

Algonquin College Opens First-of-a-kind Health Science Simulation Lab

Ottawa, Ont., Nov. 19, 2004 – Algonquin College has opened an innovative Health Science Simulation Lab, the first of its kind in Canada, that is expected to revolutionize the country's approach to nursing education.

"The status quo in nursing education is no longer sufficient to meet the growing staffing needs across the range of nursing careers," said Marie Cormier, Dean of the School of Health and Community Studies at Algonquin College. "This new lab will provide an environment to help address increasing clinical placement shortages, the specific education requirements of the internationally-educated nurse, and our ability to train multi-disciplinary teams."

The Health Science Simulation Lab is the first of its kind in Canada. Outfitted with the latest technology, it features computerized, full-body, anatomically accurate mannequins, each of which has trachea, an oesophagus, simulated lungs and a stomach, that allow students to practise a complete range of patient assessment and care procedures. A permanently mounted DV camcorder makes it possible to record training sessions for later review by students or for video-streaming in real time to nearby classrooms or anywhere in the world. Key to its uniqueness is the way in which Algonquin has integrated technology into its curriculum.

The simulation lab has the potential to change significantly the approach to clinical teaching. For example, Algonquin nursing students can work through a lesson online that describes a common health care problem such as diabetes. Then, in the lab and under the supervision of an instructor, students respond to a patient – a mannequin – experiencing a simulated diabetic crisis in a hospital or even a homecare setting. Students' responses can be recorded for review by themselves or their instructors at a later date.

Simulation labs proffer significant benefits for healthcare education. First among them is the ability to provide enhanced educational opportunities for every student. By undertaking clinical work both in simulation labs and in the field, every student has the opportunity to participate in the full range of essential practice experiences prior to graduation. Simulation labs provide the opportunity for remedial training that could significantly influence student success.

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As well, simulation labs can provide an experiential learning environment for registered nurses wishing to upgrade themselves to practise in specialty skills areas such as critical care, emergency/trauma care or perioperative nursing.

The lab is also proving beneficial in assessing internationally educated nurses participating in Algonquin's innovative foreign-trained nurse project. The project evaluates nursing skills using the computerized mannequins and provides internationally educated nurses with educational options.

Algonquin College has modeled this first-of-a-kind Health Science Simulation Lab in Canada after similar labs in the United States at the University of Maryland and Temple and McLellan Colleges in Texas.

The lab and the associated curriculum development undertaken by the College form the basis of a multi-phase project with wide reaching implications including remote training opportunities for people in Canada's North. Moving forward with future phases will depend on funding partnerships with the federal and provincial government.

"Algonquin College is very proud of this new facility, the only one of its kind in Canada," said Robert Gillett, President of Algonquin College. "Once again, Algonquin is leading the way through the introduction of innovative technology into the post-secondary learning environment, this time to address Canada's increasing need for more nursing graduates."

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BACKGROUNDER

Health Science Simulation Lab

Basic Care Simulation Labs

B 255

- 1600 sq. ft.
- 12 bed and 3 stretcher practice stations
- 1 DV camcorder with video streaming
- E-learning control station

B 257

- 1440 sq. ft
- 11 bed and 1 stretcher practice station
- Granny 's apartment —community/homecare setting
- Pan-Tilt-Zoom camera for lab use with transmission to internal and external classrooms
- 1 DV camcorder with video streaming plus DVD burner from live video feed
- E-learning control station

Simulation equipment available for practice enhancement

- 4 SimMan computerized mannequins
- 4 transportation carriers
- 2 Noelle maternity mannequins
- 2 Mega Code Kid pediatric mannequins
- 1 Nursing Annie for gynecology and obstetrical experience
- Interchangeable practice kits for SimMan
- Trauma kit
- Nursing KitBleeding Kit

Benefits of Simulation

- Create excellent Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) challenge opportunities for practical skills
- Provide fair, equitable, controlled lab experience for each student in each program
- Provide improved remedial and supplemental practice opportunities
- Enhanced level of preparation prior to clinical practice
- Facilitate a realistic multi-disciplinary healthcare team approach
- Enhance recruitment and retention of participants in programs
- Create opportunities to expand program offerings for healthcare professionals including critical care, emergency and operating room
- Improve opportunities for distance learning nationally and internationally

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Simulation Lab Backgrounder – 2

School of Health and Community Studies programs using these labs:

Nursing Studies Programs

- Personal Support Worker
- Practical Nursing
- Collaborative Baccalaureate Nursing Program With University Of Ottawa

Re-Entry and Specialty Nursing Programs

- Bridging Programs For Personal Support Workers
- Registered Practical Nurse Refresher Program
- Registered Nurse Refresher Program
- Curriculum Options For Internationally Educated Nurses
- Registered Nurse—Critical Care
- Registered Nurse—Emergency
- Registered Practical Nurse—Operating Room
- Registered Nurse—Operating Room

Allied Health Programs

- Respiratory Therapy
- Massage Therapy
- Dental Hygiene
- Dental Assistant

Contract Training Opportunities

- Available Upon Request

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