

# The Instructional Program Review Narrative Report

1. **College:** Merritt College  
**Discipline, Department or Program:** Vocational Nursing Program  
**Date:** February 15, 2010  
**Members of the Instructional Program Review Team:** Jon Murphy, Kathy Bauer, Grace Idowu
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2. Narrative Description of the Discipline, Department or Program:

**The Vocational Nursing curriculum is designed to prepare the student to practice intelligent care at the bedside, to assist in the rehabilitation of the sick and the prevention of disease, and to prepare the student for his/her role in the community as a contributing citizen, according to the basic principles of health and nursing. The Vocational Nursing curriculum is accredited by the California Board of Vocational Nurse and Psychiatric Technician Examiners. Graduates of this program are eligible to apply for the California state examination to become a Licensed Vocational Nurse (LVN). Due to the changing needs of the community for LVN's to be displaced out of the acute settings there is a growing demand for LVN's in the sub acute facilities, the ambulatory clinics and Skilled Nursing Facility, Long Term Care Facilities and/or Hospice and Home care settings. Thus the department is revising the current curriculum to meet these changing needs. The projected start date for the first one-year class is planned to begin in fall of 2011.**

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3. Curriculum:

- Is the curriculum current and effective? Have course outlines been updated within the last three years? If not, what plans are in place to remedy this?

**Recently the community demands is forging modifications to our program in the way we deliver our educational services. For example the job market for LVN's has shifted from the acute setting to the non acute setting so we have shifted our focus train our students for Sub-acute Care (i.e. Alta Bates Herrick Pulmonary Sub acute unit) and the Skilled Nursing Facility level of care (i.e. Belle ken Garden SNF). This was a necessary adjustment to meet industry needs adjusted over the past 8 months.**

**Yes, the curriculum is current and effective in regards to meeting current requirements of the Accrediting State Board, Board of Vocational Nursing and Psychiatric Technicians (BVNPT). Course outlines have been updated over the past two years, especially with the revision of the VN Program Handbook, VN 214, VN218, and VN217. Several courses in the program are still being updated. In fact, the department is currently condensing the 18 month program into a 12-month program in order to**

**admit 30% more students and thereby reduce overall attrition by 30% as it is predicted there shall be this many more graduates of this certificate program yearly.**

- Has your department conducted a curriculum review of course outlines? If not, what are the plans to remedy this?

**Yes, the VN Department has been in the process of curriculum review. This has been ongoing over the past three years by the department. Jon Murphy and Kathy Bauer are also working together on the 12-month Program slated to begin in fall 2011. All course outlines will be slightly modified, yet must be in keeping with state curriculum requirements as well as fit Peralta Colleges Calendar/Schedule.**

- What are the department's plans for curriculum improvement (i.e., courses to be developed, updated, enhanced, or deactivated)? Have prerequisites, co-requisites, and advisories been validated? Is the date of validation on the course outline?

**The program must follow curriculum mandates from the state accrediting agency, the BVNPT, however there is some modifications we need to make. For example we are to make some of the course, prerequisites, instead of within the program. See the following change, proposed in the 12-Month Program, not yet validated:**

**Pre-Requisites before or after receiving letter of acceptance\*:**

**V/NUR 215 Introduction to Pharmacology 1**

**V/NUR 216 Therapeutic Nutrition 1**

**Total:**

**2 Units**

**\* May take during summer before start of Program or may transfer credits from another accredited college.**

- What steps has the department taken to incorporate student learning outcomes in the curriculum? Are outcomes set for each course? If not, which courses do not have outcomes?

**All courses have student learning outcomes some course are still being updated to meet Merritt Standards and updated relevancy to the changing needs of the community. For example, in these courses the current Learning Objectives have yet to be edited as a student learning outcome: VN 219, VN220, and some part of VN 217.**

- Describe the efforts to develop outcomes at the program level. In which ways do these outcomes align with the institutional outcomes?

**SLO's have been 100% completed for 2008/2009 year. The department is in process of modifying the program to condense the program into a 12 month program.**

- Recommendations and priorities.  
**See Unit Plan Updates, addressing the current proposal for modifications.**
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#### 4. Instruction:

- Describe effective and innovative strategies used by faculty to involve students in the learning process. How has new technology been used by the department to improve student learning?

**Innovative strategies such as: PowerPoint lectures, critical thinking applied to case studies; discussions in small groups; students giving presentations and group work to facilitate key concepts. Also additional references are recommended to students, such as You Tube has some demonstrations of breath sounds and heart tones, which have been helpful to enhance student learning.**

- How does the department maintain the integrity and consistency of academic standards within the discipline?

