LA NOUVELLE FRANCE: CREATING NON-TRADITIONAL AND CAREER RELEVANT PROGRAMS IN A “TRADITIONAL” LOCATION

Career Integration Conference 2016
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The University of Minnesota Study in France Program

• Established in 1982 by University of Minnesota Department of French and Italian
• Partnership with Paul Valéry University
• National recruitment
• Primarily conceived to serve French majors and minors
History of program

• Quarter program in 1982
• Semester programs in 1991 (France aligned its curriculum with the rest of Europe to allow for Erasmus exchanges), and year programs
• Additional options added over time
  – Internships in 2000
  – Sports and Culture in France: La Vie Sportive
• Summer options including advanced French program French majors or minors
Broad Curricular offerings

• More possibilities offered to non-French majors:
  – Freshman seminar: Art in Southern France
  – Thematic May sessions
  – June session in advanced language

• Many students from non traditional fields (Engineering, Business, Sports) interested in studying in France who have some French skills

• Expanded offering in French
The French Embassy Grant

• Contacted August of 2014
• $20,000 for program development and dedicated scholarships
• Used prestige of grant to gain commitments from new Colleges
• Coincided with mergers of local Universities
• Opportunity to continue creative curriculum development
On Site...

- The Universities in Montpellier merged except the University Paul Valery (Humanities), to become the Université de Montpellier...perfect timing!
- Grant was prestigious and helped open doors at French university: Business Schools, School of Education, Engineering School.
- Classes taught in English (internationalization more and more necessary with Erasmus)
On-Campus

- Identified stakeholders in The College of Education and Human Development, Carlson School of Business, and The College of Science and Engineering
- Developed goals and program models by college...one size does not fit all
- Organized “super group” trip with campus leadership (Office of Undergraduate Education, Honors Program, Student Affairs)
- Set expectations for outcomes
New Semester tracks in English added

• Business track: participation in existing classes

• Education track: Teaching Practicum Program entirely created with U de Montpellier School of Education

• Engineering options: Summer Class taught in French: French for Science and Technology, January seminar on renewable energy taught in English
Outcomes to date

• 10 students have participated in student Teaching Practicum program, 3 more in Fall
• First Business in France student in Spring 16, 1 next semester
• 9 students from CSE on winter break, going again in May 17
• New students, new energy
Lessons Learned

• The power of a grant and an initiative
• The energy to map out the existing offer and see if it matches
• Willingness to shift biases
• Don’t give up on language
• Staff on both side need to “unlearn” and “relearn”
• New partners, new attitudes, new Europe
Thank You!