Title: The transition of the SUNY Upstate Perfusion education program from a BS to a MS degree: The driving educational philosophy and resultant programmatic structure.

Presenter: Bruce Searles, MS, CCP, LP, SUNY Upstate Medical University

Authors: Bruce Searles, MS, CCP, LP, SUNY Upstate Medical University; Edward Darling, SUNY Upstate Medical University; Jeff Riley, SUNY Upstate Medical University

Abstract:

The educational landscape of our profession has transitioned through many stages of growth. As the body of knowledge and scope of practice of the profession has grown so has the graduation credential of the educational programs. Currently, there are 17 accredited educational programs in the USA offering Baccalaureate, Post-Baccalaureate certificates and Masters degrees. SUNY first started its perfusion education program in 1973 as an Associate degree, transitioned to a Baccalaureate degree in 1997 and is currently transitioning to a Masters degree. Here we review the educational philosophy and programmatic structure of the new Masters degree program emphasizing the unique elements which are intended to deliver increased value to the profession.

The SUNY program includes a 48 credit core-curriculum that all students will take. The core-curriculum is built on the backbone of 600 hours of high-fidelity simulation in which fundamental clinical skills are learned and practiced in an innovative student-focused environment. The didactic coursework is delivered in sync with the simulated clinical experience so that the presentation of new knowledge is timed to coincide with the presentation and practice of the corresponding clinical skill set. With the completion of the core curriculum, all students select to pursue either a capstone experience or conduct a research thesis. Currently capstone experiences are offered in 5 clinical specialties: pediatrics, blood management, quality & safety & leadership, mechanical circulatory support or education and simulation. Research thesis projects focus on the novel investigations that significantly advance the professional body of knowledge. Additionally, all SUNY students complete 1400 hours of clinical experience across 4 different hospitals.

The SUNY faculty believe that the core-curriculum will prepare the students for success during their clinical rotations and that the capstone and thesis tracks will develop a professionally useful skill set that will benefit employers and the profession.