



Framingham State University

Department of Nursing Annual Report – June, 2013 Dr. Susan Mullaney, Chair

Introduction

The Department of Nursing administers two programs: (a) the undergraduate RN-to-BSN program with a curriculum currently consisting of eight major courses with embedded practice learning experiences (PLE); and (b) the Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) program, which has two specialty tracks, Nursing Education and Nursing Leadership, and a newly approved Post-Master's Certificate in Nursing Education. The curriculum for each of the two specialty tracks consists of six core courses (an increase from five due to changes in the *Master's Essentials* of the American Association of Colleges of Nursing, AACN) and four concentration courses.

The undergraduate nursing program (RN to BS) is an upper division program with a major in nursing for registered nurses (RNs) with an Associate Degree or Diploma in Nursing. Students enter this program as transfer students. The two major purposes of the program are to (a) prepare nurse generalists at the professional level with the ability to prevent illness and promote wellness, and (b) provide a foundation for graduate study.

The graduate nursing program (MSN) is a two-year, cohort-model program, with annual admission as of fall of 2012, offering a practicum and an internship experience in the second year in each of the two concentrations. Its major purpose is to prepare nurses with a strong theoretical foundation in research, nursing and related theories, health care policy, ethics and cultural competency, and informatics/technology, as well as practice expertise as a nurse educator or nurse leader/manager. There were 71 students in the undergraduate program this academic year; 19 of these graduated on May 19, 2013. There are currently 79 students in the MSN program who are projected to be candidates for graduation in May of 2014.

The Department is currently staffed with five full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty members (three in the undergraduate program and two in the graduate program), though one, Dr. Stephen Bolio, will be retiring on September 20th of 2013. Plans are underway for a hiring process to fill this full-time tenure track position. The Department also has two continuing visiting lecturers (VLs) and two additional VLs hired for this academic year due to a medical leave of absence taken by one of the full-time tenured faculty members. The Department has one administrative assistant which serves the undergraduate program and is shared with the Computer Science Department.

Program Achievements and Activities for AY 2012-13

- **Develop and retain quality faculty and staff**
 - The Department welcomed Dr. Ruth Remington as our new full-time tenure-track faculty member in the undergraduate nursing program. Dr. Susan Conrad was her faculty mentor with assistance from Drs. Susan Mullaney and Cynthia Bechtel. Dr. Remington (a) successfully completed her first year with very good SIR II student evaluations; (b) participated in new faculty orientation activities, including the Teaching at a Distance online learning workshop; (c) was an active member of CELTSS on the Funding subcommittee; (d) attended the Day in May and Faculty Retreat events; (e) sponsored students from her *Introduction to Nursing Research* course who presented posters at the Student Research Day; and (f) was elected to the Academic Policies Committee by her faculty peers with the largest number of votes on the ballot, which speaks to her high level of involvement and visibility on campus throughout her first year.
 - The chairperson, Dr. Susan Mullaney, began her second year as chairperson in September of 2012.
 - Three of the Nursing faculty were active members of CELTSS this academic year: Drs. Cynthia Bechtel, Susan Mullaney, and Ruth Remington. All were members of the Funding Subcommittee and actively participated in Steering and subcommittee meetings as well as supporting the Mentoring program. Drs. Bechtel and Mullaney participated in the January professional development day by co-presenting one of the education sessions, and in the Day in May by preparing and presenting a poster.
 - Three members of the Department, Drs. Bechtel, Conrad, and Mullaney, are now *Quality Matters* certified, which the faculty consider to be a vital facet to their professional development in light of the fact that both the undergraduate and graduate faculty are using blended teaching format for all Nursing courses. Dr. Remington also participated in the *Quality Matters* semester-long workshop in spring of 2013 and anticipates becoming certified in the coming year.
 - All full-time faculty members were active in professional development activities both on- and off-campus, attending or presenting at multiple conferences and workshops appropriate to their clinical areas of specialty. As examples:
 - Drs. Bechtel, Conrad, Mullaney, and Remington attended a professional development event sponsored by the Massachusetts Association of Colleges of Nursing (MACN), of which FSU is a member school. MACN is the local affiliate of AACN. This faculty development event held in September of 2013 at UMass/Worcester's south campus was attended by 70 faculty members from schools of Nursing around the state. The speaker, Pamela Ironside, is a well-known nurse educator nationally and spoke of the need for reform in the structure and delivery of nursing education.
 - Drs. Cynthia Bechtel and Susan Mullaney attended the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN)'s Master's Education Conference in February of

2013 to learn about the newest standards for accreditation which were revised in 2011.

