Whitson-Hester School of Nursing – SACSCOC Fifth-Year Interim Report

Mission Statement

The mission of the Whitson-Hester School of Nursing furthers the mission of the University, as a provider of a strong academic program in nursing with a special commitment to meeting the health care needs of the diverse population of the Upper Cumberland region of Tennessee. The goal of the nursing program is to prepare graduates with a commitment to life long success as nursing leaders in rural and urban areas who are committed to professional nursing standards, open to the changes occurring in a global health care system, and motivated to improve the health status of individuals, groups, and communities.

Summary of Program Goals and Student Learning Outcomes

The graduate of Tennessee Technological University baccalaureate program in Nursing:

1. Integrates knowledge and theories from the natural and social sciences, liberal arts, humanities, and nursing to develop a generalist professional nursing practice.
2. Provides professional nursing care, which includes health teaching and health promotion to individuals, families, groups, and communities throughout the life span along a continuum of health, illness, and/or disability within various health care settings.
   a. Identifies and applies knowledge of basic organizational and systems leadership for safe and high quality patient care.
   b. Evaluates and utilizes theory and research based knowledge in nursing practice for beginning scholarship for evidence-based practice.
   c. Demonstrates professional nursing practice through critical thinking, clinical judgment, therapeutic nursing intervention and communication utilizing information management and patient care technology within the practice of the baccalaureate generalist.
   d. Demonstrates basic knowledge of healthcare policy, finance, and regulatory environments, including local, national, and global trends.
   e. Develops collaborative relationships and interprofessional communication with health care professionals and the health care consumer to promote and advance positive patient health care outcomes founded on evidenced based practice.
   f. Utilizes evidence-based practice for health promotion, risk reduction, disease prevention, and illness management of individuals, families, groups and communities.
   g. Demonstrates quality nursing practice based on professional values, incorporating ethical, moral and legal standards, and human diversity.
Program Outcomes

**Outcome 1:** The graduate will be able to integrate knowledge and theories from the natural and social sciences, liberal arts, humanities, and nursing to develop a generalist professional nursing practice.

**Method of Assessment:**

1. Evaluation of compliance with the standards of accrediting agencies, the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) and the Tennessee Board of Nursing (TBN).

2. First attempt pass rates on the licensure examination for Registered Nurses, the National Council of Licensure Exam-Registered Nurses (NCLEX-RN) with a target of 95% of graduates passing on their first attempt and ultimately 100% passing on the first attempt.

**Results of Assessment:**

In 2009, the Whitson-Hester School of Nursing completed a self-study in preparation for an onsite evaluation by its accrediting agency, the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE). At the October 2010 meeting of CCNE, the agency determined that the School met all four of its accreditation standards with no compliance concerns. CCNE accreditation standards include an assessment of compliance with University mission and standards. Consequently, CCNE granted full accreditation of the School’s baccalaureate degree program in nursing, retroactive from February 5, 2009, when the on-site evaluation took place, until December 31, 2019. The next on-site evaluation will occur Spring, 2019. As required of all nursing programs accredited by the CCNE, the Whitson-Hester School of Nursing is to submit a Continuous Improvement Progress Report (CIPR) at the mid-point of the accreditation term, December 1, 2014, to be reviewed by CCNE Spring 2015.

The Whitson-Hester School of Nursing continues to maintain approval by the Tennessee Board of Nursing, including approval for it participation in the Regents Online Degree Program’s Master’s in Nursing.

NCLEX-RN pass rates for the first attempts by graduates at taking the exam are monitored for assessing the School’s goals and to comply with rules and regulations for approval by the Tennessee Board of Nursing and accreditation standards of the CCNE. The NCLEX-RN pass rates of graduates of the Whitson-Hester School of Nursing continue to meet and exceed national NCLEX-RN pass rates.

