

AACN NEW ERA FOR ACADEMIC NURSING AWARD

The UF CON Academic Practice Partnership exemplifies the ideal characteristic: *Alignment of Vision, Goals, and Strategy*.

One exemplar of alignment of UF Health Nursing's vision, goals and strategies is the evidence-based clinical education program designed to reduce the high attrition rates among novice BSN-prepared nurses while preparing "practice ready" graduates at UF Health Jacksonville. In 2016, with the goals of increasing the percentage of bedside nurses who were BSN-prepared to meet the demands of a changing workforce, leaders from the UFCON and UF Health Jacksonville created and adopted the Academic Partnership Unit (APU) program. The APU is an innovative educational model for second-degree students that effectively utilizes limited faculty resources in combination with practicing nurses' expertise. With this model, each student is assigned to a home-based unit and "partnered" with a bedside RN clinical instructor. Staff nurses, as well as students, report high satisfaction with the learning environment. In review of hospital human resource data in 2020, turnover for APU graduates was 7% at two years after hire versus the 23.9% national average at the one-year mark of newly licensed RNs. UF Health Jacksonville has retained 82% of all the APU BSN graduate nurses. The integration of students into hospital home units provides a smoother transition from student nurse to RN due to familiarity with the hospital and staff.¹

Another example of the reciprocal nature of our strong academic practice partnership is our Nurse Sensitive Indicators (NSI) initiative, in collaboration with UF Health Gainesville. Through this initiative, we implemented an innovative student clinical learning opportunity connecting theoretical classroom instruction with practical, firsthand experiential learning in a controlled and supervised hospital setting. Our faculty and the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Clinical Education collaborated with hospital nursing leadership to create a "hands-on" application for students to gain knowledge of and competence in quality, safety and efficacy for prevention of falls, catheter-associated urinary tract infections, central-line associated bloodstream infections, and facility-associated pressure injuries. Our pre-licensure students learned about NSIs and how to perform targeted assessments to identify at-risk patients for essential, early intervention in the context of patient care. Preliminary results show improvements in NSIs, which have positive implications at individual, unit, institution and community levels and impact health and wellness, as well as federal reimbursements to the institution.

As evidence of sustained commitment to our alignment, in March of 2022, UFCON and UF Health Gainesville launched an initiative to fund joint demonstration projects to design and evaluate improved approaches to healthcare access and delivery. The intent of the funding is to establish and strengthen collaboration between College of Nursing faculty and UF Health nurses, while advancing our shared research mission. The project teams must be structured as a multiple principal investigator project, with one principal investigator holding a primary appointment in the College of Nursing and the second principal investigator being a UF Health RN. Currently, 18 collaborative teams are developing proposals for implementation in the next year and we anticipate that outcomes of the projects will be fruitful for our partnership.

REFERENCES CITED

¹Aull, Michael MSN, RN, CEN; Nobles, Patrick M. DNP, FNP-BC, CNL The Academic Partnership Unit, JONA: The Journal of Nursing Administration: February 2022 - Volume 52 - Issue 2 - p E1-E2 doi: 10.1097/NNA.0000000000001113