

*SWIFT* Employer Strategies Work Group  
February 5, 2007 10:00am – 1:00pm  
Meriter Hospital – Madison, WI

Meeting Attendees: Jo Ann Appleyard, Jess Allison, Bob Herdrich, Shelly Malin, Joan Jacobsen, Marilyn Spenner, Sue Katz, Pat Volkert.

- I. Call to order/review of minutes from October 26, 2006
  - a. The meeting was called to order at 10:10am by Jo Ann Appleyard
  - b. The minutes from the October 26, 2006 meeting were approved
  
- II. *SWIFT* Nurse Educator program update and related discussion
  - a. Several additional employers have verbally agreed to sponsor *SWIFT* candidates. Please refer to the attachment “Employer Sponsor Summary”. Jo Ann had a meeting with several people at St. Mary’s Madison. They will be appointing a liaison for the project soon.
  - b. We will be applying for a no-cost extension for the grant, extending the end date to June 2008. Because of this, we have been very conservative in our spending thus far.
  - c. Candidate update:
    - i. Health Professional Education Certificate (HPEC) Candidates: 14 of the 17 students will complete the certificate in May and will be ready to begin teaching. Several of the students have already begun teaching nursing. All 17 students are currently in the practicum. There were 20 people initially in the program, however, there were some dropouts during the first two courses. The first three candidates to drop were replaced, but then three more decided not to continue. Because of the structure of the courses, it would have been too difficult to continue to replace candidates so we decided to keep the number to 17 students. The remaining 3 candidates will be finishing up the certificate as the courses are available.
    - ii. *SWIFT* candidate admissions to UW programs: We have 16 candidates that have started at a UW program. Four of these are in the BSN program, and the rest are in an MSN program.
      1. The first week, UWM had a candidate drop out because she was overwhelmed with the requirements for the full-time course program. She plans to return on a part-time basis for the Fall 2007 semester, but will not continue as a *SWIFT* candidate.

- a. There was discussion about the possibility of providing some sort of course for nurses who have not been in school for a long time to re-introduce them to the academic environment.
  2. At UW-Milwaukee, we have been doing specific orientation sessions for *SWIFT* candidates about the admission process. We may need to add a component to assess whether or not prospective students are fully prepared for returning to school, especially on a full-time basis.
  3. We are committed to tracking the cohorts of *SWIFT* candidates as they progress through their programs. This process will begin by the end of this semester.
- d. Report from Educational Strategies Work Group Meeting which was held on January 11, 2007:
  - i. We finalized an agreement on how many education hours will be the standard for the *SWIFT* program. The decision was made to require nine credits as a part of the total credits needed for graduation. This will necessitate an extra semester of study for some students in nurse practitioner programs; however the group is developing criteria for competency assessment in education, and some students will not have to take all nine credits because of their work experience in teaching patients, students, and/or staff.
  - ii. The education courses will focus on student development of the four educational competencies previously determined by the Educational Strategies Work Group:
    1. Planning and managing learning
    2. Constructing curricular elements
    3. Designing and implementing learning assessment strategies
    4. Demonstrating effectiveness in educational performance for selected populations.
  - iii. A discussion began among the employer liaisons about which teaching experiences the students will receive in each program (staff, patient, and student nurses). It seems that there is some combination of all three available at each program.
    1. The employers want their nurses to have teaching competencies with all three of these populations.
  - iv. The deadlines for Fall admission are:
    1. Madison – March 1<sup>st</sup>, but they will accept applications until April 1
    2. Milwaukee: March 1<sup>st</sup>, but they will accept applications until April 1 for CNS candidates
    3. Oshkosh – April 1<sup>st</sup>
    4. Eau Claire – February 1<sup>st</sup> (but flexible)

- v. *SWIFT* students in the BSN completion program will get guidance from their advisor so that they know when to apply for graduate admissions.

III. Employer experiences and issues:

- a. Communication and support to candidates as they progress through school
  - i. What employers need from the UWs
    - 1. Copies of the candidate admission letters and student course plans
    - 2. Every semester, the employers need to know that their candidates are in good course standing and still enrolled full-time. In addition, they need to be notified when candidates drop from the program.
      - a. Grades will be submitted to employers by the individuals if needed.
      - b. However, the grades for the BSN completion candidates may need to be submitted per semester to ensure that they will be accepted into the graduate program. These students need to have a cumulative B average in all courses that they have taken.
    - 3. The schools *must* notify the employers if any changes come up in the students' progression through the program.
    - 4. We will have more information about candidate progression through their coursework by the next meeting.
  - ii. Employer roles
    - 1. Employers may need to encourage their *SWIFT* students to assert themselves to get needed information from the UWs as they move through the admission process.
    - 2. Some of the employers will have to be very clear in the contracts between them and the candidates.
    - 3. Employers should be flexible (especially in the first semesters) as to what is going on with the students.
    - 4. Aurora interviewed candidates as a way to choose who to support. This was also helpful for determining whether the candidates are ready to go back to school. Pat will share some of her candidate interview information with the group.
    - 5. Children's Hospital will be doing interviews as well in order to determine that candidates are indeed interested in nursing education. A scoring process has been developed for reviewing the candidate letters, GPA, and interview.
    - 6. Meriter conducted an interview process as well.
    - 7. Froedtert will have a group that will conduct interviews for candidates. Some of the questions will be geared toward

behavioral characteristics, with one question is linked to resilience.

