

IMPLEMENTING A BSN AT A COMMUNITY COLLEGE: A CASE STUDY

by

Cynthia L. Cicchelli

This dissertation is submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education

Ferris State University

November 2023

© 2023 Cynthia Cicchelli
All Rights Reserved

IMPLEMENTING A BSN AT A COMMUNITY COLLEGE: A CASE STUDY

by

Cynthia L. Cicchelli

Has been approved

November 2023

APPROVED:

Leslie Petty, EdD

Committee Chair

Deborah S. Vendittelli, DNP, RN, ANP-BC

Committee Member

Christopher Misiak, CCE, CEC

Committee Member

Dissertation Committee

ACCEPTED:

Sandra J Balkema, PhD, Dissertation Director

Community College Leadership Program

ABSTRACT

To meet the urgent demand for bachelor-prepared nurses, many states in the U.S. have allowed community colleges to offer Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) programs. This expands beyond the colleges' traditional role of offering up to two-year academic programs.

This study examines what happens at a community college once the decision has been made to offer the BSN. Using a grounded theory qualitative research method within a single case study, the research captured experiences, insights, and recommendations after a successful community college BSN implementation. The study takes a pragmatic look at how the college created systems, managed resources, and needed to form or shift relationships within and outside of the college. The significant findings were revealed from a varied set of perspectives including frontline as well as leadership viewpoints.

Two major conclusions emerged. This study verified the necessity of changes to processes, practices, roles, and responsibilities across the institution to effectively operationalize and implement the BSN program. It also demonstrated that providing clear options and processes for students during and after this transition was essential. Amid all of this, the ability to collaborate was crucial. Major themes, conclusions, and recommendations are presented. This study revealed the strengths, challenges, and opportunities that were discovered. It serves as a bridge between academic research and practical application, offering insights that can benefit institutions contemplating similar transitions.

Key words: community college BSN program, institutional change, nursing, grounded theory, case study

DEDICATION

To my parents, Eugene and Bettie Rae (Connors) Stevens, who always believed in me and provided steadfast support throughout my academic, personal, and professional endeavors. They instilled a love for reading, expanded my thoughts, and nurtured the joy of creativity. To my children and their families, Jon, Laine, and Elijah Cicchelli, Lena, James, and Michal Pappas, who inspired me to persevere through a myriad of challenges, barriers, and blessings. They have reminded me to always seek the beauty of being loved, laughing, and seeing the world through new eyes with hope for the future. To my kindhearted partner, Jim Roddy, and the incredible friends who have become family, whether sharing moments at work or in leisure, their support has been a source of strength. To these very special people, too many to name, who made this whole experience possible. They touched my life in ways that they may not even realize. They've embraced me in times of need and joined in celebrating the soulful commitment of this study. Lastly, to Mr. Rogers. His influence broadened my views and set the stage for my first exploration into considering not just what happens in the world, but how we do it. Connected with creativity, love, and curiosity, I feel truly blessed.

Life is always transforming. It is through the shared support of those around us that we find joy and purpose in our journey.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Just like has been discovered in this research, the journey of this dissertation has been a foundational shift. My Committee Chair, Dr. Leslie Petty, has had patience, fortitude, and wisdom throughout this process. Her rich academic and professional background, as well as her savvy in navigating complex issues to see the big picture set a strong frame for me to following during this endeavor. Dr. Petty expanded my thinking yet kept me focused. She acted as my mentor, guide, and reminder of life's balance. I could not have achieved this life goal without her unflinching thoughtfulness, counsel, and support.

Special gratitude is extended to my committee members, Dr. Deborah Vendittelli, and Chef Christopher Misiak, for their indispensable contributions to this journey. Dr. Vendittelli, with her extensive nursing background in public health, academics, and leadership as the Chair for the State of Michigan Board of Nursing, brought invaluable expertise from a nursing perspective. Her insights provided a focus that both enriched and informed this research. On a personal level, she provided a listening ear and clarity that created a sense of purpose as I navigated this process.

Chef Christopher Misiak was my rational rock. His experience in higher education, involvement in developing and implementing the first bachelor's degree program at his community college, as well as his 10 years of service on the American Culinary Federation Accreditation committee, provided a unique pragmatic perspective for this project. His guidance, kindness, and never-ending support made navigating the rough edges possible.

Sandy Balkema, Dissertation Director for the Doctorate in Community College Leadership (DCCL), EdD program at Ferris State University is also to be thanked. Her patience, navigation tips, and simple consideration during this complex process was thoughtfully shared. Editor Susan Richter provided not only her expertise in managing my formatting and APA guidelines alignment, but also offered an assurance that allowed me to move forward with confidence.

Words cannot express my gratitude for all that this committee of professionals has provided. I am honored to have their support and guidance.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
GLOSSARY OF TERMS	x
CHAPTER 1: COMMUNITY COLLEGES OFFERING BSN DEGREES.....	1
Introduction	1
Background	2
National Trend in Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) programs	2
Nursing Workforce Demand	2
Why Offer Community College BSN Programs	3
Overview to the Study.....	8
Theoretical Framework	8
Research Methodology	9
Participant Identification and Selection	9
Data Collection Process.....	10
Data Analysis Process	10
Purpose of this Study	11
Research Questions.....	11
Significance of the Study	11
CONCLUSION	12
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	14
Introduction	14
Community College Students’ Profile	14
Community Colleges’ Role	16
National workforce demands.....	17
Shifting Nursing Pipeline	18
Current Traditional Bachelor Level Nursing Programs’ Limitations	21
Closed Door	21
National Movement Allowing Community College Bachelor of Science in Nursing Degrees..	22
Open Door.....	22
Equity and Access.....	23
Operationalization and Implementation	23
Defining the Terms.....	23
Operationalizing the Campus	24
Nursing Program and Accreditation Guidance	25
Relevant Literature for Integrating Community College Bachelor Degrees	26

Changes in Education	29
Changes in Students	29
Changes within Institutions	30
Focus on Nursing	31
Conclusion	31
CHAPTER 3: METHODS	33
Introduction	33
Theoretical Framework	34
Social constructivism	34
Research questions	35
Methodology	36
Grounded Theory Methodology	36
Research Participants, Tools, and Processes	37
Participants	37
Identifying Participants	37
Description of the Participants	38
Interview Tool and Set-Up	40
Interview Questions	40
Interview Sessions Scheduling	40
Data Collection	41
Data Preparation, Analysis, and Coding	41
Preparing the Data for Analysis	41
Analysis and Coding	42
Conclusion	43
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND ANALYSIS	44
Introduction	44
Research Questions	44
Data Collection	45
Participants	45
Structured Phased Approach	45
Major Themes	45
Alignment with the Research Questions	46
Subthemes	47
Findings	47
Internal Collaboration	47
Cross-Functional Teams	48
Managing Projects	49
Systems to Manage Projects	49
Departmental Preparation as a Part of Collaboration	50
Making a Shift Versus Large-Scale Changes	50
Adapting to a BSN-Level Nursing Program	51
Advising and Admissions on the Front Line	52

Program Manager Collaboration	55
BSN Students' Experiences.....	56
ADN to BSN Program versus University Traditional Pathway.....	56
Admissions and Transfer-In Experience	58
Curriculum Development	59
Program and Course Design	59
Collaboration with Other Colleges	60
Barriers and Concerns	61
Students' Confusion and Limitations.....	61
Systems and Practices	63
Additional Themes Considered	65
Research Summary.....	65
Summary of Findings.....	66
Internal Collaboration	66
Students' Experience	67
Curriculum Development	67
Barriers and Concerns	67
Limitations and Delimitations	68
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE WORK	70
Introduction	70
Tying this Study to the Research Questions.....	70
Major Themes	71
Interpretation of the Findings	72
Setting the Context for Interpretation of the Findings	72
Establishing Conclusions	73
Conclusions and Impact to Literature	73
Conclusion 1	74
Processes and Practices.....	74
Organizational Structure	78
Roles and Responsibilities	81
Designing Curriculum	85
Conclusion 2	88
Academic Choices.....	89
Onboarding Processes.....	91
Departmental Collaboration.....	93
Limitations.....	95
Recommendations for Future Research.....	96
Conclusion	96
REFERENCES	100
APPENDIX A: IRB APPROVAL LETTER.....	117

APPENDIX B: OPERATIONALIZATION-INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FRAME 119

APPENDIX C: TEMPLATE TO MANAGE INTERVIEW REQUESTS..... 124

APPENDIX D: INFORMED CONSENT 129

APPENDIX E: GOTRANSCRIPT CERTIFICATE OF ACCURACY 133

APPENDIX F: GOTRANSCRIPT CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT 135

APPENDIX G: REGISTERED NURSING (RN) COMMUNITY COLLEGE ENTRY PATHWAY OPTIONS 137

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

The following comprehensive list of terms and concepts have been referenced in this study and include additional references common in higher education. The vocabulary was identified through agencies that oversee federal, state, or organizational compliance and reporting, as well as other common sources. These sources, at times, differed in the interpretations depending upon the application or use; however, the essential understandings pertinent to this study were included.

While this list is not exhaustive of every terminology used in higher education and may be dependent upon such things as regional, programmatic, and state classifications or other factors, it intends to provide a starting point for clarity and consistency as institutions navigate critical decisions and initiatives that benefit their students, institution, and community.

2+2 model: “The “2+2 model” allows students to earn a bachelor’s degree by completing two years at a community college for an associate degree, and then transfer to a 4-year college or university for a final two years of study culminating in a bachelor’s degree” (U.S. Department of State, n.d.b).

academic adviser: “A member of a college faculty who helps and advises students solely on academic matters” (U.S. Department of State, n.d.a). The defining of academic advisors as faculty is identified at each institution.

academic program: “An instructional program leading toward an associate, bachelor's, master's, doctorate, or resulting in credits that can be applied to one of these degrees” (NCES, 2023c, p. 1)

academic support: Activities and services that “support the institution’s primary missions of instruction, research, and public service” (Center for Educational Performance and Information, 2023, p. 50). These include services such as “library services, educational media services, faculty professional development (non-program specific), faculty release/

supplemental contract for curriculum development, centers for instructional excellence, curriculum development (including online course development)” (Center for Educational Performance and Information, 2023, p. 77).

accelerated programs: “Completion of a college program of study in fewer than the usual number of years, most often by attending summer session and carrying extra courses during the full academic term” (Center for Educational Performance and Information, 2023, p. 2).

accreditation: In alignment with federal requirements by the U.S. Department of Education (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.a), accreditation includes “Approval of colleges and universities by nationally recognized professional associations or regional accrediting bodies” (U.S. Department of State, n.d.a).

accrediting agencies (also known as accrediting bodies.): “Organizations (or bodies) that establish operating standards for educational or professional institutions and programs, determine the extent to which the standards are met, and publicly announce their findings” (NCES, 2023c, p. 2).

admitted students: “Applicants that have been granted an official offer to enroll in a postsecondary institution” (NCES, 2023c, p. 2). This is guided by each institution’s admission policies with requirements for standardized admissions tests or secondary program admissions requirements established.

articulation guide (also referred to as transfer guides or referenced as a part of a transfer pathway; however, differences should be noted): Articulation guides are signed agreements between two colleges or universities that ensure the transferability of courses to be used in completing a student’s academic program. Transfer guides are not signed agreements (therefore, are subject to change), but rather indicate the courses that are typically equivalent between the institutions. Both guides primarily focus on completing coursework that fulfills an institution’s general education requirements, as well as potentially ensuring core course transferability. The use of these terms varies and may be dependent upon the institutions, regional, or state requirements and norms (American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers [AACRAO], 2019; College Transfer Net, n.d.b; Dwyer, 2012; Lavinson, 2021; Penn State – Schuylkill, n.d.; Western Michigan University, n.d.).

associate degree: “A degree awarded after a two-year period of study; it can be either terminal or transfer (the first two years of a bachelor's degree)” (U.S. Department of State, n.d.a).

average cost of attendance: “The average of the actual or average allowable costs as defined by the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended, used to determine a student’s eligibility for Title IV and other financial aid programs. The average may be based on all students or different categories of students such as undergraduates or graduates. Other

student categories may include enrollment status, academic program, or residency. For IPEDS reporting purposes, cost of attendance is only reported for full-time, first-time students” (NCES, 2023c, p. 4).

bachelor's degree (also referred to as baccalaureate degree): “A degree awarded upon completion of approximately four years of full-time study” (U.S. Department of State, n.d.a).

bachelor’s degree completion program: “According to the North Central Association’s Higher Learning Commission Task Force on Adult Degree-Completion Programs (2000), an adult-degree completion program is one designed especially to meet the needs of the working adult who, having acquired sixty or more college credit hours during previous enrollments, is returning to school after an extended period of absence to obtain a baccalaureate degree. The institution’s promise that the student will be able to complete the program in fewer than two years of continuous study is realized through provisions such as establishing alternative class schedules, truncating the traditional semester/quarter time frame, organizing student cohorts, and awarding credit for prior learning experiences equivalent to approximately 25% of the bachelor’s degree credit total (Task Force, 2000). Adult degree programs share common characteristics including but not limited to distance (online) options, evening course options, weekend course options, test-out (CLEP and DSST) options, and college credit for prior learning in the workplace” (as cited in Bergman, 2016, p. 2).

bachelor's-seeking students: Identified and used by organizations such as the Community College Resource Center (n.d.a), bachelor-seeking students represent “...a cohort of students who were seeking a bachelor's or equivalent degree upon entry” NCES, 2023c, p. 4).

certificate: “A recognized postsecondary credential that is conferred upon the satisfactory completion of a postsecondary education program” (NCES, 2023c, p. 7).

college catalog: “An official publication giving information about a university's academic programs, facilities, entrance requirements, and student life” (U.S. Department of State, n.d.a).

community college: “A community college (also known as an associate’s college) is a higher education institution that offers two-year programs leading to the Associate of Arts (AA) or Associate of Science (AS) degree. These colleges have technical and vocational programs with close links to secondary/high schools, community groups, and employers in the local community” (U.S. Department of State, n.d.b).

competencies: “Competencies are the knowledge, skills, abilities, and behaviors that contribute to individual and organizational performance. Knowledge is information developed or learned through experience, study, or investigation. Skill is the result of repeatedly applying knowledge or ability. Ability is an innate potential to perform mental

and physical actions or tasks. Behavior is the observable reaction of an individual to a certain situation. The target proficiency level for each competency will vary based on an individual's position and the organization's need" (National Institutes of Health, n.d.).

competency-based learning (also known as performance-based learning): "Competency-based learning refers to systems of instruction, assessment, grading, and academic reporting that are based on students demonstrating that they have learned the knowledge and skills they are expected to learn as they progress through their education. In public schools, competency-based systems use state learning standards to determine academic expectations and define 'competency' or 'proficiency' in a given course, subject area, or grade level (although other sets of standards may also be used, including standards developed by districts and schools or by subject-area organizations). The general goal of competency-based learning is to ensure that students are acquiring the knowledge and skills that are deemed to be essential to success in school, higher education, careers, and adult life. If students fail to meet expected learning standards, they typically receive additional instruction, practice time, and academic support to help them achieve competency or meet the expected standards" (Glossary of Education Reform, n.d.). Competency-based education relates to all levels of education when used in general; however, is often referenced interchangeably with a model of education structure in higher education known as "competency-based education" or CBE. CBE is a sometimes-controversial practice that should be differentiated and used within the appropriate context (Glossary of Education Reform, n.d.).

core courses (also referred to as required, program specific, or supportive courses): "Courses that provide the foundation of the degree program and are required of all students seeking that degree" (U.S. Department of State, n.d.a).

counseling service (academic advising services may serve in this role depending upon the institutional structure): "Activities designed to assist students in making plans and decisions related to their education, career, or personal development" (NCES, 2023c, p. 9).

course: "Regularly scheduled class sessions of one to five hours (or more) per week during a term. A degree program is made up of a specified number of required and elective courses and varies from institution to institution" (U.S. Department of State, n.d.a).

course and credit evaluation: Courses that transfer from other educational institutions or forms of prior learning (such as licensure, prior experience, or industry credentials) are evaluated for alignment of course content and credit conferment to fulfill program requirements. This is conducted in alignment with best practices identified by the AACRAO, and guided by AACRAO (2019), American Council on Education (ACE), and the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA).

course management system (CMS, often used interchangeably with learning management system [LMS]): According to Watson and Watson (2012), "A CMS provides an instructor with a set of tools and a framework that allows the relatively easy creation of online course

content and the subsequent teaching and management of that course including various interactions with students taking the course” (p. 1).

credit for life experiences (also known as prior learning credit (PLC): “Credit earned by students for what they have learned through independent study, noncredit adult courses, work experience, portfolio demonstration, previous licensure or certification, or completion of other learning opportunities (military, government, or professional). Credit may also be awarded through a credit by examination program” (NCES, 2023c, p. 9).

credits: “Units that most colleges and universities use to record the completion of courses (with passing grades) that are required for an academic degree” (U.S. Department of State, n.d.a).

developmental courses (also referred to as remedial courses): “Instructional courses designed for students deficient in the general competencies necessary for a regular postsecondary curriculum and educational setting” (NCES, 2023c, p. 11).

distance education (also referred to as Distance Learning): “Education that uses one or more technologies to deliver instruction to students who are separated from the instructor and to support regular and substantive interaction between the students and the instructor synchronously or asynchronously” (NCES, 2023c, p. 11).

dual admissions programs: “...students apply to both the community college and 4-year institution simultaneously with the guarantee of admission upon completion of the associate degree” (U.S. Department of State, n.d.b).

financial aid: “A general term that includes all types of money, loans, and work/study programs offered to a student to help pay tuition, fees, and living expenses” (U.S. Department of State, n.d.a). This may include “Federal Work Study, grants, loans to students (government and/or private), assistantships, scholarships, fellowships, tuition waivers, tuition discounts, employer aid (tuition reimbursement) and other monies (other than from relatives/friends) provided to students to meet expenses. This excludes loans to parents” (NCES, 2023c, p. 15).

first-generation college student: “An individual both of whose parents did not complete a baccalaureate degree; or (B) In the case of any individual who regularly resided with and received support from only one parent, an individual whose only such parent did not complete a baccalaureate degree” (Higher Education Act of 1965).

first-time student (undergraduate, also referred to as first-time-in-any-college/FTIAC student): “A student who has no prior postsecondary experience (except as noted below) attending any institution for the first time at the undergraduate level. This includes students enrolled in academic or occupational programs. It also includes students enrolled in the fall term who attended college for the first time in the prior summer session, and students who entered with advanced standing (college credits or recognized postsecondary

credential earned before graduation from high school)” (NCES, 2023c, p. 15).

four-year institution: “A postsecondary institution that offers programs of at least four years duration or one that offers programs at or above the baccalaureate level. Includes schools that offer postbaccalaureate certificates only or those that offer graduate programs only. Also includes free-standing medical, law or other first-professional schools” (NCES, 2023c, p. 15).

full-time student: One who is enrolled in an institution taking a full load of courses; the number of courses and hours is specified by the institution” (U.S. Department of State, n.d.a).

general education: “Includes instruction in, but is not limited to, the following subject matter areas: Visual and Performing Arts, Communications and Language Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, Mathematics, Sciences, and Physical and Wellness Education” (Center for Educational Performance and Information, 2023, p. 66)

health occupations: “Includes instruction in, but is not limited to, the following subject matter areas: Nursing, Dental Technologies, Diagnostic Technologies, Therapeutic Technologies, and all other health technologies” (Center for Educational Performance and Information, 2023, p. 56).

healthcare practitioners and technical occupations: “An occupational category based on the major group in the 2018 Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) Manual called ‘Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations’” (NCES, 2023c, p. 17).

junior: A third-year student at a secondary school, college, or university” (U.S. Department of State, n.d.a).

learning management systems (LMS, often used interchangeably with course management system [CMS]): According to Watson and Watson (2012), “An LMS is the infrastructure that delivers and manages instructional content, identifies and assesses individual and organizational learning or training goals, tracks the progress towards meeting those goals, and collects and presents data for supervising the learning process of organization as a whole (Szabo & Flesher, 2002). An LMS delivers content but also handles registering for courses, course administration, skills gap analysis, tracking, and reporting” (Gilhooly, 2001, p. 5).

liberal arts and sciences: Academic studies of subjects in the humanities, the social sciences, and the physical sciences with the goal of developing students' verbal, written, and reasoning skills” (U.S. Department of State, n.d.a).

licensure: “The term ‘licensure’ generally refers to an official process, administered by a state-level authority, that is required by law in order for an individual to practice a regulated profession. The term ‘certification’ generally refers to a function administered

by a nongovernmental organization, which is intended to further recognize professional competence based on having met the quality standards of the organization. The prevalence and relevance of certification varies by profession” (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.b).

limited competitive enrollment program: A program that has established specific criteria beyond the entry requirements established by the college or university that. These may include completion of preparatory courses, grades, assessments, or other requirements used to competitively evaluate applicants who will fill a limited number of program openings (Community College of Allegheny County, n.d.; University of Maryland, n.d.a, n.d.b).

living expenses: Expenses such as housing and meals, books and supplies, transportation, personal expenses, health insurance, etc. (U.S. Department of State, n.d.a).

major: The student's field of concentration. Major courses represent 25-50% of the total number of courses required to complete a degree” (U.S. Department of State, n.d.a).

minor: The student's secondary field of concentration. Students who decide to pursue a minor will usually complete about five courses in this second field of study” (U.S. Department of State, n.d.a).

National Council Licensure Examination [for] Registered Nurses (RN) (also referred to as the NCLEX-RN exam): A rigorous assessment of skills and competencies to become a registered nurse as identified by the National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN, n.d.).

occupational program: “A program of study consisting of one or more courses, designed to provide the student with sufficient knowledge and skills to perform in a specific occupation.” This may be specific to, “An instructional program, below the bachelor's level, designed to prepare individuals with entry-level skills and training required for employment in a specific trade, occupation, or profession related to the field of study” (NCES, 2023c, p. 25).

open admission (also referred to as “open door” or “open access”): “Admission policy whereby the school will accept any student who applies” (NCES, 2023c, p. 25).

plan of study: A detailed description of the course of study for which a candidate applies. The plan should incorporate the objectives given in the student's “statement of purpose” (U.S. Department of State, n.d.a).

prerequisites: Programs or courses that a student is required to complete before being permitted to enroll in a more advanced program or course” (U.S. Department of State, n.d.a).

private institution: “An educational institution controlled by a private individual(s) or by a nongovernmental agency, usually supported primarily by other than public funds, and

operated by other than publicly elected or appointed officials. These institutions may be either for-profit or not-for-profit” (NCES, 2023c, p. 29).

program: “A combination of courses and related activities organized for the attainment of broad educational objectives as described by the institution.” These are identified through the program category, “A summary of groups of related instructional programs designated by the first 2 digits of its appropriate Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) code” (NCES, 2023c, p. 29).

public institution: “An educational institution whose programs and activities are operated by publicly elected or appointed school officials and which is supported primarily by public funds” (NCES, 2023c, p. 29).

registered nurse (RN) license (also referred to as the NCLEX-RN exam): License is granted upon successful completion of the National Council Licensure Examination [for] Registered Nurses (RN) as identified by the National Council of State Boards of Nursing (n.d.).

registration: “Process through which students select courses to be taken during a quarter, semester, or trimester. Add/drop: A process at the beginning of a term whereby students can delete and add classes with an instructor's permission. withdrawal: The administrative procedure of dropping a course or leaving an institution” (U.S. Department of State, n.d.a).

specialized accreditation: “Specialized accreditation normally applies to the evaluation of programs, departments, or schools which usually are parts of a total collegiate or other postsecondary institution. The unit accredited may be as large as a college or school within a university or as small as a curriculum within a discipline. Most of the specialized accrediting agencies review units within a postsecondary institution which is accredited by one of the regional accrediting commissions. However, certain of the specialized accrediting agencies accredit professional schools and other specialized or vocational or other postsecondary institutions which are free-standing in their operations (NCES, 2023c, p. 32-33).

stop out: “A student who left the institution and returned at a later date” (NCES, 2023c, p. 33).

student activities: “Programs designed to support and complement the institution's academic mission and enhance the educational experience of students, individually and through student groups. Includes exposure to and participation in social, cultural, recreational, intellectual, and governance activities” (NCES, 2023c, p. 33).

student services: “Includes activities carried out with the objective of contributing to student emotional and physical well-being and to their intellectual, cultural, and social development outside the context of the institution’s regular instruction program” (Center for Educational Performance and Information, 2023, p. 62). These include services such as, “Counseling Services, Student Admissions, Registrar and Student Records, Student Clubs

and Associations, Student Government, Student Publications, Student Newspapers and Yearbooks, Student Counseling Center, [etc.]” (Center for Educational Performance and Information, p. 77-78) as well as, “...a variety of support services and cross-cultural programs, including tutoring, advising, career planning, [and] study skills” (U.S. Department of State, n.d.a).

substantive change: The procedural requirements for accreditation, as stated, “A significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution. Substantive change includes high-impact, high-risk changes and changes that can impact the quality of educational programs and services” (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, n.d.b).

terminal program: Associate degree program leading to a specific career upon graduation” (U.S. Department of State, n.d.a).

traditional students (for the purpose of this study, also referred to as traditional 1-4 students): Traditional students are described in varying ways that may include age (23 years old and younger), immediately enrolling after high school, attending college full-time, able to live on-campus, with fewer financial and family obligations, and having access to enter directly or by transferring into a four-year college or university (unlike students who are GED recipients or those without a traditional high school diploma). Traditional students may be delimited through comparisons to non-traditional student populations (NCES, 2022; Smith, 2023; Tilley, 2014). This status should be differentiated from the terminology used to define learning through varying modalities such as in an online learning setting versus in-person learning (University Accreditation Association, n.d.).

transfer: The process of moving from one university to another to complete a degree” (U.S. Department of State, n.d.a).

