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Language in Motion Outreach Program Receives National Award

HUNTINGDON, Pa. -- Juniata College's international culture outreach program, Language in Motion, has received one of three 2001-2002 Andrew Heiskell Awards for Innovation in International Education from the Institute of International Education (IIE). The Heiskell awards honor outstanding initiatives in international higher education.

Juniata's Language in Motion program, which debuted in 2000-2001 through a grant from the Cooperative Grants Program of NAFSA: Association of International Educators, received their award in the Internationalizing the Campus category. The other categories are Outstanding Faculty Program and Study Abroad. The award also includes a \$1,000 stipend.

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Representatives from the college's Language in Motion program will receive their award in a ceremony April 17 in Washington, D.C.

"These are awards for innovation, and it's very exciting to get national recognition for our program," says Deborah Roney, coordinator for Language in Motion. "It has always been our focus to create an international outreach program that other institutions can use as a model and the recognition of the program shows that Language in Motion is worthy of replication."

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Language in Motion uses international students, students recently returned from the college's study abroad programs, and students who have completed upper-level language classes to present language and cultural materials and activities in public school classrooms. Students have visited five area high schools and several seventh and eighth grade classes in Huntingdon, Bedford, and Blair counties.

"It was good to have the students work with a student who has had travel experience and can bring a contemporary element to the classroom," says Chris Gardner, a Spanish teacher at Huntingdon Area High School. "The (Juniata) student's enthusiasm was infectious and the students enjoyed her presentation."

The project, funded this year by a grant from the William P. and Frances C. Nyce Scholarship for Study in Latin America, emphasizes French, German, Russian, and Spanish language classes. Juniata students who know one of those languages will bring in a language-based activity or a presentation on the

culture of a particular foreign country.

In a Spanish class, for example, an international student from Ecuador or an American student who studied in Mexico may teach a class on local slang or on the music of the country. Presentations are done partially or entirely in the language being taught in that classroom. Barb Dearing, French teacher at Huntingdon Area High School notes, "The students got exposure to an aspect (of French culture) that I don't normally discuss with my class."

"We are expanding the programs into other areas by responding to teacher requests," explains JoAnn deArmas Wallace, dean of international programs. "Several teachers have asked students to make cultural presentations in English classes or on languages other than the one being studied in that language class."

Students from Ecuador, Egypt, Germany, Mexico, Sweden, and Switzerland have talked about their language and culture in a Language Arts classroom, and Chinese and Japanese students have brought activities to Spanish classes. In addition, several local English teachers have asked Roney to present programs on the language usage of other English-speaking nations such as Australia and Great Britain and on Black English in the United States.

Visits are made both in person and via distance learning through such methods as video conferencing and e-mail exchange. Roney says the program will visit five schools this semester: Huntingdon Area High School, Huntingdon Area Middle School, Juniata Valley High School, Tussey Mountain High School, and Williamsburg Community High School. A German class at Faust Junior High School in Chambersburg also participates, primarily through videoconferencing with a Juniata Valley High School class. "Most of the classroom presentations will be toward the end of the spring semester," Roney says.

Last year, more than a dozen students went into area schools to give presentations on international languages and culture. This year, three exchange faculty from Juniata's World Languages and Cultures Department also made visits to local schools.

Some students in the program earn one credit in service learning. Others participate purely as volunteers. Students attend several training sessions and a teacher workshop to plan with the host teachers before making a presentation.

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