



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **For Immediate Release**

#### **Nursing faculty updates tools for assessing internationally educated nurses**

*Saskatchewan Polytechnic assessment centre receives \$750,000 in funding from Health Canada*

**April 30, 2015** – Nursing faculty at Saskatchewan Polytechnic is updating tools used to assess the knowledge, judgment and skills of internationally educated nurses who want to practise as registered nurses (RNs) in Saskatchewan. The tools are used in Saskatchewan Polytechnic’s Internationally Educated Nurses (IEN) Assessment Centre in Regina, the only IEN assessment centre in the province. Health Canada is providing \$750,000 for the project over two years.

“The revised assessment tools will align with a set of national RN competencies that was introduced in 2013,” says Sandra Pettit, program head of the IEN Assessment Centre. “The revised tools will allow the assessors to identify potential gaps in theory and practice related to the new set of competencies.” Currently, IEN assessment centres in Canada’s four western provinces use tools developed by Mount Royal University in Calgary several years ago.

The update includes creating new scenarios that assess IENs’ ability to think critically, writing additional multiple-choice and short-answer questions, as well as developing simulated case studies that allow IENs to demonstrate their nursing skills.

“We are excited to engage in this innovative project that will be of great benefit to internationally educated nurses and health care in Saskatchewan,” says Dr. Netha Dyck, dean of the School of Nursing. “This project will also be of significant benefit to assessment centres in the other western provinces and to the Atlantic Connection in Halifax, which serves internationally educated health care professionals. All are providing input into the project and will have access to the revised assessment tools.”

The IEN Assessment Centre, which assesses about 50 IENs annually, consulted with psychometricians from Yardstick, an Edmonton-based training and testing company. After the psychometricians developed a project plan for the update of the tools, 18 subject-matter experts from Sask Polytech’s School of Nursing developed and wrote the new assessment material. The project is expected to wrap up in March 2016.

Saskatchewan Polytechnic serves 26,000 distinct students through applied learning opportunities at campuses in Moose Jaw, Prince Albert, Regina and Saskatoon, and through extensive distance education opportunities. Programs serve every economic and public service sector. As a polytechnic, the organization provides the depth of learning appropriate to employer and student need, including certificate, diploma and degree programs, and apprenticeship training. Saskatchewan Polytechnic engages in applied research, drawing on faculty expertise to support innovation by employers, and providing students the opportunity to develop critical thinking skills.

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