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A Dozen Years of Collaboration: A Nursing Education and Hospital Provider Partnership for BSN Education

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In the *Future of Nursing* report (2010), key recommendations included increasing the proportion of baccalaureate and higher degree-prepared nurses in the nation's workforce to 80% by 2020, and expanding educational and community affiliations for nursing education. Nursing education programs and practice settings have developed both formal and informal alliances to address selected aspects of nursing education, especially in transitioning from student nurse to RN roles. Use of dedicated educational units, interdisciplinary simulation labs open to multiple educational institutions and providers, joint faculty and practice appointments, and the VA Nursing Academy through the US Department of Veterans Affairs (Bakewell-Sachs, 2016; Dobalian *et al*, 2014; Everett, 2016; Stout *et al*, 2015; Toderio *et al*, 2015) are examples of a few of these affiliations. In 2006, a private, church-affiliated, liberal arts college in the southeastern US partnered with a nearby medical center to open a new generic baccalaureate nursing program. This presentation follows the journey of this successful 12-year relationship.

An experienced nurse educator was hired initially as a consultant and then as the inaugural chair of the nursing department to implement the generic BSN program. Approval to open the prelicensure baccalaureate degree program was obtained from the State Board of Nursing in spring of 2009 and the first nursing (NUR) courses were taught at the junior level in the fall of that year. Subsequently, initial national accreditation by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) was obtained by the program in the next year. The first class of BSN-prepared students graduated from this program in May 2011 and all graduates were licensed and employed in nursing by the end of that year. The program continued to admit one class of new nursing majors to the junior NUR courses each fall semester and graduate one class of BSN-prepared students each May. Between 45% and 50% of program graduates have been employed by the partner medical center in their new graduate nurse residency. Alumni of the program have continued formal nursing education in master's and doctoral programs, becoming nurse practitioners and nurse anesthetists, and even returning as nursing faculty in the program. Several have served as preceptors for nursing students, have taken travelling nurse assignments across the US, have obtained specialty nursing certification, and/or have earned Daisy Award and Nurse of the Month recognition. Continuing accreditation of the BSN program for the next 10 years was granted by the CCNE in 2015. The program expanded by admitting a new class of NUR juniors each spring semester who graduate in December of the following year. Additionally, an online RN to BSN Completion track for associate-degree prepared nurses who want to take additional courses to earn a BSN degree has been added to the offerings of the nursing education program.

The partnering organizations work closely throughout the year to make this a successful endeavor, including clinical instructors who are all MSN-prepared employees of the clinical agency, face-to-face meetings of all NUR faculty and all clinical instructors three times a year with additional course-specific meetings during the academic year, clinical instructor participation in the college's Boot Camp days at the beginning of each semester plus simulation days at the end of the semester, and NUR faculty presence on the clinical units with students and clinical instructors to name a few. The purpose of this session is to explore the components of this successful partnership, the challenges that were encountered, the recommendations that grew out of the journey, and suggestions for the future from both the nursing education and the nursing practice perspectives. These points would be helpful to nursing education programs and to nursing practice settings seeking to expand existing capacity and novel collaborations.

Title:

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Keywords:

Academic/practice partnership, BSN education and Collaboration

References:

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Abstract Summary:

This presentation addresses the first 12 years of a partnership between a private liberal arts college and a nearby medical center to offer a baccalaureate degree program in nursing. Opportunities, challenges, and outcomes of this community partnership are explored. Insights for establishing future collaborative endeavors are provided.

Content Outline:

1. Components of a successful community partnership in nursing education

1. Identifying the need & goal(s)
2. Finding the best fit
3. Clarifying the roles of each partner
4. Formalizing the collaboration
5. Implementing the partnership
6. Reaching the goal(s)
7. Renewing/revising the partnership
2. Outcomes of the community partnership
1. Win/win perspectives
2. Challenges for each community partner
3. Suggestions for additional collaborative endeavors

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Author Summary: Dr. McDowell has been a nurse educator for over 45 years, first at Lander University in Greenwood, South Carolina in the ADN and then in the BSN program and recently retired as the founding chair of a BSN program at Newberry College, a private liberal arts college in central South Carolina. She is certified as an academic nurse educator and is a fellow in the Academy of Nursing Education.