

First-of-its-kind nursing education option receives nearly \$300,000 grant for evaluation

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A ground-breaking option in the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh's College of Nursing has received a major grant with hope that the option might serve as a national model.

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Evaluating Innovations in Nursing Education (EIN) program has allocated \$298,720 for a two-year evaluation of the college's Accelerated Online Bachelor to BSN (ACCEL) option, a unique online teaching strategy that relies upon advanced technology, novel course scheduling, and a combination of on-campus and remote sites for classroom and clinical education.

"We are very proud of what we have accomplished with ACCEL," said Dawn Pope, ACCEL coordinator. "This grant will allow us to reap the benefits of a rigorous, independent evaluation, and we expect to learn a lot and look forward to possible enhancement of the option."

The first of its kind in the country, UW Oshkosh's ACCEL option allows individuals who have bachelor's degrees and meet meticulous admissions criteria to earn a Bachelor of Science in Nursing in 12 months.

ACCEL is comprised of online theory courses and clinical rotations that take place in the students' home communities and are supervised by specially trained preceptors. The option incorporates an innovative mix of technologies, including "Second Life," a virtual environment in which students interact with professors, their fellow students and patient avatars.

"The University of Wisconsin Oshkosh's approach shows extraordinary promise to improve education efficiency, maintain quality and offer educational opportunities for students in remote areas," said Michael Yedidia, a research professor at Rutgers University and director of the EIN program office. "We look forward to the results of the evaluation."

The EIN program is a national initiative to fund evaluations of ongoing interventions that have demonstrated promise to expand teaching capacity and/or promote faculty recruitment and retention in schools of nursing. UW Oshkosh was one of four recent recipients of EIN grants for up to \$300,000 each. The evaluation process can last up to 24 months.

- For more information about ACCEL, visit www.uwosh.edu/con/undergraduate-bsn/accelerated-online-bachelors-to-bsn.