
**Internal Review of
The Division of Nursing at
MidAmerica Nazarene University**

Response to Self-Study Report

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Submitted to:

Dr. Mark Ford, Director, Associate Dean of Accreditation,
Program Review, and Assessment

Submitted by the Internal Review Committee:

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Prof. Mark Brown
Dr. Steve Cole
Prof. Lon Dagley
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Note on Process:

The *Self-Study Report* (hereinafter referred to as the *Report*) of the Division of Nursing was received in November 2007. The chairperson of the Internal Review Committee (IRC) distributed copies of the *Report* to the members of the IRC for their preliminary review. The IRC held its first meeting on Friday, December 5, 2008. The purpose of the meeting was fourfold: first, to establish the purpose of the work of the Committee; second, to engage IRC members in a discussion of their initial reactions to the *Report* as a whole; third, to distribute responsibility for in-depth analysis of the five Criteria among the members; and fourth, to establish a timeline for the completion of the duties of the IRC. The members of the IRC were assigned individual Criterion as follows: Bill Olin, Criterion 1; Steve Cole, Criterion 2; Mark Brown, Criterion 3; Shanti Thomas, Criterion 4; and Lon Dagley, Criterion 5. The IRC members also developed a working timeline for the project and established some common parameters for the format of the *Response to the Self-Study Report*.

The IRC's second meeting was held Friday, January 30, 2009. At this meeting, each Committee member presented his/her preliminary review and analysis of the assigned Criterion. Discussion identified some common threads found throughout the *Report* and some emerging strengths and areas of concern.

The IRC convened for a third meeting on Friday, February 27, 2009, to review drafts of each member's response to his or her assigned criterion and provide feedback to each other. Members of the IRC also generated a list of strengths, areas of concern, and opportunities for improvement based on their review of the *Report* (including the supporting documents provided in the *Appendices* to the *Report*). Final drafts for each criterion were submitted to the IRC chair for compilation and editing at the beginning of March. The full *Response to the Self-Study*

Report was emailed to the members of the IRC for final review in preparation for submission to the Associate Dean of Accreditation, Program Review, and Assessment. Based on feedback from IRC members, final editing was completed and the *Response to the Self-Study Report* was submitted to Dr. Mark Ford, Associate Dean of Accreditation, Program Review, and Assessment on March 15, 2009.

CRITERION ONE: MISSION AND INTEGRITY

Criterion Statement: The division operates with integrity to ensure the fulfillment of its mission through structures and processes that involve the board, administration, faculty, staff, and students.

The IRC concludes that the division's attempts to meet the standards of Criterion One have been successful. The thorough, conscientious efforts to comply with its mission and maintain the integrity of the division in every aspect of its operations is commendable.

Core Component—1A. The division's mission is clear and articulates publicly the division's commitments.

A brief but comprehensive statement in the MNU *Catalog* outlines the goals and priorities of the division. Excerpts from the *Nursing Student Handbook* provide more in-depth explanations of the goals of the division, elaborating on the intellectual, spiritual, and personal aspects of the program goals as stated in the mission statement.

The division must operate in compliance with the constituents it intends to serve: primarily MNU, the American Nurses Association (ANA), and the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN). The division's plan to achieve this, both philosophically and practically, is clearly communicated to each student with the inclusion of comparative charts in the *Nursing Student Handbook*. These charts outline the expectations of these constituencies and the division's provisions for compliance.

An annual division evaluation plan is in place, based on the periodic actions of the AACN, with regard to revision of standards and/or accreditation requirements. Annual evaluation should, however, extend beyond the scope of recent AACN actions and

analyze/discuss the effectiveness and relevance of the current mission statement as different students progress through and complete the program.

Core Component—1B. In its mission statements, the division recognizes the diversity of its learners, other constituencies, and the greater society it serves.

Statements in the *Nursing Student Handbook* address issues of diversity, including the student's need for knowledge of and proper attitudes toward the diverse populations, cultures, and values of the various peoples and groups with whom they will be interacting. The "holistic" emphasis of the program includes the expectation of the Nursing student to understand and respect the diverse elements of the typical nursing environment. These guidelines appear in several places within the *Nursing Student Handbook*, with additions to this document as recent as September 2006.

