

**Florida Atlantic University
College of Nursing
Program Review
February 6-8, 2019**

Review Team

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OVERVIEW

The team of Dr. Victoria Niederhauser, Dr. Jacqueline Fawcett, and Dr. Evonne Rezler reviewed FAU's College of Nursing (CON) on February 6-8, 2019. Dr. Joy Longo, Assistant Dean, Graduate Practice Programs, CON, provided the reviewers with a self-study and associated documentation for each program housed in the CON. Dr. Longo also provided a detailed itinerary and exemplary logistical support. During the site visit the review team met with:

- Karin Scarpinato, Executive Associate Vice President for Research
- Russell Ivy, Senior Associate Provost for Programs and Assessment
- Marlaine Smith, Dean CON
- Karethy Edwards, Associate Dean of Academic Programs, CON
- Patricia Liehr, Interim Associate Dean of Research and Scholarship, CON
- Nancey France, Assistant Dean of Undergraduate Programs, CON
- Joy Longo, Assistant Dean of Graduate Practice Programs, CON
- Sue Bulfin, Director of Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) Program, CON
- Shirley Gordon, Professor, CON
- Rose Sherman, Director, Nursing Leadership Institute, CON
- Cheryl Krause-Parello, Professor, Faculty Fellow I-HeAL, Director, Canines Providing Assistance to Wounded Warriors (C-P.A.W.W.), CON
- David Newman, Associate Professor and Statistician, CON
- Kyle Bryan, Associate Director, Research Services and Programs, CON
- Joanna Kendall, Coordinator, Research Programs/Services, CON
- Alice Miehl, Research and Scholarship Analyst, CON
- Twenty-four faculty of all ranks in one group meeting
- Ed Pratt, Dean of Undergraduate Studies
- Nine graduate and undergraduate students from all programs, except the RN-BSN program
- Khaled Sobhan, Dean of the Graduate College

The College of Nursing (CON) houses one undergraduate degree program offering four different tracks or pathways toward a baccalaureate nursing degree, and three graduate programs. At the undergraduate level for the Bachelor of Science Nursing (BSN) the four tracks are: Freshman Direct Admit (FDA),

Accelerated Track (AO), Registered Nurse to Bachelor of Science in Nursing (RN-BSN), and the traditional BSN program. At the graduate level the three programs are: Master of Science in Nursing (MSN), Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP), and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD). The review team was provided with an Academic Program Review (APR) self-study document for all of these programs, as well as for research, and for service and community engagement for the CON. The APR self-study was comprehensive, and included a thoughtful and honest assessment of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT analyses) for each program, research, service and community engagement, and other programmatic goals. During the site visit, the review team was impressed with: 1) the students' and faculty's commitment to *Caring Science*, 2) the students' high level of satisfaction with their faculty and the CON programs, 3) CON's strong student applicant pool, 4) stable faculty teaching assignments, 5) strong program outcomes at the BSN level as demonstrated by high NCLEX pass rates, 6) strong program outcomes for advance practice programs as seen by the national certification rates, 7) high quality and dedication of the CON's faculty, and 8) the well-staffed CON research office, which provides comprehensive, and competent support for research and other scholarly efforts for CON faculty. During the APR site visit, Dean Smith kindly provided a tour of the CON building at the Boca Raton campus. This is an impressive world-class facility that was built incorporating Feng-Shui philosophy. The building provides spacious modern classrooms and dedicated relaxation and meditation areas for use by students, faculty and staff.

During the site visit, the review team requested and received additional information, including the curriculum for each program and Teaching Assistant (TA) waivers and stipend data. The review team noted that there was a program outcome matrix in the appendix with no outcome data; the evaluation data in the self-study was limited and not as comprehensive as the requirements for the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) accreditation.

During the APR site visit, the review team was asked to deliver recommendations for identified areas of concern and potential opportunities in the CON, particularly with respect to: curriculum, research, growing enrollments, faculty salaries and workloads, new revenue, and physical resources and facilities. These areas of concern and opportunities were identified through four broad questions for the reviewers listed in the APR self-study, and were also articulated by administrators, faculty, and students during the APR site visit. This document provides a collective review of the CON APR self-study and site visit.

Recommendations

Curriculum Recommendations:

1. Based on enrollment numbers for last 3 years, we recommend that the Nurse Educator, Nurse Administrator, and Advanced Holistic Nursing masters programs transition to certificate programs. Subsequently, human and facilities resources can be shifted to support remaining nursing programs.
2. We strongly encourage remaining masters programs to move from MSN to DNP programs (FNP, AGNP, PMC); BSN to DNP program enrollment has grown over last 3 years (41, 64, 87, respectively), so the CON administrators and faculty can be confident that this change will be successful in terms of maintaining and perhaps increasing enrollments, with special attention to an increase in the AGNP program enrollment. We recommend that all DNP core courses are taught in the same semester, to minimize the number of times a course is taught per year (thus

minimizing resources needed for the program). We ask whether the post MSN to DNP program requires an advanced practice role for the MSN or as part of post MSN to DNP program?

3. We recommend that any synergies between PhD and DNP courses are offered to both student groups together.
4. We recommend that the number of credits for both the DNP program and the PhD program be reviewed, as the number of credits for each program appear to be higher than at least some other DNP and PhD programs in the US.
5. We recommend that the BSN Outcomes benchmarks (given in percentages) be revised to align with realistic percentages for the goals, with a plan for incremental and realistic increases in goals percentages.
6. We recommend that didactic content be closely aligned with clinical experiences, and that an increase in high and low fidelity simulation be used as an adjunct to clinical learning experiences.
7. We recommend that all clinical placements be evaluated to identify optimal learning experiences.

