Award Corner

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My career in nursing began more than three decades ago. Healthcare education during that
time was delivered in the familiar “silo” style. Having to navigate through clinical practice,
learning along the way which disciplines were involved in the care of patients and how to
work as a team developed over time.

Coming from the hierarchical system that was once considered the norm, I have learned
that throughout my years in practice and later as a clinical faculty, collaborative efforts
with other disciplines were established as informal conversations about the patients
deferring to the discipline that had the most power or influence in the patient’s care.

While this was how it was then, I felt something more was possible and necessary to
provide the best healthcare had to offer for patients. Fast forward to 2008, when I obtained
a faculty appointment at Thomas Jefferson University, Jefferson School of Nursing, BSN
program. I was assigned to the Health Mentors Program as a faculty liaison. Unaware of
the interprofessional movement at TJU, I quickly became acquainted with the Jefferson
Interprofessional Education Center’s mission and found this to be in line with my own
values as a team member but also, in line with the current movement to create effective
healthcare teams. Major organizations and accrediting bodies (IOM’s 1999 To Err is
Human, AACN’s 2008 The Essentials, IOM’s 2010 The Future of Nursing; IPEC’s 2011 Core
Competencies for Interprofessional Collaborative Practice) challenge higher education
institutions and healthcare organizations to incorporate interprofessional education (IPE)
activities that foster collaborative engagement in the practice environment. Being a part of
the interprofessional “wave” over the past five years, I have had the fortune to participate
in several interprofessional activities and committees, including the role of the nurse in a
GEC video (2009), faculty membership on the Interprofessional Curriculum Committee
(2010-2011), Clinical Rounding Sub Committee (2010-2012), Faculty Development
Presentation (2011), and faculty liaison for the Health Mentors Program (2008 to present).
As most know, the commitment to IPE is often voluntary, happening along with other
faculty responsibilities. It is that commitment that brings together a group of healthcare
professionals from schools across the university who share a common goal – to develop
and sustain the work of promoting IPE and collaboration.

I have had the pleasure of working with other faculty volunteers these last five years and
look forward to continued involvement in JCIPE opportunities as well as being a role model
for other faculty who want to be a part of the JCIPE spirit.

Last June, 2013 I was the proud recipient of the James B. Erdmann Award for Excellence
in Interprofessional Education. Receiving this award validated my professional goal of
involvement in IPE. Being TJU faculty has given me the opportunity to be a part of a growing group of faculty who maintain and sustain IP initiatives and I am humbly aware that my contribution is part of the bigger campus-wide movement. It is a great time to be a Jeffersonian!

James B. Erdmann, PhD, FASAHP