June 5, 2008

Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education
One Dupont Circle, NW
Suite 530
Washington, DC 20036-1120

To: Accreditation Review Committee

Re: Site visitors’ report for California State University, Chico

The School of Nursing faculty appreciated the professional, efficient, and collegial presentation of the accreditation site visitors, headed by Dr. Heidi Taylor.

Overall, we are pleased with the site visit report and with its accuracy.

As an addendum, we are offering the following updates/clarifications:

1. Standard I-E, p. 7. An inaccuracy on the website, an inadvertent result of revamping the website with an old page included, has been corrected.

2. Standard II-B, pp. 11-14. The fiscal concerns are accurately represented. We have the following updated information.
   - The current budget planning for the campus is an overall 5% reduction for 2008-2009, followed by an additional 5% reduction the following year. For the coming year, 5% of our current budget is approximately $78,907. The School of Nursing will carry over about $8,000 from this year’s budget, to help offset that decrease; the decision to defer three tenure track hires will save about $114,000 (the difference between tenure track salaries and part-time salaries, to cover the required teaching loads). We feel we can weather the projected cuts with little impact on our programs, though elective courses may be impacted.
   - We were successful in getting approval to implement new course fees for each clinical course which uses the simulation center. Student fees will generate about $8000 per year, which will fully cover the costs of the simulation technician hours for our students. This amount is not enough to sustain the entire center, but does help.
   - Two grants were pending, either of which would provide substantial support for sustaining and growing the simulation center. One of those grants was not funded; we are still waiting for the outcome on the second grant.
   - Two proposals to local hospitals which would provide for support of the technician’s salary are pending.
   - We have a major simulation conference for planned for August, to provide advanced training in pediatrics. This conference is funded by a
grant, and will generate another $10,000 in income for support of the simulation center.

Through such endeavors, we believe we can keep the center running, though probably not full-time, and will have no provision for new manikin purchases. In summary, although California’s budget picture is not rosy, we do believe we will survive, and will continue to deliver quality programs, including simulation experiences.

3. Standard II-E, p. 16. The visitors reported that the faculty and director were not concerned about the ratio of part-time to full-time faculty. It is more accurate to say that we are not concerned about the quality of education being delivered with the existing ratio; we are, however, concerned about the extra burden placed on tenured/tenure track faculty to perform all faculty governance roles and committee work, while coordinating the roles of so many part-time faculty. We aim to achieve a ratio of 70 percent tenured/tenure track to 30 percent part-time, and have a five-year hiring plan to achieve that ratio. Progress on that plan is temporarily in abeyance, due to the current fiscal crisis. Though we have 3 new tenure track positions approved, we will defer making these hires until the budget stabilizes, continuing to rely on our qualified part-time pool, which allows us to operate at less cost during the coming year.

4. Standard III-D, p. 23. The new course proposal for NUR 647P, adding a professional paper option as a culminating activity for the master’s program, has been fully approved and will be offered to students in Fall, 2009.

Thank you for the opportunity to update and clarify the site visit report. We look forward to the Board’s review.

Sincerely,

Sherry D. Fox
Director
May 9, 2008

Sherry D. Fox, PhD
Director
School of Nursing
California State University, Chico
400 West First Street, Holt Hall, Room 369
Chico, CA 95929-0200

Dear Dr. Fox:

Enclosed is the report of the evaluation team from the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) that recently reviewed the baccalaureate and master's degree programs in nursing at California State University, Chico. I hope you find it to be an accurate representation of your programs.

You now have an opportunity to review the team's report and respond in several ways. First, if there are errors of fact or misinterpretations of data, we would appreciate it if you would identify these. Second, we invite you to respond in writing to the team's report. If you would like to offer comments that agree or disagree with the team's findings, as opposed to factual differences, this would be the appropriate place to state these. If there is any additional information you believe important for the CCNE Board of Commissioners to have in order to make a well informed decision about accreditation of your programs, you should include it in this letter. In the event that you choose not to respond to the report, please let us know that in writing.

While changes will not be made to the team's report, a copy of your response will be appended to the report when it is distributed to the Accreditation Review Committee and, then, to the CCNE Board of Commissioners. Please note that your response also will be shared with the evaluation team. By June 6, 2008, please submit an original plus 18 paper copies (double-sided) of your written response. Please also submit your complete response (including any cover letter, attachments, etc.) on one diskette or compact disc (CD) in a single file, labeled with institution name, city and state. We ask that you submit the information on the diskette to CCNE in a Microsoft Word, Word Perfect or Adobe PDF format.

The team's report and your response to it will be considered at the meeting of the Accreditation Review Committee on July 24-26, 2008. This committee will formulate a recommendation about accreditation, which will be considered by the CCNE Board at its meeting on September 25-27, 2008. The Board will make an accreditation decision about your programs at that meeting. Within 30 days of the Board meeting, CCNE will notify you and the chief executive officer of your institution of the accreditation decision. A copy of the team's report that you are receiving now, along with your response to it, will be sent to the chief executive officer, as well.

Again, I would like to thank you and your colleagues for inviting CCNE to evaluate your nursing programs as part of the accreditation review process. If you have any questions at this point, please let us know.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Jennifer Butlin, EdD
Director
EVALUATION TEAM REPORT ON THE ACCREDITATION REVIEW
OF THE BACCALAUREATE AND MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAMS IN NURSING
AT
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, CHICO

COMMISSION ON COLLEGIATE NURSING EDUCATION
ON-SITE EVALUATION: APRIL 9-11, 2008
EVALUATION TEAM:
Heidi Taylor, PhD, RN, Team Leader
Kaye Ann Herth, PhD, RN, FAAN
Kathleen Thompson, PhD, RN, CS
Amy Lesniewski, MS, RN
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Introduction

This report presents the findings of the evaluation team from the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE), the accrediting body devoted exclusively to the evaluation of baccalaureate and master's degree program in nursing, regarding the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) and Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) programs at California State University, Chico and their compliance with CCNE's standards for accreditation. The baccalaureate and master's programs were granted initial accreditation by CCNE in 2003 for a five year period.

California State University, Chico (CSU, Chico) is one of 23 campuses in the largest university system in the world, the California State University (CSU) System. CSU, Chico is the second oldest campus in the CSU System. This campus serves the largely rural population in Northeastern California covering a 12 county area and 33,000 square miles. The university began as a normal school in 1887 and has experienced several name changes over the years. The university joined the CSU System in 1972.

The university enrolls approximately 15,920 students (including 1,472 graduate students) from 39 states and 48 nations and employs over 1,800 faculty and staff. CSU, Chico is governed by the Chancellor and the Board of Trustees of CSU System. CSU, Chico is led by a university president who is advised by a university advisory board to ensure "two-way communication between the university and its constituents" (2007-09 university catalog, p. 24). The Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) reaffirmed accreditation in 1996, conducted a site visit in Spring 2007 and reviewed the university for capacity and preparatory in 2007. WASC will review the educational effectiveness of the university in 2009.

