



**Western New Mexico University  
Nursing Department**

**Assessment Report  
2008-2009**

**Prepared by Pat McIntire FNP  
Submitted October 1, 2009**

**Western New Mexico University  
Nursing Department  
Assessment Report for 2008-2009**

**Overview:**

The Nursing Department at Western New Mexico University (WNMU) offers Nursing Assistant courses, an Associate Degree in Nursing Program, and a RN to BSN completion program. In April, 2007, the RN to BSN program had an initial accreditation visit from the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE). The program was granted full initial approval in October, 2007. In addition, dual enrollment nursing assistant courses were offered at Cobre, Deming, and Socorro High School. For the 2008-2009 academic year, the New Mexico Higher Education Department awarded the WNMU Nursing Department \$305,148 for expansion of programs and \$21,508 for faculty and staff salary adjustment from Nursing Enhancement funds at the Higher Education Department.

**Nursing Department Mission Statement:**

WNMU Nursing Department prepares nursing care providers to safely meet the needs of patients and providers. The program emphasizes rural health, cultural competence and evolving models of health care delivery.

**Nursing Department Goals 2008-2009**

- A. Increase retention to 80% in the first year without compromising patient safety and academic standards.
- B. Join statewide collaboration for BSN completion programs
- C. Admit a Deming cohort annually, maintaining 32 ADN admissions annually
- D. Communicate with students utilizing Mustang Express
- E. Collaborate with area high schools to provide nursing assistant courses for dual enrollment.
- F. Submit an application to the US Department of Health and Human Services Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) for funding of expansion of the RN to BSN Completion Program.

**Nursing Department Performance Goals:** Maintain the following benchmarks as reported to the New Mexico Higher Education Department:

- A. Retention in the first year of the ADN program at >80%
- B. ADN graduation rate >75%
- C. BSN retention >70%
- D. BSN graduation >70% in 3 years
- E. Program satisfaction (either ADN or BSN) >80%
- F. Employment >90% within 6 months of ADN graduation

- G. First time pass rate for licensure Exam >80%
- H. Programs to remain in good accreditation/approval standing
- During the 2008-2009 academic year, the nursing Department accomplished the following:
- A. Graduated 24 ADN students
- B. Graduated 3 BSN students
- C. Offered dual enrollment nursing assistant courses at Cobre, Deming and Socorro High Schools
- D. Was awarded a 3 year HRSA Grant of \$249,740 per year for expansion of the RN to BSN Completion Program.
- E. Began migrating the RN to BSN program to Blackboard

#### Performance Benchmarks for 2007-2008

- A. Retention in the first year of the ADN program was 75%
- B. ADN graduation rate (graduation within 3 years of start) was 84%
- C. BSN retention was 85%
- D. BSN graduation rate (graduation within 3 years of start) was 60%
- E. Program satisfaction in the ADN program 90%
- F. 90% of the 2008 ADN graduating class are employed in nursing
- G. First time pass rate for 2008 was 70%. 2009 is still pending.
- H. Programs remain in good accreditation/approval standing.

#### Description of the Program Evaluation Plan and Data

The Nursing Department has two programs which are accredited, each by a different accrediting body. The Associate Degree Nursing program is accredited by the National League for Nursing Accrediting commission and the RN to BSN Completion Program is accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education. Each has slightly different accrediting standards. Therefore, we have developed and organized a separate Program Evaluation Plan for each program according to those standards. This report will focus on an Associate Degree in Nursing issue and the ADN plan but both plans are attached to this report.

National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission (NLNAC) accredited programs are reviewed during site visits according to seven standards and twenty-three criteria. For this reason, our Evaluation Plan has a separate subplan for each of the twenty-three criteria. In spite of all the detail, the nursing evaluation plan has focused on program outcomes and curriculum. It utilizes a variety of data from different sources and is summarized below.

- A. Standardized testing
- The nursing department utilized the Comprehensive Assessment and Review program from Assessment Technologies Institute (ATI). We use their Test of Essential Academic Skills on entrance to the program to identify students who may need extra assistance to complete the program. Unsecured exams are available to students for practice during each course. At the completion of each nursing course, students take a faculty generated final exam and a secured content mastery exam from ATI. The

content mastery exams are normed annually and the student receives an individual report and the program gets individual and group reports comparing our students to nursing students across the country for benchmarking. Data from this process is utilized in modification of curriculum and course content and syllabi. Longitudinal reports are available to track group performance from one year to the next. Faculty can also print transcripts to monitor student use of the non-secured exams. Students receive an excellent review outline with each module. Faculty utilize case studies from these modules within each course. At the completion of the nursing program, students are given the RN Comprehensive Predictor exam which according to ATI literature is 98% predictive for passing scores on the licensure exam. Students have access to the unsecured tests for a year following completion of the program so the system becomes a built in licensure review as well.

