

March 2009

School of Nursing

Memorial University of Newfoundland

Response to Report of the Panel for the Academic Program Review of March 24, 2008

Forward

On February 11 - 12 2008, the School of Nursing had an on-site visit by the four members of the Academic Review Panel for the School. They were: Dr. Alice Collins (Chair), Dr. S. Birnie-Lefcovitch (School of Social Work), Dr. Cynthia Baker (Director School of Nursing and Associate Dean, Faculty of Health Sciences, Queen's University), and Dr. J. Profetto-McGrath (Acting Dean, Faculty of Nursing, University of Alberta). The faculty, staff and students were very pleased with the conduct of the review and the visit. We want to extend our sincere thanks to the panel members and to Ms. Joan Bessey for their work on behalf of the School. We received the Panel's report in late March 2008 and as a faculty we reviewed the 15 recommendations at our Faculty Retreat held on June 26-27, 2008. Unfortunately, due to timing (the end of the Director's term) the School was not able to provide a full response until now. What follows below is our response and plan for action related to each of the recommendations.

Recommendation #1

- 1. That the School of Nursing conduct a survey to determine the potential committed market for the Post RN program, assess the provincial need for this program, and use the evidence to determine future offerings and if indicated, develop a planned phase out with commitment to students already in the program.**

School of Nursing's response:

In late spring 2008, the director appointed Professor M. Beaton, a senior faculty member, to work on the development of a provincial survey to assess the need for the continuation of the BN (Post RN) program. Prof. Beaton conducted a literature review and contacted all Canadian Schools/Faculties of Nursing that had a BN (Post RN) program to ascertain the status of their programs and to ask if they had an appropriate survey that they might be willing to share. She also contacted the Association of Registered Nurses of Newfoundland & Labrador and received demographic information about the diploma-prepared nurses in the province. This is the cohort that would be eligible to enrol in the BN (Post RN) program. Professor Beaton completed her report and submitted it to the director in late fall 2008. It was decided that a survey may not be the best approach to help in determining provincial need for the continuance of the program. Since the director's term was ending in Dec. 2008, it was felt that the report should be tabled until a new director is in place when a final decision about the viability of the program can be made.

Recommendation #2:

- 2. That the School of Nursing explore with students and faculty the accessibility of the services of Memorial's Counselling Centre and if the need for increased accessibility is indicated, nursing administration explore alternate or increased accessibility for nursing students with the Counselling Centre.**

School of Nursing's response:

The School will take a three-pronged approach to addressing this concern. First, the School's administration will have a meeting with the Nursing Society to discuss ways of assessing student needs regarding counselling services and then will implement appropriate measures to assess student needs. One suggestion is that an on-line survey be developed that would assess students counselling needs and accessibility to services, and to explore ways to improve student life. Second, we will explore with Dr. P. Cornish, University Counselling Centre, what services are currently available to students and what might be done to enhance services. Third, we will explore what counselling services are available to students in the Faculty of Medicine, as well as to students at the Centre for Nursing Studies and Western Regional School of Nursing. Once this information is obtained, we will decide on the appropriate ways to meet the needs of our students.

Recommendation #3:

- 3. That the School of Nursing examine the clinical component of the BN program streams to determine whether some reduction in clinical placement hours could be achieved without impacting the quality of the program.**

School of Nursing's response:

While faculty recognize that our BN (Collaborative) program has a relatively high number of clinical hours, this experiential learning is highly valued by our faculty, our students, and the employers of our students. In our recent CASN accreditation review, the reviewers praised the range and comprehensiveness of our clinical placements. Rather than reduce clinical hours at this time, faculty suggested exploring complementary experiences such as the use of human simulation models. The School has already begun this exploration by supporting faculty and staff who work in our Learning Resources Centre to attend an international conference about this topic. Dr. S. MacDonald who has a special interest in the use of human simulation (HS), piloted a HS module in a 3rd year medical – surgical nursing course in 2008 with another faculty member, Professor A. Manual and two of the our LRC staff, C. Castagne and B. Oldford. The module was evaluated very highly by both faculty and students. The School will continue to explore possibilities for sharing equipment with the Faculty of Medicine and explore the potential for purchasing our own equipment.

