

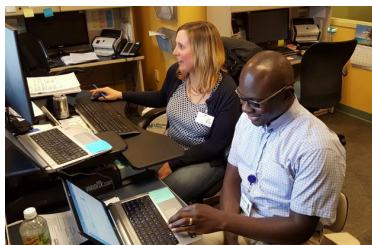
PATH to PCNP: Supporting Students' Health and Wellness Throughout Their Baccalaureate Program

Marianne Snyder, PhD, RN; Casey Carini, DNP, APRN; Thomas Van Hoof, MD, EdD, FACMQ;

Natalie Shook, PhD; Ivy M. Alexander PhD, APRN, ANP-BC, FAANP, FAAN

Background

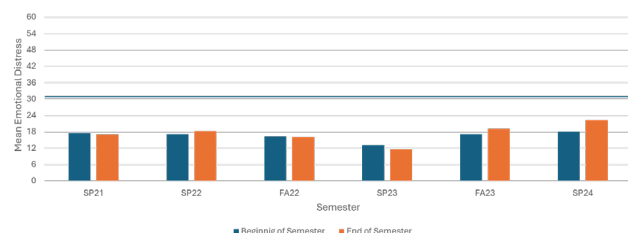
An innovative clinical-academic partnership between UConn School of Nursing and Community Health Center, Inc. Provides Academic Transformational **Help** for disadvantaged nursing students **to** become **Primary Care Nurse Practitioners** (PATH to PCNP). This program was designed to enhance academic belonging, health, and wellness for students from disadvantaged backgrounds (SDBs) and increase diversity among primary care providers in medically underserved communities in Connecticut.



Purpose

PATH to PCNP aims to support the timely progression of SDBs in a fast-track Bachelor of Science (BS) in Nursing program to become PCNPs. PATH to PCNP focuses on three main goals: (1) providing educational support for SDBs, (2) fostering a sense of belonging and promoting wellness through self-care to reduce stress and anxiety, and (3) integrating primary care and behavioral health curriculum into the junior and senior years of the nursing program.

Emotional Distress at the Beginning and End of the Semester



Method

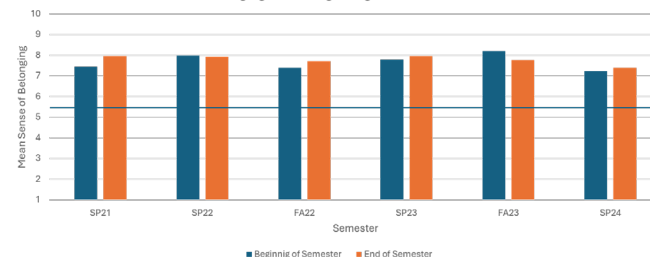
- Student participants in the PATH to PCNP program numbered 29-38 annually. Eligibility included having high financial need and being either economically or educationally/environmentally disadvantaged.
- 6-10 participating students per cohort represented each class of the 4-year BS program.
- Participants engaged in weekly/bi-weekly workshops to discuss three main concepts: the science of learning (SoL), belonging/mindfulness/self-care, and PC nursing.
- Each workshop included a brief presentation on one of the three concepts and opportunities for peer-to-peer and peer-to-project team interaction related to the concept.
- Quantitative and qualitative data related to academic belonging and emotional distress (Depression Anxiety Stress Scale; Henry & Crawford, 2005) were collected via anonymous online surveys at the beginning and end of each semester, comments during workshops and focus groups, and email communications to project team members.



Preliminary Results

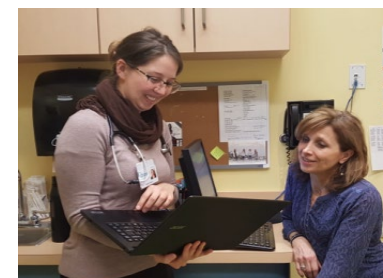
- Data across six semesters from students in the PATH to PCNP program generally reported a positive sense of university belonging and relatively low emotional distress. Mean scores across all time points were significantly different than the mid-point scores possible on survey response scales ($p < .05$).
- Although insufficiently powered for statistical comparison, sense of belonging scores generally increased slightly at the end of each semester compared to the beginning of that same semester. Emotional distress did not change across the semester.
- Content analysis of qualitative data (e.g. focus group, student essay responses, and survey questions) indicated students valued the open, compassionate, supportive peer community and caring advisors.
- Central themes emphasized an appreciation for program flexibility, open communication, helpfulness, and supportive interactions.
- Students conveyed these elements and fostered strong feelings of connectedness and a sense of belonging within the PATH to PCNP community, peer cohort, and the SON overall.

Sense of Belonging at the Beginning and End of the Semester



Conclusion

- Showing care for prelicensure students through active engagement, open communication, personalized interactions, and empathetic feedback helps facilitate a supportive environment.
- Implementing these strategies while also offering resources to facilitate student success (SoL skills, beneficial self-care habits, facilitating mentorship and peer-to-peer support, incorporating university resources into classroom learning) nurtures a more positive educational experience of connectedness.



Acknowledgment

"These projects are/were supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) under grants A10HP27202 Advanced Education Nursing Traineeship (\$688,800 over 2 years), A10HP30088 Advanced Education Nursing Traineeship (\$344,100), & D09HP29980 Advanced Nursing Education Grant (\$1,690,873 over 3 years). This information or content and conclusions are those of the author and should not be construed as the official position or policy of, nor should any endorsements be inferred by HRSA, HHS or the U.S. Government."