**Table 1. NCLEX-RN Pass-Rates, Graduates of the Whitson-Hester School of Nursing**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010*</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>92.86%</td>
<td>84.31%</td>
<td>95.3%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>91.75%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The NCLEX-RN test items are revised every three years, with resulting decreases nationwide in scores
**How Results Have Been Used:**

Self-study and on-site evaluations by CCNE and TBN provide an opportunity to examine closely all aspects of the academic program, including program quality relative to: 1) Mission and Governance; 2) Institutional Commitment and Resources; 3) Curriculum, Teaching-Learning Practices and Individual Student Learning Outcomes; and 4) Aggregate Student Performance and Faculty Accomplishments. Given the favorable review by the most recent external on-site evaluation team members, the results of the assessment have been used to provide continued monitoring of compliance to CCNE standards. On an ongoing basis, the faculty members and the Director of the School assess compliance with the standards and make modifications as warranted. Moreover, the curriculum is reviewed routinely to ensure its consistency with the expressed CCNE standards as well as the competencies outlined by the National Council of State Boards of Nursing, the organization responsible for the NCLEX-RN.

The pass rates on the NCLEX-RN are monitored annually and inform curriculum modifications as individualized development plans for students as they proceed toward graduation. Formative evaluations designed to predict success on the NCLEX-RN and to evaluate student knowledge are done periodically via the administration of the HESI exams. Based on these evaluations, faculty construct and carry out remediation plans.

**Outcome 2 (a – g):** The graduate will be able to provide professional nursing care, which included health teaching and health promotion to individuals, families, groups, and communities throughout the life span along a continuum of health, illness, and/or disability within various health care settings, a) identifying and applying knowledge of basic organizational and systems leadership for safe and high quality patient care, b) evaluating and utilizing theory and research based knowledge in nursing practice for beginning scholarship for evidence-based practice; c) demonstrating professional nursing practice through critical thinking, clinical judgment, therapeutic nursing intervention and communication utilizing information management and patient care technology within the practice of the baccalaureate generalist; d) demonstrating basic knowledge of healthcare policy, finance, and regulatory environments, including local, national, and global trends, e) developing collaborative relationships and inter-professional communication with health care professionals and the health care consumer to promote and advance positive patient health care outcomes founded on evidenced based practice, f) utilizing evidence-based practice for health promotion, risk reduction, disease prevention, and illness management of individuals, families, groups and communities, and f) demonstrating quality nursing practice based on professional values, incorporating ethical, moral and legal standards, and human diversity.

**Method of Assessment:**

1. Graduation and retention/attrition data.
2. Percentage of graduates who obtain jobs in nursing within one year of graduation, target being 100%.
3. Employer surveys will show that employers are satisfied that graduates were well prepared for initial employment in entry level nursing positions.
4. Graduate surveys will indicate that graduates are satisfied that they were well prepared for initial employment in entry level nursing positions.

5. Monitoring for compliance to standards of the University and accrediting agencies.

Results of Assessment:

The Whitson-Hester School of Nursing graduation rates continue to be equivalent to or exceed the University graduation/retention rates.

Table 2. Whitson-Hester School of Nursing Graduation Rates (*University graduation rate is within 6 years of admission)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number Accepted to UD</th>
<th>Number Graduated</th>
<th>Graduation Rates</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
<th>Ongoing Program Improvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>97.5%</td>
<td>Benchmark met-No additional plans</td>
<td>Continue to monitor; Exceeds University Graduation Rates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>88.89%</td>
<td>Benchmark met-No additional plans</td>
<td>Continue to monitor; Exceeds University Graduation Rates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007, Spring</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>86.96%</td>
<td>Benchmark met-No additional plans</td>
<td>Continue to monitor; Exceeds University Graduation Rates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007, Fall</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>95.74%</td>
<td>Benchmark met-No additional plans</td>
<td>Continue to monitor; Exceeds University Graduation Rates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008, Spring</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>86.67%</td>
<td>Benchmark met-No additional plans</td>
<td>Continue to monitor; Exceeds University Graduation Rates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008, Fall</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>91.49%</td>
<td>Benchmark met-No additional plans</td>
<td>Continue to monitor; Exceeds University Graduation Rates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009, Spring</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>88.00%</td>
<td>Benchmark met-No additional plans</td>
<td>Continue to monitor; Exceeds University Graduation Rates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009, Fall</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>84.78%</td>
<td>Benchmark met-No additional plans</td>
<td>Continue to monitor; Exceeds University Graduation Rates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010, Spring</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>72.34%</td>
<td>Benchmark met-No additional plans</td>
<td>Continue to monitor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010, Fall</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011, Spring</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
Employment of Graduates: Data on employment and employment potential of graduates are collected at the end of the senior year. Students are surveyed about pending employment and interviews. The Whitson-Hester School of Nursing continues to meet its expectations relative to employability of graduates.

