

Background

- The ongoing shortage of Perioperative Nurses was heightened by the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the aging and retirement of current perioperative nurses.
- The increased demands and workloads due to the staffing shortages is leading to burnout.
- Historically, Perioperative Nurses are the most difficult to recruit.
- Most nursing programs in our area lack a curriculum allowing students exposure to Perioperative Nursing.
- The same nursing students are unaware of the roles of a Perioperative Nurse.
- Perioperative Department clinical rotations currently exist in only a few of the area schools and are either 4 hours of observation or 1 day following 1 patient from the pre-op area to the Post Anesthesia Care Unit.
- The collaboration that was developed between Cedar Crest College and St. Luke's University Hospital and Health Network (SLUHN) allowed us to offer a Perioperative Nursing Elective with a clinical experience.

Planning

- A Planning team was created to include The Dean of Nursing, the Director of the Undergraduate Nursing Program, an adjunct faculty member with 35 years of perioperative clinical experience, the Nursing Simulation Center Manager and the Associate Chief Nursing Officer From SLUHN.
- Goals were created.
- Course details, structure and cohort size were decided.
 - 200 level Nursing course
 - 2-day weekend course consisting of 4 hours of lecture and 4 hours of hands-on SIM lab experience each day.
 - 1 credit would be awarded at the completion of the class, with a passing grade based on active participation in the class and the completion of a 2-page reflection paper.
 - Each student would be given an 8-hour shadow opportunity at one of the SLUHN campuses.
 - Registration would be open to a minimum of 8 students and a maximum of 16 students.

Goals

- Upon completion of the elective class the students would:
 - Have an increase exposure to the role of the perioperative
 - Explain the role of nurses in the perioperative setting
 - Describe the pre-operative, intra-operative and postoperative phases of the surgical experience.
 - Perform basic perioperative nursing care/skills under the guidance of faculty member (as appropriate).
 - Identify examples of risk reduction and/or patient safety measures that promote positive patient outcomes.



Curriculum Development

- The 2 8-hour days were divided into a 4-hour morning and 4-hour afternoon session.
- The morning sessions consisted of lecture and discussion.
 - Topics covered included an overview of the OR environment, professionalism, OR etiquette, circulating duties, informed consent, time out, patient identification, medications commonly used surgery, preoperative assessment, code status, counting and skin preparation.
- The afternoon sessions consisted of hands-on practice in the Simulation Operating Room.
 - Circulating Skills included, patient identification, patient positioning, Surgical Site Prep, preprocedural time outs, medication administration and patient safety.
 - Scrub skills included, sterile draping and instrument passing and performing preoperative scrub, sterile gowning and gloving
- The content of all subjects covered were based on the current AORN Standards and Practices.

Evaluation

- A post evaluation was completed at the conclusion of the Semester
- The students verbalized both positive and negative aspects of the class.
 - “ The class was great. I never knew all the things OR nurses do.”
 - “ The class was fun and interactive.”
 - “ I learned so much”
 - “ Great class but I am not sure OR nursing is for me.”
 - “ The class was fun, but I would like to see other specialties before I decide what I want to do.”

Future Considerations

- Limit registration to junior and senior nursing students.
- Create a pre and post survey to assess learning goals.
- Provide additional observation opportunities at SLUHN.
- Update course content to reflect new surgical safety protocols, workflows and AORN guidelines.
- Track the number of graduates who pursue perioperative nursing positions.



References

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