LINDA GLEASON

1. Proposed title: Analysis of factors affecting retention and success in the Saddleback College Nursing Program

2. Goals and Purpose

Purpose:
The shortage of registered nurses nationwide but especially in the state of California has emphasized the importance of maximizing the number of graduates produced by our nursing programs as quality candidates for the National Council Licensing Examination for Registered Nurses (NCLEX-RN). The State of California Chancellor’s for Community College Education, the California State Legislature, the nursing profession and the Planning Board Council (PBC) of Saddleback College have all challenged the Saddleback Nursing Program to expand enrollment and decrease attrition, while maintaining our high standard of quality in the graduates who are successful in passing the NCLEX examination.

The Saddleback College Nursing Program was awarded a Workforce Initiative Grant to Foster Student Success. This grant covers academic years 2005-2006 through 2009-2010. The goal of this grant is to ultimately increase the number of graduates to begin careers as a registered nurse. The easy part is to increase enrollment, but that does not guarantee an increase in graduates. The problem was how to increase enrollments and decrease attrition at the same time. We concluded that students accepted into the program must be evaluated and supported on an individual basis in order for each of them to be successful. To begin this process the nursing department at Saddleback College developed a case management model for our program. Our first cohort of students entered Spring 2006 and graduated Fall 2007. There will be a total of nine cohorts who will benefit from the case management model established.

This new model begins with a preadmission readiness test (Test of Essential Academic Skills [TEAS]). Students who successfully pass the TEAS test are assigned a faculty advisor who initially meets with the student to discuss the results of the TEAS and offer guidance regarding factors known to effect student success based on the results of their individual TEAS score. In addition, this faculty advisor follows the student progress throughout the program and has personal contact with the student when needed. Students who are unsuccessful on the TEAS test meet with the grant director and an Academic Counselor to jointly develop a specific remediation plan based on the results of his/her TEAS test. Once remediation is complete, the student must retake the TEAS and score greater than the state mandated 67% in order to be admitted into the nursing program.
Other portions of the grant program were designed to increase NCLEX pass rates, increase faculty knowledge of factors affecting student success, build camaraderie within the student body and among faculty, quantify factors that lead to attrition and analyze expectations of RN graduates and employers to smooth the transition into the work force. Before the grant, the attrition rate in 2005-2006 was 24%. In 2007-2008, it decreased to 15% and some of those students should finish the program but have been delayed in graduation.

Another important aspect of increasing the number of graduates is to identify causative factors influencing attrition rates. Assessment Associates International was hired using grant funds to assist with data collection from students lost to attrition, students during progress through the program and graduates and preceptors of graduates. The data indicates reasons for attrition may be academic, clinical performance, life circumstance or personal reasons such as disillusionment with career choice.

We have adequate statistical studies that have been conducted to determine admission criteria to predict student success in a nursing program. What is lacking is statistical data that can predict the potential loss of a student progressing through the nursing program. While our attrition rate has decreased, we have been unable to predict admission criteria that will minimize student attrition. In an impacted program such as nursing, approximately 400 applicants for 60 placements, it is imperative to maximize student success and minimize student attrition while maintaining the quality of the program.

As Case Manager for the Fostering Success grant, I have a unique prospective that has shown the success of our plan. I have been intimately involved in the planning and execution of our case management model. I am also aware that this grant ends in 2010. By publishing our findings and collaborating with other schools, I would like to develop a strategy for continuing this successful program when our funding ceases.

My proposed project is to assist other programs who have not had the benefit of the Fostering Success Grant by publishing or presenting our case management strategies that have been so successful for retention of our students. Because we have not fully elucidated the cause of attrition, I would like to analyze the data regarding attrition to gain a better understanding and encourage collaboration from other schools of nursing on how to minimize student loss during the nursing program.
Goals:
- Publish or present the Saddleback College Nursing Program case management strategies for student success.
- Analyze the data collected during the grant to determine potential interventions to reduce attrition.
- Minimize attrition due to predictable causes.
- Maintain the achieved student success rates in the Saddleback Nursing program after grant funding ends.

