Northland Pioneer College

Nursing Program

Project Evaluation Report Homegrown Healers Arizona Department of Commerce Community College Grant for Nursing Programs G034-07-04

September 30, 2009

Submitted by: Debra McGinty, RN PhD Dean of Nursing and Allied Health Project Director

Project Evaluation Report Homegrown Healers Effectiveness of Key Objectives

I. Introduction

In its 2005 proposal to the Arizona Department of Commerce Community College Grant for Nursing Programs, NPC chose to extend the focus beyond increasing the number of nursing students in its program to increasing the *diversity* of those students. Our goal for G058-05 was to "increase the number of students in the nursing program by not less than 25% (20 students), of which not less than 75% (15 students) will be from populations currently under-represented in the nursing profession." The widespread shortage of registered nurses (RNs) is well documented, but it is underscored by the need for nurses who are non-traditional in gender or minority status to aid under-served populations. An Internet survey of Indian Health Services job opportunities for April 2007 revealed 297 openings in the nursing profession. The state with the most openings was Arizona, and the area with the most openings was the Navajo Reservation (www.ihs.gov/JobOpportunities).

Still, Native Americans are among the most under represented in most nursing programs, including Northland Pioneer College. Over 40% of Arizona's Native American People live in Navajo and Apache Counties. Native Americans comprise over 47% of the population of Navajo County and 76.4% of the population of Apache County (U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census 2000). Still, while over 62% of the population of the NPC service area is Native American, enrollment in the NPC nursing program in the five years prior to the commencement of the Homegrown Healers project consisted of mostly Caucasian, female students. The need to reach out to prospective nursing students from under-represented groups (minorities, males) across the NPC service area was evident.

From the experience of the past three years of the Homegrown Healers project, the Dean of Nursing determined retention was the greatest issue these students face, and she believed it was critical to retain them. NPC's nursing students are excellent candidates, and the barriers they face in achieving nursing credentials have little to do with their potential to be excellent health care professionals, and a great deal to do with their socioeconomic status. This is especially significant, because 7 of the 12 partnership hospitals in the NPC service area are located on the tribal lands of the Navajo, Hopi and White Mountain Apache People. Nurses in this area must be singularly prepared to address unique cultural and linguistic needs, especially relative to health, medicine, death and dying. If the college can 'grow its own garden' of nurses from these populations, the nurses will be *uniquely qualified*, particularly from a cultural standpoint, to minister to the under-served communities from which they come.

II. Project Goals and Objectives

It was the goal of Homegrown Healers by June 2009 to increase the number of ADN graduates by 16 (67%) over Spring 2005, of which not less than 25% would be from populations currently under-represented in the nursing profession.

The following **key objectives** promoted efforts to achieve the project goal:

- Retain full-time Instructional Specialist and part-time Retention Specialist to aid these students with individualized tutoring and mentoring in the NPC nursing program. The at-risk students or Homegrown Healers, included currently licensed LPNs who returned to the program to become RNs. These students had been out of the educational system for some time, and benefited from the kind of support these specialists, the NCLEX review, the audio-visual materials, and other project activities offered.
- Channel the Homegrown Healers cohort into the existing support programs for at-risk students, thereby promoting the likelihood that they would graduate and become certified as RNs. Through these projects, students continued to receive support services that addressed the need area(s) identified by the instructional and retention specialists. Several interested students were assigned alumni mentors to guide them through the achievement of their licensure as RNs.
- Continue to provide support from the college for current NPC faculty enrolled in a master of science in nursing (MSN) program, with tuition and fees so that they may become full-time instructors to accommodate the expansion of program enrollment. The Homegrown Healers project had previously supported faculty in their quest for the MSN degree, so the college continued to provide financial support in the absence of grant funding. By qualifying faculty to become full-time NPC nursing instructors, we were again "growing our own" and enhancing the qualifications of a team of professionals who already understand and relate to the non-traditional students they will teach.

The purpose of this report is to summarize the findings and results of the Homegrown Healers program implemented during the 2008-09 academic year. The following outcomes will be presented and discussed:

1. Number of nursing program faculty as of June 30, 2007, June 30, 2008 and June 30, 2009

2. Number of students enrolled in the nursing program as of June 30, 2007, June 30, 2008, and June 30, 2009.

3. Number of students who have graduated from the nursing program as a direct result of this grant. The figures should reflect the goal outlined in your proposal.