The university is organized into three colleges of liberal arts and sciences: the College of Behavioral Sciences, the College of Humanities and Fine Arts, and the College of Natural Sciences; and four colleges of professional studies: the College of Agriculture, the College of Business, the College of Communication and Education, and the College of Engineering; as well as the School of Graduate, International, and Interdisciplinary Studies. Additional
programs such as Honors and General Studies are managed through the provost's office. The School of Nursing (SON) is organized within the College of Natural Sciences.

The BSN program at CSU, Chico was established in 1952 and was first accredited by the National League for Nursing (NLN) in 1958. The program has maintained full accreditation since that time. The MSN program was established in 1970 and was first accredited by NLN in 1998. In 2003, both programs were accredited by CCNE. The program offers the RN-BSN option (since 1999) and the master’s program (since 2004) via on-line educational methods. The BSN program was last reviewed by the California Board of Registered Nursing (CBORN) in 2005 and has full approval. The program will be reviewed again by the CBORN in 2009.

At the time of the on-site evaluation, 246 students were enrolled in the generic BSN program, 51 students were enrolled in the RN-BSN program, and 27 students were enrolled in the master's program. An on-line, LVN to BSN program is in development. The program reported that there are 13 full-time and 24 part-time faculty members employed by the SON. Students attend classes on the Chico campus, the Simulation Center located at Enloe Hospital near the campus, and at affiliated clinical agencies around the region.

There was no evidence that the program informed constituents of the opportunity to provide input to CCNE prior to the on-site evaluation. The director of the SON was unable to provide verbal or written confirmation that such notification occurred when asked. CCNE received no letters regarding the program from constituents prior to or during the on-site evaluation.

The team was afforded full cooperation in its efforts to assess the programs and to verify the self-study document. The team would like to take this opportunity to thank program and university representatives for their hospitality and consideration during the on-site evaluation.
Meeting of CCNE Standards

While visiting the campus in Chico and the SON's affiliated clinical agencies, the evaluation team had an opportunity to interview school and university officials, program faculty and staff, students, alumni, and community representatives. The team reviewed information in the self-study document and in the resource room, as well as other materials provided at its request. In addition, the team also observed classroom and clinical activities. The following assessments were made regarding compliance with the Standards for Accreditation of Baccalaureate and Graduate Nursing Programs by the BSN and the MSN programs at the institution.

STANDARD I. PROGRAM QUALITY:
MISSION AND GOVERNANCE

The mission, goals, and expected outcomes of the program are congruent with those of the parent institution, reflect professional nursing standards and guidelines, and consider the needs and expectations of the community of interest – all in the pursuit of the continuing advancement and improvement of the program. Policies of the parent institution and nursing program clearly support the program's mission, goals, and expected outcomes. The faculty and students of the program are involved in the governance of the program and in the ongoing efforts to improve program quality.

This standard is met for the baccalaureate program.
This standard is met for the master's program.

I-A. The mission, goals, and expected outcomes of the program are written, congruent with those of the parent institution, and consistent with professional nursing standards and guidelines for the preparation of nursing professionals.

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Rationale:
According to the self-study, the mission of the SON is to prepare graduates as generalists in professional nursing, as educators, and as leaders/managers for diverse healthcare settings. This mission is congruent with the university's mission: "to be known for the purposeful integration of liberal and applied learning that provides our students with the knowledge, skills, and moral and intellectual virtues that form the basis of life-long learning and public service" (self-study, p. 1; SON Student Guidelines – BSN, p. 1; Student Guidelines, RN, p. 1; and Graduate Student Guidelines, p. 2). At the time of the on-site evaluation, the university president, in his fourth year at the university, and the provost, in her first year at the university, shared a new academic plan that has been developed over the past year. This plan, which is near formal adoption, sets forth the mission, "to serve Northern California, the state, the nation, and the global community through excellence in learning, scholarship, creativity, and public engagement (Academic Plan: Penultimate Draft 2-18-08). The new academic plan complements the strategic plan for the university, which was revised in 2006.

The SON baccalaureate program is guided by the American Nurses Association's (ANA) Code of Ethics with Interpretive Statements (2001), ANA's Nursing Scope and Standards of Practice (2004), and the American Association of Colleges of Nursing's (AACN) The Essentials of Baccalaureate Education for Professional Nursing Practice (The Baccalaureate Essentials) (1998). The graduate program is guided by AACN's The Essentials of Master's Education for Advanced Practice Nursing (The Master's Essentials) (1996) and the National League for Nursing's (NLN) Core Competencies for Nurse Educators, (2005). The mission, goals, and expected outcomes for both programs are consistent with the selected professional standards.

I-B. The mission, goals, and expected outcomes of the program are reviewed periodically and revised, as appropriate, to reflect professional standards and guidelines.

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Rationale:
The mission, goals, and expected outcomes for the BSN program have been revised and are currently pending final approval of the faculty. These revisions are in response to the university's new academic plan currently being finalized under the provost's direction and the university strategic plan, which was revised in 2005-06. The revised BSN student learning outcomes were approved by the faculty in August 2007 and are reflected in the self-study document (p. 3).

The mission, goals, and expected outcomes for the MSN program were reviewed and revised in 2007, and, as part of a university effort to review graduate programs, were submitted to the University Graduate Council in Spring 2008. The revised statements include a mission statement, program goals, and student learning outcomes. There was evidence of regular review of the mission, goals, and expected outcomes for both programs.

I-C. The mission, goals, and expected outcomes of the program are reviewed periodically and revised, as appropriate, to reflect the needs and expectations of the community of interest.

Compliance Concerns?   Baccalaureate:  No  
                         Master's:     No

Rationale:
The program director and the faculty consider the needs of the community of interest as they review the mission, goals, and expected outcomes. The current evaluation plan does not specify the frequency of this review. The SON faculty reported that the community of interest for the strategic planning process is the university (assuring congruence with the university's strategic plan), the CSU system, and the employers and recipients of care in the region. The SON's mission and goals are reflective of the needs and expectations of the community of interest. For example, based upon the workforce and educational access needs of the rural population in Northern California, the program is developing an LVN-BSN program for on-line delivery and converted the MSN program from traditional to on-line delivery. Additionally, the advisory board recommended changes to the leadership component of the BSN program, and the faculty adjusted a student learning outcome related
to leadership so that students exit the program with a broader experience in nursing management.

I-D. Roles of the faculty and students in the governance of the program are clearly defined and enable meaningful participation.

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Rationale:
The director is responsible for the overall operation of the SON and reports to the dean of the College of Natural Sciences. The faculty participate in governance of the SON according to the bylaws established by the faculty. Full-time faculty are required to attend all faculty meetings and have voting privileges. Part-time faculty participate in meetings and have voice, but no vote. The part-time and full-time faculty reported that they have many opportunities to participate in decision making, that consensus is sought, and that even when they disagree, there is mutual respect and collegiality. The faculty conduct the work of the school through five standing committees, two ad hoc committees, and several other avenues such as "area" meetings. Nursing faculty are well represented on university and college level committees. Some faculty reported that they seek out committee responsibilities even though they are already tenured and do not need additional service activities to achieve tenure. These faculty members expressed satisfaction with their involvement in the university through their committee work and considered it a personal and professional benefit to participate.