**Ethical Considerations throughout the program such as HIPPA is applied to protect patient rights to confidentiality. Feedback from preceptors, advisory committees and the surveys we ask students and clinical site personnel to complete are all examples we use to maintain ongoing high levels of academic standards. We make adjustments to our program based on this data gathered from most of these resources. Additionally, Curricunet is now being used by faculty and the Department chair which serves as a standardization for maintaining best practices for academic standards. Also Standards mandated by the state accrediting board, Board of Vocational Nursing and Psychiatric Technicians (BVNPT), must be upheld to produce the finest LVN's, those who represent Merritt College.**

- Discuss the enrollment trends of your department. What is the student demand for specific courses? How do you know? What do you think are the salient trends affecting enrollments?

**Data on student enrollments are provided on page 2 of the Unit Plan. The department is currently revising the program in order to increase enrollment rates and thereby increase retention rates by 30% of FTES. This will likely translate to a 30% increase in certificates of completion rate based upon past persistence trends for the student population Merritt College serve. For example over the past five years the number of students starting the program averages 29 and the average number of program completers in 1.5 years later has been an average of 18. This translates to 48% of attrition rate.**

- Are courses scheduled in a manner that meets student needs and demand? How do you know?

**The Report to the President (2007) for Merritt College students have indicated a need for Merritt to offer more evening, 6-8 week classes, summer classes, and weekend classes. This report was based on the data gathered from the Student Needs' Survey: Follow-up to The Equity For All Report, which was conducted that same year, by Anika Toussant-Jackson**

**Joseph Adwere-Boamah.** Thus the projected program revision shall offer coursework in the summer and some of the clinical rotations for student internship shall also be offered in the summer and evenings.

The program is projected to offer some hybrid/blended coursework to better accommodate the students who must simultaneously work part time. However, it is strongly recommended that students do not work beyond 20 hours due to the academic rigorous demands of this full time program. Reportedly, students who fail are maintaining employment in excess of 20 hours.

Additional data on time of day of course offerings are provided in the Unit Plan Addendum.

- Recommendations and priorities.

Courses should be offered in the Summer to streamline career placement. If students attend school in the summer they can complete the program 6 months sooner than the traditional 1.5 year Program.

The Vocational Nursing Program is currently in process of being revised. The change is projected to be activated in Fall of 2011. At that time the start of a 46 week VN Program shall begin. This will be designed to accept 35 students in the Fall of every year. The Program will run consistent with the full academic Peralta calendar, including spring semester and the complete summer session in order to satisfy the BVNPT Curriculum requirements while simultaneously being aligned with Peralta Scheduling.

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## **5. Student Success:**

- Describe student retention and program completion trends in the department. What initiatives can the department take to improve retention and completion rates?

The department is currently revising the program in order to increase enrollment rates and thereby increase retention rates by 30% of FTES. This will likely translate to a 30% increase in certificates of completion rate based upon past persistence trends for the student population Merritt College serves. For example over the past five years the number of students starting the program averages 29 and the average number of program completers in 1.5 years later has been an average of 18. This translates to 62% of student retention. The retention is expected to stay about the same with the one-year program, based on higher level of pre-requisite requirements for acceptance into the program which would likely yield a student population with an increased vested interest and stronger commitment to complete the program.

According to the results of the same survey cited above (2007) for Merritt College, students have indicated they are more likely to not complete a course of study for the following reasons in this order: financial problems, family related concerns, academic concerns, and/or not fitting in at Merritt College. The one year program may reduce the burden of taking a 1.5 hiatus from full time employment to a one-year time period

**of reduced work, reduced income. Additionally financial aid is traditionally easier to obtain for a one year period over a 1.5 year period.**

**Additional data on student retention and course completion are reflected in the Academic Performance section of the Unit Plan. Degrees and certificate data are shown in the Unit Plan Addendum.**

**Included in the initiatives to improve retention we are adjusting the schedule to include evening clinical two days per week; we offer tutorial services in our department during faculty office hours; we require ATI to improve test taking skills of students and we refer some students to DSPS to be assessed for special learning needs.**

- **What are the key needs of students that affect their learning? What services are needed for these students to improve their learning? Describe the department's efforts to access these services. What are your department's instructional support needs?**

**Internally we offer these services as key learning needs offered to our students which affect student learning outcomes:**

**Computer Labs  
Student Learning Centers  
Tutorial Services  
Prerequisites must first be met before acceptance  
Test taking skills are crucial  
Critical Thinking Skills are crucial  
Organizational skills  
ATI Testing services are mandatory for students to improve their test taking  
Moodle soon to be incorporated into the new 1-year program**

**Externally our students utilize these services and resources**

**Library  
DSPS  
Cal Works  
Basic Skills Classes attended by students  
ESL services used by our college  
You Tube Discussions  
Health Care Videos Recommended for additionally  
Online practice test learning**

Needs:

**Program Modifications to create hybrid courses where appropriate  
Wireless access to our classroom**

- Describe the department's effort to assess student learning at the course level. Describe the efforts to assess student learning at the program level. In which ways has the department used student learning assessment results for improvement?

