Learning Outcomes Data for the Senate Committee on Instructional Program Priorities

Program:  Licensed Voc Nurse - Nursing (Licensed Vocational Nurse)

Department:  School of Nursing

Number of students enrolled in the program in Fall 2011: 1

Faculty member completing template: Dr. Carolynn Goetze, Chair; Denise Wall Parilo, Program Evaluation Committee Chair, Nursing Faculty  Date: February 3, 2012

Period of reference in the template: 2006-07 to present

1. Please describe your program’s learning-outcomes trajectory since 2006-07: Has there been a transformation of organizational culture regarding the establishment of learning outcomes and the capacity to assess progress toward their achievement? If so, during which academic year would you say the transformation became noticeable? What lies ahead; what is the next likely step in developing a learning-outcomes organizational culture within the program?  

[Please limit your response to 200 words or less]

The Licensed Voc Nurse (also known as the LVN to RN 30-Unit Option Program) is required of every California pre-licensure nursing program. Section 1435.5 in the Laws Relating to Nursing Education Licensure – Practice in the State or California provides an opportunity for the California LVN to prepare for licensure as a Registered Nurse by completing no more than 30 units of designated courses.

The program has had substantial review and revision since 2007. Formerly, the program placed students into the first and second semester courses of the traditional pre-licensure program. Students were permitted to seek challenge credit for a majority of the coursework. Although this curriculum was approved by the BRN, the faculty assessed that it fell short of meeting both the State mandate and the instructional needs of students who often planned to seek a BSN in the future. The faculty revised the curriculum in 2008 so students are required to take most second and third semester courses of traditional pre-licensure students on a space available basis. The transformed curriculum has been quite successful in preparing RNs who can easily transition to a BSN program of their choice; however, space is extremely limited resulting in sporadic admission.

2. Please list in prioritized order (or indicate no prioritization regarding) up to four desired learning outcomes (“takeaways” concerning such elements of curriculum as perspectives, specific content knowledge, skill sets, confidence levels) for students completing the program. For each stated outcome, please provide the reason that it was designated as desired by the faculty associated with the program.

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[Please limit your response *per outcome* to 300 words or less]

The major learning outcomes for the program are prescribed by the California Board of Registered Nursing (BRN) in section 1429 of the State of California Nursing Practice Act, as follows:

“Nursing courses shall be taken in an approved nursing program and shall be beyond courses equivalent to the first year of professional nursing courses. The nursing content shall include nursing intervention in acute, preventive, remedial, supportive, rehabilitative and teaching aspects of nursing. Theory and courses with concurrent clinical practice shall include advanced medical-surgical, mental health, psychiatric nursing and geriatric nursing. The nursing content shall include the basic standards for competent performance prescribed in section 1443.5 of these regulations.”

The School of Nursing (SoN) provides a curriculum that meets these mandates and does not have separate learning outcomes for this non-degree program. The Licensed Voc Nurse students enroll in five courses which provide learning opportunities that enable students to achieve these State mandates.

3. *For undergraduate programs only*, in what ways are the set of desired learning outcomes described above aligned with the University’s Baccalaureate Learning Goals? Please be as specific as possible.

[Please limit your response to 400 words or less]

Criterion 3 is not applicable for this non-degree program.

4. For each desired outcome indicated in item 2 above, please:
   a) Describe the method(s) by which its ongoing pursuit is monitored and measured.
   b) Include a description of the sample of students (e.g., random sample of transfer students declaring the major; graduating seniors) from whom data were/will be collected and the frequency and schedule with which the data in question were/will be collected.
   c) Describe and append a sample (or samples) of the “instrument” (e.g., survey or test), “artifact” (e.g., writing sample and evaluative protocol, performance review sheet), or other device used to assess the status of the learning outcomes desired by the program.
   d) Explain how the program faculty analyzed and evaluated (will analyze and evaluate) the data to reach conclusions about each desired student learning outcome.

