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Promoting excellence in undergraduate nursing education through accreditation: lessons learned from a new canadian collaborative program

Christine Barlow and Christa MacLean
University of Saskatchewan, Canada

The Saskatchewan Collaborative Bachelor of Science in Nursing Program (SCBScN) is a new Canadian undergraduate nursing program. The program is a collaborative between the University of Regina and Saskatchewan Polytechnic. The program just recently underwent regulatory body program approval simultaneously with accreditation and received the maximum accreditation of seven years from the Canadian Association of Schools of Nursing (CASN). Receiving the maximum seven year accreditation is a rarity for new collaborative nursing programs given the complexity of the delivery. The program is delivered across multiple sites with faculty teaching collaboratively across all courses and years of the program. Notably, the accreditors cited the 95% student satisfaction rate, high employer satisfaction, high graduate employment rate, and nimbleness of the program in response to student feedback. All of this was accomplished in a partnership between a University that had no existing Faculty of Nursing and a College with close to 50 years' experience in delivering nursing programming. The complexity of delivering a collaborative program related to different organizational structures, collective agreements and varying operational processes while promoting teambuilding and a single program identity will be reviewed. This paper will further briefly discuss the challenges and successes with meeting differing program approval and accreditation standards while being cognizant of the evolving provincial context. This required new approaches to address aboriginal student recruitment and retention, indigenization of the curriculum, interprofessional education, transition to the NCLEX RN, simulation learning and shrinking practice placements, faculty recruitment, communication and collaboration, changing scopes of practice, collaborative research, acceleration streams that included licensed practical nurse, registered psychiatric nurse and after degree applicants.

chris.barlow@saskpolytech.ca
christa.maclean@saskpolytech.ca