Transfer guide (also referred to as articulation guides or referenced as a part of a transfer pathway; however, differences should be noted): Transfer guides are unsigned agreements (therefore, are subject to change) that indicate the courses that are typically equivalent between two institutions. Articulation guides are signed agreements between two colleges or universities that ensure the transferability of courses to be used in completing a student’s academic program. Both guides primarily focus on completing coursework that fulfills an institution’s general education requirements, as well as potentially ensuring core course transferability. The use of these terms varies and may be dependent upon the institutions, regional, or state requirements and norms (AACRAO, 2019; College Transfer Net, n.d.a; Lavinson, 2021; Penn State – Schuylkill, n.d.; Western Michigan University, n.d.).

transfer of credit: “The policies and procedures used to determine the extent to which educational experiences or courses undertaken by a student while attending another institution may be counted for credit at the current institution” (NCES, 2023c).

transfer program (also referred to as traditional transfer program): Associate degree

program allowing the student to transfer into the third year of a four-year bachelor's degree program" (U.S. Department of State, n.d.a).

transfer-in (non-first-time entering) student: "A student entering the reporting institution for the first time but known to have previously attended a postsecondary institution at the same level (e.g., undergraduate, graduate)" (NCES, 2023c, p. 35).

transfer-out student: "A student who leaves the reporting institution and enrolls at another institution" (NCES, 2023c, p. 35).

two-year institution: "A postsecondary institution that offers programs of at least two but less than four years duration. Includes occupational and vocational schools with programs of at least 1800 hours and academic institutions with programs of less than four years. Does not include bachelor's degree-granting institutions where the baccalaureate program can be completed in three years" (NCES, 2023c, p. 36).

undergraduate student: "A student enrolled in a four- or five-year bachelor's degree program, an associate's degree program, or a vocational or technical program below the baccalaureate" (NCES, 2023c, p. 36).

university: A postsecondary institution that offers both undergraduate and graduate degree programs" (U.S. Department of State, n.d.a).

withdrawal: "The administrative procedure of dropping a course or leaving an institution" (U.S. Department of State, n.d.a).

CHAPTER 1: COMMUNITY COLLEGES OFFERING BSN DEGREES

INTRODUCTION

The need for bachelor-prepared nurses across the United States has been deemed a healthcare crisis (National Council of State Boards of Nursing, 2023). In response to this demand, a national trend has emerged to expand Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree options. While traditional university nursing programs have contributed to addressing this demand, community colleges are increasingly playing a role in offering BSN programs (Bragg et al., 2022; Community College Baccalaureate Association [CCBA], n.d.; Love et al., 2021).

Introducing a four-year BSN program at community colleges, that traditionally offer two-year or fewer credential programs, has a profound impact across the whole institution. This transition affects staff, students, as well as internal and external requirements and partnerships. It may change the way the college needs to work and could create challenges for students if not implemented effectively.

This research provides insight through a qualitative case study conducted at a single community college. This study will explore the operationalization and implementation of a community college BSN program. The research seeks to identify the changes, impacts, and challenges faced by the institution as it developed and introduced this program. It intends to focus on real-world implications for systems and the individuals involved. This study aims to bridge the gap between the academic research that may exist and practical application to provide insights that can benefit institutions considering similar transitions.

BACKGROUND

NATIONAL TREND IN BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN NURSING (BSN) PROGRAMS

Community colleges across the nation have risen to address the workforce needs for baccalaureate-prepared nurses by offering BSN degree programs. The ability to offer these bachelor degrees at a traditionally two-year granting institution requires many legislative, political, and policy actions (Bragg & Harmon, 2022; Bragg et al., 2022; Loglisci, 2018).

According to the CCBA, 157 community and technical colleges in 24 states offer bachelor-level degree programs. This is managed either through a state-wide adoption, granting all community colleges the same rights to develop programs, or by granting only selected colleges within the state to do so (CCBA, n.d.; Soler, 2019). While sometimes perceived as a departure from a community college's traditional mission, (Floyd et al., 2004; Love & Turk, 2023), this national higher education trend for community college bachelor's degrees is driven by the urgency to address workforce demands (Christian, 2022; Dones, 2021).

Meeting workforce needs has traditionally been a community college strength. Recognized for their ability to address employer's needs, the community college is well positioned to support this labor market demand (Holzer et al., 2023; Jacobs & Worth, 2019; Sánchez, 2019; Weissman, 2021). The pivot to addressing the baccalaureate level labor needs is the next step in a logical progression of providing training that has been at a core of the community college role.

NURSING WORKFORCE DEMAND

The United States is facing a growing crisis in healthcare as the demand for nurses continues to rise at an exorbitant rate (AACN, 2021a; Enlund, 2022; National Academy of

Medicine, 2021). The US Bureau of Labor Statistics 2022 report highlights the need for more than 275,000 nurses by 2030 (AACN, 2021a; American Nurses Association [ANA], n.d; Enlund, 2022; U.S. Department of Labor, 2022).

Community agencies, health care administrations, nursing accrediting bodies and organizations, and educational institutions all agree that having baccalaureate prepared nurses is the optimal end goal to providing safe and effective patient care (AACN, 2016, 2000; National Association of School Nurses, 2021). Based upon a seminal report created by the Institute of Medicine (IOM) in 2016, the goal to have 80% of nurses be bachelor-prepared by 2020 became a national initiative (Bleich, 2011; IOM, 2016), that target has not yet been met. According to multiple resources, only 59% of nurses in the field currently have a bachelor of science in nursing degree (Bleich, 2011; Campaign for Action, 2021; IOM, 2016).

WHY OFFER COMMUNITY COLLEGE BSN PROGRAMS

Community colleges have historically served as a portal to economic prosperity for all students (CCRC, n.d.a). Community colleges epitomize the spirit of the “American dream” as a part of their mission. According to the American Association of Community College (AACN, 2012), “they have long served as the gateway to higher education and thus to the middle class. It is a record for which all Americans can take great pride” (p. viii).

Providing access to millions of students from diverse backgrounds and with varying needs is the keystone of the American community college system. Over 12,000,000 students are enrolled across 1,100 community colleges in an effort to make that dream come true (Parham, 2018). Emphasizing accountability, the commitment for community colleges to adapt

is an ongoing process as they continue to redesign their approach to address students' needs and enhancing opportunities for their success (Eddy, 2019; Guth, 2017).

The community college is embedded in the community. Built on the needs of each local region, community colleges offer the chance for students to connect no matter their age, gender, ethnicity, or economic or academic background (Parham, 2018). With 90% of the population having only a short distance to their local community college, the possibility to connect is real (Boggs, 2012; Gierdowski, 2019; Loglisci, 2018; Love, 2020).

Community college students are more likely to stay within their community than university students. They are likely to not only know the culture and needs of the area but will be able to provide skills that are needed within that region. Nearly two-thirds of community college students choose to remain within a 50-mile radius of their college upon graduation (Glenn, 2020; Sentz & Stout, 2018; Wakefield & Williams, 2019).

This creates a localized impact within their community. The tie of the community college to business and industry creates partnerships that can fill employment pipelines. The regional needs for staffing can be facilitated by creating relationships to address emerging demands (Fuller & Raman, 2022). This local collaborative advantage allows community colleges to be agile and responsive to meet these workforce needs.

Access and equity. Community college students are more likely to be non-traditional in age, race, ethnicity, and economically than students attending four-year colleges. They are more likely to be the first in the family to attend higher education, and see community college as their only choice (Barrington, 2023; Bragg & Durham, 2012; CCRC, n.d.a; Juskiewicz, 2019). The majority of community college students are working part-time, nearly half of all students

receive some form of financial aid, and, contrary to what might be a stereotype, fewer than half of the students are attending college for the first time (AACC, 2012; CCRC, n.d.a; Leonard, 2020). Seen as an issue of access and equity, community colleges serve the specific needs of their unique student populations, with nursing degrees at the forefront of this push (AACC, 2022); Bragg & Harmon, 2022; Bragg et al., 2022; Christian, 2022; Rapoza et al., 2022; Soler, 2019).

Financial value. Community colleges have historically been seen as the best value in comparison to universities (AACC, 2022; Marcus, 2015; Warner, 2022). According to the AACC (2022), the quality of teaching is not impacted, however, the community college is less expensive (Parham, 2018) . Students can expect a comparable or even superior educational experience at these institutions. In many cases, the same professors are teaching at both the community college and the university, offering the same learning opportunities through a more cost-effective pathway (Fain, 2011; Loveless, 2023; Parham, 2018).

The cost for attending a university is far higher than at a community college (Ma & Pender, 2021; NCES, 2023a, 2023d). As an example, in Washington State, the costs of attending the state-run technical or community college is less than half of the cost to attend the public universities. It is an even greater savings when considering the costs of a private university (Gross & Marcus, 2018).

Leading students to achieve their goals at a fraction of the cost makes good sense. With a tradition of open admissions, community college allows entry into higher education without the higher levels of debt that can occur at universities (AACC, 2022; DeBaun, 2019; NCES, 2023b, 2023d; Parham, 2018). This is essential as students attending community colleges

typically have fewer financial resources to pay off student loans; therefore, will be more likely to carry higher levels of debt (DeBaun, 2019; Espinosa et al., 2019).

The community college student can also begin earning at a higher level earlier than the traditional university student. Students who complete their associate degree in nursing and become a licensed registered nurse, can begin their career while continuing their education to complete a BSN degree (Deering, 2023). Managing the workload of a career and academic studies can be difficult (Gamboa, 2023); however, the median wages for licensed nurses is \$39.00 per hour (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2022) with even higher wage opportunities available once a BSN has been completed (Deering, 2023; Gallagher, 2023 ; Morris, 2022; Smiley et al., 2021).

The community college students' earlier entry into the workforce not only has a strong economic impact for these students and community, but also nationally (AACC, 2022). According to an article presented by the Policy Analysis for California Education, "Associates' degree and a long-term certificate in nursing increases wages for women by about 40% and 30% respectively" (Dadgar, 2016).

Managing barriers to completion. Many factors can impede the community college students' progress toward earning a bachelor's degree. These students' lives are complex, and they may face multiple obstacles before they proceed toward a BSN program. In a survey of 27,000 students, navigating finances were the leading reasons students stopped out of college, along with balancing schedules with work and family obligations, or academic systems issues (Ortagus et al., 2021; Skinner et al., 2022).

Providing BSN degrees directly at the community college supports the students' needs and reduces further barriers that may interrupt their goals. The need to transfer to a university adds an additional layer of complexity to completing a bachelor's degree, making the probability of completion even more elusive for community college students. According to a report by Hans Johnson and Marisol Cuellar Mejia that focused on California community college transfer students (Johnson & Mejia, 2020), of the students who wanted to transfer, only 19% had done so within four years and 28% within six years.

This is not an isolated issue. Nationally, the CCRC (n.d.a) reports that while 80% of "first time in any college students" (commonly referred to as FTIAC students) expressed their intent to complete a bachelor's degree when they began their studies, only 16% achieve this within 6 years of transferring.

Tied to workforce training. According to Boggs (2018), past president of the American Association of Community Colleges, community colleges, "prepare more than half of the nation's registered nurses and the majority of other health-care workers, over 80% of first responders with postsecondary credentials (paramedics, EMTs, firefighters, and police officers), and a growing percentage of the nation's technological workforce" (Boggs, 2018). Seen as a portal for career training at the highest level of American leadership (Flannery, 2012), the connection between the community college and meeting labor demand is at the forefront of labor force preparedness.

Based on workforce demand, the need for BSN-prepared nurses continues to rise. Community colleges have the ability and responsibility to fill that gap (AACN, 2021a; Bragg & Harmon, 2022; Christian, 2022; Wakefield & Williams, 2019). Universities may not adequately

accommodate the needs of the community college students (Wakefield & Williams, 2019) and have been unable to meet the healthcare industry labor demands (AACN, 2022; Krupnick, 2020; National Education Progression in Nursing [NEPIN], 2021; AACN, 2023a, 2023b).

OVERVIEW TO THE STUDY

This study engaged Community College leaders and staff in a qualitative evaluation of their experiences of implementing a BSN program at their community college. This study utilized an interview process that revealed new findings in this area of research. The goal was to explore, in depth, the experiences of staff at one institution in order to gain insights into the complex changes that need to occur at an institutional level. The study takes a pragmatic look at how the college created systems, managed resources, and needed to form or shift relationships within and outside of the college. The significant findings were revealed from a varied set of perspectives including frontline as well as leadership viewpoints.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study follows a theoretical basis of constructivism. Constructivism is a philosophical belief that learning continues to inform reality which is transformed through new observations and measurements. The practice of qualitative analysis provides the forum in which to continue to add to the knowledge and to determine the truth based upon the experiences and new understandings that are formed (Adom, Yeboah, and Ankrah, 2016; Thompson, 2017).

This study's methods are focused on the socially constructed insights of the community college professionals that form the reality of their experience. Constructivism provides a valuable framework in which to examine educational changes because of its belief that

knowledge is not stagnant, but instead grows based upon how experiences are processed. In this study, participants were asked not to simply report on their role in the adoption of the BSN degree, but to reflect on the bigger picture of that change within their institution.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research was based upon a case study performed at one community college using a grounded theory constructivist qualitative methodology. Case studies are a common method in research that informs the concepts and ideas necessary for decision making and shared knowledge (Nohria, 2021). Respondents were interviewed individually or in pairs, their responses were transcribed and coded for analysis. A structured phased approach was used that allowed individual experiences to be revealed while compiling the data to analyze further for common elements. The analysis focused on the broad themes that emerged based upon the coding structures found in experiences of operationalization and implementation.

PARTICIPANT IDENTIFICATION AND SELECTION

Community colleges were evaluated to identify one college who would join in this study. Only an isolated segment of community colleges offers bachelor's degree programs in nursing in the United States with only 16 states allowing the legislative ability to do so as of 2021 (Juszkiewicz). This narrowed the options of potential community college participants.

Of those, one community college was identified to participate in this study based upon the institution's support and the staff's availability to contribute to this field of knowledge. Participants were identified based upon their experience at the community college and their expertise within their roles and responsibilities. Each of the staff participants had varying levels

of experience and roles in the operationalization and implementation of the Community College Bachelor of Science and nursing program. This followed a standard practice of convenience and purposive model of sampling that would allow for a qualitative analysis of relevant data (Palinkas, et al., 2015).

Twelve staff members at the institution were invited to be a part of the study and seven actively completed their involvement. This resulted in a 58% response rate. There was 0% attrition as all participants who agreed to take part in the study were able to do so. All had some level of association in the college's implementation of the BSN program.

DATA COLLECTION PROCESS

The data were collected using a semi-structured phased interview approach. This was managed through a framed and open-ended set of interview questions that were used as guidelines during the interview process. This allowed for consistency across the interviews while permitting a greater depth and an iterative capacity for responses. This method aligns to the grounded theory processes for data collection (Baškarada, 2014).

Interviews were conducted via Zoom and were recorded for accuracy and to assure that all data were effectively captured. The data were transcribed and compared to research notes and videos for accuracy and completeness.

DATA ANALYSIS PROCESS

The data were prepared and analyzed in a way that allowed major themes to emerge following a consistent and a structured methodology. The use of coding and technology provided the assistance that supported this work. A line-by-line review and confirmation of

triangulation data increased the reliability of the findings. Protocols for data management were followed to ensure any potential research or bias was minimized.

PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY

This study identifies the specific needs of community colleges in the operationalization and implementation of a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree from the perspectives of administrators, faculty, mid- to front-line level managers, and staff. It provides insight into the anticipated management of curricula development, changes to internal policy and practices, as well as data management and required reporting.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This dissertation research focuses on addressing the following questions:

1. In what ways do community colleges that implement a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree program shift requirements or practices for managing information, processes, or reporting?
2. How does the implementation of a BSN degree program at a community college affect individual and departmental roles, responsibilities, or daily work?
3. In what manner does the implementation of a BSN degree program at a community college affect or create relationships or collaboration across or outside of the college?
4. What were the lessons learned and recommendations that could be shared after the implementation of a BSN degree program at a community college?

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Community college are equipped to meet their student population's needs (Parham, 2018) and to fill nursing healthcare demands by offering a Bachelor of Science in Nursing program (Bragg & Harmon, 2022; Loglisci, 2019). Introducing BSN programs at community colleges addresses workforce needs, fosters inclusivity, offers accessible and affordable

educational pathways for diverse students, and encourages local impact and innovation in nursing education.

To achieve this effectively, community colleges would greatly benefit from tapping into the shared expertise of other practitioners to implement the program. Once a community college has been granted the right to offer the BSN degree, the institution is faced with a multitude of changes to design, develop, and then operationalize and implement this degree program. Although institutions may discover guidance for seeking state, local, or accreditation approval for making high-level decisions in the literature (Farmer et al., 2017; Love et al., 2021; Wright-Kim, 2021), the specific processes, strategies, and on-the-ground changes may not be as readily apparent.

The emphasis on understanding students' experiences from an internal perspective, as well as those of the institution's employees, will presents findings that will be significant to those who have been entrusted with the responsibility of facilitating these changes. This research seeks to explore the challenges and opportunities with implementing a BSN program through a case study conducted at one community college.

CONCLUSION

The need for BSN prepared nurses has been well-established (AACN, 2021a; Enlund, 2022; Flaubert et al., 2021). Providing students with a pathway to completing their BSN credential at a community college not only broadens their opportunities, but assists in meeting the workforce demand (Farmer et al., 2017; NEPIN, n.d., 2021).

A constructivist grounded theory frame of research of one community college creates a backdrop upon which further knowledge can be gathered from experts in this field. Community

colleges who commit to offering a BSN program at their institution can be transformative both for the students as well as the institution. Researching the way this program has been operationalized and implemented will provide practical insights and guidance for other community colleges to consider.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

To meet workforce demand (AACN, 2022; Enlund, 2022; Flaubert et al., 2021), a national trend has emerged that considers expanding alternatives for BSN degrees (Bragg et al., 2022). This shift is in response to the demand for bachelor-prepared nurses, a call that is identified as critical to the future of healthcare in the U.S. (AACN, 2021a; Bragg & Harmon, 2022; Christian, 2022; Organization for Associate Degree Nursing [ODAN], 2020). While traditional university nursing programs are addressing a portion of this national need for nurses, there has been a more recent focus on bachelor of science in nursing degree programs that are developed at community colleges.

Traditionally, universities have offered nursing baccalaureate degrees through BSN programs. These programs not only prepare the students for nursing responsibilities, but also allow the students to progress toward post-bachelor degrees, higher career attainment, and opportunities for economic progress. These programs have typically addressed a more traditional college population in age, income, race, and complex life demands than found in community college students (Love, 2020).

COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS' PROFILE

Community college students differ from university students in many ways (Community College Research Center [CCRC], n.d.a; Gierdowski, 2019; Meza & Love, 2022; U.S. Census

Bureau, 2023). Frequently, these students belong to lower-income demographics, exhibit higher diversity, and tend to enroll on a part-time basis. This group is nearly twice as likely to take remedial courses or need academic support to strengthen their skills (CCRC, n.d.a).

The community college BSN degree-seeking students are more often from diverse backgrounds than traditional students who enter a university bachelor degree nursing program (Gierdowski, 2019; Love, 2020). These community college students have different needs and availability of resources (CCRC, n.d.a; Leonard, 2020) as well as increased family commitments and other responsibilities than traditional university students. These factors often inhibit their ability to seek out and complete the traditional BSN university bachelor degrees (Gierdowski, 2019; Love, 2020; U.S. Census Bureau, 2023).

Community college students seeking BSN programs are older, female, and have more financial limitations and family obligations. These students are “place bound,” and are more likely to be working, with many in full-time positions (Butke, 2014; Gierdowski, 2019; Loglisci, 2019; Love, 2020).

The unique demographics of the community college student not only impacts the community college students’ individual abilities to progress toward a bachelor degree, but it is also inherent in issues of equity and access for these diverse communities (Bragg & Harmon, 2022; CCRC, n.d.a; Leonard, 2020; Loglisci, 2018; Spivey & Meyer, 2019).

The community college nursing student is tied to their community. The student is more likely to stay and work within their community, meeting the local nursing capacity demands, and understanding the culture and specific needs of these settings (Spivey & Meyer, 2019). The national and regional shift in population demographics, the policy focus on strengthening

underrepresented communities, and the growing demand for access to healthcare is at the forefront of these needs. (Bragg et al., 2022; Flaubert et al., 2021).

COMMUNITY COLLEGES' ROLE

In response to these student and community needs, more community colleges are beginning to offer baccalaureate degrees focusing on programs for nursing (Bragg & Harmon, 2022; Bragg et al., 2022; Loglisci, 2018). Florida is at the front end of this emerging trend (Dembicki, 2022; Love et al., 2021; Soler, 2019)

For community colleges to achieve this, they must navigate the transition from solely offering associate degrees or lower-credit credentials to incorporating the baccalaureate-level education and the necessary credentials (Farmer et al., 2017; Bragg et al., 2022). This shift in the community college's classification is paramount to many internal decisions and external considerations (Austin, 2020).

This can be a long and complicated road. Broad decisions and policies may need revision at both the state and the community college level. This may include legal or legislative actions, statewide endorsement, or financial investments such as those required in the state of Washington (U.S. News, 2022). Offering bachelor degrees at a community college could involve organizational changes that impact departments, faculty, curriculum development, budgets, internal policies, and operational practices. There will be shifts in academic and student services, as well as a need for marketing and public relations adjustments (McKinney & Morris, 2010).

Once the decision has been made to offer the BSN and the curricula developed, the community college needs to operationalize and implement the new programs. Building a BSN

degree program at a community college can require operational changes to implement the program successfully. This requires departments across an institution to collaborate, coordinate, and synthesize their efforts to ensure the program's success.

Much has been written about operations management from a business perspective that guides the principles of that field; however, higher education institutions need specific guidance on how to shift their literal work. While the management of the operations of a community college might learn from business change management principles, the transition from being an associate-only granting institution to one that also confers baccalaureate nursing degrees remains insufficiently examined. Although there seems to be an initial perspective on this shift, delving deeper into research could enhance our understanding of this transformation. This literature review aims to identify existing research on best practices and gather evidence that offers guidance for operationalization and implementation strategies for BSN programs at community colleges. It will delve into processes, methodologies, and successful launch and management approaches for this degree program and identify gaps in the literature or areas upon which this study can expand.

NATIONAL WORKFORCE DEMANDS

The demand for nurses continues to rise in the U.S. (AACN, 2021a; Enlund, 2022; Flaubert et al., 2021). The Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing and others cite data projections that more than 275,000 nurses are going to be needed by 2030 (AACN, 2022; American Nurses Association, n.d.; Enlund, 2022; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2022; U.S. Department of Labor, 2022).

This number may be even higher than originally projected. Wracked by a pandemic and facing a shift in an aging population of nurses, this profession is at an even greater risk (Buerhaus et al., 2022; Enlund, 2022). A recent report released in April 2023, by the National Council of State Boards of Nursing ([NCSBN], 2023) states, “The data reveals that 100,000 nurses left the workforce during the pandemic and by 2027, almost 900,000, or almost one-fifth of 4.5 million total registered nurses, intend to leave the workforce, threatening the national health care system at large if solutions are not enacted.”

SHIFTING NURSING PIPELINE

The current workforce of nurses is reaching the age of retirement (Haddad, 2023) and at the same time, the profession is seeing a decline in younger nurses entering the field (Auerbach et al., 2022; Firth, 2022a). Approximately 30% of nurses will be eligible to retire within the next 10 to 15 years while younger nurses struggle to balance their career and family needs.

For those already in the field, nursing burnout is furthering the need for more nurses as hospitals and healthcare providers struggle to attract and retain nurses (Haddad, 2023). Add to this the difficulties faced by those who go into nursing and their likelihood to shift their career based upon their family’s needs, which can contribute to nurses cutting back their hours or leaving the profession (Firth, 2022b).

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor (2022) statistics, there will be almost 195,000 job openings for nursing every year for the next 10 years. The need for nurses is even greater where lower salaries or limited access to healthcare systems are found, such as in rural or underserved areas of the country (Enlund, 2022; Haddad, 2023). The most recent data suggests

that over 610,000 nurses intend to leave their jobs creating a crisis in meeting future healthcare needs (NCSBN, 2023).

Not only does the nursing pipeline need to be taken into consideration, but also the shifting needs inside the U.S. According to Census data, the U.S. population is aging and is currently entering a point in time where there are more adults that are 65 years and older than ever before. It is expected that there will be a 73% increase by 2029 (Haddad, 2023). In addition, issues such as an increase in mental health needs, the ability to have access to healthcare from a primary care health physician, and the need to address infant and other mortality rates intensify the draw on the resources of nursing staff (Flaubert et al., 2021).