8. Employer criteria for candidate selection – is age a consideration?
  - a. Meriter’s candidate is in her 20’s, so they are not concerned with this at this point.
  - b. Froedtert Hospital has an outside consulting group for this that suggested making a preliminary decision and then look at whether the candidate group represents minority, age, clinical specialties, etc.
  - c. Children’s Hospital stated they were looking for nurses from three specific specialties on their marketing information. Decisions are not limited to nurses from these areas, but candidates from those areas will get preference. The plan is to use the *SWIFT* candidates as clinical instructors in those areas in the future, thereby increasing the availability of clinical placements for students in the future.
  - d. It is probably important for employer liaisons to stay in touch with their *SWIFT* students throughout the semester.
  - e. Children’s Hospital has talked about setting up a mentor program for the students in the program. The mentors will agree to contact the students at least once per month to see how things are going.
  - f. Employer liaisons will have to be in frequent contact with the candidates’ managers to make sure that there aren’t any issues at that end.
  - g. If employers hear about a candidate wanting to drop out of the program, please contact Jo Ann.
- b. Candidate recruitment – what works and what doesn’t work?
  - i. A Q&A document, program description, and, application process description are all needed in the materials. Jo Ann will send out electronic copies of developed materials to new employers to use as a model for creating their own marketing.
  - ii. Jo Ann will attend face-to-face information sessions with employees, as needed.
  - iii. Although there are several information sessions, there are still many candidates that come back with a number of questions. All of these questions are very time consuming. Jo Ann has developed a template of information to use in e-mails when she gets contacted so that she is not creating every e-mail from scratch.
  - iv. During the information sessions, there is an opportunity to determine which candidates are more prepared to go back to school

- by listening to their questions and the ways in which they respond during the discussion. It would be useful to communicate with the UW program advisors about potential candidates who appear less prepared to return to school.
- v. Once students get into the program, they will be working closely with other students and can get support from each other.
    - 1. We are planning to develop an online discussion forum and chat rooms so that the students can support each other through the UW D2L system. The goal is to have this set up by the end of this semester.
  - vi. Wheaton Franciscan All-Saints has been in contact with a number of candidates who have expressed interest in going back to school. There has been some concern with the full-time program requirement.
    - 1. Salaried candidates are concerned that even though they will have one day off per week for the course work, they will not be able to handle their jobs on a less than full-time basis.
    - 2. Staff nurses have an advantage as *SWIFT* candidates because their work schedules are flexible, and the nature of their work.
  - vii. Some managers have been concerned with how to manage their unit schedules with one less person, one day per week.
    - 1. Aurora required that one recommendation letter be from the candidate's manager so that they knew that there was an understanding of the situation. The manager also had to sign the agreement between the employer and the employee.
  - viii. Employers would like to get some information about assessing which candidates will be successful in graduate school. Jo Ann will do a literature search and talk to a few experts about this and send it out to the group.
  - c. Strategies for enlisting additional employer sponsors:
    - i. Focusing on *SWIFT* amidst multiple priorities
      - 1. The VP needs to decide that they will support it and then they will delegate the duties to someone who will be a liaison.
      - 2. We have been getting information out to potential employers to help with budget questions, creating marketing materials for recruiting candidates, sample interview questions, etc.
      - 3. Make it known that it is OK if they can only support one candidate.
      - 4. Sometimes it is helpful to refer an employer who is on the fence about participating to an employer that is already

involved with *SWIFT*. This has been useful with a few employers already.

- ii. Finding a “champion” on staff for the liaison role
  - 1. Jo Ann is recommending to the Chief Nurses at these employers that they find a “champion” on staff to handle this, but it has to be someone that is not already swamped with additional projects and activities.
  - 2. Sometimes these people can help to advocate for the program within the employer system.

IV. What happens after the grant is no longer funded?

- a. The plan is that the Wisconsin Center for Nursing will take over this project once the grant is taken over. The Workforce Development Boards will also be assisting with the work as well. They currently have the responsibility of assisting students for getting through the programs. We are setting up the system for this process and will report in further detail at the next meeting.

V. Next meeting date

- a. The meeting was adjourned at 12:20pm
- b. The next meeting will be held at the end of the semester (mid-May). The location will be determined at a later date and will be determined by the geographic mix of participants at the time. The meeting time will be around 10:00am again.