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Inter-departmental Collaboration to Enhance Programs and Meet Community Needs

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Presenter Information

Gale B. Rice PhD.,CCC-SLP; Mary Beth Ohlms M.Ed.; Carmen Russell PhD.CCC-SLP; and Jamie VanDycke PhD.

This interactive session will describe how three academic departments shared their resources and expertise to enhance program quality by giving their students opportunities to collaborate with both faculty and students of different disciplines while meeting the needs of under-represented community groups in a camp context.

Like many colleges and universities, ours is mission driven and that mission includes “serving the dear neighbor without distinction”. Fontbonne University was founded on this principle of social justice and one of our ambitions has always been to support not only professional development of our students, but the realization that these newly developed professional abilities can and should be used to serve members of under-represented groups.

The College of Education and Allied Health Professions was formed one year ago. While the College is newly developed the departments it houses—Communication Disorders and Deaf Education, Education/Special Education, and Family and Consumer Sciences-- are among the oldest on campus. This session will describe how programs in speech-language pathology, education/special education, deaf education, and dietetics shared resources and expertise to develop mission driven programs in the form of camps. A few of these included a camp for individuals who have had strokes and their families utilizing a unique therapy format (Aphasia Boot Camp), one for children to teach principles of nutrition and the culture of food (Camp F.R.E.S.H.), and a theater camp for children who use speech generating devices, their siblings, and parents (Camp “Cap”). Both students and faculty are actively involved in all programs.

After descriptions of and examples from each camp, the inter-disciplinary collaboration for each will be delineated. We will share our own template for development of such programs. In small groups participants will have the opportunity to discuss how this idea might apply to their own programs and results will be shared.

The benefits of these programs for the community participants is well-documented. The true benefit is to our students who learn to collaborate and apply their classroom knowledge in the real world with real people who have real families. Finally, these interdisciplinary camps have also benefitted us as we continue to develop our identity as a college both on the university campus and in the community.