Nursing students are elected for yearly appointments to faculty meetings. Students in different venues during the on-site evaluation reported several examples of their involvement in decision-making at various levels and expressed satisfaction with their level of participation. For example, one student discussed her role as a representative to the curriculum committee and was articulate about her involvement in a particular curricular decision.
I-E. Documents and publications are accurate. Any references in promotional materials to the program’s offerings, outcomes, accreditation/approval status, academic calendar, admission policies, grading policies, degree completion requirements, tuition, and fees are accurate.

Compliance Concerns?  
Baccalaureate: No  
Master’s: No

Rationale:  
Documents and publications accurately reflect the programs’ offerings, outcomes, academic calendar, admission policies, grading policies, degree completion requirements, tuition and fees. The team noted that although the accreditation status with CCNE was accurate on most Web pages, there was one Web page discovered prior to the on-site evaluation that indicated the graduate program was accredited by the “National League for Nursing.” This information was shared with the director of the SON who reported that this was an oversight that would be corrected immediately. She believed this was related to the launching of a completely revised university Website two weeks prior to our visit, and older Web pages may have inadvertently been launched with the new Website. No other exceptions to accuracy were noted by the team.

I-F. Policies of the parent institution and the nursing program are congruent with and support the mission, goals, and expected outcomes of the program; these policies are fair, equitable, published, and are reviewed and revised as necessary to reflect ongoing improvement. These policies include, but are not limited to, those relative to student recruitment, admission, and retention.

Compliance Concerns?  
Baccalaureate: No  
Master’s: No

Rationale:  
The on-site evaluation team found ample evidence that the policies of the parent institution and the nursing program are congruent. Policies of all programs are well-defined in student handbooks that are specific to each program. An exception is that the nursing program utilizes a point system for the competitive admission to the SON BSN program that differs
from the university admission process and is more rigorous. Policies are fair and equitable and are published in a variety of documents and on the Website; there was evidence that the faculty review and revise these policies as necessary. Students reported that they are familiar with the policies and procedures of the programs and know how to locate them if they have a question. There was no evidence of unfair application of policies and procedures.
STANDARD II. PROGRAM QUALITY: INSTITUTIONAL COMMITMENT AND RESOURCES

The parent institution demonstrates ongoing commitment and support. The institution makes available resources to enable the program to achieve its mission, goals, and expected outcomes. The faculty, as a resource of the program, enables the achievement of the mission, goals, and expected outcomes of the program.

This standard is met for the baccalaureate program.
This standard is met for the master's program.

II-A. The parent institution and program provide and support an environment that encourages faculty teaching, scholarship, service, and practice in keeping with the mission, goals, and expected outcomes of the program.

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Rationale:
CSU, Chico elaborates strategic priorities in the strategic plan that delineates the university’s commitment to high quality teaching, scholarship and service. The SON adds the expectation for currency in practice as an element of the faculty role. The university's strategic priorities are included in the self-study, Appendix I, and were evident in numerous other documents available to the evaluation team. According to the self-study (p. 11), review of university documents (the Strategic Plan, the Academic Plan) and interviews with university representatives, teaching is the central mission of the university and the highest priority for faculty. Each department at CSU, Chico determines its own standards for teaching effectiveness. The SON embraces Chickering and Garrison’s (1987) principles of teaching as the foundation for evaluating teaching effectiveness. Effective teaching includes the use of current theory, appropriate teaching methods, effective use of clinical practice, assessment of student outcomes, participation in curriculum and program development, and effective student advising. The normal workload for full-time faculty is 15 units each semester. Teaching assignments are made for 12 units with three units of reduced load provided for advising, committee work, and scholarship. For new tenure track faculty,
additional release time is provided for the first two years; thus new faculty teach nine units as they learn the role and prepare courses. This practice was evident for the five most recent new hires in the SON. Additional administrative types of responsibilities such as coordinating a program may result in additional reductions in the teaching load.

Faculty have access to on-campus and other forms of development activities to enhance their teaching effectiveness, and there was evidence of strong mentorship among senior faculty for junior faculty. The university maintains a Center of Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) operated out of the provost’s office. The CELT provides internal funding for projects, faculty travel to conferences, and awards to improve and/or reward teaching effectiveness. Three SON faculty have benefited from this funding. The Technology and Learning Program supports and empowers faculty to utilize technology toward enhancing learning outcomes. Many free workshops are provided to faculty each month, and additional resources are made available to faculty. Additionally, the CSU chancellor’s office provides other incentives for teaching innovations; two of the SON faculty have received small grants from that source to support the development of information competency in the curriculum and service learning across the curriculum.

Scholarship is considered a major component of professional growth and achievement and each department at CSU, Chico has the authority to define the elements of effective scholarship for its faculty. Boyer’s (1970) model of scholarship is followed in the SON, and includes participation in research, publication, development of teaching modules, professional presentations, grant development, academic development (such as personal progress toward the doctoral degree), and national certification. There was evidence of strong mentoring in the area of scholarship between senior and junior faculty. The doctoral degree is not required for tenure track positions, but it is required for the rank of full professor. Pursuit of the doctoral degree is considered scholarly productivity by the SON and the university. Four faculty members have completed doctoral degrees while teaching and were supported by sabbatical leaves, grant funding, leaves without pay, and flexible work schedules. Two tenure track and two part-time faculty are currently enrolled in doctoral programs.

The Office of Research and Sponsored Programs assists faculty in securing and managing internal and external funding. There are four external grants currently being managed for
the SON. The faculty reported that the state allocation for faculty development is sufficient to support faculty travel for presentations and conferences.

Service and practice are also required elements of the faculty performance. Support for release time is provided in the workload. Additional consideration is given for faculty who have major responsibilities for national organizations. For example, one of the SON faculty is currently serving as the President of Sigma Theta Tau, International and has received a two-year sabbatical to support her in that role. Faculty teaching schedules are arranged to allow for one day per week of clinical practice, which may be paid or volunteer. Faculty reported satisfaction with this arrangement.

II-B. Fiscal and physical resources are sufficient to enable the program to fulfill its mission, goals, and expected outcomes. These resources are reviewed, revised, and improved as needed.

Compliance Concerns?

Baccalaureate: Yes

Master's: Yes

Rationale:
As a member of the CSU system, the university is allocated funds based upon legislative action. The budget is allocated among the CSU system universities by the chancellor’s office. The funds are then further allocated by the university president to the colleges and other units within CSU, Chico. The deans of the colleges have full discretion on the further allocations of funds within their college. In the College of Natural Sciences, the dean described a collaborative process for determining the allocation of funding between the departments and the SON in the college, based primarily on expected enrollments; this process was verified by the president, the provost, and the program director. The dean, who came in 2001, has supported more involvement of the department chairs and school's director in the budgeting process. This was confirmed by the SON director and was described as a fair process.