Surveys of Employers and Graduates: Routinely, employer and alumni surveys are sent to graduating classes. While the response rate of these surveys is low, comments from the community and from the surveys are primarily positive. The following table shows data collected for 2006

Table 3. 2006 Graduate Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Competencies</th>
<th>No. of Graduates Surveyed</th>
<th>Alumni Responses, Benchmark Average &gt;2.5</th>
<th>Ongoing Program Improvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Criterion 1. Critical Thinking</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>N=9</td>
<td>Use and application of literature throughout curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Criterion 2. Communication</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Criterion 3. Therapeutic Interventions</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Criterion 4. Program Satisfaction</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2006 Comments from Graduates/Alumni:

Criterion 1. Critical Thinking

Graduates who responded rated consistently that Critical Thinking competencies were more than adequately achieved.
Supporting graduates comments were: “prepared me to…critically think’ and “prepared me well for the thinking part of nursing.”

Students scored the following lower: “Use of nursing research information to improve client care” and “Apply knowledge from natural and social sciences to clinical practice to improve client care.”

Criterion 2. Communication

One student commented, “good verbal reporting.”

Criterion 3. Therapeutic Interventions

Graduates scored themselves highest in some aspects of this competency (i.e. acting as a patient advocate; accepting responsibility and accountability of their own actions; and practice in the role of the professional nurse).

Graduates indicated that more emphasis needed to be placed on skills. One graduate indicated, “prepared to think, not to do”. Another graduate indicated that less emphasis needed to be on care plans and more on skills, pharmacology, and pathophysiology.

Criterion 4. Program Satisfaction

Overall, both quantitative and qualitative portions of Program Satisfaction were congruent with exception of 1 student who disagreed —4 graduates strongly agreed and 1 graduate agreed that they were satisfied with their experience at TTU SON.

Overall Analysi

Strengths:

Critical thinking, communication

Supporting comments: Clinical background of TTU’s graduates very positive; prepared to practice; prepared as professionals; prepared in performing head to toe assessment

Recommended improvements:

Skill preparation, NCLEX preparations, Medical Surgical Nursing Class and Clinical Community Health Nursing (comment from one Graduate).

Consistency with Accreditation Standards: In 2009, the Whitson-Hester School of Nursing completed a self-study in preparation for an onsite evaluation by its accrediting agency, the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE). At the October 2010 meeting of CCNE, the agency determined that the School met all four of its accreditation standards with no compliance concerns. CCNE accreditation standards include an assessment of compliance with University mission and standards. Consequently, CCNE granted full accreditation of the School’s baccalaureate degree program in nursing, retroactive from
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How Results Have Been Used

Results of employer and alumni surveys are used to guide curriculum development and revision. Brown bag lunches to discuss each course and its consistency with accreditation standards, current needs and trends in nursing, and program outcomes are reviewed and critiqued. A recent review of the curriculum to transition from a four-semester to a five-semester upper-division nursing program revealed consistency with industry trends as well as accreditation standards and success on the NCLEX-RN. Ongoing program improvement is a goal and the results of the surveys partially inform that process.

Strengths and Areas Under Improvement

- Actual aggregate student outcomes are consistent with the mission, goals, and expected student outcomes.
  - Actual aggregate student outcome data on graduation rates, job placement rates, NCLEX-RN pass rates, Evaluation of the SON Curriculum and Resources by Senior Students, and graduate/employer survey are collected, analyzed and used to foster ongoing program improvements.
- Students evaluate facilities via formal evaluations. Faculty members review these evaluations and use data to determine appropriate clinical placement.
- Continuous curriculum review through faculty brown bag sessions and Curriculum Committee reviews resulting in transition to offering curriculum over five semesters versus over four semesters. Transition in progress. Impact to be determined.
- RN to BSN program revision to better respond to the learning needs of returning RN students. In Progress. Impact to be determined.
- Faculty involvement in the admission decisions increased. Retention and outcome data on students admitted with faculty involvement being tracked. Impact to be determined.
- Methods of collecting outcome data from employers and alumni in revision to increase response and consistency. In progress. Impact to be determined.
- Recruitment and marketing plans in development. In progress. Impact to be determined.