B. Student Surveys and Input

Students complete a demographic data sheet each year so the program can report student demographics to the National League for Nursing, New Mexico Board of Nursing, New Mexico Higher Education Department and internally.

All nursing courses are evaluated by students. These evaluations and direct student input are used to evaluate courses, course materials and texts.

Graduate surveys provide us with overall program evaluation by students who have taken the licensure exam.

C. Employer surveys provide data regarding the preparation of students for the real world of nursing. These are done about six months following graduation.

D. Licensure Rates

All schools in New Mexico track the first-time pass rate on the licensure exam—the percent of students who pass the licensure exam on the first attempt. The standard set by both the NLNAC and New Mexico Board of Nursing for first time pass rate is 80%. The program also tracks cumulative pass rates—the percent of students licensed after graduation, no matter the number of times the licensure exam is taken.

E. Retention Rate

Retention has been a major concern of nursing programs particularly in view of the limited space and high costs of the programs. Our students may return to the program one time only. As faculty reviewed our mandate to increase graduations, it became our goal to increase retention since we were nearly maxed out in clinical space. It has been our experience that if students survive the first year of the program, they will be likely to graduate. Therefore, we chose to focus on retention in the first year of the program.

F. Graduation Rate

The Nursing Department has defined graduation rate as the percent of those students who complete the Associate Degree Program within three

years of starting their nursing courses. The 2-year graduation rate for the 2003 selection cohort was 62.5% and 3-year graduation rate for the same cohort was 83.3%.

Methods B through F are mandated by both the NLNAC and the New Mexico Board of Nursing. The Department is required to report this same data to the New Mexico Higher Education Department. We prepare reports for all three agencies annually. Schools that drop below the 80% first-time pass rate on the licensure exam are required to submit reports with corrective actions. If the first time pass rate is less than 80% for 3 years in a row, Board of Nursing Rules & Regulations mandate a site visit by the New Mexico Board of Nursing.

A review of the benchmark accomplishments for 2008-2009 again identified a disturbing trend. The first time pass rate for the 2008 ADN graduates was 70%. Although this is better than the 2007 first time pass rate of 62%, it falls short of the standard of 80% set by the accrediting bodies and the NM Board of Nursing. It also meant that our corrective action plan was insufficient to achieve the benchmark minimum. In reviewing the etiology of the lackluster performance of the 2008 graduates, the faculty reviewed program evaluation data to analyze the contributing factors to the lack of success of the students and then developed a corrective action plan.

The licensure exam for nursing is developed by the National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN). Content is based on surveys of new graduates completed six months following graduation and regular surveys of randomly selected practicing nurses. It is a computer adapted test containing 265 items, which are for the most part multiple choice application questions. Question banks rotate on a 90 day basis. Item writers may be educators or working nurses who have completed the item writing workshop. The blue print for the exam is reviewed and adjusted to current nursing practice every two years at the annual meeting of the National Council.

**Assessment data reviewed:**

1. There were 31 graduates in May, 2008. 21 passed the licensure exam on the first attempt and 10 failed on the first attempt. Since the first attempt, 28 have passed the RN licensure. This brings the 2008 statistics to 70% first time pass rate and 90.3% cumulative pass rate. This is in contrast to the first time pass rate of 94.4% and cumulative pass rate of 100% for the class of 2005 and the first time pass rate of 85.2% and cumulative pass rate of 100% for the class of 2006. The ADN program has an overall first time pass rate of 81.6% and cumulative of 96.2% since the program the first class graduated in 1991. A table of the NCLEX Success Rate is attached to this report.
2. The National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) has demonstrated that the sooner the graduate takes the NCLEX examination, the higher the pass rate. The class of 2007 as a group delayed sitting for the licensure exam. Only 3 of the 2008 cohort delayed sitting for the exam and one of those passed (November) and two failed (January and March). If transcripts were the last document to be submitted, all documents for the licensure application should have been at the NM Board of Nursing by the end of the first week of June. According to the NCSBN

