School of Nursing Academic Program Review Action Plan—Fall 2018

Status of Action Items from the Prior Review (Conducted 2005-2006)
Not applicable as per Dr. John Duffield.

Major Findings in Current Review

1. **Research.** The external reviewers concluded that tenure track faculty are “exceedingly successful in grant funding and in publication. They are particularly known for health of minority populations in the community, including elderly grandmothers caring for grandchildren and minority caregivers for Alzheimer’s disease patients.” The external reviewers and Self-Study report noted a need for stronger, unit-based resources to support the research agenda of the unit.

2. **Faculty.** The external reviewers and the unit’s Self-Study identified a need for an increased number of tenure track faculty. The external reviewers and Self-Study also recommended that the SON participate in cluster or joint hiring opportunities.

3. **Graduate programs.** The external reviewers praised the various graduate programs. In relation to the PhD program, they indicated it “is maintaining consistently strong enrollments and completion rates.” The reviewers found that “PhD students value highly the support and research training that they receive in their program” and that graduates “have active research careers.” The external reviewers noted that the “DNP program for post master’s students is growing and the first BSN to DNP students are in the pipeline.” The external reviewers praised the MS program as “clearly strong.” They further noted that the “master’s program enrollment, graduation and … certification success are all strong.” Consistent with the unit’s Self-Study, the external reviewers recommended reshaping the MS program so that BS graduates seeking certification as advance practice registered nurses will earn a DNP instead of a MS. The external reviewers also recommended that doctoral student advisement be recognized as part of the faculty workload; however, this provision is already in place.

4. **Undergraduate programs.** The reviewers observed that “all programs, particularly the BSN, are sought out by students and admissions are competitive.” They also noted the upper division curricula for the BSN “is rigorous and requires students with both academic and personal skills in order to be successful.” The external reviewers recommended engaging in more clinical partnerships and hiring more PTIs from partner institutions, which is already an on-going process. They also recommended strengthening undergraduate advisement staff at the University Advisement Center (UAC), reviewing the new undergraduate admission policy and further developing the SON honors program.

Action Steps for the Coming Cycle

1. **Research: Strengthen scholarly productivity**
   a) The unit will increase external funding, using a multi-pronged approach that includes hiring consultants to provide expert guidance to both novice and experienced grant writers, as well as hiring manuscript editors to assist faculty with scholarly writing. Course releases will be granted through a competitive process in order for faculty to develop successful external grant proposals. Faculty will increase proposal submissions to the college’s and university’s intramural programs to conduct pilot studies that will lead to extramural funding. Furthermore, faculty will increase use of existing Lewis College research resources (e.g. grant consultants, grant development
In order to achieve this objective, we will utilize redirected internal funds, as well the SON Lewis endowment fund. Timeline: immediate and ongoing.

b) The unit will increase research partnerships related to urban health disparities with other disciplines in the Lewis College as well as across campus. For instance, the SON faculty will expand research partnerships with SPH’s Partnership for Urban Health Research (PUHR) as well as with other units addressing urban health disparities, including AYSPS’s Georgia Health Policy Center, SPH’s Center of Excellence on Health Disparity Research, the Gerontology Institute, and the CEHD Adult Literacy Center. As the SON recruits new faculty, we will seek scholars with an interest in urban health disparities to enhance collaboration with existing nursing faculty. Timeline: immediate and ongoing.

2. Faculty: Expand the number of tenure track faculty.

a) Under the leadership of the Lewis Endowed Chair holder, the SON will pursue Next Generation opportunities to expand the number of tenure track faculty positions. We will submit several Next Generation proposals over the next five years, starting with the fall 2018 cycle with a proposal submission related to self-management of chronic diseases and urban, health disparities. Timeline: immediate and ongoing.

b) To build research expertise, the SON will propose new faculty lines from the college when those opportunities exist. Timeline: immediate and ongoing.

3. Graduate Programs: Expand and further strengthen the PhD and DNP programs.

a) Given the high national demand for research-prepared nurses, the School, led by the PhD and DNP Program Directors, will increase enrollment of doctoral students, especially in the PhD program through national and regional recruitment strategies (e.g., social media, web-based recruitment sessions) using existing resources. Timeline: immediate and ongoing.

b) Although the vast majority of our current doctoral students hold a master’s degree at time of enrollment, we will seek to increase enrollment in the BS to PhD and BS to DNP options through development of a national recruitment plan using social media and web-based advertisements to attract highly qualified BS nursing graduates. Timeline: immediate (FY 2019) and ongoing.

c) The doctoral programs will continue to refine their distance accessible curricula with the goal of attracting more students from outside of Georgia. Timeline: immediate and ongoing.

d) The PhD Program Committee will implement a manuscript option in addition to the traditional dissertation requirement. This measure will should decrease time to graduation and better prepare graduates for post-PhD opportunities. Timeline: immediate (FY 2019) and ongoing.

e) SON faculty will increase NIH grant submissions with the goal of receiving additional funds to support PhD students. Timeline: immediate (FY 2019) and ongoing.

f) To help attract additional students, the PhD Committee will award scholarship funds from the SON Lewis Endowment fund to two PhD students per academic year, with priority given to fulltime and out-of-state students. Timeline: immediate and ongoing.
g) The SON will transition the current MS program to the DNP degree to be consistent with national trends. As appropriate, internal resources will be realigned according to patterns of enrollment. This transition will be achieved by the following specific measures under the leadership of the DNP and MS Program Directors:

- Increase enrollment of BS-DNP students via a national recruitment campaign. The SON will closely monitor BS to DNP enrollment to determine the appropriate timing of the full transition of the MS to DNP to avoid a decrease in credit hours. Timeline: immediate and ongoing.
- Transition all MS courses to online format to be in alignment with the current format of DNP courses. Timeline: FY 2019-20.
- Streamline the DNP and MS curricula to minimize attrition after completion of MS requirements. Timeline: Y 201920.
- Create two primary tracks for the DNP: clinical and non-clinical. The clinical track will include the Family Nurse Practitioner, Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner, Adult Geriatric Nurse Practitioner Primary Care, and Pediatric Nurse Practitioner Primary Care options. Timeline: FY 2020.
- Transition the existing Leadership in Healthcare Innovations MS specialty track to a leadership focus, and potentially add a nurse educator concentration for students interested in a non-clinical track. Timeline: immediate and ongoing.
- Expand clinical partnerships that will be supportive of BSN-DNP students. Timeline: immediate and ongoing.
- Evaluate the success of two cohorts of BSN-DNP students to identify areas of strength and improvement. Timeline: immediate and ongoing.

h) Develop a formal mentorship program for BS to DNP students. Timeline: FY 2019.

4. Undergraduate Programs: Enhance the undergraduate learning experience.

a) In order to increase student involvement in the Honor’s College (HC), the unit will appoint an HC faculty liaison who will lead an effort to involve more students in faculty research as well as coordinate other HC opportunities in the nursing curriculum. Timeline: immediate and ongoing.

b) The SON will further develop the “Student Success” initiative launched in FY 2018 and will evaluate its effectiveness on an annual basis. Timeline: immediate and ongoing.

c) The unit will facilitate increased involvement of students in study abroad programs through continued collaboration with the Office of International Initiatives as well as with the Lewis College. Timeline: immediate and ongoing.

d) The unit will work with the advisement staff at the UAC to improve student advisement for non-majors interested in nursing, as well as review the current undergraduate admission policy for nursing majors. Timeline: immediate and ongoing.
Signature Page

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Risa Palm, Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost
Date: 10-9-18