Resources Recommendations:

1. The demographics of the faculty indicate that a majority of them are at or nearing retirement age. There is a national nursing faculty shortage. We recommend that a **top priority is increasing faculty salaries to at least the AACN mean.** This one-time investment will facilitate recruitment and retention of both senior and junior nursing faculty.
2. We recommend that the CON administrators and faculty work with the newly appointed Director of Development to raise endowment funds for Professorships and Chairs that would supplement faculty salaries and assist with senior faculty recruitment.
3. Given the continual increases in student enrollments the CON has an inadequate number of faculty, and their salaries are lower than the national average. We recommend that a “right-size” approach be adopted for the ratio of students to faculty in all CON programs.
4. We recommend that the CON administrators provide incentives to faculty to teach large classes instead of multiple sections of the same course. Incentives could be monetary or reductions in workloads.
5. We recommend that the CON administrators and faculty consider increasing entrepreneurial opportunities beyond the part-time ABSN program, such as certificate programs. We also recommend hiring CON staff to manage these programs rather than giving 50% net profit to the College of Business.
6. We recommend that differential tuition be supported for CON students, with 100% return to the CON to support additional faculty lines.
7. We recommend that a clinical fee be added to all clinical courses to support simulation, learning lab supplies, and need for low student-to-faculty ratios in clinical courses (1:8-10).
8. We recommend that an administrative fee (e.g. 15%) be added to all clinical nurse managed clinics to support CON staff who support these entities.

9. We recommend that “buying out” one day per week of a staff nurse’s salary at a practice site to cover a clinical group be considered.
10. The CON has doctoral prepared faculty who are in “instructor” lines with no time for research due to the limited number of tenured faculty lines; and the Dean found funds to raise salaries and appointments to “Visiting Assistant Professor” lines. Last year, ~\$500,000 was spent on adjunct faculty and overload teaching by full-time faculty. We recommend that these funds be converted to five tenure track lines.
11. We recommend that simulation equipment and resources be increased, by sharing the College of Medicine’s simulation labs, which will require considerable support at the highest level of the University. The current inability to share the simulation resources is a missed opportunity for students that should not continue.

Faculty Recommendations:

1. We recognize that almost all faculty are teaching very heavy loads to cover increasing enrollments, with several faculty teaching 4 or 5 courses per semester. Reducing the number of graduate programs and ensuring that all core courses in different programs are taught in the same semester could result in reducing the number of faculty teaching on overload, and free up faculty for scholarly activities. We recommend that tenure and tenure track faculty have a maximum teaching load of 2/2, which should be reduced when research buy-outs are available.
2. We recommend that new PhD Assistant Professors on tenure track should have a reduced teaching load for at least 1 year (1/1), and preferably for 2 years. We recommend that the current 5% of faculty workload for service be increased, as this percentage is too low for the amount of CON, program, FAU, and national or international service required of faculty.
3. We recommend that the CON Faculty Bylaws, specifically Article 1-1.4 Membership, be reconsidered such that administrative personnel (Deans, Associate Dean, Assistant Deans) are not voting members; instead, consider ex-officio status for administrators.
4. We recommend that the faculty annual review process be revised to reduce the length of time required to complete the annual written report.
5. We recommend that faculty aggregate outcomes data be developed for scholarly activities and be monitored for progress at least annually.

Research Recommendations:

1. The CON has a strong Office of Research with a strong Associate Dean and staff and, therefore, uses minimal FAU central resources for pre- and post- awards, although FAU takes 85% of F & A to support central research resources. We recommend increasing the F & A returns to the CON from 15% to 30%-40%, to better support growth of CON faculty research.
2. We recommend that the CON research strategic plan is more closely and comprehensively aligned with the FAU pillars. We also recommend that the FAU administrators should establish clearer pathways for CON and other FAU faculty to work within the pillars: for example, that each pillar be interpreted in the broadest way possible.

3. We recommend that CON faculty “be at the table” in each research pillar, which will encourage multidisciplinary collaboration with initially seemingly unlikely partners, who collectively could provide unique approaches to solving research questions. We strongly encourage CON faculty to take advantage of pillar partnerships, as these pillars are where a great deal of research support will occur.
4. We recognize and applaud the CON’s national and international reputation for excellence in *Caring Science*. We recommend that the CON administrators and faculty continue to build on this reputation internally (within the FAU pillars) and externally.

Program Evaluation Recommendations:

1. We recommend that the CON comprehensive evaluation plan be created or updated, with at least annual monitoring of progress. The evaluation plan should align with CCNE standards that demonstrates a continual improvement process.
2. We recommend exploration of ways to achieve higher rates for employer and alumni surveys, and consider having focus groups and/or interviews to obtain employer and alumni feedback and data.

General Recommendations:

1. We recommend that use of space within the CON be maximized by re-examining the possibility of converting under-utilized spaces, such as areas dedicated for meditation, yoga, or social functions, to multi-purpose spaces.
2. We recommend evaluating the administrative structure in relation to administrative roles and necessity for the multiple layers and levels of administrative faculty (i.e., Associate Deans, Assistant Deans, Program Directors, and Program Coordinators).
3. **We recommend that the new incoming Dean take a strong lead in negotiating and advocating for space, resources, and faculty lines.**

Conclusion

The CON is at a turning point within FAU and nationally. Many situations, especially public and university expectations for increasing enrollments, a national and international nursing faculty shortage, with many faculty at or approaching typical retirement age, lack of sufficient space to accommodate growth, and decreasing federal funding for research and programs, are endemic in the United States and other countries. Our recommendations are given in the context of recognizing these situations and are meant to be strategies to overcome potential and actual missed opportunities. We applaud the CON’s well-deserved reputation for scholarly work and practice based on *Caring Science*, and hope that our recommendations will be pathways to enhance this distinctive approach to nursing research and practice at FAU.