- data, if a student sits for the exam later than 54 days of eligibility (from the first day the application for licensure was complete), they have a 77% chance of passing the exam. Graduates had been made aware that delay in sitting for the exam had been shown to be associated with lower pass rates. Clearly, delaying in taking the licensure exam had a 6.5% negative impact on the pass rates in 2008. This is not something the faculty has any control over, although we do have responsibility to inform them that their chance of passing the exam is better if they take the exam within the 54 day window which we had done.
3. In discussing the class performance for 2008 during fall semester, we realized that although we had talked about the licensure exam as a faculty, few of the nursing faculty were actually familiar with the NCLEX-RN test plan. During faculty work days in December, an overview of the test plan was presented to the faculty. The entire 2007 NCLEX-RN Test Plan was posted on the Nursing Department shared drive which all faculty have access to while in the office. As a part of the Corrective Action Plan from the 2007-2008 Assessment Report, Mary McDonald's book *The Nurse Educator's Guide to Assessing Learning Outcomes, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.* had been purchased for reference by all faculty. During these same work days, Michele Crawford presented item writing material based on the text and the faculty adopted NCLEX-style item writing guidelines.
  4. The Nursing Department utilizes the Comprehensive Assessment and Review Program from Assessment Technologies Institute (ATI). This program provides us with proctored content mastery exams which closely match the ADN curriculum. We give the proctored exams at the end of each course, generally prior to the final exams. The program includes unproctored practice exams and a review book for each module. Students are given test ID codes and passwords and review books at the beginning of each course. Students take the secure RN Comprehensive Predictor during finals week in their last semester. They are required to achieve a 70% raw score on the exam to pass the final course. If they do not achieve a 70%, they must take the unsecured exam and achieve a minimum raw score of 90% to pass. Our benchmarks are based on ATI data which shows that the student meeting the criterion for proficiency Level Two:
    - Is fairly certain to meet NCLEX-RN standards in this content area
    - Exceeds minimum expectations for performance in this content area.
    - Demonstrates achievement of a satisfactory level of competence needed for professional nursing practice in this content area.

Review of the class of 2008 performance on the Predictor exam shows a group mean score of 65.3%. Those students who passed had a mean of 66.6% with a range of 52.2-78.9%; and those students who failed had a mean of 62.9% with a range of 53.9-70.6%. Clearly, those who failed had a lower score on the exam. Review of group mean scores on the Predictor exam for the classes of 2004, 2005, 2006, and 2007 show group means of 63%, 65.8%, and 65% and 62.5% respectively. First time pass rates for those years were 92.3%, 94.4%, 85.2%, and 62% respectively. Thus, the class of 2008 had a mean score equivalent to the classes of 2004, 2005, and 2006 which all had NCLEX first time pass rates

exceeding 80%. And according to ATI data, the 2008 group mean score is associated with a 95% chance of passing the NCLEX exam on first attempt.

From a different perspective, the exam gives a percent chance of passing. For the class of 2008, the group who passed had an average of 97% chance of passing the NCLEX exam with a range of 28-99%. The group who failed had an average of 91% chance of passing with a range of 40-99%. Those who passed were given a higher chance of passing. However, individual review and study did make a difference as demonstrated by one student passing who had a 28% chance of passing based on the Predictor and two student failing with an 99% chance of passing. Test anxiety was cited as a factor for the students with high probability of passing who actually failed.

5. Per the department corrective action plan, all but one student in the class of 2008 participated in a Kaplan NCLEX Review course held on main campus one week following graduation. This abstaining student did pass. Those who participated stated that they found it helpful and recommended that we continue the live review rather than recommend an online review.
6. After 9 years of using the ATI program and with two years of disappointing NCLEX results, the faculty were concerned that the “chance of passing” scores for students were higher than they should have been, giving students a false sense of confidence and affecting the exam preparation following graduation. This precipitated a review of ATI and other testing systems. By ATI’s own literature about the comprehensive Predictor Test, the predictive accuracy of the exam is 86.9%. In contrast, the published predictive accuracy for the Kaplan Diagnostic Test, which is part of the live review, is 95%. Kaplan presented the Integrated testing program to nursing faculty during work days following spring semester. This system includes entrance testing, proctored content exams and an exit exam as well as the Kaplan NCLEX Review following the program. The per student total cost of the integrated testing program is \$450, a live review alone is \$375 and the ATI Comprehensive Assessment and Review Program (which does not include a live review) costs \$424.25. Cost savings and higher predictive accuracy—now there’s a real deal.

