August 1, 2006

A. Lorris Betz
Senior Vice President for Health Sciences
Dean, School of Medicine
5th Floor, Moran Building

RE: Graduate Council Review
College of Nursing

Dear Vice President Betz:

Enclosed is the Graduate Council's review of the College of Nursing. Included in this review packet are the report prepared by the Graduate Council, the Academic Profile, and the Memorandum of Understanding resulting from the review wrap-up meeting.

Please forward this review to the Academic Senate to be placed on the information calendar for the next meeting of the Senate.

Sincerely,

David S. Chapman
Associate Vice President for Graduate Studies
Dean, The Graduate School

Encl.

DSC/dh
The Graduate School – University of Utah

GRADUATE COUNCIL REPORT TO THE SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS AND THE ACADEMIC SENATE

April 24, 2006

The Graduate Council has completed its review of the College of Nursing. The external reviewers were:

Karen L. Carlson, Ph.D., R.N.
Associate Dean and Professor
College of Nursing
University of New Mexico

Helen R. Connors, Ph.D., R.N. F.A.A.N.
Associate Dean and Professor
School of Nursing
University of Kansas

Kristen M. Swanson, Ph.D., R.N., F.A.A.N.
Chair and Professor
Family and Child Nursing
University of Washington

The internal review committee of the University of Utah was composed of:

Diana G. Pounder, Ph.D.
Professor and Chair
Department of Educational Leadership and Policy

Steven T. Roens, D.M.A.
Professor
School of Music

Debra L. Scammon, Ph.D.
This report by the Graduate Council’s ad hoc review committee is based on the College of Nursing self-study, the report of three external reviewers and the exit interview with them, the report of three internal reviewers, and the response from the Dean of the College of Nursing dated March 15, 2006.

COLLEGE OF NURSING PROFILE

Overview

The College of Nursing (CON) at the University of Utah has held college status since 1948 after it had operated as a Department of Nursing Education in the School of Education beginning in 1941. It is supported by the University of Utah’s central administration and the Health Sciences Center, and promotes the three-fold mission of teaching, research, and practice of the Health Sciences. Through its “two informal divisions” (self-study, page 11), Acute and Chronic Care, and Health Systems and Community-Based Care, it offers two upper division (traditional and accelerated) bachelor degrees, and an RN-to-BS degree; two M.S. degrees, Nursing and Gerontology; and a Ph.D. on campus, as well as a distance Ph.D. Extramural, intramural and private foundation funding support the College's research mission, which is also promoted through the Emma Eccles Jones Nursing Research Center located in CON. Research funding has increased from $80,000 to more than $9,930,000 over the past ten years, and senior scientists, who hold five endowed chairs, direct research interest groups and mentor junior faculty. The College follows a faculty practice plan that supports six faculty practice and student placement sites such as the Stansbury Community Center and University of Utah Health Services.

The College administration includes the dean, three associate deans (Research, Academic Programs, Information and Technology), two assistant deans (Finance and Administration, Clinical Affairs), and two division chairs. While the division chairs oversee performance reviews and faculty assignments, they do not control their own budgets, thus making CON in essence a one-department college. However, the College and its faculty are currently reviewing a proposal for reorganization of the two divisions (CON response, page 2). Similarly, the College is evaluating the role of its Gerontology program, which the reviews describe as disconnected from the CON organizational structure and curriculum. Faculty and students in the program consider gerontology an ill fit for the College of Nursing, as the majority of students are associated with Health or Social and Behavioral Science. However, neither is currently interested in relocating Gerontology nor does the program generate sufficient resources to stand on its own.

The College enjoys an “outstanding reputation at the community, regional and national levels” (external review report, page 1), and many students apply to the CON programs for that reason. Furthermore, the College is committed to strategic planning that responds to national
and state issues, and to quality improvement. Its top priority is to become one of the top research colleges in the nation.

