

SNAPSHOT

My Story:

Successful Collaboration among LCSC and Idaho State University's Nursing Program

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My name is Omotowa Omotayo "Tayo", a wife and a mother of three. In March of 2004, my family and I were living in Moscow when I was accepted into the BSN program at Lewis-Clark State College (LCSC) in Lewiston. This was almost the same time my husband got a new job at INEEL in Idaho Falls. Our children were ages 12, 8, and 4 years. My husband's new job brought with it much confusion and for me the temptation to abandon the BSN program because of the unforeseen burdens separation could cause my family. Because I had degrees in another discipline, I thought I would be able to secure a job readily at Idaho Falls. However, my interest in nursing (and my husband's encouragement) motivated me to continue; I stayed in Lewiston to pursue my nursing education but my family left to live in Idaho Falls without me.

This decision to stay in Lewiston and pursue my BSN was not a convenient endeavor. I traveled on the average of once a month between Lewiston and Idaho Falls, packing my books, and continually studying even while in transit. Each time, it was always hard for me to return to Lewiston, especially with our children, their needs, and their questions on when I would stop commuting and finally stay at home with them. Sometimes, when I stayed in Lewiston for about seven weeks (which happened about twice due to my schedule), our daughter, who is the youngest, would tell me that I had been gone for too long.

Words cannot express the emotional, psychological, physical, financial, and relational stress that I went through during these past two school calendar years. Somebody may be wondering "why didn't she do something?" Yes, I tried to get into the accelerated track of the BSN Program at my college; I tried to transfer to the BSN Program at Idaho State University (ISU), but all to no avail. Eventually I was offered a possibility - finishing the remaining senior year nursing classes at Idaho State University and then transferring my ISU credits back to LCSC to meet graduation requirements.

I am grateful for the efforts of my nursing advisor and LCSC faculty who took it upon themselves to advocate for me on my behalf. After their several meetings with me and after their many weeks of correspondence with nursing faculty at Idaho State University's Nursing Department, a tentative plan was generated. I would say at this juncture that this type of collaborative plan for a student to complete senior BSN courses off-site is something that has never happened before between ISU and LCSC's BSN programs. Both nursing programs believed that barriers could be removed so that I could implement the plan and maximize my time with my family. I was supported by

both programs all the way. Eventually the proposed plan was refined and ISU and the LCSC registrar accepted my plan to finish my remaining nursing courses in Pocatello, in the close the proximity of my home.

There is no doubt that this collaborative effort on my behalf between the nursing programs at LCSC and ISU will provide immense benefits to me as a student, to my family, and to the new community to which I belong. It will afford me the great privilege of being there for our children, to experience their growth and development, especially our teenage boy who needs some cues concerning his school work. My ability to be close to my nursing education and family will allow me greater concentration on my studies. My husband too will be better able to focus on his job (this is very important because my husband is a chemist and an analytical laboratory manager).

In my judgment, if such collaboration among nursing programs could be extended to future students, more people would be interested and attracted to Idaho's nursing programs. Family dynamics and distance would, at the least, no longer be seen as obstacles to achieving one's life ambition and completing a BSN. More importantly, the problem of statewide and/or the national nursing staff shortage could be addressed.

I want to express my profound gratitude to Dr. Barbara McNeil, Dr. Lori Stinson, Dr. Mary Hassett, and the entire faculty from LCSC's Division of Nursing and Health Sciences for believing in me and thinking outside the box. Further, I am grateful to Dr. Diana McLaughlin and the nursing faculty at the ISU Nursing Department for agreeing to accept this unique plan, to collaborate with LCSC and to ensure I can complete my BSN while remaining with my family in our community of Idaho Falls. .