



SIUE's Perez Honored By The National Association Of Hispanic Nurses

by Megan Wieser

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EDWARDSVILLE – To celebrate the culture and spirit of Hispanic nurses and represent the voices of Latinos in healthcare throughout the United States, the National Association of Hispanic Nurses (NAHN) was founded in 1975. Since the organization's inception, NAHN has played a key role in advancing health in Hispanic communities while leading, promoting, and advocating educational, professional, and leadership opportunities for Hispanic nurses.

Carrying this important legacy locally is Southern Illinois University Edwardsville's Amelia Perez, PhD, RN, associate professor and chair in the School of Nursing's (SON) Department of Family Health and Community Health Nursing. Perez has earned NAHN's Ildaura Murillo-Rohde Award for Education Excellence.

The Ildaura Murillo-Rohde Award for Education Excellence is presented to honor NAHN members who have distinguished themselves in scholarship and/or nursing education. Qualifications for the award include outstanding contributions in nursing education, research, and practice, along with recognized commitment to excellence in nursing and distinguished clinical expertise. Perez will be presented with the award at NAHN's 2021 Annual Conference in Puerto Rico on Friday, Nov. 19.

"I am humbled to be this year's recipient of the Ildaura Murillo-Rohde Award for Education Excellence from the NAHN," said Perez. "This national recognition from my peers is truly an honor. To be a nurse, you must have a passion for what you do. This is a passion to want to help others improve their health and a passion to help your patients in the good times and the bad times of their physical and mental health status. I have carried this same passion into nursing education."

Perez has been an active member of NAHN since 2012. She has served on NAHN committees at the state and national levels. She currently serves as the chair of NAHN's Education Committee at the national level, and also as chair of the Illinois chapter's Nominations Committee.

Since 2003, Perez has worked at the SON in a variety of roles, including as faculty, department chair, course leader, and coordinator of the Simulated Learning Center for Health Sciences. Her teaching focus includes medical-surgical nursing, pathophysiology, community health, and nursing research. Her research area of expertise includes acculturation, health disparities, health literacy, interprofessional education, and nursing simulation.

At the NAHN annual conference, Perez will present findings from an interprofessional education project consisting of a simulation with Spanish-speaking patients and students

from a variety of healthcare majors. This project allowed SIUE students opportunities to work with different members of the healthcare team to help train them to provide optimal care for patients who may experience language and cultural barriers.

Perez invites fellow and aspiring nurses to explore the many opportunities in the field of nursing. “Never say never,” she advised. “Be confident and stay true to yourself and others. Learning is a life-long process. By staying humble, we are continuously learning. Make realistic short- and long-term goals and work hard to achieve them. Even when things don’t work out exactly as we had planned, that is a learning moment, not a failure. Use those moments to make the next experience even better.

SIUE’s [School of Nursing’s](#) programs are committed to creating excellence in nursing leadership through innovative teaching, evidence-based practice, quality research, patient advocacy and community service. Enrolling more than 1,800 students in its baccalaureate, master’s and doctoral programs, the School develops leaders in pursuit of shaping the nursing profession and impacting the health care environment. SIUE’s undergraduate nursing programs on the Edwardsville campus help to solve the region’s shortage of baccalaureate-prepared nurses and enhance the quality of nursing practice within all patient service venues. The School’s graduate programs prepare nurses for advanced roles in clinical practice, administration and education.