4. A description of how the grant monies impacted the geographic availability of nurses.

5. A description of how the grant monies were used to increase the diversity of the nurse workforce.

6. A description of any other initiatives the college has taken during the three-year period to increase nursing education resources.

7. A comparison of the projected goals and objectives as outlined in your proposal and the actual accomplishments. We want to hear all your success stories but please discuss any obstacles you have had to overcome also.

8. Describe any faculty training that has occurred utilizing grant funds and the impact this training has had on your nursing program.

9. Provide a summary of how the grant funds have been utilized.

III. Summative Evaluation

6.1.1 In 2007-2008, part-time Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN) and Nursing Assistant Training (NAT) faculty were hired into clinical positions to support increasing enrollment. The program in Show Low reached the limits of enrollment with available faculty, facility, and clinical resources. The number of faculty increased significantly over successive years from 2005 through 2008 (see Table 1). In July 2009, a master's level faculty member who had been supported by the grant in 2007-08 acquired her degree and assumed a clinical instruction position during the Fall 2009 semester. At the Little Colorado Campus, a faculty member who had also been supported by the grant in 2007-08 was hired into a full-time position for 2009-10 academic year. The position was created is supported by the College without restriction to sustain enrollment created by the grant. This full-time position reduced Adjunct ADN faculty needs.

NPC Employment	Fiscal Year 2005- 2006	Fiscal Year 2006- 2007	Fiscal year 2007- 2008	Fiscal year 2008- 2009
Full Time ADN Faculty	4	5	5	6
Part Time ADN Faculty			1	1
Adjunct ADN Faculty	2	5	5	2
Full Time NAT Faculty	2	2	2	2
Adjunct NAT Faculty	5	5	10	11
Laboratory Managers	1	2	2	2
Total	14	19	25	24

6.1.2 By September of the second year of the grant, the program realized a 30% increase in enrollment (Table 2). While the retention of the first year students appears quite good from June 30, 2008 to June 30 2009, seven 4th semester students left the program. These students left with a Certificate of Applied Science and five passed the NCLEX-PN – the remaining two students did not take the exam. Of students admitted to the 2008 program year, one student experienced severe personal problems and withdrew. Two first year students failed academically during the first semester. Seven 4th semester students and eight 2nd semester students failed academically during the 2nd semester. Two of the 4th semester students had returned to the program from the previous year.

Two of the 2 nd semester students re-enrolled after attending a summer school course
All but two of the thirteen students have petitioned the program for re-admission.

Nursing Enrollment	June 30, 2005	September 30, 2006	September 30,2007	September 30, 2008	September 30, 2009
1 st year	38	44	45	50	48
students					
2 nd year	24	37	42	41	42
students					
Total	62	81	87	91	90
Enrollment		30%	40%	47%	45%
change		increase	increase	increase	increase
from 2005					

Table 2. Number of Nursing Students Enrolled

6.1.3 In 2009, Northland Pioneer College had a 97% average pass rate for students testing for the Licensed Practical professional designation. There was a substantial increase in the number of students eligible to take the PN test at the Little Colorado Campus during the 2008-09 academic year. Increased enrollment and significant retention efforts were supported by DOC grant funds (Table 3).

NPC Campus	FY 2004- 2005	FY 2005- 2006	FY 2006- 2007	FY 2007-08 Eligible for NCLEX-PN	FY 2008-09 Eligible for NCLEX-PN
Little Colorado	11	10	6	4	15
White Mountain	14	19	23	34	30
Total	25	29	29	38	45

Table 3. Number of Licensed Practical Nurses by Campus

The goal of the grant was to increase the number of graduates in 2009 to 40 students which represented a 67% increase over the number of graduates in Spring 2005. Thirty-three nursing students graduated from the nursing program with an Associate in Applied Science (AAS) in May 2009, an increase of 38% over the number of graduates in Spring 2005. While the retention among 2nd year students was disappointing, retention among 1st year students was much improved as a result of the work of the retention specialist. Grant-supported specialists worked closely with first-year students to increase the number of students eligible for the LPN licensure by 80% over the previous year.

