IUSB Nursing, Irish-style

'You really got the feeling a nurse is this great person'

On a hot summer morning, Kathleen Scarry, clinical lecturer in nursing at IU South Bend, poses a question to a roomful of students. The question: What are the top social and cultural values in your country? For a moment, there is silence.

Then, the responses listed on the board immediately suggest that different cultures distribute social and cultural values in a distinctly different order.

American: (1) independence and choice, (2) a strong work ethic, (3) money and acquisitions, and (4) status.

Irish: (1) family, kinship, and fellowship; (2) health; and, (3) social life.

In a simple yet effective way, IUSB nursing students and six visiting nursing students from the University of Ulster, Northern Ireland, compare the cultural values that will influence their professional careers.

The course is "American Health Care: International Experience," organized by Marian Martin Pettengill, dean of nursing and co-taught by Cyndi Sofhauser, assistant professor of nursing, as a part of an exchange program that sent three IUSB nursing students to the University of Ulster, Northern Ireland, and brought six nursing students here. The program is the first formal international undergraduate nursing exchange program in the IU system.

The exchange allowed each group a fresh perspective on nursing by experiencing a different culture's practice and philosophy of health care. The class, which focused on international issues in health care, is just one way the exchange experience was broadened to include IUSB nursing students here at home.

The success of the program earned Pettengill an IU international enhancement grant, which helped support her return to the University of Ulster this past October. While there, she presented a seminar on managed care and nursing practitioners to students and faculty, and explored possibilities for continuing and expanding the exchange program to include the field of radiography.

The success also is measured by the professional growth and personal memories of the exchange students. Each group spent approximately six weeks abroad; each was assigned to observe a variety of clinical settings and to attend university-level classes.

The strongest memories of the IUSB students involved the care of the very young Newborns and their mothers in Northern Ireland stay hospitalized for 10 days and then are visited at home daily for almost two weeks. For the first five years of life, every Northern Ireland child is visited regularly at home by a nurse.

Nurses in Northern Ireland, although terribly underpaid, are greatly respected.

"You really got the feeling a nurse is this great person there," said student Pam Arndt. There, midwives deliver 90 percent of the babies. But it's the physicians who take blood pressure and chart the health of the respiratory and cardiovascular systems. "Nurses concentrate on bedside care," said student Bethany Nine.

IUSB nursing graduate Sue Anderson, an associate faculty member, designed the clinical experiences provided to the University of Ulster students during their stay here to present a broad perspective. The Northern Ireland students observed such health-care facilities as a migrant workers' site, South Bend's Homeless Center, the parish nursing facilities of the Broadway Christian Church, and the Chapin Street Health Center, a clinic sponsored by St. Joseph's Medical Center.

IU Student Wins Marshall Scholarship

David Ginger, IU senior, has earned one of the 42 prestigious Marshall Scholarships awarded each year to enable the brightest American college students to study in Britain.

Ginger will use his scholarship to study science at Cambridge University. "I picked Cambridge because it has an outstanding reputation for its science program," he said.

While he is going to continue his schooling, he also wants to learn about the culture and to experience everything it offers. "It is three years in England. It is going to be wonderful. I can't think of another adjective to sufficiently describe it."

At IU, Ginger has pursued degrees in chemistry and physics, and, for the last two years, he has been conducting research at the IU Cyclotron Facility and the Brook Haven National Laboratory in New York. Vic Viola, an IU chemistry professor, said he had a very positive experience working with Ginger at the Cyclotron. "He has done much superb undergraduate research. He is a very enthusiastic and productive worker. I was very confident he would win and am not surprised but very proud," said Viola.