

AACN Innovations in Professional Nursing Education Award

Description of program innovation and outcomes

The NCLEX Success Project was started in 2016 after it was identified that the Division of Nursing's first-time NLCEX pass rate results failed to meet the state-mandated rate of 80% for the fourth consecutive year.

An assessment of the prelicensure baccalaureate program identified key strategies to improve student learning and cultivate clinical reasoning and judgment skills. The faculty collaborated in aligning the curriculum with the NCLEX-RN® test plan through concept mapping. The NCLEX Success Project includes the utilization of more active learning strategies throughout all courses, with increased use of simulations, case studies, and interactive computer-based learning resources for both classroom time and student learning enrichment. Technology improvements have included the addition of a new simulation laboratory and upgraded simulation equipment in existing labs. Examinations have been transitioned to an online administration and grading system.

A major innovation to the curriculum was the addition of Ace NCLEX sessions to most nursing courses. The weekly 90-minute sessions were developed with the goal of utilizing more simulation to reinforce and apply classroom content. Ace NCLEX sessions are now provided biweekly, due to decreased student numbers, and offer an innovative approach to providing additional active learning strategies that promote "thinking like a nurse." Students preparing to graduate are encouraged and guided through a virtual online NCLEX-RN® preparation course by the prelicensure program's director until they have taken the NCLEX-RN® exam. The director encourages the graduating students to support one another through the use of a social media group, reporting their successful completion of the exam and providing peer support. First-time NCLEX-RN® pass rates for the prelicensure program have consistently been greater than 93% for the years 2016-2017 (96.67%), 2017-2018 (93.10%), and 2018-2019 (96.67%) since the initiation of the NCLEX Success Project.

Served as a catalyst for change within the curriculum and/or educational mission of the institution

The focus of nursing education has evolved from being content-laden to preparing students how to "think like a nurse."

Next Generation NCLEX-RN® examinations will focus on the concepts of clinical reasoning and clinical judgment in determining preparation for nursing practice. The NCLEX Project has provided faculty with additional training and resources to effectively incorporate technology and active learning strategies that are evidence-based and increase clinical judgment and clinical reasoning skills. With the anticipated changes in Next Generation NCLEX-RN®, the Division of Nursing has adapted the mission and program outcomes to reflect the preparation of nurse generalists who demonstrate strong clinical judgment, clinical reasoning, and critical decision-making skills necessary in today's highly technical and complex health care environments. The

increased use of simulations in all nursing courses, augmentation of learning through computer-guided active learning activities, and virtual simulations and case studies have contributed to the program's achievement of preparing holistic nurses to positively impact population and global health.

Potential for replication and dissemination

The evidence-based strategies incorporated into the NCLEX Project are adaptable for use in any professional nursing education program. The increased use of technological resources for active learning, coupled with strategies that increase learner engagement, provide an effective means for transforming nursing education from content-based to problem-based learning.

The NCLEX Project innovations and outcomes were disseminated by Dr. Janice Reilley and Sr. Paula Jameson at the NLN Educational Summit in Chicago in 2018. In conversations with faculty across the country, the presenters were able to share how their assessments on the topic could be easily implemented into their nursing education programs.

Has involved teams of faculty when possible

The entire faculty were committed to the NCLEX Project and to improving the NCLEX pass rates for our graduating students. All nursing faculty were involved in the assessment of the nursing program and developing approaches to improve the NCLEX pass rates. At monthly faculty meetings and at the annual two-day faculty workshop, faculty discussed the ongoing NCLEX pass rates and determined whether new ideas needed to be implemented. The assessment phase of the NCLEX Project is an ongoing process.

The Prelicensure Program Director serves as the NCLEX Success Champion, functioning as a faculty resource by incorporating student learning resources into nursing courses, educating faculty on available resources for student learning solutions, and providing support for online learning resources to provide continuing education units.

Is consistent with AACN's mission and vision

The NCLEX Project aligns with AACN's vision by ensuring that students leave the prelicensure program with the necessary preparation to contribute to the transformation of healthcare in an ever-changing and increasingly technological environment. The project reflects AACN's mission by serving as a catalyst for improving excellence in nursing education with innovative approaches to collaborative learning.

Demonstrated advancement of professional nursing education

The outcome measure for the NCLEX Project was an increase in first-time NCLEX-RN® pass rates to above the minimum acceptable level of 80%. The consistent achievement of first-time pass rates above the national and Pennsylvania state average, and the ranking of the prelicensure program as the fourth best baccalaureate program in the state of Pennsylvania for 2018, 2019, and 2020 attest to the success of the program in advancing professional nursing education. The faculty remain committed to ongoing assessment and improvement of the program through collaboration and scholarship in a collegial environment.