The IRC does note, however, that diversity issues do not appear to be adequately addressed in division's section of the MNU *Catalog*. The IRC recommends that the division revise the Division Mission Statement, Statement of Purpose, or Divisional Outcomes portions of the Division of Nursing section of the MNU *Catalog* to include a more specific allusion to the diversity issues that are addressed in the *Nursing Student Handbook*.

Core Component--1C. Understanding of and support for the mission pervade the division.

The division appears to be quite diligent in reminding its students of its adherence to the Mission of MNU throughout the program of study. Students are alerted to the compatibility of the division's programs, requirements, and emphases with MNU's Mission Statement, the Division of Nursing Mission Statement, the guidelines of the AACN, and the standards of the

ANA. Not only is the congruence of these entities illustrated in several sections of the *Nursing Student Handbook*, but they are included in the various formal “checkpoints” as the student progresses through the program. The IRC is confident that a student would have developed a thorough understanding of the Mission of MNU and the Division of Nursing by the time of his/her completion of the program.

Core Component--1D. The division’s governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the division to fulfill its mission.

Successfully fulfilling the division’s mission requires faculty involvement beyond the classroom, specifically in clinical experiences. The division, through consultation with other institutions and other divisions at MNU, has created a standard policy regarding load credit allocation for the supervision of these clinical experiences which are such an essential and prevalent component of the program.

In addition to the leadership of a highly qualified Division Chair, the division relies on the skills of other faculty in positions of leadership created to ensure the ongoing effectiveness and consistency of the various clinical experiences, their supervision, and the overall program’s operation in relation to the Mission. Appropriate workload credit is awarded to a Student Admissions and Policies Coordinator, a Division Outcomes Coordinator, and other faculty who establish and manage various clinical placements.

The coherence of the curriculum and the integrity of the academic process are evaluated by the entire division faculty in an all-day meeting at the end of each semester. Division integrity and coherency is further addressed and maintained through periodic division meetings, an average of three, two- to three-hour meetings each month.

Core Component--1E. The division upholds and protects its integrity.

Integrity is a central component of the mission, goals, and operations of both MNU and the Division of Nursing. The philosophy, policies, curriculum, and intended outcomes of the division reflect a consistent emphasis on the importance and maintenance of program integrity, as documented in the MNU *Catalog* and in several sections within the *Nursing Student Handbook*. Evidence that the division successfully pursues and achieves its objectives can be found in the report of the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE). The CCNE's 2007 report found the division in "full compliance," indicating that they actually do what they say.

The division has displayed integrity in setting up communication and evaluation opportunities with its various constituencies, both internal and external. Provisions are in place to communicate policies, solicit feedback, and handle grievances with the many individuals and groups affected by the division. The IRC applauds the division for its conscientious efforts to interact with honesty and integrity with its many constituencies.

CRITERION TWO: PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

Criterion Statement: The division's allocation of resources and its processes for evaluation and planning demonstrate its capacity to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its education, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

The IRC finds that the Division of Nursing has successfully met Criterion Two. The division has appropriate planning procedures and uses them in effective program development. It has multiple means for evaluation and does environmental scanning to determine its responses to changes in nursing. The division's self-assessment is broad, inclusive, and continuous, allowing it to make effective program revision. It has appropriate, but limited facilities and sufficient, but stressed staffing. The division has rightly recognized the need for increased institutional support to respond to promising opportunities and to address the significant issues of limited space and maintenance of a highly-qualified faculty

Core Component—2A. The division realistically prepares for a future shaped by multiple societal and economic trends.

The Division of Nursing does effective environmental scanning through formal and informal structures. It has responded to changes in nursing by requiring criminal background checks, revising curriculum, and using new technologies to improve the learning/training experience. It has been able to respond to the burgeoning demand for BSN Completion degrees by hiring a full-time Coordinator and reinvigorating a moribund program.

