Perioperative Nursing Simulation and its Influence on Student Nurses’ Career Interest
Team Leader: Jennifer Jessen EdD MSN RN, Assistant Professor, ANC Track Leader
Creighton University, Omaha, Nebraska
Team Members: Christine Smith MSN RN CPAN, Kristy Iwansky MSN RN CPAN CAPA,
Nicola Moreland MHA BSHM RN CPAN, LeaAnn Palmer MSN RN

Background Information: Perioperative nurses are key personnel in managing safety risk and
preventing patient harm. With significant nursing shortages, there is a critical need to train and
recruit nurses to this complex area. Limited curricular exposure, clinical opportunities, and
perioperative instruction in undergraduate nursing programs have led to a decline in nurses
seeking perioperative positions and an increased staff turnover.

Objectives of Project: The specific aim of this exploratory quantitative study was to determine
if perioperative nursing educational activities, particularly simulation, influence student interest
in pursuing perioperative nursing careers.

Process of Implementation: Students in two different nursing tracks, on campuses in two
different states, and at various points in their nursing education participated in a perioperative
simulation. Due to COVID-19 challenges, this in-person simulation was converted to a virtual
simulation mid-way through the academic term, and therefore, approximately one half of
students completed the simulation in-person while the other half completed the simulation in a
virtual format. Post-simulation evaluation of data from students was conducted.

Statement of Successful Practice: Thirty-nine percent of students indicated that the simulation
and perioperative education increased their interest in pursuing intraoperative nursing. There
was no statistically significant difference in interest in pursuing perioperative nursing between
the virtual or in-person simulations. In all student groups, students with an interest in
perioperative nursing prior to simulation averaged only nine percent.

Implications for Advancing the Practice of Perianesthesia Nursing: Both in-person and virtual
simulation show promise for increasing knowledge of and interest in perioperative nursing in
baccalaureate nursing students. As nursing programs continue to struggle with clinical
placement opportunities and limitations on in-person activities, robust in-person or virtual
simulation experiences may positively influence students toward a future in perioperative
nursing.