The unmet demand for nurses affects staffing which is directly linked to patient care and outcomes (Enlund, 2022). Healthcare facilities want to not only meet the demands of their patients but are also more focused on hiring bachelor prepared nurses. Based upon a recent survey of over 600 nursing schools, nearly 30% of hospitals or health care organizations require their new nursing staff to have a bachelor degree. Over 70% use a bachelor degree as a preference during hiring of new staff (AACN, 2021a).

Nursing organizations and accrediting bodies support BSN preparation. The AACN has stated that it is essential that nurses have the bachelor-level credential of a bachelor of science or arts in nursing (AACN, 2000, 2016). The National Association of School Nurses (2021) agrees that a baccalaureate provides the “minimal preparation needed.”

The Organization for Associate Degree Nursing (OADN) advocates for the BSN to create opportunities for advancement among Associate Degree Nursing (ADN) community college graduates. In partnership with other key leaders in the National Education in Progression in

Nursing (NEPIN) collaborative, these professionals have committed to striving for “a goal of 90% of new ADN graduates achieving the BSN or higher by 2025” (Spivey & Meyer, 2019).

OADN (2019) states that associate degree-prepared nurses serve a distinct purpose and reinforces the significance of ADN registered nurses in addressing social, health, and community needs. With over half of new nurses yet to attain the BSN, OADN emphasizes ensuring that ADN nurses have seamless opportunities for both academic and career progression, while supporting the ADN's role in serving the unique culturally and economically diverse communities in which they work. The ADN nurses understand the systems and needs of this population when providing healthcare services. The ability for the ADN-prepared nurse to move forward is at the forefront of their mission (Spivey & Meyer, 2020).

The push toward bachelor-prepared nurses is ever-present across the spectrum of the medical field when considering employment or further education (Hudson, 2022; Indeed.com, 2023; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2022). Significant inroads have been made in advancing the number of bachelor-prepared nurses. There remains a substantial need for further progress. Since its initial report in 2010, the IOM has advocated for 80% of nurses to hold bachelor degrees, yet only 59% of nurses in the field currently meet this requirement (Rozko, 2021). The dedication to increasing the workforce credentials to the bachelor level has been an ongoing goal since that first IOM report. In 2022, 47% of licensed registered nurses initially entered the workforce with a bachelor degree with more than half arriving without a BSN (Smiley, 2023). Given the demand for BSNs, this highlights the necessity for BSN preparation alternatives.

CURRENT TRADITIONAL BACHELOR LEVEL NURSING PROGRAMS' LIMITATIONS

At a time when the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2022) indicates that this occupation will grow at 9% through 2026, which is faster than all other occupations, the NCSBN (2023) has identified this as a crisis. The need for BSN-prepared nurses is critical (AACN, 2021a; Bragg & Harmon, 2022; Christian, 2022), yet the capacity of universities' traditional nursing programs is limited (Noguchi, 2021; Sadler, 2022).

According to an AACN whitepaper, 2016 saw the inception of 88 new entry-level BSN programs nationwide. Simultaneously, RN to BSN completion programs experienced a growth rate of 76%. Despite these additional access points and shifting enrollments, the current programs cannot accommodate the increasing demand and prepare enough nurses to meet this BSN-prepared workforce need (AACN, 2023a, 2023b; National Education Progression in Nursing, 2021; Noguchi, 2021; Sadler, 2022).

The impact of the pandemic also has played a measurable role in nursing bachelor program enrollment. In 2020, the applicants for four-year BSN programs only increased by 1.3% (Auerbach et al., 2022). This may balance out as the world recovers from this crisis, but the long-term consequences of lower-than-expected enrollment in traditional BSN programs will have lasting implications (AACN, 2023b; Andel et al., 2022; Griffiths et al., 2018; Levins, 2023).

CLOSED DOOR

Students trying to enroll in a university baccalaureate degree nursing program may be faced with a closed door. As reported in an article for Pew Charitable Trust, many applicants for nursing programs were denied entry as the current nursing programs could not accommodate them (AACN, 2022; Krupnick, 2020). Limitations of resources or faculty, as well as other factors

such as student preparedness, have impacted nursing program capacity with over 90,000 BSN applicants turned away in 2021 (AACN, 2022; Firth, 2022b; Gaines, 2023b; Quinton, 2022).

NATIONAL MOVEMENT ALLOWING COMMUNITY COLLEGE BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN NURSING DEGREES

BSN programs had historically been offered at universities and four-year colleges. As the demands of the workforce have risen, so have the avenues to obtain a BSN degree through alternative methods (Farmer, 2017; NEPIN, n.d., 2021). The implementation of baccalaureate degrees at community colleges is a national trend that continues to grow (Bragg et al., 2022). Bachelor degrees that focus on nursing make up the highest percentage of bachelor degrees conferred at community colleges with the largest number found in the state of Florida (Bragg et al., 2022, p. 6).

In 2020, the OADN testified that over half of newly licensed Registered Nurses are graduating from community colleges (Spivey & Meyer, 2019). They argued that these associate degree nurses represent a “vital part of the nursing workforce,” and have a “crucial role in preserving nursing as a profession” (Spivey & Meyer, 2019, p. 1). Providing opportunities for advancement for these students is essential (OADN, 2000). The NEPIN alliance believes alternative models of BSN education provide a strong pathway for associate degree nursing students (NEPIN, n.d.).

OPEN DOOR

Community colleges provide access to students through an open-door policy (Dougherty et al., 2017; Oliver, 1995; Rao, 2004). The differences in the nature of students entering community colleges versus those who begin traditionally is found in the very foundation of the

community college system (Adams-Mahaley, 2016); therefore, the ability for students seeking opportunities to further their education and employment status is one that addresses access and equity, especially for non-traditional students (Bragg & Durham, 2012).

EQUITY AND ACCESS

Equity, access, and an opportunity for success are key tenets of community college missions and admissions (Bragg & Durham, 2012). Their more diverse nature (CCRC, n.d.a), their attraction for non-traditional students (Gierdowski, 2019), and their focus on the success is unique to this population and is the key to unlocking the doors for many (Bragg & Durham, 2012; Dimino, 2019).

OPERATIONALIZATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

Successfully operationalizing and implementing a BSN program at a community college requires effective management of all impacted components on campus for the program to be sustainable and successful.

DEFINING THE TERMS

For the purposes of this study, the term “operationalization” refers to the process of obtaining data, reporting, processes, and other features needed prior to the launching of the program. The term “implementation” refers to the actual BNS program launch. This may include actions taken by the registrar, admissions, financial aid, academic deans, faculty, information technology, and institutional research or other stakeholders. These terms are consistent within higher education management (Law Insider, n.d.a, n.d.b).

OPERATIONALIZING THE CAMPUS

A literature search was conducted for operationalization and implementation and other like terms within the construct of higher education. The literature review uncovered very little research that referenced the actual methods of preparing a college's operationalization elements or expanded on the processes required for implementation. The majority of the literature centered on identifying curriculum management, establishing key decisions needed to create the curriculum (Office of the Provost, Northwestern, n.d.b) or a list of internal policies or processes to follow for submission to meet the institution's requirements (Office of the Provost, Northwestern, n.d.a; University of South Florida, 2015). Regulations and state policies were identified (California State University, n.d.). Checklists and other types of tools were identified addressing program "fit" with costs and benefits to the institution (Office of the Provost, Northwestern, n.d.a). Detailed plans to align curriculum to learning outcomes were available (California State University, 2021). However, these documents focused on high-level institutional benefits or curricular content considerations. None of the resources identified specifics needed from a front-line operations perspective.

The literature lacked guidance for leading an institution through the process of operationalization and implementation, despite making references to program efficacy and sustainability based on levels of dedication to campus operations, institutional and student champions, and involvement of faculty and other stakeholders.

Organizations that focus on higher education develop strategic-level information such as the American Association of Colleges and University (AACU) development of high impact practices. These practices include teaching elements like developing learning communities,

encouraging undergraduate research, or providing a writing intensive course (Kuh, 2008). A search in literature or on the internet reveals a plethora of degrees, training opportunities, and resources for education that focus on pedagogy and how to manage learning. Using key phrases such as “managing program planning” leads to resources such as guides for educators to achieve and measure outcomes (Kekahio et al., 2014).

A literature search turns up a plethora great deal of information to establish a program's review from federal, state, or institutional levels. These guidelines often direct institutions towards accreditation or alignment with federal compliance. (Conrad & Wilson, 1985; Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Colleges [SACSCOC], 2020; State University System of Florida, n.d.; U.S. Department of Education, 2017).

A search for operational practices reveals articles focusing on hiring practices, the importance of including of stakeholders, managing resources, or other types of change management techniques and considerations (Gajendragadkar et al., 2019). This search uncovers companies that may assist in navigating complex higher educational systems or offer software solutions for managing campus data needed for operational purposes (Deloitte, n.d.; Ellucian, n.d.; Hanover Research, n.d.).

NURSING PROGRAM AND ACCREDITATION GUIDANCE

A broader literature search reveals accreditation guidance. Accrediting agencies have specific requirements within review processes when an educational institution wants to make a substantive change such as offering a new program or seeking a degree level that is higher than what was previously available (Higher Learning Commission, n.d.b; SACSCOC, n.d.b). Accrediting agencies have extensive requirements that must be demonstrated to obtain approval for

accreditation expansion for an additional degree (Higher Learning Commission, n.d.a; SACSCOC, n.d.a).

The two primary accrediting bodies in the United States for nursing programs are the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN) and the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE). These organizations provide guidance to institutions who offer nursing programs through alignment with their standards for accreditation (Gaines, 2023a). Each offers an online manual to assist with the accreditation process (ACEN, 2023; Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education, 2023). However, just as with the regional accreditation or state board requirements, their focus typically does not address the details of organizational operationalization or implementation. These organizations provide minimal detail or information on the pragmatic and literal steps that an educational institution needs to take to prepare and implement a BSN program.

RELEVANT LITERATURE FOR INTEGRATING COMMUNITY COLLEGE BACHELOR DEGREES

A few resources analyzed the ways in which baccalaureate programs are initiated at community colleges in a way that would allow the reader to extract information about operationalization and implementation. Farmer et al. (2017) described the findings from three community college leaders who implemented community college bachelor in nursing programs. Bragg et al. (2022) detailed the strategies in their book *20 Promising Practices to Advance Quality, Equity, and Success in Community College Baccalaureate (CCB) Degree Programs*. Perhaps most closely related, an earlier case study profile by McKinney and Morris (2010) provided insights into the adoption of bachelor degrees at community colleges, creating a foundation upon which further analysis could be built.

Farmer et al. (2017) focused not only on the rationale for offering BSN programs at community colleges, but also expanded on managing transitions, determining leadership roles, and the manner in which student services, tuition, accreditation (both regional as well as professional), and faculty credentials could be managed. References focused on admissions, advising, and financial aid management, as well as support systems for students. Specific examples of credit hours and transferability were considered. These instances provide a framework for the implementation process which organizations can use to begin discussions at their institutions. However, specifics for each area were not provided.

The broadest view in the literature research was found in Bragg et al.'s (2022) book, *20 Promising Practices to Advance Quality, Equity, and Success in Community College Baccalaureate (CCB) Degree Programs*. This work focused heavily on advising students through their baccalaureate pathway as a part of a model for "promising practices." It examined not only BSN programs, but other discipline major areas where students' shifting needs are met through various considerations such as design strategies, modality of learning, the need for alignment of services, and an awareness of the students' experience through feedback or continuous quality improvement viewpoints. The report strongly focused on the specific admissions process differentiating competitive and noncompetitive models.

Bragg et al. (2022) mentioned the need for inclusion of inter-related cross-institutional departments such as student support services, career development, admissions, registration, financial aid, records, advising, testing, tutoring, library, and marketing to ensure students are being served. It did not, however, delve more deeply into the operational or implementation practices of these areas.

While neither the Bragg et al. (2022) nor the Farmer (2017) reports provided a full and comprehensive view of the operationalization and implementation methods used across institutions, the examples provided allow for a basis of knowledge upon which further study can be built. Each may serve as a frame for institutional discussion; however, this literature does not delve deeply and broadly enough across the institutions to inform specific practices.

The study by McKinney and Morris (2010) is likely the most significant evaluation of operationalization and implementation that was discovered during the literature review. Using a case study model with two community colleges in Florida, the focus of this study was identifying the “opportunities and challenges community colleges are likely to encounter when launching a four-year degree program” (p. 2). Specifically, their research revealed insights from the following questions:

Research Question 1: How do executive leaders at community colleges manage the organizational change accompanying the introduction of a four-year degree program on their campuses?

Research Question 2: What specific changes in institutional policy and practice occur at community colleges as a result of introducing a four-year degree program?

Adopting the viewpoint from an organizational change model, this study revealed implementation aspects across various areas of the organizations, including admissions and financial aid, academic services, marketing, staffing, and budgeting. Whereas most literature on this topic only focused on policy or approval level decisions, McKinney and Morris’s (2010) study also addressed the need for internal and external buy-in and planning from a change-management perspective, often offering details about the experience. According to McKinney and Morris, this study resulted in research intended to, “help demystify the organizational change” (p. 14) which, in turn, would allow community colleges to evaluate their own

institution's needs. This current study references back to McKinney and Morris's (2010) findings. Their work provides additional insights into major themes and experiences at community colleges implementing BSN degrees.

CHANGES IN EDUCATION

It has been thirteen years since the McKinney and Morris's (2010) study, and education has changed considerably since then (Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, 2021). Frontline issues have continued to emerge. Funding has shifted (Mitchell et al., 2019; PEW, 2019), and student debt has increased at remarkable rates (Espinosa et al., 2019; Federal Reserve Bank of New York, 2023). Political, economic, and social impact issues have risen to the top of the dialogue on higher education (Coudriet, 2020; Reeves, 2019). Efforts to manage academic skills remediation has shifted with a national focus on entrance requirements and developmental education practices as institutions have had to adapt their practices (Bickerstaff et al., 2021; CCRC, n.d.a; Shultz & Backstrom, 2021). Technology has had a monumental impact, especially since the advent of COVID-19 (Levine & Van Pelt, 2021; Talib et al., 2021).

CHANGES IN STUDENTS

In addition, students entering community colleges are different. Graduating high school students are more diverse (Seltzer, 2016). The middle class is shrinking (Horowitz et al., 2020); therefore, students entering college have fewer financial resources, leaving more students with more debt than ever before (Espinosa et al., 2019). Student readiness has shifted with a high percentage of students taking remedial courses, particularly at community colleges. This has led

to extended timelines for degree completion and increased likelihood of students discontinuing their college education altogether (CCRC, n.d.a).

CHANGES WITHIN INSTITUTIONS

Institutional issues such as changes in enrollment, student demographics, and student involvement may have shifted the focus for many institutions (CCRC, n.d.a; National Center for Education Statistics, n.d.). The cost of administering educational resources has continued to rise along with tuition increases (Commonfund, 2022). As a result, the national news has focused on these changes, discussing the burdens of student debt and the return on investment for higher education at the forefront (Childers, 2019). In addition to this, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic challenged students' readiness to navigate online learning (Chung et al., 2020; Quilantan, 2021).

The findings of McKinney and Morris (2010) did not address the current events that have more recently evolved. As examples:

- University limitations to enrollment were presented as a rationale for offering the BSN; however, more recent shifting demands and their impact on how the organizations function were not the focus.
- Demographic changes in increasing diversity were addressed as justification for BSN programs considering place-bound and nontraditional student access issues. This issue has continued to advance since McKinney and Morris was published.
- Distance education was recognized as the model for student teaching. However, the adjustments students made to cope with the impacts of COVID-19 were not addressed.

While the intent of this study is not to comprehensively pinpoint these educational, student, and institutional changes within the case study, it remains crucial to acknowledge the evolution of these and other attributes or encounters. Although the overarching identification

of some of these concerns might remain consistent, the altered student experience could heighten urgency and risk for these individuals. It could also unveil changes in organizational management and practices to address these requirements that are a result of this evolution.

FOCUS ON NURSING

The McKinney and Morris (2010) study examined the development of any baccalaureate degree at community colleges, whereas this new study is focused solely on the experiences of launching a BSN program. Nursing students and nursing programs are different. Given the clinical settings and other unique requirements of these programs, the ability to engage the students is paramount to meeting their unique cognitive, emotional, and motivational needs (Ghasemi et al., 2020; Trowler, 2010).

CONCLUSION

The literature review for this study aimed to explore the scholarly work and practices about how community colleges operationalized or implemented a BSN program. Searches of various academic sources, organizations related to nursing and higher education, and broadly across sectors of potential sources revealed that, other than the study conducted by McKinney and Morris (2010), there was very little published research in this area.

The McKinney and Morris (2010) study has set a historical frame upon which to build and evaluate these new findings. The absence of further in-depth prior studies beyond summaries and high-level concepts provides a unique opportunity for this research to contribute original insights, knowledge, and opportunities in this field of study. By following a concrete methodology of gathering, analyzing, and reporting data, this study seeks to provide

insights into the processes at one institution that may be useful to the wider educational community.

CHAPTER 3: METHODS

INTRODUCTION

This study utilized a case study approach to explore the challenges associated with introducing a BSN program at a community college. This method facilitates a comprehensive understanding from the viewpoint of a single institution. It enables the identification of the changes and impacts, laying the groundwork for an in-depth examination of their operationalization and implementation. By focusing on one specific institution, the research could be effectively managed and offer a practical and real-life illustration of the community college's experience. This targeted perspective allowed for a more profound analysis and considerations by opening avenues for meaningful insights and potential practical applications in the future.

While existing literature has examined the high-level political, policy, legislative, or philosophical practices for community colleges when implementing BSN programs, the question of how to implement a BSN program from an operational level has not yet been fully discussed. To understand the tangible, pragmatic, and applied consequences of these changes, the case study focused on conducting interviews with a set of community college professionals who had direct or indirect involvement in the development and implementation of a BSN at a specific institution. This method of data collection provided an informative pathway to create clarity of actual practices, outcomes, and recommendations.

The study's design was guided by a framework based on constructivism grounded theory for a qualitative analysis. This approach allowed for an inductive process with a structured frame of questions intended to reveal the perspective of each participant in this study. The basis and principles of grounded theory are described in this chapter. In addition, this chapter will review the key research questions, the methods and tools used to collect and analyze the data, descriptions of the participants and the setting, and the study's limitations and delimitations.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

According to Jennifer Cleland, in *Researching Medical Education* (2022), a theoretical framework for research is pivotal to the methods and strategies used to conduct a study that seeks to identify phenomena that informs knowledge and understanding.

SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVISM

Constructivism is the belief that we learn through a process of inquiry and a construction of knowledge. Within this framework, researchers can systematically and methodically uncover perspectives and truths that can lead to qualitative discoveries that can inform research, teaching, and learning. Constructivists believe that while current theories are relevant, they may also be subjective and must be considered through a socially constructed lens. Theories are to be revised based upon new learning and understanding. While measures to reduce bias are followed, constructivist research draws on the experience of research participants to help form the knowledge, understanding that their own participation may create

subjectivity and may create limitations to generalizability. (Adom, Yeboah, and Ankrah, 2016; Thompson, 2017).

APPLICATION OF CONSTRUCTIVISM IN THIS RESEARCH

It is within this social constructivism context that this study was conducted. Following a grounded theory approach, the study applied an analytical analysis of the content. Using methods of inquiry, it sought an investigation of concepts and themes to gain insights and understanding. It employed an iterative and comparative process to ensure strong evidence in the study's content and conclusions which is supported through the literature (Charmaz, 2016; Hussein et al., 2014; Rashid et al., 2019).

The analysis of operationalization and implementation had not yet been fully researched; therefore, this study relied upon the gained experiences of the professionals who are responsible for this practice. This research was based upon a case study performed at one community college using a grounded theory constructivist qualitative methodology and analysis based upon the structured phased interview approach with a select group of participants. The theoretical approach of constructivism allowed for the foundation of this information to be established as a frame for deeper dialogue among community college professionals.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study focused on the following key research questions as a frame for gathering each participant's perspectives, allowing the researcher to find patterns, and meaning based upon their experiences:

1. In what ways do community colleges that implement a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree program shift requirements or practices for managing information, processes, or reporting?

2. How does the implementation of a BSN degree program at a community college affect individual and departmental roles, responsibilities, or daily work?
3. In what manner does the implementation of a BSN degree program at a community college affect or create relationships or collaboration across or outside of the college?
4. What were the lessons learned and recommendations that could be shared after the implementation of a BSN degree program at a community college?

METHODOLOGY

The methodology and design of the research used a convenience and purposive expert sample to complete this case study (Palinkas, et al., 2015). The convenience sampling method acknowledges the institution's targeted availability based on the college's willingness to participate; however, the purposive sampling method indicates the accessibility to individuals who were directly involved in the operationalization and implementation of the Bachelor of Science in Nursing program while acknowledging the limitations faced by this study. Data were collected through a set of individual or group interviews using an interview framework of questions which guided the discussion. Interviews were conducted in synchronous online sessions (utilizing Zoom software) and were recorded for the purpose of analysis and accuracy of reporting. Recordings were transcribed and my observation notes were used as a clarifier and validation of the qualitative data analysis.

GROUNDING THEORY METHODOLOGY

According to Baškarada (2014), the use of case studies is the most prolific type of research for qualitative studies. The use of a grounded theory methodology formed the basis of this qualitative case study capitalizing on the opportunity for learning. Grounded theory provides the breadth of a constructivist paradigm and pragmatic inquiry model that can lead to

greater insights (Charmaz, 2016; Hussein et al., 2014). This framed process allows for the discovery of themes, conceptual categories, and interpretations versus the proving or disproving of a pre-identified thesis (Hussein et al., 2014).

Following a structured phased approach helped ensure a high level of rigor in the case study qualitative analysis. It is essential to follow a structured set of stages to guide the process including planning the design, preparing for and collecting the research, evaluating the analysis, and sharing of this information (Baškarada, 2014). This included establishing the research concepts, inquiry techniques, and protocols that resulted in an effective categorization and coding of the research data. The basis of categorizing involved an empirical interpretation through validation of the concepts through triangulation of reviewing of transcriptions, evaluating field notes, and requesting feedback for clarity as needed (Rashid et al., 2019).

RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS, TOOLS, AND PROCESSES

The process of participant selection, the creation of the research instrument, and the overall management of the study were all aligned with the grounded theory constructivist approach. This methodology led to the identification of themes and categories that could be effectively coded and reported.

PARTICIPANTS

Identifying Participants

Beginning in August 2022, an email request for participation was sent to multiple community colleges that had implemented a BSN program at their institution. One college was selected to participate for the case study. On October 24, 2022, a phone call and then follow-up

email connection was made with key administrators at a Florida institution that became the focus of this case study.

I received approval from the participating college's Institutional Review Board (IRB) to conduct this study with their faculty and staff (Appendix A). Two key administrators assisted in making connections with individuals who would be beneficial to the development of this research.

Participants were identified for their expertise in their role at the community college, are currently or were employed at the study's college, and were anticipated to have either direct or indirect knowledge of the implementation of the BSN program. The process of recruiting and identifying the pool of participants was managed through an invitation via phone and email to the college's IRB committee.

Twelve requests or attempts to contact potential participants were made. The final number of seven participants were determined by availability and access, resulting in a 58% response rate. This BSN program was launched in 2017. While there was a great willingness to support this research from the institution, there were many who had since retired, moved onto other institutions or organizations, or were unavailable due to time or scheduling constraints.

Description of the Participants

Five of the participants were still employed full time by the institution, although their roles may have changed since the implementation of the BSN program. Four of the full-time employees had been promoted to higher level jobs, retaining a connection to the operations of the BSN program, while the fifth continued in the same role. One of the seven participants had retired from their primary role and returned to teach part time at this institution. Only one

participant was no longer directly connected to the institution; however, they remain affiliated with higher education through their leadership at a national organization.

The organizational roles of the study participants at the time of the BSN implementation spanned from a vice-president and dean level of authority to a staff or faculty member specialization. This group encompassed individuals with diverse responsibilities across the institution, each bringing a wealth of experiences based upon the specific department in which they worked.

As the participant's departments varied in their representation, so too did the degree of their participation in the operationalization or implementation of the BSN program. This variance was anticipated to provide a breadth of knowledge from multiple perspectives. Each participant who was interviewed either directly experienced the launching of the program or were privy to the impact and changes that have occurred as a result of, or since, its implementation.

Some were deeply pivotal to the process, whereas others came in after the fact. Two were not employed at the college during the implementation but arrived in the same year of its launch and had post-operationalization perspectives as well as shared historical institutional knowledge.

The study's participants' higher education experience ranged between 10 and 40 years. Collectively, they represented approximately 160 years of knowledge, skills, and attitudes upon which to draw insight. All participants that were available completed their involvement with the study resulting in a 0% attrition rate.

INTERVIEW TOOL AND SET-UP

Interview Questions

Using the research questions as a guide, open-ended interview questions were developed within a framework that provided consistency in data collection across respondents (Appendix B). This interview frame provided continuity in the introduction and facilitation of the discussion, while leaving open a generative and iterative process for constructivism which aligned to a grounded theory process. This semi-structured interview frame follows the standard protocols for qualitative data gathering and analysis (Baškarada, 2014). The interview questions were asked as written with the only deviations based on clarity and direction of the dialogue for discovery purposes. Follow-up requests for more details or clarifications were used to gain a better understanding of both the content and the individual's experience and opinions.

