IMPLEMENTING ACEN ACCREDITATION STANDARDS IN AN ASSOCIATE DEGREE LPN-RN PROGRAM

Lesley M. Krohn
University of Missouri – Sinclair School of Nursing

INTRODUCTION

Problem:
National accreditation through the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN) is needed for the RN program at Arkansas Tech University – Ozark (ATU-O) as:
• National accreditation connotes excellence across state line
• Benefits of national accreditation may include:
  • Increased ability to attract future faculty and students
  • Increased eligibility of program for grants and outside monies
  • Provide students with more opportunities for grants or pay reimbursement
  • Increased job opportunities for graduates
• Initial accreditation process will cost approximately $13,415 compared to possible loss of $13,215 for students that choose an accredited school over ATU-O

Literature Review:
• Explored three models of curriculum evaluation:
  • NLN’s Excellence in Nursing Education model as implemented by Meridian Community College
  • Nurse Evaluation Program
  • Curricular Mapping
• Additional key elements for curriculum review include:
  • Evidence of ongoing curriculum review
  • Evaluation methods used in each course
  • Student evaluations of the following:
    • Each course
    • Each faculty member
    • Student services
    • End-of-program comprehensive surveys
• Concepts from all three curriculum evaluation models and key elements for curriculum review were incorporated into instruments developed for this project

Purpose:
The research project will determine the degree to which the Associate degree nursing program at ATU-O aligns with Standard 4 Curriculum of the ACEN accreditation standards. Results will be used to identify areas where changes in the program’s curriculum are necessary and will become a part of the self-study that will be submitted to the ACEN during the accreditation application process.

Objectives:
1. 100% of courses required for program completion will be in compliance with ACEN Standard 4 Criteria.
2. 16% of the overall ATU-O self-study will be ready for dissemination.
3. Analysis of ADN end-of-program outcomes and faculty demographics will be evaluated for differences in accredited versus non-accredited programs in Arkansas

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Setting/Sample: The setting for this project was ATU-O in Ozark, AR. The sample consisted of the curriculum and curriculum delivery methods. Additional data were collected regarding graduates and faculty of all associate degree programs in the state of Arkansas.

Intervention: Standard 4: Curriculum Criterion 4.1-4.11 were applied to the nursing program in an effort to increase the quality and effectiveness of the nursing education unit and establish a standard of excellence. Additionally, graduate and faculty data were presented to stakeholders.

Measures: The ACEN Standards and Criteria, particularly Standard 4 Curriculum was used to evaluate the program. A worksheet was developed to use as each course was reviewed.

Research Design: Continuous quality improvement project.
• Written narrative produced for qualitative data
• Chi-square of Independence used to analyze nominal data
• Mann Whitney U used to analyze ordinal data and Vargha Delaney used to describe magnitude of clinical effect
• Independent t-tests used to analyze ratio level data and Cohen’s D used to describe magnitude of clinical effect
• Level of significance was p ≤ .05

RESULTS

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<tr>
<th>Pearson Chi-squared</th>
<th>Degrees of Freedom</th>
<th>p Value</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
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<tr>
<td>Race</td>
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<td>Highest Degree Earned</td>
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CONCLUSIONS

• All three objectives were met
• National accreditation remains a priority for the ATU-O RN program
• Annual curriculum review will occur using current ACEN Standards and Criteria
• Application for candidacy will be made once stakeholders commit to resource allocation

REFERENCES


Faculty Demographics.

Faculty Salary Distribution

Material and methods.