**Faculty**

The College of Nursing has a total of 91 faculty, of which 29 are tenure-track, 36 clinical and research, and 26 part-time adjunct. Since 2000, the tenure-track faculty headcount has slightly increased from 26 to 27, and currently includes 12 at the full, 10 at the associate, and 7 at the assistant professor levels. The reviews describe the faculty as well prepared and committed to the College’s strong research culture. For example, the College supports junior faculty development by reducing their teaching load during their initial three years, offers financial packages for research to new faculty, and provides some summer funding. The College has a good funding record and, moreover, has identified strategies to “break through to the next level of center grants” (internal review report, page 4). Although the College expects that all faculty publish, the internal review notes that faculty in administrative positions face some difficulty in meeting the publication standards, and that part-time faculty are not assigned any FTE for scholarship. The external review reports on some faculty members expressing concern about workload inequity and lack of recognition, for example for curricular contributions. While faculty overall are committed to the stated mission of the College and the University, those associated with Gerontology are disconnected from their peers. They are unsatisfied with their role in relation to the Center on Aging, the CON, and the university as a whole, and perceive a lack of recognition for the historical and current contributions of the Gerontology program.

Although CON has been able to recruit a critical mass of junior faculty, the severe shortage of nursing faculty presents a major challenge for the College of Nursing at the University of Utah (as it does for institutions across the country). Salaries below the 75th percentile according to the external review, and below the 50th according to the internal review, make CON vulnerable to recruitment of its faculty by other institutions. Both the external and the internal reviews express concern that these factors may negatively affect the College’s ability to maintain and enhance its teaching and research strengths. They also contribute to the lack of diversity in the college, as currently only six faculty members come from racial/ethnic minorities.

**Students**

The College of Nursing is able to select students from a pool of strong applicants across all programs, and has received HRSA Diversity and Bennion Center grants to support the recruitment and education of racial/ethnic minorities.

CON has experienced its greatest growth in pre-majors, from 289 in 2000-20001 to 459 as of November 2005. The number of doctoral students has increased from 28 to 46, with a handful of them receiving their doctoral degree each year. With the exception of Gerontology, students in all programs receive adequate in-person and on-line advising and are able to give input into the curriculum and other issues that affect them. Undergraduate and graduate students are very satisfied with the quality of instruction, the faculty and the supervision they receive.
through the Clinical Faculty Associate program, a cooperative program with clinical agencies. CON implemented a new plan for TA training in Fall 2005 with required participation in CTLE seminars. The internal reviewers recommend that the clinical faculty associates who support the TA training be included in formal teacher-training and evaluation processes.

Students voiced some dissatisfaction with the service-learning component of their program, which they perceive as merely an add-on rather than a well-integrated experience. It should be noted that a task force, appointed in March 2005, has made recommendations for improvements of the service learning program, which will be implemented in Fall 2006 (CON response, page 2).

The internal reviewers state some concern about the “C or better” requirement for prerequisites which may leave some students inadequately prepared for key courses such as pharmacology, pathophysiology, and clinical rotations. In a similar vein, the internal review points out that Gerontology has accepted students with fairly low GRE scores, apparently relying on the 3.2 GPA requirement to assess the applicants’ potential rather than their exam scores.

**Curriculum**

The College of Nursing offers a wide variety of programs that range from preparing entry-level nurses to educating nurse scientists; many of them are supported through partnerships with health resources in the community, for example Intermountain Health Care and the Veterans Administration Health System. The traditional B.S. in Nursing, an accelerated version to meet the critical need for nurses, and an on-line R.N. to B.S. undergraduate degree are all designed as four-semester programs. While CON competes with other undergraduate programs in the state, it is the only one that offers graduate degrees, which include 15 different M.S. tracks (with unique nursing informatics and midwifery and women’s health programs) and an on-line as well as an on-campus Ph.D. In response to the nursing faculty shortage, CON is currently focusing growth on the Teaching in Nursing M.S. track. It also houses an interdisciplinary M.S. in Gerontology, which, according to both review teams, needs to be rethought and reinvigorated. Nurses need to be prepared to care for a fast-growing older population, and, furthermore, the program aligns with the current focus on interdisciplinary programs at the University of Utah attracting students from across disciplines to its undergraduate and graduate certificate programs. The reviewers emphasize the need for Gerontology to forge strong connections to the Center on Aging, CON, the Health Sciences, and the University of Utah as a whole.

