

Title:

Determining the Regional Need for a Master's Nursing Program

Desiree Hensel, PhD, RN, PCNS-BC, CNE

School of Nursing, Curry College, Milton, MA, USA

Judith A. Halstead, PhD

Commission for Nursing Education Accreditation, National League for Nursing, Washington DC, DC, USA

Karen L. Carlson, PhD

College of Nursing, The University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM, USA

Session Title:

Experienced Nurse Faculty Leadership Academy (ENFLA)

Keywords:

Master in Nursing Education, Needs Assessment and Regional Academic Health Center

References:

Indiana University (2014). The bicentennial strategic plan for Indiana University. Retrieved from <https://strategicplan.iu.edu/doc/plan.pdf>

Sheff, Z.T., Nowak, A.L., Maxey, H., Norwood, C., Randolph, C., & Kelley, T.M. (2015). Health workforce studies program data report: 2013 nursing licensure survey. Retrieved from <https://www.ic4n.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/DataReport2013IndianaNursingWorkforceFinal.pdf>

United Heath Foundation (2016). America's health rankings: Annual report. Retrieved from <http://www.americashealthrankings.org/learn/reports/2016-annual-report>

Abstract Summary:

As part of becoming a Regional Academic Health Center, Indiana University School of Nursing Bloomington conducted a needs assessment to determine directions for graduate education. Participants likely to remain in Southern Indiana showed strong interest in family nurse practitioner and nursing education tracks with less interest in community health.

Learning Activity:

LEARNING OBJECTIVES	EXPANDED CONTENT OUTLINE
The learner will be able to describe factors which suggested that there was a service gap for MSN education in Southwest Central Indiana.	1. Campus strategic plan to build capacity in health sciences and become a center for excellence in rural health nursing 2. Coming of regional academic health center 3. Medically under served area 4. Low levels of BSN and APRN prepared nurses in region
The learner will be able to describe findings from the Indiana University School of Nursing Bloomington campus MSN needs assessment survey.	1. Strongest support found for FNP track 2. Nursing education track second most favored major among those who would stay in region 3. Only moderate interest in community health track

Abstract Text:

Background

A rising infant mortality rate, increasing prevalence of diabetes, and deadly drug crisis are some of the factors contributing to Indiana's overall health ranking of 39th among 50 states. Health disparities are particularly evident in the state's predominantly rural Southwest Central region. With no graduate nursing programs located in that 11 county area, the region also had some of the lowest levels of educational preparation among registered nurses in the state. The University's strategic plan included initiatives to improve the health of the communities served, including the creation of a regional academic health center (RAHC). Creation of the RACH was accompanied by the need to increase the expertise of nurses in the local workforce. The purpose of this Experienced Nurses Faculty Leader's Academy (ENFLA) scholar's project was to explore the feasibility of developing and implementing a Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) program with a community health specialty track on a regional campus of a core School of Nursing. As part of the decision-making process, a needs assessment was completed with the specific aims of determining the:

1. extent of prospective student interest in enrolling in a MSN graduate degree program on the regional campus; and 2. which MSN speciality majors should be offered based upon prospective student feedback.

Methods

A team of stakeholders was assembled to create the needs assessment. The 23 item tool addressed participants' interest in enrolling in selected MSN tracks if offered on the regional campus. Links to the anonymous survey were sent to all current School of Nursing students (N=197), all nursing alumni (N=471), all 2016 nursing graduates (N=52), all registered nurses at the local partner hospital (N=approximately 700), and all county school nurses (N=6). Data were collected and managed using REDCap electronic data capture tools.

Results

The survey remained open between the dates of December 9, 2016 and January 14, 2017. Of the 175 respondents, 116 indicated that they were interested or very interested in enrolling in an MSN program on the regional campus. Among the participants likely to remain in Southern Indiana the strongest MSN specialty interest was for the family nurse practitioner ([FNP], M=2.69/4) and nursing education (M=2.23/4) specialty tracks. There was only moderate interest (M=1.43/4) in a community health nursing track.

Conclusion

While the community health option was initially desired by administration as it would meet the perceived health needs of the region, prospective student data did not support it as a viable offering. Offering a FNP or nursing education track created a challenge in that it could potentially divert students from the main School of Nursing campus. The proposed plan now is to explore means by which a shared resource model can be created between the Bloomington and Indianapolis campuses to offer the FNP and Nursing Education specialty tracks. The next step is to design that model.