Interview Sessions Scheduling

There were six interview session meetings scheduled. Meeting appointments were arranged to have discourse with the available staff, faculty, or administrators within key departments who were instrumental in the implementation of the BSN program or were privy to its impact. Five of the interview sessions were arranged individually with each participant. The sixth interview was arranged with two participants, due to scheduling constraints.

Each interview session was scheduled for 90 minutes as a standard practice to provide enough time for introductions, complete the frame of interview questions, and for the concluding salutations. A template was used to consistently manage interview requests and communications (Appendix C).

I requested each interview session be electronically recorded. Participants were sent the appropriate link to log in specifying the dates and times once permission had been granted. Once an agreed upon date and time was established, the link was sent, and a general consent form (Appendix D) was sent for signature. The form indicated any risks, benefits, and assured confidentiality and the participant's rights before the session was recorded. The informed consent process completed prior to the interview.

DATA COLLECTION

The process of data collection was facilitated through the recording and transcription of five interview sessions which averaged 74 minutes. Research field notes were captured during the time of the interview sessions and were evaluated for accuracy immediately afterward to best capture the accuracy of the shared experiences, knowledge, and insights.

DATA PREPARATION, ANALYSIS, AND CODING

The data was prepared, organized, analyzed, and coded in a structured way that facilitated an evaluation of each unique perspective of the participant's experience and knowledge, while allowing for a synthesis of broader understandings.

PREPARING THE DATA FOR ANALYSIS

The recorded Zoom meetings were transcribed by a professional transcription service, GoTranscript using practices that maintain confidentiality and security, as well as guaranteed accuracy (Appendix E). For added assurance, a signed confidentiality agreement was provided (Appendix F). Transcription files were received for each interview session in Microsoft Word format. All transcribed data files were exported into a Microsoft Excel file. This prepared the

data for a systematic line-by-line review to reveal the major categories and allowed organizing the data into columns, thus adding coding in an efficient and consistent way. The use of technology as an aid to coding data is an acceptable practice for qualitative analysis; however, it is used with the intent to provide assistance and not to replace the analyst's evaluation, segmentation, and reporting of the data (Baškarada, 2014).

Confidentiality was insured through the replacement of participants' names and the names of other professionals, institutions, and organizations mentioned by the respondents. In addition, the data were cleaned of any errors that would interrupt the precision of the data. While many facets of data cleaning are considered, especially for big data issues (Chu & Ilyas, 2016), the intent was to create a set of data that would be accurate and more easily managed during the analysis and coding phase of this relatively small set of interviews.

ANALYSIS AND CODING

Following the model consistent with a grounded theory model of research (Rashid et al., 2019), the open coding line-by-line analysis of the data was conducted to identify broad themes and develop coding structures. As described by Chenail (2012), this process focuses on uncovering the meaningful aspects of the data using an iterative process of analysis.

The research notes and recordings were thoroughly analyzed to extract individual perspectives. These insights were then compiled with responses from other participants, creating a compilation of information that significantly contributed to informing the results of this study through the identification of themes and broad perspectives.

The process involved identifying general themes that were overarching beginning with the initial interview and then analyzing statements from participants to begin to distribute the

concepts across these themes, adjusting as appropriate. I returned to the identified concepts under each theme and differentiated nuances. The information was separated and placed into the subheading of the theme and a coding system was applied. This process was repeated and re-evaluated to ensure consistency and accuracy in the analysis, minimize potential researcher bias, and validate the findings through referencing the research notes, cross-reference of data, or viewing the recorded interview when clarification or context was needed.

CONCLUSION

The grounded theory constructivist method of collecting individual perspectives through interviews broadly across the case study's institution created the breadth and depth of understanding leading to the identification of clear and beneficial themes within the data. This method and process established a platform of information and provided a foundation for contemplating the practical application of best practices in the operationalization and implementation of a BSN program at a community college.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the findings from the qualitative data analysis of the interviews in the case study of a single community college's introduction of the BSN program. The purpose of this study was to investigate the necessary changes a community college must undergo to facilitate the operationalization and implementation of a BSN program. The intent of this research focused on the actual impact on systems and people. Its focus was on a pragmatic perspective through an experiential lens.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Research questions were investigated using a frame of questions intended to guide the conversation but not limit its opportunity to gather information helpful to inform this research.

These are:

1. In what ways do community colleges that implement a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree program shift requirements or practices for managing information, processes, or reporting?
2. How does this implementation affect individual and departmental roles, responsibilities, or daily work?
3. In what manner does this implementation affect or create relationships or collaboration across or outside of the college?
4. What were the lessons learned and recommendations that could be shared?

DATA COLLECTION

The data were collected from one community college that implemented a BSN degree program through a grounded theory methodology using a structured-phased approach. The interview questions can be found in Appendix B. The data were then coded following an open-coding methodology to categorize and synthesize broad themes, which is common across qualitative analysis methods (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Rashid et al., 2019).

PARTICIPANTS

The participants ranged from high-level administrators, including vice presidents and deans, as well as faculty and staff from various departments. Each participant had experienced the operationalization and implementation, and their vantage point may have differed from others with diverse responsibilities.

STRUCTURED PHASED APPROACH

The data reflect this divergent and expansive view. However, despite differing vantage points, the data reflected common aspects that stretched across the institution. The structured-phased approach enabled individual experiences to emerge while also connecting common elements to understand the underlying patterns and their impact on the overall outcome (Baškarada, 2014).

MAJOR THEMES

The data were evaluated to identify major themes and to codify the findings for further analysis. (Rashid et al., 2019). As discussions unfolded, common topics continued to be brought

forward by the participants that were then clarified and strengthened in their remarks. The following major recurring themes emerged from the data with the most frequently represented topics at the top and the least at the bottom:

- Internal collaboration
- Barriers and concerns
- Students' experience
- Curriculum development
- Leadership
- State policies
- Multi-institutional collaboration
- External partners' engagement
- Faculty
- Financing of the project
- Accreditation
- Process and progress

ALIGNMENT WITH THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The alignment between the research questions and these thematic findings reflected the objectives of the study. Each of the themes intersected with the research questions owing to the interconnected nature of the experiences and insights shared. Each theme explored various aspects and details concerning process management, role and responsibility changes, and the importance of cultivating collaborative partnerships. Each thematic finding revealed lessons that could be learned.

SUBTHEMES

These detailed divisions of data further delineated strategies, experiences, and aspects of the themes at a more defined level for examination and validation of common understandings. They outlined the “who, what, where, why, and how” of each broad category, which created a deeper understanding of the findings. An evaluation of these recurring categories brought forward the most pertinent and typical elements to provide insight into these data.

FINDINGS

The primary themes and related findings that emerged and are most closely aligned to the research questions are internal collaboration, students’ experience, curriculum development, and barriers and concerns. Each of these areas will be discussed in more detail.

INTERNAL COLLABORATION

The theme of internal collaboration was, by far, the most frequently referenced topic, comprising approximately 30% of the responses. Every participant in the study indicated the need for interdepartmental collaboration.

Respondents identified a wide variety of departments that they felt needed to be included in the operationalization and implementation of the BSN program. These include the following ranked by order of frequency in the data:

Advising/advisor

Admissions

Curriculum and academics

Library

Registrar/registration

Financial Aid

Finance/budget

Catalog

Communications

Marketing

Institutional research

Student finance

Schedule building

Business

Distance learning

Cross-Functional Teams

When discussing the necessity for collaboration, all participants mentioned how their institution leveraged existing interdepartmental structures. They emphasized the institution's common practice of using cross-functional teams for informing internal stakeholders, engaging different levels of the organization, and resolving issues around the development, operationalization, and implementation of new academic programs or other high-stakes issues.

Multiple participants cited various committees. The teams mentioned included a program managers group for all baccalaureate programs, a high-level leader/middle-management team that focused on program integration, and a team responsible for the functional aspects of integration. These committees met on a continuous and regularly scheduled basis each semester, creating a systematic communication channel to keep program development or improvements moving forward.

Each committee served its specific purpose, with only the necessary attendees present. Participants pointed out that some teams were campus-wide and strategic, like the groups overseeing change management during new program implementation, while others were explicitly operational, such as the transfer evaluation team that had a more defined purpose. Each committee was specifically identified by more than one participant, with all participants acknowledging the importance of committees and their collaborative efforts.

Managing Projects

The BSN program was not the institution's first baccalaureate-level program. The college had already developed several other bachelor's degrees in the decade before launching the BSN degree. As reported by the participants, the college had already built systems, managed data, and shifted many processes during that initial bachelor program's development. They also identified roles and processes that were defined across the institution to assist with the strategic management of the projects.

Systems to Manage Projects

Only one participant indicated that the college had created a "change management ticket system" which was used to initiate action across multiple departments and cross-functional teams; however, they spoke about it extensively enough that it warranted further review. Although the word "ticket" was not frequently specifically used by others, multiple respondents referred to a similarly framed process that would prompt action. This was used when large projects were considered or implemented, such as the introduction of new curricula like the BSN program.

The college had hired a project manager to collaborate with key stakeholders, including the administrators, faculty, and program managers. In addition, a role of faculty project director was identified specifically for the BSN. These roles allowed the organization to strategically establish timelines and organize systems in a focused manner. They also allowed the college to work expeditiously with efficiency and momentum once the project was underway.

Departmental Preparation as a Part of Collaboration

The prior establishment of multiple baccalaureate degrees influenced the data regarding how departments prepared for the BSN program. Just as the college had cross-functional teams and change management systems already in place, some of the departments were already prepared for the needs of adding a new bachelor's degree.

Making a Shift Versus Large-Scale Changes

For many departments, large-scale changes were unnecessary. Respondents reported that by the time the BSN was developed, the registrar, in collaboration with the transfer evaluation team and other campus personnel, had already established protocols for managing college course transcripts, issuing diplomas, and aligning the process to transfer credits into the institution as a bachelor-granting college.

Likewise, it was reported that Institutional Research, Financial Aid, Information Technology, and Registration already had established processes. Accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) to offer upper-level courses and baccalaureate degrees had already been granted.

As Participant D stated,

With our system, a lot of the departments actually handle system setup and configuration, and since this was not our first bachelor's degree, a lot of that framework, that groundwork, had already been laid. So, a lot of the setup could be done by the department whether that was cataloging curriculum, whether that was students, even down to student financial aid and financials with the fees set up and things of that nature.

Although many changes had already been implemented, all participants were able to describe aspects of what occurred during the initial development of the baccalaureate program. The participants were either directly or indirectly involved in the earlier bachelor's degree development, or they had knowledge of the changes through historical references and their roles within the institution.

Adapting to a BSN-Level Nursing Program

All respondents indicated that implementing the BSN program required an adaptation within their respective departments' established systems. This approach accommodated the program's nursing-focused content, data, and information while addressing the unique needs of the students. The respondents also addressed distinctive situations specific to the BSN program that were not identified as needs in the previous bachelor programs. For example, unlike other bachelor programs, participants stated that the BSN program required limited competitive enrollment that was unique to this student population. The institution had already been managing this same type of process for the ADN program. However, a shift was needed for admissions requirements to allow students who entered the BSN program with an RN license to also qualify. This required a change in the process for verification of entering students' transcripts and credentials.

Likewise, the distance learning areas and some of the faculty were accustomed to creating learning management systems (LMS) shells and content for courses on their campus.

However, not all faculty were trained. Additionally, since the BSN program was developed collaboratively with three other institutions, the college had to establish a shared LMS shell that could be utilized across all institutions, ensuring a seamless experience for the students.

Advising and Admissions on the Front Line

While multiple departments or operational areas were repeatedly mentioned by individuals in reference to cross-functional teams and preparations, all participants identified collaborations with advising and admissions as the most crucial aspect of this institutional transformation. These two departments and roles crossed over multiple themes, as their involvement was interrelated to many aspects of the operationalization and implementation of the original efforts to build the BSN, as well as subsequent changes that have occurred since the program's launch.

According to every participant, student advising was seen as the frontline view of the students' experience. They stressed that it was essential to include advisors early in the development process to ensure that current and prospective students were well-informed about new BSN completion opportunities and forthcoming changes, particularly for students already enrolled in classes. It was also seen as critical to inform new students and to build excitement around the new BSN program.

Participant A stated,

We wanted our students, not only the ones that we've had but the ones out in the community that are coming back. When we accepted a new class of ADN students, they were accepted into the ADN and provisionally into the BSN.

In addition to helping students on the front end, the data supported that advising assisted others across campus to evaluate and support the whole student life cycle. Their

involvement would improve the experience for students, faculty, and staff. As an example, respondents noted that advising works closely with the Program Manager and Dean to develop or incorporate any curricular changes into a program pathway that shows all courses needed to get to graduation. Participant E stated, "It's hard to navigate the college experience. Especially for first-generation students. It's very hard to navigate it. That's where they rely on [advising]."

Advising then worked with the students to ensure that they are taking courses that would allow them to graduate. This may include choosing a new catalog year or adhering to the requirements of the old, adjusting the students' plans, and identifying substitutions when the changes benefit the student.

Respondents report that advising works with enrollment services to streamline students' experience to be sure the transfer, credit evaluation, and degree audit are accurate. Working collaboratively across departments eases the burden on students and is seen as an ongoing need. As one participant stated,

We've been working closely with a bunch of different departments on trying to make sure that that's better. There's always room for improvement so it's never going to be perfect. We always find tweaking here and there, little things, but it really does take a village to advise these students because there's so many things that happen at the college and everyone works in their own little department.

Despite all participants stating that advising's involvement during development was critical, not all agreed on the actual experience of this involvement. Two respondents reported on several factors that provided a useful background for understanding the roles of advising and admissions.

At the time of the initial launch of the BSN program, associate and bachelor advising occurred in two separate departments. Admissions' responsibilities were also treated

differently with bachelor's admissions managed through the bachelor-level advisor. However, in 2021, due to pandemic-related staffing constraints, the college streamlined their processes into one advising responsibility regardless of degree level and separated out admissions to be managed through enrollment services for all students.

The shift in staffing was reported by only two of the participants; however, the change is essential to note as it influenced the data. As an example, all agreed that the advisors were involved. However, according to one participant the lower level advising areas, including the ADN or AA, were not directly involved in the process of designing, operationalizing, or implementing the BSN.

One participant stated,

The actual implementation on that was more on the actual academic affairs department. Student Affairs were just the cheerleaders saying, "This is a great idea. [They're] here to help in any way, and [they'll] let students know, and provide the pipeline for them as soon as we get this off the ground."

The references to advisors' involvement needed to be taken into consideration based upon the timing of the participants' own interactions and to whom they may have been referring in their answers.

Five participants indicated that at the program's inception, student admissions to the BSN were managed collaboratively between the advisor and program manager and the other stakeholders across the college. Not all participants differentiated baccalaureate-level from associate-level advisors in their direct responses; however, the data were clear upon review once the delineation was revealed. Responsibilities changed in workflow beginning in 2021 once the shift in staffing and roles had been implemented.

Regardless of the timing of the participant's involvement, all participants indicated that the advising staffing was not enough to effectively manage the workload. In addition, all participants cited admissions as essential in the development, operationalization, and implementation of the BSN program.

Program Manager Collaboration

This institution had a program manager to assist with the implementation of the BSN and coordinate cross-departmental communication. The collaboration of the program manager was mentioned many times by five of the seven participants. The BSN program manager was hired to act on behalf of the curriculum and academic area from the faculty pool who were involved in the ADN program. Their role was to not only manage the development of the program to its launch, but also the ongoing continuous improvements that would be of benefit to the students, faculty, and institution.

The participants shared that the BSN program manager collaborated with individual departments and served on committees to provide insight and guidance. Six of the seven respondents reported that they were involved across many aspects of the implementation and subsequent management, including collaboration with:

Advising and admissions

Faculty

Administration

Facilities

Community

College partners

Librarians

Students

Accreditation agencies

In addition to their involvement in the initial development, the Program Manager fulfilled responsibilities such as assisting with the evaluation of courses or keeping others on campus informed about programmatic changes. The Program Manager's relationship with advising was seen as critical. As an example, Program Managers worked with deans and advisors to provide the opportunity to proactively anticipate the impacts of changes. As one participant stated,

A lot of times, a curriculum change may negatively impact a certain group of students, and that's something that advisors have... that direct knowledge. You can do that and that's great, but here's the negative. How are we going to handle that when it comes up? Because we know it will come up.

BSN STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES

Each participant indicated that the nursing students entering the BSN program had unique needs that differentiated this baccalaureate program from the ones already established. The findings revealed that the design of the BSN program and the institution's entry points impacted the students' path to entering the program and how their courses and credits were managed. In addition, aspects such as licensing and unique admissions requirements also had bearing.

ADN to BSN Program versus University Traditional Pathway

According to five of the participants, the BSN program was developed as a "2+2" type of program. This focus revealed several aspects found in the data that indicated the distinctive nature of the students' experience.

All licensed registered nurse in the U.S. must successfully complete the National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses. This is referred to as the NCLEX-RN exam, which is a rigorous assessment of skills and competencies to become a registered nurse as identified by the National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN, n.d.). The ADN program prepares students to complete the NCLEX-RN exam.

By building the BSN program as a 2+2 program, the expectation was that students entering the BSN program were required to have either completed an ADN program and were ready to complete the RN version of the NCLEX exam, or they would have already passed the exam and were qualified to be a licensed registered nurse.

The first point of entry depended on the students who would apply to the BSN program. Students were presented with multiple tracks to becoming a nurse. Students entering the college as freshmen did not have any restrictions to begin completing courses to meet their general education requirements. However, once the students entered the ADN or BSN programs, the courses were restricted, and a competitive admissions process would be followed. There were 3 options:

- Traditional “1-4” students who wanted to transfer out of the college to attend a university would follow the Associate of Arts or Sciences track.
- The ADN option focused on preparations for the RN credential. Students who wanted to complete the coursework to prepare them directly for an RN license would follow the career program pathway.
- An RN to BSN university pathway was another option. Three participants shared that the college had established consortia agreements that allowed students to transfer seamlessly through a special articulation.

These options had different pathways, requirements, and implications for students that could change as each option shifted to adapt to the current needs. This was especially evident

in the students' selection of applicable general education courses, whether the NCLEX exam or licensure was involved for admissions, or if the student wanted to complete their BSN at a college or university. One participant stated, "We keep educational pathways for each year, each requirement term, so we know who needs what, and then we just take it on a case-by-case basis with the student."

Admissions and Transfer-In Experience

The majority of participants indicated that the use of the nursing license or having completed the preparations for the NCLEX exam allowed the students' BSN to be "stacked" upon their prior credential, either through the degree attainment or the license. This impacted the students' transfer in experiences in various ways. It allowed students within the college to have completed most, if not all, of their general education and supportive course requirements; those coming from outside of the college would have their courses analyzed to be sure all requirements for the program were met.

Multiple participants indicated that, as the student progressed through completing pre-program and general education requirements, a separate admissions process was followed to be admitted to the ADN program. The ADN program was a competitive admissions program, and the transition to competitive admissions into the BSN program continued. Students completing the ADN program were conditionally accepted; however, they would still need to apply to the BSN. Traditional transfer 1-4 were not eligible to enter the BSN program, as admissions was dependent on licensure and ADN completion status.

Three of the participants indicated that all students were required to transfer in their credits, including those who had already attended college and had completed the ADN degree.

Students from other ADN programs or with RN licenses would have their credits individually evaluated. This may prompt requests for substitutions or other necessary requirements.

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

All participants engaged in a high-level consideration of curriculum development. This was primarily mentioned only with the view that it is essential to be collaborative; however, there were some clear themes that arose. While not all research participants focused directly on the specifics of curricular development between faculty, the Program Manager, and other key stakeholders, subthemes emerged among those who were directly involved. These included considerations of identifying courses that would lead into the program, strategies for course development, methods of supporting students at this higher level of learning, and the interactions that evolved through the process of working with other separate partner institutions.

Program and Course Design

According to participants, the 2+2 model offered the greatest opportunity for students transferring in, whether from the college's ADN program or else from outside the institution. It also allowed students to navigate the general education and supportive courses in a way that optimized their final requirements along the way.

Respondents reported that the program included ways for evaluating the levels of learning and providing supportive opportunities. By evaluating not only the entering skills levels, but also the graduate levels of learning, appropriate competencies were identified, as well as opportunities to address gaps between the ADN and BSN skills needed.

Participants emphasized the importance of addressing students' incoming skills, particularly concerning the higher-level writing demands expected in baccalaureate-level coursework. Creating a research-based introductory course and engaging the library faculty within each of the courses to support students, were mentioned as ways of addressing this issue. Faculty and librarian collaboration came forward many times in the data.

Collaboration with Other Colleges

Engaging two other partner colleges not only built credibility in the rationale for creating the BSN program, but also provided insights into common curricular offerings, including those that would benefit each college's student population. Course development was shared across the institutions as well as decisions about the textbooks, modalities, and topics used in the courses. A common distance-learning platform was created across the participating colleges. This allowed each institution to build a common frame with enough differentiation to serve their students.

Respondents indicated that each college would complement the others by scheduling courses that would allow students to not only stay on track to complete their program requirements, but also to be engaged in unique coursework that would appeal to their specific interests. The intention was to have each college build electives that would be easily transferrable to all schools. One participant shared, "We were going to offer six electives, and each of the colleges would offer two of them with students being able to float to the other college for those electives if they wanted them." The experience shared by multiple participants, however, indicated that the electives were not continued across the institutions, as students were primarily staying with those offered within their own institution.

BARRIERS AND CONCERNS

The theme of barriers and concerns was distributed across all major themes. While these data findings could be captured under each theme, the number of responses that were received indicated it was worth identifying this as an individual category. The most consistent data surrounding barriers and concerns focused on the students' experiences. All seven participants cited varying degrees and perspectives of systems or practices that prohibited students from easily navigating or progressing in the BSN program.

Students' Confusion and Limitations

As described earlier, students had several pathways to the BSN. Half of the respondents reported this was "confusing" or difficult for students to navigate. The multiple choices, entry points, and opportunities for BSN attainment created many instances where students would find themselves heading down the wrong track. According to more than one participant, first-year students, especially, are confused by terminology such as "RN to BSN" and are accustomed to national discussions for entry into a traditional four-year nursing program. As one participant stated, "We have a lot of students denied [into the BSN program], but just because they're confused, without knowing why."

Students were also confused by the multiple departments involved between associate- and bachelor-level advising and admissions. This created challenges for students to navigate the systems and processes needed between the levels, as well as ensuring that they are meeting the right requirements. They often had to go to multiple departments to find the answer to questions, such as course substitutions.

As a result of data management limitations, all students, whether completing this college's ADN program or transferring in from another institution or with an RN license, were required to transfer in their credits. As one participant stated, "We actually have to transfer as if they're coming from an out-of-state or another institution. We have to ask the transfer team to transfer their credits from one career to the next." This created not only confusion for the home college's students, but also could delay their entry as it required a lengthened time for credit evaluation.

The differences in curricular requirements, especially general education, specific admissions, or supportive courses, was mentioned many times by a majority of the participants. If a student started in one pathway and changed their mind or were unaware of the requirements of their intended pathway, they may have to take additional courses. One participant noted, "If you don't transfer in our English and our math or this or that, then they do have to take those," captured this challenge.

This confusion about pathways and course requirements was exacerbated by the difficulties students faced with financial aid. It also represented challenges within the institution's practices to best accommodate the students' needs. As one participant put it,

Most of the baccalaureates are covered by financial aid. In our state, they are not. You have a primary program of study and that's the only thing that's covered under financial aid. What we've tried to do then is to have them have an ADN and a baccalaureate together as a program of study so that those other gen eds would work. If for some reason, they were on some funky financial plan that didn't allow for that, then we had them be an AA in Nursing student so that those gen eds were covered rather than an ADN. It was a game of whatever you called it so that you could get financial aid for the student who's not going to get it from the baccalaureate.

Participants varied on their perspectives regarding the clarity of general education, admission requirements, and supportive program courses based upon their position in the

college. Those initially identifying the course requirements believed the requirements were well-established and easy to track in the BSN pathway, with one stating, “There's a few alternatives in there, but it's pretty spelled out.” However, student-facing staff and administrators who helped to onboard and guide the students believed it is still confusing for students.

Systems and Practices

Multiple participants indicated the constraints that students experienced were a result of technology and data limitations or confusing processes. Systems designed to enhance efficiency were either structured in ways that had the opposite effect or were nonexistent. Discussions focused on the students’ processing of applications or communications such as using manual work instead of optimizing technical solutions. One candidate expressed their concern with on-ramping students into the BSN program, stating,

[Departments] don’t start processing future applications until they finish up with the next upcoming one. They were not communicating that to students that submitted applications. They just put them on the side until they were ready to look at that next semester. That might be a month or six weeks.

Although much of the data indicated a robust institutional dedication to collaboration through cross-division communication systems, many comments revealed that internal communications could, at times, be challenging to navigate. For instance, some comments indicated that advising at the associate level “struggled with” the bachelor’s-level requirements; however, as one person stated, “One piece I will say is that getting a bachelor's of science in nursing... [lower-level] advising was not involved at all in the implementation.”