The Division has recognized the increasing demand for nurses in the 20- to 40-year-old population. It has responded by increasing class sizes and the number of lab sections and by hiring Clinical Teaching Associates. It offers one of very few accelerated programs in the region.

The population of the United States is becoming increasingly diverse, both culturally and socio-economically. Nursing students at MNU have been provided with multiple opportunities to serve developmentally and socio-culturally diverse patients, families, and communities both at home and abroad.

The IRC is concerned that declining numbers of faculty, space limitations, and severe budget restraints will keep the Division of Nursing from responding to the identified need for a nursing graduate program.

Core Component—2B. The division’s resource base supports its educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.

Using a federal grant, the Division of Nursing has purchased nursing and human science technology including human patient simulators, electronic medical records software, and computers. The Faculty have been trained and equipped to use technology for classroom presentation and interaction with students outside the classroom. Provision has been made for online dialoging and access to common documents and resources.

The IRC recognizes some areas of concern that have taxed the division’s resources: the division has experienced a significant increase in the number of students, while office, classroom, and lab space have become critically limited. Unfortunately, expansion in the current facility is not possible. Although expanded facilities have been discussed with trustees and administrators, there is no current move to do this.

The IRC is concerned that although faculty resources are strong, there is a significant challenge. Only 30% of the faculty have an earned doctorate, and competition for faculty is strong from the 17 nursing schools in the area. With a national shortage of nursing faculty and

MNU nursing faculty salaries at only 60% of the average for master's-prepared faculty, one of the programs most pressing problems is attracting and keeping highly qualified faculty.

Core Component—2C. The division's ongoing evaluation and assessment processes provide reliable evidence of academic unit effectiveness that clearly informs strategies for continuous improvement.

The Division of Nursing is positioned to identify other quality issues because of its assessment activities. It has a Program Assessment Plan. A faculty member coordinates the outcomes assessment process, evaluation meetings are held regularly, and the division cooperates fully with the University's assessment program. Assessment is linked to AACN and ANA Professional standards.

The division communicates effectively with its various constituencies through a Blackboard Nursing Forum. It uses ATI tests to provide nationally normed data for assessment and uses the Undergraduate Nursing Education Exit Assessment. Students do course evaluations, clinical site experience evaluations, and clinical teaching performance evaluations.

The division recognizes two essential components for evaluating achievement of its mission: pass rates on the NCLEX-RN© and the success of graduates in obtaining nursing positions. The division has experienced exceptionally high job placement rates for their students: the last four years it has been between 90 and 100%.

The IRC is concerned, however, that MNU nursing student pass rates on the NCLEX-RN© in recent years have only been equal to or below the national pass rate. The division has responded by changing curriculum to meet the program outcomes and the standards established by the AACN and the ANA Standards of Clinical Nursing Practice. The IRC recommends that the division should continue to carefully monitor its student pass rates on the NCLEX-RN© to

determine if this serious issue for recognition and accreditation of the nursing program has been effectively addressed.

Core Component—2D. All levels of planning align with the division’s mission, thereby enhancing its capacity to fulfill that mission.

The Division of Nursing has defined its Mission, Vision, Values, and Goals in congruence with the University, the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN), and the American Nurses Association (ANA) Standards of Clinical Practice. Students elect a representative to attend specific division meetings once a semester and take a benchmarking survey of student satisfaction from the AACN.

Opportunities for realigning the program with the mission of the University occur through the Nursing Advisory Committee, whose membership includes the University President, Vice-President for Academic Affairs, and Vice-President for Finance. In 2002 a survey was made of a representative group of internal and external constituents. The nursing faculty meet several times a month and conduct evaluation meetings three times a year.

The division celebrates its history and heritage through its Pinning and Dedication Ceremony, interactions with its alumni, and the maintenance of an archive of its visual and experiential history.

Although the division shows strong evidence of effective planning, the IRC is uncertain what the *primary* planning document (the *Report* seemed to indicate there were several planning documents) is for the division and how it is used to chart the course for the program’s future. Therefore, the IRC recommends that the Division of Nursing develop one document to be used for strategic planning purposes.

