Texas A&M University Corpus Christi
College of Nursing and Health Sciences

Self Study Report for the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education
Fall 2005

http://conhs.tamucc.edu
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INTRODUCTION

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi (TAMU-CC) is a public, Carnegie Master’s Colleges and University Institution I, degree-granting institution of higher education that serves undergraduate, graduate and continuing education students. TAMU-CC is a coeducational institution situated in the largest metropolitan area on the South Texas Gulf Coast. This urban setting is surrounded by rural communities and is less than 200 miles from the Mexican border. The unique geographical and social environment is composed of multiple layers of diversity with respect to culture, student attributes and educational needs.

There are approximately 8,200 students enrolled in graduate and undergraduate programs (spring 2005). The student body is predominantly drawn from the Coastal Bend Region of Texas, although enrollment of students from other parts of the state and nation and from foreign countries is not unusual. TAMU-CC is comprised of five colleges: Arts and Humanities, Business, Education, Science and Technology, and the newest college, Nursing and Health Sciences. Program offerings at the University have grown to include more than 92 undergraduate and graduate degrees, pre-professional and teacher certification programs.

TAMU-CC and its nursing programs have undergone a period of rapid change and growth in the last three years. The number of students at the University has increased substantially, with the further goal of 10,000 students by 2010 and 12,000 by 2015. The nursing program enrollment has increased dramatically at the same time. At the annual President’s Convocation in October 2003, the School of Nursing and Health Sciences (SONHS) was recognized for its significant growth during the past decade and for its potential continued growth in the future. President Furgason concluded his remarks with the following statement: “I believe it is time to recognize these dynamics and to consider allowing the School of Nursing and Health Sciences to become a freestanding academic unit, which is a common structure in most universities.” The Board of Regents of the Texas A&M University System approved the
creation of the College of Nursing and Health Sciences (CONHS) in December 2003, and The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board formalized its approval in February 2004.

During the spring and summer of 2004, the SONHS underwent a strategic realignment in preparation for the advent of the CONHS in September 2004. During this period, the bylaws were reviewed, revised, and approved; a new strategic plan was developed; and the banner for the CONHS was created. On September 1st, 2004, the CONHS officially joined the other colleges of TAMU-CC.

In May 2004, Dr. Robert Furgason announced his intent to step down as president of the University as soon as a new president could be named. In December 2004, Dr. Flavius Killebrew was named president, and in January 2005 a strategic planning initiative titled Momentum 2015 was launched by Dr. Killebrew. Momentum 2015 incorporated representation from each College, and nursing faculty, staff, and students were involved at all phases of its development: on the steering committee, heading task forces and as committee members. The final version of Momentum 2015 was launched on September 10th during President Killebrew’s Investiture, and this document will inform the development of a new strategic plan and direction for TAMU-CC. Implementation of the plan will occur during 2006 at all levels of the University.

The growth in students from 6,600 in 2000 to 8,200 in 2004-5 has required reallocation of resources and realignment of services. Declared Nursing majors have increased from 245 in 2000 to 875 in 2005. Currently, there are approximately 315 freshman and sophomore students declaring nursing as a major. This increase has created the need for changes in the delivery of classes and in resource allocation and has resulted in an increase in nursing faculty lines. During this period of rapid growth, TAMU-CC administration and the community have been responsive to and supportive of the needs of the CONHS.

The baccalaureate program at the CONHS consists of a generic program that has approximately 254 students. A fast track program for twenty post baccalaureate students was instituted in fall 2004. This is not a revision of the generic program but a compression of the existing courses. A new distance education program to Texas A&M University at College Station for this fast track program has been approved and began in fall 2005 for 20 students. A RN/BSN completion program has approximately 60 students, and an RN/MSN program is in place with about 15 students. Both the RN/BSN and RN/MSN programs have developed online delivery systems. The RN/MSN program has a one-year bridge program into the MSN program,
and another bridging mechanism into the MSN program consists of course work in baccalaureate nursing for persons with a BS or BA in another discipline who are already Registered Nurses.

The MSN program has three specialty areas: Clinical Nurse Specialist, Leadership in Nursing Systems, and Nurse Practitioner. The MSN program is delivered online with clinical courses implemented in the students’ home communities that are by supervised and evaluated by faculty and preceptors. The online delivery is a result of student requests and in response to student needs in the more rural areas of Texas. There are approximately 200 students in the MSN program from multiple sites in Texas.

In the past year, CONHS faculty and staff were disseminated over six different areas on the campus, but in September 2005 faculty were allocated office space in the Center for Instruction. With this move, faculty and supporting staff are now centralized in two areas, which will enhance communication, management and teamwork. A campus Nursing building for the future is being discussed. While competition for space and resources is a constant issue on campus, the CONHS is fortunate to have a responsive TAMU-CC administration that is concerned with equity for all units.

In the future, administration and faculty of the CONHS are looking forward to establishing a partnership with another university to provide an established nursing doctoral program that will serve the nursing professional and health care needs of the South Texas region. In addition, as the CONHS distributed learning programs expand, international opportunities will be evaluated for exchange programs and the delivery of courses to international sites. These CONHS goals are supported by community partnerships and by the TAMU-CC administration. The College of Nursing and Health Sciences has every reason to be encouraged and optimistic about its future growth and development.
STANDARD I. PROGRAM QUALITY: MISSION & GOVERNANCE
The mission, goals, and expected outcomes of the program are congruent with those of the parent institution, reflect professional nursing standards and guidelines, and consider the needs and expectations of the community of interest – all in the pursuit of the continuing advancement and improvement of the program. Policies of the parent institution and nursing program clearly support the program’s mission, goals, and expected outcomes. The faculty and students of the program are involved in the governance of the program and in the ongoing efforts to improve program quality.

The mission, goals, and expected outcomes of the College of Nursing and Health Sciences (CONHS) are congruent with those of Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi (TAMU-CC). The current vision, mission, goals, and objectives of TAMU-CC were derived from strategic planning involving TAMU-CC faculty, staff, and administration. The document was approved by the Texas A&M System in July 2003 and implemented in fall 2003. In the academic year 2004, all TAMU-CC units, including COHNS, synchronized their mission and goals with the University’s strategic planning document. Both the University and COHNS emphasize goals that are directed toward teaching, research, community, service, students, and faculty. All units of TAMU-CC will be incorporating Momentum 2015 initiatives (http://pie.tamucc.edu/strapln/momentum_2015/index.htm and the resource room) into their strategic plan in the academic year 2005-2006. TAMU-CC is designated as a Hispanic serving institution and, consistent with that mission, the CONHS is committed to supporting educational opportunities for diverse, underserved populations in the Texas Coastal Bend area.

I-A. The mission, goals, and expected outcomes of the program are written, congruent with those of the parent institution, and consistent with professional nursing standards and guidelines for the preparation of nursing professionals.

The mission, goals, and expected outcomes of the CONHS are published on the CONHS undergraduate and graduate web pages and the Student Handbook (see URL and Student Handbook). The mission and expected outcomes are congruent with those of TAMU-CC (see http://pie.tamucc.edu/ and Appendix A - Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi Vision, Mission,
Governance and Guiding Principles). The congruency of mission statements is best illustrated by direct comparison, as shown below in Table 1-1:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TAMU-CC Mission</th>
<th>College of Nursing and Health Sciences Mission</th>
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<tr>
<td>Texas A&amp;M University-Corpus Christi is devoted to discovering, communicating, and applying knowledge in a complex and changing world. The university identifies, attracts, and graduates students of high potential, especially those from groups who have been historically under-represented in Texas higher education. Through a commitment to excellence in teaching, research, and service, Texas A&amp;M University-Corpus Christi prepares students for lifelong learning and for responsible participation in the global community.</td>
<td>The mission of the College of Nursing and Health Sciences is to educate the health care providers of today and leaders of tomorrow through the provision of excellent educational programs in the professions of nursing and the health sciences. The College identifies, attracts, and graduates students of high potential, especially those from groups who have been historically under represented in Texas health care. This mission is enhanced through faculty contributions to community service, leadership, practice, and research. These responsibilities are fostered within an interdisciplinary college by promoting a sense of community and caring, and through a system of shared governance.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Consistency between the TAMU-CC and the CONHS mission statement is reflected in the College goals that assist in implementing the TAMU-CC and College mission. The University goals are chiefly concerned with the growth and development of the institution over the next several years (see the TAMU-CC Mission Statement http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/mission). However, the “Institutional Principles” by which the University hopes to achieve its goals demonstrate the congruence between TAMU-CC’s and the CONHS’ aims and philosophies. Here following are the University’s principles:

* Recruiting, retaining, and supporting a diverse, highly qualified student body, faculty and staff.
* Establishing a culture of professionalism and responsibility.
* Fostering free and open intellectual inquiry, accomplishment, and expression.
* Ensuring respectful, fair, and equitable treatment of all individuals.
* Fostering an open, shared, and participatory decision making process.
* Promoting efficient and effective use of time, resources and technology.
* Providing an active campus life that extends teaching and learning beyond the classroom.
* Providing a safe and secure campus environment for students, faculty, and staff.
* Involving the university community, alumni, civic and government leaders, and other friends of the university in the Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi vision and mission.

In clear step with these principles are the College’s goals:

1. To develop within the student the knowledge and skills necessary for beginning professional and advanced nursing practice, cultivating basic and specialized abilities needed to successfully pursue a career.
2. To promote the concept of nursing as caring, and facilitate attainment of a care delivery system sensitive to multicultural communities and their health values.
3. To offer individuals the opportunity to increase the breadth and depth of the theoretical base for nursing practice, enhance and expand competence, prepare for role specialization, and contribute to the discovery of new nursing knowledge.
4. To provide an educational environment of respect within which students may evolve as broadly educated, responsible and accountable professionals dedicated to the principles of lifelong learning.
5. To build a foundation for graduate education.
6. To serve the community as nursing experts, leaders and consultants in professional organizations, health promoters, providers of health care policy information, and advocates of ethical distribution and usage of resources.

In addition, the university goals concerned with the growth and development were further explicated in the CONHS’ strategic plan. (see Appendix – B TAMU- CC Goals and CONHS Strategic Plan Goals)
The mission, goals, and expected outcomes of the CONHS are also consistent with Texas state regulations as delineated in the Nursing Practice Act and Nursing Peer Review Act (Texas State Board of Nurse Examiners, amended 2003). In addition, the American Nurses Association’s Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics for Nurses With Interpretive Statements (ANA, 2001) is incorporated into the curriculum in the form of guidelines for professional practice (Resource Room). The Differentiated Entry Level Competencies of Graduates of Texas Nursing Programs (Texas State Board of Nurse Examiners, 2002 [http://www.bne.state.tx.us/del-comp.pdf]) and The Essentials for Baccalaureate Education for Professional Practice (American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN), 1998) guide the curriculum content and outcome objectives of the CONHS baccalaureate programs. (See Appendix -C Congruence of CONHS Mission/Philosophy, BSN Student Learning Outcomes and Professional Nursing Standards).

The standards and guidelines used to guide the graduate programs are: The Essentials of Master’s Education for Advanced Practice Nursing (AACN, 1998), The National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Curriculum Guidelines and Progression Standards for Nurse Practitioner Education (NONPF, 2002), and Statement on Clinical Nurse Specialist Practice and Education (2002). These standards and guidelines were utilized in the development of the CONHS graduate programs (discussed in detail in Standard III.) and guide faculty in program assessment review and evaluation. Utilization of these documents has enabled CONHS faculty to develop a strong foundation for educating students in the baccalaureate and graduate advanced practice nursing programs. (See Appendix -D Congruence of CONHS Mission/Philosophy, MSN Student Learning Outcomes with AACN, NONPF, & ANA Standards).

I-B. The mission, goals, and expected outcomes of the program are reviewed periodically and revised, as appropriate, to reflect professional standards and guidelines.

In the CONHS, program review consists of dynamic, ongoing assessment. As a part of the transition to a college, the mission, goals, and expected outcomes of the program were reviewed and revised by the faculty in spring semester 2004. The program evaluation plan calls for the evaluation of the mission and goals every one to two years. With the implementation of
Momentum 2015 initiatives in the academic year 2005-2006, the next review of the mission, goals, and outcomes will occur in 2006-2007.

A review of the mission, goals, and expected outcomes is described in detail in the Total Program Evaluation Plan (TPEP): BSN and MSN Programs, fall 2004 (see Appendix E Total Program Evaluation Plan). The TPEP provides a systematic, comprehensive and continuous approach for assessing all program components and related outcome indicators and provides a timeline for data collection, data synthesis, decision-making, implementation, and possible actions. As described in the TPEP, the mission, goals, and expected outcomes of the program are periodically reviewed by faculty, with actions of maintenance or revision being performed as necessary. CONHS is responsive to expansion and revisions of the TAMU-CC mission, goals and expected outcomes, as was demonstrated in the opening statement of Standard I. In response to the revised TAMU-CC vision and mission statements, the faculty of the CONHS reviewed their mission, goals and program outcomes and adjustments were made to the CONHS mission and objectives.

Curricula (and thus program outcomes) were developed using the Essentials of Baccalaureate Education for Professional Nursing Practice (American Association of Colleges of Nursing, 1998); The Differentiated Entry Level Competencies of Graduates of Texas Nursing Programs (Board of Nurse Examiners for the State of Texas, 2002); Standards of Clinical Nursing Practice (American Nurses Association, 1992, 1998); Code for Nurses with Interpretive Statements (American Nurses Associations, 2001); and Nursing: A Social Policy Statement (American Nurses Association, 2003). MSN curriculum and program outcomes used the AACN Essentials of Master’s Education (1996), NONPF Domains (2000), and ANA Standards of Advanced Practice Nursing (1999). (See Appendix C for congruence of CONHS Mission, Philosophy and BSN Student Learning Outcomes with the selected set of Professional nursing standards and guidelines. See Appendix D for congruence of the CONHS Mission, Philosophy, and MSN Program Outcomes.) These professional standards serve as guidelines for faculty in conducting program assessment, recommending revisions, and planning student experiences.
I-C. The mission, goals, and expected outcomes of the program are reviewed periodically and revised, as appropriate, to reflect the needs and expectations of the community of interest.

The CONHS is responsive to the needs and expectations of its communities of interest, and it reviews and revises its mission, goals, and outcomes as needed to best serve these communities.

