



Short Communication

# Logistical Planning and Making the Move to a New Simulation Space

Jan Barber, MSN, RN<sup>a</sup>, Ashley Eberhardt, BSN, RN<sup>b</sup>, Brooklyn Kennedy, BSN, RN<sup>c</sup>, Suzie Kardong-Edgren, PhD, RN, ANEF, CHSE, FAAN<sup>d,\*</sup>

<sup>a</sup>*RISE Center Operations Manager, Standardized Patient Education Planner, Robert Morris University, Moon Township, PA 15108, USA*

<sup>b</sup>*Gibsonia, PA 15044, USA*

<sup>c</sup>*New Castle, PA 16102, USA*

<sup>d</sup>*Professor, RISE Center Director, Robert Morris University, Moon Township, PA 15108, USA*

## KEYWORDS

simulation center;  
moving;  
logistics;  
space planning;  
building design

## Abstract

**Background:** This article describes one simulation center's logistical planning experience as it consolidated three small simulation and skills areas in three buildings into one brand new building and space.

**Method:** Six months of planning and packing are described with enough detail that the ideas can be duplicated by others.

**Results:** The contents of three laboratories and all manikins were moved and unpacked in three days.

**Conclusion:** Optimal logistical planning by a committed team can ensure a smooth move into a new simulation space.

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Moving into a new simulation center is an oft dreamed of and sometimes achieved goal for many of us. However, the planning for such a move, especially when consolidating equipment and manikins from multiple buildings, takes precision planning and coordination. A literature review revealed that there is little published in this area (Baily, Baron, Yucha, & Snyder, 2013; Kuiper & Zabriskie, 2012; Young & Scherwitz, 2015). This article describes one school's

planning and execution of such a move in the hopes that others may benefit when their dream comes true.

## Building Design

The building design and planning of our simulation center began a number of years before the actual groundbreaking. The simulation area design and square footage changed multiple times along the way based on fund raising and class size projections. Once construction began, we had a small window of time to adjust the floor plan for the

\* Corresponding author: [kardongedgren@RMU.edu](mailto:kardongedgren@RMU.edu) (S. Kardong-dgren).

simulation center, which was part of the larger School of Nursing and Health Sciences building.

## Storage Space Planning

### Key Points

- This article describes the consolidation of 3 separate simulation areas into a new building.
- Existing volumetric footage for storage in the 3 areas was calculated and doubled for the new space.
- A year's worth of planning allowed consolidation and set up of a new simulation center in 3 days.

Planning for the actual needed storage space was complicated by the fact that current simulation, foundations, assessment, and general skills laboratories were scattered throughout three different buildings. We began by measuring the square footage taken up by the supply and equipment racks and stacks in those three buildings. This volumetric footage was used to plan for the potential required storage space in the new building. No one had ever seen all the equipment

consolidated into one space before. We needed to estimate current and future storage space needs, as this occurred. The current storage square footage was reported to the architects with the request that they double the storage space in the new building. The actual storage racks were also measured to devise the most efficient configuration in our new main storage room. We realized that we would need to reimagine how we kept large pieces of equipment, as well as supplies, because we would have more overall square footage but less wall space. We also measured the elevators and door widths in the current buildings to be certain that the elevators in our new building would accommodate our largest pieces of equipment and beds would pass through the doorways.

## Preparing to Move

With an anticipated move in date of mid-October, the operations manager created a moving time line and the prepacking process commenced at the start of the semester in late August. The first step was to review every item we had in our current spaces, to determine what would move to the new building and what would be donated, given away, recycled, or sold. Creative ideas were exercised to move unneeded items out of the center. We had a “freebie” bag from which students could take things they wanted. A vast collection of calculators was donated to the “test-taking box” that proctors take to each examination. Extra text books were sent to the library. Some supplies were sent with faculty and students to a yearly international mission trip to Nicaragua. Extra folding screens were offered to another school of nursing. Our last and least

desired option was to throw things away. We were also able to purchase eight new beds for the new open eight-bed laboratory area. This left us with three extra older beds. While they had no resale value, a local hospital equipment refurbishment company hauled them away at no charge.

Packing began in earnest in mid-September. The operations manager devised a packing label system dividing the new simulation center floor plan into five color-coded zones. Larger zones were subdivided into sections labeled alphabetically (Table). The color-coded floor plan was printed and placed in a central location in the current five bed laboratory; the plan was communicated early and often to faculty, staff, and our 15 undergraduate nursing student lab assistants (Figure). This helped everyone to pack and label boxes without the continuous oversight of the operations manager. Classes were ongoing throughout the semester as we were packing. As each class topic or simulation was completed for the semester, we packed and stored related supplies and equipment from each scenario and class. Every box was labeled with detailed contents, new room number, and the zone color sticker and was then stored in the general vicinity of where the specific supplies had been kept. If we needed a specific item unexpectedly during the semester, it would, theoretically, be easier to find. Our nursing student lab assistants (work study employees) were essential to the packing and eventual unpacking of supplies and equipment. Once simulations ended for the semester, we had one week to finish packing before the professional movers were scheduled to arrive. By that point, the vast majority of supplies were packed, labeled, and ready to go, across all three buildings.

Weekly or biweekly staff meetings were held throughout the semester to review construction progress and the packing and moving plan. The projected building completion date was moved back to late November or early December. University planners ultimately chose the week of December 14 for our big move after final examinations were complete. This later moving date worked well as we were simultaneously coordinating the installation, testing, and training for the new simulation digital recording

**Table** Zone Color System With Locations

Zone Colors	New Location
Blue	High-fidelity simulation and control rooms
Red with subdivided zones A, B, and C	Eight-bed clinical performance suite
Orange	Outpatient examination simulation rooms
Yellow subdivided into zones A, B, C, D, and E	Large central supply storage room
Green	Simulation supply/mouflage closet

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