[Please limit your response to 200 words or less *per learning outcome*]

*(If the requested data and/or analysis are not yet available for any of the learning outcomes, please explain why and describe the plan by which these will occur. Please limit your response to 500 words or less.)*

a) The SoN Program Evaluation Plan prescribes the means and frequency of evaluation related to the program. Evaluation data include:
   i. Annual syllabus review conducted for each course in the program, conducted in spring
   ii. Quarterly RN licensure exam results for this cohort

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iii. Student admission, progression, and completion data

b) Due to the fact that the Licensed Voc Nurse Program only admits students as space becomes available in the second semester traditional pre-licensure BSN courses, evaluation data is limited to those admitted.

c) The PEC and Undergraduate Curriculum Committee are charged with reviewing the evaluation data and taking action in an effort toward program improvement. Each committee’s responsibilities are delineated within the SoN Program Evaluation Plan.

5. Regarding each outcome and method discussed in items 2 and 4 above, please provide examples of how findings from the learning outcomes process have been utilized to address decisions to revise or maintain elements of the curriculum (including decisions to alter the program’s desired outcomes). If such decision-making has not yet occurred, please describe the plan by which it will occur.

[Please limit your response to 200 words or less per item]

Faculty determined in 2007 that the Licensed Voc Nurse curriculum was inadequate. One concern was that many students challenged out of most coursework and as a result some significant student deficiencies were not identified until the final clinical nursing course. Additionally, students who completed the program and later returned for the Sacramento State RN to BSN (post-licensure) Program were found to be deficient in maternal-child nursing knowledge, skills, and abilities. The latter finding was worrisome because Baccalaureate-prepared nurses are expected to practice in community health settings which primarily serve women and families with young children.

The curricular changes implemented since 2008 have allowed students to enter into the traditional BSN pre-licensure program without duplicating nursing content they have already had. Students begin building upon LVN-level coursework and exit the program near the nursing coursework equivalent of the RN with an Associate Degree. Consistent review of student data has shown that these changes have achieved desired results of increasing the professional education of this special cohort while also maintaining strong academic rigor.

6. Has the program systematically sought data from alumni to measure the longer-term effects of accomplishment of the program’s learning outcomes? If so, please describe the approach to this information-gathering and the ways in which the information will be applied to the program’s curriculum. If such activity has not yet occurred, please describe the plan by which it will occur.

[Please limit your response to 300 words or less]

Measurement of alumni data for this small group of students is problematic. A total of five students have entered the revised program and four have successfully completed the program on time. All students who have taken the RN licensure exam have passed on the first attempt. One student has

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returned for the RN to BSN program and is doing well. Anecdotal evidence suggests that several of the program graduates anticipated promotion within their existing workplaces.

7. Does the program pursue learning outcomes identified by an accrediting or other professional discipline-related organization as important? Does the set of outcomes pursued by your program exceed those identified as important by your accrediting or other professional discipline-related organization?

[Please limit your response to 300 words or less]

The outcomes for this program are defined by the California Board of Registered Nursing.

8. Finally, what additional information would you like to share with the Senate Committee on Instructional Program Priorities regarding the program’s desired learning outcomes and assessment of their accomplishment?

[Please limit your response to 200 words or less]

The SoN is required to offer a Licensed Voc Nurse Program in order to maintain BSN approval. However, the faculty have endeavored to structure a curriculum that best prepares students for the next level in their nursing practice. The changes have yielded lower program attrition rates than with the previous curriculum and high on-time completion rates. In addition, 100% of LVNs who have attempted the RN licensure examination have passed on the first attempt. At least one student has co-authored a manuscript in review at a popular national nursing journal and at least one other student has returned to Sacramento State for the Baccalaureate Degree in Nursing.

The demand for a pathway from LVN to RN or from LVN to BSN is strong. Additional faculty and enrollment resources would need to be made available in order to accommodate these students.