The CONHS community of interest includes both internal and external constituents. The internal constituents are as follows: nursing students, faculty, TAMU-CC and CONHS administration, and the campus student body. The external members are widely spread: registered nurses, health care consumers, hospitals and clinics in the areas where our students, graduates and faculty practice, rural health clinics and health departments, clinics within state and federal prisons, mental health facilities, and health related service organizations (e.g. March of Dimes, American Heart Association, American Red Cross).

Our community of interest participates in reviews of the program in a variety of ways. Round table discussions are conducted annually to obtain input, and nursing leadership breakfasts, Advisory Council dinners, telephone surveys of employers, and focus groups are employed in the process. CONHS sponsored events are invariably well supported and attended by the constituents.

An Advisory Committee for the College of Nursing (see Appendix F College of Nursing Advisory Board Members 2003-2005), has as its purpose to “further the attainment of the College’s mission and goals and institute feedback from the community at large relevant to health care, nursing, nursing education, and nurses as members of the health care team”. Two examples of changes to the CONHS programs in response to the expectations and needs of the health care community were:

- The design and initiation of a fast track program for second degree students. The community responded to the initiative with scholarships for the students and monetary support for faculty and support positions.
- Reactivation of the Clinical Nurse Specialist Track in response to the need for advanced practice nurses in the acute care setting.

Other examples of discussion questions and suggestions are in the resource room under CONHS Advisory Committee, spring 2005.
I-D. Roles of the faculty and students in the governance of the program are clearly defined and enable meaningful participation.

Faculty and students in the CONHS are actively involved in all levels of governance within the College, the University, and in the Texas A & M System. Great effort has been made to include all faculty (onsite and outreach) and students (onsite and web) in meaningful participation. Offsite involvement has been accomplished by using the Trans Texas Video Network (a state wide network that connects our outreach and local sites), telephone conferences, undergraduate and graduate list-serves, and chat rooms.

College Administration

The Dean of the College of Nursing and Health Sciences is responsible to the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs and serves as the chief academic administrator of the College. The Dean is administratively responsible for planning, organizing, coordinating, directing, and evaluating the cooperative effort of the College, serving also as an advocate for the nursing programs in the internal and external environments. The Dean sits on the Provost’s Council, a body which initiates recommendations and advises on University issues such as academic and fiscal matters, space needs, academic support services, enrollment services, research, public service, community outreach, and the interface of athletics with the academic program. A full position description of the Dean’s responsibilities and duties is available in the Faculty and Staff handbook located in the online resource file.

The Associate Dean of the College of Nursing and Health Sciences is a three quarter administrative position with overall responsibility for implementing and evaluating all undergraduate and graduate programs of the College of Nursing and Health Sciences. The Associate Dean reports directly to the Dean of the College of Nursing and Health Sciences and exercises the administrative responsibilities delegated by the Dean. In the absence of the Dean, the duties and responsibilities of the Dean shall be exercised by the Associate Dean. A position description of the Associate Dean’s responsibilities and duties is available in the Faculty and Staff handbook located in the online resource file.

The Coordinator of the Undergraduate Nursing Programs is responsible for coordinating the planning and evaluating of the Baccalaureate Curriculum to include clinical courses with the Undergraduate Committee in the College. The Coordinator is appointed by the Dean and chairs the Undergraduate Affairs meetings.
The Coordinator of the Graduate Nursing Programs is responsible for coordinating the planning and evaluating of the Graduate curriculum to include clinical courses with the Graduate Committee in the College. The Coordinator is appointed by the Dean and chairs the Graduate Affairs meetings.

The Outreach Coordinator works with the Undergraduate and Graduate Coordinators to coordinate and manage all courses for outreach programs. The coordinator is appointed by the Dean and is a voting member of Undergraduate and Graduate Affairs Faculty. All position descriptions are available in the Faculty and Staff handbook located in the online resource file.

The administrative council composed of the above members meets monthly to review and evaluate activities related to organization and curriculum issues.

**Faculty**

Faculty members have a major substantive decision-making role in the governance of the College of Nursing and Health Sciences. The Faculty of the Whole (FOW) organization serves as the nucleus through which information is shared, discussion occurs, and resolution is achieved. The work of the faculty occurs in the committee structure as organized in the faculty by-laws. Descriptions, purporses, responsibilities of administrative and faculty roles, and standing TAMU-CC committees are described in the 2005 – 2006 Faculty Handbook (Resource Room). The CONHS Organizational Chart and Standing Committee Calendar and Membership for 2005 – 2006 will be found in the Resource Room. In addition, a list of Faculty Committee Assignments for the College, University, and Community can be found in the Resource Room.

Additionally, the CONHS is well represented in the University’s Faculty Senate. By virtue of its constitution, the Faculty Senate is an advising and recommending body that serves to represent faculty in the governance of the TAMU-CC. The Senate's functions include overseeing policy (establishment of new policies, changes in existing policies, and the interpretation of existing policies), advising, reporting, and acting as a forum for discussion and debate of any issue vital to TAMU-CC. In addition to serving on the Senate, CONHS faculty members hold major leadership roles on TAMU-CC councils and committees.

**Students**

Students have numerous opportunities for participation in TAMU-CC and CONHS governance. These opportunities are outlined in the CONHS Bylaws (2004), and in the Student Handbook (2005-2006), and are posted on the CONHS website.
At the University level, student representatives constitute student government and contribute to the decision making process of the University through this forum. Two students form the Chancellor’s Student Advisory Board as the official voice of students to the system leadership and to the public at large concerning system-wide issues and matters of policy and implementation. Six student representatives serve on the board of directors for the Women’s Center for Education and Service.

Student representatives are invited members of the following TAMU-CC committees: Academic Standards Grievance Committee; Undergraduate Admissions Committee; Facilities Use and Events Management Committee; Homecoming Committee; Institutional Review Board, Library Committee; Pedestrian and Vehicular Subcommittees; Recreational Sports Advisory Committee; and the Student Publications Committee. (See University Committees and University Administrative Councils, revised 8-19-05, Resource Room.)

In an effort to maximize student participation in the governance of the CONHS, faculty recruit student representation on the following committees of the Faculty of the Whole: Undergraduate Affairs—four students are elected by the student body, representing the Junior and Senior students and the RN/BSN and RN/MSN students; Graduate Affairs Committee—two students are elected by the student body, representing the Clinical Nurse Specialist, Family Nurse Practitioner, and Leadership in Nursing Systems students.

Additional student committee assignments include two students nominated or volunteering to sit on the Library Committee, representing the Graduate and Undergraduate programs in Nursing, and one graduate student on the College Research Committee. Students were active participants in all committees of Momentum 2015, and they serve as members of the Recognition Ceremony Planning Committee and many other celebratory events in the College and TAMU-CC. Student participation on committees serves as an important communication link between faculty and students regarding program issues, needs and change.

Although students are encouraged to engage in committee work, the faculty is sensitive to the fact that their ability to attend meetings is influenced by the demands of their course of study, work and family commitments.
I-E. Documents and publications are accurate. Any references in promotional materials to the program’s offerings, outcomes, accreditation/approval status, academic calendar, admission policies, grading policies, degree completion requirements, tuition, and fees are accurate.

All documents and publications are reviewed and revised annually to accurately reflect the program’s offerings, outcomes, national and state accreditation and approval status, academic calendar, admission and grading policies, degree requirements, tuition, and fees. In addition to the CONHS, the Faculty Senate and the Graduate Council review all catalogue copy. The TAMU-CC Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogues, College of Nursing and Health Sciences Student Handbook, Faculty Handbook, and Preceptor Handbook are reviewed and published annually. All catalogues, student and faculty handbooks and preceptor manuals are online. By maintaining a paperless system, the annual review process allows for timely updates to ensure accuracy and immediate online correction of problems.

Promotional materials for the CONHS were reviewed in the 2004-2005 academic year, edited to reflect changes, and published in spring 2005. The web pages are currently under revision for ease of navigating, most current policies and adherence to the TAMU-CC’s publication policy and image, and will be completed by Oct 2005. The TAMU-CC Undergraduate Catalog 2005-2006 and TAMU-CC Graduate Catalog 2005-2006, as well as the TAMU-CC web site, www.tamucc.edu, reflect accurately the existing programs of the CONHS.

I-F. Policies of the parent institution and the nursing program are congruent with and support the mission, goals, and expected outcomes of the program; these policies are fair, equitable, published, and are reviewed and revised as necessary to reflect ongoing improvement. These policies include, but are not limited to, those relative to student recruitment, admission, and retention.

The CONHS policies and regulations are congruent with the policies of TAMU-CC and support the mission, goals, and expected outcomes of the BSN and MSN programs. CONHS policies affecting student recruitment, admission, and retention are published in the Student Handbook (2005) (Resource Room). During student orientation held onsite or online, the Student Handbook and Policies are reviewed prior to the commencement of classes. The Texas State Board of Nurse Examiners requires students to be advised in writing and orally of the Declaratory Orders and a copy of the students signed statement indicating this occurrence to be
must be maintained in each student’s file. The Student Handbook is reviewed and revised annually and is published electronically on the CONHS website: http://www.sci.TAMU-CC.edu/nursing/stuhandbook02/. Each student is required to read the student handbook and to submit a signed receipt verifying this action.
Summary of Assessment of Standard I

Strengths:

- The mission, goals, and outcomes of the CONHS are congruent with those of the parent institution.
- The CONHS programs have a solid foundation in professional, state, and national standards.
- *Momentum 2015* establishes new imperatives for the university with significant nursing faculty, staff, and student input.
- The internal and external Communities of Interest are engaged, supportive, and responsive to requests for feedback.
- There is strong support from the TAMU-CC Administration and Community of Interest to maintain standards while increasing the number of students and providing adequate resources for the program.

Opportunities: With the rapid growth and change in TAMU-CC and CONHS, careful planning to maintain standards must be emphasized. The external Community of Interest has many exciting opportunities for joint ventures such as research and program planning.

Plans for Ongoing Improvement:

- The College will develop a structure that allows growth and maintains the integrity of the program.
- The CONHS will continue to keep lines of communication open to maximize faculty and student participation in governance.
- The CONHS will continue to work at developing partnerships and opportunities within our external Community of Interest;
- Working with *Momentum 2015 Initiatives*, the CONHS will refine its strategic plan during the 2005-06 year and beyond.
STANDARD II. PROGRAM QUALITY: INSTITUTIONAL COMMITMENT AND RESOURCES

The parent institution demonstrates ongoing commitment and support. The institution makes available resources to enable the program to achieve its mission, goals, and expected outcomes. The faculty, as a resource of the program, enables the achievement of the mission, goals, and expected outcomes of the program.

The Texas A&M University System is comprised of nine universities, seven state agencies, and a comprehensive Health Sciences center. A Board of Regents, whose nine members are appointed by the governor and confirmed by the Texas Senate, governs the Texas A&M System. Policy 01.01 mandates that federal and state law govern the Board of Regents, the System, and its component universities, by Board bylaws and by System policies. System Policies, as approved by the Board, along with System Regulations, as established by the Chancellor, are the basis for all TAMU-CC and Agency Rules.

Budgeting Process

The fiscal resources of TAMU-CC have been constrained by a continuing state budget crisis that has resulted in declining legislative support of higher education. In 2003, TAMU-CC was required to return 5% of its allocated funding to the state with a potential further return of another 7% threatened. A campus wide study in reduction of costs was undertaken, and the five percent cut was made, although the additional cut never materialized. During the academic year 2004-2005, TAMU-CC was notified by the Legislature to expect an addition 5% cut in the budget; however, the budget cuts for 2005-2006 were avoided by the Legislature. Each time threatened reduction occurs, colleges and all campus units review their budgets and list the areas that will be reduced and the impact on programming. The uncertain and declining state support of higher education has made it necessary to seek other sources of funds such as increased tuition and fees, outside financial support, and endowments from private sectors.

Prior to fall 2004, the budget for the School of Nursing and Health Sciences resided in the College of Science and Technology. During that time, the budgetary resources were shared with the two other departments. The establishment of the College of Nursing and Health Science presented an opportunity to formulate a realistic budget for the College and to present budgetary needs to the University administration. The Assistant Vice President & Comptroller, Assistant Comptroller and Director of Budget/Payroll, and Budget Manager have all provided assistance to
the College Dean in formulating the budget. The College budget consists of three main categories: Salaries, M&O and Travel. (see Appendix H CONHS Budget 2003-2005)

The College has been fortunate to have several outside funding sources for the last several years. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board has awarded money to TAMU-CC, allowing an increase in student credit hours in the pre-licensure Nursing courses. The College of Nursing and Health Sciences was awarded $202,000 for increasing undergraduate student hours. The Coastal Bend Health Education Center and two area hospitals awarded $200,000 to establish a compressed program for second-degree students. Workforce One awarded the College $100,000 to support a faculty member for two years. In recognition of the growth in Nursing, an additional faculty and Academic Advisor position was approved in June 2005. A University Capital Campaign is being launched in 2006 to raise money to complement other efforts of private fundraising and external research funding to support the mission of the organization.

In general, the University has been very supportive of CONHS, and the College’s faculty has proved itself to be a committed and valuable resource in enabling the achievement of the mission, goals, and expected outcomes of the program.

II-A. The parent institution and program provide and support an environment that encourages faculty teaching, scholarship, service, and practice in keeping with the mission, goals, and expected outcomes of the program.

TAMU-CC and the CONHS provide and support an environment that values teaching, community service, practice, and scholarship in faculty roles. Dr. Robert Furgason, President of TAMU-CC from 1990 to 2004, and the new president, Dr. Flavius Killebrew, have made student centeredness, excellence in teaching, cultural diversity, and growth of TAMU-CC hallmarks of their administrations. Faculty members’ commitments to teaching, community service, practice, and scholarship have been established as strategic imperatives (see Momentum 2015) and are actively supported through a number of avenues that stem from the level of President/Provost through to the Colleges. Faculty and staff have an academic incentive program to encourage them to continue formal education, and many opportunities are available to engage in continuing
education as part of professional development. Faculty members are encouraged to participate in local, state, national and international professional organizations.

**Teaching**

The CONHS provides an orientation and mentoring program for new faculty. Each new faculty is assigned a faculty mentor for one to two years. The mentor is an experienced faculty member who assists the new teacher to understand System policies and TAMU-CC rules and provides support and assistance in adjusting to the TAMU-CC and CONHS environment. The College also supports faculty development by providing retreats and faculty development workshops one to two times each year. Topics for the workshops are areas that faculty suggest. Many workshops are presented in partnership with District 17, Texas Nurses Association, or Eta Omicron Chapter, Sigma Theta Tau International.

