An Innovative Expansion of NEXus to Address Geriatric Nursing Capacity

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Purpose
1. Describe a new cooperative relationship between NEXus and the National Hartford Centers for Geriatric Nursing Excellence (NHGNE) to address a nationally recognized gap in geriatric nursing education; and
2. Provide recommendations for similar cooperative relationships.

NEXus Brief Background
• Shrinking resources in doctoral nursing education provided an impetus for a collaboration to expand course offerings for doctoral nursing students through distance education.
• To address this goal, the Nursing Education Xchange (NEXus) began in 2004.

NEXus Growth
• NEXus began with 4 select Western universities offering distance (online) doctoral courses in nursing to students enrolled in collaborating universities.
• The project has now expanded nationally to include 16 institutions granting PhD and/or DNP degrees in nursing.

Members
• Academic Collaborators  
  – Schools both send and teach students within the collaboration.
• Academic Affiliates  
  – Schools only send students to take courses from academic collaborators.
Member Institutions

**Academic Collaborators** (* = founding member)

- Arizona State University
- Idaho State University
- Loma Linda University
- Oregon Health & Science Univ.*
- University at Buffalo
- University of Colorado*
- University of Hawaii, Manoa
- University of Kansas
- Univ. of Nevada Las Vegas
- University of New Mexico
- University of No. Colorado*
- University of Texas at Tyler
- University of Utah*
- Virginia Commonwealth Univ.
- Washington State University

**Academic Affiliates**

- The University of Oklahoma

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NEXus Core Documents

- **Guiding Principles:**
  - the document outlining philosophical approach and principles underlying the collaborative

- **Memorandum of Understanding:**
  - the agreement signed by campus deans and administrators

- **Bylaws, Policies, and Procedures:**
  - the operating procedures that provide structure to the collaborative

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NEXus Operations

- The student's transcript is developed and diploma awarded at the home institution.
- Courses are exempt from transfer credit policies.
- Students pay the "Common Price" per credit hour regardless of the home or teaching institution.
- Revenue is distributed among the home institution, teaching institution, and NEXus central to ensure sustainability.

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NEXus...  

- Is a well-established and innovative collaboration of 16 member schools;
- Is a course-sharing collaboration in which members offer high-quality distance education courses to students of other member institutions;
- Dramatically increases course options for PhD and DNP students.

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NEXus Common Price

- Tuition Common Price and Tuition Split:
  - reflects efforts of teaching courses, sending students from home institution, and sustaining the collaborative
  - **75%** tuition returns to teaching institution
  - **10%** to home institution
  - **15%** to NEXus administration

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Membership Dues 2013-14

**Academic Collaborators**

- **Base Dues** $5,000
- **First-year New Member’s Premium** $1,000
- **Each Additional Program** $1,000
Concerns of NHCGNE

• The aging population of the United States is expected to reach 20% of the US population.*
• The healthcare workforce is “too small and critically unprepared” to meet the health needs of older adults.*
• A rate-limiting factor in preparing nurses to address the needs of this population is the lack of gerontological nursing faculty.

* (IOM, 2008)

New Collaboration

• Discussion ensued between Directors of Hartford Centers for Excellence, NHCGNE, and NEXus.
• The OHSU Hartford Center for Excellence was the recipient of a grant to enact the project resulting from the earlier discussions.
• An MOU was signed between NHCGNE and NEXus to solidify the new collaboration.

NEXus-NHCGNE MOU

• Creates a collaboration for schools/colleges to join both NHCGNE and NEXus, and to jointly promote the collaborative effort.
• Issues a call for proposals for up to 10 awards.
• Conducts 2 distance accessible technical assistance workshops for potential applicants.
• Projects to begin expanded gerontological nursing course sharing in the 2013-2014 AY.
• Contemplates adding members annually.

Criteria for Selection

• Demonstrated strength or high potential for expertise: gerontological nursing/gerontology;
• Curricular strength in gerontology/geriatric nursing;
• Interested cadres of gerontology nursing faculty;
• Funded programs of research in nursing care of older adults; and
• Committed institutional leaders who provide letters of support.

NHCGNE GRANT

• Schools of nursing with demonstrated strength in gerontological nursing are encouraged to apply for an award of $10,000.
• The grantees are eligible for reduced fees for the first 3 years of NEXus membership.
• The grantees must also join the National Hartford Centers of Gerontological Nursing Excellence (NHCGNE).

