Title:
Creating a Statewide Nurse Practitioner Student-Led Organization in Utah

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Session Title:
Rising Stars of Research and Scholarship Invited Student Posters

Keywords:
Nurse practitioner student, Student leadership and Student organization

References:


Abstract Summary:
Studies have shown benefits of student-led organizations in health care. There are no national or statewide nurse practitioner student organizations or framework to provide these benefits. This is a report on the development of a growing and successful nurse practitioner student-led organization in the state of Utah.

Learning Activity:

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<th>LEARNING OBJECTIVES</th>
<th>EXPANDED CONTENT OUTLINE</th>
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<td>The learner will be able to understand the benefits of a statewide nurse practitioner student organization.</td>
<td>Student organizations are an effective way of developing leadership abilities, helping students develop a network of peers, and enabling students to develop professionally in a way that formal education often does not provide (Veronesi &amp; Gunderman, 2012, Phillips, McLaughlin, Gettig, Fajiculay, &amp; Advincula, 2015, &amp; Scott et al., 2016). Students who attended these events reported that as a result, they feel more confident in beginning their career as a nurse practitioner.</td>
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The learner will be able to learn strategies to create their own statewide nurse practitioner student organization.

Method In the initial stages of creating this organization, I met with my program director who was the former president of Utah Nurse Practitioners (UNP), and the current Utah state representative of AANP. Originally, we talked about starting the organization at the university level so that it would be easier to manage, and keep in contact with all the members. However, this idea changed due to fear that this would become a university student organization where other programs are invited rather than a statewide student nurse practitioner program. Our first step was to recruit students from other programs involved, we contacted every nurse practitioner program director through email. We announced that we were creating a nurse practitioner student organization, and desired to have input from every program in its formation. We sought for one to two students from each program so there would be a variety of insights. After multiple attempts, we were able to get one to two students from each program in Utah except one. These students were able to form the first executive board of this organization. Once we had input from the different nurse practitioner programs in Utah, we developed the mission and bylaws of the organization. The bylaws included membership requirements, executive board positions and responsibilities, management of funds, election guidelines, and an outline for meetings. The development of bylaws provided a foundation for us to build our organization. We decided that our name would be Utah Student Nurse Practitioners (USNP) and that our mission would be to ‘assist in the professional development, political activism, and unification of nurse practitioner students in the state of Utah’. After the bylaws were created, we announced the formation of USNP to all student nurse practitioners throughout the state of Utah. This was announced this through social media and university emails. To promote excitement about USNP and fulfill our mission to assist in unification among
nurse practitioner students, we hosted a kick-off event at a centralized location. Social media, university email, and the kick-off event were all effective means of spreading the word about USNP and we increased to 18 members. Results Studies on student organizations report that barriers to these organizations often include travel, work and family obligations, and course load (Phillips, McLaughlin, Gettig, Fajiculay, & Advincula, 2015, & Scott et al., 2016). Nurse practitioner students in Utah also experienced these same barriers. To overcome these, we posted polls on social media sites to see what events students were most interested in. If the event was what students wanted to learn about then there would a be a higher likelihood of them attending. Because of work and family obligations, we found that if the event was announced more than a month before it occurred, then students were more likely to attend. Lastly, and made sure the event location and time were easily accessible to all students. We have hosted several events by following these steps and have had more than 30 students at our events and our membership has increased to over 60 in less than a year. Students who attended these events reported that as a result, they feel more confident in beginning their career as a nurse practitioner.

Abstract Text:

Background

Student organizations are an effective way of developing leadership abilities, helping students develop a network of peers, and enabling students to develop professionally in a way that formal education often does not provide (Veronesi & Gunderman, 2012, Phillips, McLaughlin, Gettig, Fajiculay, & Advincula, 2015, & Scott et al., 2016). Registered nurse students have the National Student Nurses Association (NSNA) which has over 60,000 members, as well as national, state, and program chapters with their own governing bodies (“About NSNA,” n.d.). As a result, NSNA’s members have experienced the benefits of a student organization listed above. While many health science student professionals have their own student organizations, nurse practitioner students do not. There are organizations like the American Association of Nurse Practitioners (AANP), statewide nurse practitioner associations, and nurse practitioner specialty associations that provide student memberships, but there is no organization specifically for nurse practitioner students. Having an organization for nursing practitioner students or other graduate level nursing student leads to professional development opportunities to invite dialogue across specialties, develop shared learning experiences, and become united in issues important in today’s health care/policy issues. In addition, many nurse practitioner programs in Utah don’t adequately
address professional topics like contract negotiation, political involvement, nuances of running a clinic, and other subjects important to the development of nurse practitioner students. With the clear benefit of student organizations and the apparent need for more instruction on professional development and political activism topics, I started a student nurse practitioner organization in Utah with the assistance of program faculty and other nurse practitioner students.

Method

In the initial stages of creating this organization, I met with my program director who was the former president of Utah Nurse Practitioners (UNP), and the current Utah state representative of AANP. Originally, we talked about starting the organization at the university level so that it would be easier to manage, and keep in contact with all the members. However, this idea changed due to fear that this would become a university student organization where other programs are invited rather than a statewide student nurse practitioner program.

Our first step was to recruit students from other programs involved, we contacted every nurse practitioner program director through email. We announced that we were creating a nurse practitioner student organization, and desired to have input from every program in its formation. We sought for one to two students from each program so there would be a variety of insights. After multiple attempts, we were able to get one to two students from each program in Utah except one. These students were able to form the first executive board of this organization.

Once we had input from the different nurse practitioner programs in Utah, we developed the mission and bylaws of the organization. The bylaws included membership requirements, executive board positions and responsibilities, management of funds, election guidelines, and an outline for meetings. The development of bylaws provided a foundation for us to build our organization. We decided that our name would be Utah Student Nurse Practitioners (USNP) and that our mission would be to “assist in the professional development, political activism, and unification of nurse practitioner students in the state of Utah.”

After the bylaws were created, we announced the formation of USNP to all student nurse practitioners throughout the state of Utah. This was announced through social media and university emails. To promote excitement about USNP and fulfill our mission to assist in unification among nurse practitioner students, we hosted a kick-off event at a centralized location. Social media, university email, and the kick-off event were all effective means of spreading the word about USNP and we increased to 18 members.

Results

Studies on student organizations report that barriers to these organizations often include travel, work and family obligations, and course load (Phillips, McLaughlin, Gettig, Fajiculay, & Advincula, 2015, & Scott et al., 2016). Nurse practitioner students in Utah also experienced these same barriers. To overcome these, we posted polls on social media sites to see what events students were most interested in. If the event was what students wanted to learn about then there would a be a higher likelihood of them attending. Because of work and family obligations, we found that if the event was announced more than a month before it occurred, then students were more likely to attend. Lastly, and made sure the event location and time were easily accessible to all students. We have hosted several events by following these steps and have had more than 30 students at our events and our membership has increased to over 60 in less than a year. Students who attended these events reported that as a result, they feel more confident in beginning their career as a nurse practitioner.

Future

Utah Student Nurse Practitioners (USNP) is still less than a year old. While continuing to increase membership, fulfill our mission, and establish a new executive board of incoming students, I want to take
steps to make this organization more permanent. We are working toward attaining non-profit status, and as membership continues to grow I want to create specialized task committees. Despite USNP being a young organization, nurse practitioner student members have already experienced the benefits of having a statewide nurse practitioner student-led organization in the state of Utah.