

Stockton's Dr. Mary Lou Galantino to Work on Global Health in South Africa

Fulbright Specialist Will Help University Colleagues Develop Curriculum

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Galloway Township, NJ - Dr. Mary Lou Galantino, professor of Physical Therapy at The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey, will be working on global health as a Fulbright specialist in South Africa starting in May.

Dr. Galantino will be facilitating curriculum review and development with colleagues and students at the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg for six weeks. A focus is bridging interprofessional education (IPE) across their health professional programs. In addition, she will continue to foster HIV collaborative research with students -and faculty.

She was chosen as a Fulbright specialist for her expertise in HIV-AIDS rehabilitation, cancer rehabilitation and integrative medicine. Dr. Galantino is also a yoga instructor and certified American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) wellness coach.

More than 5 million people are living with HIV-AIDS in South Africa, the most of any country in the world.

"Through evidence-based research, I take a holistic approach with integrative medicine, using my expertise in HIV and cancer rehabilitation," she said. "Yoga, Tai-Chi and meditation are a few of the holistic approaches in my work with graduate students, patients in the clinic and through my research."

"Dr. Galantino is the quintessential faculty member who blends extraordinary teaching, research, and service both here and abroad," said Dr. Harvey Kesselman, provost and executive vice president of Stockton. "What an example for our students who are being prepared to live in a global community."

As the coordinator of the Holistic Health Minor, Dr. Galantino supports undergraduate students in clinical experiences in Beijing, China, where Nursing students learned Traditional Chinese

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Medicine practices for a month last summer. She also volunteered in Haiti in July-August 2013, along with her daughter and a Stockton Physical Therapy student. They helped patients at two clinics, aiding individuals still affected by the 2010 earthquake and others with chronic illnesses.

While in Haiti, she worked with physical and occupational therapists, doctors and nurses from various regions of the world, studying traditional healing practices and doing research. This IPE research was presented at Stockton's Day of Scholarship in March and was accepted for presentation in June at the 7th International Conference on Interprofessional Practice and Education.

Dr. Galantino said she and her students studied "the art of interprofessional practice with a cadre of healthcare practitioners from various backgrounds – handling conflicts, navigating cultural and language challenges and realizing the impact on humanity."

Those experiences will inform her work in South Africa.

"While I am facilitating curriculum and research development in areas of my expertise, I too learn much about the culture of students, faculty and patients in South Africa," Dr. Galantino said. "For example, a mainstay of health delivery is community-based rehabilitation, a model that works well when elders are taught and respected as they assist the healing of others in their communities."

"I am particularly honored to be part of a reciprocal learning process in the context of a different culture with the same focused intent: to serve others through optimizing function to live vibrantly amidst health challenges," she continued. "Research shows that interprofessional healthcare training fosters these goals and I intend to work with everyone to maximize this engagement of IPE.

Dr. Galantino noted that Stockton's 2020 strategic planning program includes global initiatives.

"As an advisory board member of Stockton's Center for Community Engagement and the Global Initiatives Team, I am excited to impact opportunities for collaborative research, curriculum development and potential sites for clinical experiences for our Doctor of Physical Therapy students across the globe," she said of her motivation in seeking the Fulbright.

Dr. Galantino teaches at Stockton's School of Health Sciences and is also an adjunct research scholar and Associate Professor in the Department of Family Medicine and Community Health at the University of Pennsylvania where she conducts research on integrative medicine and chronic diseases. Her DPT students and graduate assistants are instrumental in this collaborative research. She lives in Wilmington, DE

The Fulbright Program is sponsored by the United States Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. It was founded by the late U.S. Sen. J. William Fulbright in 1946 and now operates in 155 countries. Fulbrights provide funding for students, scholars, teachers, and professionals for graduate study, advanced research, university teaching, and teaching in elementary and secondary schools.

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