According to the director, nursing faculty salaries compare favorably to the reported salaries in AACN Faculty Salary Reports, although the director reported concern over the lower average salary of lecturers. These are typically part-time faculty who also work in the
service arena. Over the years, this group has been a "stable and committed pool" of well-qualified faculty. According to the director, service salaries are becoming more competitive, making it increasingly difficult to maintain and recruit a highly qualified part-time faculty group.

Given ongoing state mandated budget reductions, the program is facing continued budget constraints. There was evidence in recent faculty meeting minutes that the faculty are considering how to manage the programs with fewer resources. For example, the minutes of the faculty meeting on January 24, 2008, reflected a conversation about a potential 10 percent budget cut and the possibility of cutting some courses from the schedule. In the minutes from February 15, 2008, the faculty discuss a 2.5 percent reduction and the possibility of reducing RN-BSN courses was considered. On March 7, 2008, the minutes reflected that the budget reductions could be 7.5 percent, but that the cuts may be closer to 5 percent over the next two years, and that the provost has indicated her commitment to make more strategic cuts than to make across the board cuts in all programs. These minutes reflected that the program is considering not offering the one unit NCLEX-RN prep course, cutting the externship program, and limiting or halting admissions to the RN-BSN program. (The RN-BSN program was identified by the external constituents of the program as a program that needs to grow.)

During the on-site evaluation, the anticipated budget cut was reported in the 5 percent range. Also during the on-site evaluation, the director informed the team that she intended to place a moratorium on filling the existing three faculty vacancies in order to meet the anticipated budget reductions. She reported that she based this decision on the need to decrease the budget, and, at least in part, on the lack of sufficient applicants to the available positions. The faculty and director have capped admissions to the programs. The CSU system has identified the nursing program as one of several "impacted programs," which means that there are more applicants to the program than can be admitted because of resources. This admission cycle, the BSN program considered 292 applicants for 40 slots. Faculty reported that since 1990, when the tenured faculty FTE's were reduced from 23 to 13, there has been no increase in tenure track/tenured FTE's, despite the growth of more than 200 students and the development of new on-line programs. This growth has been accommodated by part-time faculty. Faculty further reported that although the "work is
getting done”, resources are strained. The ability to admit students to the LVN to BSN program that is currently in development is questionable given current resource constraints.

According to the faculty and the director, space is “cramped” for faculty offices, classrooms, and meeting rooms in the SON. This is not unique to the SON, as university administrators universally reported space constraints for all programs on the campus. Faculty offices are small and modestly furnished, and some faculty (part-time) share offices. The on-campus nursing laboratory is a single room that also serves as a classroom and has a few hospital beds as well as tables and chairs. The available patient care technology on-campus, such as IV infusion pumps and patient monitoring systems is minimal. The nursing department utilizes two primary classrooms that have sufficient seats for the students and all are equipped as “smart” classrooms.

The on-campus laboratory is augmented by a new and well-equipped Simulation Center located at the Enloe Hospital a few blocks from campus, which provides access to high fidelity mannequins and simulation experiences two days per week. This facility is shared by the local community college’s ADN program and the partner hospitals. It is located in a building that is currently not used by the hospital. The Simulation Center, which was initiated through grant funding, is at risk for ongoing sustainability now that the grant has ended. The director informed the evaluation team that ongoing funding for the Simulation Center is available through June, 2008, and that there are two grant proposals pending that, if funded, will sustain the Simulation Center beyond June. The center coordinator reported that additional funding has been received to operate until September, 2008. In discussions with the advisory board, the constituents reported that they trusted the faculty and the director “to find a way to make it happen”. The director and faculty have been actively seeking funding, and resources are “trickling in”. The director has proposed a “fairly radical” fee proposal that will support the Simulation Center, but that proposal has not yet been approved. University administrators expressed understanding of the role of the Simulation Center to help the program achieve its mission, goals and expected outcomes when there is limited clinical space in the region for clinical instruction. No specific strategies for ongoing funding were offered. If the hospital needs to expand to the building where the Simulation Center is currently housed, the ongoing location of the Simulation Center is uncertain. One option reported by the director will be to move it to campus and eliminate the current media center in the SON.
The Simulation Center and the on-campus laboratory are augmented by a media center which is available only to nursing students with computers and a variety of instructional materials, including videos and DVD's, computer assisted instructional modules, and other media. No concerns regarding the effectiveness of this resource were expressed by faculty or students.

II-C. Academic support services are sufficient to ensure quality and are evaluated on a regular basis to meet program and student needs.

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**Rationale:**

**Resources**

The academic support services at the university are sufficient to ensure quality programs and to meet student needs. There was evidence that these resources are reviewed regularly. The library provides high quality and current resources to all students through traditional and on-line access. The library provides over 25,000 full-text journal subscriptions on-line and over 5,000 print journals. The library resources available to nursing majors are readily available to students through a Web page that links students to relevant and frequently used databases, the disciplines as well as other resources. The SON has one faculty member who serves as the library liaison, and a library employee is specifically assigned to manage the needs of the SON. Each department is provided discretionary money to acquire new library holdings according to a formula that considers the number of majors enrolled and the cost of books.

Every four years, the librarians weed the collection by doing a first “cull”, and then notifying faculty and the "book chair" of the college of the opportunity to review the cull and provide further suggestions for discarding outdated items. The library is a hub of student activity on campus. The librarian noted that the gate count for entering the library decreased by only 12 percent when its resources were made widely available on-line.
There is a broad range of resources available to students to assist them in managing their academic, personal, financial and social lives. These include a center for academic advising, information management resources, recreation services, child-care, legal services, public performances, art galleries, career placement and planning, and student organizations. Students and faculty reported a high degree of satisfaction with student support services.

II-D. The chief nurse administrator is academically and experientially qualified and is vested with the authority required to accomplish the mission, goals, and expected outcomes. The chief nurse administrator provides effective leadership to the nursing unit in achieving its mission, goals, and expected outcomes.

Compliance Concerns?

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Rationale:
The director of the SON is academically and experientially qualified to lead the program. The director holds a BSN, a Master of Arts in Nursing and a PhD in Medical Sociology. She has been a faculty member at CSU, Chico since 1974. The director serves in three year terms elected by her faculty. She has served as the director for 17 years and has been repeatedly re-elected by her peers to serve in that role. She is active in many state and local professional organizations. The director was highly praised for her leadership and work ethic in all interviews by constituents, faculty, students, and administrators. She is highly regarded as a fair and consistent leader, and as someone who keeps abreast of the complex issues facing nursing and nursing education. Several students and faculty commented that they chose CSU, Chico because of her. The director manages all aspects of the admission process with help from one of the two secretaries employed in the SON. She also serves as the director of the Simulation Center and manages all the data collection and analysis for the program outcomes assessment. She is known by the faculty as a good mentor and is often a co-contributor on scholarly products developed by the faculty. The director also advises students regularly and writes grants as necessary. Until last year, the director maintained a three unit teaching load, but she is currently not required to teach.
II-E. Faculty members are academically and experientially qualified and sufficient in number to accomplish the mission, goals, and expected outcomes of the program.

