



NKU Launches College of Health Professions to Help Keep Pace with Growing Regional Demand

Northern Kentucky University celebrated the launch of its new College of Health Professions in September.

The college is comprised of NKU's nursing, advanced nursing studies and allied health departments. It enrolls more than 1,500 students and employs more than 50 faculty and staff.

Dr. Denise Robinson, interim dean of the college, said the the new college will enable the faculty and chairs to enhance current programs, increase the quality of instruction and allow NKU to better meet the needs of its students and the region.

One of the top priorities for the new college will be to attain funding for a new Health Innovations Center, which will house programs that will drive hospital, physician, e-health, pharmaceutical, bio-technical, allied health, senior citizen and other medical-related business development in the region. The facility will be programmed to match healthcare community needs in areas such as nursing, psychology, radiologic technology, health informatics, respiratory therapy and health science.

NKU is seeking \$92.5 million in state funding for a joint project to build a new facility for the college and renovate NKU's Founders

Hall. By combining the two projects, NKU is projecting a savings of about \$20 million.

Those who attended the college's kickoff saw demonstrations of wireless simulator technology that current and future health professions students will use. The simulators are so sophisticated that they can talk and breathe. They have a heartbeat, can have dilated/constricted pupils and recognize when the correct or incorrect medication is given. NKU currently has one wireless simulator, but Dr. Robinson said simulators will play a major role when the Health Innovations Center is built.

The Center will include 8,000 to 12,000 square feet dedicated to a 'virtual hospital' simulation center which will look and function like a hospital unit. One of the highlights of this virtual hospital will be expanded use of these high-tech simulators.

"Students will be able to have specific types of patients," Dr. Robinson said. "It will not depend on whether real patients happen to be in the hospitals at the moment. In our 'virtual hospital,' such patients will be guaranteed for each student. High-risk situations such as high-risk delivery,

critically ill patients and code situations can be experienced by all students. There will be simulators for adults, babies and even for pregnancy and delivery."

As an added bonus, she said the new facility will make it possible for community health providers to utilize the simulators in their training. NKU's current simulation lab is scheduled for undergraduate nursing instruction from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Additionally, the facility will afford NKU students the opportunity to use state-of-the-art imaging and respiratory equipment in keeping with technological advancements in the diagnosis and care of patients in the delivery setting.

In Northern Kentucky, healthcare professions represent the largest segment of Vision 2015's 50,000 new jobs goal. Dr. Robinson said educating enough students to meet the Vision 2015 goal of 7,200 new health care and social assistance jobs by 2015 will be a challenge without funding for the Health Innovations Center.

Each year, she noted, NKU turns away about 300 qualified nursing and allied health students due to space limitations.

NKU Striving to Become More Military Friendly

As part of its continuing efforts to become a more military friendly campus, NKU recently announced a number of initiatives aimed at making the university more accessible and comfortable for veterans.

NKU's university-wide support committee, called the Veteran's Advocacy Committee (VAC), ensures that the university is prepared to meet the needs of the growing number of military veteran students.

The university also now has a Veterans for Education and Transition Support (V.E.T.S.) student organization, which has achieved national membership and recognition by the Student Veterans of America. Only 191 student veteran organizations exist nationwide.

V.E.T.S. helped the Sons of American Legion place American flags on the graves of veterans in Northern Kentucky on Memorial Day and recently sponsored a workshop for veterans and family members eligible for benefits. The group also boasts a mentorship

program that, upon request, pairs prospective veteran students with current student veterans for one-on-one transition assistance from pre-registration through graduation.

NKU is also participating in the VA Yellow Ribbon GI Education Enhancement Program, an agreement between institutions of higher learning and the VA to fund tuition/fees that exceed the highest in-state undergrad tuition and fees for the state where the school is located.

The VAC also sponsors training opportunities for faculty and staff on the challenges that are unique for veteran students.

"We hope veterans will continue to make NKU their first choice," said Dave Merriss, chair of the committee. "We offer a great

educational experience that understands and recognizes all the strengths and diversity of their experiences. At NKU, we like to think of our student veterans as yesterday's warriors, today's scholars and tomorrow's leaders."

NKU Chase College of Law posted Kentucky's highest passage rate for the July 2009 Kentucky Bar Exam - 89% of first-time takers passed.