

## **SUNY Ulster Community College, Stone Ridge, NY**

**Hope Windle, Instructional Designer, Chris Seubert, Academic Travel Coordinator**

### **Start of Project in 2006**

In 2006, as Ulster's instructional designer, I began to work with the school's newly appointed International Program Director, Richard Cattabiani, after seeing Jon Rubin's talk about connecting SUNY Purchase students with those in Belarus through his Cross-Cultural Video Production course. The COIL model was attractive to us because community college students are largely unable to study abroad. At the same time, I could see that COIL could be a vehicle to interest faculty in using technology and team teaching. For our university administration, COIL seemed an ideal vehicle for applied and experiential learning which they were promoting, as it focused on student teams, group work and acquiring intercultural competency.

### **Implementation of COIL**

Once Ulster began to pilot COIL-enhanced courses, early adopter faculty encouraged their departmental colleagues to participate by sharing curriculum and successful teaching methods. After a few of the professors in the Business, Art & Design and Biology departments became involved in COIL, we then reached out to the department chairs of these units to codify their relationship to COIL. With the support of the Vice President of Academic Affairs, who proposed the creation of a COIL degree, we acknowledged these departments to the rest of the school through Letters of Agreement. These were publicly presented to COIL-supportive department chairs and shared with the campus community through publications, at the Employee Recognition Luncheon, and with country-coded sashes worn with their graduation regalia.

Departments committed to COIL, and many Ulster college administrators felt that COIL could help us attract and retain students. When presenting COIL to school groups, we found that many interested high school students wanted an affordable college experience where they could undertake internationally oriented coursework, as well as travel abroad, even though the latter seemed out-of-reach. Many were very intrigued by the opportunity that COIL offered.

Both adjunct and fulltime instructors are encouraged to participate in COIL collaborations, but lack of time and fear of technology continue to be the largest deterrents to participation. In departments where fulltime faculty are already over-burdened with committee work, advisees, and the promotion of their programs, some adjunct faculty have taken the initiative to develop COIL collaborations or to carry on COIL curricula created by others.

### **Organization**

A significant percentage of my time (approximately 30%) as instructional designer is devoted to COIL project work. I work closely with faculty to support the creation of the curriculum, aid in connecting the professors for weekly conference updates, as well as provide technical support in locating appropriate tools. I also work with instructors to create course spaces in our LMS and/or in social media and/or in Google docs, as well as providing the initial physical location and/or technical support for introductory

or closing synchronous sessions with collaborating students and faculty. In addition, our academic travel coordinator also contributes some of his time to the COIL endeavor.

### **Outcomes and Objectives**

Immigrant and first-generation immigrant students' relationships with local native-born students have flourished in COIL projects. These students sometimes act as spokespeople, translators and cultural ambassadors. For example, a student from Honduras was part of a COIL Design collaboration with Mexico that involved a short trip to Mexico City. She became the integral student connector when we travelled to meet the collaborating COIL team. She translated colloquial expressions and became proud of her heritage and her bilingual ability to work with both the American and Mexican students. She noted to me how surprised and pleased she was to see so much incredible history and elegant current design work in a country that has been so vilified and denigrated in United States media.

In the academic year 2016-17 Ulster offered 17 Coil-enhanced courses based in five different programs, working with ten different international partner institutions.

*Submitted February 2017*