

**REPORT OF THE *AD HOC* COMMITTEE TO REVIEW THE COLLEGE OF
NURSING**
October 2020

Introduction

The University of Iowa Operations Manual requires that collegiate reviews be conducted regularly. For colleges that are subject to extensive external accreditation reviews, such as the College of Nursing (CON), the review may be limited and focused. In accordance with this operating procedure, Executive Vice President and Provost Montse Fuentes formed the Ad Hoc Committee to Review the College (“the Review Committee”) and charged it to carry out an abbreviated review and prepare this report.

Review Committee Members

The Review Committee consisted of three members:

- Mary Charlton, Associate Professor of Epidemiology, College of Public Health—Review Committee Chair
- Nick Street, Associate Dean for Research and PhD Programs, Professor of Business Analytics, Tippie College of Business
- Professor David Asprey, Chair and DEO, Physician Assistant Studies and Services; Professor of Physician Assistant, Physical Therapy and Rehabilitation Science, and Pediatrics, Carver College of Medicine

Materials Consulted and Groups Interviewed

Materials used to inform the Review Committee included the charge for the abbreviated review, the College’s Accreditation Self-Study, a 2002–2003 Nursing Committee Report, a CON Competitive Analysis Presentation, emails about learning needs assessment, and a draft CON strategic plan.

Groups interviewed are listed in the Appendix.

Charge for Abbreviated Review

The Review Committee was charged to conduct a review of the CON, limited to evaluating:

- I. Areas that have the potential to bring distinction to the CON and the University of Iowa
- II. Opportunities to enhance research and collaborations with other colleges and beyond to promote interdisciplinary research
- III. Lifelong learning opportunities
- IV. Prospective new curricular partnerships and development of new joint programs

I. Areas that have the potential to bring distinction to the CON and the University of Iowa

I.A. Potential to capitalize on areas of existing strengths

The CON has several areas of existing strengths in clinical care, education, and research that it can capitalize on to enhance its distinction. Its clinical expertise in pediatrics stands out. The CON does excellent work educating its students. Graduates are highly knowledgeable, and nurse

administrators from the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics (UIHC) indicated CON graduates are dramatically more prepared than their peers from other institutions when they start their jobs.

In research, a number of areas of distinction stand out. The CON is ranked #2 in the Big Ten for gerontology. The competitive analysis of the CON showed that *US News and World Report* ranked the CON's Adult/Gerontology Nurse Practitioner, Nursing Administration, and Clinical Nurse Leader programs in its top 10. The following areas are worthy of continued investment:

- Gerontology. The CON has been recognized as a leader in gerontology for many years. The CON's Csomay Center for Gerontological Excellence is a major strength, and was built on the foundation of the John A. Hartford Center of Nursing Excellence that was funded for 15 years (starting in 1990) by the Hartford Foundation. There is a need for succession planning as senior professors approach retirement. Harleah Buck was recently hired as the Sally Mathis Hartwig Professor in Gerontological Nursing and Co-Director of the Csomay Center.
- Health systems. The CON's research program in health systems is still ranked but has dropped a bit in recent years.
 - Health administration is still a strength area.
 - Informatics/analytics/data science is an area of former leadership that was lost completely but which is being rebuilt.
 - The reputation of the CON's Center for Nursing Classification was internationally renowned, and multiple PhD students indicated that it factored into their decision to select Iowa. However, retirements of key leaders have lessened its impact and reputation, and it has not been as large a research driver as in the past. There is a need for investment in faculty, data availability, and research focus to reinvigorate this initiative. The hiring of Associate Professor Karen Dunn Lopez was reported to be a great step in the right direction.
- Complex chronic conditions. The CON's Center for Advancing Multimorbidity Science (CAMS) is a one of just a handful of Exploratory Centers of Excellence in the nation funded by the National Institutes of Nursing Research at the National Institutes of Health through the P20 mechanism. It was established in August 2018, and has ties among multiple researchers and growing junior faculty. Recently the Center was invited by NIH to do a collaborative project related to COVID-19.
- Pain and symptom science. This area is another emerging area of distinction and is closely related to CAMS; many faculty crossover both areas. The CON's P32 training grant on pain (funded 2010–2021) is well recognized in the nursing field. Palliative care is another closely related area of research strength with multiple faculty working in this field. The CON may intend to roll this area into CAMS.

I.B. Potential areas of growth in research

- Genetics is an area of potential; while it has had periodic episodes of showing progress, it has waned in recent years since the elimination of distinct administrative areas in the CON. Multiple faculty have served as presidents of the International Society of Nurses in Genetics (ISONG).

