

STRATEGIC PLAN: 2010-2013
School of Nursing
Memorial University of Newfoundland

EQUIPPED FOR SUCCESS

Message from the Director

I am so pleased faculty were able to come together to develop a strategic plan for the years 2010-2013. During our day-long retreat, we made significant and positive progress as we considered issues and trends and formulated our response to strategic issues that are already upon us.

Several features of a strategic plan are worth noting:

- A strategic plan should focus on 'make or break' issues. These are issues or conditions that must be addressed for an organization to remain relevant and responsive. The responses to these 'make or break' issues are referred to as *strategic directions*.
- 'Make or break' issues usually emerge from an analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats facing an organization. A synopsis of our situational analysis is included in this plan.
- Regardless of the size, maturity and the level of available human and financial resources of an organization, few have the capacity to respond to more than three to five 'make or break' issues in a three year period. We have committed to pursuing five strategic directions over the next three-year period.
- Strategic directions begin to live when they are accompanied by goals and time frames which articulate accountability for implementation. While we have articulated goals and timeframes in this plan, on an annual basis we will also be developing an operational plan that further details how we will achieve our strategic directions and goals.

Our strategic directions are:

1. Consolidate nursing education human resources (faculty and staff), administration and infrastructure within MUN.
2. Revise the Fast Track Nursing Program for implementation in September 2012.
3. Create and action the business case to secure adequate space and resources to accommodate required faculty and staff necessary for nursing education at MUN.
4. Assertively pursue and implement the nursing education programs that respond to the needs of the health care system and which foster faculty development and scholarship.
5. Strengthen our visibility and credibility among stakeholders that fosters a stronger environment of understanding and support.

I am confident we have chosen the right areas of focus for us for the next three years. I am committing my unwavering support as we work together to achieve success in our plan. We will regularly review our process on an annual basis and faculty will meet to assess new internal and external conditions to ensure our strategic plan remains meaningful and relevant. Strategy is about establishing direction, passion and momentum. We are already on the right road. Now we must travel and navigate together.

Judith McFetridge-Durdle, PhD, RN
Director, School of Nursing

Our Mission, Vision and Values

Mission

The School of Nursing provides leadership and advances knowledge in nursing education, practice and research with the goal of promoting health and well being.

Vision

We will be innovative leaders in nursing education and research provincially, nationally and internationally by developing quality learning and scholarship environments. Our graduates will be prepared to embrace the challenges of providing health care and will be responsive to human diversity while improving health for all.

Values

Caring. We will strive to be compassionate and considerate in all our interactions.

Excellence. We will seek to achieve the highest possible quality in our educational programs and in our teaching, research, scholarship, and service.

Ethical Standards. We will hold ourselves to the highest standard of ethical conduct in all that we do.

Spirit of Inquiry. We will foster a climate of intellectual curiosity, critical thinking and life-long learning.

Responsiveness. We will respond to the needs of our students and to changes in society and the global environment.

Collaboration. We will foster effective and dynamic relationships by sharing knowledge and expertise in a spirit of mutual respect to achieve common goals.

Situational Analysis

In September 1966, the first 38 students were admitted to the Bachelor of Nursing programs at Memorial University (generic and post-RN). At that time, there were just three faculty members. The School of Nursing became a resident of the Health Sciences Centre in 1978. Since then, the School has grown in response to increased enrollments, expansion of programs and an increase in faculty. Today, the School houses 46 fulltime faculty (25 tenure track and 21 contract) with 213 fulltime students enrolled in the four-year Bachelor of Nursing (Collaborative) Program, 52 fulltime students in the two-year Fast Track Program, 143 active enrollments in the Bachelor of Nursing (Post-RN) Program, and 84 active enrollments in the Master of Nursing Program.

As of March 2008, the BN program has enjoyed a seven-year national accreditation status from the Canadian Association of Schools of Nursing; the highest award granted. At the same time, the BN (Collaborative) and the BN (Post-RN) programs were approved by the Association of Registered Nurses of Newfoundland and Labrador (ARNNL) for seven years. Taken together, this accreditation and approval status assures both the public and students that the School of Nursing is exceptionally well-equipped to prepare entry-level practitioners who provide safe, ethical and quality health care.

The provincial and national demand for Bachelor and Masters-prepared nurses continues to place demands on the School of Nursing to increase enrolment. This demand is expected to continue for the foreseeable future. In addition, here in the province, there are a considerable number of nurses (3,000 of 5,000) who still do not have a Bachelor of Nursing degree. However, there are significant restraints on the ability of the School to meet the demand for additional graduates including:

- Availability of clinical placements and clinical faculty and preceptors. The availability of preceptors is especially a concern because nursing students can be burdensome and overwhelming to nurses who are trying to balance their responsibilities as caregivers and their commitment to nursing education. This may require a new category of faculty such as a Clinical Associate who will assume a mentoring and teaching role for students on the unit.
- Availability of classroom and laboratory space to support increased student enrolment. The current availability of funds to conduct a detailed functional analysis of future space requirements will enable the School to better articulate its space requirements.
- Ability to be competitive nationally in the recruitment of faculty. Currently only .02% of nurses in Canada hold a PhD. Thus, the competition for doctoral-prepared nursing faculty is intense. However, this also provides an opportunity for our School to commence a PhD program. These plans are well underway and now the focus must be on implementation.
- Access to financial resources to support increased nursing education seats.

