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University of Alabama at Birmingham Baseline Site Description

Interprofessional practice and education (IPE) has been a longstanding component of health professions education at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB). In recent years, the establishment of formal administrating and coordinating structures has augmented UAB's IPE efforts. UAB hopes that joining the National Center's Nexus Innovation Network (NIN) will further advance their IPE work and increase their impact on the Triple Aim.

History of IPE at UAB

Several efforts over the past few years contributed to institutionalizing IPE at UAB. In 2010, a provost-appointed task force was formed to investigate interprofessional education and simulation and proposed creating an office for interprofessional simulation to consolidate and expand existing simulation activity. In 2012, the UAB Healthcare Coordinating Committee began meeting and recommended establishing a formal administrative structure to support the development of interprofessional educational opportunities at UAB. In 2014, both the university and the health system came together to recognize the value of IPE and commit to IPE as an ongoing and essential part of the education and training provided to students and health professionals at UAB.

Context of IPE at UAB

Founded in 2015 by the University of Alabama System Board of Trustees, the UAB Center for Interprofessional Education and Simulation embodies the commitment of the UAB's health profession schools and health system. This Center works to integrate the efforts of the university and health system to provide interprofessional education and training to students, faculty and staff from all health professions. It is comprised of two offices with two distinct focal areas—the Office for Interprofessional Curriculum (OIPC) and the Office of Interprofessional Simulation for Innovative Clinical Practice (OIPS). As of October 1, the Center will include a third office, the Office of Standardized Patient Education (OSPE). These offices raise awareness about IPE efforts and support their implementation. Moreover, the role of these offices is to serve as facilitators of IPE—not as owners of university-wide IPE activities. The Center for Interprofessional Education and Simulation thereby plays an important role in improving the coordination of curricula across schools and strengthening collaboration between UAB and the health system.



Moreover, as a collaborative effort between both the university and health system, the Center for Interprofessional Education and Simulation is accountable to both entities. The UAB provost, dean of the medical school, dean of the nursing school, and the CEO of the health system provide oversight for the Center and champion IPE in the university and health system. This is significant. As UAB is the largest employer in the state of Alabama and the health system is the premier medical facility in the region, the priorities of UAB and the health system have influence on the priorities of the state. Given that it represents an alignment of the vision of the university and the health system and supports a partnership in implementing IPE, the Center for Interprofessional Education and Simulation has created a solid foundation from which to advance IPE in Alabama.

UAB and the Nexus Innovations Network

UAB formally joined the NIN in February 2016, and their NIN project builds on the work of the Center for Interprofessional Education and Simulation. The NIN project involves a comparison of two approaches for training a group of interprofessional faculty on simulation debriefing in a manner that encourages interprofessional collaborative practice. Accordingly, the faculty development program aims to improve faculty perceptions about and competencies related to interprofessional collaboration. In turn, clinical faculty's ability to teach students how to effectively collaborate while working in an interprofessional team should improve, as should, ultimately, clinical outcomes. UAB's NIN project, by this means, further contributes to UAB's efforts to prepare a workforce to practice interprofessional collaboration that impacts the Triple Aim. Moreover, the NIN has much to gain from UAB's experiences in implementing—and institutionalizing—IPE.