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Rationale:
The program representatives reported that there are 13 full-time faculty, including the director, with primary responsibility for teaching across both the BSN and MSN programs. One faculty member is on sabbatical to serve as President of Sigma Theta Tau, International, and the director does not teach, leaving 11 full-time faculty to carry out the teaching and departmental work of the SON. Seven faculty members are doctoral. Four additional faculty are on the tenure track. Faculty recruitment issues, such as interest in relocation to Chico, salary competition with the service sector, and retirements have led to the increased use of part-time faculty. There are currently 21 part-time faculty members.

All full and part-time faculty are well qualified by academic preparation and clinical expertise to provide instruction in the programs offered. These qualifications were evident in faculty curricula vitae available during the visit. Full and part-time faculty reported a high degree of collegiality among all the faculty, and that part-time faculty are very well informed by full-time faculty about all issues pertaining to the curriculum and teaching-learning practices. The faculty and director reported that there is no concern over the ratio of part-time to full-time faculty. Part-time faculty stay current in the clinical area where they teach as they are employed in clinical settings, as validated by review of personnel folders and comments from students and faculty. Full-time faculty also stay current through clinical work in the community and professional organization officer roles and work, as well as attendance at community clinical site orientations to be updated to policies, procedures, and new equipment in-services.

The faculty number is reported by program officials and faculty as sufficient to manage current work loads. The faculty reported concerns about their continued ability to contribute effectively in all areas of the faculty role in the future if the programs grow in enrollments. While the SON feels pressured to increase enrollments by the state legislature and the
broad state-wide constituency to meet state and national nursing shortage, the president,
the provost, and the dean indicated they have no expectations for the programs to grow in
light of budgetary, clinical, and faculty constraints. The advisory board reported that they do
not need more generic BSN graduates, but they reported a need for the program to grow the
RN-BSN, the LVN-BSN and master's programs in the future.

II-F. The faculty roles in teaching, scholarship, service, and practice are identified
clearly and are congruent with the mission, goals, and expected outcomes of the
program.

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Rationale:
The faculty roles in teaching, scholarship, and service are well defined in the Faculty
Personnel Policies and Procedures (2007-08), the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA)
for California State University, Chico and the SON Personnel Plan. All faculty, including
part-time faculty, are informed of the criteria for evaluation in the university's Faculty
Personnel Policies and Procedures. The required activities for promotion and tenure of
nursing faculty are explicated in the SON Plan. Expectations for faculty practice were not
evident in the three documents mentioned above, but faculty expressed various ways in
which they engage in practice, including, but not limited to, volunteer activities, outside
employment (particularly part-time faculty), research, and clinical supervision of students.
Faculty evaluations and tenure portfolios provided evidence that the expectations are clearly
communicated to the faculty, and that faculty are evaluated according to those expectations.
STANDARD III. PROGRAM QUALITY: CURRICULUM AND TEACHING-LEARNING PRACTICES

The curriculum is developed in accordance with the mission, goals, and expected outcomes of the program and reflects professional nursing standards and guidelines and the needs and expectations of the community of interest. There is congruence between teaching-learning experiences and expected outcomes. The environment for teaching, learning, and evaluation of student performance fosters achievement of the expected outcomes.

This standard is met for the baccalaureate program.
This standard is met for the master's program.

Ill-A. The curriculum is developed, implemented, and revised to reflect clear statements of expected student learning outcomes that are consistent with professional nursing standards and guidelines and congruent with the program's mission, goals, and expected outcomes.

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Rationale:
The current mission of the nursing department is to prepare graduates as generalists in professional nursing and as leaders/managers for diverse health care settings. The SON is in the process of revising the mission and program outcomes to reflect the recent revision of the university's and college's mission statements. The program goals have been revised but have not been approved. The six expected student learning outcomes, which were revised and accepted by the faculty in August 2007, are congruent with the program's mission, goals, and the required and selected professional nursing standards and guidelines. For example, the expected outcome of "applying knowledge of the changing health care delivery system in fostering the health of diverse persons in their environment" is consistent with the mission of preparing graduates as leaders/managers in diverse health care settings.
The MSN program curriculum prepares nurse educators with an emphasis on achieving advanced proficiency in adult health and a focus on systematic integration of knowledge, theory, and skills for the advanced practice nurse. This purpose is congruent with the program's mission, goals, and expected outcomes. There are seven expected student outcomes for the graduate program, and these are consistent with the program's mission, goals, and expected outcomes. For example, the outcome to "incorporate advanced knowledge, theory, research, and information competency in planning, implementing, and evaluating health care through a variety of advanced nursing roles" is consistent with the mission to prepare nurse educators as leaders for diverse healthcare settings. There was sufficient evidence in faculty and graduate committee minutes that the mission, goals, and expected outcomes are reviewed.

III-B. The curriculum is developed, implemented, and revised to reflect professional nursing standards and guidelines. These standards and guidelines are clearly evident within the curriculum structure and expected learning outcomes. Course/unit/level outcomes are consistent with the roles for which the program is preparing its graduates.

1. The baccalaureate curriculum incorporates knowledge and skills identified in The Essentials of Baccalaureate Education for Professional Nursing Practice (AACN, 1998).

Compliance Concerns? Baccalaureate: No

Rationale:
The program offers three options for the BSN degree; the generic BSN, the RN to BSN, and the LVN to BSN. Each of the options has the same student learning objectives. The self-study document indicates that the baccalaureate curriculum incorporates the five core components in The Baccalaureate Essentials: liberal education, professional values, core competencies, core knowledge, and role development. An example of a professional value incorporated into the curriculum is the concept of caring, which the faculty have identified as a core concept. All clinical courses incorporate caring in the evaluation process, and students were able to verbalize the importance of caring in the nurse/patient relationship. Other key concepts that are clearly threaded throughout the curriculum are communication
both verbal and written, critical thinking, assessment, technical skills, and role development.

2. The master's curriculum incorporates knowledge and skills identified in The Essentials of Master's Education for Advanced Practice Nursing (AACN, 1996). Any specialty standards adopted for the master's program are incorporated into the curriculum. In addition, nurse practitioner program curricula demonstrate incorporation of the Criteria for Evaluation of Nurse Practitioner Programs (NTF, 2002).

Compliance Concerns? Master's: No

Rationale:
The Master's Essentials were used in development of curriculum content, and the seven core graduate curriculum components were evident in each course syllabus. For example human diversity and social issues were found within a variety of courses including N640, N647, N650, and N657. In addition, course objectives were clearly linked with The Master's Essentials. Student learning outcomes for the graduate program are based upon the graduate core curriculum content specifically identified in The Master's Essentials. In Fall 2007, the graduate committee adopted the Core Competencies for Nursing Educators (NLN, 2005) guidelines as a standard for the specific nurse educator courses. Incorporation of these standards was evident upon review of N650 and N657 syllabi. Review of on-line student postings related to these competencies demonstrated the students' knowledge and understanding of these competencies.