NHCGNE GRANT

• First Call for Applications resulted in 4 schools of nursing being selected, all of which are in the process of applying for NEXus membership.
• The Second Call for Applications was issued on January 8, 2014 with a March 15, 2014 deadline for application.

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Program Requirements

- Offer distance-accessible doctoral level courses;
- Execute the NEXus MOU expeditiously;
- Demonstrate a cadre of doctoral students willing to avail themselves of the gerontological nursing courses; and
- Accept the NEXus Guiding Principles, Bylaws, and other core documents.

NEXus and NHCGNE Supports

- An orientation webinar explaining NEXus and the NHCGNE grant for schools considering an application.
- Technical webinars with campus implementation teams, e.g., registrars, financial aid officers, directors of PhD and DNP programs.

Grant-funded Participants will be:

- Full academic collaborators of NEXus, so will both offer courses and send students to take courses from other members.
- Members of the NEXus Executive Committee, the governing body.
- Participants in the tuition split.

NEXus Strength in Geriatric Nursing Courses

- GP IDEA staff consulted on the project and conducted a faculty survey to determine which content area was most needed:
  - Geriatrics, nursing education, diverse and vulnerable populations, and informatics were identified as priorities by NEXus academic collaborators.

161 Courses Organized into Clusters

- Nursing Education
- Diverse and Vulnerable Populations
- Gerontology and Geriatric Nursing
- Systems, Leadership Informatics, and Policy
- Nursing Knowledge Development: Theory, Philosophy and Science
- Chronic & Disabling Conditions & Palliative Care
- Research Methods
- Scholarship and Writing
- Advanced Nursing Practice*
- Scientific Underpinnings for Advanced Nursing Practice*
- Ethics and Interprofessional Collaboration*
- Children, Parents & Family

* DNP Specific

Benefits to Students

- Schools joining through NEXus-NHCGNE will make all courses within the NEXus course catalogue available to their students.
- NEXus will support ‘off-sequence’ students with needed coursework.
- Students learn a variety of distance education models and delivery methods.
- Courses provide access to leaders and expert faculty nationally recognized in their fields.
NHCGNE Badging

- NHCGNE will approve courses that will lead to badging.
- The NHCGNE-approved courses leading to a badge will be noted on the NEXus course catalogue.
- NHCGNE will issue the badges.

Member Advantages

- Dues recovered by enrolling as few as six NEXus students/year into PhD and/or DNP courses
- Savings:
  - Course development
  - Cover courses with faculty loss
  - Ease independent study workload

Strengths of Doctoral Collaboration

- Trust built among collaborators
- Support of institutional team
- New partners and their administrators are oriented to, and accept, Guiding Principles, policies and procedures
- Student friendly
- Administrative model and staffing

New Members Enrich Collaborative

- NEXus welcomes new members
- Expanding variety of course offerings and specialties (e.g. gerontology)
- Expanded opportunities for students
- Expanded networking for faculty
- Enriches value of the collaborative

Model for Additional Collaborations

- The new NEXus-NHCGNE collaboration provides a model for others groups that might like to join NEXus.
- Possible future collaborations could include: oncology, family/maternal health/children.

Why does This Matter?

- In spite of many calls for a more highly educated nursing workforce, an AACN press release reported only a modest increase (2.6%) in nursing school enrollments and graduates (January 9, 2014).
- Implementation of the Affordable Care Act will require more health care providers.
Why does This Matter?

- Qualified applicants continue to be turned away from schools of nursing;
- A primary barrier to accepting more qualified applicants is a continuing shortage of nursing faculty.

Results of Faculty Shortage

- Limitations on available courses;
- Students are challenged to find appropriate theory and methods courses, especially if out-of-sequence in their progression.

NEXus: A Faculty Shortage Solution

- The NEXus course exchange provides access to courses to keep students on track in their progression;
- Assures that content is available while alleviating the need for every school to provide every course;
- Relieves the pressure for faculty to teach Independent Study courses for students.

Evaluations from students who have taken a NEXus course indicates:

- Graduation would have been delayed or progression delayed by a semester (80%);
- Access to the course content would have to have been sought through another institution;
- NEXus gave access to a course not offered anywhere else.

NEXus: A Gerontological Solution

- The NEXus-NHCGNE Collaboration extends the opportunity for:
  1. Students with a gerontological clinical focus to access the needed content and to stay on track to graduation;
  2. Gerontological-focused PhD students to stay on track to graduation and gerontological-focused academic careers and programs of research.

For more information on NHCGNE RFA:

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