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PHARMACY STUDENTS VISIT NAVAJO RESERVATION FOR FALL BREAK

Omaha, Nebraska (October 24, 2006) --- Over Fall Break, Creighton University pharmacy students Minh Nguyen, Sara Johnson, Cara Walkup and Valerie Williams participated in an immersion and service trip to the Navajo Reservation in Arizona. The students participated in the service trip as part of an elective course entitled Learning through Reflective Service: Native American Experience, which is taught by Drs. Rhonda Jones and Victoria Roche. In this course, the pharmacy students learn about Native American culture, health challenges and care needs, approaches to restore/maintain wellness and careers in Native American health care through the Indian Health Service and tribally run clinics.

During their trip, the students stayed with health care professionals working with Indian Health Service on the Navajo Reservation. They also had the opportunity to tour and observe multiple health care facilities on the Reservation including the Chinle and Tsaile Service Units and Pinon Clinic. The students also participated in home visits to elders living in remote locations with the Public Health Nurses and Community Health Representatives to gain a better understanding of the home environment, culture, and barriers to care.

On October 18 and 19, the students participated in the Gates Millennium Scholarship Mentoring Program under the direction of Tami Buffalohead-McGill, mentoring 21 juniors and 23 seniors from Chinle High School in the initiation and eventual completion of their Gates Scholarship applications. This program mentors students through the competitive Gates Millennium Scholarship process, helping ensure that they are competitive for these coveted scholarships (which can provide full cost of attendance for minority students to attend the college of their choice). The pharmacy students also talked to multiple classrooms of high school students about college and Creighton University.

The group had the opportunity to have dinner with a Navajo family and interacted with family members who are prominent in their local academic, cultural and political communities. The immersion trip provided the group with a holistic experience related to Native American culture and health, Indian Health Service practice and the lives of the Navajo people. The course and service trip were supported by Cardoner at Creighton, an Academic Affairs program designed to cultivate a more deliberate exploration of life purpose, vocation-as-calling, and well-being.



Above left: Pharmacy students Cara Walkup, Valerie Williams, Sara Johnson and Minh Nguyen at the Pinon Clinic on the Navajo Reservation.

Above right: Valerie Williams talks with a senior at Chinle High School about the Gates Millennium Scholarship.