Journal Entry #1 - Arrival and UEL visit
By Ellen McHugh

Wednesday, May 13

We arrived in Londrina, Brazil and were immediately greeted by our host students with signs and many hugs. We had been communicating with them before coming here so it was very exciting to finally meet them! We went home with our host students to meet their families and rest after a day of travel. Later in the day we went to feira da lua, which is probably what we would call a fair here in the United States. There were about 20 different food stands that were selling a typical Brazilian food known as “pastels.” It was similar to a toaster strudel, but with cheese and meat and it was fried instead of toasted. It was delicious, and a bit greasy. We also had the world’s best churro at the fair. It was very warm and had a caramel filling. Our first day was a long day but it was amazing to feel so welcomed and to be able to experience some Brazilian culture.
Thursday, May 14

Today we went to a presentation about the nursing program and graduate program at the Universidade Estadual de Londrina (UEL) which is where our host students attend school. We learned that there are many differences and similarities with our programs, but there was one thing that really stuck out to us. We learned that it is very difficult to get in to the nursing program at UEL because it is a public university and therefore their schooling is free.

When a student is admitted to the nursing program at UEL, their families throw big parties for them and they celebrate with their friends and the other newly admitted students. We also learned about their healthcare system in Brazil which is known as SUS (Sistema Unico de Saude). The major difference between our healthcare and theirs is that the people of Brazil have the right to healthcare compared to the United States where it is still considered a privilege. We had the opportunity to meet with the President of UEL and talk to her about their nursing program. After we talked to the President we had a tour of UEL, and the campus was beautiful. The university, however, is currently on strike because the government is not willing to compensate for a reasonable salary for the teachers. Therefore, we were only able to see a few research labs, but we were still able to walk around the majority of the campus. Overall, our first few days in Londrina have been a great experience. We can’t wait to learn more about the Brazilian culture!
Journal Entry #2 – Weekend of Travel and Culture
By Rachel Corrado

Saturday, May 16

After a great orientation to the university we began to pack up for our trip to Foz do Iguaçu, where we had the opportunity to really experience the culture of Brazil. We drove 8 hours by bus to visit the beautiful Foz do Iguaçu waterfalls, and we're all stunned by the natural beauty and power of the ginormous falls. We hiked a trail leading us through the different areas of the falls and got to experience its beauty from the top. But that wasn't enough for us, so we began a journey through the forests of Brazil which ended at a boat ready to take us into the falls themselves. We all strapped on our life jackets and hopped in the boat excited to experience the real power of the falls. The boat took us down to the base of the falls, crossing the Argentinian border, and even under the falls themselves. Needless to say it was an incredible experience and we all got soaking wet! We closed out the park and headed straight for pizza.

One would think that “going out for pizza” would be the same experience most places in the world, but we quickly learned that Brazil has a very unique way of presenting this meal. Waiters brought around a variety of different pizza flavors and you asked for a piece of the ones you specifically wanted, and the flavors were very creative too! For example, some of the flavors were corn pizza, white chocolate and strawberry pizza, banana pizza, and my personal favorite the spicy pizza!

Sunday, May 17

Our weekend adventure was jam-packed with fun and exciting activities. We started our day by visiting the hydroelectric plant, ITAIPU, which was very similar to the Hoover dam in function, but much bigger. It was extremely interesting to learn about how the plant functions and that it supplies Paraguay with the majority of their country’s...
electricity. On this trip we also crossed the border to Paraguay and so we can now say we have been to three South American countries! After grabbing lunch at a local mall, we headed to the Parque das Aves, a national bird sanctuary, where we were able to get up close and personal with many different types of birds. At the end of the park we all also had the opportunity to hold an “Arára”, or a Macaw. Then we headed over to the area where the three countries (Brazil, Paraguay, and Argentina) all meet. Personally, this was my favorite part of the day because it was incredible to be looking out over three different countries at the same time.
Then we headed to try our first “churrasco”, or barbecue, which is a famous Brazilian tradition. This was a great opportunity to really experience the culture of the country and to understand why they love their meat so much! Many of us even tried chicken heart, which just tasted like really chewy chicken! We all went to bed tired that night after our long day of learning and eating! The next morning before heading back to Londrina, Brazil and to all of our new friends we had just made, we stopped to visit a fair in Foz do Iguaçu. At the fair we bought some typical Brazilian items to bring home with us, like homemade soap and Brazilian nuts. We even tried the coconut water from a fresh coconut before hitting the road! The man at the market chopped the top off the coconut right before our eyes, stuck a straw in, and handed it to us ready to drink! Needless to say, our weekend was full of fun, educational, and cultural experiences and we all feel more connected with the people of this beautiful country!
Monday, May 18