CRITERION THREE: STUDENT LEARNING AND EFFECTIVE TEACHING

Criterion Statement: The division provides evidence of student learning and teaching effectiveness that demonstrates it is fulfilling its educational mission.

Overall, the *Report* confirms that the division is fulfilling its educational mission as demonstrated by the satisfactory performance on student outcomes and the assessment of teaching effectiveness. **The IRC, therefore, determines that the division has met Criterion Three.** Furthermore, it is evident that program outcomes and specific division student outcomes are well-aligned with MNU's general education outcomes and with the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education standards. The *Report* also shows that the division is using multiple assessments to make informed decisions and to improve program effectiveness.

Core Component—3A. The division's goals for student learning outcomes are clearly stated for each educational program and make effective assessment possible.

The Nursing Division has done an outstanding job of clearly and thoroughly stating student learning outcomes, making it possible to have effective assessment. Therefore, the IRC concludes that the division is adequately meeting the requirements of Core Component-3A.

It is evident that assessment takes place in the division at multiple levels. The *Report* demonstrates that student learning is evaluated through (1) teacher-made tests in individual courses, (2) web-based testing related to various courses, (3) checklists to measure mastery, and (4) senior comprehensive examinations.

The division appropriately allows access to assessment results to its constituents. The results of the NCLEX-RN© are made available to the Nursing Advisory Committee, and multi-year pass rates are available to the general public. Additionally, each student is provided

feedback on the results of web-based assessments. This enables the students to make improvements in their individual areas of weakness and to be encouraged in their areas of strength.

The *Report* indicates that the division effectively uses assessment results to review the program. Analysis of results has been used to make changes in the program as shown in the *Report's* appendices (meeting minutes). For example, pass rates on exams in individual courses have been increased in order to encourage better performance in the courses, hopefully leading to better performances on the exam for nursing licensure.

The division has been concerned that the recent first-time pass rate on the NCLEX-RN[®] has been below the national average; this is also a concern of the IRC. The IRC is encouraged, however, that the division is taking action to make improvements (such as the example cited in the previous paragraph).

Core Component—3B. The division values and supports effective teaching.

The IRC determines that the Nursing Division is meeting Core Component-3B. The IRC distinguishes four strengths and one concern in this area.

First, the faculty is diverse in its content strengths. The *Report* clearly shows that the faculty members in the division have varied areas of expertise; therefore, the faculty members complement each other and, as a result, build up the nursing program itself.

Second, the division is open to innovative strategies that boost student learning. For example, government-funded patient simulators have enabled nursing students to experience situations they may otherwise have not encountered.

Third, the division uses many tools to assess whether teaching is successful. Examples include regular course assessment tools, overall program assessment tools, student evaluations, etc. The division then uses these assessments to improve future performance in the classroom. This has been evidenced by changes that have been made to the program.

Fourth, the division places a strong emphasis on professional development. The *Report* states that the division subscribes to various professional nursing journals. These journals enable the nursing faculty to keep current on current research. Additionally, the faculty members involve themselves in MNU faculty development opportunities and other nursing-specific professional development opportunities, especially those in the Kansas City area. The Division Chair also attends semiannual meetings of the American Association of Colleges of Nursing. Because of the changing nature of the field of nursing, the IRC recommends that the institution ensure that sufficient funding remain available to the nursing faculty so they may stay as up-to-date as possible.

The IRC has one concern as it relates to teaching effectiveness. The percentage of nursing faculty with doctoral degrees is only at 30% (3 out of 10); however, the IRC recognizes that another 30% are currently enrolled in doctoral programs.

Core Component—3C. The division creates effective learning environments.

As stated earlier, the division effectively uses assessment results to make improvements in the nursing program. Specifically, twice each year the division reviews student and faculty assessments of individual classes in order to improve course effectiveness. In recent years the division also reviews each of the nursing program outcomes. This review includes discussion of how the results of the assessment will be used to improve the program.

