PROGRAM REVIEW REPORT

1.   **Reporting Institution** Eastern Illinois University_____

2.   **Program Reviewed**   RN to BS in Nursing_____

3.   **Date** 01/18/2019_____

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5.   **Overview**

The Nursing Program at Eastern Illinois University is committed to offering superior, flexible, and accessible undergraduate education for registered nurses pursuing a Bachelor's of Science degree in nursing. The program prepares students to provide care to meet the complex health care needs of individuals, groups, families, communities, and populations across the lifespan and in a variety of health care environments. A student-centered academic environment encourages reflective thinking that leads to the development of accountability and responsibility for lifelong learning and professional development. The RN to BS in Nursing program strengthens students' communication skills in order to enhance professional interactions, collaboration, coordination, and management of care and development of leadership roles in an evolving health care system. This reflects and promotes the mission and the vision of EIU.

Our student population are full-time employed registered nurses attending a completion degree as part-time or fulltime students. These students have varied health care backgrounds, range in age between 22-40 years and have 1 to10 ten years of nursing experience. The motivation to complete this degree is derived from personal ideals-in part from the national initiative to have the national nursing workforce to achieve baccalaureate preparation-and employer requirements.

The goals of the RN to BSN program and the intended student learning outcomes are to provide care to diverse clients/populations using evidence-based practice and evaluative nursing practice. The liberal arts component and the specific nursing curriculum promotes the integration of the learning experience in the need of lifelong learning to use knowledge and research to form an inquiry-based practice. Communication and collaboration is emphasized with the role of health care provider as a health care team member to manage, lead, and coordinate health care for the client.

6.   **Major Findings and Recommendations**

6.a   **Description and assessment of any major changes in the program [e.g., (a) changes in the overall discipline or field; (b) student demand; (c) societal needs; (d) institutional context for offering the degree; and (e) other elements appropriate to the discipline in question.**

<u>**Changes in the Discipline/Societal Needs**</u>
The continuation of the nursing shortage and the move toward the baccalaureate degree by the workforce continues to drive the need for a well-rounded nurse.
<u>**Student Demands**</u>

Current enrollment in the program is 71.This figure is expected to grow significantly as the changes in delivery and curriculum identified in section 7.1 take effect.

Institutional Context for Offering the Degree
The nontraditional student population of the working nurse force may find it difficult to attend classes in the synchronous format therefore the delivery system has moved to the asynchronous format, with each of the nursing classes being offered over a seven week format. This allows the student to focus on the class over the seven week format to master the content before moving to the next selected course. All employer and student assessment tools are available on the website, which promotes ease of program assessment. This change in delivery format expands the program to a regional or national level. Program and course information is maintained online and updated periodically.

6.b   D**escription of major findings and recommendations, including evidence of learning outcomes and identification of opportunities for program improvement;**

The program has managed to remain consistent in meeting the program and student outcomes. Satisfaction surveys of students have remained high. The most indicative change to meet student need has been the transition to a total asynchronous online format as of Fall 2018. The Program assessments indicate that outcome criteria meet the established benchmark of 90-95% in all indicated areas. These benchmarks utilized specific course assignments as direct measure and/or student surveys as indirect measures. Portfolio completion and evidence-based practice projects indicated that the student learning outcomes are being met. Continued course evaluations and survey tools have been embedded in the website to facilitate the ease of program assessment by the student and the employer/public. Active efforts have been implemented to re-establish these vital program tools. Current data collection indicates continued satisfaction with the nursing courses provided.

Current assessment items include specific performance items such as the evidence-based project, diverse population needs and cultural diversity research critiques, examinations, writing intensive assignments and others that are linked to specific course objectives that meet the program outcomes and student learning objectives. The portfolio is a culminating collection of course work that demonstrates the thoughtful consideration of how the integration of the course work has influenced the student's current nursing practice.