This carried over with a caution toward ensuring advising involvement not just during the initial implementation but also with the ongoing management of the program. As one

participant shared, “A lot of times, a curriculum change may negatively impact a certain group of students, and that's something that advisors have that direct knowledge.”

Sufficient advising staffing was consistently stated as a problem across all participants; however, it was not clear whether the reference was to the lower- or upper-level advisors.

From a lower-level advising perspective, one participant shared that they would have appreciated a closer relationship with the upper-level advisors stating,

We knew of them. We had a list of this is who does what, so if a student asked a question, we could refer to the right person, but we didn't really work-- looking back on it, we definitely should have worked closely and had more of a-- it was definitely an opportunity that was missed to work closer with them.

Data system designs and limitations have also created difficulties for students, including their ability to receive financial aid. Not all departments that could collaborate on solutions are brought into these issues, but rather it is gleaned in other ways. It was stated, “Honestly, unless they bring up issues, you just don't know what they're probably going through unless they break up. They don't always bring it up. That one I just know about because I've heard it a number of times.”

The data systems design also created difficulties for students when they were trying to move from the college's ADN program into the BSN. As one participant stated,

The way it's set up in PeopleSoft, which is the system we use, is the lower level, the AA, the AS, all the non-bachelor's programs are in something called a credit career. In PeopleSoft, they created a different career for bachelors, it's the bachelor career. There's a bachelor's career and there's a credit career and they don't talk to each other. What that means is if a student's been here for three, four years, they finish up their two-year degree, AA or AS doesn't matter. Then they apply to the bachelor's program and get accepted, and you run an audit in the system, it's going to show they've never taken a course. The audit is going to be blank.

ADDITIONAL THEMES CONSIDERED

Participants discussed additional topics, although fewer individuals mentioned these, and they were less frequently discussed by those who did mention them. This does not diminish their value; rather, it reflects that the intersectionality, continuity, and complexity of perspectives across participants didn't bring these themes to the forefront in the findings.

These areas included:

Leadership

State policies

Multi-institutional collaboration

External partners engagement

Faculty

Financing of the project

Accreditation

RESEARCH SUMMARY

This chapter presented the research questions of this case study of the operationalization and implementation of a BSN degree program at a single community college. Seven participants were interviewed using a structured frame of questions, each identified for their knowledge about the institution and the program implementation. This study identified multiple themes that were revealed through the process of data analysis and coding. The themes were further analyzed illuminating findings across many subcategories.

Data revealed that internal collaboration, the students' experiences, and curriculum development were the most prolific themes across participants. The theme of barriers and concerns were integrated in various ways among all major themes identified during the data

analysis. Themes of leadership, state policies, multi-institutional collaboration, external partners engagement, faculty, financing of the project, and accreditation also emerged; however, they did not have the breadth and depth of the primary major themes.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Internal Collaboration

The findings revealed that information management, processes, and reporting were either created or shifted, based upon the department's prior status. Roles, responsibilities, or daily work aligned to accommodate the shifts in processes or to address the unique students' needs. New roles and positions were created as needed; responsibilities shifted based upon evaluating the impacts. Relationships between internal departments were established. Cross-functional teams were optimized internally. New collaborations were established, and external partnerships were created and managed. Advising and admissions rose to the forefront of the data as the most critical elements of the operationalization and implementation of the BSN program.

Due to the BSN being launched more than 10 years after the first baccalaureate at this college, many departments were already prepared to address the needs of a new baccalaureate program. Participants reported that this eased the implementation and operationalization processes as they could rely on existing processes and structures for much of the necessary work. The BSN program had specific needs that required additional structural support. The institution reacted to those needs with tangible actions, such as hiring a program manager and training faculty to develop online courses.

Students' Experience

Students' experiences were impacted by many factors based upon individual students' needs. Entry points into the BSN program varied depending on the students' goals; therefore, clear processes were needed for each to differentiate the BSN students from other populations. This impacted admissions, credit evaluation, and other critical areas that would address the students' ability to navigate the program effectively. Interdepartmental collaboration was crucial to ensure successful student progress into and through the program.

Curriculum Development

Program design as a 2+2 program had fundamental impacts on the students' navigation through the program. Establishing the appropriate levels of learning for baccalaureate students was essential not only in the design of the courses, but also the support that would be available for students' success.

While enriching students' experiences through elective offerings and using common learning platforms for distance-learning courses across multiple institutions aimed to enhance student engagement, it was discontinued based on students' preference to remain at their home college.

Barriers and Concerns

Respondents' greatest reported concern involved the multiple pathways that were offered at the college. The pathways defined the students' course requirements and had admissions and financial aid implications. The ability for students to navigate through the various departments was hindered by the management of student intake, the limitations of internal communications, and hampered by limitations of the data infrastructures.

LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS

This research study provided a wealth of insights on the operationalization and implementation of a BSN program at a community college. The use of a single institution case study approach allowed for a comprehensive view of the college from varying viewpoints, positions, and involvement. The structured frame of interviewing provided clarity of opinions, insights, and information that was beneficial to understanding the phenomenon across the institution and not just from one perspective. The involvement of professionals across the institution with differing levels of positional authority, experiences, and vantage points increased the breadth of those perspectives.

A limitation of this data arose from the unavailability of a broader cross-section of professionals at the institution for interviews. This was due to some having left the college or availability constraints. This may have minimally biased the frequency of the terms identified within the coding process, but efforts were made to seek a proficient level of saturation and to increase reliability and validity of the data through a repetition and review process.

As this BSN program was not the college's first baccalaureate degree, many systems changes had already been put into place. The knowledge obtained through the interviews was able to address many of the implications for the initial launch of the first bachelor's degree; however, an analysis of a community college at the stage of initiating their first baccalaureate degree would have likely provided different insights.

The benefits included the ability to view changes that were implemented institutionally as a result of earlier baccalaureate degree implementations as well as how the BSN differed. In

addition, a single case study limits the ability to generalize the findings to other institutions without a greater depth of investigation, replication, and continued analysis.

My cognitive bias may also play into the limitations of the data due to my professional involvement in community college leadership; however, processes were followed to ensure the coding was consistent and accurate and the data could be determined as reliable.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE WORK

INTRODUCTION

This grounded theory qualitative case study aimed to uncover the changes in processes, reporting, as well as roles and responsibilities that emerged during the operationalization and implementation of a BSN program at a specific community college. It aimed to identify varying aspects and implications resulting from the development and deployment of this unique program revealing ways in which other community colleges could effectively respond, should they undertake a similar venture.

This chapter will discuss the key findings of this study as they relate to the research questions and major relevant themes in the literature and addresses the implications and recommendations for future research. The intention is to establish a summary of the study to best inform other institutions that may be considering this institutional change.

TYING THIS STUDY TO THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Research questions were investigated using a frame of questions intended to guide the conversation, but not limit its opportunity to gather information helpful to inform this research.

The research questions were:

1. In what ways do community colleges that implement a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree program shift requirements or practices for managing information, processes, or reporting?
2. How does this implementation affect individual and departmental roles, responsibilities, or daily work?

3. In what manner does this implementation affect or create relationships or collaboration across or outside of the college?
4. What were the lessons learned and recommendations that could be shared?

The research questions provided guidance in answering a real-world example of a college shifting their institution to meet the regional needs for nurses. Each of the research questions were addressed in this study through an analysis of the data and the identification of major themes within the findings. The intersection of experiences reported between themes revealed the ways in which the institution shifted its work, staffing resources, and built relationships. Each theme revealed opportunities that can inform other community colleges should they undertake this same type of challenge.

MAJOR THEMES

This study identified four major themes within the findings: internal collaboration, student experience, curriculum development, and barriers and concerns. Additional themes of leadership, state policies, multi-institutional collaboration, external partners, engagement, faculty, financing of the project, and accreditation also appeared. These, however, did not have the frequency of the central major themes discussed to be used as a primary focus of this chapter. The analysis of the major themes aligned with the original research questions and established a platform which was used to build interpretations of the data.

All the themes discovered in this study were interrelated at some level with crossover occurring throughout the data. The primary themes were affected by the institutional structure, the processes involved, the strategies that were embedded, and the agility or difficulty with which the institution addressed the students' and institution's needs, both because of this BSN

implementation and from a framework of the institution's already established culture and mode of operations.

An interpretation of key findings presented in this chapter are based upon the conclusions drawn from the major themes. A review of the literature will illustrate the way in which this study adds to, contradicts, or provides new insights.

INTERPRETATION OF THE FINDINGS

SETTING THE CONTEXT FOR INTERPRETATION OF THE FINDINGS

Participants impact. This research engaged multiple stakeholders with varying levels of leadership and responsibilities providing a wide range of perspectives across the institution. Each was involved to varying degrees during or after the BSN program's implementation.

Methods impact. This study was conducted using a grounded theory constructivist qualitative methodology and analysis based upon the structured phased interview approach at a single institution with a select group of participants. Each interview provided access to the experiences of professionals across the institution, many of whom interacted with each other during or after the BSN program implementation. While the interpretations indicate the understandings from one institution, the wide array of perspectives across that institution created an intersection of knowledge and insight.

Effect of campus preparedness. As this was not the college's first baccalaureate degree, various attributes of the institution had already been previously established. Many roles, responsibilities, reporting, and processes had been determined within the earlier bachelor-degree implementations; therefore, the study captured the way the institution had to adapt these processes for the BSN rather than creating them from the ground up.

ESTABLISHING CONCLUSIONS

As the BSN was unique at this community college in its students' and program's needs, the study's findings focused on those issues. From a synthesized perspective, this included the management of the students' intake and processing across departments, access to pertinent resources and support, the need to manage partnerships with other institutions, considerations of interdepartmental collaboration and communications, as well as the management of data and records. The intersection of these elements is interwoven through the four major themes. Each of the research questions are present and inherent in these findings that are guided by the students' or staff's shared experiences. This synthesis of themes, research questions, and findings reveals the circumstances for this college. Conclusions are drawn from the broad review of the data in this study as well as indicated from prior research in this area.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPACT TO LITERATURE

The conclusions of this research are intended to inform and raise further questions for successful operationalization and implementation of BSN programs at community colleges. The study relates to the literature and provides new insights not previously reported. The conclusions tie the literature to the research questions and poses new considerations for colleges to explore. This chapter will discuss the conclusions of this study and provide insight into the current literature to reveal new learning as well as opportunities for institutions to consider or that may set a basis for further study.

CONCLUSION 1

Community colleges that implement a BSN program must evaluate and shift their practices, roles, and responsibilities, and the way in which they collaborate both within and outside of the college.

To facilitate the large-scale changes that will occur at a community college once a decision has been made to offer a baccalaureate degree, it is essential for institutions to recognize the unique needs and requirements of this degree level, as well as the needs of the students who will be completing it. This is especially true of the nursing student population who begin in community colleges to ensure that the college addresses their unique needs.

The first research question examines the existence of an institutional shift with the second focusing on how this change affected people at the college as a result of the BSN implementation. This study found that departments across the institution needed to make fundamental changes to the way they worked, who did that work, and how they collaborated across the institution.

Processes and Practices

The college had already established many processes, practices, and data management strategies to accommodate the conferment of baccalaureate degrees. However, they needed to shift areas or information that were specific to the BSN program. A frame was in place, but modifications or new strategies were needed.

In many ways, this preparedness from implementing prior baccalaureate degrees provided this institution an advantage. However, it was discovered that, at times, practices

were impacted by data limitations or systems that were not effective in managing this particular student population.

As an example, challenges were discovered in the way in which data did not cross over from the associate-level student information system (SIS) and the bachelor-level SIS that impacted the students' ability to apply, get accepted, and enroll in the program. This also impacted the internal processes across departments, often increasing the workload and interfering with the accuracy and timeliness of data.

Only one study in the literature, Bragg et al. (2022), mentioned the SIS indicating bachelor-level classes within the data system to ensure that tuition differences were identified. While the literature addressed the need to consider the processes and practices, it often left details such as the literal data management unaddressed. In Bragg et al. (2022), only one of the 20 promising practices addressed the initial implementation of a BSN degree program at a community college but did not mention this topic. While a few of the other initiatives offered some insight that aligned to this study's findings, their primary focus was not on implementing a BSN program, rather that the practices provided an overview with a limited frame and did not examine the institutional shift that was identified in this research study.

The existing literature consistently identified the departments impacted but did not provide specific details about the necessary changes to data or process management. Bragg et al. (2022), Farmer et al. (2017), and McKinney and Morris (2010) listed similar departments as were indicated in this study. Admissions, academics, library, registrar/registration, financial aid, finance/budget, marketing, institutional research, student finance, schedule building, business, and distance learning were all considered critical in various ways for managing the transition of

any organizational change. While the need for involvement was identified in the literature, the processes, practices, and strategies each department would use were not fully explored.

An area where this study did not focus was the need for community colleges to seek regional accreditations to be allowed to offer the BSN program. Accreditation by the SACSCOC to offer upper-level courses and baccalaureate degrees had already been granted to this college during the initial implementation of their first bachelor's degree. This process was not a major finding of this study; however, it would be critical for a community college to navigate should the BSN be their first bachelor-level degree.

In addition to regional accreditation, community colleges may also need to navigate the processes of legislative or governmental requirements within their state. This need is identified in all the research that was consequential to this study; however, the specifics of accomplishing this were not defined. The processes for managing those approvals and making changes across the institution may be dependent on the location of the community college, the specifications and requirements of the state, the board of education, or even the guidance established through the relationships with universities within their areas.

The key findings both in this research study and across the literature suggest that institutions may rely heavily on the expertise within departments that already have the tacit knowledge needed to implement changes to processes and practices. While this confidence is admirable, it leaves each institution burdened with the task of evaluating and interpreting how to move forward without shared guidance on best practices and ways to avoid pitfalls along the way.

National organizations such as American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers and accrediting agencies like the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (2023) or the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (2023), which are overseen by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation might have standards or guidelines that could be useful in informing the community college of how to move forward.

While each of these sources may offer insights on how to operationalize or implement a BSN program, the knowledge and practices may often be isolated within specific departments or limited to a few individuals. Increasing the institution's awareness of these practices may ameliorate the possibility of unintended consequences such as those demonstrated in the example of the SIS data constraints found in this study. While the intent of this study was to engage community college professionals to increase the discovery of these practices, further clarification and research should be conducted.

Standards of practice may not yet be fully developed internally within departments or across institutions. Perhaps evaluating reporting requirements could be the entry point into a deeper exploration. Efforts, such as the interdepartmental collaboration required to stay in compliance with Department of Education requirements may provide a strong frame for research and institutional dialogue. Guiding documents, such as the Higher Education Compliance Alliance (2021) compliance matrix have links to resources that guide colleges across the range of requirements for admissions, financial aid, accreditation, program integrity, etc., might offer a starting point of shared knowledge and analysis.

Before community colleges can successfully implement a BSN program, they must consider additional crucial steps that were not directly revealed in this study; however, they are

addressed through a broad set of research on this topic. These include examining the requirements of their state, accrediting bodies, and other agencies to determine the feasibility, structure, and approach of the program. Relationships with universities must also be examined. How this curriculum fits within the college's mission as a part of the institution's portfolio of offerings compared to other opportunities available to students should also be investigated.

These assessments are critical before making significant investments in time, effort, or money. As this study revealed, knowing what to do, how and when to do it, and considering the implications across the institution from an operational perspective are keys to implementation of the BSN program.

Organizational Structure

The processes and practices that were applied for the BSN implementation went beyond data management the college used in this study. The organizational structure and frame of work responsibilities also had a bearing on the success of the implementation and students' progression. Interwoven within the management of operational practices and processes, this study focused on changes to the roles, responsibilities, and daily work when investigating the second research question. Pivotal to these changes was the impact of the organizational structure.

As an example, the college had previously established a two-tier system for advising consisting of lower-level advisors for incoming freshmen and upper-level advisors dedicated to students pursuing baccalaureate degrees. While this practice created content expertise for each segment of the student population, it also unintentionally divided the knowledge about the curriculum, the students' pathways to enter the program, and added complexity to

managing the students and their data. The lower- and upper-level advisors did not always work in conjunction with each other, and processes, such as those for admissions, were managed in different ways based on where the student was in their academic path. This created confusion and inefficiencies, both for the institution and the students. The structure of the organization was responsible for this impact.

Likewise, this college primarily used a centralized nonfaculty advisor role instead of a structure where the advisor is a faculty member with advising responsibilities. This organizational frame for advising varies across the literature. There was agreement on the importance of advising; however, the model of advising was not consistent. Bragg et al. (2022) stated that the faculty advisor, who was the program chair, was responsible for working with students in navigating their way. McKinney and Morris (2010) indicated a need for training advisors; however, they didn't specify the model used nor branch into any student factors, internal processes, or other implications based on a particular frame.

This bifurcation of the organizational structure between upper-level and lower-level academics at the community college not only impacted advising, but it was responsible for the difficulties found in the management of data in the SIS system as each level was treated as its own entity. This decision impacted not only the institution, but the students' experiences and progress.

Beyond the perspectives of a two-tiered model, or the use of faculty or a centralized office for advising, the literature for implementing a BSN at a community college did not fully address the need to evaluate an organizational frame at all. Rather, the literature identified the need for buy in and involvement from top administrators, community, and faculty to justify the

need and to manage the organizational change. There was little discussion in the literature about organizational shifts or staffing frameworks that would be essential to the implementation of a BSN degree other than the need to hire new faculty, staff, and administrators.

Further analysis and research of the impact of an organizational frame is recommended before beginning the operationalization and implementation of a BSN program at a community college. In addition, based upon the findings within this study and across the literature, colleges may need to evaluate the best advising model that will work within their organization and culture.

While this community college had effectively used a two-tier advising system for other bachelor's degree areas, a divided organizational frame was not fully effective for their nursing students. As was presented, this raises questions that go beyond advising and touch upon the entire organizational structure to prevent issues such as the SIS system constraints. It suggests that colleges should analyze each program's operational needs and assess students' requirements. Moreover, the structure of other areas within the college should be evaluated.

Colleges must be prepared to evaluate their entire organizational system, address students' specific needs, and determine the best framework for building a unique BSN program. Each institution should develop its own strategies for effectiveness by evaluating the roles of individuals in supporting students, curriculum development, and implementing the necessary systems.

Roles and Responsibilities

Building upon the organizational structure findings, a view of the shifting college's roles and responsibilities is essential. This college committed resources to address the needs of instruction and the curriculum. They invested in staff to provide support and an organizational structure that they believed would be a platform for success. Specific staff were hired: a program manager, librarian, project manager, and academic advisors. Each of these professionals was deeply involved in the establishment and success of the BSN program. Each collaborated across the students' experience and within the organization during the original operationalization and implementation of the program including the years since its launch.

The delineation between these roles and responsibilities appeared to blur as students navigated through the college's systems and processes. The roles also shifted as a result of the reorganization that occurred that combined both upper- and lower-level advising into one department. Additionally, the program manager and librarian collaboratively taught the upper-level nursing courses and established independent processes for supporting the students' success. This fit the college's structure at the point of implementation; however, the findings indicated that it also created challenges as well.

The faculty-held position of program manager served as the representative from an academic perspective, whereas the advisor represented the front-line entry for students' program decision-making and, especially prior to the merging of levels, the process of admissions into the program. The shift in responsibilities during the advising department merger removed the admissions responsibilities from that role, which was more representative of how the rest of the college was managed.

While these collaborations between the program manager and advisors were intended to create broader understanding across the college, it also created gaps in the processes and knowledge and had students moving from place to place to find necessary guidance and decisions. As was reported in the Organizational Structure section of this chapter, the clarity on roles between advising and faculty was not clearly addressed in the literature around implementing a BSN program.

The literature did not provide any information about the differentiation of roles between faculty and librarians. At this community college, a new research librarian was hired to create and teach a research course at the beginning of the program. In addition, the librarian co-taught the introductory courses with the nursing faculty. The nursing faculty guided students through the nursing competencies and requirements, while the librarian supported the students' research processes and writing standards.

The literature indicated that greater library resources would be needed; however, it did not address the unique strategies that were employed at the college in this study. Rather, the library was listed among departments to be included in the operationalization and implementation stating that services and resources would need to be enhanced. Both McKinney and Morris (2010) and Farmer et al. (2017) indicated that colleges should be prepared to financially support new library acquisitions.

The roles and responsibility differentiation between the faculty program manager and the project manager was notable. The program manager acted to connect and build relationships with outside stakeholders, engage faculty and administrators, as well as the internal departments deemed essential. The project manager, instead, served as the internal

arbiter of timelines, data and resource needs, and project flow. This involved a deep collaboration between the program manager and project manager to ensure the operationalization and implementation were successful.

This distinction for managing projects was not present in the literature for the implementation of a BSN program at a community college. References to program implementation was referred to within the higher context of leadership and administrative duties to oversee the project; whereas this study identifies a single position that would serve to literally facilitate that responsibility. Bragg et al. (2022) identified a program chair or faculty lead to manage the program implementation. McKinney and Morris (2010) presented the need for a task force for implementation. While these are essential elements of a BSN project, the unique defining of a literal project manager's role versus the faculty position had not yet been covered.

The identification of roles and responsibilities addresses the second research question as well as embeds the findings of the first research question that seeks insights into the adjustments needed when implementing a BSN at a community college. It shifts the focus from the high-level organizational structure to the departments involved and then captures the ways in which staff, processes, or practices are impacted.

Defining roles and responsibilities is critical in the operationalization and implementation of a BSN program at a community college. The community college's structure and its impact presented in this case study may provide insights into the strategies that would best fit community colleges trying to implement the BSN at their institution. As colleges evaluate the organizational structure that will work best within their institution, they can also

establish guidelines for each role. Having clearly defined roles would allow for an analysis of the structure from various perspectives before action is taken. Beyond new hires, they can also evaluate whether faculty, staff, or others on campus would take on additional or new responsibilities to accommodate the new program, courses, and the management of the students' needs. This sets the stage for understanding the impact of processes and practices.

These changes can cost money. Staffing changes through promotions or adding new positions to accommodate an increase in students as well as additional resources in technology, facilities, or services can add to a college's financial responsibilities. Institutions can consider their preparedness to support this investment if they are considering developing a BSN.

The focus of this research was not centered on this aspect of operationalization and implementation and, although a few participants did mention the business aspects of this work, it did not rise to the level of a major finding. However, finance is a critical aspect of the college's effective operationalization and implementation, as well as sustainability of a new BSN program. The existing literature addresses financial issues, often at a higher level of analysis, especially regarding the rationale for offering a BSN program at a community college. McKinney and Morris (2010), Bragg et al. (2022), and Farmer et al. (2017) share the increase of budgetary considerations such as paying a higher wage to recruit faculty, the cost of nursing and regional accreditations, and other aspects that will be a result of the implementation of a BSN program.

From a financial perspective, community colleges need to take these elements into consideration before making a commitment to developing a BSN program. They also need to plan for other unanticipated increased costs that will need to be managed through the life of the program.

Designing Curriculum

Curriculum development was a major theme that arose in the research study. The development of the 2+2 associate-to-bachelor BSN program allowed students to enter in multiple ways that optimized their prior learning and credentials. The study revealed that the structure of the BSN program as a 2+2 program had a deep impact on the students' experience with navigation and progression through the program. It also had an impact on the internal practice and management of data. It set the stage for the organizational and operational decisions.

One major finding of this study addressed the development of partnerships with other community colleges to build online courses that were transferable between the institutions to offer students more elective options. In addition, the levels of learning were identified as a critical element of this design process. Creating the 2+2 allowed an analysis of learning that fits between entry-level skills and those that would prepare the students for entering a master's degree program. Only one study participant talked about the actual process for designing the courses.

While the specifics of how to accomplish curriculum development goals were not addressed in this study beyond the choice to develop the 2+2 BSN program, the literature provided deeper insight into this process. It referenced the need to plan for, manage, and align to the nursing accreditation requirements. As noted by Farmer et al. (2017), the AACN provided the guidance to write the curriculum to the highest standards. They stated, "To guide the BSN committee, the AACN *Essentials of Baccalaureate Education*, National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission standards, American Nurses Association Standards, and Florida State

articulation guidelines were consulted prior to and during curriculum development” (p. 105).

AACN (2021b) provides clarity regarding degree levels specifically in the view of transferring to a bachelor-level program by specifying that,

Two levels of [AACN] sub-competencies reflect the educational stages of nurses as they enter professional practice and as they return to school to advance their education. The first-level sub-competencies set the foundation for nurses entering professional practice. These level one (entry-level) competencies are used within curricula for prelicensure preparation as well as professional nursing degree completion pathways for nurses with initial preparation at the associate degree or diploma level. Although learning experiences may vary across individual programs, they provide an opportunity for learners to demonstrate attainment of competencies in multiple and authentic contexts over time (not a “one and done”/checklist approach). (p. 16)

These aspects of the design, development, and implementation of the curriculum speak to each of the research questions. This touches on the management of roles and responsibilities, the processes and information that is needed, collaborations both internally and externally, and provides a platform upon which community colleges can learn.