The Ph.D. programs prepare nurse scientists in a research methods intensive curriculum. The innovative distance Ph.D. program, with a focus on oncology, is considered a unique model for doctoral study that limits financial commitment from the host institution. The college is also exploring the development of a Nurse Practitioner Doctorate (D.N.P.) that would be available for students with an M.S. in one of the nurse practitioner specialties.

**Program Effectiveness - Outcomes Assessment**

The College of Nursing has a comprehensive assessment plan in place that includes capstones, exit surveys, licensure and accreditation pass rates, and meetings with area employers about the competency of graduates, and program advising. The reviewers consider the College’s
process evaluation and quality improvement procedures effective, and find the learning outcomes to be clearly articulated. Less clearly stated, according to the external reviewers, is the link between assessed students’ abilities and end of program objectives. In its response, CON agrees that it needs to ascertain how the learning outcomes map to program outcomes, for example by conducting a survey with employers of graduates as part of a more comprehensive plan that links outcomes to objectives.

**Facilities**

The College of Nursing has been in its current building since 1969 and is in dire need of substantial upgrades. The Nursing building is substandard in many areas, and potentially a safety hazard in relation to fire codes, emergency exits, and seismic stability. Space presents a serious problem as several part-time faculty members currently share offices, and laboratories are insufficient for instruction and simulation of clinical procedures. A comprehensive master plan has led to some upgrades, including the remodeling of the 5th floor to house the Research Center and the Center on Aging. However, as the self-study and the reviewers suggest, much more is necessary to create a safe and functional space.

Library resources and access to electronic resources are sufficient, and the College takes advantage of the vicinity of the Health Sciences and its new HSEB with state of the art classrooms, computer centers, and areas that promote interaction.

**COMMENDATIONS**

1. The College has strong leadership, a thoughtful and well-articulated mission, and a strategic plan that responds well to changes in nursing education, practice, and research.

2. The College has successfully focused on its research mission by substantially increasing extramural funding, having acquired five endowed chairs (and soon a sixth) to enhance scholarly productivity, and providing strong support for faculty development.

3. CON has successfully positioned itself as a leader in nursing education in the state of Utah. It has recognized that the key to addressing the well-known nursing shortage is to train students at the graduate level to become nursing faculty and leaders.

4. CON offers high quality programs across all levels with successful use of instructional technology and innovative teaching ideas. The successful distance Ph.D. program in oncology uses real-time video-conferencing to create a unique community of learning. It has become a model for doctoral study around the country, and will heighten the prestige of the College regionally and nationally.

5. The College has successfully built clinical partnerships to enhance the education and placement of its students across all levels. In particular, the Clinical Faculty Associate program has significantly enhanced the training of the undergraduates who are mentored and supervised by employed nurses.
RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The College should be supported in its given authority and responsibility to provide direction and oversight of the Gerontology Program. The College as a whole operates cohesively and with a strong commitment to its mission, and the Gerontology Program needs to be clearly articulated and integrated within the College of Nursing. The focus for this interdisciplinary program should be on coordination and collaboration to increase student enrollment and program visibility throughout the University.

2. The College should make diversity of faculty and students a top priority by seeking grants that specifically target the recruitment and retention of minority faculty, similar to the current HRSA and Bennion Center grants for student recruitment and financial and educational support. The College should work closely with the Associate Vice President for Diversity and articulate its commitment to diversity strongly and highly visibly.

3. The College should continue to review its range of program offerings with an eye to changing market needs and internal efficiencies such as consolidation.

4. In order to compete in the nursing faculty market and to retain its current faculty, the College must find ways to increase its salaries. One suggested strategy is that the College address salary issues in the context of discussions on the consolidation of its graduate programs.

5. The College should continue its efforts to secure external funding, and pursue internal strategies that will provide support incentives such as pilot and bridge grants. If possible, the College should raise the current intramural maximum of $3,000 to at least $7,500.

6. The College should define how it measures its stated learning outcomes and devise strategies for using results to improve curricula and programs. Faculty should participate in this process of “closing the feedback loop.”

