

Northwestern Advances Evidence-Informed Practice Curriculum

Northwestern Health Sciences University has implemented an online faculty development program focused on evidence informed practice (EIP). This initiative is part of the Research Education Project for which the university received a National Institutes of Health grant of approximately \$900,000 in 2008. The program is focused on integrating research skills into the practice of complementary and alternative medicine.

The course, available to Northwestern faculty on Moodle, the university's course management system, is called Faculty Foundations of EIP. It includes two options that cover the same content students are learning across all three Northwestern academic programs. Track I covers six core modules, which include an introduction to EIP and practical applications. Track II is more in-depth, covering an additional 16 online modules - all of which are currently included in the Foundations of Evidence Informed Practice student course.

As part of the faculty program, an online discussion via Moodle will take place monthly, facilitated by members of the project's faculty development team and research faculty. The forum will allow faculty to share ideas on how they can use EIP in classroom and clinic teaching activities.

"We're excited about the possibility of generating a dialogue between faculty using EIP in practice," said Louise Delagran, MEd, education specialist at the University of Minnesota Center for Spirituality and Healing, and a member of the project team. Northwestern and the University of Minnesota are collaborating on the Research Education Project.

According to Delagran, once the EIP course requirement for students was introduced in the Summer 2009 term, it created a demand by faculty for the modules. "Faculty want to understand what we're teaching students and what the students are learning," said Delagran.

"Faculty who have viewed the course are excited," added Kristin Swartz, BA, research education project manager. "They seem eager to share information. We're anticipating an enthusiastic online discussion."

Source: Northwestern Health Sciences University