

QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PLAN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

IPE: Changing the Course of Health Education

Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center at New Orleans (LSUHSC-NO) is an academic health sciences center offering 20 degree programs across six schools: Allied Health, Dentistry, Graduate Studies, Medicine, Nursing, and Public Health. This institutional structure provides significant potential for teamwork and collaboration among various students, which in turn has been shown to improve health outcomes. However, a broad review of LSUHSC-NO institutional goals and the ability to meet those goals through interprofessional interactions identified a number of factors hindering interprofessional relationships. This Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) is focused on interprofessional education (IPE) in response to this acknowledgement as well as national calls to utilize IPE to improve health outcomes.

IPE, defined as “when students from two or more professions learn about, from, and with each other to enable effective collaboration and improve health outcomes” (World Health Organization, 2010), is currently a limited component of LSUHSC-NO’s collective curricula, only reaching a small proportion of students. Despite the small number of IPE opportunities that currently exist, there is significant enthusiasm for IPE among students and faculty. The QEP aims to broaden and enhance IPE across the institution by achieving 3 major goals:

- Develop a centralized office
- Facilitate faculty engagement in IPE
- Increase IPE opportunities for students

The QEP strives to keep 2 key principles in mind: (1) The patient should be at the center of care; and (2) adult learners need to know that what they are learning draws from their former knowledge and experiences and is relevant to their future roles. Accordingly, IPE experiences will focus on the care of the people we serve regardless of the educational setting, and educational activities will build on foundational information in order to allow students to apply their knowledge to solve problems and create team-based plans of care. Student learning outcomes will be based on nationally accepted competency domains to ensure students truly learn how to practice in interprofessional teams.

Changing institutional culture is a longitudinal process that requires a commitment from the institution’s leadership as well as a broad interest and dedication from students, faculty, and other constituents. The components of this QEP were constructed in order to facilitate this critical culture shift and therefore change the course of health education at LSUHSC-NO for many years to come.

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