Collaborative Doctoral Programs: Optimizing Resources in Mississippi

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Introduction

A collaborative PhD program between the University of Mississippi Medical Center (UMMC) and the University of Southern Mississippi (USM) was established in 1998, with each institution granting its own degree. The collaboration was possible due to similar admission requirements and common core courses.

Both schools offer courses that have been identified as “core,” including Statistics, Theory, Research Methods and Philosophy. Students may take any of the core courses at either university. Courses successfully completed at one institution are accepted without reservation at the other and do not count as transfer credits.

The collaborative DNP program between UMMC and USM began in 2009. Two years later, the Mississippi Educational Consortium for the Doctorate of Nursing Practice (MECDNP) was started to support curriculum and faculty development.

Students and faculty from both universities come together for an annual retreat to network, share success in the Numbers.

Dissertation Examples

- Characteristics That Affect a HIV Infected Individual’s Utilization of HIV Medical Care (Brennan, USM)
- A survey of students’ perception of bullying behaviors in nursing education in Mississippi (Cooper, USM)
- Tailored Adherence Interventions for HIV-infected Adults Based on the Transtheoretical Model of Change (Konkle-Parker, 2001)
- The Effects of Oral Sucrose and Non-nutritive Sucking on the Relief of Pain Experienced by Preterm Infants During Eye Examinations Performed to Detect of Monitor Retinopathy of Prematurity (Mitchell, 2003)
- Physical Activity as a Function of Social Status and Neighborhood Context in Year 1 and 2 of the Jackson Heart Study (Robinson, 2006)
- A Description of Communication Patterns Used by Baccalaureate Nursing Students When Interacting With Patients in the Clinical Setting (Rusuifa, USM)
- Giving Sorrow Words: The Experiences of Middle-age Southern Women Who are Survivors of the Sudden Death of a Spouse (Williamson, 2010)

Capstone Project Examples

- Resource Care Map for Rural Elderly Caregivers: An Evidence-based Pilot Project (Abernathy, USM)
- An Evaluation of Rapid Response Team Impact (Age, UMMC)
- A Health Literacy Intervention Tool for Healthcare Providers Who Serve Rural Elderly Populations (McClinton, USM)
- Planning Phase of a Population-specific Healthy Lifestyle Program (Moore, UMMC)
- A Proactive Classroom Management Model to Enhance Self Efficacy Levels in Teachers of Adolescents Who Display Disruptive Behaviors (Pace, USM)

Success in the Numbers

Since the program’s inception, 38 students have earned the PhD in Nursing. The University of Southern Mississippi currently has 18 students enrolled; 13 of which are in dissertation work. Likewise, the University of Mississippi Medical Center posts 20 students enrolled with 7 in the dissertation phase. The DNP programs are growing rapidly. UMMC reports 6 graduates and 26 current students; USM, 8 graduates and 23 students.

MECDNP

The Mississippi Educational Consortium for the Doctorate of Nursing Practice formed in an effort to increase statewide collaboration for faculty development, clinical outreach, marketing, and mentoring in the DNP program.

Mississippi State Board of Trustees for Institutions of Higher Learning Directives to the MECDNP

1. Statewide planning through the Dean’s and Director’s Council involving all five state universities that offer baccalaureate and higher degrees in nursing.
2. Initially, one DNP collaborative program within the state with two degree granting schools (parent institutions) – UMMC and USM.
3. First implement a postmaster’s DNP program: currently offered at UMMC and USM.
4. Beginning in 2013, four schools will offer the DNP degree: USM, UMMC, MWU and DSU.
5. All five schools will offer BSN-DNP in the future.

Advantages of Collaboration

- Optimizes state resources such as faculty, facilities, student services
- Builds on expertise and resources of each institution and community
- Enhances program offering for students
- Creates community of faculty in advanced practice education
- Delivers specialty courses to students state-wide
- Facilitates admission/transfer of students
- Aoids duplication of services
- Benefits the health care of Mississippians

Successive collaboration

Delta State University
Cleveland
Mississippi University for Women
Columbus
The University of Mississippi Medical Center
Jackson
Alcorn State University
Natchez
The University of Southern Mississippi
Hattiesburg

PhD Program:
UMMC and USM

DNP Program:
all 5 schools

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