at Thesis Talks," said Sloane Burke, PhD, Project Director for CAMINO. "We thank Amanda, not only for her excellent scholarship, but for her wonderful contribution to CAMINO."

After earning her master's degree, Amanda will begin a dietetic internship with the Los Angeles VA Medical Center. The FCS department is proud of Amanda and all of her accomplishments and encourages interested graduate students to showcase their research through participation with next year's Annual Research and Creative Works Symposium.

*CAMINO – Charting Access for Hispanics Majoring In Needed Careers and Occupations in Healthcare