

SPECIAL SECTION – HEALTH CARE

Samuel Merritt expands facilities to address nursing needs – by Celeste Villanueva, CRNA, MSN

SAMUEL MERRITT College (SMC) is rapidly expanding its facilities and geographical locations for the School of Nursing over the next five years to respond to the critical need for registered nurses. In cooperation with the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation and the Kaiser Permanente Northern California Fund for Health Education, the college opened a new Health Sciences Simulation Center in Oakland, Learning Centers in San Francisco and San Mateo, as well as expanded the Sacramento Regional Learning Center.

Through the support of the Wayne and Gladys Valley Foundation, SMC opened a state-of-the-art Health Sciences Simulation Center at the Oakland campus last October. This multi-million dollar, 5,500-square-foot facility has been specifically designed to implement a wide range of simulation-based learning strategies and features two simulation suites, each complete with separate control rooms, programmable human-like mannequins, and conference rooms for debriefing. This innovative adaptation of technology and reflective learning puts SMC at the forefront of health science education, enabling faculty to incorporate high fidelity simulation into program curricula.

Clinical sites in which students can practice skills on real patients are limited throughout the region. Consequently, these skills need to be learned in simulated environments. Human simulation is quickly becoming standard learning



technology with the use of human-like mannequins that are managed by highly sophisticated software allowing manipulation of a wide variety of parameters (pulse, blood pressure, response to drugs, heart rate and rhythm, etc.). The "SIM patients" are programmed to simulate common medical conditions like asthma or more critical conditions like cardiac arrest, and they speak to the student during simulated treatment.

Students formulate "real time" treatment plans and see the immediate effect of their decisions. They manage routine surgical, anesthetic, drug

Students practice their surgical nursing skills in Samuel Merritt College's simulation lab as faculty members program human-like mannequins.

protocols or emergency conditions for virtually hundreds of scenarios. Errors can be allowed to occur, which provide students with invaluable information and feedback.

One of health science education's greatest challenges is providing meaningful clinical experience for students. Simulation eliminates some of the risks that come with practicing health care skills on live patients.

Students learn not only by doing, but by observing filmed real-time scenarios of their team interactions. They debrief, guided by a faculty member, to review and evaluate their actions while watching a pre-recorded video of their patient care interaction. The students use the video to reflect on the decisions made and team management.

SMC's Sacramento Regional Learning Center (SRLC) has expanded from 3,700 to 10,000 square feet at the four-year-old center that accommodates up to 150 students. Two nursing programs are offered which are designed for those with a baccalaureate in a non-nursing field. The Entry Level Master of Science in Nursing (ELMSN) allows a student to become a nurse in 16 months and the Accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing (ABSBN) allows a student to become a nurse in one year.

SMC is also expanding its geographic reach in the Bay Area. The college is offering the ABSN program at its two newest learning centers in San Francisco and San Mateo as well as at the Oakland campus and Sacramento Regional Learning Center. The San Francisco Learning Center is located at St. Luke's Medical Center, 3555 Cesar Chavez St. and the San Mateo Learning Center is at 1720 South Amphlett Blvd.

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