The faculty role in teaching is also supported by the TAMU-CC through regularly scheduled workshops directed toward achieving excellence in the various aspects of teaching and classroom management. An example was the recent workshop on developing Teaching and Administrative Portfolios. The TAMU-CC Library provides workshops to facilitate faculty activities in searching databases and locating reference materials. In addition, the Library offers an extensive collection of films, videos, and CDs for faculty and student use. The Faculty Renaissance Center ([http://falcon.TAMU-CC.edu/wiki/FRC/HomePage](http://falcon.TAMU-CC.edu/wiki/FRC/HomePage)) provides workshops and on-site assistance to strengthen faculty computer skills in managing distributive learning and students in the virtual classroom. The Instructional Technology staff also assist faculty in operation and maintenance of e-mail systems, various computer programs and systems to promote faculty members’ ability to engage in effective communication and to both provide and access needed information.

All faculty offices are equipped with computer and Internet access. Each computer system is loaded with minimum of Microsoft Office, email and Internet Browsers. Statistical packages are available to faculty through site licenses. Virtual teaching platforms are available to faculty to support distance learning. WebCT is the program used in the CONHS to support virtual learning. Online tutorials and technical support regarding use of WebCT are available for students and faculty. An Educational Technologist is available within the College to support faculty and student needs on an as-needed basis.
Scholarship

Although teaching and service to the TAMU-CC and the community at large has been a major focus of the TAMU-CC since its beginning, the President, Provost, and College Dean are also committed to promoting the scholarship efforts of faculty. Scholarship at the University consists of three separate, yet interconnected elements: Scholarship of Discovery, Scholarship of Integration and Teaching, and Scholarship of Application.

http://www.TAMUCC.edu/provost/TAMU-CC_rules/faculty/120199C104.htm

Contributions in research and scholarship are expected of faculty and are outlined in each individual’s annual Professional Development Plan. To support TAMU-CC’s movement to a Research Intensive Status, an Office of Research and Scholarly Activity exists. This resource is available to encourage and assist the University community in obtaining and administering external support for research. In addition to regularly sponsoring grant writing and related seminars for faculty, a wealth of information concerning rules, research policies, guideline, forms, and animal and human subjects are available at this office. The website contains Institutional Review Board (IRB) forms, pre and post award information and other helpful information. http://falcon.TAMU-CC.edu/%7Egradweb/research/ For individuals who sign up, weekly e-mails advertising grant opportunities are sent. Monthly reports providing information about TAMU-CC grants submitted and funded as well as funding opportunities for faculty are available. http://falcon.TAMU-CC.edu/%7Egradweb/research/

Funds to support faculty research are available through the TAMU-CC Research Enhancement Committee. The application is competitive, and several of the College’s faculty members have received funding. The same state source that provides funds for University-wide research also allocates funds distribution within the five colleges, with amounts to be determined by the number of faculty in each college. Hence, the amount of this funding is small, usually between five and ten thousand dollars per college. Currently, the Coastal Bend Health Education Center (CBHEC) provides $30,000 for pilot studies that support Development of the Nurses in Partnership Research Award Program. The purpose of this program is to increase the amount of research in the College of Nursing and Health Science. The Office of Research and Scholarly Activity oversees the distribution of these funds.
Community Service

Formation of the CONHS created new opportunities for community service which faculty eagerly embraced. All faculty members participate in activities that are classified as community service. Many are on community boards, such as MHMR, ADVANCE, March of Dimes, Rotary International, and the City Office of Emergency Planning. TAMU-CC has an office of Community Outreach, which connects faculty with community activities that benefit from CONHS personnel involvement, such as work in the Colonias, Public Health Homeland Security planning, and work with youth groups in disadvantaged populations and school districts. An example of this last involvement was a Science Fair for fifth graders, where faculty and students taught elementary students aspects of the nervous system and how to test for cranial nerves. CONHS faculty has had a grant with the Texas Department of Transportation to develop “A Safe Community Model” for the past five years. The interdisciplinary grant with Nursing and Criminal Justice has involved planning and implementing safety fairs, passing out infant car seats and checking to make sure they are installed correctly, engaging in Buckle Up campaigns, and promoting safe and sober spring breaks, to name just a few activities.

Practice

A faculty practice plan has been developed to assist faculty members in advanced practice roles to maintain their clinical competence. A senior faculty member works with the local MHMR in a collaborative partnership to enhance their programs utilizing a PhD prepared Clinical Nurse Specialist in Psychiatric Nursing. Several faculty members practice in the student Health and Counseling Center on campus. Multiple opportunities for faculty practice and consultation exist as the University and the Nursing program continue to develop partnerships within the community.

University Recognition and Support

TAMU-CC annually awards, recognizes and supports individuals for excellence in teaching, research, and service. One CONHS faculty member received the first TAMU-CC Faculty Senate Service Award in 2000 and another received the TAMU-CC Faculty Senate Excellence in Teaching Award in 2001. Two further faculty members were nominated for the
TAMU-CC Faculty Senate Excellence in Scholarship (2002 and 2004) and received the College Excellence in Scholarship Award.

Faculty Developmental leaves have just been established and may be granted to faculty after seven years of service. Policies and procedures are available on the TAMU-CC web site, http://www.TAMU-CC.edu/provost/TAMU-CC_rules/faculty/129901C1.html.

Support in terms of planning the workload schedule and arranging leave is provided in the CONHS for research, scholarly development, and lifelong learning. Although limited, there are College funds available to support faculty travel to present papers/posters and for faculty development. New tenure track faculty are provided 25% release time for the fall, spring and summer semesters of their first year to establish their programs of research. In addition, reduced teaching loads may be negotiated with the Dean to provide increase time for research when the teaching requirements allow.

TAMU-CC provides personnel resources, both for faculty and staff through its Human Resources Department. Presently the College of Nursing and Health Sciences has 31 full time faculty and 1 vacant faculty position. Additionally, approximately ten adjuncts are hired each semester. There are eight College staff positions to cover administrative, faculty and student services needs. The staff positions include one senior administrative assistant, four secretaries, one database coordinator, one educational technologist, one business coordinator, and one full and one half time Academic Advisors. There is also a Learning Resource Assistant for the lab and student workers who are employed for a limited number of hours. In addition, the College supplies the school nurse (who is not teaching faculty) for the Early Childhood Development Center, a demonstration school for Corpus Christi Independent School District for levels Preschool to grade 5.

II-B. Fiscal and physical resources are sufficient to enable the program to fulfill its mission, goals, and expected outcomes. These resources are reviewed, revised, and improved as needed.

Fiscal Resources
The TAMU-CC Office of Planning and Institutional Effectiveness conducts a Faculty Comparison Study each year, comparing the disciplines and rank salaries of TAMU-CC faculty members with a chosen comparison group of like universities and a group of aspiration
universities. The list of universities may be found at http://pic.TAMU-CC.edu/. In addition, nursing salaries are benchmarked to AACN regional data by rank and other descriptors.

The compensation for the Dean of the College of Nursing and Health Sciences is 14% lower than the reported AACN mean for public institutions (AACN, 2004-2005, Table 5, p5). Compared to the four other academic deans at TAMU-CC, the CONHS Dean’s compensation is between 10-23% lower than her peer group. TAMU-CC/CONHS comparisons demonstrate that nursing salaries are $2000-6,000 lower than the mean for all comparisons except the full Professor rank, which is approximately $10,000 below the Southern Region mean. In recognition of the disparity for all TAMU-CC professors, a $2,300 equity increase was awarded this fall to all full professors. The salaries in the following table, Table 2-1, represent that increase.

Table 2-1 Faculty salaries by rank compared with disciple specific Aspiration Group and AACN 2004-5 data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean Salary 2005-06</th>
<th>Mean Years of Service</th>
<th>Comparison with Aspiration Group 2003-4</th>
<th>Comparison with AACN 2004-5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professor</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>$69,598</td>
<td>7 Range (2-12)</td>
<td>$71,671</td>
<td>$78,023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Professor Doctoral</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>$58,799</td>
<td>3.5 Range (1-6)</td>
<td>$56,377</td>
<td>$64,862</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Professor Doctoral</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>$53,358</td>
<td>6.5 Range (1-14)</td>
<td>$50,464</td>
<td>$55,214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visiting Assistant Professor Masters</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>$46,510</td>
<td>3.125 Range (1-11)</td>
<td>$50,464</td>
<td>$49,119</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Faculty members are eligible, if qualified for the course offered, to request a summer teaching assignment. In the past, the majority of nursing courses offered were at the graduate level; however, more undergraduate courses are now being included in summer offerings. A six credit teaching assignment for Summer Session I and Summer Session II constitutes 100% effort. The pay rate is calculated based on 25% of the faculty member’s nine-month salary for full time summer employment. The total is adjusted based on the summer percent effort.
Reassigned time for course development, research and practice can be arranged.

Reassigned time assignments are supported by the adjunct faculty budget and total number of full-time faculty members available to staff teaching assignments.

Scholarship is supported through assigned time to develop programs of research. Budget line items have been available to support graduate assistants to support faculty research through the Office of Research and Scholarly Activity. Travel funds have been provided for faculty with papers accepted for scholarly presentations (See Appendix G -CONHS Budget 2003-2005).

Funds are available to provide on-campus workshops at least once a year. Topics have included distance education, development of web-supported courses, program evaluation, and test item construction, and collaborative practice. Twenty faculty participated in a CONHS supported online workshop to improve online teaching and interaction through LERN. A HESI workshop on developing critical thinking questions was held fall 2004. One faculty teaching in the graduate FNP program attended a week long Pharmacology Workshop, paid for by the CONHS, to upgrade the course content in graduate Pharmacology. (Flyers addressing workshops will be available in the Resource room). Faculty may use travel funds to obtain Continuing Education Units (CEUs) in their clinical specialty and supporting teaching areas.

At the present the budget is sufficient to meet the goals and expected outcomes of the CONHS. With the growth of CONHS program, however, it will be necessary to increase fiscal resources.

**Physical Resources**

Physical space for faculty offices and classrooms on this campus are a challenge for all colleges. In 2004, nursing faculty and administrative offices were housed in six different campus sites. During taskforce meetings for *Momentum 2015*, a desire to house colleges in specific locations and develop a college identity for each emerged. A University administrative team reviewed resources and needs of the CONHS and confirmed CONHS’ own assessment of the need for a consolidated space. Vacated space in an adjacent building, the Center for Instruction, was renovated and faculty will move into the offices in fall 2005. This will allow the faculty to be housed in two major areas in close proximity to one another. This will bring the College into line with the other Colleges, which has been a goal of the TAMU-CC Administration since the inception of the College.
The College’s Learning Resource Center has renovation plans to make more efficient use of their space. This renovation will take place sometime in the fall of 2005, and our community partners have offered their vacated hospital space to use as a lab during the renovation. TAMU-CC and community have been extremely supportive in our search for solutions to the space problem.

II-C. Academic support services are sufficient to ensure quality and are evaluated on a regular basis to meet program and student needs.

Academic support services are available and sufficient to meet the program’s and the students’ needs, and these services are regularly reviewed. TAMU-CC offers a wide range of academic support services that are available to students, faculty, and staff. Resources are described in the TAMU-CC catalogues, TAMU-CC Student Handbook, CONHS Student Handbook, and CONHS Faculty and Staff Handbook. Resources include: Academic Computing, Tutoring and Learning Center, Career Planning and Placement Center, Library and Media Services and other on-campus resources.

Academic Computing Resources.

Computing resources for students include laboratory classrooms housing over 300 workstations. Most laboratories are open over 90 hours per week. They are staffed with student laboratory assistants. The student network servers are equipped to provide a wide range of software applications, including a variety of word processors, spreadsheets, graphics programs, e-mail, programming languages, and specialized software applications that support individual classes. Students have full access to the Internet from the laboratories and through telephone modem banks. In addition to these computing resources, with the renovation of the Learning Resource Center, an additional 48 networked computers will be available to nursing students for resources and classroom testing.

Tutoring and Learning Center

The Tutoring and Learning Center (TLC) is an academic student support service program designed to improve academic skills for TAMU-CC students. The TLC offers a wide variety of services, and all students are encouraged to take advantage of them. These programs are
designed to improve the retention and graduation rates of TAMU-CC students. The TLC's primary service is peer tutoring which provides free academic assistance to students in subject areas such as: Mathematics, Writing, Biology, Chemistry, Environmental Science, and Physics. The Center has won national awards for its programs the last two years. In addition to the TLC, there are also peer tutors available to nursing students, as well as individual and group tutors composed of faculty and/or graduates and graduate students.

**Career Planning and Placement Center**

Career Services provides career-counseling services to currently enrolled students and alumni up to a year after graduation for no charge. The office has been helpful to Nursing students, providing help, information, and workshops on writing résumés, interviewing and locating intern opportunities in the community. In addition, career fairs are held regularly on campus for prospective employers and graduating students.

**Library and Media Services**

The Mary and Jeff Bell Library houses a collection of approximately 1,100,000 books, bound periodicals, microforms, and state and federal documents. The Library subscribes to over 2,800 periodical titles in print or microfilm and provides electronic access to articles in more than 30,000 additional titles through approximately 150 multidisciplinary and subject specific databases and electronic journal collections. The Library also maintains a strong media collection and has major collections of South Texas books and archival materials. Librarians are available to assist students in locating, using, and evaluating information sources as they work on assignments and/or do research. Librarians are also available to instruct classes in subject-specific information sources.

The Library has made a concerted effort to offer strong collections in the sciences, particularly in nursing and health sciences. The Library subscribes to several multidisciplinary and subject specific databases that directly support students in the College of Nursing and Health Sciences. Many of these resources offer full-text or partial full-text. Included among the Library’s electronic offerings are CINAHL, Pre-CINAHL, Cancerlit, Cell Publications, Medline, Nature Publications, Web of Science, Dekker Publications/Taylor and Francis Online Journals, Science Direct, SpringerLink, TOXLINE, and Wiley Interscience.
The Library’s book/monographic collections contain several thousand titles that are relevant for the study of nursing and health sciences. The majority of these titles are less than 10 years old. The Library’s media collection includes approximately 500 titles that are directly related to nursing and health topics. The Library’s collection of nursing and health science related periodicals permits access to more than 5,200 journals in nursing, medicine, public aspects of medicine, pathology, internal medicine, surgery, ophthalmology, otorhinolaryngology, gynecology and obstetrics, pediatrics, dentistry, dermatology, therapeutics, pharmacology, pharmacy and materia medica, homeopathy, and other systems of medicine. While these collections are not comprehensive, they are able to support the programs offered.

