

Program Response to CCNE Team Report

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the team report of our March 4-6, 2015 site visit for our Graduate Nursing Programs accreditation.

The new standards in IV.C and IV.D (2013) require we be able to differentiate between MSN (degree seeking) and Post-Master's Certificate students. We discussed the issues inherent in this for our programs with the accreditation team during the site visit. We kept the data aggregated for two primary reasons: 1) the Post-Master's Certificate students are fully integrated in courses with the degree-seeking students and are expected to achieve the same outcomes; and 2) the numbers of Post-Master's Certificate students are very small---averaging 2-3 students/year with sometimes a single Post-Master's Certificate student in a course. Not only do these small numbers allow for personal identification of an individual student of evaluation results; these small numbers do not allow for valid, reliable inferences or provide an informative assessment of the program. That said, these data segregated and collected over time may remedy this and allow us to achieve a more meaningful evaluation of the Post-Master's Certificate Program.

In the future, the Program will report aggregated data separately for the Master's, Post-Master's Certificate, and DNP outcomes. Below, please find more specific details for each Standard Criterion.

IV-A. A systematic process is used to determine program effectiveness.

Elaboration: The program uses a systematic process to obtain relevant data to determine program effectiveness. The process:

- *is written, ongoing, and exists to determine achievement of program outcomes;*
- *is comprehensive (i.e., includes completion, licensure, certification, and employment rates, as required by the U.S. Department of Education; and other program outcomes);*
- *identifies which quantitative and/or qualitative data are collected to assess achievement of the program outcomes;*
- *includes timelines for collection, review of expected and actual outcomes, and analysis; and*
- *is periodically reviewed and revised as appropriate.*

Program Response:

On March 16, 2015, the Evaluation Committee met to review the Evaluation Plan located in Appendix IV-A.1 of the Self-Study and the Evaluation Timeline located in Appendix III-H-1 (approved 12/08/2014). As discussed with the CCNE On-Site Evaluation Team, Educational Benchmarking, Inc. (EBI—MAP Works---now Skyfactor) will be used to administer alumni surveys to evaluate students' achievement of program outcomes for the program they attended. While HRSA grant funding is in place, alumni surveys will be deployed once every 2-3 years using personal email addresses obtained at the time of graduation. A Population Code will be used to differentiate graduates of each program option. Analysis of these aggregated data will take place in the Evaluation Committee with a report to the Graduate Admissions and Progressions/Curriculum Committees for review and planning for policy or curriculum revisions as needed based upon findings.

IV-B. Program completion rates demonstrate program effectiveness.

Elaboration: The program demonstrates achievement of required program outcomes regarding completion. For each degree program (baccalaureate, master's, and DNP) and post-graduate APRN certificate program:

- *The completion rate for each of the three most recent calendar years is provided.*
- *The program specifies the entry point and defines the time period to completion.*
- *The program describes the formula it uses to calculate the completion rate.*
- *The completion rate for the most recent calendar year is 70% or higher. However, if the completion rate for the most recent calendar year is less than 70%, (1) the completion rate is 70% or higher when the annual completion rates for the three most recent calendar years are averaged or (2) the completion rate is 70% or higher when excluding students who have identified factors such as family obligations, relocation, financial barriers, and decisions to change major or to transfer to another institution of higher education.*

A program with a completion rate less than 70% for the most recent calendar year provides a written explanation/analysis with documentation for the variance.

This key element is not applicable to a new degree or certificate program that does not yet have individuals who have completed the program.

Program Response:

The Evaluation Committee has determined that qualitative and quantitative data collection specific to the reasons why students choose to leave our programs or are unsuccessful is best addressed by the Option Coordinator faculty member for the student's specific option or the Program Assistant who has substantial contact with students. Data such as reasons for taking Leaves of Absence and withdrawals from a program will be tracked via an exit interview with the student conducted by the Option Coordinator or Program Assistant. The Option Coordinator will identify whether the student was in the Master's, Post-Master's Certificate, or DNP Program and data will be tracked by option. For graduates who live in Colorado, the Option Coordinator or Program Assistant can search the Department of Regulatory Agencies, Division of Professions and Occupations, Database to determine if APN Licensure has been granted. Analysis of these data will take place annually in the Evaluation Committee with a report to the Graduate Admissions and Progressions/Curriculum Committees for review and planning of policy and/or curriculum changes as deemed necessary.