**Assessment:**

**At the college Level we have developed Institutional Learning Outcomes for our student population, in general.**

**At the Program Level these are some of the SLO's for our general VN Program level:**

- 1. To practice safety in all nursing skills applications and procedures**
- 2. To work with integrity and apply the highest level of ethics in all actions and communications**
- 3. To obtain and maintain LVN licensure for our students**
- 4. To apply nursing skills and knowledge base to offer compassion and care that meets the highest standards of the profession**

**At the three core levels of Medical Surgical Nursing course levels (i.e. VN214, VN217, VN219) we offer these particular SLO's:**

**Student Learning Outcomes**

- 1. Communication Skills:**
  - a. Select therapeutic communication techniques to establish a therapeutic environment.**
  - b. Utilization of the nursing process and teaching learning theory to provide formal and informal health teaching, health promotion, illness prevention, and restorative care for medical-surgical patients.**
- 2. Thinking and Reasoning:**
  - a. Utilization of bio-psychosocial concepts and theories, and principles of critical thinking to plan, implement and evaluate care of medical-surgical patients.**
- 3. Information Competency:**
  - a. Choose verbal, non-verbal, interpersonal, and communication technology skills to implement nursing care for medical-surgical patients.**
  - b. Employ appropriate scientific resources and technology to plan and deliver patient care in the acute facility.**
- 4. Diversity:**
  - a. Develop individual responsibility, personal integrity and respect for diverse persons and cultures of the world.**
  - b. Identify the developmental level and utilize developmental theory and concepts of diversity in planning, implementing, and evaluating care for medical-surgical patients.**
- 5. Civic Responsibility:**
  - a. Demonstrate personal integrity and professional accountability.**

- b. Apply the nursing process in the delivery of safe care to the medical-surgical patients and their families.
  - c. Demonstration of safe performance of basic nursing skills and understanding of underlying scientific principles.
  - d. Identification of ethical-legal dilemmas and actions as a patient advocate for medical-surgical patients.
6. Life Skills:
- a. Demonstrate caring behaviors to the patients, families, and Health Care team.
  - b. Initiate self care and stress management behaviors.
7. Careers:
- a. Begin the process of lifelong learning.
  - b. Communicate verbally and non-verbally with other members of the health care team.
    - (1) Report and record variances from normal patient behaviors.
    - (2) Utilization of basic principles of time management, organization, delegation and priority setting to providing nursing care for the medical-surgical patient.

#### **EFFORTS TO ASSESS AND GRADE STUDENTS ARE:**

- ◆ Multiple (weekly) exams' overall average will count as the Theory Grade for all classes.
- ◆ In order to progress to the next Medical Surgical Theory and Clinical level students must pass the prior course level with a grade Average of 75%.
- ◆ Drug-dose calculation exam must also be passed with 75%, 80%, and 90% in order to pass VN214, VN217, VN219, respectively
- ◆ Clinical Evaluation Forms Students must earn at least a satisfactory score on all skills testing and for overall monitored clinical performance
- ◆ In order to pass these courses and progress through the program students must at all times follow the program and course rules as outlined in the Vocational Nursing Student Handbook and this Syllabus. They must act professionally and respectfully toward fellow students, staff and faculty. Students who do not meet this course requirement will not pass these courses and will be referred for further discipline if necessary.
- ◆ Reading and Workbook assignment are also required and on a class schedule. Study guide assignments for each chapter after reading the chapters are recommended.

#### **Students are encouraged to take ATI Practice Tests and**

- ✓ Item Analysis is done on every Test Given to assure validity of tests administered to students
- ✓ Tests are continually revised based on the data

- ✓ **Clinical Learning Objectives are modified based on changing industry needs**
- Recommendations and priorities.

**Program Modifications to meet changing industry needs in our community**

**New improved sophisticated Scan Tron Machine which facilitates Item Analysis for quality assurance of student testing.**

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**6. Human and Physical Resources (including equipment and facilities)**

- Describe your current level of staff, including full-time and part-time faculty, classified staff and other categories of employment.