To ensure that the collection continues to meet the needs of growing programs, the Library allocates a portion of the library materials budget for use in purchasing print and media materials that directly support the curriculum. Funding for print monographic collections is consistent and based on a formula that combines student credit hours taught, level of coursework offered, and FTE faculty in the discipline. In addition, programs in the College of Nursing and Health Sciences receive materials through the Library’s approval plan. The approval plan profile was established with input from faculty on the College’s Library Committee. Allocations for nursing and health sciences programs, including approval plan allocations, were made as follows from fiscal year 2000 to fiscal year 2005: FY 2000: $11270, FY 2001: $5458, FY 2002: $3247, FY 2003: $4989, FY 2004: $5402, FY 2005: $3438. (Note that funding for FY 2000 included a supplemental new program allocation of $5000.)

In addition to resources available within the Mary and Jeff Bell Library, students have access to other library collections, locally and statewide, as a result of cooperative agreements among libraries at institutions of higher education. Students registered at TAMU-CC are able to borrow materials from Del Mar College and from Texas A&M University-Kingsville, using their student identification cards. Registered students also have access to the Texshare program, a cooperative network that provides borrowing privileges at most academic institutions in the state. Additionally, the Library is a founding member of the Coastal Bend Health Information Network (CBHIN). Because of this affiliation, students at TAMU-CC have access to the library collections at Driscoll Children’s Hospital and at Spohn Memorial Hospital in Corpus Christi, as well as to document delivery services provided by the network.
Students not having the option to travel to other institutions may also request materials not available at the Library through interlibrary loan. There is no charge to students for this service. The Library is a co-signer of the AMIGOS Interlibrary Loan Code, which improves speed of delivery of interlibrary loan materials. In addition, the Library has signed several bilateral interlibrary loan agreements with academic libraries throughout the U.S. and Mexico to further improve access to materials not owned by the library.

The Mary and Jeff Bell Library offers reference and instruction services both in person and electronically to students enrolled in the CONHS. “Ask a Librarian” is a Web-based email reference service, which is monitored days, nights, and weekends. Librarians provide on-campus instruction in the use of nursing and allied health resources in the Library’s computerized teaching center. The librarian nursing liaison also participates in the graduate orientation provided for nursing students. In order to serve students at remote locations, this orientation is provided simultaneously in person and via Trans Texas Video Network (TTVN).

For nursing classes delivered online, use of specialized resources is supported through a distance learning web page located on the Mary and Jeff Bell Library web site (http://rattler.TAMU-CC.edu/distlearn/index.htm). The distance learning page includes an overview of services offered, tutorials in the use of specialized databases and the online catalog, important related web links and web-based research tools, citation guides, contact information for reference and technical support, and answers to frequently asked questions. Web-based research tools include a step-by-step Research Guide, specialized Subject Guides (bibliographies or webliographies), specialized database user aids, and guides for finding and evaluating web resources, as well as for distinguishing between magazine and journal articles.

Nursing Learning Resource Center

Located in a large dedicated space, the Nursing Learning Resource Center (NRC) is available to students in the Science and Technology Building. A smaller lab is located in the Early Childhood Development Center for students to practice physical examination procedures and skills with models. Room 316 in the Science and Technology building provides a practice laboratory used to demonstrate and practice nursing skills. The lab is equipped to simulate a hospital unit with 10 hospital beds so that undergraduate and graduate students may practice skills and techniques before entering hospital/clinical agency rotations. In addition to the practice
space, the room contains computer and video equipment for students to use computer assisted instruction and interactive video programs or view videotapes. There is also an area set up as a classroom in the NRC.

The CONHS owns two Sim Man patient simulators that allow faculty to fully create actual clinical environments situations in which participants (students) can see the results of their decisions and actions; and errors can be allowed to occur and reach their conclusion. In addition students practice interpersonal interactions with others and work on their communication and leadership within a simulated space. Other technology includes a CathSim® AccuTouch® System which allows students to practice intravenous insertion through virtual reality, HESI Case Studies, Diagnosis RX, and numerous models and computer programs for nursing. Fees, capital equipment allocations, and grants have assisted the CONHS to furnish the lab with state of the art multimedia equipment, models, exam tables, hospital beds, and other hospital equipment. With the proposed renovation, the current space will be utilized to maximize the area and resources.

One of our Professors of Nursing is currently the Assistant Vice President in charge of Special Projects. She has received a $4.3 million grant for the year 2005 from the Department of Defense (DOD) and Department of the Navy (DON) to develop simulation and gaming technology for First Responders in Medical and Nursing Situations. The tailored, interactive software will include video game-like scenarios for nurses and doctors. It puts users in emergency medical situations and allows them to make decisions that could save a patient’s life. The project will be ready beta testing in September 2006 and evaluated on campus in the CONHS and in Washington, D.C.

**ARMS Grant**

In 2000, two faculty members in the then School of Nursing and Health Sciences were awarded a $473,000 Basic Nursing Grant from DHHS to examine and develop recruitment, retention, and success in the CONHS nursing program and in passing the NCLEX-RN. A comprehensive database that tracked student academic factors and forecast those elements that predicted academic success and difficulty was developed and continues to serve the College’s undergraduates and graduates. In addition, recruitment and retention plans, including mentoring...
and tutoring strategies, were successfully implemented. The grant ended in August 2004, but the database, and the recruitment and retention strategies continue.

Other Resources

The Student Services Center is conveniently located in the center of campus. This one-stop location houses the offices of Admissions, the Registrar, Financial Assistance, the Bursar, the Academic Testing Center, and other units serving students.

Finally, the Early Childhood Development Center (ECDC), located on the campus, serves as a public school for area children and as a TAMU-CC teaching laboratory and research center. The CONHS maintains an Island Wellness Clinic in the ECDC, which provides the school nurse who consults with our pediatric faculty and conducts physical exams for all of the ECDC students.

All of the above academic support services, which help ensure program quality, are reviewed regularly though self-assessment and through surveys of students, faculty, alumni, and employees. Data are used to support and validate the various programs of support. (Summary of data will be in the Resource Room).

II-D. The chief nurse administrator is academically and experientially qualified and is vested with the authority required to accomplish the mission, goals, and expected outcomes. The chief nurse administrator provides effective leadership to the nursing unit in achieving its mission, goals, and expected outcomes.

The Chief Nurse Administrator was appointed Interim Director of the School of Nursing and Health Sciences in November 2001, Director of the CONHS in August 2002, and Dean of the new College of Nursing and Health Sciences on September 1st, 2004. The Dean received her BSN from the Medical College of Georgia, an MS in Psychology with a minor in Sociology from Texas A&M University-Kingsville, and her PhD in Nursing from Texas Woman’s University in Houston. She is a tenured full professor at TAMU-CC. During her tenure here, she has served on the Faculty Senate for two terms, as secretary/treasurer within the Faculty Senate and as Faculty Affairs Chair. She has been awarded over two million dollars in federal grants. She is a member of the University of California-San Francisco International HIV/AIDS Nursing
Research Network, which works with international and national HIV Symptom Management Studies. Additionally, she is active in the American Nurses Association, Texas Nurses Association, Sigma Theta Tau Eta Omicron, Society of Pediatric Nurses, American Nurses in AIDS Care, AWHONN, and Southern Nursing Research Society. In 1999, she was awarded the first TAMU-CC Service Award by the Faculty Senate in recognition of her outstanding service to the TAMU-CC, the state and local community, and the nation.

The Dean has taught in programs of Nursing since 1968, first in a diploma program, secondly in an Associate Degree program, and then in baccalaureate and graduate programs. She has served on state and national committees in nursing education. Her service to the community includes long time involvement with the March of Dimes as a board member, chairperson of the Health Professional Advisory Committee, and Chairperson of the Ronald McDonald Board. (See the Dean’s CV for further information in Resource Room)

As academic leader of the College of Nursing and Health Sciences, the Dean serves on all academic decision-making bodies of the TAMU-CC that involve the University deans, the chief of which are the Deans’ Council and the Provost’s Council.

The Deans’ Council initiates recommendations concerning academic programs at TAMU-CC, advises on appropriate University issues, coordinates planning and implementation of college academic programs, provides administrative oversight of all issues involving graduate education at TAMU-CC, and performs other functions as designated by the Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs.

The Provost’s Council initiates recommendations and advises on academic and fiscal matters and space needs, as well as issues involving academic support services, enrollment services, research, public service, community outreach, and the interface of athletics with the academic programs. The Provost’s Council proposes and reviews certain TAMU-CC rules, participates in strategic planning, and performs other functions as designated by the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs.
II-E. Faculty members are academically and experientially qualified and sufficient in number to accomplish the mission, goals, and expected outcomes of the program.

The CONHS faculty is both academically and experientially qualified to accomplish the mission, goals, and expected outcomes of the program. The CONHS faculty has 32 full-time members (including the Dean and Associate Dean), 10 part-time members, and numerous adjunct members. All full-time faculty hold a minimum of a master’s degree in nursing. Adjunct faculty who provide classroom and clinical practice instruction in the nursing courses hold a Master of Science in Nursing Degree. Of the 31 full time faculty, fourteen are doctorally prepared, eight in nursing and six in related disciplines. Two faculty members are currently enrolled in doctoral programs, and three faculty members have completed a post-masters Geriatric Nurse Practitioner certificate program. Other qualifications include:

- National Board Certification:
  - Family Nurse Practitioners (2);
  - Pediatric Nurse Practitioner (2); and
  - Nurse Administrator (1).

- State recognized Clinical Nurse Specialization:
  - Mental Health/Psychiatric (3);
  - Community (1);
  - Medical/Surgical (1) and
  - Maternal Child (2).

The CONHS has 15 faculty members teaching in the graduate program. All full time faculty teaching didactic content in the graduate program are doctorally prepared, and one faculty member is certified in the content taught (Informatics). Clinical adjunct faculty are nationally certified in their specialty.

The CONHS faculty is sufficient in number to accomplish the mission, goals, and expected outcomes of the program at the present time. (see Appendix – H Faculty, Qualifications and Courses Taught).
II-F. The faculty roles in teaching, scholarship, service, and practice are identified clearly and are congruent with the mission, goals, and expected outcomes of the program.

The faculty roles in teaching, scholarship, community service, and practice are clearly identified in the TAMU-CC Rules and Policies and the CONHS Faculty Handbook and are congruent with the mission, goals, and expected outcomes of the program. The policies in both the University and College are reviewed on a biannual basis for clarity and consistency with the mission, goals, and expected outcomes of the program. The TAMU-CC Faculty Handbook, Sections 2.1.3 & 2.1.4, describes faculty and adjunct faculty responsibilities for Teaching, Scholarship, and Service. The TAMU-CC guidelines for faculty appointments and promotions are found in the TAMU-CC Faculty Handbook, Section 2.0. These documents set the parameters for promotion and retention at each rank in the areas of teaching, scholarship and service. The Faculty Senate has proposed changes to the Tenure and Promotion Policy and the Dean’s Council has it as an agenda item for the current academic year.

Each member of the faculty devises an annual Faculty Goals Statement, which is designed to assist the faculty member's progression through the academic ranks within the University. Faculty Goals are designed to address the roles of teaching, scholarship, service and practice and are to be consistent with the mission, goals, and expected outcomes of the program. Faculty at ranks of Professor, Associate, and Assistant Professor negotiate an annual plan that allocates percentages of their time to the areas of teaching, scholarship, and service. Faculty at Visiting rank are expected to spend the majority of their workload in the teaching/instruction area. The CONHS is currently presenting a Clinical Faculty Policy to the Provost and Faculty Senate for approval. The Visiting Assistant Professors will move into Clinical Faculty lines when approved, with designated percentages of teaching/service/research that are different from the tenure track lines. The same teaching/service/scholarship model will be in place but with a reduction in percent of scholarship effort and an increased percentage of teaching.

Faculty members have been successful in teaching, research, and service roles, as evidenced by the number of faculty promoted and tenured through the TAMU-CC processes over the past three years. Tenure and promotion has been awarded to each CONHS faculty who has applied since the last CCNE visit. Further examples of recognition of successful teaching are the number of scholarly presentations, such as at The Nursing Education Conference of the
Rockies, where at least two faculty per year present and one is on the planning committee. Another example would be the awarding of the Helene Fuld Leadership Internship to a nursing faculty member and community partner.

As part of their regular faculty responsibilities, faculty members are expected to satisfactorily perform the following: academic advising; supervision of undergraduate and graduate students; direction of individual studies, curriculum development; participation in College and TAMU-CC governance; scholarship; and participation in professional activities, community activities, and special projects of the University.

Acknowledging the diverse responsibilities of its faculty, the University supports an equitable and reasonable workload assignment system. The TAMU-CC follows guidelines which specify the amount of workload credit that may be granted for various faculty assignments. (See TAMU-CC Statement 12.03.99.C1.01 in the Resource Room.) The academic workload standard for full-time faculty members is 12 workload credits per semester. Workload credits are assigned for direct instruction and for a variety of instructionally-related, administrative, scholarly, and service activities. Assignments of non-instructional workload credit are made by the Dean of the CONHS, in consultation with the Associate Dean, on the basis of recommendations made by the appropriate Program Coordinator who represents the views and wishes of the College faculty.
Summary of Assessment of Standard II

Strengths:

- The CONHS has much improved space for faculty and students.
- Strong resources in the form of Library and Media, state of the art equipment in the NRC exist.
- A dedicated and experienced faculty that assists the students to use the resources to their maximum benefit and who excel in teaching, community service, research and practice.
- The designation the School of Nursing & Health Sciences into a College of Nursing and Health Sciences, a move that has recognized the worth of the unit to TAMU-CC and acknowledged the growth and potential contributions to the Communities of Interest.
- The CONHS has received strong support from the University Administration in terms of resources.
- External funding has been received from partners, public and private, which sustains excellence in faculty and programming.

Opportunities: The College should join in a coordinated effort in fund raising with the Office of Institutional Advancement in order to leverage our fundraising attempts. We should continue to work with the Grants Office to maximize our resources to enhance federal funding.

Plans for Ongoing Improvement:

- The College should continue to monitor resources, both financial and physical to meet the needs of faculty and students.
STANDARD III. PROGRAM QUALITY: CURRICULUM AND TEACHING-LEARNING PRACTICES

The curriculum is developed in accordance with the mission, goals, and expected outcomes of the program and reflects professional nursing standards and guidelines and the needs and expectations of the community of interest. There is congruence between teaching-learning experiences and expected outcomes. The environment for teaching, learning and evaluation of student performance fosters achievement of the expected outcomes.

