MEMORANDUM

TO: Members of the Board of Governors Committee on Educational Planning, Policies, and Programs

FROM: Alan Mabe

DATE: January 29, 2008

SUBJECT: UNC Nursing Exam Results for 2007 and Nursing Enrollment and Degrees Conferred Report

**UNC Board of Governors’ Policy and Annual Reporting Requirements**

In May 1990, the University of North Carolina Board of Governors adopted the following policy and performance standards for UNC nursing programs:

A requirement that the president will consider, jointly with the Chancellor, an evaluation of the leadership, faculty, admissions policies and the curriculum of any program whose graduates do not achieve for two consecutive years an annual passing rate of 85% for first-time writers, and, a requirement that the president will ask the Board to initiate program termination procedures for any program having a first-time passing rate of less than 75% for two consecutive years.

This report on enrollment and passing rates for licensure for the UNC nursing programs is prepared annually in accord with this Board policy. The UNC nursing students who took the NCLEX-RN exam for the first time in 2007 passed at an average rate of 92%. Six UNC campuses had passing rates above 90% (ECU, NCCU, UNC-CH, UNCC, UNCG and WSSU). Seven of the eleven campuses with graduates of prelicensure programs were above the UNC Board minimum standard for passing of 85%.

One campus has fallen below the 85% passing rate for two consecutive years (NCA&T) and thus is below the BOG two-year standard. North Carolina A&T State University has fallen below the BOG’s 85% standard for eight consecutive years. It should be noted that NCA&T improved its pass rate from 69% for 2006 to 84% for 2007.

The two new programs at FSU and at UNCP both fell below the BOG 85% standard with FSU at 64% for 2007 and UNCP at 68%. Since these are new programs they do not technically fall below the Boards threshold of below 85% for two consecutive years, but this indicates neither program has started up at a level of performance expected by the Board of Governors.
NC Board of Nursing Standards
The Board of Nursing has revised its standard for NCLEX passing rates for Nursing Programs. Previously the standard had been at 75%. If a program fell below that rate it was put on warning and was required to prepare and file with the Board of Nursing a plan to address the factors in the program that needed to be improved to bring the passing rate to the required level.

The Board of Nursing has adopted a new standard that requires NCLEX passing rates for first time writers be at 95% of the national pass rate or greater based on a rolling three-year average. The Board is in the process of implementing this plan. The Board of Nursing’s approved transition plan: For 2007, the requirement is 95% of the national pass rate or greater, using a two-year average pass rate for calendar years 2006 and 2007. The calculation of the three-year average will be implemented January 1, 2009 using calendar years 2006, 2007, 2008.

Based on this assessment, four of the UNC Nursing Programs remain or have been placed on warning status by the Board of Nursing.

Fayetteville State University
From BON letter to FSU: The NCLEX Annual pass rates have been computed for all nursing education programs for the time frame of January 1, 2006 through December 31, 2007. The pass rate for the BSN program at FSU is 64%, which is below the established standard of 83% for approved RN programs.

In accordance with Rule 21 NCAC 36.0303 (b) (1) as it relates to the Standard for annual pass rates on first time writing of the licensure examination as set forth in the approved transition plan for 21 NCAC 36.0320, Fayetteville State University continues on Warning approval status.

University of North Carolina at Pembroke
From BON letter to UNCP: The NCLEX Annual pass rates have been computed for all nursing education programs for the time frame of January 1, 2006 through December 31, 2007. The pass rate for the BSN program at UNCP is 68%, which is below the established standard of 83% for approved RN programs.

In accordance with Rule 21 NCAC 36.0303 (b) (1) as it relates to the Standard for annual pass rates on first time writing of the licensure examination as set forth in the approved transition plan for 21 NCAC 36.0320, University of North Carolina at Pembroke is assigned Warning status until the NCLEX results are available for calendar year 2008.

North Carolina A&T State University
From BON letter to NCA&TSU: The NCLEX Annual pass rates have been computed for all nursing education programs for the time frame of January 1, 2006
through December 31, 2007. The pass rate for the BSN program at NCA&TSU is 76%, which is below the established standard of 83% for approved RN programs.

In accordance with Rule 21 NCAC 36.0303 (b) (1) as it relates to the Standard for annual pass rates on first time writing of the licensure examination as set forth in the approved transition plan for 21 NCAC 36.0320, North Carolina A&T State University continues on Warning approval status. This is the third consecutive year that the pass rate has been below standard.

Western Carolina University

From BON letter to WCU: The NCLEX Annual pass rates have been computed for all nursing education programs for the time frame of January 1, 2006 through December 31, 2007. The pass rate for the BSN program at WCU is 81%, which is below the established standard of 83% for approved RN programs.