#### **Corrective Actions:**

1. Continue to offer a live NCLEX review for students following the completion of the ADN program. Beginning in Fall 2009, begin utilization of the Kaplan and Lippincott Williams & Wilkins Integrated Testing Program rather than the ATI RN Comprehensive Assessment and Review Program because of predictive accuracy concerns. Incorporate 50% of the cost of the program in the student course fees each semester.
2. The nursing department adopted some standards for teacher-made questions based on McDonald’s book. We agreed as a faculty to revise questions in all item banks to conform with these standards. These include:

#### **Every item must include:**

Stem, 4 options, 1 key (correct option) & 3 distractors, the unit objective associated with the item, Bloom's cognitive level, Source/reference

w/page number, and rationale for all 4 options.

**Every item can include** (optional at this time):

The associated stage of the Nursing Process, and the associated NCLEX-RN category.

**Other adopted rules:**

- randomize the questions but not the options
- list options from shortest to longest
- write stem in present tense
- use active voice
- use positive questions instead of negative ('except', etc.) if possible
- use "nurse" in every stem
- use client not patient
- use healthcare provider not doctor, physician, etc.
- be accurate about using symptoms (not signs) when you say symptoms, and signs (not symptoms) when you say signs
- use "ml" not "mL" consistently for mililiter
- use "L" not "l" consistently for liter
- use both F & Celsius for every temp
- use both pounds & kg for weight
- list complete lab values (3.5 meq/dl)
- don't use brand names (diapers instead of Pampers)
- follow APA for numbers and abbreviations
- medications are anything prescribed, and drugs are anything illegally used
- always use both generic and trade name for meds the first time used in stem. Then can use either one if mentioned in same stem or options.
- use "should" not "would" (e.g. "the nurse should do" not "the nurse would do")
- use client "reports" not complains
- exclude extraneous info (client names, ages genders, marital status, occupation unless pertinent to question)
- no bold, italics, underline
- Grammar/Punctuation
  - use "a" the first time you mention a nurse or client or whomever, and "the" thereafter ("A nurse went into the room. Then the nurse.....")
  - use no punctuation at end of incomplete sentence at end of stem (no colons, etc.)
  - use periods at end every complete sentence at end of stem
  - **use** question marks at end if a question ends the stem
  - if options complete last sentence in stem, begin each with lower case letter
  - if options do not complete last sentence in stem, begin each with upper case letter
  - every option ends in period (except number sequence)
  - do not use contractions

3. Change one of the two textbooks for Nursing Student Success. Drop *How to Survive & Maybe Even Love Nursing School* by Kelli Dunham and change to *Saunders Student Nurse Planner: A Guide to Success in Nursing School* by Susan deWit. Continue the Evolve Apply Program which has online case studies for the students and utilize *Saunders Comprehensive Review for the NCLEX-RN Examination* by Linda Silvestri for additional question review throughout the program. (Somehow, the text change did not get implemented for the Fall 2009 Nursing Success Seminar.)
4. Schedule regular faculty development programs. Michele Crawford's presentation on item writing was part of this program. We contracted with Donna Ignatavicius, "Iggy", for a one day program using topics from her Boot Camp for Nurse Educators Workshop including: "Redesigning Curricula to meet changing health care system needs", "Moving from a disease-based model", and "Evidence-based clinical evaluation tools." We then contracted for a three part webinar series by Donna Ignatavicius on "Student Success and Retention." During August, there was a mandatory half-day orientation to the Kaplan Integrative Testing Program. During the fall, we will be scheduling an orientation to Sim-Man, a new patient simulation manikin, and will utilize the Evolve Simulation Learning system for initial scenarios.
5. While nursing faculty believe that the nursing curriculum is fundamentally sound, two consecutive years of a first time NCLEX pass rate of 70% or less is more than cause for concern. Therefore, all Associate Degree Nursing faculty will participate in and contribute to a thorough review of the ADN curriculum in the upcoming year. Ms McIntire will coordinate the review process. Curriculum review sessions will be held every other week during fall and spring semesters. The review will include program outcomes, level objectives, competencies, and theoretical content. The focus will be on developing a unifying framework, identification of concepts rather than facts, development of critical thinking, student success, and avoiding duplication.

# **RN to BSN Evaluation Plan**

# ADN Evaluation Plan

**NCLEX  
Success  
Rate  
1991-2009**