The College of Nursing and Health Sciences (CONHS) offers undergraduate, graduate and post-master’s certificate programs that prepare individuals to function as registered nurses in a variety of healthcare settings. These programs are designed to support students in their acquisition of knowledge, values, leadership, and clinical skills essential to the effective care of individuals, families, and communities. The values inherent in professional practice are emphasized as critical elements of knowledge frameworks for both generalist and advanced nursing practice. These values are consistent with the American Nurses Association’s Code of Ethics with Interpretive Statements (2001) and Nursing’s Social Policy (2003). The program curricula direct faculty effort in the achievement of the COHNS mission, goals, and expected outcomes that are consistent with Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi goals.

The curriculum for each of the programs is designed to support the student’s development of a science-based, theoretical framework that will guide professional practice. The undergraduate curriculum consists of courses that prepare students as generalists in their nursing practice. The graduate curriculum consists of three areas of study that prepare students as specialists. These areas are Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS), Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP), and Leadership in Nursing Systems (LNS). Additionally, the CONHS offers two areas of minor study – Nursing Education and Nurse Researcher. Course objectives are congruent with program goals and explicitly indicate that graduates of both the undergraduate and graduate programs act as culturally competent leaders and clinicians. Graduates are expected to contribute to the practice of nursing as lifelong learners, change agents, and members of multi-disciplinary healthcare teams. The course objectives are documented in each course syllabus (Resource Room).
III-A. The curriculum is developed, implemented, and revised to reflect clear statements of expected student learning outcomes that are consistent with professional nursing standards and guidelines and congruent with the program’s mission, goals, and expected outcomes.

The CONHS curricula are developed, implemented, and revised with the goal of producing graduates who think critically, communicate professionally, apply evidence-based research findings, and provide caring sensitive health care to culturally diverse populations in a variety of settings. This goal reflects the expected outcomes of both the undergraduate and graduate programs. These characteristics represent behaviors demonstrated in professional activities inherent in the provision and coordination of care in generalist and advanced practice roles.

The CONHS graduate and undergraduate curricula are derived from the TAMU-CC mission statement and the CONHS mission statement, philosophy, and goals. The program outcomes provide measurable indicators of the extent to which the faculty, through the curriculum, effectively achieves the CONHS mission and goals. The University mission statement is displayed on the Web at http://www.TAMU-CC.edu/provost/mission/. The CONHS mission, goals, and expected outcomes are documented in the CONHS Student Handbook, 2005 (see Resource Room).

The CONHS philosophy is one of caring and recognition of the diversity and uniqueness of the learner and recipients of nursing care (see Appendix I CONHS Philosophy). Themes derived from the mission and philosophy are Caring, Nursing Process, Communication (including Teaching/Learning concepts), Environmental Health, Leadership/Management, Critical Thinking, Accountability, and Roles in Nursing. These themes form the basis of the following undergraduate and graduate nursing program goals:

1. To develop within the student the knowledge and skills necessary for beginning professional and advanced nursing practice, cultivating basic and specialized abilities needed to successfully pursue a career.

2. To promote the concept of nursing as caring, and facilitate attainment of a care delivery system sensitive to multicultural communities and their health values.
3. To offer individuals the opportunity to increase the breadth and depth of the theoretical base for nursing practice, enhance and expand competence, prepare for role specialization, and contribute to the discovery of new nursing knowledge.

4. To provide an educational environment of respect within which students may evolve as broadly educated, responsible and accountable professionals dedicated to the principles of lifelong learning.

5. To build a foundation for graduate education.

6. To serve the community as nursing experts, leaders and consultants in professional organizations, health promoters, providers of health care policy information, and advocates of ethical distribution and usage of resources.

Learning Outcomes

These program goals, founded on the College’s mission, are reflected in the program’s learning outcomes. Each undergraduate and graduate student is expected to achieve the learning outcomes associated with the CONHS program, no matter how they entered their respective programs. These outcomes are achieved through a student’s active engagement in the learning community that includes interactions with expert clinicians and educators. The undergraduate and graduate outcomes are consistent with professional nursing standards and state regulations for entry-level nursing competencies. (These standards are discussed in further detail under Key Element III-B.) Table 3-1 shows not only the expected learning outcomes for both undergraduate and graduate students, but also how these outcomes expand incrementally from the undergraduate to the graduate program. These learning outcomes are reflected in the curricula of all Nursing programs.
### Table 3-1 Comparison of Undergraduate and Graduate Expected Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNDERGRADUATE</th>
<th>GRADUATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Incorporate the philosophy “Caring is the essence of Nursing” into nursing practice</td>
<td>Demonstrate competency in advance practice roles. Communicate caring, sensitivity and respect in the delivery of health care to culturally diverse populations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice Nursing utilizing the Nursing process and other systematic approaches derived from the sciences and liberal arts to promote optimum health for individuals, families and communities from diverse populations.</td>
<td>Critically analyze, interpret and utilize appropriate knowledge, research and theories to meet the health care needs of diverse urban and rural client populations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicate and collaborate purposefully, using creative approaches that acknowledge independent roles and relationships.</td>
<td>Collaboratively plan for the delivery of culturally acceptable health care within the context of client social structure and worldviews.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate leadership through the application and utilization of theories for the improvement and enhancement of care and health status.</td>
<td>Utilize leadership and teaching skills to foster change and continual improvement in health care in order to meet changing societal and environmental needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Display critical thinking and independent decisions making that utilize and apply theory and research in practice.</td>
<td>Evaluate theory and research findings for integration into professional practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Show awareness of political, ethical and social issues; accountability for professional practice and commitment for continuing professional development.</td>
<td>Value commitment to the advancement of the profession and discipline of nursing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accept nursing leadership roles that respond to a changing society and health care delivery system.</td>
<td>Demonstrate commitment to life long learning.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Revisions

Faculty members share the responsibility for monitoring professional nursing standards and guidelines to insure that the College mission, program goals, and outcomes broadly reflect professional values and standards of practice. Curriculum changes are implemented when an area that is no longer consistent with current professional standards has been identified, revisions have been developed and discussed across appropriate curriculum committees, and recommendations for change have been approved by the CONHS faculty. Faculty members serve on University-level committees assigned to review TAMU-CC’s mission and goals in order to prevent potential conflicts in TAMU-CC goals and professional nursing standards or practice regulations.
The MSN curriculum underwent major revision during 2000-2001, with approval of the revised curriculum by faculty, the University, and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. The purpose was to refocus the curriculum in accordance with the opportunities and challenges of the contemporary health care system and the identified needs of the communities of interest. Specific factors considered in the revision process included:

- Alignment of faculty credentials and certifications with course offerings
- Evaluation from the communities of interest on perceived health care provider needs
- Evaluation from graduate students

These revisions strengthened the course content across the specialty areas and enhanced graduate ability to function as Clinical Nurse Specialists, Family Nurse Practitioners, and leaders or nurse administrators in nursing systems. These substantive changes were reported in the 2003 CCNE CIP-R (Resource Room). The curriculum associated with each of the specialty areas is depicted in Appendix J MSN Course Sequence. Course descriptions contained in individual syllabi indicate the major focus of each course.

III-B. **The curriculum is developed, implemented, and revised to reflect professional nursing standards and guidelines. These standards and guidelines are clearly evident within the curriculum structure and expected learning outcomes. Course/unit/level outcomes are consistent with the roles for which the program is preparing its graduates.**

The CONHS undergraduate and graduate curricula integrate the principles of professional practice as delineated in professional nursing standards and guidelines. Since the inception of the BSN and MSN nursing programs at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, faculty members have carefully reviewed and chosen professional standards and guidelines to form the foundation of the Nursing programs of study. These professional standards, ethical codes, and regulatory standards are used to evaluate and revise program goals and objectives, course objectives, and outcomes on a regular basis as identified in the evaluation plan. They are reviewed every five years and were last reviewed in 2000-2001 as part of curriculum review. (See Key Element III-D for further discussion of revision.)

The baccalaureate curriculum incorporates knowledge and skills identified in *The Essentials of Baccalaureate Education for Professional Nursing Practice* (AACN, 1998), the Texas Board of Nurse Examiners’ *The Differentiated Entry Level Competencies of Graduates of*
Texas Nursing Programs (2002), the American Nurses Association Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics (2003) as foundation content for the baccalaureate curriculum. The master’s curriculum incorporates knowledge and skills identified in The Essentials of Master’s Education for Advanced Practice Nursing (AACN, 1998). Standards and guidelines that specify educational requirements for advanced practice roles offered in the CONHS program are incorporated into the MSN curriculum. It is because of the incorporation of these specialty standards as guidelines for curriculum structure that students are eligible to sit for national certification examinations necessary to practice in advanced roles in the state of Texas.

The specialty areas of study offered in the MSN program reflect the faculty’s commitment to providing graduate education that is relevant to the communities of interest and reflects the diverse advanced practice environment in Texas. Currently, the CONHS MSN program prepares graduates to assume roles as Clinical Nurse Specialists (CNS), Family Nurse Practitioners (FNP), and Nurse Administrators (LNS). Two minor areas of study are offered to students who want to focus specifically on one aspect of the broader advanced practice nurse roles. Courses that constitute these two minors—Nursing Education and Nurse Researcher—can be completed concurrently with specialty courses. Additionally, students who have earned a Masters of Nursing in a specialty area can complete coursework in another specialty area through the post-masters certification process. The post-masters coursework prepares students to practice in a new specialty area. Objectives outlined in the individual courses that form the undergraduate and graduate curricula are derived from the respective professional guidelines, thus ensuring that the skills and knowledge acquired over the program create an overall framework for professional nursing practice.

The undergraduate and graduate curricula are examined regularly as faculty members prepare their courses. Faculty credentialed as experts in specialty areas lead other faculty members through a review of course objectives to verify that the curricula continuously reflect the standards and guidelines of general and specialty nursing practice. These reviews insure program compliance with professional educational standards. Additionally, faculty with the requisite knowledge, experience, and credentials, as specified in the Texas Board of Nurse Examiners Rule 219 of the Texas Administrative Code and professional educational guidelines, are generally assigned leading roles in teaching specialty courses so that they can monitor student progress in achieving expected outcomes. Findings from the last review conducted in
2005 are documented in the Undergraduate and Graduate Affairs meeting minutes (Resource Room).

**III-C. The curriculum is logically structured to meet expected program outcomes.**

The CONHS undergraduate and graduate curricula have been designed to support student progression through coursework in a timely manner. The faculty believes that learning is a life-long, interactive process, and faculty members endeavor to create a learning environment that is flexible and intellectually stimulating, that encourages scholarship, and that promotes self-directed learning. Student knowledge is built upon an existing knowledge base and is directed toward socialization into the practice of professional nursing and the Health Sciences.

The undergraduate curriculum course sequence organizes student learning such that students construct a foundation to analyze increasingly complex healthcare problems. Students have opportunities to practice principles of care under expert supervision with increasing responsibility for the independent management of nursing care for a group of patients. The graduate curriculum sequence introduces students to the principles of advanced nursing practice that are shared across the Advanced Practice Nurse and administrative nursing roles. The courses that constitute the specialty areas of study provide students with a deeper focused understanding of the foundation of professional standards and guidelines embedded in professional practice at the advanced level.

**Undergraduate**

The baccalaureate curriculum builds upon a foundation of the arts, sciences, and humanities. For the student, as a developing professional, to understand diverse individuals, families, and communities and their environments, the faculty believes that the student must be broadly educated in the classical disciplines of arts, humanities, mathematics, science, and nursing. The generic freshman student entering TAMU-CC begins with the University Core Curriculum. The Core Curriculum consists of 46-48 academic hours, as mandated by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and interpreted within public/state institutions of higher education guidelines.

TAMU-CC has a nationally acclaimed Learning Community model for incoming freshman students. These students register for courses blocked into tetrads or triads. Tetrads
include two freshman-level Core Curriculum lecture courses that are taught in large classes of 250 plus, and triads include one such course. Both also include a required English Composition course and a Freshman Seminar course taught in groups of 25. The organizing framework of the Freshman Seminar involves discussions and writings on the course content, freshman orientation issues, and emphasis in development of various skills, especially critical thinking (*Undergraduate Catalogue, 2005-2006*).

The liberal arts foundation at TAMU-CC provides students with the ability to think critically, reason, and make well-informed judgments. In addition, in the Freshman Composition and Seminar courses, the students learn to articulate thoughts and expressions, and identify individual ethical values and beliefs in a setting that is both interdisciplinary and ethnically diverse. This foundation prepares the students to identify and describe various health and belief systems unique to individual communities and societies.

Beyond this basic foundation, the scientific support courses, such as Chemistry, Microbiology, Anatomy and Physiology, and Pathophysiology, prepare students to apply and assimilate information regarding body processes to nursing knowledge to provide care for the patient. Psychology and Lifespan growth and development provide basic knowledge of groups, behavioral patterns, and norms to compare beliefs and health care structures. Language Arts assist the student with communication in order to express thoughts clearly and accurately. Documentation of care requires that clear, concise information be placed in the patient’s record. Throughout the Core Curriculum, underpinning the mission of the University and the College, is the belief that students of the twenty-first century must be prepared to work in a global society with culturally diverse populations. Integration of the basic tenets taught in the Core Curriculum and pre-requisite courses with the Nursing baccalaureate core will lead to appropriate care and interventions among clients, families, aggregates, and communities.

The undergraduate Nursing curriculum offers the student an opportunity to integrate, synthesize, and apply concepts learned in lower division courses. The program of nursing is taught in a modified block format, the essential quality coming from the principles and content of the natural and behavioral sciences, the humanities, and nursing science. Building on this foundation, the student enters into the progression of Nursing courses which are designed around Matrix Courses (Nurse as Professional), Provider of Care Courses, and Coordinator of Care Courses. The progression is from simple to complex, with the capstone courses requiring a high
Behavior in Nursing Practice Environments (NURS 5364) are the core courses for the LDNS program.

All specialty roles under the MSN curriculum have a capstone experience. These courses were first described in the CCNE CIP-R submitted to CCNE in 2003 (Available in Resource Room). They are shown below in Table 3-2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MAJOR</th>
<th>CAPSTONE COURSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clinical Nurse Specialist</td>
<td>Nursing 5639, Special Practicum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Nurse Practitioner</td>
<td>Nursing 5646, Integrated Clinical Practicum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership in Nursing Systems</td>
<td>Nursing 5469, Patterns of Care Delivery</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These capstone courses consist primarily of clinical practice where students apply the principles learned across the program of study under the supervision of expert preceptors. Course objectives represent professional competencies associated with each specialty area, and successful completion of the courses helps to ensure that all students achieve the expected learning outcomes of their program and are fully prepared for national board certification.

