

Master of Nursing
Faculty of Community Services
FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT (FAR)
Approved by Senate January 31, 2017

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

With combined strengths in research, advanced practice, and teaching, the Daphne Cockwell School of Nursing offers a Master of Nursing program that prepares graduates to pursue advanced practice and leadership roles across all health care sectors, helping to shape the future of our health system. The MN program is designed to ensure that graduates have an advanced level of skill and knowledge necessary to contribute to the further development of nursing science and to facilitate the utilization of best practice knowledge across the healthcare spectrum. Underpinned by values relating to social justice, accountability, advocacy and partnership, the program provides nursing education to graduate students who wish to achieve an advanced level of skill and knowledge in evidence-informed practice, education, policy and leadership. Our Master of Nursing program offers students three options:

Option 1 (Course Stream). Students enroll in full or part-time studies. They choose a Field of Study (Leadership in Health Care Policy and Education or Health and Illness of Individuals and Communities) based on their particular practice and research interests. The Master of Nursing course stream curriculum covers theory, research and practice, while providing a solid and balanced advanced nursing education.

Option 2 (Thesis Stream). Students enroll in full-time studies. This is a research-intensive program for students pursuing careers in advanced nursing research and evidence-based practice. Students choose a Field of Study based on their particular research interests. Graduates from Option 2 go on to complete doctoral studies (Appendix 1-12), take faculty positions in academic institutions, or work in research institutes or other research environments.

Option 3 (Combined MN/PHCNP). Students enroll in full or part-time studies. Students earn a Master of Nursing degree and a PHCNP Certificate. Upon graduate they are eligible to write the College of Nurses of Ontario's NP-Primary Health Care exam.

Together, our faculty and students create a community of learning that is a hub for community building with vibrant, interactive classroom and practice settings that help students connect and develop relations to expand their personal and professional networks. Our graduate program fosters connections with leading health care organizations and Toronto's diverse neighbourhoods. This allows the program to offer students rich, rewarding opportunities for practice, education, and research. Our program options are values-driven, emphasizing social justice, accountability and advocacy and partnership as core values in health care leadership.

Analysis of the Periodic Program Review self-study report shows the following as key strengths of our program:

- Strong number of applications each year since the program's inception
- Academically strong applicant pool.
- Flexibility of time to completion as both part-time and full-time options.
- Strong links with practice partners who seek out our students for placements and our graduates for employment opportunities.

- Excellent faculty who are recognized by students as providing supportive learning environments and mentorship.
- Faculty with diverse and strong programs of research that actively engage students and graduates with their scholarly endeavours.

The Periodic Program Review process has enabled us to create a development plan that builds upon our program's strengths, and to respond to areas identified as weaknesses through capitalizing on opportunities envisioned through the new Academic Plan of the University as well as Faculty and School aspirations for the next 3-5 years. The priority areas of action identified in this plan are:

- Ensure the ongoing currency, depth and relevance of curriculum to advanced practice nursing and the evolving health care system
- Increase the number of students enrolled in Option 2 (thesis stream)
- Explore opportunities for international outreach, collaboration and/or partnerships with other nursing and health science schools, institutions, and professional associations to enhance student learning and faculty SRC
- Enhance graduate faculty capacity related to doctoral education with a goal to establishing a PhD program
- Develop a MN alumni association
- Improve upon the flexibility of course offerings by increasing the number of electives and/or utilize new e-learning opportunities to incorporate in curricula

PEER REVIEW

The Peer Response Team for the Periodic Review of the Master of Nursing (MN) program consisted of Dr. Elizabeth Peter (University of Toronto), Dr. Janet Landeen (McMaster University), and Nina-Marie Lister (Ryerson University). The PRT site visit was conducted on April 19 and 20, 2016. The PRT report was communicated to the Associate Dean, YSGS on May 13, 2016, and the response to the report from MN was communicated on July 12, 2016.

The PRT cited several strengths in their report. They also stated that the review process was well planned and executed, from the comprehensive, reflective and forthright Self-Study Report to the well-organized site visit and that there was a consistently high level of faculty, student, and staff engagement. The PRT found that students, alumni, faculty, staff, and administrative personnel all were open and consistent in sharing their perspectives about the program. The process was positive in all regards, making this PRT experience positive, and intellectually enriching. Overall, the PRT found that the MN program to be well developed and implemented and that the areas for improvement that were identified are intended to assist a strong program in achieving greater accomplishments.

As mandated by Ryerson Senate Policy 126, what follows is the YSGS-level response to both the PRT report, and the response to the report by Nursing. Summarized below are program strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities that were noted by the PRT. Also outlined are the PRT recommendations and YSGS and Nursing Program responses, divided into two broad categories: academic and administrative/financial as well as the implementation plan.

STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Strengths

- People are the core strength of the DCSN (MN). This was consistently articulated by the alumni and at all levels during the review. The high quality of the faculty, staff, program director, program administrator, along with the alumni and current students was noted in all aspects of the program and is evident directly from recruitment via open houses, current student advocates, and “bedside peers” who recommend Ryerson.
- The ethno-cultural and demographic diversity of the student body is a significant asset; it leads to rich experiences for all students, and will be ultimately and significantly reflected in the next generation of nursing leaders.
- The new Ryerson library and student learning centre are significant assets to the program’s growth in scholarship. The current plan for additional space is also important to the program’s continued success. As the program moves into the new facility, it will be important to ensure dedicated research space for students.
- The program’s commitments are well-aligned with and reflective of the Ryerson University Academic Plan, and specifically, its core values around diversity, equity and inclusion, and the priorities that relate to these values.

Weaknesses

- Teaching loads are heavier at Ryerson University than in some other competitor universities in the region. This has the effect of limiting the faculty in increasing their SRC at a faster rate. In turn, this can further limit the ability of the school in developing a PhD program with the supervisory capacity needed to support it well.
- There were no significant weaknesses identified.

Opportunities

- A PhD program can be viewed as an opportunity. The thesis stream is an asset in research training, and it can cultivate interest, talent, and skills to ‘seed’ a nascent PhD program. Faculty scholarship shows strong potential and is growing.
- Faculty initiatives including FCS-shared elective courses and inter-professional learning are assets that could help to diversify course offerings in a cost-effective but socially- beneficial and educationally enriching way.
- The DCSN MN’s location in a downtown, urban-focused university is a significant advantage as the urban population is growing and its demographics are shifting to include a majority of foreign-born citizens. The MN Program is well positioned to be a leader in next-generation urban health, with its teaching strengths focused around issues of diversity, equity, inclusion, and grounded in strategies of community engagement to serve a changing urban niche, including program opportunities in urban aboriginal health.
- Many students in the DCSN MN program reflect ethno-culturally diverse backgrounds and these students will increasingly move into positions of nursing leadership, advanced practice, etc. This is an opportunity for the program to contribute to training and leadership development for the future of nursing—fostering diversity in leadership as much as in front-line healthcare delivery. It also ties tightly into the Ryerson University Academic Plan core values and Priorities, for example, Priority 4: *Expand Community Engagement and City-Building*—through experiential learning, diverse and inclusive communities, and positive social, organizational change.
- The emphases on diversity, equity and inclusion could lead to the development of a potential timely niche on urban aboriginal health. (see e.g. Recommendations #21, 22, & 23 of the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission* that relate specifically to improved nursing practices and education that will require leadership in nursing.) The MN program has the possibility of

assisting urban aboriginal nurses in laddering to leadership positions given their established strengths in social justice through areas of focus in diversity, equity and inclusion.

SUMMARY OF THE PEER REVIEWER TEAM (PRT) RECOMMENDATIONS

Academic Recommendations

- Proceed with the development of a PhD program with caution. The investment in PhD students may compromise the strength and focus on the MN, which could lose ground to the energy required to launch the PhD. In addition, given the unevenness of leadership of SRC within the faculty, it will be necessary to determine who has a sufficient level of scholarship and research to supervise students and who does not. Note that lessons learned from research-intensive schools is that PhD students do not necessarily translate into increased scholarly productivity, and supervision is not evenly shared by faculty.
- Increase IPE opportunities including shorter workshops and elective courses. Consider possible faculty-wide or cross-platform courses, such as statistics and research methods.
- The plan to increase thesis stream applicants should continue to be a recruitment focus.

Administrative and Financial Recommendations

- Teaching loads should be carefully considered, and revised to support intentions to launch a PhD program and the time required by faculty to supervise effectively. Consider incentivising the supervision of PhD students.
- The program requires additional administrative support (e.g. +0.5) given the complexity of registration, the growing student numbers, and the complexity and diversity of the student body in terms of demographics, family obligations, work scheduling, front-line counselling, etc.
- The MN Program's operating budget should be re-evaluated to be allocated on a per-student basis to provide for the resources required to support student learning and engagement.
- Supports for preceptors should be formalized, including (status only) adjunct faculty appointments or similar.
- Connections and supports to alumni should be strengthened to have a fully developed alumni program, which in turn could lend significant community-professional, peer and financial support to the MN program in practice.

