

## **Advancing Clinical Practice through International Travel. A field Trip to Chicago**



The benefits (and potential pitfalls) of engaging in field trips are numerous. Providing students with the opportunity to explore another health care setting within a different culture can address a multitude of learning outcomes desirable at MSc level. Many of these range from gaining an understanding of the political climate and healthcare drivers that form the fundamentals of health care delivery of the host country, such as Obama Care, to developing confidence in networking and gaining ideas for final projects.

Despite these benefits, many nurses and allied health care professionals may not be given the opportunity to travel abroad for study. This may, in part, be due to the requirement of governing bodies, such as the NMC's for students to fulfil the majority of clinical contact time within the UK however, recent papers such as 'Outward Student Mobility for Nurse, Midwife and AHP Students' Council of Deans (2017) are more encouraging of this.

In March this year Coventry University organised a field trip to Chicago Illinois for a group of Advanced Clinical Practitioners (ACP's) studying for the MSc Advancing Clinical Practice Programme. The aim of the trip was for students to gain an international perspective of the ACP role.

Our host Dr Karen Eagnes at the Marcella Niehoff School of Nursing Loyola University Chicago, kindly organised a full schedule with us to include impressively, the following activities for the week.

### **Day 1**

Attendance at the Palmer Research Symposium, focusing on Innovative Technology to transform research and promote health.

### **Day 2**

A visit to the Hospital wards and Emergency Department, at Loyola University Medical Centre to see Advanced Nurse Practitioners at work in the clinical setting, meet with key staff to gain an understanding of the role and engage with lectures.





### Day 3

A visit to the local high school to explore activities undertaken by student nurses to promote the 'Healthy Schools Initiative' at the school health fair.



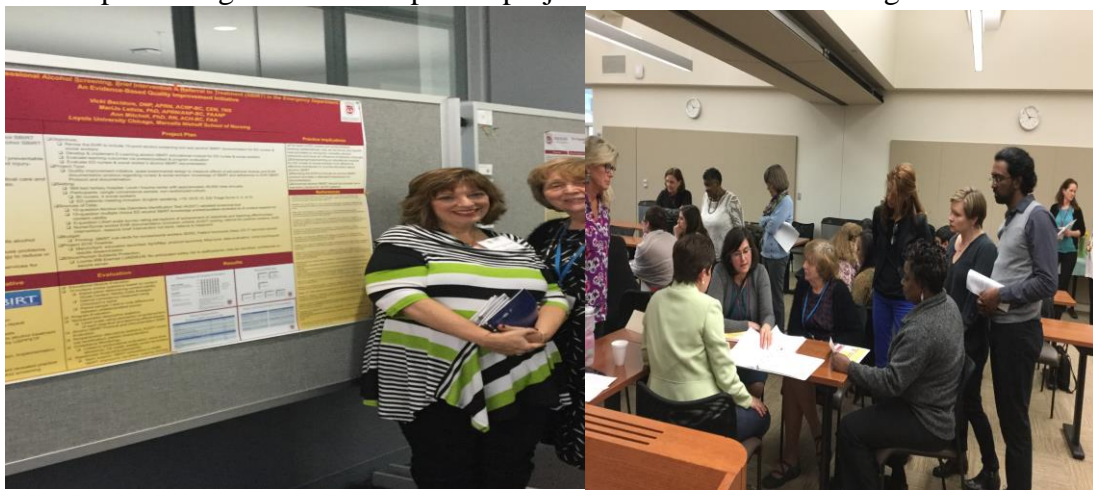
### Day 4

A visit to Loyola Campus to meet student nurses from the UK exchange programme with free time for students to explore the City



**Day 5 and 6**

Attendance at the Doctorate Emersion Weekend to engage with students presenting their final Capstone projects for the Doctorate Degree.



**Day 7 and 8**

Attendance at Springfield rally to support 'Nurses Political Action Day' with a trip to the Abraham Lincoln Museum.



The schedule was quite full yet we still managed to see some of the City and enjoy our accommodation setting at the Hotel Lincoln Chicago.

Providing an experience for Advanced Clinical Practitioners to travel internationally has been very positive. Students can see how developing their skills and knowledge can potentially transform healthcare when looking at it from a different perspective. Students enjoyed the experience of immersing themselves into American life and were surprised to learn that the curriculum for the ACP programme in the US is extraordinarily similar to ours in the UK in terms of subjects studied, and learning outcomes to be obtained despite the differences in health care.

Exposure to the Doctorate immersion weekend has inspired some to look at the potential of furthering their education to doctorate level. Students confidence in interacting with other students and academics internationally evidently developed throughout the trip.

The success of such activities is often measured in terms of learning outcomes aligned with course content however the 'hidden curriculum', experiences that include such activities as informal socialisation, group travel and engaging with our Host and her family were probably among some of the most rewarding and memorable experiences from this trip.

We were rather fascinated to learn about two potential ideas for service development, namely using a 'Vocera' device to improve communication in the Emergency Room and exploring the potential of using therapy Dogs to reduce anxiety and stress among patients and clinical staff.



We also had the opportunity to share practice with our America colleagues through delivering a talk about Advancing Clinical Practice within an NHS system in the UK. Our American audience found this most informative and it helped to put comparative healthcare into perspective.



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