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Promoting inclusion of diversity in nursing education

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Purpose: The purpose of the nursing network: Careers and technology program as authorized in title VIII, section 821 of the Public Health Service Act is to increase nursing education opportunities for individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds (including racial and ethnic minorities under-represented among registered nurses). The NN-CAT (Nursing Network-Nursing Careers and Technology) program is designed to provide student stipends, scholarships and opportunities for mentorship through three innovative sub-programs focusing upon increasing cultural inclusivity in nursing education.

Methods: The NN-CAT mentoring program was established in 2013 at Western Carolina University whose faculty was concerned about the shortage of a diversity of nursing students and nurses in the Western North Carolina region. The nursing mentoring program was established to provide individualized nursing mentors to guide minority and rural students to success in their pursuit to enter nursing school. The nursing mentoring program provides nursing mentors from both the community as well as the School of Nursing. Mentors are university prepared nurses that are trained to provide comprehensive individualized mentoring to prenursing students from rural counties in Western North Carolina. The second NN-CAT sub-program is the WCU School of Nursing (SON) and the MAHEC (Mountain Area Health Education Center) which partners to offer a summer collaborative in exploring health careers to promote academic success. The program features enhanced science preparation for high school students preparing to enter nursing school. The focus is upon encouraging students from disadvantaged and diverse backgrounds to pursue nursing. The third NN-CAT sub-program consists of an enriched virtual Second Life science curriculum that is being developed by both the IT department of WCU and the science teachers in Cherokee, Graham, Swain and Jackson counties and the Cherokee Indian Qualla Boundary. The purpose is to increase interest in both science and the nursing profession for high school students from diverse and disadvantaged backgrounds.

Results: Preliminary educational program progress and results will be presented for each of the three programs. The three programs are individual educational research studies that have been funded by the HRSA division of the nursing government.

Conclusions: Preliminary conclusions and recommendations based upon the progress of the three programs will be presented to the participants. Recommendations for other educators will be presented to help foster similar programs with the overarching goal to increase inclusion of diverse students both into applying and being accepted into nursing schools as well as increasing the multicultural heritage of nurses entering the profession.

Biography

Sharon Elizabeth Metcalfe is currently an Associate Professor of Nursing at Western Carolina University in Asheville, North Carolina. For over 8 years, she has been an Associate Professor of Nursing and had previous academic appointments as a Dean of Nursing for a private and community college. Additionally, she has been an Educational Grants Researcher and has focused on grant funding for partnerships with colleges and medical facilities. She is currently serving on the Board of the North Carolina Nursing Association Foundation from 2010 to the till date. She has focused her nursing research agenda on global leadership development for nurses and on mentoring transformational nurse leaders to meet the needs of the future. She additionally has been serving as the Program Director of the NN-CAT Program (Nursing Network-Careers and Technology Program) which is a national program that provides scholarships, stipends and personal mentors to underrepresented ethnic minority students for guidance for applying to the baccalaureate of nursing education program at Western Carolina University, USA.

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