

A Collaborative Bachelor of Science in Nursing Pathway in Western Maryland

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Abstract

Background and Purpose

The Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) Collaborative Pathway was created for students coming to Frostburg State University (FSU) wanting a traditional nursing program. Both a planning and implementation grant were funded through NSP II grants. Prior to this BSN Collaborative Pathway option, the only pathway for FSU students who wanted to pursue a nursing degree was to transfer to another school after completing their prerequisite courses. It was found that many qualified students were not transferring when the time came but instead were completing degrees in other majors and then applying to nursing programs as second-degree students. Some were leaving the goal of nursing altogether. As students began requesting alternative pathways that would allow them to remain at FSU and complete traditional nursing courses, the plan for a collaboration with Allegany College of Maryland's (ACM) associate degree program was formed.

Method

Students in the Collaborative Pathway take all their prerequisite courses at FSU over two years, then become dually enrolled between FSU and ACM for two years, and then finish their BSN program at FSU over one part-time semester. Students in this pathway live on FSU's campus and can be involved in all activities and sports throughout the entirety of their undergraduate experiences. This pathway was a retention effort to keep students at the school of their choice while enabling them to earn their desired nursing degree.

Students were supported throughout this Collaborative Pathway in a variety of ways. During the first two years while students completed their prerequisite courses, they were also engaged in a mentorship program that allowed them to explore the field of nursing through job shadowing and special educational events, including guest speakers. Students were also placed in a living-learning community during their first semester so that they could build a supportive community of peers and take courses together. Once students were dually enrolled, they received advising from both FSU and ACM, and FSU faculty taught clinical and skills courses at ACM.

Results

During the five-year grant period, FSU was able to strengthen the pipeline of qualified pre-nursing students with over 100 pre-nursing students, identifying opportunities and barriers to dual enrollment. A total of 97 students applied, 68 students were accepted, 38 students progressed, and nine students graduated from this Collaborative Pathway. There was also 21 students who were accepted into the ACM nursing program but either denied acceptance, changed majors after starting the nursing courses, or failed and were dismissed from the program.