

MEDIA RELEASE

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New uniforms for SIAST nursing students

Standardized uniforms allow for easy identification of student nurses

June 24, 2010 – Patients visiting health care facilities in the Saskatoon Health Care Region will soon have a clearer image of who to go to when they need assistance.

This spring, the Nursing Education Program of Saskatchewan (NEPS) began a pilot project that provides NEPS Second Degree Entry Option students with uniforms. The uniforms are charcoal grey and emblazoned with a crest that says “Nursing Student” in gold lettering.

The pilot project was created due to confusion in the health care industry on who to go to for assistance or questions. “There seems to be an identity crisis in nursing,” says Madeline Press, NEPS faculty member. “We’ve received feedback from health care providers, faculty and patients that they cannot tell one health care worker from another. Student nurses are frequently approached by team members, patients and families to perform duties that are currently outside their scope of practice.” The recent Patient First Review, a 2009 study on how patients experience the Saskatchewan health care system, confirmed that there are nurse identity issues that need to be addressed.

Uniforms should help to alleviate some of these issues. Easy identification of nursing students will allow patients and other health care providers to adjust or redirect their questions as necessary. Roslyn Compton, NEPS faculty member states, “It’s only been a month, and we have already heard positive things from faculty members about the ease of identifying student nurses. I am confident that this pilot will be successful and will be adopted into our core programming.”

The pilot project consists of 70 students and will conclude in March 2011. The uniforms are currently only worn in the classroom, but the public can expect to see the new uniforms in limited locations of the Saskatoon Health Region when the students begin their work term in November 2010. To evaluate the success of the pilot, SIAST will implement a study incorporating feedback from all stakeholders – nursing students,

faculty, health care team members, patients and their visitors. If the pilot is successful, the uniforms will be rolled out to all SIAST nursing students.

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 14,000 students were enrolled in SIAST programs in the most recent academic year; additionally, the organization drew almost 30,000 individual course registrations. Through program and course registrations, SIAST served almost 26,000 distinct students with programs that touch every sector of the economy. SIAST 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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