As was demonstrated in this study, the model of curriculum design has far-reaching impacts on the way in which students and the organization navigate and manage information, practices, and collaboration. Community colleges charged with implementing a BSN program would benefit from analyzing the options of the models available that best meet their organizational and students’ needs. These may be limited by the requirements set by state restrictions or informed by accrediting or other governing bodies. However, understanding the implications ahead of the decision will be beneficial.

As was demonstrated in this study and across the literature, this continuity can be achieved by aligning the curriculum to nursing accreditation standards at each level of learning. This brings clarity to the design and assurance of quality across the curricula. It creates the

alignment of expectations to ensure the right competencies are achieved along the students' journey. It also prepares the BSN nurses to enter their profession having the skills and critical thinking that have been identified as necessary that were expounded upon in the pivotal Institute of Medicine's (2011) *The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health* report. Utilizing tools such as the AACN (2008) *Essentials of Baccalaureate Education for Professional Nursing Practice* can provide the guidelines needed for effective curricular development.

The 2+2 model of a BSN program takes into consideration the optimization of the ADN degree requirements, allows portability of licensure, and sets the expectation of a student to achieve a master's preparation set of capabilities. Designing the curriculum in a way that utilizes or adjusts the ADN requirements to be a stackable portal into the BSN program creates a clearer platform upon which to build higher level learning and dovetails the experience in a seamless way. Likewise, developing upper level general education and nursing courses that not only lead to the BSN's program outcomes but prepare nurses to enter a master's program unifies the experience by creating continuity between levels. This alignment provides community college students with choices as they enter or are promoted in the workforce or continue toward their academic goals.

Adopting a strategy that involves collaboration for alignment between and perhaps creating articulations for a crosswalk between the BSN and master's degree serves multiple purposes. Not only does it offer students a clear path between degrees and grant access to continued achievement, but it also supports the relationship between the community college and university. This allows the university to remain a partner instead of becoming an adversary in this endeavor.

Also mentioned across the literature was the need for validation of the curriculum in partnership with advisory committees. While this did not rise as a key finding in this research, ensuring the partnerships with outside hospital or medical agencies is imperative to ensure your curriculum is meeting the workforce needs that might be unique within the community college's community.

CONCLUSION 2

Providing clear options and processes for students is essential for supporting the students' experience and ability to progress toward their academic goals. In addition to effectively addressing operational and implementation needs, it is essential to consider the way in which the program is designed from a student lens. This involves how the college manages communications with students about their options, and the processes that are used to assist students through the institutional requirements, practices, and various departments. Assuring these elements have been analyzed, planned, and put in place before implementation is crucial for effectively supporting students in their goals.

While the overall outcomes of this study found that the program was very successfully designed, implemented, and has been well stewarded to meet students' needs, it also revealed that students are confused. The choices that were presented to incoming college students, the processes they had to go through, and the various departments with whom they needed to connect created an experience that was not always conducive to their success. The concerns expressed throughout this study about students' confusion stemmed from several factors including academic program choices through various pathways, the onboarding process, and interdepartmental collaboration that would make their experience smoother. This confusion

was addressed most pointedly within the themes of the students' experience, curriculum development, and barriers and concerns and touches on each of the research questions in varying ways.

Academic Choices

The multiple academic pathways for students to achieve a BSN degree were not clear for students. Depending on how they entered the college, the course requirements could vary. This impacted students' advancement toward their goals by not taking the right courses, their ability to pay for their courses with financial aid, or even their ability to enter the community college BSN program at all.

The design of the 2+2 BSN program afforded great opportunity for students to advance toward the BSN, but only as long as they knew the right program pathway, completed the right general education and admissions requirement courses, and understood the way that licensure worked within their academic requirements. Otherwise, it appears that the students struggled.

The research revealed that this community college had additional options beyond their 2+2 BSN program for students who wanted to be an RN. These included the college's ADN program that would result in an RN license, a 2+2 transfer pathway to a university BSN program also resulting in an RN license, and a 2+2 concurrent-enrollment consortia agreement with a university that uses the ADN toward the BSN at that college. In addition, students could pursue a direct traditional transfer option that did not result in an RN license, but rather followed the general education pathway for transfer. These students would wait to take nursing classes once they arrived at the university instead of at the community college. The community college's 2+2 BSN program was only one option towards a BSN.

The literature was silent on much of this pathway decision-making that was at the front end of a students' experience. Farmer et al. (2017), Bragg et al. (2022), and McKinney and Morris (2010) discussed varying features of the BSN or bachelor's degree programs such as identifying general education requirements, application processes undergoing development, or the fact that the BSN shifted their institution's open-door admissions policy. The number of credits required for general education courses were shared and concurrent enrollment options were identified. McKinney and Morris more fully described their experience with designing the ADN to BSN (2+2) completion model that most closely related to this study's findings.

These choices affected students' coursework as well as their ability to receive financial aid. Student-facing staff shared challenges and ways in which they would work with students to address these needs. Every participant noted that academic advising was the most important factor when building the program and then managing students' progress, and that there weren't enough advisors. This perception of a significant need for advising may have been associated with addressing students' confusion as a strategy to provide clarity and assist them in navigating these complex issues.

The students' confusion over the variety of choices offered in their pathway to achieving a BSN was frequently mentioned by participants in this study. As discussed in Chapter 2, very few sources bring clarity on the subject of designing a BSN program from an operational perspective, and none was discovered that directly addressed the complexity of students' concerns or clearly addressed this confusion.

This literature can assist community colleges to review these multiple pathways to create course crosswalks when possible (Appendix G). They may use this also to guide

communications to students from the marketing of their program options to their advising and management of students' navigation through the program.

Further research to delineate these varying pathways can be explored, both from an institutional level for the BSN as well as from a model of looking at all pathways at the college. Much research is available on defining the students' navigation through academic programs. Sources such as the Community College Research Center (CCRC, n.d.b) offer many research findings, strategies, and opportunities for community colleges to implement a guided pathways model.

Perhaps the issue surrounding the students' confusion and navigation is not solely that the community colleges lack additional advisors, but rather the knowledge of these pathway differences is not institutionally understood. Providing students clarity on their options across all student-facing information or communications, no matter which pathway is sought, will build a stronger opportunity for the students' success. Community colleges can build this awareness across the institution rather than relying only on advising to understand these curricular and pathway options. This may have far-reaching impacts on how students are advised and managed across the institution no matter which department is involved. Providing a clear understanding of program options will assist not only the students, but the institution as well.

Onboarding Processes

Building upon shared institutional knowledge around the RN pathways leads to an analysis of the students' onboarding processes that involved many departments across the institution. According to this research, the students' entry into the BSN program is a complex

transaction that, at times, added to the students' confusion. Students were required to navigate through multiple departments, processes, and case-specific decisions.

This institution reported a successful model of bringing students into the college's BSN program; however, not all experiences were smooth. The breadth of academic choices impacted the way in which students' records were handled, what requirements were needed, and when and how the student could begin registering for their courses. Students arriving with an RN license had a different avenue for credit evaluation than those who either transferred internally from the college's ADN program or transferred from another institution with a variety of credits or another ADN program. Despite the collaboration with area colleges where agreements had been created, the evaluation of the students' transcripts to determine course equivalencies still created onboarding challenges.

The academic choice confusion created lost opportunity for some students. For instance, those who had selected the traditional transfer option did not qualify to enter the college's BSN program as they had not taken the appropriate courses. If this was not clarified during the early admission to the college, the students would have perhaps taken the wrong or an unintended path.

Undecided, change of program, and transfer in students were at the greatest risk. Credit loss through taking the wrong courses or transferring in non-equated courses, requesting course substitutions to ameliorate the issue, and clarity of messaging for students to make the right choices were defined as difficulties that students faced.

The differentiation between BSN pathways was not consistently addressed in the literature. However, Farmer et al. (2017) shared the deepest analysis that could be useful to

community college planning to implement a BSN program. Admission requirements, the number of credits for RN licensure, and collaboration between departments were discussed. Concerns regarding the efficiencies of the processes, new hires and workloads, and training were presented as means to increase effectiveness.

Departmental Collaboration

Streamlining the students' experience was a common finding from this study as the institution tried to minimize the students' confusion and create a clear pathway. However, this study revealed that students still had to traverse the academic systems across multiple departments. As an example, at this college credits were evaluated in collaboration with advising and the registrar's office. Advisors would identify opportunities for course substitutions and work with the program manager to ensure the course would fulfill the admission or program requirements. The advisor would reach out to the student with the decision and then the student would have to wait to have the credits conferred. This collaboration was seen as a positive way to ensure students were taking the appropriate courses and only what was needed. Nonetheless, this also created difficulty for the timing of the students' ability to be accepted into the program and to register for classes as the collaboration lengthened the process.

Even students who had completed the college's ADN program had to go through an internal transfer process that involved multiple departments to have their credits evaluated. The college had established a transfer team who managed this information. Some of these processes were managed using paper-based forms and manual methods. As a result, students still needed to go to multiple departments to initiate and then complete this process.

The literature on implementing BSN programs at community colleges generally did not explore the students' experiences. For instance, Farmer et al. (2017) discussed related concerns but not a thorough examination of these issues by describing the desire for faster admission processes and streamlined financial aid forms via online procedures.

Notably, the recommendations for onboarding and departmental collaboration build upon the suggestions for academic choices and the efforts to create clarity for students that was described for advising and consistent communications.

This research study identifies the unique qualities of the students who enter community colleges, and the BSN students have specific needs to enter this program. Community colleges can analyze the demographics of the students that they serve to better understand ways in which they can best be served. Defining the nature of their student community can lead the way in addressing their specific student population's unique needs.

In addition, the engagement of guided pathways strategies that was previously recommended may offer the best opportunity for departmental and institutional analysis to determine the best model of managing the students' experience. Jenkins et al. (2020) may offer insights and practices that will ease the onboarding experiences for students and staff.

To mediate a continued and consistent dialog with students and to ameliorate concerns regarding multiple department interactions, the college may want to research the option of developing a centralized case-manager, concierge-type, "academic navigator" position that spans the responsibilities of recruitment, enrollment, advising, registration, and all-around academic progression services. Developing a case-manager role similar to those found in health care and other professions would act as a one-stop connection for the student. While this

position may not be deeply responsible for these transactions, they can be the go-to person for students as they try to find their way through their academic journey.

The college in this study reported varied strategies between the advisor and program manager. This inconsistency in perceptions is likely one reason that students were pulled in multiple directions across departments. Supporting a position for an academic navigator, such as the enrollment success navigator position at the Community College of Philadelphia (2023), may address these issues and provide a consistent connection for students and departments.

LIMITATIONS

This study was conducted at one community college. The fact that the interviews were conducted more broadly across multiple departments may have impacted these findings. However, this may be an indication of a siloing of responsibilities at this college versus a campus-wide awareness that would have provided more frequency across the themes. The time gap between when the implementation occurred and when the study was conducted could have also been a factor.

This study was an after-the-fact assessment. The collection of data occurred six years after the implementation of this program, which was not this college's first baccalaureate degree. The determination of whether the community college had the right to offer the BSN degree from a state level had already been determined. The college had determined that this degree program would be added to their portfolio. The curriculum was already reasonably defined; however, the data from this study revealed deeper information on how that was determined.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The findings of this grounded theory qualitative case study created a platform upon which further study and analysis could occur. This research offers an opportunity to increase the findings through continued qualitative research on the topics of operationalization strategies that engage best practices, broadens the institutional knowledge, and strengthens the students' experience from a front-line perspective across the organization.

This study also provides the ability to delve deeper into individual aspects of these findings such as the clarity between nursing pathways and the strategies to manage these options. While the guided pathways initiatives have driven deeply into students' experiences, it has not yet addressed the complex avenues available to BSN-seeking students.

Another area of research may be a deeper analysis of the literal practices and reporting that is required when adopting a BSN program at a community college. The absence of shared institutional guidance leaves community colleges at the mercy of internal tacit knowledge that may be thin or not exist and places each college at a disadvantage for not having shared insight across the institution and without learning from other colleges who have successfully completed this journey. Further analysis of the impact of organizational frames would also be of benefit.

CONCLUSION

This study sought to identify the impacts to institutions that plan to implement a BSN program at a community college. Key findings in this case study offered a view of one community college's experience and insights that addressed the changes to the institution's management of information and processes, as well as the effect on individual and department

roles, responsibilities, and daily work. It provided insight into how this change impacted relationships and addressed the challenges faced for both the students and the institution.

The findings of this study revealed two primary conclusions:

- Conclusion 1: Community colleges that implement a BSN program must evaluate and shift their practices, roles, and responsibilities and the way in which they collaborate both within and outside of the college.
- Conclusion 2: Providing clear options and processes for students is essential for supporting the students' experience and ability to progress toward their academic goals.

When considering the major themes that emerged of internal collaboration, students' experience, curriculum development, and barriers and concerns, it reinforces the idea that the design of the curriculum, the ability to navigate the systems, and the efficiency of the internal departmental systems are key to an effective operationalization and implementation of the BSN program.

The largest, unexpected outcome included the students' confusion about the nursing options that are available. The pathway confusion was interwoven throughout the interviews in ways that was communicated as a standard expectation, as these options can be very complex based upon each student's prior coursework, work and life obligations, and the ways they can best achieve their goals. Varying beliefs about their confusion was evident depending upon the participant and the angle of their experience.

Another unforeseen finding was the challenge of addressing students' need to navigate between multiple departments. The participants conveyed that they worked to streamline processes; however, the unintended consequences of collaboration in lengthening or complicating processes seemed in conflict with each other. The balance between upholding

standards, dividing responsibilities among institutional knowledge keepers, and making the experience smoother seemed to be a difficult quality to achieve.

Further, the structure of the organization had a strong bearing on decisions that were made around staffing, data, and process management. While the BSN program was deemed successful, this structural decision impacted the data system and created redundancy of roles and inefficiency of workflow across systems. In addition, it added to students' confusion and the complexity of internal processes, often creating roadblocks to the students' progression in their academic goals. Workarounds were created to navigate this complication.

This study revealed that roles and responsibilities shifted as a result of the BSN implementation. New positions were created, and others transformed to accommodate the changes. New opportunities for collaboration were created that enhanced students' success while, in some cases, crossover of functions generated confusion and barriers.

Curricular decisions had far-reaching impacts on students as well as the institution. Creating courses and programs that meet the students' needs and presenting the options clearly was an important factor revealed.

While some aspects of these findings were discovered in the literature, the depth was not present in the same way presented in this study. This research added to the literature by defining details around the processes and management of information that had direct impact on the students and the institution. It broadened the perspective of the students' experience and how the frame of the organization would benefit through analysis and thoughtful consideration of the impacts. This research reached beyond the surface of these issues and

revealed authentic insights from a variety of perspectives across the institution that ranged from high leadership roles to the front-line staff who face students every day.

This study delved into the impacts faced by community colleges when implementing a BSN program. The case study, focusing on one community college's experience, provided valuable insights into the changes affecting information management, processes, individual and departmental roles, responsibilities, relationships, and challenges experienced by students and the institution. This study reveals strengths, weaknesses, and strategies to consider for the successful operationalization and implementation in other community colleges that choose to follow this path.

REFERENCES

- Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing. (2023). *ACEN 2023 accreditation manual*. <https://www.acenursing.org/acen-2023-accreditation-manual/>
- Adams-Mahaley, C. (2016). Maintaining open access admissions with the community college system. *ACPA Developments*, 14(2). <https://developments.myacpa.org/private7J9pRkXzLq/47/maintaining-open-access-admissions-within-the-community-college-system/338/>
- Adom, D., Yeboah, A., & Ankrah, A. K. (2016). Constructivism philosophical paradigm: Implication for research, teaching, and learning. *Global Journal of Arts Humanities and Social Sciences*, 4(10), 1-9.
- American Association of Colleges of Nursing. (2000). *The baccalaureate degree in nursing as minimal preparation for professional practice*. <https://www.aacnnursing.org/news-data/position-statements-white-papers/baccalaureate-degree-in-nursing-as-a-minimal-preparation>
- American Association of Colleges of Nursing. (2008). *The essentials of baccalaureate education for professional nursing practice*. <https://www.aacnnursing.org/Portals/0/PDFs/Publications/BaccEssentials08.pdf>
- American Association of Colleges of Nursing. (2016). *Academic progression in nursing: Moving together toward a highly educated nursing workforce*. <https://www.aacnnursing.org/Portals/42/News/Position-Statements/Academic-Progression.pdf>
- American Association of Colleges of Nursing. (2021a). *Employment of new nurse graduates and employer preferences for baccalaureate-prepared nurses* [Research brief]. <https://www.aacnnursing.org/Portals/42/News/Surveys-Data/Research-Brief-10-21.pdf>
- American Association of Colleges of Nursing. (2021b). *The essentials: Core competencies for professional nursing education*. <https://www.aacnnursing.org/Portals/0/PDFs/Publications/Essentials-2021.pdf>
- American Association of Colleges of Nursing. (2022). *Fact sheet: Nursing shortage*. <https://www.aacnnursing.org/Portals/42/News/Factsheets/Nursing-Shortage-Factsheet.pdf>

- American Association of Colleges of Nursing. (2023a). *Highlights from AACN's 2022 annual survey*. <https://www.aacnnursing.org/Portals/0/PDFs/Data/2022-Survey-Highlights.pdf>
- American Association of Colleges of Nursing. (2023b). *New data show enrollment declines in schools of nursing, raising concerns about the nation's nursing workforce*. <https://www.aacnnursing.org/news-data/all-news/new-data-show-enrollment-declines-in-schools-of-nursing-raising-concerns-about-the-nations-nursing-workforce>
- American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers. (2019). *Guide to best practices of articulation agreements*. https://www.aacrao.org/docs/default-source/signature-initiative-docs/trending-topic-docs/transfer/aacrao-articulation-agreement-final_aacraocover.pdf
- American Association of Community Colleges. (2012). *Reclaiming the American dream: Community colleges and the nation's future*. (ED535906). ERIC. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED535906>
- American Association of Community Colleges. (2022). *The economic value of America's community colleges*. https://www.aacc.nche.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/AACC_MainReport_1920_Formatted-Finalv2.pdf
- American Nurses Association. (n.d.). *Nursing Staffing Crisis*. <https://www.nursingworld.org/practice-policy/nurse-staffing/nurse-staffing-crisis/>
- Andel, S. A., Tedone, A. M., Shen, W., & Arvan, M. L. (2022). Safety implications of different forms of understaffing among nurses during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 78(1), 121–130. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jan.14952>
- Auerbach, D. I., Buerhaus, P. I., Donelan, K., & Staiger, D. O. (2022, April 13). A worrisome drop in the number of young nurses. *Health Affairs Forefront*. <https://doi.org/10.1377/forefront.20220412.311784>
- Austin, S. L. (2020). *Carnegie classifications, college tiers, and what they mean*. Academic Influence. <https://academicinfluence.com/resources/guidance/carnegie-classifications-college-tiers#meaning>
- Barrington, K. (2023, June 30). *Community colleges are more important than ever*. Community College Review. <https://www.communitycollegereview.com/blog/community-colleges-are-more-important-than-ever>
- Baškarada, S. (2014). Qualitative case study guidelines. *The Qualitative Report*, 19(40), 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2014.1008>
- Bergman, M. (2016). From stopout to scholar: Pathways to graduation through adult degree completion programs. *International Journal of Information Communication Technologies and Human Development*, 8(4), 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.4018/IJICTHD.2016100101>

- Bickerstaff, S., Kopko, E., Lewy, E. B., Raufman, J., & Rutschow, E. Z. (2021). *Implementing and scaling multiple measures assessment in the context of COVID-19* [Research brief]. Center for the Analysis of Postsecondary Readiness. (ED610605). ERIC. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED610605>
- Bleich, M. R. (2011). IOM report: The future of nursing: leading change, advancing health: Milestones and challenges in expanding nursing science. *Research in Nursing and Health, 34*(3), 169–170. <https://doi.org/10.1002/nur.20433>
- Boggs, G. R. (2012). The evolution of the community college in America: Democracy's colleges. *Community College Journal, 82*(4), 36–39. (EJ970327). ERIC. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ970327>
- Boggs, G. R. (2018, April 12). This is what Trump gets wrong about community colleges. *San Diego Tribune*. <http://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/opinion/commentary/sd-utbg-community-colleges-trump-20180412-story.html>
- Bragg, D. D., & Durham, B. (2012). Perspectives on access and equity in the era of (community) college completion. *Community College Review, 40*(2). <https://doi.org/10.1177/0091552112444724>
- Bragg, D., & Harmon, T. (2022, December 5). *Making the case for community college baccalaureates*. New America. <https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/briefs/making-the-case-for-community-college-baccalaureates-what-supply-and-demand-analysis-reveals-in-two-midwest-states/>
- Bragg, D. D., Harmon, T., Napiontek, T., Wasserman, E., & Kersenbrock, A. (2022, June). *20 promising practices to advance quality, equity, and success in community college baccalaureate (CCB) degree programs*. Community College Baccalaureate Association. <https://www.accbd.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/CCBA-Ebook.pdf>
- Buerhaus, P. I., Staiger, D. O., Auerbach, D. I., Yates, M. C., & Donelan, K. (2022). Nurse employment during the first fifteen months of the COVID-19 pandemic. *Health Affairs, 41*(1). <https://doi.org/10.1377/hlthaff.2021.01289>
- Butke, D. (2014). *The qualitative exploration on the community college baccalaureate in nursing* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Ferris State University
- California State University. (n.d.). *Program planning guide*. <https://www.calstate.edu/csu-system/administration/academic-and-student-affairs/academic-programs-innovations-and-faculty-development/program-development/Pages/Program-Planning-Resource-Guide.aspx>

- California State University. (2021). *Tips for completing a successful program proposal*. <https://www.calstate.edu/csu-system/administration/academic-and-student-affairs/academic-programs-innovations-and-faculty-development/Documents/tips-for-a-successful-proposal.pdf>
- Campaign for Action. (2021, February 23). *Looking back to look forward*. <https://campaignforaction.org/looking-back-to-look-forward/>
- Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education. (2021). *2021 update: Facts and figures*. <https://carnegieclassifications.acenet.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/CCIHE2021-FactsFigures.pdf>
- Center for Educational Performance and Information. (2023). *Michigan Postsecondary Data Inventory data manual*. https://www.michigan.gov/-/media/Project/Websites/cepi/MPDI/MPDI_Data_Manual.pdf
- Charmaz, K. (2016). The power of constructivist grounded theory for critical inquiry. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 23(1), 34–45. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800416657105>
- Chenail, R. J. (2012). Conducting qualitative analysis: Reading line-by-line but analyzing by meaningful qualitative units. *The Qualitative Report*, 17(1), 266–269. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2012.1817>
- Childers, L. (2019, November 18). *25 ways college has changed in the last decade*. Stacker. <https://stacker.com/education/25-ways-college-has-changed-last-decade>
- Christian, S. (2022, September 20). Create more 4-year community college degrees. *Inside Higher Ed*. <https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2022/09/21/community-college-four-year-degrees-widen-opportunity-opinion>
- Chu, X., & Ilyas, I. F. (2016). Qualitative data cleaning. *Proceedings of the VLDB Endowment*, 9(13), 1605–1608. <https://doi.org/10.14778/3007263.3007320>
- Chung, E., Mathew, V. N., & Noor, N. M. (2020). Are you ready? An assessment of online learning readiness among university students. *International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development*, 9(1), 301–307. <https://dopi.org/10.6007/IJARPED/v9-i1/7128>
- Cleland, J., & Durning, S. J. (Eds.). (2022). *Researching medical education*. John Wiley & Sons.
- College Transfer Net. (n.d.a). *How do articulation agreements help transfer students?* <https://collegerealitycheck.com/traditional-student-vs-non-traditional/>
- College Transfer Net. (n.d.b). *What is an articulation agreement?* <https://www.collegetransfer.net/AskCT/What-is-an-Articulation-Agreement>

- Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education. (2023). *Procedures for accreditation of baccalaureate and graduate nursing programs*. <https://www.aacnnursing.org/portals/0/PDFs/CCNE/Procedures.pdf>
- Commonfund. (2022). *2022 HEPI report released*. <https://www.commonfund.org/research-center/press-releases/2022-higher-education-price-index-hepi-report-released>
- Community College Baccalaureate Association. (n.d.). *National program inventory*. <https://www.accbd.org/state-inventory/>
- Community College of Allegheny County. (n.d.). *Nursing and allied health*. <https://www.ccac.edu/academics/programs/nursing-and-allied-health/index.php>
- Community College of Philadelphia. (2023). *Enrollment success navigator*. <https://jobs.ccp.edu/postings/7172>
- Community College Research Center. (n.d.a). *Community College FAQs*. <https://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/community-college-faqs.html>
- Community College Research Center. (n.d.b). *Guided pathways*. <https://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/research/guided-pathways.html>
- Conrad, C. F., & Wilson, R. F. (1985). *Academic program reviews: Institutional approaches, expectations, and controversies* [ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report No. 5] (ED264806). ERIC. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED264806>
- Coudriet, C. (2019, December 28). The decade in higher ed: Ten trends. *Forbes*. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/cartercoudriet/2019/12/28/higher-education-colleges-decade-trends/>
- Dadgar, M. (2016, March 8). *What is the economic value of community college degrees and certificates?* Policy Analysis for California Education. <https://edpolicyinca.org/newsroom/what-economic-value-community-college-degrees-and-certificates>
- DeBaun, B. (2019, April 4). *Survey data strengthen association between FAFSA completion and enrollment*. National College Attainment Network. <https://www.ncan.org/news/456025/Survey-Data-Strengthen-Association-Between-FAFSA-Completion-and-Enrollment.htm>
- Deering, M. (2023, January 10). Top 10 advantages of a BSN degree. *Nurse Journal*. <https://nursejournal.org/degrees/bsn/top-advantages-of-a-bsn-degree/>
- Deloitte. (n.d.). *Strategy and operations*. <https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/pages/public-sector/solutions/higher-education-strategy-operations.html>

