



News Release



For immediate release — Monday, October 17, 2016

Local nursing education program achieves accreditation

The Nursing Education in Southwestern Alberta (NESA) program, delivered collaboratively by Lethbridge College and the University of Lethbridge, has met national standards for nursing schools and obtained accreditation by the Canadian Association of Schools of Nursing (CASN).

The NESA program has always been an approved program at the provincial level. CASN accreditation means the program has met the national standards for nursing programs across Canada.

"We have accreditation for five years, which is fantastic," says Chris Hosgood, dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences. "It absolutely confirms what I've always thought, which is that we have a wonderful program with incredibly engaged and dedicated instructors."

"This accreditation is a result of exceptional collaboration between the two institutions," says Debra Bardock, dean of Lethbridge College's Centre for Health and Wellness. "The program is a success due to the commitment, dedication and consistent pursuit of excellence by faculty and staff to support the success of students."

The designation means the NESA program meets the standards for both curriculum and faculty research. The program offers a united curriculum over four years, with students spending their first two years at the College and their final two years at the U of L.

"The benefit for students is that they have a CASN-accredited program supporting their access into graduate programming in nursing, as well as international nursing opportunities," says Hosgood, adding that the U of L offers a master of nursing and a doctorate in population studies in health.

"Students also receive life experience that is the best of both worlds," says Bardock. "They experience both university and college life, and ultimately get to benefit from the success of the high-level collaboration between the two institutions."

The accreditation process took around three years. The first step was a self-study of the program according to a set of criteria identified by CASN. After the self-report was completed, four external reviewers from other nursing schools in Canada, but outside of Alberta, visited both the U of L and the College.

"The reviewers met with students in the classroom and at their clinical sites, partners in the community,

faculty members, and senior administrators at both institutions and in the health system,” says Hosgood.

“The support of our external partners cannot be over-stated,” says Bardock. “Health environments across southern Alberta that provide practice-based opportunities for our students are as invested in their success as we are.”

Programs like NESA, where students spend the first two years at Lethbridge College and the final two years at the U of L, aren’t uncommon. However, the level of collaboration between the College and the University is unique, says Hosgood. The collective approach to the program means both sides share knowledge and resources, with a focus on excellence and student success.

The NESA program was launched in 2002 and is celebrating a decade of graduating students in 2016.

—30—

Contact:

University of Lethbridge

Caroline Zentner, public affairs advisor

403-394-3975 or 403-795-5403

caroline.zentner@uleth.ca

Lethbridge College

Paul Kingsmith

Communications Specialist

403-320-3202, ext. 5211 or 587-220-0750 (cell)

paul.kingsmith@lethbridgecollege.ca