

NEWS RELEASE

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Program designed for immigrant nurses

Orientation to Nursing in Canada will help meet Sask nursing needs

Regina, March 30, 2007 – A new program at SIAST will help internationally educated nurses contribute to their full potential in Saskatchewan's health care system.

"Internationally educated nurses have valuable skills and talents, but many need help bridging the gap created by differences in technology, language and culture," says Netha Dyck, SIAST's dean of Nursing. "This new program is designed to help them understand our health care system, improve their communication skills and give them the knowledge and skills required of a nurse working in Saskatchewan."

The program – Orientation to Nursing in Canada for Internationally Educated Nurses – was introduced today at an information session for organizations that support immigrants in Saskatchewan. SIAST nursing faculty, an internationally educated nurse and a Saskatchewan nurse manager spoke about the challenges facing internationally educated nurses.

"Some are able to make a smooth transition, but a significant number face challenges," says Sandra Pettit, the SIAST program head responsible for Orientation to Nursing in Canada. Some newcomers fail the Canadian Nurse Registration Exam, Pettit notes, while others pass the exam but encounter cultural difficulties that make it difficult to adapt to their new work environment. "This new program, tailored to meet the very specific needs of this group, will ease the transition."

In addition, this program will increase the number of nurses prepared to work within the health care system and help alleviate the current nursing shortage.

Most courses in the new program are offered through distance education, although some are taken on-site at SIAST, and the clinical experience is completed in a health care facility. The program is offered on a part-time basis and must be completed within three years. Students learn about processes and procedures used in Canadian health care, equipment, techniques and terminology, and various drug therapies.

SIAST's Nursing Division is a partner in the Nursing Education Program of Saskatchewan (NEPS), which prepares students to become registered nurses. It also offers the NEPS Second-Degree Option and Practical Nursing programs, as well as extensive opportunities in continuing nursing education.

SIAST is Saskatchewan's primary public institution for post-secondary technical education and skills training, recognized nationally and internationally for its expertise and innovation. More than 12,000 students are registered in SIAST programs, which touch every sector of the economy; additionally, the organization draws more than 28,000 individual course registrations. It operates campuses in Moose Jaw, Prince Albert, Regina and Saskatoon, and provides a number of courses and programs through distance education.

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