

Transforming an Academic Quality Program: Collaborating to Integrate a Quality Assurance/Performance Improvement (QAPI) Model



J. Michael Leger, PhD, MBA, RN, NEA-BC, CNE, CNL
Sharron Forest, DNP, NNP-BC

The University of Texas Medical Branch, Galveston, TX

Background

- Accredited Schools of Nursing (SON) require a comprehensive framework to ensure quality of nursing programs
- Higher education accrediting bodies (e.g., CCNE, CNEA) do not define the process for collecting, reporting, and analyzing data; thus, processes vary among SONs
- Lack of a standardized approach often leads to inefficient processes, missing data, and stress during the accreditation process
- CMS's QAPI model, used by nursing homes and hospitals, is a systematic, comprehensive, and data-driven approach to maximize outcomes
- QAPI is based on 5 core elements; a 12-step guide facilitates its implementation

Purpose

SON leadership and faculty collaborated to develop and initiate a transformative strategy for quality assurance by translating the QAPI model to the academic setting to ensure the quality and integrity of the SON program outcomes

Methods



Element 1	Element 2	Element 3	Element 4	Element 5
Design/ Scope	Governance/ Leadership	Feedback/ Systems/ Monitoring	Performance Improvement Projects	Systematic Analysis & Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewed current processes • Identified gaps and missing components 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtained leadership and faculty-governing body buy-in • Established expectations of accountability • Disseminated QAPI plan to SON faculty and staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identified performance indicators, targets, and external benchmarks • Collaborated to redesign data collection, monitoring, and reporting processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implemented PDSA Model for Improvement • Designed standardized improvement plan template 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Created organization-wide schedule for data collection and reporting • Created standard reporting template • Streamlined reporting structure

Results

- QAPI was implemented 9/1/2019 across all SON programs
- The reporting schedule resulted in timely collection/reporting of program outcome data
- Modifications to current metric/performance indicators were identified
- Individual PI plan developed/implemented with full transparency for reporting
- SON program leaders and faculty-led quality committee fully support the QAPI framework and provided feedback and recommendations for improvement

Conclusion

- QAPI is a replicable strategy that can be easily be translated to academia to form the foundation for a quality management system
- Collaboration between SON leaders and faculty facilitates implementation of QAPI
- Development of a schedule and reporting template enables timely review of program outcomes, helping to identify areas of needed improvement to ensure the quality of SON program outcomes