For the 2010/11 academic year, the School is enjoying full enrolment; indeed there is an oversubscription for the BN (Collaborative) Program. However, this may represent an anomaly

as trends indicate student recruitment will become more difficult as high school enrolments decline consistent with projected population demographic changes and as high school graduates pursue a wider range of educational and career opportunities.

It is clear that the profile of nursing students is rapidly changing. Today, students are less committed to nursing as a single career choice and are more apt to have other fulltime roles as a parent (and often as a single parent) or to work part-time. Although the average age of students entering the BN (Collaborative) Program remains consistent at 21 years (four-year program) and 25 years (Fast Track program), the average age of students enrolled in the BN Post-RN Program has increased from 32 years in 2000 to 41 years in 2009. These statistics signal a more mature student who requires greater flexibility for when and how they complete their degrees

The size of our student body now warrants a dedicated counselling service to support students' needs for career and mental health counselling. Concerted efforts are required so that students are able to readily avail of these services when they need them.

In the near term, we can expect nurses will require deepened expertise in chronic disease management, mental health and addictions, infection control, patient safety and in working with seniors. This will require access to coursework and clinical experiences that develop required nursing competencies. There will also be a demand for additional nurses prepared at the Master's level to fill expected gaps in nursing leadership.

Nationally and provincially, new program standards and changing health system requirements will compel us to ensure that existing and new programs are relevant. Apart from the introduction of a PhD program, new national and provincial standards compel us to transition the BN Post RN Primary Health Care Program to the master's level and to revise our MN Nurse Practitioner Option to include Adult and Family All Ages streams. As well, we will explore the feasibility of a flexible distance option for diploma-prepared nurses so that they can exit the university with a Master of Nursing degree. Each of these initiatives will require the dedicated focus of our faculty and staff and the active support and engagement of our internal and external partners. These important initiatives are reflected in this strategic plan.

We are already clearly detecting that younger students prefer electronic means of communication. Taken together with the wider availability of distance education courses, there will be more and more students whom faculty will rarely encounter on a face-to-face basis. The mix of our student body resembles that of workplaces: the tenuous blending of values and expectations with regards to work ethic, commitment and technological suaveness. This means we will need to be less traditional in our approaches to education while retaining a deep commitment to the values of quality client-centred care delivered with compassion. We must ensure a perfect blend of distance education and face-to-face contact to facilitate the development of well-rounded graduates who possess required competencies and nursing ideals.

The School is well-known for its ability to produce exceptionally well-prepared graduates who are in demand throughout the country. We know we can play a stronger role with our health system partners in this regard. A key challenge will be retaining these graduates here in the province. In support of these efforts, the School is now more frequently engaged by the Regional Health Authorities to support their internal efforts in practice and policy development relating to nursing care and the delivery of nursing services to individuals, families, communities and populations.

The long anticipated consolidation of nursing education now represents a critically important decision that will enable our partners at the Centre for Nursing Studies and the Western Regional School of Nursing to respond to nursing education through coordinated, strategic and innovative approaches. With consolidation, we will have the ability to introduce new models of delivering nursing education that meets the needs of both rural and urban communities and which embraces the enhanced use of technology (including simulation models) to meet the needs of learners. Through leveraging our collective strengths, we are certain there are also untapped opportunities to ensure that we have greater capacity for leadership in research and in the formulation and realization of healthy public policy.

As a School, we need to be nimble enough to respond to change. Changes in health care delivery models and health policy will compel us to respond with the ability to produce nursing graduates who have the required basic, advanced and applied skills. We must also do our part to ensure that all nurses with varying levels of education (LPN, BN, MN, NP and PhD) have the opportunity to work to their full scope of practice.

We must also engage in more proactive communication so that the role of nurses is better understood by the public and policy makers within government and academic settings. We must promote our achievements as a professional school. As consolidation of nursing education occurs, there will be a requirement to ensure stakeholders understand the significance of the changes occurring and to garner the support of internal and external stakeholders. This lays the foundation for increased opportunities for alumni engagement, scholarships and even more partnership approaches both within and outside the university.

As we address these challenges we have many assets to capitalize upon. Apart from our well-prepared faculty, we enjoy strong collegial relationships among faculty and staff, a leadership position in interprofessional and distance education, and a well-balanced focus on education, clinical practice research and service to other organizations.

Strategic Direction 1: Consolidate nursing education human resources (faculty and staff), administration and infrastructure within MUN.

Planning Imperative

Newfoundland and Labrador is the only province in Canada where nursing education is located in the service setting. Moreover, the current model of nursing education with three separate Schools of Nursing results in duplicated resources and costs that impede optimal use of limited resources. Through consolidation, significantly greater opportunities for innovation in nursing education are possible. The province has the opportunity to create the largest Faculty of Nursing in the country with the most innovative programming that prepares nurses from the LPN to PhD.

