

Advancing Access, Connection, and Engagement in the RN-BS Pathway

Amanda Keddington DNP, MSN, RN, CCRN, NPD-BC

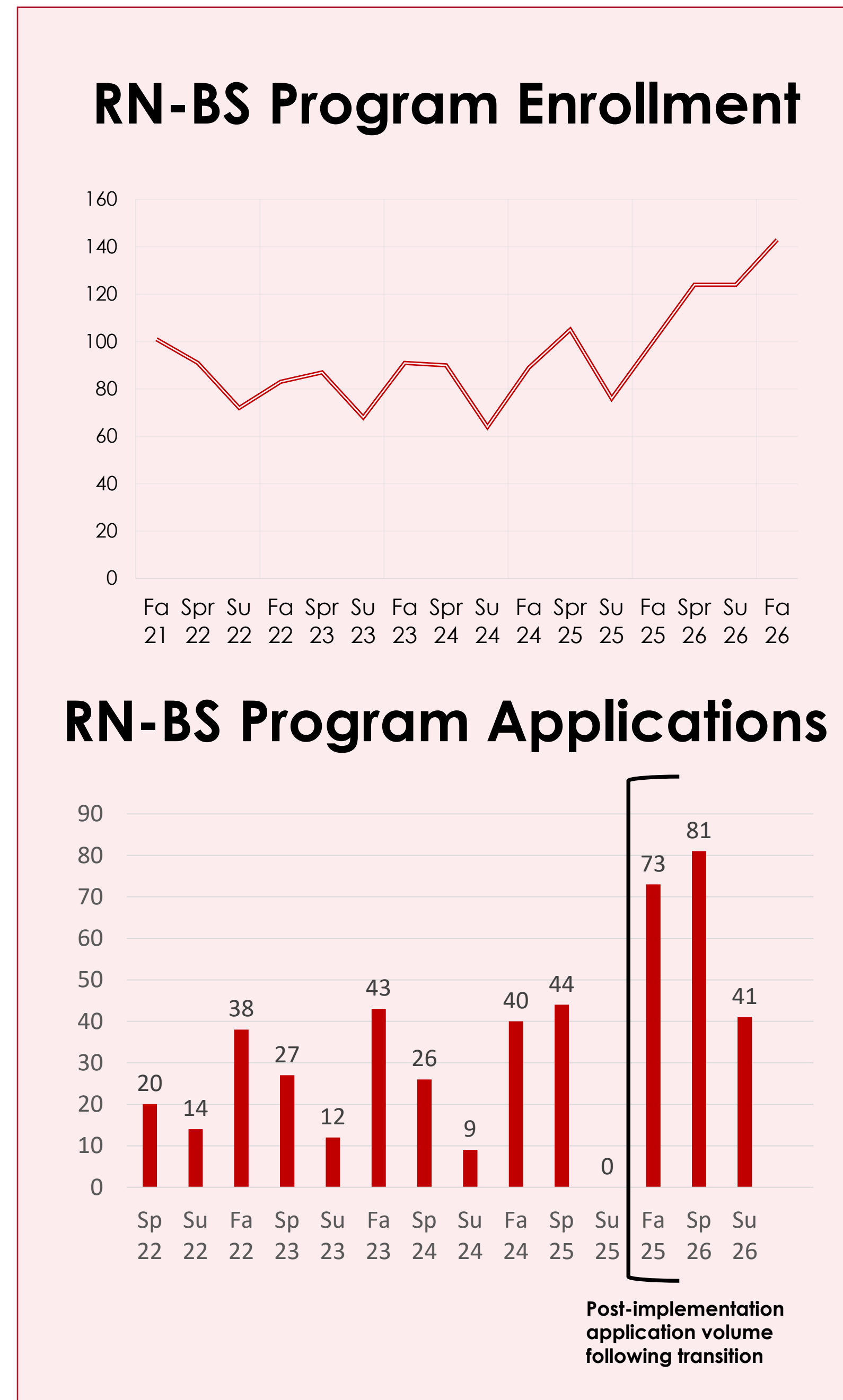
Key Finding: Coordinated changes across **admissions, access, and curriculum** reduced friction for working RN students and were associated with **increased applications and enrollment**.

