

2018-2019 UNCP Grant for Excellence in Teaching & Learning Award Final Report

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Background.

Our grant project was proposed by a collaborative cohort of interdisciplinary faculty from American Indian Studies (Drs. Jane Haladay and Mary Ann Jacobs), Biology (Dr. Conner Sandefur), and Nursing (Dr. Cherry Beasley) to enrich curriculum in courses taught by all four faculty beginning in fall 2018. Our focus has been Indigenous health through food sovereignty, specifically in rural Southeast communities; traditional Native agricultural practices, food preparation, seed saving; and the impacts of both traditional and colonized food systems upon Native peoples' health and identities. Below we discuss the implementation and impacts of our work as supported by this Grant for Excellence in Teaching & Learning Award, and our subsequent growth as teacher-scholars as a result of our collaboration.

Grant implementation.

This faculty cohort met several times during the summer of 2018 to develop interdisciplinary curriculum around food sovereignty. Over the summer, we shared and selected several readings from our disciplinary perspectives that we assigned students in all our classes to read, and we created shared activities around food sovereignty – including a Personal Foods Journal and health assessments activity – that we assigned to all of our students in fall. We discussed when to place these readings and assignments in our syllabi calendars, which order to most effectively teach them, and we proposed a preliminary schedule of guest lecture visits to each other's classrooms.

We originally scheduled readings and guest lecture visits to take place during October and November 2018, in advance of Indigenous cuisine chef Sean Sherman's Native American Speakers Series cooking demo and community presentation during the AIS Department's 10th Annual Honoring Native Foodways event during Native American Heritage Month. However, because of Hurricane Florence in September and its impact on our campus and regional communities, we had to adjust our schedule for some of these activities and classroom guest lectures visits.

Assessment of Grant Impact.

We have assessed the impact of our grant project in a number of spheres. Overall, our interdisciplinary pedagogy and materials were positively received by students. One assignment was a reflection essay on students' Personal Foods Journals, in which we asked students to chronicle everything they ate and drank for two days. Their essays then reflected on those choices in light of our discussions of food sovereignty as an interconnected cultural, geographic, economic, health, and social justice issue. Student reflection essays included the following significant observations: "I feel a whole lot better after eating the homegrown food than the fast food" (Bailey); "Most people live on campus or commute from not far away and we all agree that there are more fast food options than healthier, more localized foods" (Angelee); "This foods journal has impacted my perspective on my daily eating habits, allowing improvements to

be made” (Lakeyna); and, “I really enjoyed the experience of sharing our food journals in class and now I am starting to change bad habits in my life” (Kayla).

We assess the tremendous success of Sean Sherman’s campus visit, as both a guest chef at Honoring Native Foodways and a Native Speakers Series presenter giving a community talk on Indigenous food histories, as an extremely positive impact on those students, faculty, staff, and community members who attended one or both events.

Our collaboration on this grant project modeled to UNCP faculty the value of interdisciplinary work, both its challenges and successes, in hopes of inspiring our colleagues to attempt similar interdisciplinary collaborations. Specifically, our collaboration was impactful on a group of junior faculty in Nursing who, as a result of seeing our Food Sovereignty guest lectures in their Nursing classes in fall, have created their own faculty cohort to co-create a shared unit on mental health.

Finally, we assess an additional impact of our grant project by the four invitations we have received, as a cohort and individually, to present our research in other venues throughout North Carolina. These include an invited group workshop presentation at Davidson College in October 2018, an invited presentation by Dr. Haladay at Sandhills Community College in November for Native American Heritage Month, an invited presentation by Dr. Beasley for the Pembroke Business and Professional Women in spring 2019, and a group conference presentation for the North Carolina Sociological Society in February 2019.

Reflecting on Our Growth as Teacher-Scholars.

In reflecting on our collaboration during the course of this grant project, we recognize several important areas of growth as teacher-scholars. We have all learned new interdisciplinary languages and perspectives in co-creating curriculum. Those of us not in Nursing have learned about this professional program’s stricter parameters – e.g., scheduling clinicals, 8-week class format, etc. – and how to coordinate our schedules for maximum efficiency to accommodate busy Nursing students. We have grown in our understandings of the many meaningful disciplinary intersections of food sovereignty research, pedagogy, and community health applications, and we have grown through collaborating on multiple public presentations on our research and teaching. We plan to continue our collaboration and professional growth in the future as we continue to expand our work in many directions within the classroom, the community, and the region.