ANNUAL ASSESSMENT REPORT
MASTER OF SCIENCE IN NURSING
DECEMBER 8, 2006

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND GOALS

The College of Health Professions currently offers the Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) degree with the areas of emphasis in: Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP), Family Nurse Practitioner with School Nurse Practitioner Specialization, Nursing Administration (NA), or Nursing Education (NE). The college also offers Post Masters Certificates in Family Nurse Practitioner, Nursing Administration, and Nursing Education.

The purpose of the MSN program is to prepare graduates for advanced practice nursing in a variety of practice settings, particularly in rural and/or underserved communities. The program also prepares nurses for leadership roles in the administration of clinical services in a variety of community based or acute care provider agencies and for academic nursing education roles.

The 2005-06 goals of the Nursing program, approved by the faculty and specific to the MSN program are as follows:

- Maintain program accreditation.
- Continue student rotations to rural and underserved areas
- Continue community based experiences.
- Provide opportunities for faculty development at least yearly.
- Encourage and facilitate faculty scholarship.
- Enhance learning resource center(s) and library resources and capability.
- Continue fund raising efforts.
- Support faculty teaching with new technology.
- Encourage and facilitate faculty and staff leadership roles in professional organizations.
- Pursue multidisciplinary and other projects and grants.
- Continue to recruit doctoral prepared faculty, and encourage faculty to obtain doctoral preparation.
- Promote nursing as a career in elementary and middle schools.
EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS PLAN: REVISED 8/19/05
LEARNING OUTCOMES/DATA COLLECTION

The program has an identified plan for systematic program evaluation and assessment of educational outcomes.

Systematic evaluation of all aspects of the program requires:

- A written plan;
- Assessment of each criterion and required and elective outcomes (two);
- Operational definitions of criterion and outcomes;
- Expected level of achievement of all plan components;
- Time frames for assessment of all plan components;
- Person(s) responsible for evaluation of each component of the plan;
- Methods and/or instruments to assess each criterion and outcome;
- Reliability, validity, and trustworthiness of methods and/or instruments used;
- Data collected, analyzed, aggregated, and trended; and
- Use of findings in decision making for program improvement.

Documentation confirms:

A. Systematic plan for program evaluation and assessment of outcomes; time lines; appropriate methods and tools; level of achievement for decision rules; collection and analysis of trended aggregate data; and verification that the findings are used for program improvement.

B. Systematic plan for program evaluation and assessment facilitates attainment of outcomes.

C. Measurement of required outcomes.
   - Critical thinking skills in reasoning, analysis and decision-making relevant to the discipline of nursing.
   - Interpersonal and communication skills (written, verbal, and nonverbal communications), information technologies, and/or media production.
   - Therapeutic nursing interventions including psychomotor and psycho-social therapeutics directed at individuals, family, groups, and community.
   - Performance on certifying examinations of advanced practice graduates.
   - Employment rates of graduates six to nine months after graduation.

Evaluation is valued as essential for the development, maintenance, and revision of the program. A formal Systematic Evaluation Plan for the Master of Science in Nursing Program is in place. It covers the area of Structure and Governance, Resources, Students, Faculty, Curriculum, and Evaluation. The evaluation includes the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission’s required and selected program outcomes. The plan was developed through a continuing process with involvement of students, faculty, administration, alumni, and consultants. The plan also calls for the evaluation of selected components of the graduate nursing program by agencies and people outside Nursing. The evaluation plan has occurred in stages and continues to be refined. Appendix A contains the Systematic Evaluation Plan for the Master of Science in Nursing Program. The
reliability, validity, and specificity of outcome measures were addressed. These were voted upon in the Nursing Graduate Academic Planning and Standards Committee.

Data for evaluation are collected from multiple sources. Students provide input for changes through course, faculty, clinical site and preceptor evaluations, committee membership, and individual and group meetings with faculty, Associate Dean, and/or Dean. Faculty provides input through analysis of course evaluations, committee membership, committee participation, and evaluations of students, clinical sites, preceptors, and peers. Additional data are obtained from consultants' reports, University reports, self report from graduates regarding results of American Nurses Credentialing Center Certification Examination for Family Nurse Practitioners, for School Nurse Practitioners, for Nursing Administrators, meetings with alumni, and through alumni and employer surveys. Thus, the Systematic Evaluation Plan for the Master of Science in Nursing provides a mechanism for ongoing accountability, and for the measurement of program inputs, operations, and outcomes.
REQUIRED OUTCOME CRITERION 1: Critical Thinking

Critical thinking is defined by the faculty as skillful responsible thinking that uses systematic analysis and research to make meaningful judgments and decisions. Critical thinking, as a program outcome, is measured by the Evidence-Based Project, Clinical Evaluation of capstone courses in the specific areas of emphasis, and the Graduate Program Evaluation Questionnaires.