- Dembicki, M. (2022, March 1). DataPoints: The community college baccalaureate landscape. *Community College Daily*. <https://www.ccdaily.com/2022/03/datapoints-the-community-college-baccalaureate-landscape/>
- Dimino, M. (2019, October 8). *How outcomes metrics can better reflect community college performance*. Third Way. <https://www.thirdway.org/report/how-outcomes-metrics-can-better-reflect-community-college-performance>
- Dones, C. M. (2021). *Expanding the role of community colleges with workforce baccalaureate programs*. IBI Global.
- Dougherty, K. J., Lahr, H., & Morest, V. (2017). *Reforming the American community college: Promising changes and their challenges* [CCRC Working Paper No. 98]. Community College Research Center. <http://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/media/k2/attachments/reforming-american-community-college-promising-changes-challenges.pdf>
- Dwyer, K. (2012, August 12). *Higher education articulation and transfer agreements* (Office of Legislative Research Report 2012-R-0333). <https://www.cga.ct.gov/2012/rpt/2012-R-0333.htm>
- Eddy, P. (2019, September 30). Community colleges need to evolve as students' needs do. *Harvard Business Review*. <https://hbr.org/2019/09/community-colleges-need-to-evolve-as-students-needs-do>
- Ellucian. (n.d.). *Ellucian colleague: All together now*. <https://www.ellucian.com/solutions/ellucian-colleague>
- Enlund, S. (2022, June 20). *Addressing nursing shortages: Options for states*. National Conference of State Legislatures. <https://www.ncsl.org/health/addressing-nursing-shortages-options-for-states>
- Espinosa, L. L., Turk, J. M., Taylor, M., & Chessman, H. M. (2019). *Race and ethnicity in higher education: A status report*. American Council on Education. <https://vtechworks.lib.vt.edu/bitstream/handle/10919/89187/RaceEthnicityHighEducation.pdf>
- Fain, P. (2011, November 30). Tracking quality at two-year colleges. *Inside Higher Ed*. <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2011/12/01/community-college-association-releases-voluntary-accountability-measures>
- Farmer, P., Meyer, D., Srocynski, M., Close, L., Gorski, M. S., & Wortock, J. (2017). RN to BSN at the community college: A promising practice for nursing education transformation. *Teaching and learning in Nursing, 12*(2), 103–108. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.teln.2016.12.003>

- Federal Reserve Bank of New York. (2023). *Household debt and credit report (Q2 2023)*. Center for Microeconomic Data. <https://www.newyorkfed.org/microeconomics/hhdc.html>
- Firth, S. (2022a, April 22). Snapshot analysis shows “unprecedented” decline in RN workforce. *Medpage Today*. <https://www.medpagetoday.com/nursing/nursing/98372>
- Firth, S. (2022b, May 11). More support needed to shore up nurse pipeline, experts say. *Medpage Today*. <https://www.medpagetoday.com/nursing/nursing/98663>
- Flannery, M. E. (2012, March 29). *Community colleges connect the dots*. The White House. <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/blog/2012/03/29/community-colleges-connect-dots>
- Flaubert, J. L., Le Menestrel, S., Williams, D. R., & Wakefield, M. K. (Eds.). (2021). *The future of nursing 2020–2030: Charting a path to achieve health equity*. National Academies Press.
- Floyd, D. L., Skolnik, M. L., & Walker, K. P. (2004). *The community college baccalaureate: Emerging trends and policy issues*. Routledge.
- Fuller, J. B., & Raman, M. (2022). *The partnership imperative: Community colleges, employers, and America’s chronic skills gap*. Harvard Business School.
- Gaines, K. (2023a, February 21). *Why nursing school accreditation matters*. <https://nurse.org/education/nursing-school-accreditation/>
- Gaines, K. (2023b, April 20). *Top 10 reasons nursing schools are rejecting applicants in 2023*. Nurse.org. <https://nurse.org/articles/reasons-nursing-schools-reject-applicants/>
- Gajendragadkar, S., Pinder, D., Rounsaville, T., & Wright, J. (2019, October 14). *Building operational excellence in higher education*. McKinsey and Company. <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/education/our-insights/building-operational-excellence-in-higher-education>
- Gallagher, M. (2023, May 2). ASN vs. BSN: Which degree should you earn? *Forbes*. <https://www.forbes.com/advisor/education/asn-vs-bsn/>
- Gamboa, A. (2023, September 23). Associate degree in nursing (AND): Overview. *Nursing Education*. <https://nursingeducation.org/degrees/associate-degree-in-nursing-adn/>
- Ghasemi, M. R., Moonaghi, H. K., & Heydari, A. (2020). Strategies for sustaining and enhancing nursing students’ engagement in academic and clinical settings: A narrative review. *Korean Journal of Medical Education*, 32(2), 103–117. <https://doi.org/10.3946/kjme.2020.159>

- Gierdowski, D. C. (2019, May 28). *ECAR study of community college students and information technology, 2019*. Educause. <https://www.educause.edu/ecar/research-publications/ecar-study-of-community-college-students-and-information-technology/2019/overview>
- Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. Aldine.
- Glenn, L. A. (2020, April 20). How are community college students different? *Community College Daily*.
- Glossary of Education Reform. (n.d.). *Competency-based learning*. <https://www.edglossary.org/competency-based-learning/>
- Griffiths, P., Recio-Saucedo, A., Dall’Ora, C., Briggs, J., Maruotti, A., Meredith, P., Smith, G. & Ball, J. (2018). The association between nurse staffing and omissions in nursing care: A systematic review. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 74(7), 1474–1487. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jan.13564>
- Gross, A., & Marcus, J. (2018, April 25). *High-paying trade jobs sit empty, while high school grads line up for university* [Radio broadcast]. NPR. <https://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2018/04/25/605092520/high-paying-trade-jobs-sit-empty-while-high-school-grads-line-up-for-university>
- Guth, D. (2017, November 1). Where we are now. *Community College Daily*. <https://www.ccdaily.com/2017/11/where-we-are-now/>
- Haddad, L. M., Annamaraju, P., & Toney-Butler, T. J. (2023, February 13). *Nursing shortage*. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK493175/>
- Hanover Research. (n.d.). *Optimize your investments to maximize your sustainability with data and insights*. <https://www.hanoverresearch.com/higher-education/operations-finance/>
- Higher Education Act. (1965). P.L. 89–329. <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/COMPS-765/pdf/COMPS-765.pdf>
- Higher Education Compliance Alliance. (2021). *Compliance matrix*. <https://www.higheredcompliance.org/compliance-matrix/>
- Higher Learning Commission. (n.d.a). *New academic program: substantive change application*. https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fdownload.hlcommission.org%2Fchange%2FACademicProgramApplication_FRM.docx
- Higher Learning Commission. (n.d.b). *Substantive change: New academic programs*. <https://www.hlcommission.org/Accreditation/substantive-change-new-academic-programs.html>

- Holzer, H. J., Lipson, R., & Wright, G. (2023). *Community college and workforce development: Are they achieving their potential?* American Enterprise Institute.
- Horowitz, J. M., Igielnik, R., & Kochhar, R. (2020, January 9). *The gaps in wealth between upper-income and middle- and lower-income families are rising, and the share held by middle-income families is falling*. Pew Research Center. https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2020/01/09/trends-in-income-and-wealth-inequality/psdt_01-10-20_economic-inequality_1-4/
- Hudson, J. (2022). *Nursing education: What degree do nurses need?* Betternurse.org. <https://betternurse.org/nursing-education/>
- Hussein, M. E.; Hirst, S., Salyers, V., & Osuji, J. (2014). Using grounded theory as a method of inquiry: Advantages and disadvantages. *The Qualitative Report*, 19(27), 1–15. <http://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol19/iss27/3>
- Indeed.com. (2023). *How to become a nurse without majoring in nursing in 6 steps*. <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/finding-a-job/how-to-become-nurse-without-majoring-in-nursing>
- Institute of Medicine. (2011). *The future of nursing: Leading change, advancing health*. National Academies Press. <https://www.mapnh.org/Resources/Documents/IOM%20Report%20on%20Nursing.pdf>
- Institute of Medicine. (2016). *Assessing progress on the Institute of Medicine Report the future of nursing*. National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/21838>
- Jacobs, J., & Worth, J. (2019). *The evolving mission of workforce development in the community college* (CCRC Working Paper No. 107). Community College Research Center.
- Jenkins, D., Lahr, H., & Pellegrino, L. (2020). *Redesigning community college student onboarding through guided pathways*. Community College Research Center. <https://doi.org/10.7916/d8-xq7t-z517>
- Johnson, H., & Mejia, M. C. (2020). *Increasing community college transfers: Progress and barriers*. Public Policy Institute of California. <https://www.ppic.org/wp-content/uploads/increasing-community-college-transfers-progress-and-barriers-september-2020.pdf>
- Juskiewicz, J. (2019). *Trends in community college enrollment and completion data*. American Association of Community Colleges. <https://www.aacc.nche.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/CCEnrollmentMarch2019Final.pdf>

- Juszkiewicz, J. (2021, August 23). *Community colleges' contribution to nursing and health*. The Community College Daily. <https://www.ccdaily.com/2021/08/washington-watch-community-colleges-contribution-to-nursing-and-health/#:~:text=Current%20nursing%20education%20landscape&text=This%20is%20no%20small%20feat,BSN%20pr ograms%20in%2016%20states>.
- Kekahio, W., Cicchinelli, L., Lawton, B., & Brandon, P. R. (2014). *Logic models: A tool for effective program planning, collaboration, and monitoring* (REL 2014–025)., Institute of Education Sciences. <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oese/oss/technicalassistance/easlogicmodelstoolmonitoring.pdf>
- Krupnick, M. (2020, December 21). When nurses are needed most, nursing programs aren't keeping up with demand. *The Hechinger Report*. <https://hechingerreport.org/when-nurses-are-needed-most-nursing-programs-arent-keeping-up-with-demand/>
- Kuh, G. D. (2008). *High-impact educational practices: What they are, who has access to them, and why they matter*. American Association of Colleges and Universities.
- Lavinson, R. (2021, January 27). Articulation agreements are just a small part of the answer. *Inside Higher Ed*. <https://www.insidehighered.com/blogs/tackling-transfer/articulation-agreements-are-just-small-part-answer>
- Law Insider. (n.d.a). *Ordinary college operations definition*. <https://www.lawinsider.com/dictionary/ordinary-college-operations>
- Law Insider. (n.d.b). *Program implementation sample clauses*. <https://www.lawinsider.com/clause/program-implementation>
- Leonard, M. B. (2020). *Geography of college opportunity: Situating community college baccalaureates across demographic differences* (Publication No. 28890306) [Doctoral dissertation, The Ohio State University]. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global.
- Levine, A., & Van Pelt, S. (2021, October 3). The future of higher ed is occurring at the margins. *Inside Higher Ed*. <https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2021/10/04/higher-education-should-prepare-five-new-realities-opinion>
- Levins, H. (2023, January 9). *How inadequate hospital staffing continues to burn out nurses and threaten patients*. Penn LDI. <https://ldi.upenn.edu/our-work/research-updates/how-inadequate-hospital-staffing-continues-to-burn-out-nurses-and-threaten-patients>
- Loglisci, M. M. (2018). *An analysis of community college baccalaureate nursing degrees* (Publication No. 13421002) [Doctoral dissertation, Wilmington University]. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global.
- Love, I. (2020, October). *The baccalaureate and beyond*. New America. newamerica.org/education-policy/reports/baccalaureate-and-beyond/

- Love, I., Bragg, D., & Harmon, T. (2021, November 9). *Mapping the community college baccalaureate*. New America. <https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/briefs/mapping-the-community-college-baccalaureate/>
- Love, I., & Turk, J. M. (2023, July 21). Competing, coordinating, or collaborating: Perspectives on the community college baccalaureate within the context of mission differentiation. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10668926.2023.2236050>
- Loveless, B. (2023, October 13). *Community colleges vs. universities*. Education Corner. <https://www.educationcorner.com/community-colleges-vs-universities/>
- Ma, J., & Pender, M. (2021). *Trends in college pricing and student aid 2021*. College Board. <https://research.collegeboard.org/media/pdf/trends-college-pricing-student-aid-2021.pdf>
- Marcus, J. (2015, October 26). Poll: Americans give high marks to community colleges for quality, value. *The Hechinger Report*. <https://hechingerreport.org/poll-americans-give-high-marks-to-community-colleges-for-quality-value/>
- McKinney, L., & Morris, P. A. (2010). Examining an evolution: a case study of organization change accompanying the community college baccalaureate. *Community College Review*, 37(3), 187–208. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0091552109351185>
- Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2016). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation* (4th ed.). Jossey Bass.
- Meza, E., & Love, I. (2022, March 3). *Community college baccalaureate programs as an equity strategy: Student access and outcomes data*. New America. <https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/briefs/community-college-baccalaureate-programs-as-an-equity-strategy-student-access-and-outcomes-data/>
- Mitchell, M., Leachman, M., & Saenz, M. (2019, October 24). *State higher education funding cuts have pushed costs to students, worsened inequality*. Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. https://tacc.org/sites/default/files/documents/2019-11/state_he_funding_cuts.pdf
- Morris, G. (2022, August 29). Ten reasons why RNs should pursue their BSN degree. *Nurse Journal*. <https://nursejournal.org/articles/reasons-why-rns-should-pursue-their-bsn-degree/>
- National Academy of Medicine. (2021). *The future of nursing 2020-2030: Charting a path to achieve health equity*. National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/25982>

- National Association of School Nurses. (2021). *Education, licensure, and certification of school nurses*. <https://www.nasn.org/nasn-resources/professional-practice-documents/position-statements/ps-education>
- National Center for Education Statistics. (n.d.). *Definitions and data*. <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs/web/97578e.asp>
- National Center for Education Statistics. (2022). *Fast facts: Enrollment*. <https://nces.ed.gov/fastFacts/display.asp?id=98>
- National Center for Education Statistics. (2023a). *Fast facts: Student debt*. <https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=900>
- National Center for Education Statistics. (2023b). *Fast facts: Tuition costs of colleges and universities*. <https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=76>
- National Center for Education Statistics. (2023c). *IPEDS data collection system: Glossary*. <https://surveys.nces.ed.gov/ipeds/public/glossary>
- National Center for Education Statistics. (2023d). *Price of attending an undergraduate institution*. <https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator/cua#suggested-citation>
- National Council of State Boards of Nursing. (n.d.). *NCLEX-RN exam overview*. <https://www.princetonreview.com/professional/nclex-rn-exam-overview>
- National Council of State Boards of Nursing. (2023, April 13). *NCSBN research projects significant nursing workforce shortages and crisis*. <https://www.ncsbn.org/news/ncsbn-research-projects-significant-nursing-workforce-shortages-and-crisis>
- National Education Progression in Nursing. (n.d.). *Models for academic progression*. Retrieved August 20, 2023. <https://nepincollaborative.org/programs/models/>
- National Education Progression in Nursing. (2021). *Trends in nursing academic progression: 2016-2020*. https://oadn.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/NEPIN_APTrends_Final.pdf
- National Institutes of Health. (n.d.). *What are competencies?* <https://hr.nih.gov/about/faq/working-nih/competencies/what-are-competencies>
- Noguchi, Y. (2021, October 25). *The US needs more nurses, but nursing schools don't have enough slots* [Audio podcast]. NPR. <https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2021/10/25/1047290034/the-u-s-needs-more-nurses-but-nursing-schools-have-too-few-slots>
- Nohria, N. (2021, December 21). *What the case study method really teaches*. *Harvard Business Review*. <https://hbr.org/2021/12/what-the-case-study-method-really-teaches>

- Office of the Provost, Northwestern. (n.d.a). *Development process*.
<https://www.northwestern.edu/provost/policies-procedures/new-program-development/process.html>
- Office of the Provost, Northwestern. (n.d.b). *Program proposal and approval*.
<https://www.northwestern.edu/provost/policies-procedures/new-program-development/program-proposal-and-approval.html>
- Oliver, C. (1995). *The community college open-door philosophy: What negative outcomes have developed?* (ED388345). ERIC. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED388345>
- Organization for Associate Degree Nursing. (2000, February 11). *OADN position statement on academic progression*. <https://oadn.org/resource/oadn-position-statement-on-academic-progression/>
- Organization for Associate Degree Nursing. (2019, December 17). *Social determinants of health fact sheet*. <https://oadn.org/resource/social-determinants-of-health-fact-sheet/>
- Ortagus, J. C., Skinner, B. T., & Tanner, M. J. (2021, December 21). Investigating why academically successful community college students leave college without a degree. *AERA Open*, 7. <https://doi.org/10.1177/23328584211065724>
- Palinkas, L.A., Horwitz, S.M., Green, C.A. et al. *Purposeful Sampling for Qualitative Data Collection and Analysis in Mixed Method Implementation Research*. *Adm Policy Ment Health* 42, 533–544 (2015). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10488-013-0528-y>
- Parham, M. (2018, March 30). *Editorial: What are community colleges? Are they vocational schools?* American Association of Community Colleges. <https://www.aacc.nche.edu/2018/03/30/editorial-what-are-community-colleges-are-they-vocational-schools/>
- Penn State - Schuylkill. (n.d.). *Transfer guides and articulation agreements*.
<https://schuylkill.psu.edu/admission/transfer-students/transfer-guides-articulation-agreements>
- PEW. (2019, October 15). *Two decades of change in federal and state higher education funding*.
<https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/issue-briefs/2019/10/two-decades-of-change-in-federal-and-state-higher-education-funding>
- Quilantan, B. (2021, January 25). How the pandemic forever changed higher education. *Weekly Education*. <https://www.politico.com/newsletters/weekly-education-coronavirus-special-edition/2021/01/25/how-the-pandemic-forever-changed-higher-education-792939>
- Quinton, S. (2022, March 17). As nurses quit, states seek to train more. *Stateline*.
<https://stateline.org/2022/03/17/as-nurses-quit-states-seek-to-train-more/>

- Rao, D. (2004). The open-door policy: Hidden barriers to postsecondary education for nontraditional adult learners. *Focus on Basics*, 6(D), 10–12.
- Rapoza, S., Tucker, K., Campbell, S., & Morris, P. (2022). Improving the local nursing workforce through creation of an RN-BSN program. *Teaching and Learning in Nursing*, 17(4), 417–420. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.teln.2022.06.011>
- Rashid, Y., Rashid, A., & Waseem, A. (2019). Case study method: A step-by-step guide for business researchers. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 18, 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406919862424>
- Reeves, R. V. (2019, March 1). *The future of higher education: A conversation with Lawrence Bacow, president of Harvard University*. Brookings Institution. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/the-future-of-higher-education-a-conversation-with-lawrence-bacow-president-of-harvard-university/>
- Rozko, N. (2021, February 23). *Looking back to look forward*. Campaign for Action. <https://campaignforaction.org/looking-back-to-look-forward/>
- Sadler, D. (2022, May 1). Nursing shortage. *OR Today*. <https://ortoday.com/nursing-shortage/>
- Sánchez, N. L. (2019, October 24). Community colleges and the future of workforce development. *Forbes*. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/nancyleesanchez/2019/10/24/community-colleges-and-the-future-of-workforce-development/?sh=57de81b1681f>
- Seltzer, R. (2016, December 5). The high school graduate plateau. *Inside Higher Ed*. <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2016/12/06/high-school-graduates-drop-number-and-be-increasingly-diverse>
- Sentz, R., & Stout, K. (2018, November 8). Community colleges' crucial role in powering local economies. *Voices of the Governing Institute*. <https://www.governing.com/gov-institute/voices/col-community-colleges-vital-role-powering-economies.html>
- Shultz, L., & Backstrom, B. (2021). *Test-optional admissions policies: Evidence from implementations pre- and post-COVID-19* [Policy Brief]. Nelson A. Rockefeller Institute of Government (ED613855). ERIC. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED613855>
- Skinner, B., Ortagus, J., & Tanner, M. (2022, February 2). *Why community college students quit despite being almost finished*. The Conversation. <https://theconversation.com/why-community-college-students-quit-despite-being-almost-finished-175420>
- Smiley, R. A. (Ed.). (2023). The 2022 national nursing workforce survey. *Journal of Nursing Regulation*, 14(1), Suppl. 2. [https://www.journalofnursingregulation.com/issue/S2155-8256\(23\)X0004-0](https://www.journalofnursingregulation.com/issue/S2155-8256(23)X0004-0)

- Smiley, R. A., Ruttinger, C., Oliveira, C. M., Hudson, L. R., Allgeyer, R., Reneau, K. A., Silvestre, J. H., & Alexander, M. (2021). The 2020 national nursing workforce survey. *Journal of Nursing Regulation, 12*(1), Suppl. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2155-8256\(21\)00027-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2155-8256(21)00027-2)
- Smith, R. (2023, June 4). *Traditional student vs. non-traditional: How to know the difference*. College Reality Check. <https://collegerealitycheck.com/traditional-student-vs-non-traditional/>
- Soler, M. C. (2019, November). *Updating the national landscape: State adoption of community college baccalaureate degrees* [Data Note 3]. Community College Research Initiatives (ED608172). ERIC. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED608172.pdf>
- Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. (n.d.a). *Seeking accreditation at a higher or lower degree level*. <https://sacscoc.org/app/uploads/2020/01/Level-Change-for-Member-Institutions-1.pdf>
- Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. (n.d.b). *Substantive change policy and procedures*. <https://sacscoc.org/app/uploads/2019/08/SubstantiveChange.pdf>
- Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. (2020). *Handbook for review committees*. <https://sacscoc.org/app/uploads/2019/08/Exhibit-18.HandbookForReviewCommittees.pdf>
- Spivey, D., & Meyer, D. (2019, December 16). *OADN's written testimony to the Future of Nursing 2020-2030 Committee*. Organization for Associate Degree Nursing. <https://oadn.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/OADN-Public-Comments-to-Future-of-Nursing-2020-2030-Study-Committee-19.12.16.pdf>
- State University System of Florida. (n.d.). *Program review and accreditation*. <https://www.flbog.edu/resources/academic/program-review-accreditation/>
- Talib, M. A., Bettayeb, A. M., & Omer, R. I. (2021). Analytical study on the impact of technology in higher education during the age of COVID-19: Systematic literature review. *Education and Information Technologies, 26*, 6719–6746. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-021-10507-1>
- Thompson, P. (2017). *Foundations of educational technology*. Stillwater, OK: Oklahoma State University Libraries. <https://doi.org/10.22488/okstate.19.000002>
- Tilley, B. P. (2014). What makes a student non-traditional? A comparison of students over and under age 25 in online, accelerated psychology courses. *Psychology Learning and Teaching, 13*(2), 95–106. <https://doi.org/10.2304/plat.2014.13.2.95>
- Trowler, V. (2010). *Student engagement literature review*. The Higher Education Academy. https://ishare.mq.edu.au/prod/file/4fc62a5c-8d4d-4cd8-92a4-033c6ff46724/1/EXT%20Student_engagement_literature_review%20Advance%20HE_HEA.pdf

- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2022, September 8). *Occupational outlook handbook: Registered nurses*. <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/registered-nurses.htm>
- U.S. Census Bureau. (April, 2023). *Community College Month*. <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/stories/community-college-month.html>
- U.S. Department of Education. (n.d.a). *Accreditation: Postsecondary education institutions*. <https://www.ed.gov/accreditation>
- U.S. Department of Education. (n.d.b). *Professional licensure*. <https://sites.ed.gov/international/professional-licensure/>
- U.S. Department of Education. (2017). *Program review guide for institutions*. <https://fsapartners.ed.gov/sites/default/files/attachments/programrevguide/2017ProgramReviewGuide.pdf>
- U.S. Department of Labor. (2022, October 3). *U.S. Department of Labor announces \$80M funding opportunity to help train, expand, diversify nursing workforce; address shortage of nurses*. <https://www.dol.gov/newsroom/releases/eta/eta20221003>
- U.S. Department of State. (n.d.a). *Glossary*. <https://educationusa.state.gov/experience-studying-usa/us-educational-system/glossary>
- U.S. Department of State. (n.d.b). *Study in the United States with the 2+2 model*. https://educationusa.state.gov/sites/default/files/20210804_22_one-pager_a4.pdf
- U.S. News. (2022, June 6). *Legislature moves to expand nursing education in Washington*. <https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/washington/articles/2022-06-06/legislature-moves-to-expand-nursing-education-in-washington>
- University Accreditation Association. (n.d.). *Traditional vs non-traditional education*. <https://universityaccreditation.org/approach.html>
- University of Maryland. (n.d.a). *Academics*. <https://marylandglobal.umd.edu/global-learning-all/study-abroad/explore/incoming-exchange/academics>
- University of Maryland. (n.d.b). *Limited enrollment programs*. <https://admissions.umd.edu/academics/limited-enrollment-programs>
- University of South Florida. (2015). *2015-2025 USF system campus master plan updates: goals, objectives, and policies*. <https://www.usf.edu/administrative-services/facilities/documents/planning/goals-objectives-policies.pdf>

- Wakefield, M., & Williams, D. R. (2019, December 16). *OADN's written testimony to the Future of Nursing 2020-2023 Committee*. Organization for Associate Degree Nursing. <https://oadn.org/resource/oadns-written-testimony-to-the-future-of-nursing-2020-2030-committee-2/>
- Warner, A. (2022, May 19). Five reasons to consider community college. *U.S. News*. <https://www.usnews.com/education/community-colleges/articles/reasons-to-consider-community-college>
- Watson, W. R., & Watson, S. L. (2012). An argument for clarity: What are learning management systems, what are they not, and what should they become? *TechTrends*, 51(2), 28–34. <https://hal.science/file/index/docid/692067/filename/Watson-2007.pdf>
- Weissman, S. (2021, September 15). Report: Community colleges drive workforce education, training. *Inside Higher Ed*. <https://www.insidehighered.com/quicktakes/2021/09/16/report-community-colleges-drive-workforce-education-training>
- Western Michigan University. (n.d.). *Articulation information*. <https://wmich.edu/transfer/credit/articulation-information>
- Wright-Kim, J. (2021). An update on the impacts of the community college baccalaureate. *New Directions for Community Colleges*, 59–70. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cc.20497>

APPENDIX A: IRB APPROVAL LETTER

FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

1010 Campus Drive FLITE 410 Big Rapids, MI 49307

www.ferris.edu/irb

Date: February 16, 2023

To: Susan DeCamillis, EdD and Cynthia Cicchelli

From: David R. White, Ph.D, IRB Chair

Re: IRB Application *IRB-FY22-23-90 Case Study of the Implementation of BSN @ a Community College*

The Ferris State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application for using human subjects in the study, *Case Study of the Implementation of BSN @ a Community College (IRB-FY22-23-90)* and approved this project under Federal Regulations Exempt Category 2.(ii). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording).