Submitted by the Ad Hoc Review Committee of the Graduate Council

Johanna Watzinger-Tharp (Chair), Department of Languages and Literature
Lynne Schrum, Department of Teaching and Learning
Jingyi Zhu, Department of Mathematics
Sharon-Aiken Wisniewski (Undergraduate Council), University College
Memorandum of Understanding
College of Nursing
Graduate Council Review 2005-06

This memorandum of understanding is a summary of decisions reached at a wrap-up meeting on May 30, 2006, concluding the Graduate Council Review of the College of Nursing. A. Lorris Betz, Senior Vice President for Health Sciences; Maureen R. Keefe, Dean of the College of Nursing; David S. Chapman, Dean of the Graduate School; and Frederick Rhodewalt, Associate Dean of the Graduate School were present.

The discussion centered on but was not limited to the recommendations contained in the Graduate Council review completed on April 24, 2006. At the wrap-up meeting, the working group agreed to endorse the following actions:

Recommendation 1: The College should be supported in its given authority and responsibility to provide direction and oversight of the Gerontology Program. The College as a whole operates cohesively and with a strong commitment to its mission, and the Gerontology Program needs to be clearly articulated and integrated within the College of Nursing. The focus for this interdisciplinary program should be on coordination and collaboration to increase student enrollment and program visibility throughout the University.

The Senior Vice President for Health Sciences expects and supports the College of Nursing exercising its responsibility in addressing issues related to the Gerontology Program. A new director has been appointed and the College has instructed the program to develop a strategic plan that addresses enrollment growth and integration with the College of Nursing.

Recommendation 2: The College should make diversity of faculty and students a top priority by seeking grants that specifically target the recruitment and retention of minority faculty, similar to the current HRSA and Bennion Center grants for student recruitment and financial and educational support. The College should work closely with the Associate Vice President for Diversity and articulate its commitment to diversity strongly and highly visibly.

The College of Nursing gives this recommendation its highest priority and is actively developing multiple strategies to increase and sustain diversity among faculty, staff, and students. The College is currently assessing the effectiveness of its current outreach programs (HRSA and Bennion Center funded initiatives) as well as proposing a pre-nursing LEAP seminar. The College is attempting to develop an in-house doctoral level pool for faculty recruitment.

Recommendation 3: The College should continue to review its range of program offerings with an eye to changing market needs and internal efficiencies such as consolidation.

The College has completed an evaluation of its specialization areas. It is attempting to cluster and consolidate areas as part of the ongoing transition to offering the Doctor Nursing Practice (DNP) degree.
College has discontinued student admissions in two areas, Community Health Nursing and Patient Care Service Administration, as part of the consolidation and repositioning for the DNP degree program.

Memorandum of Understanding
College of Nursing
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Recommendation 4: In order to compete in the nursing faculty market and to retain its current faculty, the College must find ways to increase its salaries. One suggested strategy is that the College address salary issues in the context of discussions on the consolidation of its graduate programs.

The College is conducting a salary analysis for the purposes of developing a plan but sees no obvious immediate solution in sight. Funding from the State Nursing Initiative has been used to increase some base salaries, but this source is limited by the fact that dollars must be matched 1 to 2 by the hospitals. Some of this funding has been used to support the hiring of new FTEs. The College notes that they are ranked at the top in number of endowed chairs in state-supported colleges of nursing.

Recommendation 5: The College should continue its efforts to secure external funding, and pursue internal strategies that will provide support incentives such as pilot and bridge grants. If possible, the College should raise the current intramural maximum of $3,000 to at least $7,500.

With the support of the Senior Vice President for Health Sciences the College Research Center has raised proposal initiative seed grants $7,500.

Recommendation 6: The College of Nursing should define how it measures its stated learning outcomes and devise strategies for using results to improve curricula and programs. Faculty should participate in this process of "closing the feedback loop".

The College of Nursing reports that it has clearly specified learning objectives and is working to coordinate outcomes assessments with these objectives. The College will provide documentation in its follow-up reports about how it incorporates feedback into its operations. The College plans to undertake an evaluation of its outcomes assessment model.

This memorandum of understanding is be followed by annual letters of progress from the Department Chair to the Dean of the Graduate School. Letters will be submitted each year until all of the actions described in the preceding paragraphs have been completed.

A. Lorris Betz
David S. Chapman
Maureen R. Keefe
Frederick Rhodewalt

David S. Chapman
Assoc. V.P. for Graduate Studies
Dean, The Graduate School
August 1, 2006