Mission Possible: Accreditation 2017

Clarion University of PA

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Disclaimers

- This process was not supported by any grant.

- The presenters are employees of Clarion University of Pennsylvania, in the United States of America.

- The material used in this study was developed by the presenters.

- The presenters do not have any real or perceived vested interest that relate to this presentation.
Learning Outcomes

At the end of this symposium, participants will be able to:

- Understand the challenges a nursing program experiences in relation to Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN) program evaluation process

- Describe the use of the Systematic Evaluation Plan (SEP) as a template for continuous quality improvement within Clarion University’s RN-BSN program

- Describe strategies that work in assessing end of program and student learning outcomes as a measure of academic quality from a diverse curricular perspective
What is the purpose of Accreditation?

- Voluntary, peer-review, self-regulatory process
- Recognizes educational programs that meet or exceed standards and criteria for educational quality.
- Assists in the further improvement of the institutions related to resources invested, processes followed, and results achieved.
- Tied closely to state examination and licensing rules.
- After continuing accreditation is granted, the program is reviewed every eight (8) years.

(ACEN, 2017)
Mission Possible: The Challenge

At the end of this presentation, the learner will be able to:

- Understand the history of the accreditation process within the RN BSN program at CUP
- Understand the challenges of the accreditation process within the RN BSN program at CUP
Clarion University Of PA Nursing Programs

Undergraduate programs with same accreditation timeline:
- ASN (face-to-face program)
- BSN 4y (face-to-face program; started 2014; 1st graduating class 2018)
- RN-BSN (online)

Graduate programs with different accreditation timeline:
- MSN FNP (online)
- DNP (online, started 2015)
Year 1 – 4: Relax! We have plenty of time!

Year 5: Begin thinking about accreditation. UGH!!! Can’t we do this later? Is this really my job?

Year 6: Time to get busy! Our report is due in just a few months! I’m still not certain this is my job!

Year 7: Frantic behavior begins! Who is doing what & when? Didn’t we document that? Stress and anxiety mount!

6 months out: Self-study submitted! What do you mean we aren’t done? What evidence? Sleepless days and nights!

Visitors arrive! Faculty and administrators are exhausted. Is hate too strong a word? Hopefully they won’t see what we’ve missed!
History of the Accreditation Process

Negativity Associated with Accreditation
Increase in the workload for already overworked faculty; visits are stressful; past visits' experience & outcomes

Identifies Program Problems
Preparing for the self-study & visit identifies the gaps and/or problems in the programs; too little time “to fix things”; panic feelings

Lack of Faculty Ownership
Who’s job is it anyways? Nurse administrator? Department chair? Tenure faculty versus Adjunct faculty?

Limited understanding of Evaluation Process
Why are we doing this? Lack of understanding of the benefits. What if we don’t do this? Viewed as a once in 8 year event
“Accreditation implies program quality, demonstrates excellence to peers, and provides for institution and program recognition” (p. 38).

“Faculty and nursing directors... depicted the accreditation process as overwhelming and time consuming” (p.38)
Lewallen (2015):

- Accreditation is something we have to do
- Accreditation is something we don’t like to think about
- Viewed as an additional, extra task
- Not part of day-to-day running of program
- Often made the last priority (p. 133)
Challenges at Clarion

- Continually changing nursing leaders & administration at university
- Limited number of tenure undergraduate faculty (n = 8)
- High number of undergraduate adjunct faculty (n = 17)
- Tenure faculty teaching across multiple programs
- Faculty new to department/ limited accreditation experience
- Lack of ownership with accreditation
- Lack of understanding with accreditation process and evaluation
- Multiple programs / multiple modalities
- Limited human & financial resources
- Hierarchy of programs within department
Solutions

- Major paradigm shift how we think about accreditation
- Standard Teams for Standards 3, 4, & 6
- Increased involvement of adjunct faculty
- Faculty mentors leading teams
- Promoting faculty ownership
- Implementing program evaluation plan for continuous quality improvement RN BSN program
The Accreditation Process

- **Positive Opportunity**: Faculty can take an in-depth look at programs strengths and weaknesses.
- **Faculty Development**: Great learning experience for both novice faculty and mentors.
- **Faculty Cohesiveness**: Provides an opportunity for faculty to work together across programs.
- **University Recognition**: University administrators, staff, and faculty gain better understanding of the workings of the department.
Standards 1, 2, & 5

Standard 3

Standard 4

Standard 6
References