Any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research would not reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, educational advancement, or reputation.

Your protocol has been assigned project number IRB-FY22-23-90. Approval mandates that you follow all University policy and procedures, in addition to applicable governmental regulations. Approval applies only to the activities described in the protocol submission; should revisions need to be made, all materials must be reviewed and approved by the IRB prior to initiation. In addition, the IRB must be made aware of any serious and unexpected and/or unanticipated adverse events as well as complaints and non-compliance issues.

Understand that informed consent is a process beginning with a description of the study and participant rights, with the assurance of participant understanding followed by a signed consent form. Informed consent must continue throughout the study via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require each participant receive a copy of the signed consent document and investigators maintain consent records for a minimum of three years. Ferris IRB requires submission of annual status reports during the life of the research project and a Final Report Form upon study completion. The Annual Status Report for this project is due on or before February 15, 2024. Thank you for your compliance with these guidelines and best wishes for a successful research endeavor.

Regards,



David R. White, Ph.D, IRB Chair

Ferris State University Institutional Review Board

APPENDIX B: OPERATIONALIZATION-INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FRAME

BSN Operationalization-Interview Questions Frame

Cynthia Cicchelli, as of 2/20/2023

DATE: _____ PARTICIPANT CODE (CASE #) _____

Hello [name],

Thank you for joining me today. It's a pleasure to meet you.

Before we get started, I just want to give you an overview of what our process will be and give you a context upon which to base your responses.

This study is focused on Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) programs offered at community colleges.

The primary intent is to gain an understanding not so much about WHY community colleges should offer this program, but rather HOW it occurred.

Today, we are looking at the literal implementation and operationalization steps that it required.

Your input will not only inform our current and possible future work in managing instructional operations responsibilities, but also, will serve as the basis of my dissertation research in the Doctorate of Community College Leadership program at Ferris State University in Big Rapids, Michigan.

During this interview, I will use a framework of questions to guide our conversation. This should take approximately 90 minutes. This frame is meant to be sure we've covered all the aspects of the study. It's not meant to limit our discussion. Rather, this is meant to be a rich dialogue about your knowledge and experience. Please feel free to share whatever seems to make sense at the time.

I will be recording our session so that I can be sure I accurately represent what you have shared in the study. I'll be sure to manage your privacy and any of the data that we collect. I'll also be taking notes as we go along, so hopefully that's not distracting. Please let me know if it does.

I may need to reach back out to you to after we're done to ensure accuracy, ask for clarification, or to request more information.

What questions might you have before we begin?

May I start recording?

.....
START RECORDING

.....
Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study.

I'd like to start by talking about the program that you were involved in developing.

.....

According to what I've read, The Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree program was implemented at [Your College] beginning in 2017.

I understand that this was not your first baccalaureate degree that was offered at this institution. This might mean that some aspects of operationalization and implementation may have been managed prior to the development of this BSN degree program.

I also understand that the program was built in collaboration with 2 other community colleges through a consortium partnership with [X College] and [Y College]. In addition, it appears that [Your State] uses a statewide course numbering system.

Is this correct?

.....

In light of this, I would first like you to think of your insights regarding the [Your College's] BSN program. Then we can talk about how being a part of a consortium and in a state-wide system might have impacted your work.

Are you ready to begin?

Participant	
<i>"I'd like to learn more about you..."</i>	
1. Where do you currently work?	
2. What is your current job title?	
3. What was your job title at [Your College] at the time that the BSN was developed?	
4. How long have you been involved in higher education as a whole?	
Role	
<i>"The BSN degree program likely involved many people across the institution. ...Let's focus on <u>your role</u> at the time of the BSN program development at [Your College]."</i>	
<i>Before we start on this section, though, I want to clarify some terms.</i>	
<i>When I talk about <u>operationalization</u>,</i> <i>I mean the literal management of data in systems or processes that need to be in place to make things work.</i>	
<i>When I talk about <u>implementation</u>,</i> <i>I am referring to getting all of these systems up and running, courses out onto the web, and those types of things that launched the BSN program."</i>	
1. Could you please describe how <u>your job</u> was specifically related to -operationalization or the -implementation	

of the Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree program?	
2. How were you personally involved?	
3. Who else at your institution might have been involved and what was their role?	
Preparations	
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Continuing with a focus on the operations and implementation, please answer the next set of questions from the perspective of how these changes were managed at [Your College].</i></p> <p><i>I will also ask about the impact surrounding the consortium partnerships with [X College] and [Y College] and the state-wide course numbering system.</i></p>	
4. What did you or your institution specifically <u>DO</u> to prepare for the implementation of the Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree program	
5. How long of a period of preparation was needed to integrate the Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree program into your institutional systems? a. Was there anything that impacted this timeline?	
6. In what way was your preparation of implementation impacted by the Consortium Partnership?	
7. What departments were involved?	
8. Please describe any additional preparations that were needed based on the statewide numbering system requirements.	
9. In what way was the local university involved in the implementation planning?	
10. What strategies did you employ to ensure your implementation preparations were complete prior to launching this program?	
Implementation	
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Continuing with a focus on the operationalization aspect of implementation, please answer the next set of questions from the perspective of how these changes were managed at [Your College].</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>If there was any impact that was due to the consortium partnerships or statewide systems, please share that as well."</i></p>	
11. Specific to [Your College], what large or small changes did you need to implement surrounding a. managing information, b. processes, or c. reporting?	
12. Specific to <u>your job</u> at [Your College], in what way did the implementation of the Bachelor of Science in Nursing impact your ...	
a. Daily work?	
b. Data management?	
1. Reporting requirements?	

2.	Modifications of intutional policies and practices?	
3.	Other departments or integration with other processes, people, or strategies?	
13.	What unintended operational consequences, if any, may have stemmed from the implementation of the BSN degree program?	
CQI		
<i>"Now I'd like to ask about your post-implementation thoughts..."</i>		
14.	If you were to do this all over again, what changes might you have made in your operationalization or implementation of this BSN degree program, both within your role with this development or from the institution's perspective?	
15.	What other advice might you have for other institutions who might be considering the implementation of the Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree program?	
Strength of the Study		
<i>"And finally, a few wrap-up questions..."</i>		
16.	When you think about the operationalization of the BSN, are there other important things that we haven't yet discussed? Please tell me about them.	
17.	Are there other professionals who were at [Your College] or elsewhere that you think would add to the depth of this study?	
a.	If so, would you be able [willing] to help me make this connection?	
Thank you		
<i>"Thank you so much for participating. I enjoyed our conversation and appreciated your thoughts and insights. I'll be reviewing the information and will let you know if I have any further questions or need clarification. Take care!"</i>		

APPENDIX C: TEMPLATE TO MANAGE INTERVIEW REQUESTS

INITIAL EMAIL INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE

TO: [Name: Interview Candidate]

CC: [Name: Your College IRB Approved Contact]

SUBJECT: Participation Requested RE: Operationalization of BSN at a Community College

Hello [Name: Interview Candidate],

I was referred to you by [Name: Your College IRB Approved Contact, Title] at [Your College]. I am a fellow community college administrator who is requesting your help. I would like to schedule an interview within a few weeks, should you consent to participate.

As [Name: Your College IRB Approved Contact] may have informed you, I have an ongoing project surrounding the implementation of a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree program. The State of [My State] continues to explore various options in this regard, and I would like to be prepared should we be granted this opportunity. As the associate dean managing instructional operations, curriculum design and development, and assessment and quality improvement, I hope to learn from your wisdom.

This project not only will inform our current and possible future work in managing instructional operations responsibilities, but also will serve as the basis of my dissertation research in the Doctorate of Community College Leadership program at Ferris State University in Big Rapids, Michigan.

If you can participate, I will send a consent form to sign and set up a meeting. Details for the meeting will be included in the invitation.

- Could you please send me dates and times that might fit well with your schedule?

Thank you in advance for your support on this important endeavor!

Best regards,
Cynthia

2nd Request to Participate

TO: [Name: Interview Candidate]

CC: [Name: Your College IRB Approved Contact]

SUBJECT: RE: Participation Requested RE: Operationalization of BSN at a Community College

Hello [Name: Interview Candidate],

I am just reaching out again to ask for your assistance in participating in a study that focuses on the operationalization of the BSN program at [Your College]. (Please see the email below for more details.)

It can be a busy time of the year. Is there a time that works well with your schedule when we can meet remotely?

Best regards,
Cynthia

POTENTIAL DATES FOR INTERVIEW

TO: [Name: Interview Candidate]

CC: [Name: Your College IRB Approved Contact]

SUBJECT: Potential Dates for Interview RE: Operationalization of BSN at a Community College

Hello [Name: Interview Candidate],

I am so very grateful to have your support in this important conversation surrounding your BSN program at your college.

Here are some potential days and times:

- Fri 3/24/2023 from 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM (noon) EST
- Thu 3/30/2023 between 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM EST
- Fri 3/31/2023 between 2:00 PM - 5:00 PM EST
- Tue 4/4/2023 from 12:30 PM - 2:00 PM EST
- Thu 4/6/2023 from 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM (noon) EST

Once we have confirmed a date and time, I will send a consent form to sign and set up the Outlook meeting. Details for the meeting will be included in the invitation.

Thank you again!

Cindy

CALENDAR INVITE TO FINALIZE AGREEMENT TO PARTICIPATE

SUBJECT: Interview RE: Operationalization of BSN at a Community College

LOCATION: <https://schoolcraftcollege.zoom.us/j/9561846406>

ATTACHMENT: GeneralConsent (Cicchelli) 2023 02 18

Dear [Name: Interview Candidate],

Thank you for your interest in participating in my research project about the implementation of a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree program at a community college.

- Meeting Date: **Wed 3/8/2023**
- Meeting Time: **1:00 PM Eastern Time**
- Meeting Location: <https://schoolcraftcollege.zoom.us/j/9561846406>

Participation will involve a framework of questions to guide the interview which will take approximately 90 minutes. I may also need to contact you following the interview to clarify questions and/or to request additional information.

Participation is voluntary.

- See the attached **General Consent** form for more details and to prepare the form.
- Once you have read and agreed to participate:

- please print, initial, and sign the form
- send the completed form back electronically to:
 - ccicchel@schoolcraft.edu

After I receive the completed General Consent form, I will also sign it and send you back a copy for your records. Feel free to contact me if you have any questions about this process.

The interview will take place in a virtual live-streamed session using Zoom which will be digitally recorded only to assure accuracy with care taken for your privacy.

- Zoom login details and information may be found at the bottom of this email.

Thank you, again, for your support of this study.

Best regards,

Cynthia

OR

Dear **[Name: Interview Candidate]**,

Thank you for your interest in participating in my research project about the implementation of a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree program at a community college. Participation will involve a framework of questions to guide the interview which will take approximately 90 minutes. I may also need to contact you following the interview to clarify questions and/or to request additional information.

Meeting Date: **Wed 3/1/2023**

Meeting Time: **12:00 PM Eastern Time**

Participation is voluntary. See the attached General Consent form for more details. Once you have read and agreed to participate, please:

- Print, initial, and sign the form
- Send the completed form back electronically prior to our meeting to:
 - ccicchel@schoolcraft.edu
- After I receive the completed General Consent form, I will also sign it and send you back a copy for your records.
- Feel free to contact me if you have any questions about this process.

The interview will take place in a virtual live-streamed session using Zoom which will be digitally recorded only to assure accuracy with care taken for your privacy. Please see the Zoom address below.

Thank you, again, for your support of this study.

Best regards,

Cynthia

REMINDER FOR INTERVIEW

Hello [Name: Interview Candidate],

I'm looking forward to our conversation tomorrow via Zoom!

Subject: Operationalization of BSN at a Community College

When: Wednesday, March 1, 2023 12:00 PM-1:30 PM Eastern Time (US & Canada).

Where: <https://schoolcraftcollege.zoom.us/j/9561846406>

Just one more step as we prepare to begin...

- Please review, sign, and return the attached General Consent form for my records.

I truly appreciate your support in this valuable research!

See you tomorrow,

Cindy

AFTER THE INTERVIEW THANK YOU

Dear [Name: Interview Candidate],

Thank you participating in my research project about the implementation of a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree program at a community college.

It was so nice to get to know you through this interview. I thoroughly enjoyed the information and insights that you provided and believe that they will truly add value to the way in which community colleges continue to address this workforce need. Having the operational strategies, processes, and particulars in hand will be very useful for those who are pursuing this work.

To wrap up...please...

- Feel free to reach back out to me if you think of something else that comes to mind or that we should have covered.
- Also, if you know of others with whom I should connect, please share their name and, if you have it, their contact information, or perhaps help me make this introduction if you are able.

I have great notes from our conversation! I may also need to contact you following the interview to clarify questions and/or to request additional information as I go through the data.

Again, my appreciation for your support cannot be emphasized enough. Thank you so very much!

Cindy

APPENDIX D: INFORMED CONSENT



FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD FOR HUMAN SUBJECT RESEARCH

1010 Campus Drive FLITE 410 Big Rapids, MI 49307 | (231) 591-2553 | www.ferris.edu/irb

Informed Consent

Project Title: Case Study of the Implementation of BSN at a Community College

IRB Approved Project #: IRB- FY22-23-90

Principal Investigator: Dr. Susan DeCamillis. Email: decamis@ferris.edu

Co-Principal Investigator: Cynthia Cicchelli, Ferris State University Student Researcher

Email: ccicchel@schoolcraft.edu (w); cynthiacicchelli@gmail.com (h)

Phone: 734-462-4798 (w); 248-802-6575 (c)

Key Information

You are invited to participate in a voluntary research study about the implementation of a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree program at a community college. The researcher is interested in building a case study of a single institution to explore, through a systematic interview process, the ways in which the program was operationalized (data, processes, reporting, etc.). Your involvement is due to your experience with the transformation of a community college in offering a bachelor's degree.

Participation will involve a framework of questions to guide the interview which will take approximately 90 minutes. The interview will take place in a virtual live-streamed session using Zoom. The researcher may also need to contact you following the interview to clarify questions and/or to request additional information. The interview will be digitally recorded. The interview phase of the study will take about three months to complete (February to April 2023).

Please take the time to read this form and ask any questions you have before deciding if you want to take part in this voluntary research study.

Participation

Taking part in this study is completely voluntary. You do not have to participate in this study if you don't want to and you may leave at any time without consequence. The interview will take approximately 90 minutes to complete and will take place through a Zoom virtual meeting. The researcher may also need to contact you following the interview to clarify questions or to request additional information.

The study will take about three months to complete and your participation in this study will be over when your interview and any necessary follow up is completed.

Anticipated Benefits

Although this research is not designed to help you personally, others may benefit from your participation as the information you provide may help community colleges and other institutions benefit from a stronger understanding surrounding the operationalization and implementation of the Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree program at community colleges.

Potential Risks

It is not anticipated that this study would subject the participants to any risks or harm; however, measures will be taken to ensure that the organization and identities of the participants are kept confidential. Names will be omitted, and data will be codified to reduce the impact to the participants and institution.

Confidentiality

Records of your participation in this research study will be completely confidential. Your identity will not be revealed on any report, publication, or at scientific meetings. The researchers will password protect the recorded Zoom interview. Recordings and data will be managed in a secure location such as an encrypted or password protected storage device to be deleted within an appropriate retention period of three years. Only the researcher will have access to the original recordings.

In order to keep your information safe, the researcher will maintain your confidentiality. Your identity will not be used; instead, names will be omitted, and data will be codified to reduce the impact to the participants and institution. At your request, any sensitive information that you provide in the interview will not be used in any written documents resulting from the interview.

Use of Digital Recordings

Your initial here (_____) indicate your permission to video record the interview. Your video recording will not be used in any written materials or presentations related to this study. Only the written transcription of the interview information will be used. Only the researcher will have access to the original recordings. Video recordings will be destroyed after the researcher has verified the transcription for accuracy, and no identifying information will be included in the transcription.

All information you provide (written documents and video recording) will be securely stored. Research notes and recordings will be available only to the researcher and will be managed in a secure location such as an encrypted or password protected storage device to be deleted within an appropriate retention period of 3 years. At this time, the researcher will dispose of your information, using accepted procedures.

Signing this form is required in order for you to take part in the study and gives the researcher your permission to obtain, use, and share information about you for this study. The results of this study could be published in an article but will not include any information that identifies you. There are some reasons why people other than the researchers may need to see the information you provide as part of the study. This includes organizations responsible for making sure the research is done safely and properly, including Ferris State University.

Participant Rights

This is a voluntary research study. You are free to leave the study at any time. If you leave the study before it is finished, there will be no penalty to you. If you are an employee or student at Seminole State College of Florida, your employment status or academic standing will not be affected whether or not you decide to participate in this study.

You will not lose any benefits to which you may otherwise be entitled. If you choose to tell the researchers why you are leaving the study, your reasons for leaving may be kept as part of the study record. If you decide to leave the study before it is finished, please tell one of the persons listed in the *“Contact Information”* section below.

The researcher could take you out of the study, even if you want to continue to participate. There are many reasons why the researchers may need to end your participation in the study. Examples include:

- The researcher believes that it is not in your best interest to stay in the study
- You become ineligible to participate
- Your condition changes and you need treatment that is not allowed while you are taking part in the study
- The study is suspended or cancelled

The researcher will tell you if they learn of important new information that may change your willingness to stay in this study. If new information is provided to you after you have joined the study, it is possible that you may be asked to sign a new consent form that includes new information.

Contact Information

The main researcher conducting this study is Cynthia Cicchelli, a doctoral student at Ferris State University and an administrator at Schoolcraft College. Please ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact Cynthia at [734-462-4798](tel:734-462-4798) or ccicchel@schoolcraft.edu. If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a subject in this study, please contact: **Ferris State University Institutional Review Board (IRB)**, 1010 Campus Drive, FLITE 410, Big Rapids, MI 49307, (231) 591-2553 or IRB@ferris.edu.

Signatures

Research Subject: I understand the information printed on this form. I have discussed this study, its risks, potential benefits and my other alternatives. My questions so far have been answered. I understand that if I have more questions or concerns about the study or my participation as a research subject, I may contact one of the people listed above in the “*Contact Information*” section.

I understand that I will receive a copy of this form at the time I sign it. I understand that if my ability to consent for myself changes, either my legal representative or I may be asked to re-consent prior to my continued participation.

Signature of Subject: _____

Printed Name: _____

Date of Signature: _____

Principal Investigator (or Designee): I have given this research subject (or his/her legally authorized representative, if applicable) information about this study that I believe is accurate and complete. The subject has indicated that he or she understands the nature of the study and the risks and benefits of participating.

Printed Name: _____

Title: _____

Signature: _____

Date of Signature: _____

APPENDIX E: GOTRANSCRIPT CERTIFICATE OF ACCURACY



Certificate of Accuracy

Transcription of **Cynthia Cicchellis Personal Meeting** **Room_default.mp4** in English

As an authorized representative of GoTranscript LTD, a professional transcription services agency, I, Mindaugas Caplinskas hereby certify that the above-mentioned document has been transcribed by an experienced, qualified and competent professional transcriber, fluent in the above-mentioned language and that, in my best judgement, the transcribed text truly reflects the content, meaning, and style of the original audio file and constitutes in every respect a complete and accurate transcription of the original audio. This audio file has not been transcribed for a family member, friend, or business associate.

This is to certify the correctness of the transcription only. I do not make any claims or guarantees about the authenticity of the content of the original audio file. Further, GoTranscript LTD assumes no liability for the way in which the transcription is used by the customer or any third party, including endusers of the transcription.

A copy of this transcription is attached to this certification.

Signed on **22 May 2023**

Signed	<u>MindCaplin</u>
Name	<u>Mindaugas Caplinskas</u>
Position	<u>CEO</u>

Mindaugas Caplinskas, CEO of GoTranscript LTD

Address: 166, College Road, Harrow, Middlesex, HA11BH, United Kingdom **Phone number:** +1 (831) 222-8398 **Email:** support@gotranscript.com **Website:** www.gotranscript.com

APPENDIX F: GOTRANSCRIPT CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT



2023/07/03

**Confidentiality agreement between GoTranscript - GOTRANSCRIPT LTD & the client
Cynthia L. Cicchelli**

1. I hereby undertake not, during the term of my agreement to provide consultancy services to the client, or after its termination, for any reason unless expressly authorised by the client, or required by law, to disclose to any unauthorised person, nor use, any confidential information relating to or received from the client.
2. Such information includes but is not limited to financial information, client personal files and research data. Information is also confidential information if it is clearly marked as such or by its very nature is evidently confidential.
3. I understand that the use and disclosure of all information about identifiable living individuals is governed by the Data Protection Act. I will not use any personal data I acquire during my work for any purpose that is or may be incompatible with the purposes specified in this agreement.
4. I understand that I am required to keep all confidential and personal data securely.
5. I hereby undertake, during the term of my agreement to provide consultancy services to the client, to store all the records and materials related to the client in a safe, secure location as long as they are in my possession.
6. I hereby undertake to ensure that all records provided for the purposes of this agreement, including any back-up records, are deleted as directed, once I have received confirmation that the contract has been satisfactorily completed and all the required information has been provided in accordance with the client's wishes. I also confirm that the client will be able to personally remove the completed transcriptions from our database, and that the records and all the information and data related to them will be completely removed from the translators ' computers once the contract is satisfactorily completed.
7. I understand that the client reserves the right to take legal action against any breach of confidence, and will proceed with upmost speed to protect its interests in the event of any such breach.

Signed MindCaplin
 Name Mindaugas Caplinskas
 Position CEO

APPENDIX G: REGISTERED NURSING (RN) COMMUNITY COLLEGE ENTRY PATHWAY
OPTIONS

Registered Nursing (RN) Community College Entry Pathway Options

NOTE: Overgeneralized view of each program's requirements. See your Advisor for details!

	Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN) Associate of Applied Science Degree	2+2 ADN to Community College Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) Degree	2+2 ADN Articulation or Consortium (e.g., Dual Enrollment) Agreement to University Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) Degree	Associate of Science (AS) to Traditional University Transfer Degree	Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) Degree for Transfer Students
Lower-level General Education or Supportive Courses*	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Depends on University's Acceptance of Each Course that is Required in the University's BSN Program
English Communications Courses	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Humanities Courses	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Anatomy and Physiology Science Courses	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Psychology or Social Science Courses	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Mathematics Courses	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
LPN Nursing Courses	Depends	No	No	No	No
LPN Licensure	Depends	No	No	No	No
RN Nursing Courses	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes @ University
RN Clinical Courses	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes @ University
ADN Associate of Applied Science Degree (AAS)	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
RN Licensure	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Not Yet
Advanced-level General Education or Supportive Courses	No	Yes @ Community College	Yes @ University	No	Yes @ University
Advanced Nursing Courses: Ex: community health, developing nursing practice, case management, and nursing research	No	Yes @ Community College	Yes @ University	No	Yes @ University
RN Licensure	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) Degree	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Direct Option for Master's or Higher Degree	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes

*courses required will vary by institution or state requirements

Depends = each program may determine this requirement

No = may not be applicable or a requirement of the program

Registered Nursing (RN) Pathway Options
by Cynthia Cicchelli, 2023