The Division of Nursing provides a positive environment for diversity among its students. Several of its students are ELL students representing many different countries, and these students are given ample opportunity to overcome their language barrier. The division also works with students in handling the culturally diverse populations encountered in the nursing profession.

Another aspect of the division's positive impact on the learning environment is effective advising. The nursing students are closely monitored by their individual advisors throughout the entire program. Nursing skills are regularly checked, test averages are monitored, and the policies outlined in the *Nursing Student Handbook* are followed.

Finally, the division regularly adds new technologies as they become available (i.e. the aforementioned human patient simulators). These new technologies enhance the learning environment by providing students with experiences that more closely match real-world situations in nursing practice.

Core Component—3D. The division's learning resources support student learning and effective teaching.

The *Report* clearly shows that the learning resources of the Division of Nursing support student learning and effective teaching.

First, this is evidenced by providing MNU nursing students with access to the University Nursing Lab throughout the days, evenings, and weekends. Second, and probably the most effective learning resource, is the opportunity for the division's students to have clinical experiences. The Kansas City area hospitals and clinics have been invaluable in affording students the opportunity to experience learning in the "real-world" setting.

The *Report* also demonstrates that the Division of Nursing is effectively assessing the effectiveness of the learning resources. Faculty members discuss these needs in semiannual evaluation meetings, students use a wide-spread evaluation tool to evaluate their clinical, and clinical instructors closely monitor student performance in their clinical experiences.

For the most part, the division has sufficient staffing for supporting the learning resources. A nurse oversees the University Nursing Lab, Clinical Teaching Associates are used for clinical support, and one full-time Office Manager is employed to handle the division office and the proctoring of computerized tests. The *Report* suggests, however, that an additional office manager would “greatly increase the smooth functioning of the division.” The IRC strongly recommends that this suggestion be seriously considered by the University administration.

CRITERION FOUR: ACQUISITION, DISCOVERY, AND APPLICATION OF KNOWLEDGE

Criterion Statement: The division promotes a life of learning for its faculty, administration, staff, and students by fostering and supporting inquiry, creativity, practice, and social responsibility in ways consistent with its mission.

After careful review, the IRC is of the view that the nursing division's attempts to acquire, discover, and apply knowledge have been quite successful. **Therefore, the IRC concludes that the Division of Nursing has met Criterion Four.**

Core Component—4A. The division demonstrates, through the actions of its administrators, students, faculty, and staff, that it values a life of learning.

It is commendable that the University supports and values the division's educational programs and encourages faculty to complete terminal degrees. Also, the division attempts to keep faculty, staff, and students up-to-date with news, current issues, and practices in nursing through its subscriptions to various periodicals, such as the *Journal of Nursing Education*, *Nurse Educator*, the *Journal of Professional Nursing*, the *Legislative Network for Nurses*, etc.

Other activities that enhance learning include professional development opportunities and participation in conferences by the Division Chair and faculty members; however, due to the current financial crisis, it is unfortunate that the university is not able to provide funding for any staff development opportunities, even though the division recommended that the division Office Manager be formally trained on the Microsoft Office Access software.

Besides recognizing the accomplishments of faculty, the division's decision to recognize graduating nursing students and students who excel in education (with higher GPAs) during the University's Honors Convocation needs to be appreciated. The division keeps up with its mission emphasis on teaching, scholarship, practice, and service. It also extends opportunities for

students, juniors and seniors in particular, to develop the skill of constructive criticism. For example, senior students learn to critique nursing research articles, and some junior students participate in data collecting processes at various hospitals.

Core Component—4B. The division demonstrates that acquisition of a breadth of knowledge and skills and the exercise of intellectual inquiry are integral to its educational programs.

It is understood that the program outcomes of the division correspond to the general education outcomes of MNU. The distribution of learning activities and assessment strategies into three levels is very helpful for students and advisors, especially during enrollment.

The division's requirement that every student maintain the professional portfolio, which includes the seven program outcomes and record of the learning activities, demonstrates the extent of knowledge and skills achieved. The learning outcomes and activities also validate students' views of responsibility and accountability toward health care issues.