III-C. The curriculum is logically structured to meet expected program outcomes.

1. The baccalaureate curriculum builds upon a foundation of the arts, sciences, and humanities.

Compliance Concerns? Baccalaureate: No

Rationale:
The baccalaureate curriculum builds on the foundation of the arts, science, and humanities. Students are required to complete coursework in the basic sciences (anatomy, physiology,
microbiology, and chemistry), communication (English and speech), critical thinking, nutrition, and social sciences (child/human development, psychology, and anthropology/sociology) that provide the basis to begin and progress through the nursing sequence. After completing the general education and prerequisite courses for nursing, students begin six semesters of nursing theory and clinical courses. Nursing content is structured from the simple to the complex, and students are required to build on the information from previous courses.

In the first semester, students are introduced to the nursing role including information and application of interpersonal communication, the nursing process, and critical thinking. The second year of the curriculum provides the biophysical foundation for the application of decision making and skills in the care of acutely ill adults, pregnant women, and children. The final year of the program requires the student to demonstrate an integration of decision-making, communication, and skills in complex and high risk situations.

2. The master's curriculum builds on the baccalaureate level foundation.

Compliance Concerns Master’s: No

Rationale:
The master's degree curriculum builds upon the knowledge and competencies of the baccalaureate-prepared nurse. The curriculum is divided into core course, adult health courses (didactic and practicum), educator courses (didactic and practicum), and a culminating activity (thesis/project). The MSN curriculum focuses on systematic integration of knowledge, theory, and skills for advanced practice with a specialty focus on Adult Health and a role focus on Nurse Educator. Graduate course content and learning experiences essential to performance in advanced nursing roles are logically integrated throughout the curriculum. Review of syllabi verified that courses within the MSN curriculum (N620: Nursing Research and Theory; N640: Advanced Theoretical Concepts for Nursing Care of the Adult; and N647: Advanced Practicum for Adult Health Nursing Care) draw upon the foundational courses and concepts within the BSN program.

Prerequisites for entry into the MSN program include completion of an accredited baccalaureate nursing program, including public health nursing; a current registered nurse
license in California; at least two years of clinical practice as an RN; and an introductory three-unit course in statistics within the preceding five-year period. The revised on-line curriculum eliminated elective cognate courses that were previously taken outside of nursing, in order to add a course focused on technology in nursing, and to provide more focus on nursing education theory and practice.

**III-D. Curriculum and teaching-learning practices are evaluated at regularly scheduled intervals to foster ongoing improvement.**

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**Rationale:**
The curriculum and the teaching and learning practices are reviewed in a variety of ways. The faculty participate in monthly faculty meetings, graduate committee meetings, area meetings, and other venues to consider student input into the curriculum and the teaching and learning practices. Courses are evaluated at the end of each semester. Minor changes are managed at the semester level for the undergraduate program and in the graduate committee for the graduate program. Major revisions are referred to the school's curriculum committee and, if required by university policy, to the college and university levels as appropriate.

**A motion was passed by the faculty on December 14, 2007, to conduct a comprehensive program review over a three year period.** The review is scheduled to include the syllabus, course supplements, textbooks, content, and student evaluation data as well as how the course meets the terminal objectives. There was evidence that this process began during the Spring 2008 semester. Five courses were identified in the schedule to be reviewed during that semester with the other courses spread over the next three years. Curriculum committee meeting minutes of March 28, 2008 provided data submitted by course faculty for three courses (NURS 281, 282 and 283). The primary discussion focused on content duplication and areas of omission.

MSN program course syllabi specifically outline the teaching-learning practices within each course. Review of committee minutes (graduate and faculty); end of semester course
evaluations; as well as conversation with graduate students, faculty, and the graduate program coordinator confirmed that evaluative feedback regarding teaching-learning practices are solicited (as described in the self-study document), and changes are made based on that feedback at regularly scheduled intervals. A recent example was development of a third option, writing a scholarly paper for potential publication in a peer reviewed journal, to the culminating activities from which graduate nursing students can choose. This change was based on extensive student input. The addition of NURS 647P: Nursing Professional Paper (2 units) is currently undergoing university curriculum review. It was verified that, on a set schedule, two courses within the graduate curriculum are peer reviewed and evaluated by graduate nursing faculty yearly. Use of the Rubric for On-line Instruction, developed by CSU, Chico in 2003, as one component of the evaluation criteria for on-line course review, was confirmed. This includes the evaluation of course objectives and course content for linkages to The Master’s Essentials and the recently adopted NLN Core Competencies for Nurse Educator documents.

Faculty meeting minutes and conversation with graduate faculty and the graduate program coordinator verified that the schedule of review of at least two courses by two graduate nursing faculty is being followed. Tenure track and part-time faculty are evaluated annually, including evaluation of learning strategies and course implementation, and tenured full professor faculty are formally reviewed every five years.

III-E. The didactic and clinical teaching-learning practices and learning environments support the achievement of student learning outcomes.

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Rationale:
A review of syllabi for didactic courses in the BSN program indicated that faculty utilize a wide variety of teaching methodologies including lecture, group discussion, role-play, case studies, reading assignments, student presentations, and reflective writing. Three undergraduate classes were observed, in which instructors used a variety of teaching methods including power point, use of a kidney stone experiment, small group discussions, lecture handouts, and active open questioning/dialog with the students. The students were
prepared and responded eagerly to the various knowledge and critical thinking questions posed by the instructors and contributed thoughtful questions of their own regarding the material. In addition, each didactic course is enhanced to varying degrees with Vista, a course-management system.

In interviews, students reported satisfaction with all courses except for NURS 305: Pharmacology. This was also the one course consistently identified by faculty as having low satisfaction from students and alumni, and is the only course in the generic BSN program that is totally on-line. The evaluation team assessed a sampling of the on-line courses, and NURS 305: Pharmacology, was among those assessed. Modules in this course consisted of a reading assignment and a list of the medications students were responsible to know. There were no additional learning materials identified. Faculty reported that exams in this course are not proctored. The curriculum committee minutes provided evidence that the faculty have discussed possible solutions to the concerns over this course such as incorporating pharmacology information throughout the curriculum.

CSU-Chico's SON utilizes a variety of clinical placement sites to allow students to achieve the course objectives. Students have access to patient populations that enhance their learning. Many of these sites are located across a very wide geographic region. Students may travel up to 75 miles from campus for a clinical placement. Students also reported that they are informed of the large commutes when admitted to the program, and that efforts are made to alternate assignments so that the same student is not always assigned to a site with the long commute.

In discussion with the Nursing Advisory Board, each of the agency representatives expressed willingness and excitement to be providing clinical sites for students. Preceptors reported to team members that students’ presence and participation are valued. The students reported that they feel very welcomed in most clinical settings, and when problems arise, faculty are very responsive in addressing issues.