NPC Campus	FY 2004- 2005	FY 2005- 2006	FY 2006- 2007	FY 2007- 2008	FY 2008- 2009
Little Colorado	13	10	8	8	4
White Mountain	12	14	25	29	29
Total	25	24	33	37	33

Table 4. Number of Associate of Applied Science Graduates by Campus

Seven students withdrew from the program on April 7th and 8th. Four students at the White Mountain Campus failed to pass the HESI Exit Exam. Three students at the Little Colorado Campus failed to achieve a 78% unit exam average to qualify for graduation. Faculty were surprised at the numbers of students who failed to meet academic standards. Faculty worked together to achieve consensus to revise progression and graduation policies and adjust the rounding rule for unit examinations.

6.1.4 Description of the impact the grant monies had on the geographic availability of nurses.

Table 4 demonstrates a 32% increase in the number of graduates from the nursing program from 2005 to 2009. The program offers admission to students who may not yet have completed their prerequisites prior to enrollment, so most students on the waiting list are admitted each year. By increasing enrollment and improving policies to account for student attrition, the Northland Pioneer College nursing program has improved the concentration of employed nurses in relation to the area's growing population. Summit Healthcare Regional Medical Center hired 12 new graduates this past summer and Whiteriver Service Unit hired approximately 14 new graduates. The Whiteriver Service Unit is currently is fully staffed with nurses for the first time in the past four years. The use of grant monies to continue to support greater numbers of students has improved the geographic availability of nurses.

6.1.5. Description of how the grant monies were used to increase the diversity of the nurse workforce.

Table 5 reflects significant increases in the number of non-traditional ethnicity and gender attributes in nursing students. Marketing and outreach efforts supported by grant monies have resulted in an increase in enrollment of students from diverse backgrounds particularly at the Little Colorado campus. The marketing and outreach supported by the grant influenced a significant increase in Native American enrollments. The number of Native American students nearly doubled since 2005. Additional nursing assistant sections in Whiteriver and Chinle with instructional mentoring are expected to sustain these incremental increases in enrollment of Native American students in the nursing program. The number of males enrolled at the White Mountain Campus went from one in 2008-09 to seven in 2009-10.

Of the 33 students who graduated in 2009, only 15% were from populations currently underrepresented in nursing: 3 males and 3 Native Americans. Two students of Native American heritage and 2 males withdrew from the program Spring 2009 due to testing failure. The faculty subsequently revised the progression and graduation policies as well as the rounding rule for unit exams.

Under- Represented Groups	June 30, 2005	Sept 30, 2006	Sept 30, 2007	Sept 30, 2008	Sept 30, 2009
Native	6	8	9	8	11
American	0	0		•	
Hispanic	3	4	4	2	3
African				3	2
American				C	Z
Male	3	10	14	8	12
Asian/Pacific	1	0	1	0	0
Islander	1	0	1	0	0
Self-					
Identified as	0	2	0	0	0
Other					
Total	13	22	28	22	28

Table 5. Number of Nursing Students with Attributes of Under-Represented Groups

6.1.6 Description of any other initiatives the community college has taken during the fiscal year to increase nursing education resources.

Northland Pioneer College received Scholarship for Disadvantaged Students during Spring 2009. These monies satisfied a proportion of unmet need for many nursing students. Scholarships reduce the time students need to spend working shifts while balancing academic and family demands. Some retention within the program can be attributed to these scholarships.

The nursing department partnered with the Arizona Health Education Consortium to provide instructional support to former students who had graduated from a nursing program but had been unsuccessful in passing the NCLEX-RN and NCLEX-PN examinations. To date, 4 of 5 students who returned to the nursing program for mentoring, tutoring, and lab/clinical experience have successfully passed their NCLEX examinations. One student continues to study before taking the exam.

Professional development funds from the College provided a significant sum during the past year for the purpose of maintaining and enhancing faculty training needs. One faculty member is completing her Masters at the University of New Mexico, while another acquired the Certified Nurse Educator designation, recognized by the National League for Nursing.