In accordance with Rule 21 NCAC 36.0303 (b) (1) as it relates to the Standard for annual pass rates on first time writing of the licensure examination as set forth in the approved transition plan for 21 NCAC 36.0320, Western Carolina University is assigned Warning status until the NCLEX results are available for calendar year 2008.

Requirements for Each School On Warning with the BON

Each of the four schools on warning has received notice of additional reporting requirements to the Board of Nursing. The template for the report is attached to this report. UNC GA will require the report to the BON be provided to General Administration with a cover letter from the chancellor explaining what steps the chancellor is taking to rectify the problems identified in the program and what additional resources from the campus, if any, are being use to move the program to a place where it is admitting students that can be and producing graduates that are educated to a level to be successful on the NCLEX exam and meet Board of Nursing and Board of Governors standards.

North Carolina A&T State University

NCA&T, while on warning from the BON based on the three-year rolling average of the new standard, did make progress increasing their pass rate from 69% to 84% an increase of 15 points. The Review Team for the 2006 external review also recommended that the size of the program be reduced by 15% each year that it fails to meet the BOG standard of 85% passing rate and the Educational Planning Committee concurred. UNCGA recommends that that requirement remain in effect.

Fayetteville State University

UNCGA in consultation with Chancellor Hackly commissioned an outside review of the FSU nursing program. That report is a separate item on the Committee’s agenda.
University of North Carolina at Pembroke
Discussions with the nursing program at UNCP have occurred and the program has accepted a recommendation by UNCGA that it bring in an outside consultant to review their program and make recommendations for program improvement.

Western Carolina University
While WCU is just 2 point below the BON standard, it has a recent history of some dips in student performance on the NCCEX. It would be wise for the program to bring in an outside consultant to review the program.

North Carolina Central University
It should be noted that NCCU, which has had difficulties in the past, has made significant improvements over the past two years going from 65% in 2005 to 91% in 2007. The 2006 outside review team members confirmed that they believed NCCU was on the right track and the evidence of the past two years pass rates supports that. This shows that central administration attention, resources, and good program leadership can turn a nursing program around.

Nursing Programs
North Carolina has 65 nursing programs that train Registered Nurses. This includes 11 UNC baccalaureate programs (with new prelicensure programs at FSU and UNCP started in 2005), 44 associate degree programs offered by the North Carolina Community College System; 4 private baccalaureate programs, 3 independent ADN and 3 hospital-based diploma programs. According to the North Carolina Board of Nursing, the total number of students taking the exam from UNC programs remained at 861 in 2007.

UNC Nursing Enrollment
The baccalaureate nursing enrollment increased from 2,845 students in fall 2006 to 3,138 in fall 2007. Only upper-division majors are included in the data. Campuses have in addition more than a 1,000 lower division students taking nursing courses and planning to be majors. UNC nursing schools and departments currently offer RN to BSN distance learning programs at sites throughout the state and online. Some nursing courses are also offered via the internet and through interactive video. The number of students enrolled in master’s programs increased from 1,139 to 1,278. The number of nursing students enrolled in a doctoral program reached a new high of 110 students in 2007 (61 at UNC-Chapel Hill, 23 at East Carolina, and 26 at UNCG. UNC graduate programs prepare advanced practice practitioners, nursing specialists, nursing scientists, health administrators and nursing faculty for the UNC and community college programs. Overall, enrollment in UNC nursing programs increased by approximately 11% for fall 2007. Growing enrollment in graduate program will expand the number of faculty available to expand baccalaureate programs. The General Assembly has now provided $2.4 in scholarship-loans for nursing graduate students intent on a career in nursing teaching.
**UNC Nursing Degrees Conferred**
For 2006-07 there were 1,300 baccalaureate degrees, 294 master’s degrees and 11 doctorates awarded. The masters and doctorates will contribute to easing the shortage of faculty for nursing programs. The significant increase in enrollment should lead to further increases in graduates in future years. In addition, two new prelicensure programs, one at FSU and one at UNCP, had their first graduates in 2007.

**Expanding Nursing Education in UNC.**
The North Carolina Institute of Medicine issued its report on Nursing, *Task Force on the North Carolina Nursing Workforce Report* in May 2004. The Board established a Committee on the Future of Nursing which made its report to the Board in November 2004. Both reports document the need for increasing the number of nurses in North Carolina and increasing the educational level of nurses. UNC campuses are well along in their enrollment expansion to achieve the ambitious goals approved by the Board of Governors to increase the production of nurses at every level.

Attachments

cc: UNC Nursing Deans