The number of OB and acute-care pediatric sites is decreasing. To address this issue, the Simulation Center was developed. Students are able to practice skills and participate in a wide range of patient case studies using this technology. Several graduate students have complete OB and pediatric scenarios as part of their graduate coursework that have been
utilized by the undergraduate program. The simulation center fills the gap in clinical site opportunities for special populations such as pediatrics and maternal/child.

The master’s program focuses on preparing nurse educators in adult nursing through core courses, adult health (advanced practice) course, and the curriculum and instructional process (education specialty) courses. A new cohort is admitted every other year; numbers of students applying and admitted to the graduate program has increased since it was converted from classroom based to an on-line based program. Graduate students confirmed that the theory and clinical teaching-learning experiences and environments support the achievement of student learning outcomes. A variety of teaching-learning methodologies to support achievement of student learning outcomes in an on-line program was identified by the graduate students. This was also evident in the course syllabus including discussion via class bulletin board postings, numerous exercises, case study analyses, logs/journals, student presentations, and various written exercises.

Students in the 2004 and 2006 cohorts identified several strengths of the program. These were meeting together several times a semester in person; faculty who are available, flexible, and show personal interest; strong preceptors and opportunities in the two practicum experiences (N647: Advanced Practicum in Nursing Care and N657: Practicum for the Instructional Process in Nursing Education); and the movement as a cohort through the curriculum. According to the students, these strengths facilitated learning new ways of thinking and the ultimate achievement of learning outcomes. Visiting with students, faculty, and the coordinator within the simulation lab as well as review of simulation scenarios developed by graduate students in their practica in teaching supported the integral role of the regional Simulation Center to the development of the advanced practice role and achievement of student learning outcomes.

III-F. The curriculum and teaching-learning practices consider the needs and expectations of the identified community of interest.

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Rationale:
The SON Advisory Board is made up of major employers as well as representatives from a diverse, cross section of major acute care and public health care agencies that provide clinical placement for the students. The Advisory Board validated that the needs and expectations of the community of interest are considered in curriculum development and teaching-learning practices. The Advisory Board members meet yearly to provide advice and guidance to the school on curriculum, professional partnerships, research, and emerging programmatic opportunities in the region, and they communicate freely at other times with the program director.

Advisory Board members gave examples of the quick responsiveness to concerns or questions they may have. One example was the conversion of the master's program in 2004 to an almost exclusively on-line format, which was done in response to the need to increase the number of master's prepared nurses in the region and to increase accessibility for the many rural and working RNs who would otherwise be unable to pursue graduate education. A subgroup of the Advisory Board was instrumental in this decision. Students and faculty confirmed that every effort is made to accommodate proximity to the student's residence for their clinical coursework, and Advisory Board members indicated that students from their agencies/institutions are enrolled in the graduate program, and that positive changes in practice within their organization are happening as a result of their educational experience.

Faculty members in the SON are actively engaged in the community, as evidenced in review of faculty files, SON Annual Performance Reports, and communication from Advisory Board members. Faculty meet in August of each year with a local clinical site to review policy/procedures updates and other noted changes (new equipment, programs, etc.). Graduate students expressed that "faculty and the SON are highly regarded in the north state and bring innovative, evidenced based positive change to the community." The nursing program director belongs to the Northern California nurse leaders group that comprises the hospital directors and education directors in the region and is, therefore, aware of needs in the community of interest. Faculty and the SON Advisory Board verified that input from various clinical agencies is sought through a variety of means, both formal and informal, and that the "graduate students have helped the community understand the issues being faced by educational programs today."
STANDARD IV. PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS: STUDENT PERFORMANCE AND FACULTY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The program is effective in fulfilling its mission, goals, and expected outcomes. Actual student learning outcomes are consistent with the mission, goals, and expected outcomes of the program. Alumni satisfaction and the accomplishments of graduates of the program attest to the effectiveness of the program. Actual faculty outcomes are consistent with the mission, goals, and expected outcomes of the program. Data on program effectiveness are used to foster ongoing improvement.

This standard is met for the baccalaureate program.

This standard is met for the master's program.

IV-A. Student performance is evaluated by the faculty and reflects achievement of expected outcomes. Evaluation policies and procedures are defined and consistently applied.

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Rationale:
The evaluation team confirmed through interviews with students, preceptors, and faculty that student performance in all courses is evaluated by course faculty. In the baccalaureate program, course objectives/outcomes guide the evaluation of student performance in both didactic and clinical courses. All syllabi clearly reflect course assignments. The point allocation for each assignment and each section of the assignment is available in syllabi. Grading rubrics for how points are determined for both written assignments and clinical performance are available in approximately 30 percent of the courses. Students are provided feedback using Vista (course management system), written feedback either on paper or electronically, and in face-to-face evaluations. Grading scales are also provided in all syllabi. It was noted that the percent scores attributed to letter grades are not consistent across courses in both programs. For example, in one course, a student may need to earn a minimum grade of 93 for a letter grade of "A", while in other courses, the students may
need to earn a grade of 90 for the same grade. Faculty reported that it is the individual faculty member's discretion to determine the assignment of letter grades, and consistency across courses is not required. In all cases, the grading criteria for each course are clearly identified in the course syllabus. Students did not report any concerns with this practice except to say that more stringent "A" criterion makes them work harder.

In the graduate program, criteria for effective student performance were found in each graduate course syllabus, and graduate committee minutes verified that evaluation policies and procedures are defined and consistently applied. General grading policies, standards and professional performance expectations are in keeping with university's and SON's policies and are communicated to the students through the 2007-2009 university catalog and 2008 SON graduate student handbook as well as within each course syllabi. Syllabi and students confirmed that methods of evaluation are varied and include such activities as papers, on-line discussion, and faculty and preceptor observation of student performance during clinical experiences. The students also stated that they are clearly communicated. Clinical site evaluations were reviewed that are completed each semester for each graduate student by faculty members, preceptors, and students. The final grade in the practicum course is determined by the faculty member with input from the preceptor.

IV-B. Surveys and other data sources are used to collect information about student, alumni, and employer satisfaction and demonstrated achievements of graduates. Student outcome data include, but are not limited to, graduation rates, NCLEX-RN® pass rates, certification examination pass rates, and job placement rates, as appropriate.

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Rationale:
The SON utilizes the Stufflebeam education evaluation model, which has four components of evaluation; context, input, process, and product. This model has been used since the 1980s at the university. The Evaluation Grid presented in Appendix IV of the self-study document provides the framework for the evaluation process and specifies the methods and responsibilities for evaluation of students, faculty, the curriculum, and the university. The
program has collected the survey information according to the plan, and those results are presented in Appendix IV of the self-study document. Additional data from 2007-08 were made available onsite. During the on-site evaluation, the team was given a recently revised evaluation grid that includes the outcomes of program satisfaction, critical thinking, communication, nursing therapeutics, and community service as the product of the student outcome evaluation process.

Data are collected via the senior exit survey, alumni survey, the RN-BSN alumni survey, and the MSN satisfaction survey. In addition, the SON reported trend data on graduation/attrition rates, NCLEX-RN pass rates, and job placement rates for the previous three years.