**III-D. Curriculum and teaching-learning practices are evaluated at regularly scheduled intervals to foster ongoing improvement.**

Regularly scheduled evaluations of CONHS curricula are conducted every five years to verify the effectiveness of the curricula in preparing CONHS graduates to function as competent nurses. Continuous monitoring of undergraduate and graduate student performance in and perception of courses is used by faculty to identify aspects of the curriculum or teaching-learning practices that may need modification to improve learning outcomes. Data obtained through either continuous monitoring activities or scheduled program evaluations are used to guide curricular decisions.

The undergraduate curriculum is formally evaluated every five years by the Undergraduate Affairs Committee. This review examines the courses for consistency and compliance with national and state standards. The next review will be done in the academic year, 2005-2006. In addition to the formal programmatic review, Course Coordinators and Course Leaders review student feedback, examination statistics, and student achievement to fine-tune course delivery each time a course is offered.
The MSN curriculum is also formally reviewed every five years. Faculty credentialed as experts in a specialty area lead members of the Graduate Affairs Committee in a review of courses to verify that the curriculum continuously reflects the standards of practice across the specialties offered in the TAMU-CC MSN program. The most recent review was initiated in 2004 when the CNS program was activated in response to community request. A new minor area of study was developed to support the preparation of CNS graduates as researchers. Course descriptions for this new minor area of study are in the Resource Room. Graduate Affairs committee minutes contain the record of the review process.

Teaching environments for the undergraduate, transitional, and graduate programs are primarily didactic environments with clinic based learning experiences in primary, secondary, and tertiary health settings. The didactic experiences utilize a variety of learning opportunities, and are offered in traditional classroom settings, online, and on interactive television settings. Evaluations are sought from students at the conclusion of every didactic course. Faculty members use these evaluations to increase the effectiveness of student learning experiences in subsequent courses. (All evaluations may be viewed in the Resource Room.)

Both undergraduate and graduate clinical experiences offer a plethora of opportunities that reflect national standards, students’ educational and practice background, and the objectives of the course. There are multiple clinical sites in both rural and urban areas, and the students work with health teams that include nurse practitioners, physicians, physician assistants, specialty providers, and social services. Clinical sites are reviewed by the course faculty each semester and again evaluated by the student at the end of each semester.

The adoption of a web-based curriculum delivery process has altered and increased the student population served by CONHS over the past academic year. The growth in the geographic dispersion of the graduate student body has challenged oversight of student performance and curriculum management through existing communication structures. A review of the literature to identify best practices was recently conducted, and graduate faculty members are adopting many of these practices to promote student development as competent clinicians and leaders. In fall 2005, the first graduate student orientation was conducted in cooperation with the TAMU-CC Office of Graduate Studies University orientation. Representatives from the TAMU-CC Bell Library conducted a demonstration of the distance learning resources as an introduction to services that support students in their coursework (Resource Room and Jeff and
Mary Bell Library URL: http://rattler.TAMU-CC.edu/distlearn/index.htm. A graduate student listserv was created and is moderated by the CONHS education technologist. Students are subscribed upon admission to the program. Messages that relate to college operations and student activities are sent through this listserv to keep students updated on CONHS events. A Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) page is available to students through the WebCT course management platform as a resource to students in courses.

Because the MSN curriculum delivery practices have been in transition with the adoption of web-based course formats, members of the CONHS faculty have continuously monitored the quality of the web-based courses through course evaluations and formative surveys. Additionally, the Graduate Coordinator has analyzed attrition patterns to identify barriers to web-based learning. Changes to the delivery process have been implemented when indicated through these monitoring processes.

III-E. The didactic and clinical teaching-learning practices and learning environments support the achievement of student learning outcomes.

The CONHS faculty uses multiple teaching learning strategies to support the achievement of student learning outcomes. At the undergraduate level, didactic courses are taught through a distance-learning technologies and traditional face-to-face classroom experiences. Currently, the graduate courses are delivered primarily through web-based technology. Clinical courses provide students with experiential learning that challenges their application of theoretical models to real-life situations.

Teaching-learning Practices

Teaching-learning strategies for the undergraduate courses include presentations, seminars, discussions, small group work, independent study of texts and library resources, computer assisted instruction, audio-visual aids, and critical thinking case studies and exercises. Community activities, group assignments, and interdisciplinary projects within the community provide for active learning. Professional nursing standards and guidelines support faculty in their design of active learning experiences and in selecting diverse clinical environments. Active learning is encouraged through use of case studies, group presentations, seminars, poster
presentations, threaded discussions, interdisciplinary team participation, and community service projects. Samples of student work may be viewed in the Resource Room.

Faculty members deliberately select diverse and challenging clinical practice environments to increase student learning and outcomes. Building on professional values, altruism, autonomy, human dignity, integrity, and social justice, faculty members select curricular content that contributes to learning, role development, and goal achievement. Cognitive, affective, and psychomotor objectives are emphasized each semester. The research process assists the student to critique and validate nursing knowledge for application and increased critical inquiry. Examples of practice-oriented research and application to the clinical area are to be found in every clinical course.

A commitment to strengthen the nursing workforce of Texas led the CONHS to the adoption of web-based curriculum delivery processes. The University adopted the WebCT course management platform to support distance learning and the CONHS rapidly modified courses to deliver the LNS specialty area of study in the MSN program to distance students. The CNS and FNP curricula were quickly adapted for the WebCT system after evaluating student response to the web-based LNS curriculum. The WebCT course management platform is also used to deliver some courses in the undergraduate curriculum.

Faculty adopted a standardized online course template to aid students in their navigation of courses as they progress through their program. Content is presented in self-contained shells that support student engagement in course activities and promote communication across faculty and students. Through collaborative efforts between the College and TAMU-CC Bell Library, students now have two web-based features that assist them in their coursework (http://rattler.TAMU-CC.edu). The College’s webpage provides students with access to documents that support students in their learning experiences. These documents include the Student Handbook, University catalogs, and links to University sites related to student progress. A graduate student listserv provides a central communication method for students and faculty. These structures are consistent with recommendations and guidelines for distance learning programs. The principle guidelines used to inform and evaluate teaching-learning practices and associated infra-structures include:

- Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, *Best Practices for Electronically Offered Degree and Certificate Programs*
• Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, *Guide for Incorporating the Principles of Best Practice Into Electronically-Based Courses*

• National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties, *Guidelines for Distance Learning in Nurse Practitioner Education*

The WebCT course management platform allows faculty to use a variety of teaching-learning strategies for the didactic courses. These strategies include presentations, synchronous seminars, asynchronous discussions, small group work, independent study of texts and library resources, computer assisted instruction, virtual field trips, and critical thinking case studies and exercises. Full-time support is available for faculty who seek to test innovative technologies that improve student learning through the Web.

The clinical courses are delivered primarily through the preceptor-faculty-student triad. Didactic course faculty members coordinate their coursework with clinical activities through the assigned clinical instructors. Every clinical instructor can access the course through a WebCT account and can assist students to apply principles learned through their class work in appropriate clinical situations. The clinical instructor works with the student and preceptor to insure the student meets course objectives best demonstrated in the clinical setting.

Faculty participation on university-level committees provides access to new web-based teaching strategies. Participation in conferences such as the University of Nebraska Medical Center College of Nursing 2nd Biennial Distance Education Conference and The Rutgers State University College of Nursing 22nd International Computer and Technology Conference (2004) provided opportunities to share teaching and student support strategies. Collaborative relationships forged through these conferences are valuable resources that support faculty in their development of innovative methods for monitoring student progress in the clinical and didactic courses. Faculty enrollment in synchronous and asynchronous courses for online teaching has expanded the breadth of teaching-learning strategies used for the online courses. These strategies can also be adapted for traditional face-to-face courses. Many faculty update their skills through continuing education courses provided by universities or other resources such as the Learning Resources Network (LERN) ([http://www.lern.org/index.cfm?segmentID=7](http://www.lern.org/index.cfm?segmentID=7)).
Learning Environment

The CONHS works to insure that its varied learning environments are conducive to student success. The College believes it is important that students have access to faculty who can facilitate resolution of problems that interfere with student progression through undergraduate and graduate programs. Outreach sites with faculty coordinators have been used to support students through a centralized office. The faculty coordinators help students to manage the matriculation, registration, and graduation procedures associated with academic institutions, and they facilitate communication between students, clinical faculty, the CONHS administrative team and academic advisors. The adoption of the web-based delivery structure changed the characteristics of the MSN graduate student and, accordingly, their access to the outreach offices. The three outreach sites in Laredo, Victoria, and Temple, Texas, have been closed and so no longer provide students with easy access to CONHS representatives or site coordinators. The Administrative Council has absorbed the responsibilities for communicating with clinical faculty, students, and academic advisors and is currently adapting its infrastructure to better serve the widely distributed student population. Electronic technologies such as electronic mail groups, listservs, teleconferencing telephones, and televised faculty meetings provide students and faculty rapid access to information. These technologies allow faculty and students to actively participate in CONHS academic policy and procedure development. The goal is to create a learning environment that supports the achievement of student outcomes and fosters each student’s sense of belonging to the College with minimal travel requirements.

III-F. The curriculum and teaching-learning practices consider the needs and expectations of the identified community of interest.

As noted in II-C, the CONHS has identified and established ties with internal and external communities of interest, which incorporate students, faculty, and administrators on campus, but also external constituents such as hospitals, clinics of various kinds, and health consumers and practitioners. The College works in partnership with all of these members to refine and develop the goals, objectives, and curricula. The curricula effectively prepare students at the initial and advanced level to be healthcare leaders of tomorrow who will serve the identified communities of interest.
The Nursing program is accountable to these communities. Undergraduate nursing students expect to receive a quality education that leads to job opportunities and successful mastery of the NCLEX-RN. Graduate nursing students expect to engage in learning experiences that increase their knowledge and expand their expertise in specialty areas of nursing practice. They expect this knowledge will lead to successful performance on national certification examinations and eligibility for advanced practice nursing or leadership positions in nursing systems. The College facilitates this process by providing theoretical and clinical experiences designed to achieve these goals.

Graduates of the baccalaureate program are employed in the local and surrounding counties in various settings such as healthcare institutions, physicians’ offices, city and county health departments, and clinics and rural facilities. Many of the local agencies actively recruit the students prior to graduation. Unsolicited positive comments regarding the communication, technical skills, and clinical judgment of the graduates have been made by the employing agencies. With satisfactory performance on national certification examinations, many MSN graduates are invited to work in the agencies where they completed their clinical laboratory experiences. Other MSN graduates move into administrative positions in institutions that supported them through their graduate studies. Recruiters seeking nurses with advanced educational preparation often contact faculty for assistance in advertising primary care or specialty healthcare settings. Information about jobs may be posted on professional listservs.

The South Texas professional nursing community, healthcare providers, and the consumers of health care are key members of the CONHS community of interest. The employer and the public expect graduates to possess a professional knowledge base, technical competency, and professional behavior, as well as the ability to function as leaders in the health care setting. In addition, graduates are expected to have the ability to handle coordination of care and collaboration with other health care providers. In the managed care area, graduates act as case managers for clients/families/communities. The ability to communicate and to think critically with regard to coordinating patient care are program and employer expectations. Clinical practice for the undergraduate and transitional students is scheduled in acute care agencies, community clinics, non-traditional delivery care settings, i.e. homeless shelters, community health fairs, and private clinics. Students have the opportunity to meet program goals with clients across the lifespan and health-illness continuum, with diverse cultural groups and in diverse clinical
settings. Graduate student clinical experiences are conducted in both rural and urban multicultural settings related to the nursing major.

Advisory groups provide the CONHS with essential information about the needs and expectations of the community of interest. These advisory groups consist of professional employers and other health care professionals who work in a collegial and collaborative manner with graduates and consumers. Community agencies and consumers are surveyed periodically to ascertain expectations of the College’s graduates. To collect data from the local community of interest, the Dean and faculty of the College invite the local nursing leaders to a working breakfast or dinner. This group explores common topics of interest and suggests ways that organizations can cooperate in order to benefit the students’ educational experience and institutional needs. Each table spends time brainstorming on ways to work together for the common interest. The minutes from each table are summarized. The summary statements are returned to the participants and are reviewed in faculty meetings. Minutes from the meetings may be found in the document room.

While regularly scheduled meetings with the Advisory Group are used to elicit current needs for specialty areas of advanced practice nursing, additional data are collected through professional relationships. Meetings of the Corpus Christi Organization of Nurse Executives, Eta Omicron chapter of Sigma Theta Tau, and continuing education programs that involve leaders of the various agencies who employ graduates of the CONHS MSN program provide frequent opportunities to engage in nursing workforce discussions. Membership in these organizations provide opportunities to explore how baccalaureate-prepared and advanced practice nurses can be used and how interested agencies can support the College in the educational mission. The CONHS is consistently identified as a key contributor to generating professional competent nursing workforce throughout Texas. With the adoption of web-based programs, the College expects to increase service to its communities of interest and to improve rural and traditionally under-served regions access to advanced practice nurses and nurse administrators.
Summary of Assessment of Standard III

Strengths:

- The CONHS curricula have strong foundations in the arts, sciences, and humanities.
- The graduate curriculum builds on baccalaureate nursing education.
- Professional standards are embedded in the courses and expected outcomes are consistent with national standards and regulations for the practice of nursing.
- Expert faculty who have knowledge about professional standards, who perform and utilize research in their roles as educators, and who demonstrate expert clinical skills work together to design, implement, and evaluate the curricula through CONHS committees.
- An active community of interest informs the CONHS about its workforce needs and provides feedback about graduates and their ability to perform as competent professionals.
- The adoption of an undergraduate compressed program for second-degree students and a web-based graduate program expanded the potential student base for both the undergraduate and graduate programs. Students responded to these new educational opportunities and CONHS enrollment increased quickly over the past four semesters. The growth in enrollment accompanied the College’s transition to an independent college within TAMU-CC.
- Faculty have worked together to create an infrastructure that supports faculty in their work as nurse educators, clinicians, researchers, and consultants.
- Communication processes now include electronic mail groups, discussion boards, and televised synchronous meetings to improve coordination of activities throughout the College.
- The CONHS mission and strategic plan were revised to reflect the transition to college designation.