Today started with a warm welcome from the hospital staff. The director did a presentation on the University Hospital and its goals. One thing that was very similar to that of the United States is that we both strive for competent and holistic care for the patient and families. We learned about the role of the nurse and the auxiliary nurse. The nurse is the one that manages the unit while the auxiliary nurse provides direct patient care: giving medications, dressing changes, and general charting. We then went on a tour of the hospital. An interesting point was that they have male and female wards. In each room, there can be up to six patients! In the OB unit, there were rooms for high-risk mothers, a laboring room, and post-partum mothers. The post-partum mothers shared rooms, with up to six in each room. We were able to enter the area where they have patients receiving bone marrow transplants. An interesting fact was that a majority of the transplants are autologous, not from donors.
We were then taken to the breast milk bank. Here is where mothers are able to donate their breast milk, which is then pasteurized and given to babies. We were taken through the pasteurization process and were able to see some of the collected milk! It is important to note that the mothers do not get paid for their donation. It is completely voluntary and they are required to go through screening to see if they are eligible to donate. Also, they must produce enough milk for their baby before the rest can be donated. The baby gets weighed periodically to ensure that they are receiving sufficient milk.

After lunch, we were able to shadow a nurse resident on a unit. I selected the female ward to spend my time. It was similar to a med/surg unit that we would have in the United States. I was able to look at the paper documentation and watch as medications were being pulled. Narcotics and psychotropic medications are locked up and counted to ensure safety. On the carts, I was able to identify that they used the Braden scale and Glasgow score... just as we do! The nurse took me into the isolation area and we had to put on our isolation gear which included a gown and gloves. From 3:00-4:30 p.m. is visitor time. Different from the United States, visitors are only allowed during this time unless the patient is younger than 18, or in critical care. After my time on the woman's ward, I went to the pediatrics unit. The resident nurse showed us areas of the unit, including the intensive care unit, isolation area, and general patient rooms. The patients here are aged 0-12. We also viewed the play room. Here is where toys, books and puzzles are located so the patients can come to play. The only restriction is if they are in isolation.

For dinner, the students and hosts went for a Brazilian treat... hot dogs at Arnaldo’s! They were served on a piece of French bread with a hot dog, shredded chicken, mayonnaise, ketchup, mustard, and tomatoes!
Journal Entry #4 - Shadowing and the Sim Lab
By Lauren Donar

Tuesday, May 19

In the morning we observed a different unit of the hospital, and I was in the emergency department. The nurse resident took me around the unit and explained what goes on down there. They have different areas of the ED for specific specialties: maternity, pediatrics, men, and women. They have specific places for everyone because many of the patients spend an extensive amount of time there. Because of all of the patients requiring care, at times it is not possible to move them up to the unit right after they are stabilized. The resident nurses we were working with were kind enough to show us around other critical care units. We spent some time in the ICU and saw how important it is to perform a physical assessment and continuous monitoring of the patient.

Since we only spent a few minutes in the burn unit the day before, we returned there. When we arrived, they were bathing a patient. We were able to see the bathing process and safety and infection concerns that they have for burn patients. Some patients undergo a skin graft in an attempt to repair the burned area. They have a specific surgical room on the unit that they can do that in. This unit cares for patients of any age. Since the hospital was celebrating nurse’s month, we went to get some popcorn and cotton candy then were off to lunch.

After a lunch filled with Brazilian goodies, it was our turn to present about Illinois State University’s Mennonite College of Nursing. We discussed our college history, values, and goals. Next, we talked about our Simulation Lab. They are working on
building one for their college! We talked about what we do there, how the equipment works, and how we learn from spending time there.

For our UEL friends, this was a new world and a paradigm shift. They expressed great interest in seeing our Sim Lab someday!