IV-C. Program outcome data are analyzed to provide evidence of program effectiveness and are used to foster ongoing program improvement.

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Rationale:
The SON analyzes data to provide evidence of program effectiveness. The generic BSN program reported a graduation rate of between 91.4% and 96.2% in the period between 2004-05 and 2006-07. The RN-BSN program has a graduation rate that ranged from 45% to 66.6% in the same time period. NCLEX-RN pass rates have been 89.8% in 2004, 72.9% in 2005, 100% in 2006 and 86.8% in 2007. The undergraduate program reported job placement rates from 89% to 100% in recent years. Survey findings for the undergraduate program revealed satisfaction in the achievement of program objectives among seniors and alumni.

The MSN graduation rate has been 57% and 12.5% for the cohorts beginning in 2002 and 2004 respectively. Survey responses for the graduate program are limited due to the very small number of graduates from the program in the past five years. MSN alumni from 2004-2005 and the current cohort of master's students who have completed all the required courses indicated high levels of satisfaction with achievement of the program objectives, and several graduate students are considering doctoral education, with one recent graduate beginning a doctoral program this coming fall. The first cohorts of students admitted to the
on-line program were surveyed in Fall 2006, and scores ranged from completely satisfied to very satisfied. Data were reviewed from a follow-up survey administered in Spring 2008, that verified statistically significant improvement in satisfaction with on-line learning in most categories. Faculty reported that MSN alumni are all employed in positions as nurse educators. Review of graduate committee minutes verified a high degree of employer satisfaction with graduates.

The SON has used data from surveys, graduation rates, NCLEX-RN pass rates, and job placement rates to foster ongoing program improvement. Addressing the low graduation rate among MSN students, faculty and students identified that thesis/project completion has been a significant roadblock, with some who never complete, despite implementation of a comprehensive exam option for two cohorts of students (2002 and 2004). This solution was found to be unsatisfactory by both students and faculty and subsequently was dropped. Graduate faculty minutes indicated that additional measures were taken to address the low graduation rates for the 2004 cohort, including explicit expectations and support for thesis progression provided by faculty along with a one-unit seminar. Subsequently, two students completed the degree within three years. The project of one of these two students has been nominated for Outstanding University Thesis. The 2006 cohort of students, faculty, and graduate program committee minutes confirmed that the thesis seminar was further refined with expectations for completion of the first three chapters reinforced. These students expressed they will finish in May 2009 and felt that the changes made have been helpful.

Review of the Professional Paper Proposal Status paper and faculty and graduate committee minutes verified that an alternative to the thesis, a professional paper, passed College Academic Status and Policy Committee and is being reviewed by the university. If approved, there are plans, to implement it in Fall 2008 as the third option for a culminating experience. Other options are completion of a thesis or a project.

Review of committee minutes and interviews with faculty and students verified that feedback from recent master students related to concerns regarding on-line course tools and technical support led to improved communication between the Technology and Learning Program staff and to an increase in the assistance provided to students. This resulted in an improved satisfaction rating for the Fall 2006 student cohort.
Based upon the "uncharacteristic" drop in the NCLEX-RN pass rate in 2005, the faculty implemented a required benchmark for students to achieve on the ATI comprehensive exam and made that a requirement in the final course in the curriculum. The student performance on the ATI examination may lead to remediation as necessary. The faculty attribute the improvement of the NCLEX-RN pass rates since 2005 on these changes. Additionally, data on ESL students led to an increased focus on the success of ESL and minority students, which resulted in improved retention. Another example of using outcomes assessment for program improvement is that the graduates, alumni, and NCLEX-RN results indicated that knowledge of pharmacology concepts is one of the areas that needed improvement. Minutes from the curriculum committee and the faculty meetings demonstrated that the faculty are working to improve this area of concern.

Following the 2006 WACS accreditation visit, the university engaged in an initiative to improve student outcome evaluation processes across the university. This initiative was evident in recent revisions of student outcomes and the university’s commitment to allocate funds for a faculty assessment coordinator for each department with three units release time to carry-out assessment projects, effective Spring 2008.

IV-D. Faculty outcomes demonstrate achievement of the program’s mission, goals, and expected outcomes and enhance program quality and effectiveness.

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Rationale:
Review of personnel files as well as communication with the faculty and program director verified that faculty accomplishments in teaching are assessed annually through a campus-wide Student Evaluation of Teaching (SET) process and periodically through both peer review and review by the director and dean. Faculty complete an annual performance report that includes accomplishment in teaching, scholarship, and practice/service. Specific recommendations for potential areas to strengthen are provided by the director and dean and discussed with individual faculty during the Retention, Tenure, and Promotion Process (RTP) and through informal discussion. Clearly identified examples of faculty roles in
teaching, scholarship, and service were found to correlate to the mission, goals, and expected outcomes of the program as validated through review of personnel files.

Review of several recent annual performance reports as well as faculty vitae verified that faculty have authored numerous publications in refereed journals; presented papers and posters at professional meetings; keynoted professional conferences and meetings; and garnered local, regional, and national grant funding. The grant funding includes a $1 million dollar federal HRSA grant (1999-2004) to place the majority of the RN to BSN courses in an on-line format; $250,000 to develop a simulation center (2006-2007); $125,000 in 2006-2008 to develop and implant an on-line LVN to BSN program; and other small grants (i.e. $37,000 in AHEC Funding to develop two on-line specialty courses) to facilitate the development of the on-line MSN program, as well as elective MSN courses regional simulation workshops.

It was verified that over the past three years, there have been 40 peer-reviewed publications, including two best selling textbooks and several multi-media CD ROMS, 35 peer-reviewed presentations (12 international and 23 national), and six grants funded from external sources and five internal grant awards. Faculty and programs have achieved numerous awards including two faculty for Exemplary On-line Education on campus, the RN to BSN program received the Sigma Theta Tau International's Pinnacle Award for Technology in 2004, and a faculty member currently serves as president of the Sigma Theta Tau International Nursing Honor Society. Two tenure track and two part-time faculty are currently enrolled in doctoral programs, which will increase the percentage of doctoral prepared faculty. All university administrators who were interviewed commended the nursing faculty as role models for the rest of the university and expressed high satisfaction with their productivity and effectiveness in all areas of performance.

IV-E. The program has established policies and procedures by which it defines and reviews formal complaints; analyses of aggregate data regarding formal complaints are used to foster ongoing program improvement.

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<tr>
<th>Compliance Concerns?</th>
<th>Baccalaureate:</th>
<th>No</th>
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<td>Master's:</td>
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Rationale:
The policies and procedures for formal complaints were evident in all student publications, and students expressed knowledge of how to access the process should they need to do so. The SON has had no formal grievances or complaints filed in the past decade, and minor complaints have been handled at the level of the director. During a 2005 site visit by the California Board of Registered Nursing, the site visitor reported to the director that a clinical group expressed dissatisfaction with a clinical instructor. This matter was explored by the director who found that only two of the ten students had expressed dissatisfaction with the faculty member. The director identified the source of the dissatisfaction and was able to resolve the issue informally.