Strategies to Address Challenges by Making the Pathway Between Gaining an Associate's and A Bachelor's Degree in Nursing Seamless

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Introduction

The Institute of Medicine recommends increasing the proportion of nurses with a baccalaureate degree to 80 percent by 2025. The College of Southern Maryland's (CSM) Health Science Department has responded by building bridges to foster opportunities for students who wish to become nurses connecting them early in their education to bachelor's degree programs that support their pathway towards their career objectives.

The ATB partnership models allows students to explore early on as to how they can expand their skills by continuing with their RN to BSN coursework while they are in their Associates Degree in Nursing program. Those students who decide that they ATB program is not an option for them can still work on the non-nursing course required by the BSN program they select so they can seamlessly continue their BSN once they pass NCLEX. Having the knowledge as to how to continue their education will help them save time, be more cost effective and transparent.

Objective

Participants will demonstrate the ability to identify and describe challenges in making the pathway between an Associate's and Bachelor's degree in Nursing seamless

Strategies and Solutions

Strategy – Prospective students first point of contact are the College's advisors.

Solution – At CSM the ATB coordinator meets with the advising staff each semester to make them aware of any changes in the programs and can respond to any questions they may have.

Strategy - Connect with prospective nursing students when they first apply to the College.

Solution - The College of Southern Maryland (CSM) has an introductory nursing course students take during their first semester. The ATB Coordinator meets with each student, discusses their career aspirations, and then outlines a degree pathway

Strategy –Continue to be in contact with prospective nursing students as to how they can advance their degree program

Solution - ATB Coordinator visits pre-nursing courses such as Anatomy and Physiology I & II, and Microbiology labs to continue the conversation regarding dual admission and dual enrollment programs available at CSM.

Strategy – Not all of the nursing students are eligible the ATB program due cumulative grade point average being lower than 3.0 or family obligations which does not offer them time to take additional courses.

Solution - Nursing students who decide that they ATB program is not an option for them can still work on the non-nursing course required by the BSN program they select allowing them to seamlessly continue their BSN once they pass NCLEX. Having the knowledge as to how to continue their education will be more transparent by saving time, and be more cost

Challenge - COVID restrictions and remote schooling have brought about many challenges in last year. We have found that ATB Nursing students who have children in school are not able to juggle home schooling for their family, CSM's nursing program and dual admissions. They have decided to put their BSN courses on hold until their children return to school.

Conclusion

The ATB partnership models allows students to explore early on as to how they can expand their skills by continuing with their RN to BSN coursework while they are in their Associates Degree in Nursing program. Those students who decide that they ATB program is not an option for them can still work on the non-nursing course required by the BSN program they select so they can seamlessly continue their BSN once they pass NCLEX. Having the knowledge as to how to continue their education will help them save time, be more cost effective and transparent.

Acknowledgements

Contact Information

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