



UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

The Graduate School

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June 24, 2002

To: Lee Huntsman
Provost

From: Marsha Landolt 
Dean and Vice Provost

Re: UW Tacoma Nursing Program 5-year Review

Summary and recommendation

At its meeting of May 30, 2002, the Graduate School Council met with members of the review committee for the UW Tacoma Nursing Program, the Vice Chancellor of UW Tacoma, and the Director of the Program. The Council concurred with the review team's recommendation that the undergraduate (BSN) program be continued, with its next review in 10 years (2011-2012), and that the graduate program (MN) be converted from provisional to continuing status, also with review in ten years. I, too, concur with these findings and recommendations.

Background

The UWT Nursing Program offers two degree opportunities for registered nurses: a Bachelor of Nursing (BSN) and a Master of Nursing (MN). The latter degree, first offered in 1996, has emphases in "Communities, Populations and Health" and "Health Care Leadership and Management". Both degrees are designed for full or part-time attendance, and in both programs the great majority of students attend part-time (70-75% of BSN students and above 95% of MN students). To date, the Program has graduated 496 BSN students (a mean graduation rate of about 87%) and 83 MN students (approximately a 90% graduation rate). The Program currently has 10 full-time faculty members.

The review team was highly complementary of the Program. Its impact on the local community is clear and its curriculum is solid and appropriate to its mission. Its faculty are well respected, active members in the burgeoning UWT community, and the flow of applicants to the Program is consistent and increasingly diverse. Most students continue

to work as nurses while attending school, and graduates usually stay at the same health care institution, often with promotion. Students, graduates and employers alike are clear about the value and high quality of the Program; all emphasized the importance to the South Puget Sound region of access to advanced education in Nursing.

The relationship of the Tacoma campus to the Seattle campus School of Nursing has grown and changed over time. Due to accreditation and by design, the UWT Program was originally completely dependent on the Seattle Program. Now, however, there is a desire and need for more independence, which is acknowledged by the leadership on all three campuses. Accordingly, the review team recommended that the UWT Program begin to consider seeking greater autonomy from UW Seattle in the form of separate professional accreditation, which appears to be allowed by their accrediting association. The review team felt that such autonomy might well foster collaboration and greater collegiality between the two campus's programs.

The review team had several additional recommendations, generally encouraging a careful examination of how faculty time and other resources are used. Specific suggestions included evaluating the effort required to offer T HEALTH courses (designed for nonmajors) versus student gain; improving the efficiency of clinical site placement and coordination responsibilities; conducting a needs assessment for a track with a greater clinical component. The review team also noted that while students are effusive in their praise for the attention they receive from faculty, the attention perhaps comes at too great a price to individual faculty. The review team made several suggestions regarding the faculty's ability to conduct research and recommended that the Program pursue various efforts to facilitate greater scholarly productivity, for example, reduce student office hours; hire a full professor to jump-start the scholarly effort; find a more efficient balance between service and scholarship; be more proactive in grant-writing; and support UWT initiatives to give one quarter release time for research. The Graduate School Council recommended that the campus continue to come to grips with research expectations – to address the tension between what is appropriate to the mission of the campus and what the faculty expect to be able to accomplish when appointed to a campus of a major research university.

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