The Program Director and Retention Specialist worked closely with the Project Director of a Robert Woods Johnson Foundation grant entitled Learning Circles awarded to Northern Arizona University. The Winslow Service Unit cohort worked closely with our staff to pursue competency-based skill development.

6.1.7 Comparison of the projected goals and objectives as outlined in your proposal and the actual accomplishments.

Prior to the Homegrown Healers grant support, the program pass rate was in decline (Figure 1.) Following implementation of instructional support systems and supported by the professional development of faculty to acquire graduate degrees, the pass rate exceeded 90% in 2007, 2008, and most recently in 2009. This dramatic improvement is unprecedented and attributable to the efforts of the faculty supported by the Department of Commerce grant funding. The faculty believe the dedicated work of the instructional specialists was the critical element toward increasing the pass rate and improving retention within the program. While the project did not reach its overall goal to increase the number of ADN graduates by 16 (67%) over Spring 2005, a significant increase in the retention of students at the Little Colorado Campus will have a profound impact on the availability of nurses in the I-40 corridor in 2010 (Table 3). Grant-supported specialists worked closely with first-year students to increase the number of students eligible for the LPN licensure by 80% over the previous year. The instructional specialist necessarily focused on first year students during the grant year. Mastering skills for test-taking, time management, and study strategies is critically important for students to continue to perform in a sustained superior manner in the nursing program.



The faculty learned a great deal about the mentality of second year students in the 4th semester. The program had a graduation policy that required a 78% unit exam average to progress to capstone and a >800 HESI Exit Exam score. Three students at the Little Colorado Campus performed poorly on the unit examination prior to the capstone, lowering their average. Faculty subsequently adjusted the rounding rule for the 2009-10 academic year. Four students at the White Mountain Campus failed to meet the HESI

Exit Exam standard. Two of these students were employed full-time and experienced exceptionally demanding family responsibilities at the time. Two other students nearly met the requirement. Faculty revised the policy and will include the HESI Exit Exam score in the unit/final exam average score. Their hope is to reduce the high-stakes implications of the exam and reduce student anxiety. While the project did not meet its goal, the grant provided the means to significantly improve long-term retention, academic progression, and graduation rates.

6.1.8 Describe any faculty training that has occurred utilizing grant funds and the impact this training has had on your nursing program.

No faculty training was included in the revised proposal for the 2008-09 academic year.

IV. Budget

During the grant year, Northland Pioneer College invoiced the Department for \$111,998.76, leaving a balance of \$8,101.24. The program received permission to utilize these funds to provide continued student support. The benefits of the previously grant-supported Instructional Specialist position were recognized as critical to the success of the nursing students at the Little Colorado Campus, thus Northland Pioneer College provided a budgetary line in 2009-10 to sustain a full-time nursing faculty position. We are utilizing the funds available from this grant year to support an adjunct Instructional Specialist position at White Mountain Campus for 8 hours each week. This specialist is working with students individually, creating structured learning plans with them, and providing tutoring, mentoring, and study sessions in addition to taking them to the lab to help them with additional practice as needed. Responsibilities of the instructional specialist include the following:

1. Collaborate with the Dean and faculty in developing, implementing, and evaluating student academic support strategies.

2. Direct and provide instructional support for students in a variety of settings, i.e., study groups, individual tutoring, mentoring and laboratory skill reviews, demonstrating knowledge and clinical competence.

3. Collaboratively work with faculty, students and staff to provide supplemental experiences for student nurses, exploring new and varied technology, i.e., simulated case scenarios and study/skill building experiences in computer laboratory.

4. At no time will the Instructional Specialist be required to teach nursing courses. The activities provided by this position supplement rather than supplant current coursework.