Completion of the Evidence-Based Project requires students to utilize critical thinking to define a problem, analyze existing research, to explain feasible causes of the problem, determine a theoretical framework to study the problem, propose measures to correct the problem, and make recommendations for future study. The score 85% is the critical indicator for achievement of this outcome.

End-of-program data are collected in the clinical area by means of observations and documentation as recorded in the NUR 695 (FNP), NUR 648 (NA) or NUR 619 clinical evaluation tools. These courses were selected for this and other program outcomes as these courses are the capstone courses in the students’ area of emphasis. The clinical evaluation tool was designed to measure the critical thinking skills used in making judgments and decisions in advanced clinical practice, in administration of clinical services or in teaching in nursing academic settings. These areas are rated on a 0 to 4 scale with 4 being the highest. The critical indicator for achievement of this outcome is 3.

The Graduate Program Evaluation Questionnaires are assessment methods which provide information on the perceptions of graduates concerning the development of critical thinking skills as indicated by the following objective: “Expand knowledge of nursing theories used by nurses as a basis for advanced practice nursing in my chosen field”. These are ranked 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). A mean of 3 (agree) is the critical indicator.
**Program Evaluation Plan**

**Criteria: Critical Thinking (Graduate Program)**

**Operational Definition:** As defined by the faculty, a multidimensional, self-directed, cognitive process that uses knowledge as context is criteria based, creative and purposeful in making judgments and decisions.

**Expected Level of Achievement/Decision Rule for Action:** The expected level of achievement for each component is at or above the critical indicator listed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Where Documents/ Information found</th>
<th>Person Responsible</th>
<th>Frequency of Assessment</th>
<th>Assessment Methods</th>
<th>Degree of Reliability, Validity, Trustworthiness</th>
<th>Results of Data Collection and Analysis including Actual Levels of Achievement</th>
<th>Actions for Program Development, Maintenance or Revision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evidence-Based Project</td>
<td>Coordinator’s offices</td>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>End of Program</td>
<td>Critical Indicator 85%</td>
<td>Validity – Based on course objectives</td>
<td>Paper=90% Presentation=95%</td>
<td>Exceeds critical indicator, no action indicated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinical Evaluations</td>
<td>Student Records</td>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>End of Course</td>
<td>Critical Outcome 3</td>
<td>Validity – Based on course objectives</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Exceeds critical indicator, no action indicated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Surveys FNP n=17</td>
<td>Program Specialist’s Office</td>
<td>Graduates</td>
<td>End of Program</td>
<td>Critical Indicator 4</td>
<td>Validity- Based on program outcomes</td>
<td>4.75</td>
<td>Exceeds critical indicator, no action indicated.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
REQUIRED OUTCOME CRITERION 2: Communication

The faculty defines communication as the utilization of the communication process through a variety of methods. Communication, as a program outcome, is measured by clinical evaluations as recorded in the NUR 695, NUR 648, or NUR 619 clinical evaluation tool, Evidence-Based Project and Graduate Program Evaluation Questionnaires.

NUR 695, NUR 648 or NUR 619 course are the capstone courses in the students’ area of emphasis. Selected areas of this evaluation tool reflect students’ oral and written communications with clients and others. The critical indicator on the 0 to 4 scale is 3.

The Evidence-Based Project Paper reflects the students’ written communication skills at end of program. The critical indicator is a score of 85%.

A reflection of the students’ verbal communication skills at the end of the program is captured in a successful Evidence-Based Project Presentation with a score of at least 85%.

The Graduate Program Evaluation Questionnaires are assessment methods which provide information on the perceptions of graduates concerning the development of Communication skills as indicated by the following objective: “Actively engage in collaborative relationships with others for the purpose of improving health care”. These are ranked 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). A mean of 3 (agree) is the critical indicator.
## PROGRAM EVALUATION PLAN

**Criteria: Communication (Graduate Program)**

**Operational Definition:** As defined by the faculty, utilization of the communication process through a variety of methods.

**Expected Level of Achievement/Decision Rule for Action:** The expected level of achievement for each component is at or above the critical indicator listed.

