

West Chester University and Community College of Philadelphia Nursing Collaboration

The ongoing collaboration between West Chester University and the Community College of Philadelphia's (CCP) nursing department has provided significant benefits for students, enabling many to efficiently complete their Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degrees. The seamless transition into West Chester University's RN-BSN program, which requires 24 core nursing credits for completion, has made this pathway particularly appealing. The program prerequisites include six credits in English or writing, which CCP graduates already fulfill. Additionally, the only non-nursing course requirement for the BSN program is a statistics class. West Chester University is also notably flexible with general education credit requirements for program completion. Furthermore, the affordability of West Chester's program makes it a financially favorable option for students seeking to advance their nursing education. Students can complete the nursing courses as part of the curriculum in West Chester's program in 3 semesters.

While the RN-BSN option at West Chester University has been available for many years, there has been a marked increase in CCP nursing students enrolling over the past decade. During this time, CCP's nursing program has received several grants that have allowed select students to take a BSN course after completing their first year of the associate degree program. The Nursing Research course was chosen for grant funding, as it is a required component of all RN-BSN programs and transferable to other institutions if students opted for a different BSN pathway. Each grant cycle typically funded 10 students to take this course.

These CCP students were placed in a dedicated cohort, fostering consistent communication between faculty members at both institutions, which contributed to positive student outcomes. The opportunity to complete the BSN Research course while still in the associate degree program provided two key benefits. First, students not only had one course completed and funded but also gained confidence in their ability to succeed in a BSN program. Second, this early exposure to BSN coursework increased the likelihood of students enrolling and completing the program. Familiarity with the curriculum, along with early success in the Research course, led many students to enroll in the BSN program within six months of graduation. Positive feedback has been received about the CCP students' ability to excel in the Research Course. The integration of a focus on evidence-based practice in the nursing curriculum at CCP has been cited as a key factor contributing to their academic success in the Research Course.

Over the past year, West Chester University has extended the opportunity to take the Nursing Research course to students who are not grant-funded, a practice that will continue moving forward. Additionally, students who take the Research course after their first year at CCP often serve as ambassadors, sharing their positive experiences and encouraging their classmates to enroll. This initiative has further strengthened the partnership between the two institutions and has supported student success in advancing their nursing education. Over the last 5 years, the majority of nursing students at CCP, attend West Chester University's RN-BSN program.