For dinner, one of the host families invited us over for a churrasco. Many of the homes here have a churrasco grill in their kitchen. They make a variety of meats on huge skewers and then serve it. After dinner, we were all stuffed but made room for dessert... brigadeiro! A brigadeiro is a chocolate fudge ball rolled in sprinkles. The food was delicious and fun memories were made!
Journal Entry #5 - Shadowing and the Sim Lab 
By Zach Missel 

Wednesday, May 20

We currently have been in Londrina, Brazil for over a week now and the culture and health care system has still yet to cease to amaze me. On Wednesday morning, we went to UBS Ouro Branco. This is a community health clinic that roughly serves 5,000 residents of Londrina. The goal of this clinic is to provide health education, vaccinations, prenatal care, care for minor wounds, and any other health needs in the immediate community that may arise. The community health department here seemed to be the most technically advanced when compared to other branches of their health delivery system. I was most impressed with their national vaccination registry. It is a completely online system where health care professionals can enter in patient information and include what vaccinations the patient has been given to date.

Not only does this community center provide services in its building, but also provides a multi-disciplinary team that will trek onto the streets of south Londrina to make home visits. Fortunately, we were able to go on a few of these visits. With us were a physical therapist (with training in respiratory and occupational therapy), an exercise sciences specialist, a nutritionist, nursing staff, and a community representative. The community representative was a person of the community that is in charge of knowing the layout of the neighborhood as well as staying aware of the health needs that may come about.
While we were out and about, we also came across an outdoor community workout area that was nothing like what we consider to be a gym; however, it did the trick by working out all the major muscle groups.

The multidisciplinary group including a nutritionist, physiotherapist/respiratory therapist, physical education specialist, and psychologist, and a nurse. Our students accompanied them on home visits.

Lauren Donar tries out one of the many pieces of aerobic exercise equipment available to the public. Classes led by the physical education specialist encourage activities for the community.

Wednesday evening, we again went to the Feira da Lua and were once again impressed by the fresh fruits and vegetables of Brazil!
Thursday, May 21

This morning the group made a visit to the CIDI. It is also a public health center, but specializes in infectious diseases that are affecting the community—specifically tuberculosis and HIV treatment and counseling. Again, this building displayed a multi-disciplinary approach having an on site dentist, nursing staff, three physicians, psychologist, and social worker. In the case of the patient that is diagnosed with HIV, this team is critical in providing assistance in all the areas that can be affected with such a diagnosis. In Brazil, the medications used to treat HIV are only stocked at these infectious disease clinics. That way, health providers can keep a better track on who taking these medications and the government has a better sense of how much medication to stock. The tuberculosis section of the clinic was more open with positive pressure ventilation set up through fanning systems. Patients had an outside entrance that led specifically to the physician exam rooms. Protocols and the medications given for tuberculosis were the same as the method of treatment in the states.

In the afternoon on, we went to the “Maternidade Municipal” or community maternity ward, where Moms with a low to medium risk pregnancy give birth. This clinic prides itself on lowering the community’s caesarian birth rates and increasing natural births. Much like how hospitals in America are trying to reach “Baby Friendly Status,” this clinic followed the same guidelines including keeping the baby in the room with mother at all times and educating and encouraging breast-feeding with mothers. What was incredibly impressive was that this institution has their own dental technician that educated moms on proper oral care for their new babies. This emphasis on oral care at the earliest time possible for children is definitely a practice that we could adopt in the United States.
The stained glass window in the Cathedral of Londrina. We visited this during our lunch break before heading to the Community Maternity Hospital of Londrina. After touring the hospital, we sat with the nursing director of the hospital, and the UEL faculty member and discussed differences and similarities in maternity practices between our countries.

(L to R) Bianca Donath (UEL student host, and interpreter), Maureen D., Zach M., Ellen M, Rachel C., Lynn K, Lauren Donar at the front entrance to the Municipal Maternity Hospital of Londrina. This a ‘low-risk’ hospital for the people of Londrina that is supported by SURS.
Journal Entry #6 – CAPs and Festa Junina
By Emily Asai

Friday, May 22

Today was another busy day in the beautiful city of Londrina. We started bright and early at the Center for Psychosocial Health, also known as CAPs (Centro de Atencão Psicossocial), which is located on the northern part of the city. Here, we were greeted by a UEL professor named Regina who showed us around the facility and told us a little more about how this clinic works.

