Task Force on Graduate Education: Selective Excellence

Program Ratings and Rationale

Program: Nursing MSN Program
Rating: Exemplary

The Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) program prepares nurse leaders. The curriculum of the MSN program meets the standards of various accrediting and certifying bodies that regulate advanced nursing education. The MSN program is in high demand. MSN students have had a 100% certification pass rate over the past three years and all are placed in nursing positions after graduation. The MSN is highly ranked by US News and World Report in areas such as Nursing service administration (#1), Gerontological/geriatric nursing (#1), Nurse anesthetist (#5), Pediatric nurse practitioner (#6), Master science nursing (#9) and Family nurse practitioner (#11).

Program: Nursing Ph.D. Program
Rating: High Quality

The PhD program in nursing has four focus areas: aging, nursing administration, informatics and child and family nursing. The PhD enrollment is ~50 students. One area of concern is the long TTD (7.7 yrs) if looking retrospectively, but improvements are being made. The completion rate for those entering 1996-2000 is very good (83%) and the TTD for this cohort is 5.9 yrs. The TTD does reflect the fact that most students are working as clinical nurses while completing the PhD, due to limited funding opportunities, which is more of a concern, although common in the field. Other challenges for the program in addition to funding include impending faculty retirements and the size of the faculty relative to the size of the graduate programs. It was noted that these challenges are not unique to UI but reflect common issues faced by Nursing graduate programs nationwide. Graduates are highly sought after with 55% of graduates from 2003-08 in tenure track faculty positions and another 9% in academic postdoc positions.

Program: Nursing DNP Program
Rating: Too new to assess

The Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) was introduced in 2007 as the only clinical doctorate program in the state and complies with educational standards for advanced practice nurses established by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing. The DNP prepares nurse clinicians to assume leadership positions in clinical practice, clinical education or executive management. A total of 26 students have enrolled as of Fall 2009. All of the DNP graduates (two classes to date) are currently employed as nurse practitioners. All indicators suggest that the program is on an upward trajectory.