

Nursing

A School offering the B.S., the M.S., the Ph.D. and the Doctor of Nursing Practice (D.N.P.).

■ The Review Process

This was a “continuous improvement progress report” submitted in accordance with accreditation requirements of the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE), the accrediting body for college and university nursing programs. It is required at the mid-point of the normal CCNE ten-year accreditation cycle. The progress report is reviewed by the CCNE Board of Commissioners; there is no visiting team. CCNE accredits baccalaureate and master’s degrees. The School’s Ph.D. was reviewed in 1999-2000 through the AQAD process (at that time a joint program with UMass Worcester), and again in 2005 when it was approved by the Board of Trustees and the Board of Higher Education as a single-campus degree. The D.N.P. was reviewed and approved by the Board of Trustees and Board of Higher Education in 2006.

■ Main Issues

The progress report responds to the four principal CCNE accreditation standards:

- **Program Quality: Mission and Governance.** The School reported that a revised statement of vision and mission and goals and objectives was adopted in 2004, consistent with University goals and nursing requirements. Publications and other documents are reviewed periodically to ensure accuracy with mission, goals and objectives. Faculty and students are appropriately involved in program governance.
- **Program Quality: Institutional Commitment and Resources.** The School reported several changes related to sufficiency of resources. State (institutional) funding for the School increased 56% between FY 2001 and FY 2006. Full-time faculty increased from 23 to 37 during the same period, and the proportion of course sections taught by full-time faculty increased to 65%. Since the last accreditation review the campus has committed \$16.4 million for the renovation of Skinner Hall to provide classroom, office, laboratory, and student support space for the School. Academic support services have been reorganized, with the addition of a Recruitment/Retention and Academic Advising Coordinator and consistent advising relationships.
- **Program Quality: Curriculum and Teaching-Learning Practices.** The baccalaureate and master’s programs’ learning objectives were revised in 2002 to more clearly match School goals and disciplinary requirements. All theory and clinical courses were reviewed and revised as necessary. Through this process 53% of baccalaureate courses and 47% of master’s-level courses were revised. The School also developed a new Clinical Nurse Leader (CNL) concentration within the master’s program reflecting knowledge and skills identified by the American Association of College of Nursing (AACN). Curricula and teaching-learning practices are evaluated regularly through a process in which all course evaluations, faculty action plans, and faculty end-of-course reports are examined to identify courses failing to meet expectations. Since the last report, a task force has reviewed the curriculum to ensure appropriate community nursing content and clinical experiences.

■ **Program Effectiveness: Student Performance and Faculty Accomplishments.** The School's Systematic Evaluation Plan (SEP) assesses student performance in several ways. At the baccalaureate level, all syllabi have been reviewed, and now contain the specific learning outcomes for the course and the methods of evaluating achievement of those outcomes. Student satisfaction is measured through use of a semesterly survey on course objectives and teaching environment, an annual exit survey of graduating seniors, the AACN/EBI annual survey, and interviews. Employer satisfaction is measured using an employer survey. Student retention rates, nursing licensure exam pass rates, and job placement rates of graduates are monitored and compared against established expectations, with corrective action taken when thresholds are not achieved. Similar evaluation methods are used at the master's level. Faculty performance is measured in several dimensions: research grant proposals increased by 57% since 2003, and publication of articles in peer-reviewed journals increased by 12%; cultural proficiency workshops have been held annually since 2003; and presentations at professional meetings and conferences have increased.

■ **Results of the Review**

In its progress report the School targeted four improvement goals: 1) explore strategies to improve pass rates in the nursing licensure exam; 2) achieve better data coordination for assessment and evaluation; 3) pursue program growth in graduate education; and 4) move toward a more decentralized administrative structure within the School.

After reviewing the progress report, on April 8, 2006, the CCNE Board of Commissioners determined that the UMass Nursing programs continue to meet all accreditation standards. The next on-site review was scheduled for 2010.