**As per the data in the Personnel Needs section of the Unit Plan.**

**Currently the VN Program employs:**

**2 full time tenured instructors**

**One part time Director**

**Occasionally half semesters of part time instructors are needed to teach clinical**

**The upcoming revised program will require 2 additional part time instructors or one additional full time instructor to assure a viable program.**

The faculty fully

- Describe your current utilization of facilities and equipment.

**Projects**

**Access to learning center 1 hour per week**

**Laptops – to be updated every 5 years**

**computer labs- access needed 21 hour per week during every semester and in summer starting 2012.**

**See Unit Plan, also.**

- Are the human and physical resources, including equipment and location, adequate for all the courses offered by your department (or program)? What are your key staffing and facilities needs for the next three years? Why?

**See Unit Plan - Kathy Bauer to Forward upon Request**

**Stethoscopes and blood pressure cuffs**

**Mannequins**

**DVDs, CD-ROMs, and current videos**

**Alcohol swabs, syringes**

**Wound care equipment**

**Linen**

**Glucometers**

**Suction equipment**

### **Simulation mannequin**

**Head wall system x 4 (simulated patient care over bed wall mount units that contain O2, suction, etc.)**

**Foley Catheters**

**Nasogastric tubes**

**K-Y gel**

**Dressing Kits and dressings**

**This program also requires classroom space for Mondays and Thursday currently (Add Friday space for Fridays Classes 8:00 til 12PM beginning Fall of 2011.**

**Also needed is a skill lab space.**

- Recommendations and priorities.  
**Additional Full Time Equivalent (FTE) instructor to maintain the need for 3.0 FTE.**  
**Additional part time instructor to cover summer program curriculum needs.**

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## **7. Community Outreach and Articulation**

### *For vocational programs:*

- Describe the department's connection with industry. Is there an Advisory Board or Advisory Committee for the program? If so, how often does it meet? Is the program adequately preparing students for careers in the field? How do you know?

**Advisory Boards have been traditionally part of our ongoing connection with the industry. However for the past year we have been reduced from biannual meetings down to one annual meeting and we are overdue for another now. Due to the changing industry needs we are regrouping with sub acute and SNF and Long term care facilities in lieu of acute care settings. Thus we are in transition of modifying our client base as the stakeholders have changed.**

**The BVNPT provides statistical follow-up data which reveals annually updated pass rates of students.**

**Follow-up emails of students are also randomly received to track our student job placement status after graduation. Reportedly the job market for our students in the acute arena is next to none.**

- Have students completing the program attained a foundation of technical and career skills? How do you know? What are the completion rates in your program?

**All students must meet minimal clinical competency acceptable for professional job market demands in the community (trained within local clinical settings) and they are graduates of a state BVNPT Board approved VN Program which verifies demonstration of theoretical and clinical competency for becoming licensed. Then they must first pass the NCLEX-VN state exam to obtain licensure for employment and practice as an LVN.**

**The completion rates of our program is at 62% based upon average number of students starting the program divided by the average number of students completing the program successfully.**

- What are the employment placement rates? Include a description of job titles and salaries. What is the relationship between completion rates and employment rates?

**Employment placement rates are currently not tracked The current placement rates needs to be researched further by follow-up emailing of all of our students in the past five year. Perhaps a follow-up survey sent out to all graduating students from the past 10 years would be helpful i.e. we need to send out a Survey Monkey to accomplish this objective.**

- What industry trends are most critical for the future viability of the program? How do you know? What are the implications of these trends for curriculum development and improvement?

**Due to the current shift of LVN's no longer being hired in the acute setting, the acute clinical settings in the community is also closing off as options for student internship.**

**Thus the program must be revised to accommodate this major trend. There is still increased needs for LVN's in the sub acute, SNF, Convalescence, and LTC settings as well as home health care.**

**Thus our program needs to further change the curriculum focus of the training from acute to the non acute to keep abreast of current industry demands.**

***For transfer programs:***

- Describe the department's efforts in meeting with and collaborating with local 4-year institutions. Is the program adequately preparing students for upper division course work? How do you know?

**Currently no established liaison between Merritt and four year institutions**

***For all instructional programs:***

- Describe the department's effort to ensure that the curriculum responds to the needs of the constituencies that it serves.

**The reflection of our last advisory board indicated the need for program revision to align the educational services we provide with the industry demands for LVNs.**

- Recommendations and priorities.

**To resume and develop new Advisory Board Meetings**

**Develop a survey to track student success rates**

**Develop a survey for students to report to the school their pass rates.**