Opportunities: The Administrative council should continue to explore strategies that support creative and innovative teaching through distance-learning technology and traditional classroom experiences. The Council should also continue to seek ways to support faculty in establishing
partnerships with members of the community of interest that expand student learning experiences and strengthen collaboration between providers and educators who seek to improve the health of Texas citizens.

**Plans for Improvement:**

- Continuous monitoring must occur to insure that the curriculum and student outcomes are consistent with the CONHS mission and strategic plan.
- Course objectives and teaching-learning practices will be modified if indicated by analysis of feedback about the recent infrastructure changes.
STANDARD IV. PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS: STUDENT PERFORMANCE & FACULTY

The program is effective in fulfilling its mission, goals and expected outcomes. Actual student learning outcomes are consistent with the mission, goals and expected outcomes of the program. Alumni satisfaction and the accomplishments of graduates of the program attest to the effectiveness of the program. Actual faculty outcomes are consistent with the mission, goals and expected outcomes. Data on program effectiveness are used to foster ongoing improvement.

While the College of Nursing and Health Sciences faculty believes that the Nursing program has demonstrated its effectiveness, the faculty also believes that continual evaluation of program effectiveness is essential to the current and future success of the program. Prior to 2003, InterEd Corp., an outsourced contractor was used for program evaluation. Compilations of reports received from InterEd are available in the resource room. In 2003, the Texas State Legislature requested all state schools return 5% of monies already spent. Due to subsequent budget cuts, the InterEd contract was not renewed in the fall of 2003, and the faculty of CONHS began the process of reviewing and revising the Total Program Evaluation Plan (TPEP). The TPEP Committee began redesigning, piloting, and implementing evaluation surveys, instruments, and timelines in spring 2004. The TPEP was streamlined from its earlier version and approved by Faculty of the Whole in December, 2004 (Appendix-E Total Program Evaluation). Surveys for certain areas of evaluation are presently under review and construction. These areas will be identified in the report.

The major organizing components of the TPEP evaluation plan include formative and summative evaluations related to organization and administration, mission and goals, curriculum, resources, student achievements, and faculty performance. The nursing program curriculum, documents, and publications are evaluated regularly to ensure effectiveness and identify areas for improvement. TPEP includes a comprehensive and continuous approach for assessing program components including indicators of achievement, data collection, data synthesis, development of recommendations and changes in outcomes. Data are used to foster ongoing improvement.
IV-A. Student performance is evaluated by the faculty and reflects achievement of expected outcomes. Evaluation policies and procedures are defined and consistently applied.

Student Performance Evaluation

CONHS’ grading policies are set by the faculty in the Undergraduate Affairs and Graduate Affairs committee meetings and then approved in the Faculty of the Whole meetings. The current grading policies and scale are published in the Student Handbook 2005-2006. The course faculty members, in accordance with the standards that are established by the Faculty of the Whole, determine individual course grades. The individual course standards are published in the syllabus for the course and reviewed by the faculty member and the students on the first day of class during orientation in both online and face to face classes.

Evaluation policies and procedures are defined and consistently applied. Student clinical evaluation is accomplished in a variety of modalities. The evaluation process for students is determined by the faculty, depending on the type of achievement or results expected. Didactic and theory results are evaluated using tests, papers, case studies, discussion, and presentations based on outcomes for the course and programs. Specific criteria for these evaluative processes are documented in each syllabus. Students are notified at mid-term if they are not meeting outcomes. Students are encouraged to make appointments with faculty members to review grading and study efforts in order to improve their learning experience.

Clinical practice is evaluated by standardized clinical evaluation instruments given to the student at the beginning of the course (Appendix-M Undergraduate Clinical Evaluation Instrument). Based on faculty and student input the undergraduate student clinical performance instrument was revised, piloted and implemented in 2003. The broad categories remained the same—Nurse as a Professional, Provider of Care, and Coordinator of Care—and are currently based on The Differentiated Entry Level Competencies of Graduates of Texas Nursing Programs (Texas State Board of Nurse Examiners, 2002, http://www.bne.state.tx.us/del-comp.pdf) and the The Essentials of Baccalaureate Education for Professional Nurse Practice (American Association of Colleges of Nursing, 1998). Revisions included clarifying item descriptors more specifically to student behaviors. The instrument continues to measure critical thinking, communication, and therapeutic nursing interventions.
The graduate clinical evaluation instrument (Appendix-N MSN Clinical Evaluation Instrument) measures clinical approach, assessment, analysis and decision making, management and evaluation. These areas support the goals and objectives of the graduate curriculum. Now that the revised undergraduate instrument has been implemented, the graduate faculty is presently reviewing and revising the graduate evaluation instrument. Implementation of the revised instrument is projected for fall 2006.

The clinical instruments reflect expected outcomes of the clinical courses as stated in each syllabus. Clinical performance is evaluated at the end of the clinical experience. Students are given the opportunity to discuss their performance with their professors and have the opportunity to comment in writing on the evaluation instrument. Expected outcomes must be satisfactory in all critical areas. Successful completion of a course is dependent on satisfactory outcomes in the clinical area. Issues for clinical concerns are published in the CONHS student handbook. Remediation for clinical concerns is available for students. Remediation can be initiated by faculty or student. Faculty members are encouraged to compare evaluation of students to determine inconsistencies that suggest poor inter-rater reliability.

IV-B. Surveys and other data sources are used to collect information about student, alumni, and employer satisfaction and demonstrated achievements of graduates. Student outcome data include but are not limited to, graduation rates, NCLEX-RN pass rates, certification examination pass rates, and job placement rates, as appropriate.

A variety of sources are used to collect information about students, alumni, and employer satisfaction. Data are collected by our faculty in community meetings such as CC-ONE (Corpus Christi – Organization of Nursing Executives), Dean’s meetings with health care facility leadership, and our Advisory Board meeting (which represents health care facility managers in the community). Positive comments from these meetings indicate that employers in this community are hiring our graduates and affirm that graduates are prepared to care for clients and show critical thinking capabilities, good communication skills and adequate knowledge of nursing interventions upon graduation.

Christus Spohn Health System, the largest health care system in our community, and the Driscoll Children Health System have stated their support and their expected implementation of the American Organization of Nurse Executives position statement on preparation of the future
nurse at the baccalaureate level. Christus Spohn stated they would only be hiring BSN’s for their cardiac units. This same system, which is a major employer of our graduates, has instituted a competency based assessment for orientees and has offered to share this information with the faculty when adequate data have been collected. The leadership of both systems has donated a total of $70,000 to increase the number of qualified students in the CONHS. This is an indicator of employer satisfaction and support for the CONHS. Many alumni of the program are employed in the community and through informal communication with faculty have indicated that a year after graduation they felt positive about their educational preparation from CONHS.

Collection of formal data about students begins at orientation. Students fill out a demographic data survey (Appendix-O Demographic Data Survey). This information is used to identify the general characteristics of the entering students. Data profiles are started, and information related to demographics, course grades, specialty exams, exit exam scores, NCLEX status and certification exams are maintained. The data base process began in 2002, with the support of the Dean, who initiated the hiring of data entry personnel. This information is analyzed by the Administrative Council of the CONHS, program coordinators, and various faculty researchers for trends in student outcomes. The faculty is currently reviewing information being maintained and examining what information they need to support their teaching and research. Examples of these aggregate data may be viewed in the resource room.

**Graduation Rates: Undergraduate Students**

Data related to admission/retention/graduation/attrition and persistence is kept in the CONHS. RN/BSN students are permitted to progress through the program on a full or part-time basis. Generic nursing students are admitted on a full time basis and usually progress through the curriculum in a two-year time period. The desired outcome for both tracks is an increase in graduation rate each year. The CONHS admits generic students once a year; therefore, if a student is unsuccessful in a course, he/she must wait a full year before retaking that course. The faculty has been studying this phenomenon and is looking at different interpretations of completion. Persistence rates are being explored by the Texas State Board of Nurse Examiners when analyzing graduation rates and attrition. Persistence rate is defined by the number of students in the original cohort who have not graduated but are still enrolled. This data is included in table 4.1 and is valuable to faculty to determine trends and time sequences for students
progressing at a different rate. In table 4.1, students who persisted and graduated are indicated by year of graduation. The graduation rate is calculated by the number of students who entered in the fall of the admission year and all students who graduated from that cohort regardless of the year of graduation. The number of graduates is the number who graduated for that year regardless of when they started the program.

Table 4.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cohorts</th>
<th>Admissions</th>
<th>Dismissals/Withdraws</th>
<th>Persisting</th>
<th>Graduated</th>
<th>Graduation Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2001-2003</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7 (2004)</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>85.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generic Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4(2005)</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002-2004</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4 (2006)</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>89.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generic Total</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2 (2007)</td>
<td>7 (Dec 2005)</td>
<td>6 (Aug 2005)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1Projected to graduate
2Two students have been out for a year and have just returned to the program.
3Students who have not graduated due to Exit HESI requirement

In fall 2004, twenty post bachelor students were admitted to the program and allowed to progress through a compressed track of 18 months. This first cohort of students, which now numbers twelve, will graduate in December 2005. The sequencing of the compressed track students has afforded some flexibility for traditional students who have had to repeat a nursing course. Seven students who were unable to graduate in spring 2005 because of failure of a course did not have to wait a year to repeat the course and were able to join the compressed track students sequencing.
An effort has been made to increase the numbers of RN/BSN students. All classes are now offered online and all but one nursing prerequisites have been eliminated. One of the health systems in the community is preparing to apply for Magnet status, and the CONHS is anticipating an increased demand for the RN/BSN track.

**Graduate Rates: Graduate Students**

The MSN program is offered as a part-time educational program to the community of interest to accommodate the personal and professional schedules of potential students. As a part-time program, students can earn their MSN in six to eight semesters depending on their specialty area of study (Appendix-J  MSN Course Sequence). The LNS courses are scheduled over six continuous semesters and the CNS and FNP courses are scheduled over eight continuous semesters. The time to graduation from admission, then, varies depending on the number of semesters taken each semester.

The number of students admitted to the MSN program has fluctuated over the past three years with the adoption of the web-based course format. The first group of students to complete the program through the all web-based format started coursework in 2003. Increased access to graduate nursing education stimulated student interest and admissions increased to 93 in 2004. The number of students admitted in 2005 decreased from 2004 but is consistent with the norm for annual graduate admissions for the past five years. Graduate student admission and graduation rates for the past three years are found in Table 4.2.

**Table 4.2**

**Admission and Graduation of Students in the MSN Program in 2003, 2004, 2005**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Admissions</th>
<th>Graduation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>FNP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2003</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2004</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2005</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ Education track has changed to a specialty area
Performance on NCLEX-RN/Certification exams

The CONHS TPEP established the desired outcome for the NCLEX-RN as a pass rate of 80%, which is the state’s requirement. The program has consistently exceeded this desired outcome, as evidenced by Table 4.3:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Test Takers</th>
<th>Number who Passed</th>
<th>Pass Rate</th>
<th>State Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>95.56%</td>
<td>91.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>97.7%</td>
<td>88.03%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>59*</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>98.30%</td>
<td>90.75%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* one student has not reported results

The CONHS faculty has instituted several strategies to strengthen student learning and pass rates. At risk students are identified and given assistance through the ARMS grant. Copies of the grant and data results are available in the Resource Room. As part of the grant, tutors are provided for students. Monies are still available to hire student tutors. Requirements for graduation now include a score of 850 on the Health Education Systems, Inc. (HESI) exit exam. Students who do not score 850 after the second try must enroll in a review course during the summer and take a third HESI. In May of 2004, five students were unable to graduate because of this requirement. After remediation, four out of the five students passed the NCLEX-RN in 2004. One student did not take the exam until 2005 and was not successful.

Performance on Advanced Certification Exams

The MSN program prepares students for specialty certification. Students who complete the CNS and FNP plan of study and earn the MSN are eligible to apply for Advanced Practice designation in Texas once they have passed the required specialty certification examinations (Texas Administrative Code, Rule 221.3). Faculty monitors student performance on these certifications through student self-report and public data available on the Texas Board of Nurse Examiners APN On-Line Verification web site (https://www.bne.state.tx.us/olv/apninq.htm).
The Graduate Coordinator obtains annually the ANCC Nurse Practitioner Program Aggregate Data Report as a component of the continuous program improvement data. Table 4.4 illustrates the results of those graduates who are certified for advanced practice by the Texas Board of Nurse Examiners 2003 - 2005.

Table 4.4 TAMUCC MSN Graduate Advanced Practice Nurse Designation Status for the Period 2003-2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th># of FNP Graduates</th>
<th>Advanced Certification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>FNP – 11</td>
<td>9 certified, 2 unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>FNP - 14</td>
<td>10 certified, 1 deceased, 3 unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>FNP – 40, Post Masters - 4</td>
<td>21 certified, 19 pending</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 certified, 1 pending</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 applications in process

Employment

The End of Program survey includes data on employment after graduation. Rate of return has been very low and the TPEP Committee is studying this problem. Employment rate has been informally collected by faculty in classes taught at the end of the program, and this indicates a high rate of success: all students who have met the requirements for graduation have been employed upon graduation, including those students who have left the state.

Alumni and Employer Satisfaction

Here, too, are areas identified by the TPEP committee as being in need of further development. The former evaluation plan using InterEd collected information from employers every one and three years. However, information collected by InterEd continually had a low rate of return. The TPEP committee is presently developing surveys and a method to retrieve this information more readily. Alumni and employer satisfaction information has been the last part of
the evaluation process to be developed, and therefore there is no aggregate data for 2004. Surveys will, however, be sent in fall of 2005 to collect information from alumni and employers.

**IV-C. Program outcome data are analyzed to provide evidence of program effectiveness and are used to foster ongoing program improvement.**

Primary outcome goals for CONHS students are competence in applying therapeutic interventions and skills in communication and critical thinking. Information is gathered and assessed throughout the curriculum in a cumulative fashion. The goals are also evaluated in a variety of ways within the individual courses. During program evaluation with InterEd, faculty developed definitions for critical thinking, communication, and therapeutic interventions. These definitions are used as criteria for effectiveness when analyzing outcome data in order to foster program improvement.

In 2000, CONHS NCLEX-RN pass rates fell to 78%, which was below the accepted outcome of 80%. Faculty created a corrective measures and timetable document which can be viewed in the resource room. Changes implemented in the last five years include revisions to the Medical/Surgical courses (2001), Medical/Surgical I taken out of the second semester and placed in the summer semester (2002), identifying students at risk and providing remediation through the ARMS grant (2002), and using the Health Education Systems, Inc. (HESI) Exit exam (2002) with a minimum score of 850 as a requirement for graduation. In addition, specialty HESI exams are now used at the end of courses to aid in the analysis of student learning and program effectiveness.