- Dr. Mullaney represented the FSU Nursing programs at the AACN Spring Annual Meeting held in Washington, DC in March of 2013. This meeting is held twice yearly (fall and spring) for all member schools in order to conduct the business of the professional organization and disseminate accreditation essentials updates and professional development opportunities.
- Drs. Conrad and Remington attended a one-day workshop sponsored by the Massachusetts/Rhode Island League for Nursing (MARILN) as the first step toward achieving the designation of Certified Nurse Educator (CNE). They anticipate taking the certifying exam during AY 2013-14.
- Dr. Bechtel presented a poster at the National League for Nursing (NLN) Technology Conference in October on a collaborative faculty/student online project with a graduate Nursing class at the University of Kansas.
- Dr. Susan Mullaney was selected to participate as a member of two Department of Higher Education (DHE) site visit teams, one in the fall semester and one in spring, to assist in the evaluation of new or modified Nursing programs in the Commonwealth or region prior to DHE approval.
- Dr. Cynthia Bechtel was appointed as a co-chair for the Faculty Opportunities Project Team, one of the several task forces convened by the Robert Wood Johnson initiative spearheaded in Massachusetts through collaboration with the Organization of Nurse Leaders (ONL) and the DHE known as the MA Action Coalition (MAAC). Dr. Mullaney is a volunteer member of this task force as well.
- Dr. Bechtel achieved certification through The Society for Simulation in Healthcare (SSH) by attending a series of intensive workshops and successfully passing the certifying exam, earning her the credential of Certified Healthcare Simulation Educator (CHSE).
- Dr. Bechtel was promoted to Associate Professor this year, and also assumed role of President of the Massachusetts/Rhode Island League for Nursing (MARILN) for a 2-year term.
- Dr. Susan Conrad received a Course of Distinction Award at the *9th Annual Massachusetts Conference on eLearning: Sharing Best Practices* technology conference held at Bridgewater State University on June 5, 2013 for her Quality Matters-approved blended learning course, *Professional Nursing Perspectives*, a required course for all Nursing majors.
- **Strengthen new student preparation, induction and early academic success**
 - Dr. Susan Conrad was appointed by the DHE to be the Nurse Educator liaison to the Nursing Education Transfer Compact (NETCompact) through her work on the Nurse of the Future Working Group and has been a major contributor to the now-developed draft of the NETCompact, modeled after the MassTransfer Compact already in existence. The goal of the NETCompact is to provide a method to reduce the barriers of time, cost, and frustration for the progression of Registered Nurses (RNs) from the

ADN level into RN-to-BS/N programs by addressing the transfer of credits from one level program to another, currently a frequent barrier to this transition.

- The one-credit optional NURS 701 *Writing and Information Literacy for Nurses* course, open to both graduate and undergraduate Nursing students as well as nurses from the community, was offered six times with the goal of improving the potential for student success in writing assignments and the application of APA formatting.
 - The RN-to-BSN program admitted 41 new transfer students and 9 readmits this AY for a total of 50 students. Undergraduate orientation sessions for new transfer students which include advising, information sharing, and registration were conducted in late August (22 attendees) and January (10 attendees) for incoming RN-to-BSN students. Those unable to attend were individually advised by the department chair prior to the start of their respective semesters. These sessions are invaluable for assisting students in planning their course sequences, becoming aware of program and University policies, and with time management to enhance their likelihood for success in the program. The head count for all undergraduate students was 71.
 - A graduate orientation session was held in August for the incoming MSN students; 84 were in attendance. Students met with faculty in their cohort groups for information sharing, to distribute fall course syllabi, and to answer student questions.
 - MSN Information sessions were held monthly throughout the academic year to meet with potential candidates for admission and provide program and admission information to assist candidates in determining whether the FSU program was a good match for their career goals and learning needs and choosing the appropriate specialty track.
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- **Pursue excellence and engagement in the academic experience**
 - Dr. Bechtel provided two opportunities for synchronous online collaboration with University of Kansas for the education cohort of the MSN program. One event enabled students to have an interdisciplinary experience with Occupational Therapy (OT) and Physical Therapy (PT) students and a student located in Jordan.
 - The Department of Nursing, in conjunction with the FSU's Rho Phi Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau (STTI) the international honor society for nursing, sponsored two speaker events on campus. The fall event, with a focus on nursing research, featured two FSU alumnae, Dr. Susan Mullaney and Ms. Coleen Toronto, a 2010 graduate of the MSN program, who spoke about their collaborative integrative review study on influenza vaccination practices among nurses related to poor compliance. The spring event also featured a 2010 FSU alumnus, Ms. Mary Zentis, who spoke about her recent participation in a Robert Wood Johnson-sponsored Nursing Leadership Development program. Program attendees included current nursing program graduate and undergraduate students, faculty, alumni, and nurses from the community at large.
 - The Rho Phi Chapter inducted 24 new members from among the current graduate and undergraduate Nursing student body on May 5, 2013. These students met rigorous criteria for acceptance into Sigma Theta Tau International (STTI).

