

## Health Professions Education Institute (HPEI)

**Title:** The Role of Virtual Simulation as a Modality of Clinical Experience in the AHEC Scholars Program

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### WORKS IN PROGRESS

*Background/Needs Assessment:* Annually, the North Carolina Area Health Education Centers (AHEC) hold a two (2)-year Scholars program designed for undergraduate students to improve the diversity and distribution of health professionals. Scholars receive forty (40) hours of didactics and forty (40) hours of clinical work where they develop new skills and are introduced to an interprofessional framework for improving health. AHEC Scholar clinical rotations diminished during the pandemic due to clinical pressures in state-wide healthcare systems. Consequently, the AHEC Scholars program requested that state simulation centers join together to provide simulated clinical experiences. The Center for Experiential and Applied Learning (CEAL) and Northwest AHEC partnered and participated in this state-wide initiative to provide virtual simulation experiences.

*Objectives:* This study aims to assess AHEC scholar survey feedback to determine the impact of virtual simulation events, compare virtual simulation events to clinical experiences, and determine if/how this new aspect of the program should continue in future years.

*Methods/Description of Program:* In 2022, CEAL is hosting four (4) simulation experiences focused on anesthesiology and labor and delivery. Electronic surveys, which include five (5)-point Likert scale and open ended questions, are administered to participating Scholars. Descriptive statistics, t-tests and qualitative assessment of themes will be completed.

*Anticipated Results/Evaluation Plan:*

It is anticipated that virtual simulation experiences will be well-received by Scholars but that clinical experiences will remain preferred. To date, CEAL held one (1) simulation event, and preliminary 5-point Likert results reveal agreement with the content being pertinent to

educational needs (4.6) and increased knowledge/skills due to the virtual simulation event (4.6).

*Next Steps:* CEAL will complete all four (4) virtual simulation experiences by March 2022 and evaluate our data provided by AHEC. We will partner with participating simulation centers to compile simulation data across all programs. We will obtain clinical experience data with AHEC for comparison to determine if/how simulation will remain a part of the future Scholars program.