The CONHS uses the HESI Exit as an evaluation method to examine expected outcomes of the program. Those outcomes include competence in critical thinking, communication, and nursing interventions, as well as core knowledge, competencies, and roles as described in the AACN *Essentials of Baccalaureate Education*. For the past five years, there has been a statistically significant relationship \((P=.01)\) between student performance on the HESI Exit exam and final grades in each of the respective courses in the curriculum. The benchmark score of 850 for the Exit exam has been accurately predictive of NCLEX-RN success for TAMU-CC CONHS students at a 94.59%. This level of predictive accuracy is congruent with those described for nationally-based samples of students in BSN programs (Nibert, A., Young, A., & Adamson, C. (2002)). This percent is based on the Standard Formula for Establishing Predictive Accuracy (the number of students predicted to pass the NCLEX-RN who failed the NCLEX-RN was
divided by the total number of students who were predicted to pass, and subtracted from one). Other data supporting the predictive accuracy of the exit HESI can be viewed in the Resource Room.

Examining categories of the HESI Exit exams helps students and faculty to identify areas for student remediation and learning, as well as areas to change or improve within the program. The exam is divided into three areas: Core Competencies, Core Knowledge and Role Development. These competencies are further delineated by specific content which include critical thinking, communication, nursing interventions and the AACN categories described in *The Essentials of Baccalaureate Education for Professional Nurse Practice* (American Association of Colleges of Nursing, 1998). The following table illustrates a comparison of student aggregate mean scores for the last five years from 2001 through 2005. Each of the competency areas has met the benchmark of 850.

**Table 4.5 Comparison of Students’ Aggregate Mean Scores on the AACN-Related Scoring Categories**

**Average Composite HESI Score – Mean Score 870.25**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Competency – Mean Score 864.04</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Scores</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Knowledge – Mean Score 865.09</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Scores</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role Development – Mean Score 869.23</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mgr of Care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Scores</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

HESI specialty exams are also used as a method for evaluating and improving program effectiveness. Critical thinking scores in some specialties were below the benchmark of 850. As
a result of faculty increasing case study presentations and assignments to foster critical thinking, students’ critical thinking scores rose above the benchmark to 876 in spring 2005. (See below for further discussion of Critical Thinking.) Knowledge of technical skills was identified as an area for improvement, scoring below the 850 benchmark. Faculties now use remediation forms for technical skills and send students to the College laboratory to practice deficiencies. There is a laboratory manager and graduate student to assist students with remediation. The lab houses two simulation mannequins and two simulation arms that have aided student skill remediation. Fundamental faculty has increased testing of theory associated with skills during laboratory practice. This is carried through with other clinical courses but at a lesser degree. In addition, clinical courses start with a skills lab before beginning the clinical rotation.

**Critical Thinking**

Critical thinking reflects goal-oriented thinking beyond that of following rules, standards or the application of specific procedures or decision-algorithms. It is a process in which content knowledge, standards of reasoning, and the contribution of personal context are reasoned to conclusions that guide actions that resolve nursing problems in ways found to be acceptable and desirable ways for all involved.

The CONHS faculty values the application and development of critical thinking as the primary outcome for graduates. Evaluation of critical thinking is measured by the Clinical Evaluation Instrument under the Provider of Care Competency, by the HESI specialty exams and Exit exam, and is imbedded in the End of the Program instrument.

Appendix-P Critical Thinking Exit Data illustrates trends in the Exit exam on critical thinking. The first version of the exam is given to all students who will be graduating. Those students who do not score the benchmark score 850 are given another opportunity to take the exam; these students take the second version. Students who score 850 or above on version two meet the requirements for graduation. Version three and four represent those students who have undergone one-to-one remediation with a faculty member before taking another exit exam.

As illustrated by Appendix-P Critical Thinking Exit Data, 2001 and 2002 scores were below benchmark scores of 850 for critical thinking. At that time, faculty explored methods to increase the critical thinking process. Faculty members providing tutoring through the ARMS grant, targeted critical thinking as an outcome, and one faculty member developed methodology
for critical examination of exam question stems and distracters. All faculties included additional critical thinking exercises in their courses and increased critical thinking questions on their teacher made exams. With the sole exception of Pediatrics, Critical Thinking scores for specialty classes have shown an upward trend. Table 4.6 illustrates this trend.

Table 4.6 Critical Thinking Trends

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Exam Name</th>
<th># of students</th>
<th>Critical Thinking Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2004</td>
<td>Maternity</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>849</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pediatrics</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>807</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2004</td>
<td>Med/Surg</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>844</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Psych</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>819</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2005</td>
<td>Maternity</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>1032</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pediatrics</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>741</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>937</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Psych</td>
<td>13 PB</td>
<td>914</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer 2005</td>
<td>Community</td>
<td>18 (12 PB)</td>
<td>991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maternity</td>
<td>1 eLine</td>
<td>1278</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Communication and Therapeutic Nursing Intervention

Therapeutic Nursing Intervention is defined as the student’s ability to perform theory-based and knowledge-based nursing interventions, including psycho-motor and psychosocial therapeutics directed at individual groups. Faculty members use opportunities in the classroom and clinical areas to foster an environment for effective communication and therapeutic nursing interventions. Evaluation of effective communication and therapeutic nursing interventions is measured by the Clinical Evaluation Instrument under the Provider of Care Competency, by the HESI specialty exams and Exit exam, and is imbedded in the End of the Program instrument. Data from HESI Exit scores in communication and nursing interventions over a five year period can be seen in the Resource Room. The scores are above the 850 bench mark for 2003 through 2005.
IV-D. Faculty outcomes demonstrate achievement of the program’s mission, goals, and expected outcomes and enhance program quality and effectiveness.

Faculty accomplishments in teaching, scholarship, practice and service demonstrate program effectiveness in achieving the College of Nursing and Health Sciences mission, goals, and expected outcomes. The process for evaluating faculty performance is described in the College Faculty Handbook and is done annually by the Dean. In January of each year, faculty members develop goals for teaching, service, scholarship, and practice. Goals are reviewed by the Dean and discussed with the individual faculty member. At the end of the year, faculty members report on progress of goals. A committee elected by the faculty and attended by the Associate Dean reviews the progress on goals and forwards its findings to the Dean. These are summarized and translated into merit and performance evaluation by the Dean. The categories of merit include low merit - good, medium merit - outstanding, and high merit - exceptional. Evaluations are reviewed with faculty in the spring, so that merit raises can be included in contracts for the forthcoming academic year and future plans for that year pertaining to teaching, practice, service and scholarship can be discussed. Due to the increase in faculty and the structure of the leadership for the College, the Dean and administrative team are reviewing this process. The goal is to allow for a more substantive review of faculty progress. In addition to the Dean’s evaluations, peer reviews are often sought by faculty members and are used to support dossiers for promotion and tenure.

Results of the evaluative process have been used to discuss methods for individual faculty members to improve quality of teaching through use of various teaching and learning strategies. In addition, the evaluative process guides faculty in the commitment of time to service at the University, as well as professional and community service, and to the production of scholarly works. The process has highlighted content areas for faculty development workshops (i.e. technology supported teaching), travel funding to support presentation of scholarly works, and attendance at continuing education workshops in assigned clinical teaching areas. Faculty accomplishments are documented in CVs and annual evaluations. (Resource Room.) The faculty is currently working on increasing intra and extramural funding for scholarship projects and publications.
Teaching

The University is committed to excellence in teaching. All nursing faculty have teaching roles in the classroom and/or online and/or clinical practice. A philosophical foundation of the CONHS is the essence of caring. This essence can be described in cognitive, affective and psychomotor terms. Caring behaviors include skillful use of the nursing process directed toward preservation of cultural differences, freedom of choice, promotion of human growth and development, and the adherence to ethical principles. These behaviors are practiced by the faculty to foster student learning within a caring environment. The faculty encourages students to increase the depth and breadth of their theoretical base, to enhance and expand their competence, and to contribute to the discovery of new nursing knowledge. The faculty provides an educational environment of respect in which students can evolve as broadly educated, responsible and accountable professionals dedicated to the principles of lifelong learning.

Students evaluate faculty after each course, using standardized evaluation instruments (Resource Room developed by the TPEP Committee). Faculty members review the feedback from these instruments every semester, and use them to evaluate their teacher effectiveness and to make changes in instruction and content. Separate evaluation instruments have been developed for classroom, online, and clinical teaching. Prior to 2004, students filled out a pencil and paper form, which was sent to InterEd for data analysis. In 2004, the faculty had the new surveys put into WebCT shells and instructed students to fill them out online. The forms use a Likert scale with 1 as strongly disagrees and 5 as strongly agree. Teacher effectiveness is measured by mean scores 3 and above on this 5 point scale. This process is a work in progress, and each semester the faculty has contributed constructive ways to improve the mechanism and output. For instance, when reviewing the data, it was noted that some mean scores were over 5. Data showed that the N/A choice had been given a number output. This has been removed for the fall 2005 evaluations. So far, the faculty has been disappointed in a response rate of only 30% from students. Students are therefore being encouraged to use this methodology, and the faculty is investigating greater incentives for return. Collected aggregate data can be viewed in the Resource Room.

Teaching effectiveness is also evaluated using the End of Program Survey (available in the resource room). This survey is also online and has an extremely low rate of return, only 2% for 2004 and 10% for 2005. The faculty recognizes this as an area that needs much
improvement. The survey is very long, so for summer 2005 the survey was edited to include only questions pertaining to how this institution contributed to their learning. The TPEP Committee will be revising and piloting a new End of Program Survey. The projected date for piloting is spring 2006.

**Scholarship**

The faculty is active in scholarship and have presented at local, state, national and international conferences. Over the past three years, faculty members have presented 80 podium presentations and 48 poster presentation across the country. They have published 45 articles in peer-reviewed journals and 16 contributions to textbooks. Moreover, they have submitted 48 grants (internal and external) since 2002, 27 of which have been funded with awards totaling over three million dollars. The faculty is actively working to increase research activities. Examples of faculty research include projects such as Surgery and Patient Satisfaction, Asthma, Building a Professional Workforce, Health Disparities in Underserved populations, and the Efficacy of HIV/AIDS Symptom Management. All faculty members meet the State of Texas mandatory continuing education requirement of twenty contact hours of continuing education each biennium.

**Service**

Nursing faculty members all serve on at least two CONHS committees including Curriculum Affairs (Undergraduate and/or Graduate) and Faculty of the Whole. The CONHS is well represented on University Committees such as Faculty Senate, Graduate Council, Research Enhancement and Promotion and Tenure. (Resource Room) The Nursing faculty demonstrates a firm commitment to making a difference in the community through service on local, state and national committees and boards. Faculty members believe this commitment to service acts as modeling for students and validates professional growth and development. Examples of the kinds of service positions currently held by faculty members include the following: District 17 President for TNA, board member for the March of Dimes and Chair of the Program Services Committee, Clinical Coordinator for the Coastal Bend Critical Incident Stress Management Team, Commissioner for the Human Relations Commission for the Corpus Christi City Council, and Vice Chair on the Mental Health and Mental Retardation Board.
Practice

Faculty members are given the opportunity to practice in order to meet certification requirements. An Ad Hoc faculty committee has developed a faculty practice plan, which is being evaluated by the Faculty of the Whole and can be viewed in the Resource Room. Several faculty members practice in various University settings, such as the Health Center and Counseling Center. Clinical knowledge and skills are maintained by consulting and practicing within the nursing community, as demonstrated by faculty CVs in the Resource Room.

IV-E. The program has established policies and procedures by which it defines and reviews formal complaints; analyses of aggregate data regarding formal complaints are used to foster ongoing program improvement.

A University grievance process is outlined in the University Catalog (both graduate and undergraduate). In 1998-1999, a College policy located in the College student handbook was instituted. Since this policy was instituted, there have not been any students who initiated a formal grievance. Those grievances that have occurred have been resolved without a formal process. Nevertheless the faculty felt the process was too cumbersome to navigate and a new policy has been put in place for fall 2005 (See Student Handbook). Students are encouraged to critically examine an issue and to approach the faculty member with thoughtful rationale. Students begin any grievance process with the Instructor of record. If the issue can not be resolved satisfactorily, it progresses through the chain of command: the Course Manager, Program Coordinator, Associate Dean, and Dean. If the grievance meets the criteria for review, the student may initiate an appeal. Students’ letters of concern are kept in the Administrative suite.

Several other avenues are available for students to voice satisfaction and complaints. Student concerns that are global across courses or that are persistent may be the basis for faculty development programs. Students are represented on both the Graduate and Undergraduate Affairs Committees. Student representatives bring concerns from the student body to the Affairs Committees and are able to get feedback from faculty to take back to the student groups. In many instances, students are seeking clarification or explanation of procedures and policies. This form of communication within these Committees has worked well to decrease
Summary of Assessment of Standard IV

Strengths:

- As identified by the TPEP, program effectiveness and the ability of graduates to apply critical thinking skills as evidenced by the increased pass rates on the NCLEX-RN and Advanced Practice Certification Exams.
- All students graduating in the last three years have found employment.
- Evidence indicates strong support for our graduates in the community through our health care systems.
- Faculty members are excellent teachers, role models, and mentors and are recognized in leadership roles in the community and professional organizations.
- Student performance is evaluated by several modalities and is ongoing and consistent throughout the curriculum.

Opportunities: The CONHS and the TPEP Committee have the opportunity to evaluate aspects of all programs while supporting the needs of the community. Increased data collection will allow substantive rationale for changes when needed. There is continued support in the community for all programs which allows for collaborative efforts in teaching and research.

Plans for Improvement:

- Plans for improvement include revision of surveys used to evaluate alumni, employer input, and end of program perceptions.
- The evaluation committee will consider and test alternate processes to collect evaluative program data from alumni and employers.
- An option to be explored and tested includes list serves for alumni and employers. This suggestion evolved during an Advisory Board meeting.
- The TPEP committee will continue to monitor response rate from current students for course, clinical, and end of program evaluation.
- Although current students keep the faculty apprised of their evaluation of the program and contents during student evaluations, curriculum meetings and one-on-ones, increased aggregate data will aid the CONHS faculty in assessment of the curriculum. The faculty is
investigating several incentives to complete the evaluations. This discussion will continue during the fall 2005 semester.