Veterans - Best Practices for Effective Transitions into the Nursing Profession

Thursday, February 9, 2017
12:00 pm – 1:00 pm
Washington, DC 20006

Dr. Mary Jean Schumann
Dr. Gretchen Wiersma
Support for Veterans’ Initiatives

• Obama Administration expanded educational opportunities for Veterans to transition
  – Through grant programs
  – Department of Health and Human Services
    • Provide incentives for physician assistant and nursing training programs to enroll veterans,
    • Key elements
      • Provide credit for vet’s military experience
      • Provide the support needed to successfully complete nursing education
Why Now? Why Nursing?

• US nursing (RNs) shortage projected - 260,000 by 2025¹

• Over the next five years, approximately 1.5 million service members will separate from military²


HRSA Grant Overview
July 2014-June 2017

• To increase veterans’ enrollment, retention, graduation from nursing programs, and successful NCLEX pass rates
• Improving the numbers and quality of the nursing workforce
• Expedites path for military personnel to achieve a nursing (BSN) degree
• 3 cohorts for total of 31 schools
Aims for GW SON VBSN Program

Aims were to design and incorporate:

I. Career ladders to transition Veterans into nursing
II. Faculty development into ABSN and other SON programs to enhance teaching strategies with Veteran students
III. Methods to assess veterans’ clinical knowledge, skills, and abilities, to facilitate awarding academic credit for prior health care training/experience
IV. Evidence-based mentorship and supportive services into GW’s VBSN program to address the unique challenges of Veteran students
GW’s Program

• Accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing (ABSN)
• Usual applicants already prepared with Bachelor’s degree in another discipline
• Must have 6 prerequisites
• 4 semesters full time on site at VSTC- Ashburn, VA
• 15 month continuous program
• 60 credits - 12 credits are graduate level courses
  – Leadership; Policy; Evidenced-based practice (research); Health Information Technology
Veterans at GW ABSN program

- No Degree Required
  - 60 Credit Minimum (including prerequisites)
- Both medical and non-medical veterans are eligible to apply
- Applications open 12 months in advance with heavy advising prior to admission
- Applicants reviewed on a rolling basis
- There is no cookie-cutter VBSN applicant/profile
Veteran Characteristics

• Mature
  – Situational awareness
  – Problem solvers
  – Goal directed
• Leadership
• Driven by hands-on performance, not test grades
  – May not seek understanding around test score
• Follow directions (non-argumentative)
• Conditioned to endure strenuous work environments, i.e. personal protective equipment
Faculty Role

• “Baggage to luggage in 15 months”
• Participate in faculty development to better understand needs of Veteran students
• Some faculty advise VBSN students
• Guide and direct academic and clinical progress
• Meet students where they enter – writing skills, study skills, math skills
Strengths of Team Supporting Vets

• Preadmissions
  - Dedicated admissions officer
  - Preadmission webinars
  - Sponsors
    - American Council on Education (ACE)
      - Approved college credit for military experience and training
      - Prerequisites offered via GW online for reduced fees

• VBSN ongoing support
  - Dedicated student services on VSTC campus
  - VALOR (Office of Military and Veteran Student Services)
Academic Support

- Academic (integrated with ABSN cohort throughout program)
- Cohort cohesion
  - Dedicated simulation lab group
  - Tutoring (grant supported)
    - Writing Lab resources brought from Main campus
    - Math tutoring
- Clinical options integrated
  - Priority registration for clinical groups
  - VA or DOD facilities in addition to civilian hospitals and agencies
- Faculty and instructors
  - Veterans in Nurse Corps/Guards/Reservists
Financial and Transitional Support

• Transitional support
  – Mentoring and Counseling Experts
  • Expert in Veteran Affairs - Vietnam Veteran
  • Psychiatric nursing faculty with military background

• Financial Support and advising
  – GW history in support of Veterans
  – GW is a Yellow Ribbon University
  – Student services (staffed by experts in veteran services)
  – Academic partnerships with local Health systems for Scholarships/ tuition assistance
By the numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>VBSN Spring 2015</th>
<th>VBSN Fall 2015</th>
<th>VBSN Spring 2016</th>
<th>VBSN Fall 2016</th>
<th>VBSN Spring 2017</th>
<th>VBSN Fall 2017</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Applied</td>
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<td>38</td>
<td>50</td>
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<td>26</td>
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<td>18</td>
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## Our Students

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<tr>
<th>Cohort #</th>
<th>Number of students</th>
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<td>Totals</td>
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<td>13</td>
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# Medical Specialty

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<th>Medical Designated Speciality</th>
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<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>7 (counted in 28 medical)</td>
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# Student Diversity

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2014 Fall</th>
<th>2015 Fall</th>
<th>2016 Fall</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>83%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>17%</td>
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GW Best Practices

- Dedicated admission counselor
- Dedicated Program Director
- Commitment of Senior leadership and team to meeting unique needs of each Veteran
- Commitment of faculty to Veterans’ success
- Uniqueness of clinical opportunities
  - Capstone at VA and WNMC
  - Faculty members with military experience
• Dedicated lab groups to support cohort cohesion
• Student services and formal tutoring at VSTC
• VBSN Lounge
• Counseling and Mentorship from Vets/Military faculty
• Veterans increase overall student body diversity
• Exit Survey: average student ratings regarding program satisfaction as 4.7 on a 5 point scale
“All Hands on Deck”
Goals Moving Forward

- HRSA grant in 3rd and final year
- 62 students (45 present: seventeen graduated)
- Continued recruitment
- Collaboration with Veterans Affairs system
- Long term sustainability
- Advancing research on best practices
- Key topics addressed to focus groups
  - Building on medical skills and training
  - Faculty development
Contact Information

Mary Jean Schumann, DNP, MBA, RN, CPNP, FAAN
GW School of Nursing, 1919 Pennsylvania Ave Suite 500, Washington, DC 20006
mschuma7@gwu.edu
202-994-3484

Gretchen Wiersma, DNP, RN, CPN
GW School of Nursing, 45085 University Drive, Suite 201, Ashburn, VA 20147
gwiers@gwu.edu
571-553-4485