I.C. General observations related to faculty and areas of distinction

It was reported that the distribution of CON faculty has shifted such that there are more clinical track and instructional track faculty than tenure track faculty. The clinical and instructional track make outstanding contributions to education and training and clinical care excellence. There may be a need to encourage clinical track faculty to more strongly recognize their role in research-related work (e.g., publishing and presenting at conferences).

Some faculty have research interests and clinical areas of expertise that do not fit in the aforementioned areas of excellence but are key areas that contribute substantially to the training and education of nursing students at all levels. Given the CON administrative structure, it can be challenging for these faculty to feel like they are part of a core group, and this in turn can cause issues related to providing junior faculty with clear direction regarding promotion and tenure.

Many of the areas of excellence were developed and strengthened by senior faculty who are now approaching retirement. As senior research leaders retire, there is an opportunity to ensure that they still maintain connections with the CON to help mentor junior faculty.

II. Opportunities to enhance research and collaborations with other colleges and beyond to promote interdisciplinary research

Team science was highly valued by CON faculty, and multiple collaborations exist between the CON and the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences in gerontology, psychology, sociology, social work, biology, and neuroscience, with potential opportunities for more. There are also a number of collaborations with the Colleges of Business, Engineering, Medicine, and Public Health. Tenure track faculty report they do not have trouble finding collaborators, and that senior leadership helps connect them. In many areas including genetics, microbiome, and cancer, the CON's faculty have had success. In rural health, CON faculty have connections with the Carver College of Medicine (CCOM) and College of Public Health.

While individual faculty in the CON actively reach out to other UI colleges, the CON does not have any formal collegiate-level mechanisms to facilitate collaborative efforts across colleges and to reward/recognize those who foster interdisciplinary connections. In gerontology, the CON faces an institutional barrier in that the CCOM does not have a gerontology/geriatric medicine department, so there are not overlapping strengths in that area. The CON may benefit from developing a more systematic method to promote collaborations across the university and grow its visibility with other colleges so that eventually more colleges seek out collaborations with CON faculty.

Collegiate engagement with the informatics/data science community has scaled up in recent years, reviving a prior area of leadership that had been almost entirely lost. Internally the CON has added both faculty (Associate Professor Karen Dunn Lopez, Associate Faculty Sena Chae) and staff (Research Scientist Todd Papke) with informatics expertise. Institutionally, the CAMS Integrative Analytics Core has matched multiple young nursing faculty with data science collaborators across campus. Challenges remain, however, in maximizing the benefit of the “big data” era. In particular, access to clinical nursing data through the Institute for Clinical and Translational Science is spotty (the clinical data warehouse lacks some needed fields) and time- and labor-intensive.

Regarding collaboration to promote interdisciplinary research, the CON’s lack of lab space is a barrier. There is no dedicated lab space for CON faculty in microbiome and genetics. Areas of current CON research that would lend themselves especially well to collaboration with other colleges include microbiome and maternal child health. The CON wants to be more deeply involved in maternal child health with the CCOM, but it was reported that some dynamic is causing a barrier.

III. Lifelong learning opportunities

The CON has several programs (both degree and certificate) to provide opportunities for lifelong learning across the stages of nursing careers. The CON has a widely recognized RN to BSN program that is offered online. In Spring 2021 the CON will pilot a U2G (undergraduate to graduate) program that will allow RN-BSN students to continue their educational journey into the CON’s DNP Program. The CON anticipates that this will be favorably received.

The CON is also developing a Graduate Entry Program in which those who already have a Bachelor’s degree can earn a second degree and be eligible to take the licensure exam—effectively earning their RN and Master’s at the same time. The CON anticipates that this will be a program that can be promoted to liberal arts colleges in Iowa that do not have nursing programs. Simpson College has expressed a desire to collaborate with the CON on this program.

The CON is starting Master’s programs in 1) Nursing Administration and 2) Nursing Informatics. These are in development. As background, the CON did away with its Master’s programs in 2010 in favor of Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) programs. However, a statewide survey found significant interest in a Master’s degree in health science/administration. The CON acknowledges a need to establish non-clinical Master’s programs and anticipates that doing so could bolster enrollment in its DNP programs.

The CON also has a Clinical Nurse Leader (CNL) Master’s program which is focused on training experienced nurses in improving the quality of patient care and helping professional nurses to thrive in the health care system.

