

EXEMPLARY ACADEMIC-PRACTICE PARTNERSHIP AWARD

Foundation of the Partnership

This partnership was developed between Grand Valley State University's (GVSU) Kirkhof College of Nursing (KCON) and McLaren Health Care (MHC) in an effort to expand healthcare access and increase the diversity in nursing leaders in rural and underserved communities throughout Michigan. This successful, reciprocal, and collaborative partnership demonstrates how academia and practice worked together to positively influence the health outcomes of communities throughout Michigan.

Academic Partner

KCON is one of seven colleges within GVSU, located in the central area of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Since the nursing program's inception in 1972, KCON has grown, offering accredited programs to students leading to a Bachelor of Science degree in nursing (BSN), a Master of Science in nursing (MSN), and a Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree.

Practice Partner

McLaren Health Care is comprised of 15 hospitals and more than 195 clinics throughout Michigan and Ohio and operates Michigan's largest network of cancer centers, an extension of the Karmanos Cancer Institute, which is one of 52 National Cancer Institute Designated Comprehensive Cancer Centers in the United States.

Establishing the Partnership

As part of their mission, KCON aims to transform care in diverse populations and MHC seeks to be the preferred healthcare provider for communities they serve. Recognizing their potential to positively influence health outcomes in Michigan, KCON and MHC partnered to address the care needs in MHC's service area, which includes 25 (30%) counties in Michigan that is a blend of metropolitan, micropolitan, and rural communities. The formal academic-practice partnership (APP) began in November 2018.

Partnership Goals

- Sustain an APP built on trust, mutual goal setting, and reciprocity to advance nursing practice across the educational continuum.
- Increase the diversity in nursing by using a collaborative approach to support students who are committed to assuming roles as primary care health care providers and nursing leaders in rural/underserved communities after graduation.
- Provide high-quality, culturally sensitive education to ensure program success for students from rural/underserved communities, medically underserved areas/populations, and/or disadvantaged backgrounds throughout Michigan
- Develop and implement a preceptor professional development and support program to ensure preceptors have the resources needed to provide a rich learning environment for students.
- Integrate technology in primary care settings to enhance educational opportunities for students and expand access opportunities for residents in rural/underserved communities in Michigan.

Progress to Date

In this short timeframe, this APP has resulted in:

- A Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Advancing Nursing Education Workforce grant that was awarded in 2019 totaling \$2,799,987 over 4 years. The grant provided for:
 - Financial support for 13 MHC nurses to complete the BSN to DNP degree program at KCON.
 - Funding for 4 MHC nurses as the inaugural cohort for the Interprofessional Healthcare Informatics Certificate Program at KCON.
 - Graduation of first cohort of nurse practitioner Doctor of Nursing Program students on time in May 2022.
 - Development of the Preceptor Resource Network (PRN).
 - Dissemination of PRN outcomes at both a HRSA conference and National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties (NONPF) conference in 2022.
 - Publication of PRN outcomes in the Journal of the American Association of Nurse Practitioners (May 2022).
- A HRSA Nursing Workforce Diversity (NWD) grant that was awarded in 2021 totaling \$2,219,682 over four years. The grant provided for:
 - Financial support for 16 MHC nurses to complete Registered Nurse (RN) to BSN (9), MSN (4) and DNP in Health Systems Leadership (3) programs at KCON beginning in 2021.
 - Additional funding support for at least 11 more MHC nurses to complete a RN to BSN (5) or MSN (6) in academic year 2023.
 - Enhancement of KCON's Holistic Admission process.
 - Development of a student retention plan that incorporates evidence-based strategies that address Social Determinants of Health and Education that interferes with academic success.

Conclusion

This academic-practice partnership has demonstrated that through a relationship built on trust and reciprocal goals, organizations can work together to address healthcare access and improve nursing workforce diversity.