Faculty also suggested that HS models might be used in other clinical settings in the province that are currently under-utilized. For example, we know that the clinical settings in St. John's are over-used while hospitals and other health facilities located in outlying areas are under-utilized. To better understand our utilization of all health settings in the province, the Director and Administrative Council of the BN (Collaborative) program along with the provincial health authorities and government, are exploring the potential of a soft ware program called HSP-Net as a way of tracking clinical placements of nursing and other health science students across the entire province. This has the potential to help us better understand and better use all the existing provincial clinical facilities.

Recommendation #4:

- 4. That the School continue to review courses in the graduate program in a systematic manner to ensure currency, connectivity among the courses and cohesiveness of the program as a whole.**

School of Nursing's response:

Dr. S. Solberg, Associate Director, Graduate Programs and Research, with the Graduate Studies Committee of the School of Nursing instituted a comprehensive review of the MN program in 2008. The GSC has been systematically reviewing each course and will be recommending changes to the graduate program to our Academic Council once the review is fully completed. A process of instituting regular review of the graduate program will also be developed and discussed with faculty.

Recommendation #5:

5. **That the School of Nursing offer the NP program at the MN level in line with the position of the CNPI.**

School of Nursing's response

It is the intention of the School of Nursing to offer the NP program (both acute care and primary health care) at the MN level by 2010. However, funding for the NP-PHC program is currently allocated to those completing the BN-PHC degree. Government will need to agree to transfer these funds to students who will be taking the MN-PHC program. Given that this is a somewhat contentious issue that has been raised at the national meetings of assistant deputy ministers of health, we are not certain that government will be in agreement. The School continues to liaise with the Chief Nurse, NL Department of Health and Community Services and with the ARNNL, the regulatory body that sets the educational standard for licensure of NPs in the province.

Recommendation #6:

6. **That the School of Nursing begin work on a PhD program with care/attention to its relationship to its other programs. To effectively develop the program the School must obtain needed resources. When ready start the program by admitting a small cohort of students (3-5).**

School of Nursing's response

The School of Nursing has been actively working on the development of a PhD program since 2006-07. Work to date includes:

- a) the development of an ad hoc committee to plan the program
- b) a PhD planning symposium with 5 invited speakers held in May 2007
- c) discussions with the University of New Brunswick Faculty of Nursing to explore possibilities of a joint program
- d) the development of a draft program that included a vision statement, program objectives, focal areas, and brief course descriptions that were distributed and discussed at the Faculty Retreat held June 2008.

The ad hoc PhD planning committee received extensive feedback from faculty on the draft program and is revising it based on this feedback. The revised program is being developed with attention to our Master of Nursing programs.

The new Director will need to estimate costs of this new program and will need to allocate sufficient resources for it to be a success. The ad hoc committee will be recommending an initial intake of only 3-5 students

Recommendation #7:

7. **That the School of Nursing consider curriculum reform to provide the time needed for increased research productivity.**

School of Nursing's response:

As indicated under recommendations # 1, #3 and # 4, reviews of our BN (Post RN) and graduate programs are being done. Given our consortium arrangement with the other two Schools of Nursing, curricular reform of the BN (Collaborative) Program is a complex and time intensive process. In fact, we have revised the BN (Collaborative) Program and are implementing those changes on a yearly basis. Further modification of the program does not seem feasible at this time. It is important to note here that both our BN(Collaborative) Program and the BN (Post RN) Program received full 7-year CASN accreditation again in March 2008. One initiative that could be implemented would be to convene a work-load committee to review the work related to the teaching of all courses in both the undergraduate and graduate programs.

While acknowledging the relatively large number of programs we offer, faculty identified that it was the large number of committees in the School of Nursing and other professional committees that seemed to take up valuable time. Members suggested formation of a sub-committee to see where faculty's time is being spent. The new Director may wish to convene this sub-committee and to additionally review the committee structure of the School with a view to suggesting recommendations to streamline effort. This will need to dovetail with a strategy for increasing research productivity.

Recommendation #8:

8. **That the Senior Executive of the University immediately implement the consolidation process and advance the recommendations in the Earle Report.**

School of Nursing's response:

Dr. Doreen Neville, Associate Vice-President Academic, is now the chair of the Steering Committee of the Consolidation of Schools of Nursing. Dr. Alice Collins, past dean of the Faculty of Education was appointed by the senior executive to assist in moving this process forward. She is collecting appropriate data, co-ordinating meetings of the steering committee, and working closely with the senior executive and with the appointed representative from the three Schools of Nursing as well as the three Directors.

