



INNOVATION ABSTRACTS

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The Amado M. Peña, Jr., Scholarship Program

Everyone has heard that "life imitates art," and art has been used to bring life to one institution's financial aid program. Noted Southwest artist Amado M. Peña, Jr., grew up in humble surroundings in the Texas border town of Laredo. At the completion of his formal education, he moved his dreams of being a wage-earning artist 250 miles north to Austin, the capital of Texas. His earliest work was peddled on street corners across from The University of Texas for the meager sum of 50 cents. Today, some of these early works sell for thousands of dollars. His career has led him and his work to many of the world's finest art galleries, and in many circles his name is synonymous with the artistic style of the Southwest. He has, in a word, "made it." Fortunately for a new generation of young Hispanics, he has never forgotten where he has been or what his responsibilities are to others.

In 1989, he agreed to establish the Amado M. Peña, Jr., endowed scholarship program for Hispanic students at Austin Community College. Not only did he establish the program, but he has worked tirelessly to ensure its long-term success.

For the program's first fund-raising effort, an original work by Peña was reproduced in poster form, in a limited edition. The posters sold for \$50 each, and the total sales (more than \$60,000) went directly to the program endowment. About the piece, *Los Cuentos*, Peña wrote:

I was a teacher in Austin for 16 years, and I have seen educational opportunities transform many lives. As a matter of fact, the artwork I have produced to establish the scholarship fund is about the storyteller, or teacher, who encourages us to be more than we thought we could be. My special teacher was my grandmother. This portrait is dedicated to her and to all teachers.

When the *Los Cuentos* original was sold, Peña donated 10% of its price to the scholarship fund. From the first year's effort, eight scholarships were awarded.

In 1990, Amado Peña offered another original work. The even more limited edition was of a signed and numbered serigraph, *Dos Mujeres*. Sales revenues reached \$15,000.

Then in the summer of 1991, Peña arranged for an art auction to further benefit the fund. He approached other

Southwest masters, asked them to donate original works for auction, and donated works from his own personal collection as well. Actor Lou Diamond Phillips (*La Bamba*, *Stand and Deliver*, and *Young Guns I and II*) responded to a call from his friend Peña and flew from California to serve as celebrity auctioneer. This event raised an additional \$27,000 for the scholarship program.

Peña has twice served the college as an artist-in-residence, on each occasion spending two full days teaching a wide range of art topics to aspiring artists; he would not accept an honorarium.



No individual can better describe the need for help in financing an education than the person who must seek it. In awarding the Peña scholarship, ACC asks students to describe in writing their need for financial support and their aspirations. Two such responses are offered here.

I am originally from Lampasas, Nuevo Leon, Mexico. I would like a better education than my parents had. My father graduated from sixth grade. My mother went only to second. Since my father's death three years ago, we have lived only on social security. I am hoping to get this scholarship so that my dreams for a good education can come true.

'Growing up on the rough side of town' I had the opportunity to experience the pain and struggles of the poor. I feel that poverty in minorities is itself one aspect of society that desperately needs attention. Hopefully, my completed studies will open the doors for me to help the kinds of people I grew up knowing.

Amado Peña's roots in the Rio Grande Valley have given him an uncommon understanding of the problems of the socioeconomically disadvantaged; his earliest experiences have never been forgotten. The students whose comments are featured here are real people, dependent on others who have been successful and who can now offer a helping hand. Amado Peña understands and embraces this critical need.





On each of our campuses and in each of our communities, there may be individuals who would choose to help remove the burden of long-term debt from the shoulders of those already sufficiently burdened as they pursue the dream of a higher education. Austin Community College is fortunate to have been the "right place at the right time," becoming one beneficiary of Amado Peña, Jr.'s commitment to giving something back to his community and to enriching the lives of students in a tangible and critical way.

Fifteen students now receive Peña scholarships. His original commitment to the program is stronger today than ever, and new fund-raising initiatives are in the planning stages.

Dan Angel, *President*

Mike DeVault, *Executive Assistant to the President*

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Games Nurses Play

Creative teaching techniques involve the use of many learning principles, and they promote the development of critical thinking skills. Techniques such as "gaming" involve the active participation of the student and generate a new enthusiasm for learning.

At Monroe Community College, nursing students are required to take comprehensive final examinations. Instructors have adapted the popular board game "Trivial Pursuit"™ (Selchow and Righter Co., Bay Shore, NY) to help students prepare for the exams. The normal game subjects have been replaced with six nursing-related categories: (M) medications; (N) numbers; (DT) definitions/terminology; (P) procedures; (NP) nursing process; and (D) documentation.

Playing the game is easy and fun. Students may play as individuals or in opposing groups. With some exceptions, the rules of the game are basically the same as those outlined in the "Trivial Pursuit"™ instruction booklet. To move the game along quickly, instructors allow students to win a "pie wedge" anytime the player or team answers a category's question correctly; normally, a player or team can only win a pie wedge when they have landed on a hub, or "headquarters" square, and have answered correctly.

The game presents students with nursing-related questions that must be answered correctly. A correct

answer wins the corresponding category's pie wedge. Each player or team is given 60 seconds to answer a question. If a player or team correctly answers the question, they win the category's pie wedge and can continue playing. If they answer incorrectly, the other player or team takes their turn and attempts to answer a question. Once the player or team has won a pie wedge, they do not have to answer any more questions in that category.

The game proceeds with students collecting pie wedges from all six categories. In order to win, the player or team must land in the middle of the board, where they answer an additional question chosen by the opposing player or team.

This gaming technique has been enthusiastically accepted by students, and they play it several times before the final comprehensive examination. The technique has been identified as one major reason for the students' exceptional performance (95 percent pass) on the National Council Licensure Examination.

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