- Nineteen RN-to-BSN students completed their programs of study and graduated with their baccalaureate degree on May 19, 2013.
- Of the 84 students admitted to the MSN program in fall of 2012, 79 students remain in the program for a retention rate of 94%.
- **Prepare students for global citizenship and competitiveness**
 - Five 2012 graduates of the MSN program entered PhD programs this past year and anecdotal comments from program faculty, primarily at UMass/Amherst and Dartmouth, indicated that students were “well prepared for doctoral education” as a result of their participation in the MSN program at FSU.
 - The cohort model of the MSN program builds interconnectedness among nurses of diverse background and practice experiences. This contributes to the building of a community of committed Nurse leaders and educators who are motivated to improve the health of their communities through the networking resources at their disposal as a result of the graduate program.
- **Respond to labor market trends in academic program and center development**
 - Labor market trends are assessed via faculty participation in a variety of local, state, and national professional organizations (MACN, MARILN), committees, task forces (MAAC), and other initiatives and projects. In addition, Drs. Conrad and Mullaney are members of the Nursing Advisory Board for MassBay Community College; Dr. Cynthia Bechtel is a member of the Nursing Advisory Board for the Bay Path PN Program; and Dr. Bechtel sits on the Board of Directors for the MetroWest Health Foundation. All of these groups are stakeholders with interests in identifying methods for supporting healthcare education changes aimed at preparing the health care workers of the future. Dr. Mullaney is also a member of the MetroWest Healthcare Collaborative group tasked with analyzing the needs of area healthcare employers and providing educational solutions to meet these needs. Labor market trends are also identified via graduate student participation in practicums and internships in their second year of the program.
 - Dialogues are also maintained with major area employers via the aforementioned strategies. In addition, discussions of employer needs ensue during the practicum arrangement process as student learning needs are matched with potential preceptors in appropriate sites for applied student projects that meet the needs of the practicum venue.
- **Continuous Improvement**
 - The Department conducted its annual Curriculum Planning Workshop in May. One of the major discussion points included initiating development of the Self-Study Report assessment for the next reaccreditation site visit by CCNE scheduled for fall of 2014 and the possible deferment of that visit to the spring of 2015 due to the continuing construction that will be taking place in Hemenway Hall at the time of the anticipated visit. Also discussed were student course and program evaluation results with

development of a plan for improvement in areas noted to need revision. While evaluation scores overall were satisfactory, some student comments in both undergraduate and graduate programs indicated that some thought to minor course changes by responsible faculty may be needed, primarily in the areas of length of time between written assignments and the provision of timely feedback. In addition, the undergraduate program needs relative to the hiring of a new faculty member were outlined and plans for mentoring the new hire were discussed.

- **Strategic Planning and Budget Initiatives**

- The primary initiative completed this past year relative to the 5-Year Strategic Plan was to *Collaborate with external constituents to create new cohorts in the MSN program* (a cohort of LPN educators affiliated with area technical schools begun in May of 2012 continued this past AY). The next initiative that will be given attention this coming year will be *Successfully attain reaccreditation of the Nursing programs from the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) in fall 2014*.
- The graduate faculty has identified the need for a part-time simulation lab coordinator. The program has been growing since its inception in 2008; currently there are 79 students in the program in 4 cohorts who will graduate in 2014, and in fall of 2013 we will have 6 cohorts and between 110 and 129 students. Simulation is an important concept in Nursing education and future educators need to be experienced in using simulation in pre- and post-licensure curricula; incorporating it into the MSN curriculum is vital to maintaining our reputation as a leader in graduate Nursing education. Additionally, with the numbers of enrolled students increasing with the consequential need to hire more VLs each year, the faculty has determined that an additional full-time tenure-track faculty member will be needed for the graduate program in order to maintain the standards for faculty required by our accrediting agency.
- For the first time in the history of the undergraduate program, all entry-level Nursing courses filled at the May orientation session and there are no open seats for August orientees or possible readmitted students. In addition, it has been identified at the state level through the DHE that the FSU RN-to-BSN program graduates represent only 1.1% of all baccalaureate Nursing graduates annually in the Commonwealth. With the state's goal of increasing the percentage of RNs with a bachelor's degree to 66% (the IOM report states a goal of 80%, which has been deemed unrealistic in our state by a coalition of professional Nursing organizations), there is an identified need and desire for FSU to increase the numbers of enrolled students and consequently, the number of full-time faculty members in order to offer additional course sections.

- **Community Engagement**

- Community engagement within the Nursing programs was accomplished mainly in four ways: (a) via our graduate and undergraduate students through interacting with clinical clients, community health agencies, and practicum preceptors via the Practice Learning Experiences and student practicums and internships; (b) through the educational presentations sponsored by the Rho Phi Chapter, FSU's chapter of Sigma

Theta Tau International which were in part attended by nurses from the community; (c) through presentations by nursing faculty to nurses, state leaders, and college educators at state and national conferences and meetings; and (d) by University representation at area college career fairs and information sessions.