

Abstract

Since 1966, the Charles George VA Medical Center (CGVAMC) has served as a clinical rotation site for multiple generations of nursing students in a variety of specialty areas including psychiatry, medicine, surgery, and primary care. Included among the many clinical affiliations is Western Carolina University School of Nursing (WCU SON), the only four-year school of nursing in Western North Carolina. The CGVAMC and WCU SON have a longstanding affiliation that exemplifies the spirit of partnership, collaborative ventures, and a commitment to educating nurses. Beginning with the summer semester of 2009, the CGVAMC and WCU SON will be partners in providing the highest level of nursing education available to students in the Accelerated Bachelor of Science (ABSN) program while meeting the goals and objectives of the VA Nursing Academy. Together, we will meet the following objectives:

1. Providing opportunities for three VA-based faculty and two WCU SON-based faculty to engage students and colleagues in education, research, and scholarship.
2. Increasing the number of nursing students in the ABSN program by 20 during each of the three years covered by the VA Nurse Academy Grant. By increasing the clinical and educational encounters at the CGVAMC, ABSN students will experience the standards of excellence in health care provided to Veterans by VA nurses. VA education and practice opportunities include acute medicine, surgery, long-term care, rehabilitative nursing, palliative care, hospice, primary care, telehealth, home-based primary care, community-based outpatient clinics and “pain resource nursing”.
3. Providing educational support by involving WCU SON nursing students and VA/WCU SON faculty in innovative nursing education such as on-line classes, WCU Simulation Lab for clinical experience and extensive clinical rotations across the healthcare continuum.
4. Implementing VA/WCU SON-based faculty hosted monthly VA Nursing Academy Rounds to ABSN students and CGVAMC nurses using Live Meeting to promote evidence based practice, research, and advanced degrees for clinical nursing staff. The CGVAMC will provide environmental support using two new classrooms and a new computer lab located at the CGVAMC.
5. Initiating WCU SON web links that include VA scholarships, loan repayment, pre- and post-doctoral support including VA grant deadlines.
6. Upon graduation from the WCU SON, offering employment opportunities at the CGVAMC with a target rate of 50% employment.