Core Component—4C. The division assesses the usefulness of its curricula to students who will live and work in a global, diverse, and technological society.

The division has a program in place for the effective communication outcome, and students are well prepared to provide “safe, effective, and holistic nursing care to a reasonably-assigned case load of developmentally, socio-culturally diverse patients/families/communities.” Other education program services include extending services by nursing students who have served or are now serving in Russia, the Ukraine, various countries in Africa, Costa Rica, Mexico, Peru, Bolivia, Brazil, and Iraq.

The division conducts an annual meeting (in June) of the Nursing Advisory Committee that is involved in curricular evaluation. Regular input is gained from the committee regarding expectations for nursing graduates and feedback is received on curricular innovations, the continuing education programs, and other programmatic issues.

Another example of curricular evaluation includes the participation of nursing students in the AACN/EBI Undergraduate Nursing Education Exit Assessment. This is a comparative study and provides the university with sufficient data in comparison with six schools (with similar mission and focus) selected by MNU. It is commendable that MNU has exceeded other schools in overall program effectiveness, role development, core knowledge, technical skills, core competencies, professional values, classmates, facilities and administration, course lecture and interaction, work and class size, and quality of nursing instruction.

Nursing students have opportunities to take part in other curricular and co-curricular activities that promote social responsibility. These opportunities expose students to a variety of experiences, which in turn lead students to better understand diversity. During their senior year, all of the seniors participate in community health projects that include working in public and private schools, working with the homeless population at the Kansas City Rescue Mission, providing care for children through Nazarene Compassionate Ministries Widows and Orphans program, and taking overseas mission trips.

Core Component—4D. The division provides support to ensure that faculty, students, and staff acquire, discover, and apply knowledge responsibly.

The division supports the Kresge Center by extending peer tutoring for nursing courses. Additionally, the division employs nursing lab assistants to help students practice their nursing

skills in the University Nursing Lab. Students are also encouraged to use self-evaluations and reflective journals in order to become more responsible and accountable with their work.

The division also ensures that students follow ethical standards and practices; they are made aware of their ethical responsibilities through all the possible sources that are in place and as outlined in the 2008-2009 *Nursing Students Handbook*. Plagiarism statements are also part of students' course syllabi.

In addition, nursing instructors hold students responsible for their assignments and clinical practices. In order to ensure integrity of research and practice, the Division Chair monitors the criminal background checks required by clinical agencies for faculty and students.

Overall, it has been understood from this review that the Division of Nursing has all its requirements in place and fulfills its mission to the university and to the students by extending quality education and opportunities for service to everyone involved.

CRITERION FIVE: ENGAGEMENT AND SERVICE

Criterion Statement: As called for by its mission, the division identifies its constituencies and serves them in ways both value.

The IRC concludes that the division’s attempts to meet the standards of Criterion Five have been successful. The thorough, conscientious efforts to comply with engagement and service are evident in the actions of the division.

Core Component—5A. The division learns from the constituencies it serves and analyzes its capacity to serve their needs and expectations.

The MNU *Catalog* clearly states that the division will adequately prepare students. The students are placed in various clinical experiences that expand and challenge the students. The clinical experiences provide students varying experiences in secular, religious (including Catholic and Jewish hospitals), inpatient, outpatient, home, suburban, inner city, and third world settings. The students learn how to work in secular and religious settings, with various socio-economic groups, and in a variety of medical situations.

The faculty also keeps in touch with the nursing profession through contacts in the nursing community and through the Nursing Advisory Committee. The Division Chair and other faculty are members of many professional nursing organizations in the greater Kansas City area. These include Collegiate Nurse Educators Greater Kansas City, American Association of Colleges of Nursing, and the Kansas Association of Colleges of Nursing.

Core Component—5B. The division has the capacity and commitment to engage with its identified constituencies and communities.

The division has put in place a Nursing Advisory Committee consisting of nursing faculty, MNU administrators, a hospital administrator, nursing service administrators, nurses in active clinical practice, Associate Degree in Nursing administrators, BSN program administrators, and community representatives to help direct the program and maintain connections in the community.