We learned that this center is divided into a 6-bed inpatient unit, an out-patient day-treatment center, and a mental health clinic available for appointment and consultations. The in-patient unit is open 24 hours for psychiatric patients who are in manic or out-of-control states. The out-patient unit is a place where patients can come for the day and participate in group activities or arts and crafts. The facility was very open - there weren’t any bars on the windows or locked doors between units. The patients were free to walk around wherever they wanted. During our tour, we even had a pleasant encounter with one of the patients. There was one area in particular that stood out to me because it was almost like a courtyard in that the roof was completely open which allowed sunlight to pour in. There was also a bed of different plants and tables for patients to sit and play checkers if they pleased. I thought that this area was very therapeutic and provided a very relaxed environment for the patients.

After visiting CAPs, we stopped off at the UEL’s clothing store to buy some t-shirts.
and then made our way to do one of our new favorite things in Brazil - eat! We went to a self-service restaurant called Paolo’s. I don’t know about everybody else, but I grabbed way too much food…again! When we finished lunch, we went to the historic museum of Londrina. The museum hadn’t opened yet, so we spent some time walking around a little store outside the museum which had a wide variety of coffee and jams which were all made by local farmers. We learned about the process of collecting and roasting coffee to get the best flavor.

After this we walked about a block to the Japanese square. The last stop we made before going back to the historic museum was to a small art museum. There were two floors of canvas paintings of portraits of people. They were interesting to look at and quite different than the art I’m used to seeing back at home in Chicago. Once we finished up here, we were finally able to get into the historic museum where we were given a tour full of historical facts on Londrina. Since I am a coffee addict, the most interesting fact I learned was that Londrina was once known as the central capital of coffee until the 1960s when a terrible frost ruined the coffee bean crops.
Hiking in the Botanical Gardens outside of Londrina.

Walking in a bamboo forest and hearing beautiful birds singing around us.

Students and their hosts.

Japanese garden honoring 100 years of Japanese immigrants being part of Londrina.
The last two trips we made today was to get some ice cream and to the botanical gardens. Thank goodness for the ice cream because it gave us all a little boost of energy to hike along the path in the gardens! It was absolutely beautiful and so relaxing walking through the gardens together. It was another full day of learning more about the Brazilian culture and experiencing different parts of the city. We are all getting very close to our new friends and not looking forward to our departure on Tuesday.

Saturday, May 23

Today was another beautiful sunny day in Londrina! We all got a chance to catch up on sleep and slept in this morning. It was glorious! We also had our big lunch later this afternoon with our hosts and the professors. Before going to this, I decided to spend the morning with my host family. They had to run a few errands downtown, so I got to spend the morning walking around that area with them. The streets were filled with people doing their typical Saturday morning shopping. I got to see the cathedral, the library, and a bunch of clothing stores. We also stopped into their Grandmother’s shop to say “hello.” After visiting with her, my host family took me to the restaurant to meet up with the group.

We had lunch at a restaurant called Fabrica Un. Here, we got a chance to taste a popular dish called feijoada, which is a traditional Brazilian stew made up of beans and different types of meat. There were bowls and bowls filled with feijoada to choose from. There were also a lot of fruits, farofa, desserts, rice, and more meats. Today was also Ellen’s 21st birthday, so we celebrated by singing “Happy Birthday” to her in English and in Portuguese with cake of course!

After lunch, we all headed back to our host’s homes to rest before the big party tonight. Zach, Rachel and I got a ride back with Rachel’s host, Alana, who had to run a few errands before dropping us off. One of the stops we made was
to a flower shop. It was filled with beautiful flowers and smelled amazing! The owner of the flower shop was this little Japanese woman who welcomed us all into the store and told us that she sings. So, she turned on some background music and serenaded us all while we were waiting for Alana’s flowers. It was the most entertaining thing I have ever experienced walking into a flower shop. The owner even ran off to hand the ringing phone to another worker so that she could continue serenading us. Once she finished, we all applauded her and thanked her for her wonderful performance. Then, we headed home.

Tonight, we had our big party. We were celebrating Festa Junina, which is a traditional Brazilian holiday that takes place in June and required us to dress up in costumes. All the girls wore these traditional dresses with braids or pigtails in our hair, as well as lots of blush and drawn-on freckles on our cheeks. The guys wore a plaid-patterned shirt with a drawn-on uni-brow and mustache. We all looked pretty great in our outfits!