Student Learning Outcomes
The graduate will:
1.   Provide care to individuals, families, groups, communities, and populations.
        Examples: NUR 3303- individual physical assessments; NUR 4506-community assessment.
2.   Integrate general and liberal education into nursing knowledge to support clinical decision-making, evidence-based practice and evaluative nursing practice.
        Example: NUR 3103-writing intensive theoretical paper
3.   Become a collaborative member of the health care team; a manager, leader and coordinator of care; and one who participates in professional activities.
        Example; NUR 3103-professional organization activity
4.   Be accountable and responsible for professional development and lifelong learning.
        Example: NUR 4604-Portfolio
5.   Build an ethical value system for informed nursing practice.
        Example: NUR 4106-identification of leadership style

6.   Be prepared to serve clients in a variety of settings with diverse needs.
Example: NUR 4203-political brief presentation
7.   Communicate effectively with clients, colleagues, and other members of the heath care team.
Example: NUR 3604 pharmacology teaching presentation
8.   Use knowledge and research to form an inquiry-based practice.
Example: NUR 3703-Literature Review

6.c   Description of actions taken since the last review, including instructional resources and practices, and curricular changes; and faculty hires.

Curricular Changes.

In the fall of 2017, the first curricular review occurred since the accreditation process was begun. A review of program content was undertaken by the director and faculty to insure the integrity of consistency of program language and delivery methodologies. This is an ongoing process. It was indicated by the faculty to update the Patho-pharmacology course to a Pharmacogenomics course. Components to the Public Health Nursing and the Leadership and Management courses to include a dyad component with courses selected to complement those fields included an interdisciplinary approach were added. Adjustments were made to the original course hours to accommodate these changes. These changes support the initiatives of the American Association of the Colleges of Nursing.

Recent Faculty Hires: No recent hires, faculty are stable.

6.d   Description of actions to be taken as a result of this review, including instructional resources and practices, and curricular changes.

Curricular Changes: Changes implemented Fall 2018 and will be monitored and assessed at the end of the academic year with the assessment plan on file.

7   Responses to Institution-Assigned Issues

When the program was initiated, the target enrollment BSN Completion program was 80 students. Assuming that is still the target enrollment, please describe 1) recruitment and retention issues that will assist the program in attaining the 80 student level; and 2) any barriers to reaching the goal as well as any plans to ameliorate the conditions that present the barriers.

Recruitment and Retention Issues.

To increase enrollment, the recruitment plan calls on the program staff to improve its recruitment of community college students and ensure that two-plus-two agreements and individual course articulations allow for the seamless transfer of courses. Reduction of hours for program completion from 56 to 42 hours with 40 hours at the junior/senior level has greatly influenced student enrollment. This has influenced the transition with articulation agreements from the community colleges and improved recruitment. These actions brought the online RN to BS in Nursing program into alignment with the other online programs offered at EIU. The transition to each nursing course being offered over a seven week format, five enrollment periods in the year and the flexibility to take asynchronous courses has increased enrollment in the program.

7.2 **Is there a strong rationale for strategic expansion to a Master's degree with a focus that would fit a particular market in the profession? If so, please explain.**

It would be prudent and profitable to develop a core competency track and a two-focus program that would offer the potential student an opportunity to complete a graduate degree in nursing education or leadership. Both of these foci could be designed to offer the student the opportunity for specialization or certification in these areas. The emphasis would be placed on nursing education with the Certified Nurse Education option and the Leadership and Management graduate degree with the option for the Clinical Nurse leader certification. There is a critical shortage in nurse educators and leaders in health care, both of which are necessary to meet the needs of a restructured health care system.

7.3. **Describe the ways in which the Nursing program has incorporated programmatic, curricular, and teaching learning strategies to support the integrative learning experience at EIU. What plans does the department have for increasing its support of ILE?**

The RN to BS in Nursing Program at EIU is designed to be integrative in nature, building upon existing knowledge, skills, and professional experience. Students are encouraged to reflect on the integration of new knowledge and to apply new learning to their professional practice. Opportunities for integrative learning experiences are inherently provided throughout the EIU nursing program. These include service learning, reflection, capstone projects, and several curricular threads woven throughout the curriculum. These activities are described as follows:

Service Learning

The nursing program's mission includes a commitment to "active, applied learning experiences" designed to help students "integrate knowledge gained from general and liberal studies, the sciences, and nursing to think critically and make ethical and reasoned clinical decisions." This is fulfilled largely through the three clinical courses in the nursing curriculum. Students spend time in community service settings observing and working alongside preceptors and other leaders. Opportunities in a safe environment in virtual labs allow the student to practice certain skill-sets then apply them in the practice setting.
In each course, one aim is for the student to gain understanding and have the opportunity to apply knowledge and skills. Another aim is to provide service to the community. The clinical components are designed to introduce and increase student awareness to vulnerable or underserved populations. Emphasis is placed on the multicultural component and diverse needs across the lifespan in health care. Integration of life experience, actual practice and the learning opportunity increases the meaningfulness of the experience.

Reflection

Various assignments in the nursing program require students to reflect on readings, past experiences and knowledge, current practice, and future goals. Students complete reflective journals while enrolled in Theoretical Foundations of Professional Nursing Practice, the first course in the nursing curriculum. Since the expectation is for the student to engage in reflective practice they design professional development plans derived from these actions. These actions encourage engaged and thoughtful learning.

Capstone Projects

Several summative projects require students to call upon knowledge and skills gained through their general and liberal studies, nursing knowledge gained while in the program, and their workplace

experiences. These projects are part of the final semester and they are designed to demonstrate the accomplishment of program goals. Included are professional portfolios, seminars, and an evidence based practice project created from samples of their work from each nursing program course as well as a copy of their professional goals and learning objectives for the program. During their final semester, they review the portfolio and evaluate their own accomplishment of program and professional goals as well as completion of their stated learning objectives. Program faculty then review the portfolio and comment on progress toward goals/objectives and on the students' self-evaluations.

Students conduct a comprehensive literature search concerning a chosen area of nursing practice. Attention is paid to the amount and quality of research available that provides evidence of the best practice. Understanding of the research process and critique of published research reports, as presented in the earlier nursing research course, is applied. The student assesses the current state of nursing practice in the chosen area and then makes recommendations. Findings and recommendations are communicated through an academic paper, a poster, and a presentation. This enhances the understanding of the evidence-based practice integral to nursing science.

Curricular Threads

Students are provided opportunities for applying knowledge and skills acquired in one context to be used in another. Curricular threads include systems theory, communication, and ethics. Several nursing and related theories are introduced in NUR 3103. Systems theory is emphasized and then utilized as the conceptual framework in each of the other nursing program courses. Students begin by acquiring general knowledge about the theory and then progress to application of the theory to the content of other courses. Communication, collaboration, cultural awareness, and caring are underlying themes shared by nursing theories. Ethical theory is demonstrated by the student's ability to use sound reasoning and application of principles.

Academic writing: Students receive specific guidance and feedback at each stage of the writing process as they complete the required academic paper in the first program course. In subsequent courses, increasing synthesis of information is required. Students are provided summative feedback on their academic writing assignments but are expected to initiate a request for formative guidance if needed. The process is designed to ensure high quality writing skills by the end of the program.

Information literacy: A thorough orientation to the library, use of databases, and technology is provided at the start of the program. Students are guided through the steps of conducting a literature search including the evaluation of material quality during their first nursing program course. As with beginning writing skills, they are then expected to gradually accept more of the responsibility for ensuring quality and acquiring needed skills. Problem solving and resourcefulness is encouraged while faculty continue to remain available for extra assistance as needed.

7.4   What one unique noteworthy activity is the Nursing Program involved in that will enable the IBHE to distinguish it from other similar programs in the state?

A noteworthy attribute of the program is the seamless transition into the program for degree completion. The opportunity for degree completion online and recognition of the importance of interdisciplinary study allows a seamless pathway that a student can complete a degree in fourteen or less months. This enhances the articulation agreement process with community colleges.

8. Outcome

8.1 Decision:

__X___ Program in Good Standing

_____ Program flagged for Priority Review

_____ Program Enrollment Suspended

On behalf of the office of Academic Affairs, I appreciate the program's continued responsiveness to the ever-changing nursing profession. The program is to be commended for its efforts in the area of enrollment, particularly online program development. Finally, the report demonstrates a commitment to academic excellence and student success.