Building Bridges Abroad

During a June 2011 trip to Brazil, Catherine E. Wilson, Ph.D., was greeted warmly by fellow Villanova alumnus Nythamar ("Nita") de Oliveira, Ph.D., while she was visiting the campus of the Pontificia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul (PUCRS) in Porto Alegre. Dr. Wilson spent a few days on the PUCRS campus with the objective of establishing a student, research and faculty exchange program between PUCRS and Villanova. While there, Dr. Wilson delivered a paper entitled, "Immigrant Rights, Social Movements, and Political Incorporation," for PUCRS' Brazilian Center for Research in Democracy, established by Dr. de Oliveira.

Satya Pattanayak, Ph.D., director of the Latin American Studies program at Villanova, sponsored Dr. Wilson’s travel to Brazil in an effort to deepen Villanova’s ties in the Southern Hemisphere. At present, Villanova has two established study abroad programs in Latin America at the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso in Valparaíso, Chile and the International Center for Development Studies in San José, Costa Rica. Wilson’s travel was made possible by a 2009 – 2011 Title VI-A Undergraduate International Studies and Foreign Language Grant that Dr. Pattanayak received from the United States Department of Education. The travel aims to spark cross-disciplinary interest among faculty and students in the fields of Brazilian culture, politics, and public management at Villanova.