Background

- Heavy reliance on GPA, test scores, and rigid prerequisites can exclude qualified students from underrepresented backgrounds.^{1 2}
- Holistic review is associated with increased diversity and does not appear to worsen academic outcomes.^{1 3}
- For RN-to-BSN students, access and progression depend on flexibility, affordability, and recognition of prior learning.^{4 5}

Methods

A Quality Improvement initiative was conducted to improve RN-BS admissions, progression, and access. Interventions included redesign of the admissions review process, revision of access structures, and implementation of eight new Essentials-based courses. Changes were intended to reduce barriers, streamline progression, and better align the program with the needs of working registered nurses.

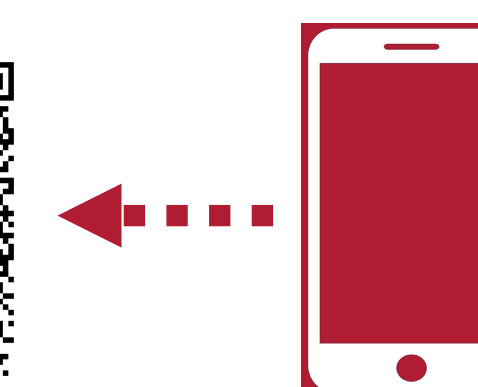


Results

Changes improved processing time, time to enrollment, and access for working nurses. Spring applications increased by approximately **42%** after implementation and exceeded all prior terms since 2021. Enrollment also trended upward across subsequent terms, reaching its highest level in 2026.

Conclusions

Admissions, progression, and curriculum must align to improve access for working RN students. Bundled program changes were associated with increased applications and enrollment.



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Biography

Amanda S. Keddington, DNP, MSN-Ed, RN, CCRN, NPD-BC, is Assistant Professor (Clinical) and RN-BS program Director at the University of Utah College of Nursing. She is a registered nurse with clinical experience spanning emergency nursing, critical care, oncology, and nursing professional development. Her academic and leadership work focuses on undergraduate nursing education, curriculum innovation, student access, and program improvement.

Dr. Keddington earned her Doctor of Nursing Practice in Organizational Leadership from the University of Utah, a Master of Science in Nursing Education from Indiana State University, and her associate and baccalaureate nursing degrees from Weber State University. She has served in a variety of academic and clinical roles, including adjunct faculty, clinical instructor, nurse educator, charge nurse, hospital nursing supervisor, and emergency department nurse. At the University of Utah College of Nursing, she leads the RN-BS program and has been closely involved in curriculum redesign, Essentials implementation, and initiatives to improve student progression and program fit.

Her scholarship reflects a strong interest in educational quality improvement, workforce development, community health, and student support. She has published and presented on topics including simulation in competency assessment, community health worker integration, faculty-student mentoring, psychological safety in nursing education, and palliative care perceptions. Her work has been presented at regional, national, and international conferences, including AACN, Sigma, the Western Institute of Nursing, and the Transcultural Nursing Society.

Dr. Keddington has received multiple honors for teaching, scholarship, and leadership, including the University of Utah Academy of Health Science Educators Fellowship, the AACN Access, Connection, Engagement Leadership Institute Fellowship, the Outstanding DNP Scholar award, and Sigma's Excellence in Education award. She is actively involved in professional service through AACN, the National RN to Baccalaureate Faculty Forum, Sigma Theta Tau, and the University of Utah College of Nursing.

She is committed to creating student-ready nursing programs that maintain rigor while expanding access, belonging, and opportunity for diverse learners.

Contact Information



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