2008-2009	Department of	Commerce	Grant
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Item	Allocation	Expenditure	Balance	Extension 2009-10
Salaries				2003-10
Salary for one HALF-TIME				
Retention Specialist (NPC	\$28,000.00*	\$27,831.93		
board-approved rate for	+ -,	Ŧ ,		
master's level faculty)				
Salary for full-time Instructional	\$56,000.00*	\$53,666.67		
Specialist to teach Homegrown				
Healers cohort (NPC board-				
approved rate for master's level				
faculty)				
Adjunct Instructional Specialist	\$84,000.00	¢94 409 60		\$8101.24
Total Salaries	\$64,000.00	\$81,498.60	\$2,501.40	\$0101.24
Fringe Benefits				
Standard NPC medical benefits	¢F 4 FO 00			
package for Retention Specialist	\$5,150.00			
@ \$5,150.00 ea.Standard NPC medical benefits	\$5,150.00	7,710.99		
 Standard NPC medical benefits package for Instructional 	ψ0,100.00	7,710.33		
Specialist @ \$5,150.00				
 Average yearly benefits for 	\$5,600.00	5,874.00		
Retention Specialist @ NPC	. ,	,		
board - approved rate of 20%				
 Average yearly benefits for 				
Instructional Specialist @ NPC	\$11,200.00	10,185.86		
board-approved rate of 20%	• ·			
Total Fringe Benefits	\$27,100.00	\$24,136.69	\$2,963.31	No Benefits
Supplies				
 Marketing and promotional 	\$1,000.00	\$751.92		
materials and supplies	• · • • • • •	\$744.41		
 Books, tutorial materials and 	\$4,000.00	35.00		
supplies for summer pre-session		3.01		
@ \$200 per student x 20		¢000.40		
students		\$829.13		
 Media for student review and article thinking skill practice 				
critical thinking skill practiceBooks, tutorial materials and	\$4,000.00	\$4,000.00		
 Books, tutonal materials and supplies for enrichment course 	¢ 1,000.00	÷ .,000.00		
@ \$200 per student x 20	\$9,000.00	\$6363.47	\$ 2,636.53	
students			-	
Total Supplies				
Total Request	\$120,100	\$111,998.76	\$8,101.24	8,101.24

*Reflects NPC District Governing Board approved salary increase of 4% per year over 2007-2008.

V. Summary

Lessons Learned

The Northland Pioneer College nursing program has learned a great deal about retaining at-risk students. Methods adopted from this project, include an individualized needs assessment for each student, a program of study for each student based on the needs assessment, and one-on-one or small-group tutoring and mentoring. The Homegrown Healers project demonstrated unparalleled success for culturally, economically and socially at-risk first year students, because it specifically addressed the factors that cause these students to fail. Through this project, Northland Pioneer College 2nd year nursing students who failed to meet the progression and graduation standard this past year will return to the program in the Spring. With the assistance of learner-centered services provided by the instructional specialist, these students will succeed in spite of the barriers they've faced in the past. They will be empowered to improve not only their own lives, but the lives of those in the communities they serve – as true homegrown healers.

Efforts to retain a larger percentage of nursing students utilizing a retention and instructional specialist were centered at the Show Low and Winslow campuses. Encouraging students from other under-represented groups, most of them low-income, and the first generation in their families to enroll in college, and to promote their retention in college programs, depends upon sensitivity to a number of factors. In working with the first cohort of Homegrown Healers, this became acutely clear. Not only did students encounter barriers related to family support, most of them were themselves parents – many of them single parents and the head of the household. The reality of trying to attend to coursework while working to support children and extended family placed students in a precarious position. Without the intensive support of the Homegrown Healers project, many would have discontinued their studies. In fact, the single greatest barrier faced by these students was financial. Many adult learners at NPC had exhausted their eligibility for Federal Pell funds, and the Homegrown Healers cohort was no exception. Moreover, while there were some tribal scholarships available, eligibility was dependent upon the recipient attending college on a full-time basis, a requirement that simply was not possible for these students due to issues related to family and childcare. To ameliorate this barrier, the nursing program acquired a Scholarship for Disadvantaged Students for HRSA in Spring 2009.

The project continues to encounter the typical personal barriers that prevent pursuit of higher education, i.e., transportation, child care. Referrals to access federal, state, local, and private sources of funding to meet student financial need will continue. The nursing program will continue to seek additional scholarship sources and provide resources available through the college.

Recruitment efforts by the college continue to increase interest and enrollment of students in healthcare careers. Over the past two weeks, many college faculty volunteered at information booths at both the Navajo and Apache County Fairs. The interest in healthcare careers was impressive and marketing brochures supported by the DOC grant provided the public with valuable information.

