

Abstract

Project Title: Empowering Nursing Students for Success
Applicant Organization Name: Western Michigan University
Address: 1903 W. Michigan Ave, Kalamazoo, MI 49008
Project Director Name: Mary Ann Stark, PhD, RNC
Contact Phone: Office 269-387-8234; Fax 269-387-8170
Email Address: Mary.stark@wmich.edu
Funds Requested: \$1,941,976 over 4 years;
Funding Preference: Substantially Benefits Underserved Populations

Growing disparities between the diversity of the population in west Michigan and the nursing workforce predict increasing health disparities in the future. Not only does the Michigan nursing workforce fail to reflect the diversity of our state and nation, the nursing student population and graduates in the state do not support a dramatic change in the demographics of baccalaureate graduates in the near future. Underrepresented minority groups continue to lag behind their peers relative to enrollment in and graduation from baccalaureate nursing degree programs. The Michigan Center for Nursing (2015) reported approximately 80% of students enrolled in a nursing baccalaureate program in Michigan identified as white compared to just 15.3% of nursing baccalaureate program enrollees reporting a race other than white, excluding students where race is unknown or not reported. In county ranking of health outcomes, eleven of the nineteen counties in west Michigan, where Western Michigan University (WMU) resides, fall below the 50th percentile. In response to these needs, **Empowering Nursing Students for Success (Empower Success)** was designed is to increase the diversity of the nursing workforce in west Michigan by implementing a comprehensive program using evidence based strategies to recruit, enroll, retain and graduate students from underrepresented minority population. The **target population** of Empower Success is: 1) students from underrepresented racial and ethnic minority populations, 2) students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, and 3) students from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds who come to WMU for a generic baccalaureate nursing education at the Bronson School of Nursing (BSON). By applying the Social Determinants of Health model in this program, **Empower Success** also will positively impact population health outcomes in west Michigan as graduates return to the areas where they live.

Empower Success is designed to effectively incorporate best practices and modeled after stated evidence based strategies needed for success. The following goals will be accomplished with completion of **Empower Success**: 1) Increase by 60% the number of underrepresented students in the nursing program by the end of Year 4; 2) Provide **academic and peer support** for enrolled students from the target population; 3) Provide **financial support** for students enrolled in Empower Success; 4) Nurture a culture of inclusion and diversity at BSON where faculty have the needed skills and competencies for intercultural understanding; 5) Develop a cadre of diverse nurses in nursing practice to **mentor Empower Success** students; and 6) Implement **holistic review** by fall 2019 in consultation with AACN. We pilot tested a successful academic and peer mentoring model for students from underrepresented minority populations. Given our experience and **internal partnerships** at WMU and **external partnerships** with some unique programs such as the *Kalamazoo Promise*, we are uniquely positioned with **Empower Success** to address the nursing workforce disparity in west Michigan.