The division has launched a new program, BSN Completion Program, to help nurses upgrade their degree. A graduate program has been considered, when staffing and teaching loads will allow it.

Core Component—5C. The division demonstrates its responsiveness to those constituencies that depend on it for service.

The establishment of a corporate rate for Shawnee Mission Medical Center for nurses wanting to upgrade their degrees allows the hospital to pay a discounted rate for its nurses.

The Division of Nursing has a number of transfers and second-career students in the program. Among the students are many from outside the US. Having good transfer policies in place makes it possible for the division to readily accept these students.

Core Component—5D. Internal and external constituencies value the services the division provides.

Upon completing the nursing program, MNU nursing students participate in the AACN/EBI Undergraduate Nursing Education Exit Assessment. The data from this assessment is compared with six other schools.

The Division of Nursing graduates enjoy a nearly 100% hiring rate. This is evidence of the support for the MNU nursing program.

The division has shared human patient simulators with Olathe Medical Center and the Olathe Fire Department in group training exercises. This is a great example of the value added to the division's external constituencies.

The faculty and students of the Division of Nursing at MNU build relationships with hospitals in the area. This is evidenced by Olathe Medical Center's scholarship program for nursing students. Many of these same students are hired by the hospital.

As part of the clinical experience, students are placed in many diverse cultures and socio-economic groups. These include not only the area hospitals, but inner city clinics and medical mission trips to Central America. These experiences are secured through contractual agreements with various constituencies.

SUMMARY

Strengths:

- The division has experienced a tremendous growth in enrollment
- The division makes an excellent effort to ensure that students have opportunities to experience diverse (cultural, socioeconomic, and religious) professional nursing environments through clinical placements, mission trips, etc.
- The division has a solid outcomes assessment plan which is effectively monitored, resulting in specific, documented changes for program improvement
- The faculty is diverse in its strengths and utilizes those strengths well in teaching within the division.
- The division does an excellent job of maintaining connections with the professional nursing community through the faculty's involvement in professional organizations, work in clinical settings, and relationships with the medical community.
- The division involves its students in academic research through several classes that are part of the major (Nursing Informatics, Community Health Nursing, etc.).
- Upon completing the program, students participate in the AACN/EBI Undergraduate Nursing Education Exit Assessment, which gives the students an opportunity to evaluate their educational program.

Areas of Concern:

- Divisional mission statement does not adequately address diversity issues
- Lack of adequate office, classroom, and lab space
- The division has difficulty in attracting and retaining highly qualified faculty who are doctorally prepared due to the gap between current faculty salaries at MNU compared to salaries for practicing nurses in clinical settings
- Student first-time pass rates on NCLEX-RN® have only been equal to or below the national pass rate
- The division lacks a central strategic planning document with appropriate timelines attached
- The division is experiencing a lack of institutional funding for professional development, which is required to maintain licensure

Opportunities for Improvement:

- Due to lack of space and doctorally qualified faculty, the division may need to optimize their numbers by becoming more selective in admitting students and developing new programs until these issues are resolved.
- Because of outside demands on their time (class schedules, clinical responsibilities, etc.), the division faculty should continue to make intentional efforts to stay engaged in the campus academic culture.

- The IRC recommends that the divisional mission statement be revised to address issues of diversity
- The IRC encourages the division to continue to dialog with the administration concerning the need for funding for professional development of its faculty and staff
- The IRC encourages the division to dialog with the academic administration regarding a space utilization scheme, which may identify other classrooms on campus available for use.
- The IRC recommends that the division discuss with the administration the limitations of the University in attracting and retaining highly qualified faculty and work with the administration in developing a plan of response to the situation.
- The IRC recommends that the division continue its efforts to increase the student first-time pass rate on the NCLEX-RN© exam and that it work with its supporting disciplines and services within the University to develop adjustments to the curriculum or its presentation to increase student's understandings and capabilities.
- The IRC recommends that the division develop one central strategic planning document, with appropriate timelines, so that it is clear how it is addressing its perceived needs and weaknesses.