3. Describe the specific objectives you wish to achieve that will support the goals and purpose of your sabbatical.
   - Develop a manuscript of findings for publication or presentation at a nursing conference
   - Analyze data collected during the grant to classify reasons for attrition
   - Collaborate with other schools of nursing to identify strategies to decrease attrition.

4. Describe in detail the types of activities you propose to include and/or undertake during your project.
   - Determine the current knowledge on Nursing Student Success.
     i. Attend the National League of Nursing Summit in Philadelphia, PA- September 23-26, 2009
     ii. Attend the National Organization for Associate Degree Nursing 2009 Annual Convention- Fall 2009
   - Perform a literature review to determine current state of evidence and practice in student attrition during nursing school.- January 2010
   - Work with Assessment Associates International to design and run the statistical analysis of the data collected during the grant.- February (design) – March (final data collection) –April 2010- Analysis)
   - Write a scholarly manuscript for submission for publication or for presentation at a nursing convention or conference.(May 2010)

5. Describe how these activities relate to your goals and objectives.
   - Attendance at these two national conferences will update my knowledge regarding what other nursing programs have implemented to foster success and increase retention.
   - As the Case Manger of Fostering Student Success grant, I will have overseen the day to day management of this project for 5 years and will have had contact with 540 students with sole purpose of increasing student success while maintaining the nursing program quality. I have
the broad overview and intimate knowledge of the reason for success or failure of these students and wish to use this information to do a much more in-depth study of what we can learn from our success and on what we could still improve. I am in the unique position to categorize students as to cause of attrition before statistical analysis. The timing is also crucial as we will lose the assistance of Assessment Associate International to design and run the statistical data at the end of the grant in June 2010.

- With the end of grant funding, it will be difficult to maintain the extremely high level of faculty student contact. A plan for maximizing other supports systems in place at Saddleback College is therefore important in determining how to support the nursing students continuing in the program after grant funding ends.
- The reasons for my plan for completing a publishable manuscript are twofold. The first is a responsibility to my colleagues and the second is a responsibility to the nursing profession. While at conferences the last two years, I have informally discussed with other nursing faculty some of our strategies. Other nursing programs have indicated they would be interested to know more about our success in decreasing attrition in the Saddleback College Nursing Program. In addition the National League of Nursing, the voice of nursing education, has promoted evidence based practice not only in the clinical areas but through research in Nursing Education. I therefore feel compelled to report our experience for promoting student success to others.

6. Describe the measurable outcomes of your project such as curriculum, materials, scientific specimens, manuscripts, audio visual, etc.
   - Manuscript for publication or for presentation at a nursing conference
   - Completed analysis of data from Assessment Associates International

7. Describe the projected impact your project will have on the teaching and learning.
   - Nursing school throughout the nation will benefit from the lessons learned from the Fostering Student Success Grant.
   - Saddleback College will be recognized for the excellent work on an important national issue.
   - The community at large will benefit from additional nurses being placed in the workforce due to a decrease in attrition in nursing schools across the nation.
   - Saddleback nursing students will continue to receive the unprecedented support to be successful in their nursing program
8. **Describe how you intend to apply the results of your sabbatical to your professional assignment and development plan.**
   - As case manager for the Fostering Success Grant, I will be able to collaborate with other professionals to enhance our current model.
   - Explore cost effective ways to continue the case management model after the Fostering Success Grant sunsets.
   - Recommendations to guide future changes in admission criteria.

9. **Describe your plan for dissemination of the results of your sabbatical proposal to your students, colleagues, college, District and/or community.**
   - Present my manuscript to all Saddleback nursing faculty at our in-service faculty meeting August, 2010.
   - Present manuscript for publication or for presentation at a nursing conference.