

Maurine Church Coburn School of Nursing Program Review Executive Summary

December 30, 2014
Revised April 21, 2015

Program Review was conducted by the faculty of the Maurine Church Coburn School of Nursing during the fall semester 2014, and addresses program mission, vitality, outcomes and student learning since the last review in 2008-2009. Members of the support team included Heather Faust (Division Chair, Life Sciences), and Jon Knolle, Associate Dean of Instructional Technology and Development. Feedback and recommendations from the support team members is included in the following summary.

The Maurine Church Coburn School of Nursing has been a stand-alone department since its inception in 1982, funded by a partnership between MPC and Community Hospital Foundation, as described in an annual MOU between the institutions. Funding is augmented by state Chancellor's Office grants, and several smaller grants and endowments. The main trust fund administered by Community Hospital Foundation (Maurine Church Coburn Charitable Trust) has outlived its original duration, which was expected to have exhausted in 2006. Due to prudent investment and augmentation by Community Hospital Foundation, the fund continues to support the nursing program at this time. The nursing faculty consists of 5 full-time and 3 permanent part-time instructors, as well as the Director whose responsibilities are completely administrative with occasional classroom teaching as needed. In addition, the school of nursing is staffed with a Division Office Manager and an Instructional Technology Specialist.

The nursing program budget is high when analyzed by FTES/FTE ratio. This is due to the standard student -to-instructor ratio of 8:1 to 10:1 in the clinical setting. Unlike some allied health programs in which clinical practicums are conducted by preceptors in the field, pre-licensure nursing programs by regulation must be taught by faculty both in the classroom and in the clinical setting, with narrow exception. Another component of cost is that nursing faculty salaries are designed to keep pace with those of industry in order to recruit and retain loyal and qualified faculty.

The MCCSN received initial approval from the California Board of Registered Nursing (BRN) in 1981, and has maintained full approval since that time. National accreditation was received in Fall, 1990 from the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission, and accreditation has been maintained since that time. The most recent NLNAC visit occurred in October, 2011.

Program Strengths

The attached review revealed to the faculty the following strengths of the nursing program:

- The **unique partnership** with the Community Hospital Foundation continues to enable the college to have the necessary resources to provide a high quality program that otherwise would not be possible due to its high cost.
- A **strong advisory board** provides annual community feedback to inform program decisions, such as increasing written assignments and interviewing skills.
- The **cohort model** of student progression has demonstrated a consistent pattern of high semester-to-semester retention compared to MPC CTE programs overall.

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- With minor exception, the core faculty have been a consistent group with **low turnover** and have made a long term commitment to the program. This continuity provides institutional memory to inform curricular decisions, and serves as a strong backbone of experience with many kinds of students. The director position has had a change in personnel twice since the last review, yet the transition was smooth because of the overall faculty continuity.
- The program remains **fully accredited** by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN, formerly known as NLNAC) through 2019. In order to promote program excellence, the MCCSN faculty engage in an annual 2-day comprehensive review of the nursing program according to the 6 standards (and many sub-standards) of the ACEN accreditation requirements.
- The faculty and the curriculum continue to adopt the most **current technology** available in order to provide student learning in modern health care environments (high fidelity simulation lab and upgrades, bedside electronic documentation, medication bar-coding and point-of-care electronic resources). The simulation coordinator has presented twice at national conferences.
- **Student success interventions** are multi-faceted, including individual case-management by “student success coordinators” for each level of the program, a close relationship with the Access Resource Center for testing accommodations, faculty-led study groups and scholarship assistance to name a few. Community donations for private scholarships to students exceed \$250,000 annually. The Men In Nursing Program has also provided support since 2007 to enhance success of non-traditional students.
- **Pass rates on the licensure exam** have remained at or above state and national averages for 4 out of the past 5 years. Employment rates have remained higher than state averages even during the economic downturn.
- MCCSN received recognition by the **National Student Nurses’ Association (NSNA) as a Stellar School** in April 2014, based on the commitment of faculty to the professional development of students, participation in state and national legislative process for evidence-based practices, and in community service (e.g. RotaCare free clinic in Seaside).
- **Grant efforts** have been vigorous in recent years (private, state and special). The school of nursing currently manages 5 grants to assist with funding, defraying the cost to the college as much as possible.

Challenges/Areas for Improvement

The attached review also revealed to the nursing faculty the following areas for improvement:

- Maintaining **adequate resources** to provide a high quality instructional program continues to be an ongoing challenge. To this end, a “guest-visitor” program been initiated to invite current scholarship donors to the simulation center, displaying both the phenomenal learning that takes place here and the need for financial support. An Alumni newsletter (*In Touch*) has also been initiated and will be mailed to all alumni in January 2015 as part of a fundraising campaign.
- Despite the aforementioned robust student success efforts, **program completion rates** have been below the 85% expected level of achievement for 4 out of the most recent 5 years. Completion rates are especially poor for men and for students of Filipino and Asian ethnicity.

