Nursing graduates achieve near perfection on RN exam

Graduates of the 2008 Rogue Community College associate degree Nursing Program have scored a 97 percent pass rate on the NCLEX-RN, the national licensure exam required to become a registered nurse.

The 31 graduates were part of the first class to have completed a new curriculum collaboratively developed by nurse educators from RCC and around the state as part of the Oregon Consortium for Nursing Education (OCNE), said Linda Wagner, RCC Nursing Department head.

OCNE is a statewide coalition of community college and university nursing programs. The consortium was designed as a long-term solution to the nursing shortage and as a response to the need for a “new kind of nurse” to care for Oregon’s aging and increasingly diverse population, Wagner noted. The group’s efforts focus on increasing capacity in schools of nursing by making the best use of scarce faculty, classrooms, and clinical training resources in the delivery of a standard curriculum on 13 campuses, including eight community colleges and the five campuses of the Oregon Health Sciences University (OHSU) School of Nursing.

By 2020, Oregon is projected to have a 50 percent vacancy rate for registered nurses. The current shortage of nurses is affecting all areas of nursing practice, including acute care, public health, and long-term care, and is most severely affecting rural parts of the state.

To educate this new nurse in a climate of scarce fiscal, faculty, and clinical resources, the ONLC proposed a partnership among all community college and public and private four-year programs. OCNE was thus established to provide baccalaureate nursing education throughout the state, increasing the opportunities for students. Graduates of community colleges have the option of taking another four terms of classes through OHSU to earn a bachelor’s degree.

This comprehensive and collaborative effort is unprecedented in the United States and is increasingly viewed by health care and nursing education leaders as a model that could be adapted to achieve similar goals across the country, Wagner said.

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