

**Associate-to-Bachelor: Positioning More Baccalaureate Nurses at the Bedside —  
Challenges, Success, and Outcomes**

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**Abstract**

**Background and Scope**

In an effort to decrease time to degree, decrease tuition costs, and increase capacity of nursing students, Frostburg State University has been implementing dual enrollment between community colleges and the university. The addition of the associate-to-bachelor (ATB) model has provided a more structured progression and financial aid benefits and has reduced the tuition costs for students overall.

The ATB model is the collaboration of two programs, which eliminates curriculum duplication and decreases the amount of time for associate degree nursing students to achieve their Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN). This option allows for seamless progression between the two programs at two separate institutions of higher learning also meeting the Institute of Medicine's (2010) recommendation to increase the number of nurses prepared at the BSN level to 80%.

While this model is anticipated to decrease time to degree, decrease tuition costs, and increase the capacity of nursing students, thereby graduating more BSN nurses, it is not without challenges and barriers. These challenges and barriers pose various obstacles such as administration, transfer of credits, and future sustainability.

**Purpose**

Share the challenges, successes, and outcomes associated with the implementation of an ATB model.

**Methods**

To create this model, a five-year implementation grant was requested and funded by the Maryland Higher Education Commission NSP II. The funding has been used to hire individuals to meet project goals. Sharing the challenges and successes as well as the outcome is part of the grant initiative as it approaches the final year of funding.

**Results**

The anticipated outcomes over the project period are to identify and share challenges and barriers as well as potential solutions to aide other institutions in the implementation of the ATB model.

### **Conclusion/Recommendations**

In general, the administration of the model, transfer of credits, and future sustainability are the major challenges and barriers. However, these may be overcome by way of way of collaboration and innovation through clear delineation of staff and faculty to oversee the model, implementing processes and procedures such as individualized plans of study and progression plans, and credit hour conversions.