Faculty are currently gathering data to describe our experience with this project. Efforts to document the successful work of the Instructional Specialist may assist other nursing faculty to

put supportive processes in place to improve the learning and performance of minority students in their programs. The program is presenting the results of its efforts to the statewide Nurse Educators Conference October 16, 2009 sponsored by the State Board of Nursing. The Homegrown Healers project will continue to be responsive to the demands of local health care employers by supporting increasing numbers of nurses in training. We appreciate the support of the Arizona Department of Commerce so that we may increase the number of graduates from our program by devising and implementing methods for retention and support.

Appendix A

Instructional Specialist Resume

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Tammy Kuusisto, RN, BSN

WORK EXPERIENCE

Case ManagerJune 2008 – June 2009Transfer from Show Low VA to Washington VA (WallaWalla)Back Office Procedure Nurse (Assistant Team Leader)March 2006 – June 2008Veteran Administration Outpatient Clinic (Carl T Hayden VA)Show Low, Arizona 85901

On various occasions I was the acting Nurse Team Leader of the Show Low VA Clinic. During this time the clinic has maintained good interpersonal relationships with all staff. Patient education/teaching is part of the daily routine. My primary job duties are related to back office nursing procedures and case management. Some of the responsibilities are to perform various clinic procedures such as: injections, phlebotomy, EKG, IV, triage nursing, laboratory specimen collection, ordering, and education and to ensure adherence to JCAHO performance indicators by implementing positive process changes.

Clinical Application Coordinator (transfer to VA from here) January – Marcy 2006 Data Nurse Abstractor August 2003 – January 2006 Emergency Department Nurse (RN in ER on contract basis, prn) Whiteriver Indian Health Service HIS/PHS Whiteriver, Arizona 85941

Clinical Application Coordinator: As an assistant in which my principal job duty was to train all staff in the use of the Electronic Health Record and assist with implementation throughout the facility.

Data Nurse Abstractor: Based in the Quality Management Department. Was primarily responsible for data abstraction and assisting the facility in adherence to JCAHO guidelines. Conducted daily chart audits to meet JCAHO performance guidelines for patient admitted with pneumonia, CHF, MI and implemented processes to comply with standards. Completed creation, analysis and DEMI (design evaluation measure and improve results through various methods). Multiple statistical analysis including root cause analysis, failure mode effect analysis, and sentinel even processing and evaluation. Primarily responsible for the implementation of a trauma registry in conjunction with Arizona State EMS.

Emergency Department Nurse: Provide emergency/trauma nursing services on an as needed basis (usually twice a month) to all ages of patients. ACLS certification and ENNC (Emergency Nurse Certification) required.

Research Nurse Coordinator/Site Manager/Lab Coordinator/Educator 1988-2006 Johns Hopkins University, Center for Native American Health Whiteriver, Arizona 85941

Through the years of working with Johnson Hopkins University, I encountered many opportunities to advance through the organization. While starting out as an administrative assistant in September of 1988 I quickly advanced to the field educator and then laboratory coordinator for all field sites. Concurrently during my employment I attended nursing school and upon obtaining my RN license in 19081 was quickly advanced to a site manager (after a couple years of nursing experience) and finally as the Research Coordinator for 10 remote research sites throughout Arizona and New Mexico. Most of the responsibilities were guided by protocols and strict guidelines from various pharmaceutical companies. All aspects of clinical research was involved with this position.

RN, Med Surgical

Navopache Regional Medical Center Show Low, Arizona 85901

Part time, weekend position to enhance my clinical nursing skills after graduation from nursing school. Performed all aspects of floor nursing and was able to float to other areas with the hospital as needed.

EDUCATION

Graceland University	Independence, Missouri	BSN 2009
Northland Pioneer College	Show Low, Arizona	AAS 1995
Montana Tech	Butte, Montana	1981

SKILLS/CERTIFICATIONS

BLS	HIV Counseling	Fit testing
Microsoft Applications	Trauma One	CPHQ (Health Quality)
Quality Data Abstraction	Beyond Benchmark	
Computer Security Awareness	HIPPA Trainer	
Dangerous Goods Shipment	Teaching skills	

1996 - 1998