Goals	Lead Responsibility	By When
1. Reactivate discussions among all stakeholders of the positive benefits of consolidation.	Director's Task Force	Sept 2010
2. Develop and implement a transition plan that honours sound change management principles.	Director's Task Force	Dec 2010

Strategic Direction 2: Revise the Fast Track Nursing Program for implementation in September 2012.

Planning Imperative

Student and faculty/staff recognize that the current Fast Track Program is not working as well as it could be. Problems include: disjointed sequencing of some coursework; unrealistic workload demands for both students and faculty; and mismatch between the program and the learning needs and abilities of learners. Current problems are affecting recruitment and retention into the program that could ultimately affect our ability to meet the demand for nurses in this province. A revision of the program is urgently required as the interim structure for the program will expire with the incoming class of 2010.

Goals	Lead Responsibility	By When
1. Establish a Fast Track Working Group empowered to lead the revision process and with the support of an external consultant.	Admin Council	Sept 2010
2. Conduct a thorough evaluation of the current Program as a basis for designing a future Fast Track Program.	Undergraduate Studies Committee	Dec 2010
3. Seek approval from relevant stakeholders as a basis for implementation.	Fast Track Working Group	June 2011

Strategic Direction 3: Create and action the business case to secure adequate space and resources to accommodate required faculty and staff necessary for nursing education at MUN.

Within the School, there is inadequate space for current educational offerings, research programs, collaborative faculty activities and student activities. An untenable situation exists in that an office designed for one faculty member is accommodating up to five faculty. Very little space and faculty capacity exists to expand student seats to meet government and health industry demand for additional nurses. There is also insufficient space to accommodate the new PhD program. Further human resources and technology (e.g., human simulation) investments are also required for the learning resource centre.

Goals	Lead Responsibility	By When
1. Secure funding for space and resource planning.	Director	June 2010
2. Establish a space committee to work with a consultant, staff, faculty, and students to determine requirements.	Director	Sept 2010
3. Develop a business case that details the needs and benefits of additional space and resources.	Space Committee	Dec 2010
4. Create a physical entity that provides a sense of home and identity for faculty, staff, and students.	Director's Task Force	June 2013
5. Ensure effective recruitment and retention mechanisms are in place for current and future faculty.	Director	Sept 2010

Strategic Direction 4: Assertively pursue and implement the nursing education programs that respond to the needs of the health care system and which foster faculty development and scholarship.

Planning Imperative

The School of Nursing must be constantly vigilant by ensuring its programs meet the needs of the health care system and which build and sustain scholarship.

The existing Nurse Practitioner Primary Health Care option of the BN (Post-RN) program was designed as a time-limited, transitional program. Now, there are new standards set by the Canadian Nurses Association and ARNNL that mandates that all NP education will be at the MN level by 2010 or at the latest by 2015. The new standards will require national examination and licensure in one of three streams (adult, family all ages, and pediatrics), thus enabling NPs to have full portability among provinces. We will continue with the program revision work already underway to ensure that we are equipped to offer a new MN Nurse Practitioner Option in September 2011.

There is a strong imperative to increase the PhD –prepared faculty complement in the School of Nursing to meet the new and ongoing demands of nursing education. Scholarly knowledge and contribution to nursing research are long-acknowledged hallmarks of successful academic

programs. The demand for PhD-prepared nurses both within academic settings and within the health care system far outstrips the current supply, presenting a strong case for a NL-based PhD program that recruits students from the province and elsewhere. While plans for the PhD program are well-developed, we must now focus on the program's implementation.

Given the demographic profile of nurses, nursing leaders in the province have been expressing an urgent need for nurses prepared at the Master's level, but with a focus on nursing leadership. There is an opportunity for the School of Nursing to develop a program targeted to practicing RNs that enables them to return to university and exit with a Master of Nursing degree with a focus in leadership. Such a program would rely on courses already offered and would represent a "first of its kind" innovative approach to preparing nursing leaders. Consequently, this program is expected to be in high demand throughout the country.

Goals	Lead Responsibility	By When
1. Submit a proposal to the ARNNL for an amended Master of Nursing Nurse Practitioner Option with Adult and Family All Ages streams for program implementation in September 2011.	NP Transition Committee	Sept 2010
2. Commence intake of PhD students in September 2011.	PhD Planning Committee	Sept 2011
3. Explore the feasibility of a Diploma to Master of Nursing Program.	Director's Task Force	May 2011

Strategic Direction 5: Strengthen our visibility and credibility among stakeholders that fosters a stronger environment of understanding and support.

Planning Imperative

The School of Nursing must become much more proactive in its external communications by promoting our vital role and our achievements. A greater presence with stakeholders creates the conditions that foster increased ability to respond to community needs, to be a credible and visible player in shaping future directions for the health and education systems and in our ability to garner a compelling case for support.

Goals	Lead Responsibility	By When
1. Finalize a communications plan.	Communications Coordinator	Sept 2010
2. Ensure a School representative is a member of appropriate committees within stakeholder organizations.	Director and Faculty	Dec 2010
3. Commit faculty to communicating their achievements and, with permission, student achievements.	Faculty and Staff	ASAP and Ongoing