In addition to their degree granting programs, the CON also offers Post-Graduate Certificate Programs (non-degree granting). Post-graduate certificate programs build on graduate-level nursing competencies, and the courses required depend on the previous academic work of the

applicant. The specific clinical requirements in the certificate programs also depend on each student's previous background. Post-graduate certificates include Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP), Pediatric Nurse Practitioner (PNP), Adult/Gerontology Nurse Practitioner (AGNP), Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP) Post-Graduate Certificate, and dual certification in FNP with PMHNP, PNP with PMHNP, and AGNP with PMHNP.

IV. Prospective new curricular partnerships and development of new joint programs

The CON currently has a 3+1 agreement with six community colleges [Des Moines Area Community College (Des Moines), North Iowa Area Community College (Mason City), Southwestern Community College (Creston), Southeastern Community College (Burlington), Eastern Iowa Community Colleges (Davenport, Clinton, Muscatine), Iowa Lakes Community College (Estherville)] in the state and is working with an additional four community colleges [Northwest Iowa Community College (Sheldon), Indian Hills Community College (Ottumwa), Hawkeye Community College (Waterloo), and Iowa Valley Community College (Marshalltown)] to develop such agreements. The agreements allow students to be admitted to the CON RN-BSN Program during their final semester of their ADN program, providing a seamless transition. The largest barrier to implementing these agreements is the existing curriculum of the community college ADN programs—some include college coursework that meets the CON's requirements more readily, while others may require students to complete additional courses as a part of their community college plan. Several colleges have actually made changes to their curriculums in order to participate. The colleges that have "ladder programs" (which allow seamless progression of individuals admitted to LPN Program to progress into the ADN Program) have presented the largest challenge due primarily to the regulations of the Iowa Department of Education for the number of credit hours that can be included in the program.

Several CON faculty, as well as UIHC nurse administrators, discussed the need for establishing a CON nurse midwifery program, as there is a need for midwives in Iowa's rural areas. There is a clear belief by the CON that the appropriate entry-level degree for this is at the doctorate level. However, the CON does not have its own program in the hospital, so the CON would be dependent on the CCOM Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology to provide the clinical aspects of the program. The CCOM has expressed that the appropriate entry-level degree for a midwifery program is a Master's. It was reported that this disagreement over the appropriate degree level is blocking the whole initiative. This issue could benefit from intervention by Provost to resolve this conflict in order to allow the program to proceed.

CON leadership has engaged over the past year, along with the College of Public Health and the Tippie College of Business, in exploring options for a new Health or Nursing Informatics Master's program. While the engaged colleges agree broadly on the required curriculum, opportunities for collaboration are limited by the accreditation requirement of offering only an MSN. While the MSN in Nursing Informatics is currently under development and will rely on courses offered in other colleges, it will not be a jointly offered program, reducing the CON control over curriculum/availability and the external incentive for innovation.

The CON Nursing Clinical Education Center, a joint venture between the CON and the UIHC Department of Nursing Services, was lauded as an excellent environment for training nursing students and health care staff. The health sciences colleges and the UIHC had investigated and planned a shared simulation center, but that endeavor was put on hold due to financial issues. The CON would like to revisit the idea of a centralized simulation center. This represents an opportunity for intercollegiate collaboration.

One challenge faced by the CON concerns placing students in clinical rotations. The UIHC has capacity issues in placing graduate and undergraduate students in clinical rotations in the hospital. The CON has explored developing partnerships with other health care entities to secure sufficient placements and to expand their program. However, Des Moines hospitals are already saturated, as are most hospitals in Iowa's larger cities. There may be capacity in some of Iowa's rural critical access hospitals, but travel to these hospitals is an issue. Undergraduate students stated that they wanted more opportunities to shadow a variety of units because they cannot always get their first choice for clinical rotations or preceptorships at UIHC.

V. Other observations

Undergraduate nursing students expressed that requiring a health disparities class before entering the CON would be important. While there is some coursework about this topic toward the end of the curriculum, additional prerequisite curriculum would better prepare students to deal with issues of diversity and inclusion in clinical settings. On a related note, the students stated a desire for more diversity among their faculty. One student reported having to endure derogatory race/ethnicity-related statements from multiple patients during clinical rotations, and stated that earlier exposure to health disparities coursework and availability of non-White instructors would have helped immensely in dealing with these difficult situations.

END OF REPORT

Appendix. Groups Interviewed by the Review Committee

Individuals

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Groups

Senior/Administration Faculty

Tenure Track Faculty

UIHC Nurse Administration

Council of Deans and invited John Culshaw (University Librarian) and Russell Ganim (International Programs) to also interview with the deans.

RN-BSN Students

RN Students

DNP/PhD Students