MacEwan University introduces Bachelor of Psychiatric Nursing degree

Edmonton—MacEwan University, in Edmonton, has become the first post-secondary institution in Alberta to offer a Bachelor of Psychiatric Nursing degree.

The Bachelor of Psychiatric Nursing (BPN) will allow registered psychiatric nurses (RPNs) already armed with a diploma to expand their knowledge and skills in the field of psychiatric nursing.

“This is a really important achievement and milestone for registered psychiatric nurses and graduates from our diploma program,” explains Marian Anderson, chair of both the new degree program and the university’s Psychiatric Nursing diploma. “It opens up opportunities within Alberta for further studies and degree completion within their chosen field. MacEwan University is the sole provider of psychiatric nursing education in this province.”

Accessibility and flexible options

The new post-diploma program consists of 45 credits and will have intakes in January and September, with the first cohort beginning September 2014. “We are planning to admit 60 students between the Fall 2014 and Winter 2015 intakes, so 30 students each term,” says Anderson.

Delivered via distance and online delivery, the easy access of the program will appeal to new diploma grads and practicing RPNs. The program concludes with a capstone course that includes field experience that can take on a variety of forms, including role-shadowing, counselling, and focused observation and data collection.

Building on diploma broadens opportunities

Building on the foundation of the diploma, the post-diploma degree will provide opportunities for graduates to find employment in a broader range of settings, promoting mental health and working with clients experiencing complex mental health care issues. Graduates with this credential will also be better prepared to pursue further graduate-level studies in psychiatric nursing or a related field.

Increased demand for advanced skills and knowledge

The Government of Canada has made mental health a priority, and there is an increased emphasis on RPNs to have advanced preparation for employment within complex health care environments. Learner-centred, innovative and accessible, the BPN offers a global perspective and the opportunity to enhance knowledge and skills in areas such as child and adolescent psychiatry, the criminal justice system, addictions and substance abuse, community mental health, nursing research, and leadership.

Founded in 1971, MacEwan University is a comprehensive university offering more than 65 programs including undergraduate degrees, applied degrees, diplomas, certificates, continuing education and corporate training. It’s philosophy of inspiring minds, academic excellence, and providing career opportunities continues to be its guide as it serves the educational needs of students across Alberta, Canada and the world.

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