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<td>End of Course</td>
<td>Critical Outcome 3</td>
<td>Validity – Based on course objectives</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Exceeds critical indicator, no action indicated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence-Based Project Paper</td>
<td>Coordinator’s offices</td>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>End of Program</td>
<td>Critical Indicator 85%</td>
<td>Validity – Based on course objectives</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>Exceeds critical indicator, no action indicated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence-Based Project Presentation</td>
<td>Coordinator’s offices</td>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>End of Program</td>
<td>Critical Indicator 85%</td>
<td>Validity – Based on course objectives</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>Exceeds critical indicator, no action indicated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Surveys</td>
<td>Program Specialist’s Office</td>
<td>Graduates</td>
<td>End of Program</td>
<td>Critical Indicator 4</td>
<td>Validity- Based on program outcomes</td>
<td>4.75</td>
<td>Exceeds critical indicator, no action indicated.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
REQUIRED OUTCOME CRITERION 3: Therapeutic Nursing Intervention

Therapeutic nursing interventions (TNI) are defined as theory-based cognitive, psychomotor and affective skills used in the implementation of nursing care. TNI skills, as a program outcome, are measured by clinical evaluations (in NUR 695, NUR 648, or NUR 619), Graduate Program Evaluation Questionnaires, ANCC Family Nurse Practitioners/School Nurse Practitioner, Certification Examination, and ANCC Nursing Administration, or Nursing Education Certification Examination.

The clinical evaluation tool in NUR 695, NUR 648 and NUR 619 measure TNI skills at the end of program. This tool is designed to evaluate the students in their application of cognitive, psychomotor, and affective skills in advanced nursing practice or in the administration of clinical services or in teaching in academic settings. The critical indicator is a 3 on 1-4 scale.

The Graduate Program Evaluation Questionnaires are assessment methods which provide information on the perceptions of graduates concerning the development of Communication skills as indicated by the following objective: “Apply knowledge from the sciences and humanities to support advanced practice nursing and role development for my chosen field”. These are ranked 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). A mean of 3 (agree) is the critical indicator.

The ANCC Family Nurse Practitioner, Certification Examination is widely accepted to determine clinical competence in this specialized area of Advanced Practice Nursing. This is self reported by the graduate and has a critical indicator of 80% passage rate as this is usually the national average.
**PROGRAM EVALUATION PLAN**

**Criteria:** Therapeutic Nursing Interventions (Graduate Program)  
**Operational Definition:** As defined by the faculty, theory-based cognitive, psychomotor and affective skills used in the implementation of nursing care.  
**Expected Level of Achievement/Decision Rule for Action:** The expected level of achievement for each component is at or above the critical indicator listed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Where Documents/Information found</th>
<th>Person Responsible</th>
<th>Frequency of Assessment</th>
<th>Assessment Methods</th>
<th>Degree of Reliability, Validity, Trustworthiness</th>
<th>Results of Data Collection and Analysis including Actual Levels of Achievement</th>
<th>Actions for Program Development, Maintenance or Revision</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clinical Evaluations for Faculty</td>
<td>End of Course</td>
<td>Critical Indicator 3</td>
<td>Validity – Based on course objectives  Reliability – in use for &gt; 10 years  Trustworthiness- data are credible</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Exceeds critical indicator, no action indicated</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Surveys Program Specialist’s Office End of Course Critical Indicator 4</td>
<td>Validity – Based on course objectives  Reliability – in use for &gt; 10 years  Trustworthiness- data are credible</td>
<td>4.75</td>
<td>Exceeds critical indicator, no action indicated</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANCC Certification Examination Chair’s Office After Graduation Critical Indicator: National Average</td>
<td>Nationally Normed exam</td>
<td>Data not provided by ANCC</td>
<td>Coordinator of FNP program will review curriculum</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
REQUIRED OUTCOME CRITERION 4: Performance on Certifying Exams

The attainment of certification indicates that a high proficiency in an area of specialization has been achieved.

The ANCC Family Nurse Practitioner/School Nurse Practitioner Certification Examination is widely accepted to determine clinical competence in this specialized area of Advanced Practice Nursing. This is reported to the School by the ANCC headquarters. The critical indicator is at or above the national average pass rate.

Certification Examinations for Advanced Practice in Nursing Administration or Nursing Education are also widely accepted to determine competency in these areas. This is self reported by the graduates and the critical indicator is at or above the national average pass rate.
**PROGRAM EVALUATION PLAN**

**Criteria: Performance on Certifying Exams**  
**Operational Definition:** As defined by the faculty, a high proficiency in an area of specialization has been achieved.  
**Expected Level of Achievement/Decision Rule for Action:** The expected level of achievement for each component is at or above the critical indicator listed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Person Responsible</th>
<th>Frequency of Assessment</th>
<th>Assessment Methods</th>
<th>Degree of Reliability, Validity, Trustworthiness</th>
<th>Results of Data Collection and Analysis including Actual Levels of Achievement</th>
<th>Actions for Program Development, Maintenance or Revision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ANCC Certifying Exam for FNP</td>
<td>Office of Associate Dean</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>After Graduation</td>
<td>At or above national average pass rate</td>
<td>Nationally Normed Exam</td>
<td>Data not provided by ANCC</td>
<td>Coordinator of FNP program will review curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NLN Certifying Exam for NE</td>
<td>Office of Associate Dean</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>After Graduation</td>
<td>At or above national average pass rate</td>
<td>Nationally Normed Exam</td>
<td>New exam, no results available</td>
<td>Encourage participation by NE graduates</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
REQUIRED OUTCOME CRITERION 5: EMPLOYEMENT RATES

Employment patterns are tracked through graduate questionnaires and self report.