The party was at one of the professor’s homes, Maria-Elisa’s, which was absolutely beautiful. She had this breathtaking backyard with a patio to dance and eat, couches and chairs to sit, hammocks to lay down on, and an assortment of plants throughout the yard. It was the perfect place for a party. The night was filled with different games, dancing, karaoke, a churrasco, and enjoying each other’s company throughout the night. We all had a great time chatting with all the Brazilians and laughing. The dance we learned was like a square dance which required us all to have partner to dance with. It was so much fun! We ended the party around midnight. Everybody was exhausted but still pumped from all the excitement. Tonight was an experience that will forever be remembered during our time in Brazil!
Journal Entry #7 – The end
By Maureen Dubczuk

Sunday, May 24

Today we attended another “churrasco” or barbecue at the home of our faculty advisor, Lynn Kennell’s host family. We were warmly welcomed by the scent of this delicious home cooked meal, as well as hugs and kisses from faculty, friends and hosts. Beef, sausage, and grilled chicken wings were served along with mouth-watering fruits, salad, ‘farofa’—a delicious topping made of mandioca flour, dried soy beans, and other flavorings, and garlic bread. There was a large selection of desserts, which was impossible to choose from. Many of the students, including myself couldn’t resist trying all of them, including Pé de moleque (a traditional candy made of peanuts and molasses), paçoca (another candy made of peanuts, sugar, and cassava flour), flan, a cheesecake, brigadero, and a personal favorite- pavê (a delicious layered dessert).

We returned to our hosts’ homes with full stomachs and smiles, until the students reunited in the morning at the hospital, HU. Here we learned about the Hospital Infection Control Committee, which was fairly different from our infection control. At the hospital, they have a unit specifically for infectious diseases. The majority of the cases received are HIV and Tuberculosis. Having a separate unit for this keeps the nurses knowledgeable on the proper protocol when dealing with these diseases.
There were certain setbacks that were apparent, for example an isolation room had a door that would not close all the way- but despite this the nurses continue to work around it. They manifest their passion into creativity so that they may find new ways to “fix” broken items. The healthcare providers may not have the luxury of brand new technology, but they have the desire to provide optimal care- and with this, the patients really do get better.

Later that morning we reviewed our entire experience with the UEL faculty and student hosts. Our discussion showed that the viewing of the hospital and various clinics significantly impacted us. We were also extremely pleased that there was only one student with each host family. This pulled us out of our comfort zones, letting go of the culture we were familiar with and submersing ourselves into our host families’ lives and daily interactions. We became a part of their family. Our closeness made saying goodbye later that night and the next day very difficult, but it demonstrated the extent of our experience and depth of our relationships.

We spent the evening cooking an “American-Mexican” meal for the faculty as well as our host families. We served watermelon, vegetables and dip, taco salad and ice-cream sandwiches for dessert. One of the highlights of the evening was receiving the gift of a book and DVD on Londrina. Raquel Matioli’s dad was the chief photographer for the book. We will treasure this book forever!
Key Nursing faculty from UEL who helped organize and plan the schedule for our students: Professors Sarah, Flavia, Elma, Lynn (MCN-ISU faculty), Maria Elisa, and Marcia. We greatly appreciate ALL their efforts to make our experience an unforgettable one!

Our 5 hosts—Alana Fernandes, Bianca Donath, Nathalia Fereira, Raquel Matioli, and Isabella Molina listen as we reflect on our 2 weeks in Brazil.

MCN-ISU student stands behind his/her host in Londrina: Lauren Donar with Isabella Molina; Ellen McHugh with Nathalia Fereira; Zach Missel and Emily Asai with Raquel Motiari; Maureen Dubczuk with Bianca Donath; and Rachel Corrado with Alana Fernandes
Monday, May 25

Everyone was united together reminiscing about the trip and sharing memories. We said goodbye with hugs and kisses, and expressed our hopes of meeting again. If you measure in terms of time, we were only together for two weeks, but our experiences feel infinite and will be carried with us always.

Heading to our Gol flight as we leave this beautiful city of Londrina, in Parana, Brazil.