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The Men In Nursing program has experienced turnover in facilitators, and the applicant pool itself has had an average of only 10% men. Faculty need to address the needs of these groups to improve equity and completion rates. The MIN program has a new and stable facilitator now, who is motivated to develop effective retention strategies. The multi-criterion selection process is expected to admit those students sooner who have the greatest potential for completion, while minimizing unintended disproportionate impact. The adopted process has been accepted by the Chancellor's office and also formally reported to the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN)

- While MCCSN graduates have found **employment at rates** higher than the state average during the recent economic downturn, graduates of the program have needed to change their expectation of working in a hospital immediately. Most will find work in long term care or community-based settings, the new paradigm. Continuing efforts will need to be made to provide graduates with curriculum that prepares them for employment in the affordable care era. This includes a seamless pathway for ALL associate degree graduates to complete their BSN locally.
- Assuring the continued availability of **highly qualified instructors** needed to provide instruction in the program for years in the future. A succession plan is needed as many faculty approach retirement age in the next 5 years.
- **Maintaining excellent outcomes** is more important than ever for the continued vitality of the program. National accreditation is expensive, but also gives MCCSN graduates distinction in pursuing advanced degrees. Embedded standardized exams are expected to provide students with individualized remediation for NCLEX success, and also to guide the curriculum in areas needing improved instructional strategies.
- **Ensuring effective communication with, and support for, science faculty** as the multi-criterion selection process is refined. Sciences at MPC are rigorous and top quality compared to those of some other regional colleges, leading to the best preparation for health careers. Students are pressured to achieve high science grades in order to be competitive in the multi-criterion selection process. Therefore, students need both accurate information about the value of completing foundational sciences at MPC, and support to be as successful as possible. Further study of the impact of the selection process is underway, and both science faculty and counseling input will be sought for changes if needed within the confines of the current interpretation of the Education Code concerning multi-criterion selection. In the meantime, Perkins grant funding has been requested to provide the science faculty resources to add faculty-led study sessions or other success interventions for students.

Goals

- Improve program completion rates through a combination of vigilant student success efforts and modifications to the selection process. Assess the needs of identified vulnerable groups and men; early and intrusive intervention.
- Maintain excellent NCLEX pass rates through curriculum responsiveness and standardized testing prior to program completion.

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- Expand the residency program (NURS 53) into multiple settings to assist new graduates in securing employment as an RN. Seek grant funding for graduate stipends.
- Seek partnerships and community support to augment program funding, along with continued aggressive grant participation.
- Collaborate with leaders at CSUMB and other 4-year institutions to establish a seamless BSN pathway, ideally a regional model. This endeavor has more urgency now that there is a national movement to increase the number of baccalaureate-prepared nurses. Future grant-funding and national accreditation may require the integration of such educational pathways.
- Continue to develop curriculum to meet industry needs in the affordable health care era, with more focus on community-based settings and concepts that are transferrable across the lifespan (to address the lack of reliable pediatric clinical sites). Consider ways to offer additional elective courses and/or scheduling existing courses that have not been offered in recent years due to faculty work load.
- Develop computerized course testing, blueprinted to course content and NCLEX client need categories.
- Maintain continued BRN approval and ACEN (or other national) accreditation.
- Recruit highly qualified faculty to plan for succession and continued program vitality. Reach out/encourage local BSN grads to complete higher degrees and to consider teaching. Continue to offer local nurses the opportunity to complete master-degree teaching internships at MCCSN under the supervision of current faculty. Retain the excellent current faculty by promoting morale through regular staff meeting “shout-outs” and recognition for accomplishments.

Overarching Campus Issues

The School of Nursing program review also identified some issues of concerns to the entire campus:

- Maintenance of facilities and custodial care: The buildings on the west side of campus (IC, NU, Music, Art Dimensional) are badly in need of repairs, upgrades and cleaning. Plumbing, roofs and air vents have failed. Such disrepair is a source of frustration for faculty and students, as it has caused disruption to scheduled activities and concern about potential health effects.

Security is an issue that has surfaced in recent building response drills and in the campus shooter incident in March 2014, especially a lack availability of phone and intercom communication to the IC and AD buildings. The recent addition of radios has improved communications, but classrooms in the IC building are still “deaf” during response drills.
- Continued commitment to funding for CTE programs as they respond to changing needs in the workforce: Faculty has verbalized anxiety about the financial picture of the college moving forward. The partnership with Community Hospital Foundation remains a strong financial support for the school of nursing, as long as the college is also committed to its support.
- Faculty have verbalized a growing fatigue with the additional duties imposed in recent years (e.g. positive attendance tracking records; Instructor Reflections; accreditation reports; curriculum enhancements reflecting national trends). Continued support for coordination activities is essential to the meaningful and timely completion of such requirements.