PROGRAM EVALUATION PLAN

Criteria: Employment Rates
Operational Definition: As defined by the faculty, employment patterns document employment settings, roles, population groups, and overall employment rate of graduates.

Expected Level of Achievement/Decision Rule for Action: The expected level of achievement for each component is at or above the critical indicator listed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Frequency of Assessment</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Surveys</td>
<td>Program Specialist’s Office</td>
<td>Graduates</td>
<td>End of Program</td>
<td>Critical Indicator 100%</td>
<td>Validity – Based on course objectives Reliability – in use for &gt; 10 years Trustworthiness- data are credible</td>
<td>FNP=100% NA=100% NE=100%</td>
<td>Exceeds critical indicator, no action indicated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FNP n=17 NA n=9 NE n=5</td>
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</table>
ELECTIVE OUTCOME CRITERON 1: GRADUATE SATISFACTION

Program satisfaction as defined by faculty, is the degree to which the nursing program and its component elements are perceived by its recipients to meet their requirements or criteria. Recipients are defined as persons who experience the program directly either as new graduates or alumni.

Program satisfaction is measured through the use of Program Evaluation Questionnaires that are distributed to new graduates and are indicated by the objective: “The program prepared me to function in my chosen field”. The critical indicator for this item on the questionnaire is a mean score of 4 on a 5-point scale.

<table>
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<th>Component</th>
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<tr>
<td>Graduate Surveys FNP n=17 NA n=9 NE n=5</td>
<td>Program Specialist’s Office</td>
<td>Graduates</td>
<td>At end of program</td>
<td>Critical Indicator 4</td>
<td>Validity- Based on program outcomes Reliability – in use for &gt; 10 years Trustworthiness – data are credible</td>
<td>4.75</td>
<td>Exceeds critical indicator, no action indicated.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**ELECTIVE OUTCOME CRITERION 2: Graduation Rates**

Student records are the most accurate way to retrieve this type of data. The critical indicator is 70% of entering class graduate. Data retrieved reflects the number of students entering and the number of students graduated from a given class.

### PROGRAM EVALUATION PLAN

**Criteria: Graduation Rates**

**Operational Definition:** As defined by the faculty, the number of students entering and the number of students graduated from a given class.

**Expected Level of Achievement/Decision Rule for Action:** The expected level of achievement for each component is at or above the critical indicator listed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROCESS</th>
<th>IMPLEMENTATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Component</strong></td>
<td><strong>Where Documents/ Information found</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduation Rates</td>
<td>Records Office</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
RESULTS/DISCUSSION

During the Fall semester, the program outcomes for the previous academic year are collected by the Chairperson. Results are presented to the Graduate Academic Planning and Standards Committee. This committee makes recommendations based on each outcome to the School of Nursing Faculty Organization. The latter group makes decisions on any program changes which might be necessary.

Course coordinators meet with faculty who teach in each course to discuss course outcomes, student evaluations and faculty own evaluations. Changes in courses which do not involve changes in the course description or objectives are made at this level. Changes in course descriptions or objectives must be approved first by the Graduate Academic Planning and Standards Committee and then the School of Nursing Faculty Organization. From there changes go through the University approval process.

Data is collected for program outcomes through graduate surveys at the end of the program. Next, data is analyzed and interpreted as described in the section on the review process. Appendix A, the Systematic Evaluation Plan, also demonstrates who evaluates each area and how often. For outcome data, trends are analyzed year to year to determine the ongoing effectiveness of the program and to identify revisions that may be necessary.

Documentation confirms:
Measurement of required outcomes.
- **Critical thinking** skills in reasoning, analysis, and decision-making relevant to the discipline of nursing (exceeds critical indicator in all areas).
- **Interpersonal and communication** skills (written, verbal, and nonverbal communications), information technologies, and/or media production (exceeds critical indicator in all areas).
- **Therapeutic nursing interventions** including psychomotor and psycho-social therapeutics directed at individuals, family, groups, and community (exceeds critical indicator in all areas).
- **Performance on certifying exams** This area is particularly difficult to measure since official results have not been made available to the program.
- **Employment rates** of graduates six to nine months after graduation (continues high).

Measurement of elective outcomes degree of student/graduate
- **Program satisfaction** with adequacy of the curriculum, environment, learning resources, support services, and policies (exceeds critical indicator)
- **Graduation rates** of students who complete the program within a defined period of time (exceeds critical indicator).