The University of Windsor’s Faculty of Nursing has an impressive Clinical Learning Centre (CLC) which is located in the Toldo Health Education Centre and the new Medical Education Building. The CLC is the home to state of the art facilities, which replicate a palliative simulation suite as well as hospital and primary care facilities designed to provide students with opportunities to engage in “real-life” experiences in the safety of the simulation setting. The CLC is an integral part of our faculty, as it is where students come to learn, practice and refine their skills.

Nursing students in all four years of the BScN degree, as well as graduate and Nurse Practitioner students are provided with simulated learning opportunities that prepare them for and/or enhance their actual clinical practice. Various modalities of simulation are available to students: from simple task trainers to learn and practice new skills, to high-fidelity simulation manikins. Our adult, pediatric and baby manikins speak (our baby coos), breathe, have lung, heart and bowel sounds, and are physiologically modelled to respond to treatment and medication as would a real patient. Over 150 scenarios are available for students to experience, which facilitates the bridging of theory to practice. We also have a robust standardized patient pool of individuals hired to portray patients with specific conditions. The use of standardized patients (SPs) enables students to have hands-on practice with live patients who provide meaningful feedback to students. Video recording is also available and allows students to review how they cared for patients during simulation and how they can improve their skills in the future.
All simulation instructors have participated in faculty development and training and are versed in the use of simulation as a teaching pedagogy and the importance of debriefing to “put the pieces of the puzzle together” following high-fidelity simulation scenarios. Evidence-based practice guidelines and patient safety tools are incorporated into all scenarios and simulation experiences, and are levelled and appropriately linked to theory with clear learning objectives. The focus of our simulation program is to help close the gap between research, theory and practice. Armed with the knowledge gained through simulated experiences, students can then safely care for patients in the clinical arena without placing human patients in jeopardy.

Judy Bornais & Debbie Rickeard, Experiential Learning Specialists responsible for the Simulation Program, are thrilled with the students’ enthusiasm for simulation experiences:

* “I felt the simulation was a great learning experience. The rapidly changing patient condition allowed us to use our critical thinking skills. It was wonderful!”
* “This experience was extremely valuable as it really incorporates our theory into a very realistic practice scenario. Good to evaluate our level of patient care, team work and problem solving skills”.

The simulation experiences have also benefited our graduates once they are in the workforce. A testimonial received by Professor Bornais attests to this fact:

* “...the reason I wanted to email you was because of something that happened at work yesterday. I was caring for a very sick patient and eventually had the opportunity to advocate for my patient in having a meaningful discussion about code status with the family member. As we were talking about the various things that happen in a code situation, the difficulty of making this kind of decision, etc., I remembered practicing this kind of discussion in the nursing lab in the code/end-of-life scenario, and was thinking how grateful I was for that and how it's become so important to my practice. Just thought I'd pass it along with another big 'THANKS' for all you do with in the nursing lab. Heather, 2011 BScN graduate"
Visit our webpage ontariosimalliance.ca. It features important highlights on the collaborative work, upcoming events, research opportunities & projects!

Thank you for a great academic year & enjoy the warm days of summer!