

Realizing Interprofessional Student Education

Carolinas College of Health Sciences

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Carolinas College of Health Sciences (Carolinas College) is a small, single-focus, selective-admission college that prepares students for nursing and allied health careers. The mission of Carolinas College is to transform lives by educating, engaging, and empowering professionals for an evolving healthcare environment. The field of healthcare is a dynamic and complex environment where professionals from diverse disciplines must work together as effective team members to provide safe, high-quality care to patients. Through the institutional planning process, Carolinas College realized a more concerted focus on enhancing collaboration and connection among students pursuing different professions, or interprofessional teamwork, would better prepare graduates for the evolving healthcare environment. Interprofessional education (IPE) has been shown to increase interprofessional collaboration and teamwork between healthcare groups with the result of improved safety and higher quality care for patients. Carolinas College recognized that IPE opportunities were available to students on a voluntary or informal basis. Interprofessional education aligns with the mission of the College as it goes beyond the specific content of the profession to the practice of the professional. Therefore, the aim of the Carolinas College Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) is to integrate interprofessional education opportunities in the clinical healthcare programs at the college.

A QEP Steering Committee, comprised of faculty, staff, and students from different academic programs and administrative departments, developed the QEP. The QEP Steering Committee solicited broad-based input to identify three main goals for the QEP:

- I. Establish an infrastructure necessary to successfully implement and maintain an interprofessional education initiative.
- II. Support faculty in the development, implementation, and evaluation of interprofessional education learning experiences.
- III. Improve knowledge, increase skills, and change attitudes of learners related to interprofessional teamwork.

Integrating IPE learning experiences into healthcare programs will provide students the opportunity to learn about, from, and with others pursuing different professions in healthcare. Student learning outcomes are based on the competencies established by the Interprofessional Education Collaborative (IPEC, 2016). An evidence-based curriculum (TeamSTEPPS[®]) will be used to instruct students on effective teamwork.

The organizational structure of Carolinas College provides great support for the implementation of this IPE initiative, given the various healthcare professions represented within the college as well as the college's affiliation with a large healthcare system. This QEP will allow Carolinas College to realize interprofessional student education and impact our educational practices for the future.