IV-C. Licensure and certification pass rates demonstrate program effectiveness.

Elaboration: The graduate program demonstrates achievement of required program outcomes regarding certification. Certification results are obtained and reported in the aggregate for those graduates taking each examination, even when national certification is not required to practice in a particular state.

- *Data are provided regarding the number of graduates and the number of graduates taking each certification examination.*

- *The certification pass rate for each examination for which the program prepares graduates is provided for each of the three most recent calendar years.*
- *The certification pass rate for each examination is 80% or higher for first-time takers for the most recent calendar year. However, if the pass rate for any certification examination is less than 80% for first-time takers for the most recent calendar year, (1) the pass rate for that certification examination is 80% or higher for all takers (first-time and repeat) for the most recent calendar year, (2) the pass rate for that certification examination is 80% or higher for first-time takers when the annual pass rates for the three most recent calendar years are averaged, or (3) the pass rate for that certification examination is 80% or higher for all takers (first-time and repeat) when the annual pass rates for the three most recent calendar years are averaged.*

A program with a pass rate of less than 80% for any certification examination for the most recent calendar year provides a written explanation/analysis for the variance and a plan to meet the 80% certification pass rate for first-time takers. The explanation may include trend data, information about numbers of test takers, and data on repeat takers.

This key element is not applicable to a new degree or certificate program that does not yet have individuals who have taken licensure or certification examinations.

Program Response:

The Evaluation Committee met on March 16, 2015 to discuss the need to obtain data specific to FNP and A/GNP Post-Master's Certificate students on certification pass rates. This was acknowledged as a challenge since the national board certification bodies do not provide these data when reporting pass rates. Our plan is to obtain a personal email address at the time our students sign up for graduation. When we receive the pass rate reports from ANCC and AANP, we will use that as a prompt to send out an email to alumni requesting an update on their certification status. We will match responses to transcripts to determine whether the individual is a graduate of our Master's Program or Post-Master's Certificate Option. Thus, efforts to obtain these data will occur multiple times per year. Further, when advanced practice registry information is obtained from the Colorado Board of Nursing, board certification can be inferred. Analysis of these aggregated data will take place annually in the Evaluation Committee with a report to the Graduate Admissions and Progressions/Curriculum Committees for review and planning as needed.

IV-D. Employment rates demonstrate program effectiveness.

Elaboration: The program demonstrates achievement of required outcomes regarding employment rates.

- *The employment rate is collected separately for each degree program (baccalaureate, master's, and DNP) and post-graduate APRN certificate program.*

- *Data are collected within 12 months of program completion. For example, employment data may be collected at the time of program completion or at any time within 12 months of program completion.*
- *The employment rate is 70% or higher. However, if the employment rate is less than 70%, the employment rate is 70% or higher when excluding graduates who have elected not to be employed.*

Any program with an employment rate less than 70% provides a written explanation/analysis with documentation for the variance.

This key element is not applicable to a new degree or certificate program that does not yet have individuals who have completed the program.

Program Response:

The Evaluation Committee has developed an Employment Questionnaire and will use Survey Monkey® to disseminate the survey via email to graduates annually (in May 2015 for 2014) using personal email addresses from our alumni database. The Employment Survey is attached as Appendix IV-D.1R. We will match responses to our student database to determine whether the individual is a graduate of our Master's Program, Post-Master's Certificate Option, or DNP Program. Data for each program option will be aggregated. Analysis of these data will take place annually in the Evaluation Committee with a report to the Graduate Admissions and Progressions/Curriculum Committees for review and planning as needed.