YSGS AND MN RESPONSES WITH IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Academic Recommendations

PRT Recommendation	MN Response	MN Implementation Plan	YSGS Response
Proceed with the development of a PhD program with caution.	The DCSN will carefully consider the feedback provided by the PRT in moving forward with an PhD program which includes building on the strengths of the MN program and	MN Graduate Program Director, by Fall 2017.	YSGS supports the programming aspirations of Nursing. Spaces for PhD expansion are dependent on Ryerson's renewed Strategic Mandate Agreement (SMA) coming in 2018. We look

	determining the strategies moving forward to strengthen faculty supervisions of graduate students and opportunities to support faculty and resources to building the capacity for a PhD.		forward to discussing aspirational programming in the next SMA round with Nursing and FCS.
Increase IPE opportunities including shorter workshops and elective courses. Consider possible faculty-wide or cross-platform courses, such as statistics and research methods.	The newly appointed Associate Dean, Graduate Studies and Special Projects, in FCS has as a priority to focus on increasing IPE graduate electives. The DCSN will look to other FCS schools regarding the development of IPE courses that meet the needs of nursing students. – Possibility of creating a centre for professional development in which 2 to 3 hour workshops can be offered for a fee; development of professional graduate programs or certificates.	MN Graduate Program Director, by Fall 2017.	YSGS supports the PRT recommendation and program response. We encourage Nursing students to take suitable electives outside of the program, where space is available.
The plan to increase thesis stream applicants should continue to be a recruitment focus.	The MN program will continue with this focus as it also helps with movement toward a PhD program.	MN Graduate Program Director, by Fall 2017.	YSGS supports the PRT recommendation and program response.

Administrative and Financial Recommendations

PRT Recommendation	MN Response	MN Implementation Plan	YSGS Response
Teaching loads should be carefully considered, and revised to support intentions to launch a PhD	The new RFA collective agreement has provisions that will allow the DCSN to move from a teaching load of 3 + 2 to a 2 + 2. In reviewing our workload provisions the	MN Graduate Program Director, by Fall 2017.	Teaching loads are governed by the RFA Collective Agreement, and assigned by the Faculty Dean in conjunction with the School Director. YSGS does not

<p>program and the time required by faculty to supervise effectively. Consider incentivising the supervision of PhD students.</p>	<p>will look to include incentives to supervise graduate students and support work of the graduate program. Develop creative modes for delivering courses such as collaborative teaching.</p>		<p>support incentives for graduate supervision, as we view this as part of faculty responsibilities.</p>
<p>The program requires additional administrative support (e.g. +0.5) given the complexity of registration, the growing student numbers, and the complexity and diversity of the student body in terms of demographics, family obligations, work scheduling, front-line counselling, etc.</p>	<p>The program strongly supports that additional resources regarding administration is essential and is committed to working with the Director, DCSN and Dean, FCS in looking at allocation resources for graduate program given the student complement.</p>	<p>MN Graduate Program Director, by Fall 2017.</p>	<p>The Program Administrator for Nursing reports to Nursing and FCS. We encourage discussion between the program and FCS regarding its staffing needs.</p>
<p>The MN Program's operating budget should be re-evaluated to be allocated on a per-student basis to provide for the resources required</p>	<p>The operating budget is the same amount as other graduate programs with considerably lower enrolment numbers in FCS; so the MN program will advocate for funding that is more closely associated with student</p>	<p>MN Graduate Program Director, by Fall 2017.</p>	<p>The MN operating budget is managed by FCS in conjunction with the Provost. Note that with the decentralization of graduate education at Ryerson, the funding model for MN is to students, and is part of a</p>
<p>to support student learning and engagement.</p>	<p>numbers related to both steady state FTEs and yearly enrollments.</p>		<p>base budget allocation within FCS. We support ways for Nursing to work with FCS to enhance its</p>

Supports for preceptors should be formalized, including (status only) adjunct faculty appointments or similar.	The MN program will work with YSGS to provide process for preceptors to have a formalized association with the university.	MN Graduate Program Director, by Fall 2017.	YSGS supports the PRT recommendation and looks forward to working with the program to have the role of preceptor formalized within Ryerson.
Connections and supports to alumni should be strengthened to have a fully developed alumni program.	MN program agrees this is an area for improvement and will work with university advancement and the current Nursing Alumni (made up mostly of undergraduate grads) to develop a robust MN alumni group. For example engage alumni as visiting lecturer and/or preceptor; have alumni event for graduate nurses.	MN Graduate Program Director, by Fall 2017.	YSGS encourages strengthening graduate alumni ties and communication for Nursing and all of our graduate programs. Alumni events with graduated MN students are one effective way to foster this engagement.

In conclusion, from the Self-Study Report and the associated data to the Site Visit and meetings with stakeholders, the PRT found that the MN Program demonstrates excellence in nursing education at the graduate level.

The PRT recommendations and MN's responses raise important points regarding the program, and the discussion of these will only have a positive development in the evolution of the program.

Next Periodic Program Review: 2024 - 2025