

Understanding the barriers and facilitators to aboriginal nursing student success

By Ms. Brianna Krekoski and Dr. Josephine Etowa, delivered through UROP and the Loyer DaSilva Research Chair in Public Health Nursing

Introduction

The increasingly globalized scope of Canadian public health has enabled the exposure of major disparities in health distribution, and the social determinants at their core. First Nations, Metis and Inuit communities in Canada currently experience the lowest rates of both Health Care Professional (HCP) representation and quality of health overall. Although studies identify the support of aboriginal nursing students through mentorship as an effective approach to increasing HCP representation, consequently improving the health conditions in these populations, the percentage of students accessing such resources in Canada remains proportionately low. This study works within the Aboriginal Student Mentoring Program at the University of Ottawa, to identify barriers and facilitators that Aboriginal nursing students face in the course of their studies. The research asks what the barriers and facilitators are, influencing Aboriginal nursing student success. The research design is a descriptive, qualitative study with focus groups as the main data source and documents students' perspectives on how barriers and facilitators can be addressed.

Mentorship

Academic events and Aboriginal student supports organized through the program.

- Mentor matching with Aboriginal nurses
- Organizational and study skill workshop
- Term Paper writing workshops
- Peer mentorship
- Aboriginal nursing student recruitment

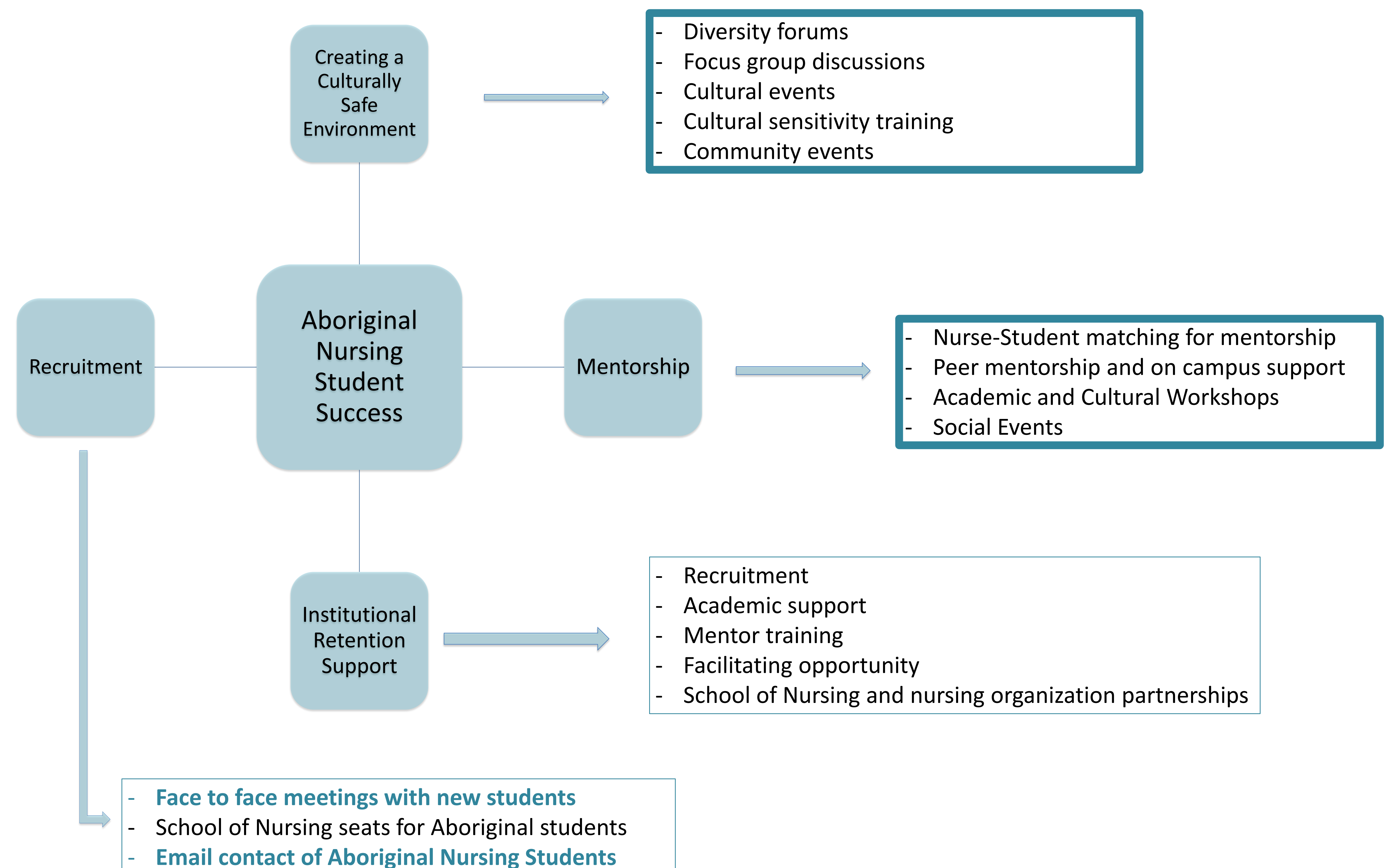
Methodology

Literature review and focus groups will form the key sources of data. Focus groups, a qualitative research method characterized as carefully planned, permissive, non-threatening discussions for obtaining perceptions on a defined area of interest (Krueger 1994), will be used to facilitate in-depth discussion. We are anticipating a total of three focus groups comprising of 3-5 participants each during the course of this UROP project (i.e. three months).

Thematic Analysis will be used for data analysis and interpretation. Braun & Clarke (2006)'s six-phase approach will guide the coding analysis and data interpretation

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Focus Study Questions

What is most/least helpful in promoting success of Aboriginal students within the School of Nursing?

What structures/activities or supports within the School would promote the success of Aboriginal students within the School of Nursing?

What daily living changes have been made to adjust to and succeed in the nursing program?

How have institutional/community supports had an influence on Aboriginal nursing student success?

How have nursing program content and delivery approaches had an impact on aboriginal nursing student success and career goals?

Results

- Focus Group Study is still pending Ethics Approval.

Conclusion

The proposed study aims to fill the gap of knowledge specific to mentorship for University of Ottawa Aboriginal Nursing Students and the access of resources by this group. The identification of these barriers is essential in promoting Aboriginal nursing student success, retention and ultimately quality of health care overall in the above mentioned populations.

These focus group discussions also provide an eventual platform to expand students' cultural, societal and health care expectations. It will empower students to expect more of their academic experience and to seek opportunities for the amelioration of health care in their communities.

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