

PROGRAM ABSTRACT

HENRY FORD COMMUNITY COLLEGE\HENRY FORD HOSPITAL ACCLERATED NURSING PROGRAM

Henry Ford Community College and the Henry Ford Hospital System formed a partnership to work towards solving the shortage of registered nurses in southeastern Michigan. The hospital had determined that individuals already working for them had the interest and potential to become registered nurses. The Henry Ford Hospital system joined with Henry Ford Community College to submit a grant application to the State of Michigan for funding to design and implement a program that would better enable these individuals to become registered nurses and contribute to solving the nursing shortage in the state. Importantly, the program enabled individuals to complete a degree in nursing more quickly than would be possible in a traditional nursing program. The program was also designed to help participants overcome barriers that can exist when working adults return to school. The first cohort of students began the program in May 2006 and graduated in August 2007.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

HENRY FORD COMMUNITY COLLEGE\HENRY FORD HOSPITAL ACCELERATED NURSING PROGRAM

Program Goals

The goals of the Henry Community College\Henry Ford Hospital System Accelerated Nursing Program include:

1. Working towards solving the shortage of registered nurses in southeastern Michigan.
2. Providing hospital employees the opportunity to become registered nurses.
3. Developing a program that enabled individuals to complete a nursing degree more quickly than a traditional nursing program would allow.
4. Developing a program that would enable working adults to overcome barriers that can hinder them in continuing their education.

Program Design and Implementation

Henry Ford Community College and the Henry Ford Hospital System joined together to submit a proposal for grant funding to the state of Michigan for the development of an Accelerated Nursing program. The grant proposal was accepted and the state provided \$1.5 of funding to develop and implement the program. The design of the program included a number of innovative characteristics.

The program was targeted towards individuals who were already employed in the health care industry. It was felt that such individuals had already shown an interest in working in health care, so that there existed less of a chance that they would withdraw from the program after starting it. Also, these individuals were already employed by Henry Ford Hospital so they had a familiarity with the system and some loyalty to it. The college scheduled classes over a three day period to make it easier for program participants to continue working. The hospital worked with program participants on their work schedules so that they could more easily attend classes.

The program was structured so that students completed the program over a 15 month period rather than the 24 months a traditional program takes. This was accomplished by having students attend school continuously from May to August of the following year. Having students begin the program in the spring semester enabled us to use clinical sites more effectively than we had in the past. The ability to complete the program in a shorter period of time was an attraction to individuals who were already in the workforce.

Through the use of funds from the grant, the hospital developed instructional facilities on their campus. Students could more easily attend school and continue

working if classes were held at the hospital. A lecture room, a nursing skills lab, and a computer lab were developed. Administrative rules of the Michigan Board of Nursing required that the college have this off-campus site approved, which was accomplished in May 2006.

The college worked with the hospital to hold informational meetings with hospital employees to describe the program to them. Over 400 hospital employees expressed an interest in the program and received informational materials. The college set up a process whereby transcripts of interested individuals could be reviewed and individuals could receive advising on what they needed to accomplish to enter the program. Many individuals needed to complete pre-requisites before they could enter the program and were guided on what they needed to do.

The program was initially designed to cover tuition and educational costs for sixty students. In order to attain that number, a system was set up so that if there were an insufficient number of hospital employees qualified to enter the program, that those slots could be filled by individuals on the Henry Ford Community College wait list for the nursing program. Additionally, students who fell out of the program would be replaced by individuals from the college's traditional program who had fallen out earlier, gone through remediation, and would be ready to re-enter the program. Since the tuition of program participants who were not hospital employees would be covered by the grant, these individuals would be required to sign an agreement to work for the hospital for three years upon their graduation from the program.

The nursing instructors from the college worked with instructors from nursing education center at the hospital to coordinate the sharing of facilities. The Associate Dean of the Nursing Division from the college and the Associate Vice President of Nursing Services from the hospital were appointed co-coordinators of the program. They worked together to ensure that the cultures of the two institutions could effectively work together for the success of the program.

A Steering Committee composed of key individuals from Henry Ford Hospital and Henry Community College was formed to oversee the program and develop strategies to deal with issues that would arise. This committee met once a month and was co-chaired by the Vice President of Academic Affairs for Career & Technical programs at the college and the Vice President\Chief Nursing Officer at the hospital. Also, an Advisory Committee consisting of individuals from the community with an interest in the program was formed. This committee met once each quarter to review the progress of the program.

Assessment and Outcomes

To account for possible attrition in the program, we began the first cohort with seventy-one students in May 2006. Ten students had fallen out of the program by the Fall 2006. During the Fall semester an additional 13 students withdrew from the program. However at the mid-point of the Fall semester, nine new students entered the

program. These consisted of two students who had completed remediation and seven licensed practical nurses who were prepared to enter our program. An additional student who had completed remediation entered the program during the Winter 2007 semester, resulting in 58 students being in the program. During the subsequent semesters two of these students withdrew, so that 56 students graduated in the first cohort in August 2007. Fifty-two of the graduates passed the NCLEX test the first time. Fifty of these fifty-two individuals were employed at Henry Ford Hospital as registered nurses.

During the monthly Steering Committee meetings issues concerning students, faculty and the overall program were analyzed and discussed. Consideration would be given to actions that might be taken to deal with the issues and to improve the program. Action was taken when deemed appropriate.

Surveys of program participants were done approximately one month after they started the program and again at the end of program. The initial survey dealt with the process the participants went through in finding out about the program, applying for the program, and starting the program. The purpose of the survey was to identify problem areas that could be rectified for any future cohorts. The exit survey dealt with the experience participants had while in the program and recommendations they would make to improve the program.

Students identified three main areas of challenge. First was the difficulty in balancing work, school, and their personal lives. Second was despite having their tuition and expenses for the program paid for, that the reduction in work hours to accommodate participation in the program created financial challenges. Third was the challenge of maintaining the support of the families and friends while they were in the program. Students who persevered in the program stressed the necessity of putting school first, keeping in mind that the program lasted only sixteen months, and that they were sacrificing today for a better tomorrow.

The hospital also sited three primary challenges. First was being able to maintain consistent policies from managers in the support provided to program participants. Second was the challenge of harmonizing the culture of the hospital with the culture of the college. Third was allocating sufficient time for the education coordinators to work with students.

The college also identified three main areas of difficulty. First was securing faculty who were willing to teach in the program rather than on the college's campus. Second, like the hospital, was harmonizing the culture of the college with the culture of the hospital. And third, was melding students from the hospital with students from the college's wait-list.

Sustainability

In reviewing the success of the program, the college and the hospital decided to apply for a second grant from the state of Michigan to fund a second cohort of students. We subsequently received a \$1 million grant for the second group. This second cohort was comprised of fifty-nine individuals who began classes in May 2007. In August 2008, 55 individuals graduated in the second cohort.

As a result of the success of the program, Henry Ford Hospital decided to self-fund a third cohort of students. This cohort of students began the program in May 2008 and will graduate in August 2009. The hospital is currently considering whether or not to fund a fourth cohort of students who would begin the program in May 2009.

Building on the success of this collaboration, Henry Ford Community College and the Henry Ford Hospital System jointed with the Dearborn Public Schools to apply for a state of Michigan planning grant to develop an Early College based on the health careers. In the Fall 2007 the Henry Ford Early College enrolled its first class of 41 students. These students began their sophomore year in the Fall 2008, with an additional 75 students beginning their freshman year at that time.