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Collaborative online nurse practitioner students meet in Regina

Students in Canada's first collaborative, online master of nursing nurse practitioner program are getting together in person this week for the first time. Students currently enrolled in the online Collaborative Nurse Practitioner Program (CNPP) – offered jointly by the Saskatchewan Polytechnic and the University of Regina – are in Regina this week, as part of their studies.

The program launched in September 2014 with 18 students from across Saskatchewan, as well as from Alberta, Manitoba and Ontario. In addition to their online studies and the one-week residency, students will also participate in clinical experiences, most often in their home community.

Given that the CNPP is delivered online, students can complete their Master's of Nursing (Nurse Practitioner) degree by studying in their home communities. For people whose professional lives are established in their communities, this means they do not have to move to Regina. For those living in Regina, it means accessing their studies from home.

For the students, it is valuable to meet other students and faculty in person.

"It's important to learn about the people you're spending two years interacting with, and also getting to meet faculty members. I feel closer to them now," says Niki Aschenbrenner from Martensville, SK.

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“Relationships are important. Being able to meet the other students, and our instructors, face-to-face, and learning about their lives is important,” says another student, Claudia Pearson of Prince Albert.

“In addition to the acquisition of knowledge, skills and competencies, students are afforded the opportunity to foster their identity as CNPP graduate students. Importantly, this week-long intensive session promotes a sense of community among the students,” explains Dr. David Gregory, Dean, Faculty of Nursing, University of Regina.

“The residency will provide for intense engagement in discussion, exploration, simulation and practical application together with their fellow classmates. It will be an invaluable and transformational learning experience,” says Dr. Netha Dyck, Dean of Nursing at Saskatchewan Polytechnic.

Nurse practitioners play an integral role in the health care team in managing the care of patients and their families, and increasing access to health care services.

Applications for the next program intake are currently being accepted online at www.sasknursingdegree.ca.

The University of Regina is a comprehensive, mid-sized university that traces its roots back to the creation of Regina College in 1911. It now has 200 academic programs, 10 faculties and about 14,000 students. The University of Regina is well known in several areas, including business, education, engineering, journalism and justice studies, and offers online and distance study programs for people throughout Saskatchewan and across Canada.

Saskatchewan Polytechnic is Saskatchewan’s primary public institution for post-secondary technical education and skills training. A member of Polytechnics Canada, Saskatchewan Polytechnic’s programs include apprenticeship training, certificates, diplomas and degrees. The institution serves 26,000 distinct students through campuses in Moose Jaw, Prince Albert, Regina and Saskatoon, and through extensive distance education opportunities.