Recommendation #9:

9. **That the School of Nursing apply the process outlined in Article 3.17 of the MUNFA Collective Agreement to consider revising the equivalency weightings for clinical courses.**

School of Nursing response

This recommendation was discussed at the Faculty retreat in June 2008. It was decided that the timing is now right to do a full review of teaching weightings and it was suggested that a survey on course weightings be developed by an ad hoc workload committee and be distributed to faculty. It is expected that the new director will initiate this process.

Recommendation #10:

10. **That the School of Nursing consider Article 11.29 of the Collective Agreement to elaborate the criteria to be applied for promotion and tenure.**

School of Nursing's response

Faculty discussed this recommendation at the faculty retreat in June 2008 and agreed that article 11.29 of the MUNFA Collective Agreement be explored to better reflect the importance of academic service. They also suggested that other criteria for scholarship be explored. It is expected that the new director will initiate this discussion with the Executive Committee, review options, and develop a plan of action for how to proceed with this review.

Recommendation #11:

11. **That the School of Nursing continue what it is doing to strengthen its research profile, adding administrative/policy support for research to its list of challenges.**

School of Nursing's response

The School recognizes that providing administrative and policy support for research is a challenge. To better assess the needs of faculty, it was suggested that a special faculty meeting be held to identify the activities that need better support. Once the issues are identified, the manager of administration and finance can work with faculty and staff to develop a plan to better meet the needs for research support in the School.

Recommendation #12:

- 12. The Director of the School work with contractual faculty, in consultation with the Office of Faculty Relations, to identify strategies to recognize contractual faculty and foster long-term relationships between contractual faculty and the School of Nursing.**

School of Nursing's response

In 2007-08, the Search Committee of the School of Nursing developed guidelines for the appointment of sessional, contractual/term faculty that took past service into account. These guidelines were approved by faculty at an Academic Council meeting. We also fully implemented article 7.16 related to contracts of those who could 'roll over' from one contract (without advertising) to the next where there is no interruption or break in service.

At the Faculty Retreat, faculty identified that this issue was well described in the Earle Report and needs to be considered by the Steering Committee for Consolidation of Schools of Nursing and by the Senior Executive. MUNSON's appointed representative on that steering committee and Dr. Alice Collins along with Dr. Doreen Neville are well aware of this issue.

The new director will need to advocate for our sessional and contractual/term faculty. One possibility is advocating for an increase in the number of long term contracts (e. g., 3 or 5 year contracts).

Recommendation #13:

- 13. That the School of Nursing closely monitor implementation of these changes [related to the office and staff review] to ensure they are achieving the desired results.**

School of Nursing's response

The School recognized that the administrative support staff had high workloads at times. To remedy this situation, a full office review was conducted and new positions were created and some administrative work was realigned. The Manager of Administration and Finance has taken the lead on this recommendation and is monitoring changes made by the creation of new positions and work realignment to be certain that the number and type of support staff are sufficient. Working with the new director, the manager will report on progress in this area.

Recommendation #14:

14. **That the Director of the School of Nursing and the Vice-President (Academic) undertake space planning immediately.**

School of Nursing's response

While the School is in a near critical shortage of space for faculty offices, student space, classroom space, research space etc., it is difficult to plan for expansion without knowing the outcome of the consolidation of the Schools of Nursing initiative. Renovations to existing space in the School of Nursing have been done to good effect. However, we now need new additional space if we are to increase student numbers (as government has asked) which will also necessitate hiring more faculty. The incoming director will need to review space needs and consult with the Vice-President (Academic) about the possibility of building or accessing new space within the Health Sciences facility or even in another location. The Medical School expansion may provide some opportunities for acquiring new space and this needs full exploration.

Recommendation #15:

15. **That the School of Nursing conduct a survey to determine the potential committed market for the Post RN Program, assess the provincial need for this program, and use the evidence to determine future offerings and if indicated, developed a planned phase out with commitment to students already in the program.**

School of Nursing's response

Response to this recommendation is the same as indicated in Recommendation #1.