

REVIEW OF THE PH.D. IN NURSING

Classification of Instructional Program (CIP) Code: 51.3808
Nursing Science

OVERVIEW

The Ph.D. in Nursing program at Illinois State University is housed in the Mennonite College of Nursing. The college is unique among credit-granting colleges at Illinois State in that it has no departments. Thus, all academic programs offered by the college are administered at the college level. The Mennonite College of Nursing also offers a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (B.S.N.), a Master of Science in Nursing (M.S.N.), a Post-Master's Family Nurse Practitioner Certificate, and a Doctor of Nursing Practice (D.N.P.). The Ph.D. in Nursing program focuses on original research, whereas the D.N.P. program focuses on application of research to improve nursing care. The Ph.D. in Nursing program was established to help address a national shortage of doctorally-prepared nurses to conduct research and to teach in postsecondary nursing programs. The program is one of 10 doctoral programs at Illinois State.

All academic programs of the Mennonite College of Nursing other than the D.N.P. program have been reviewed in the current program review cycle. The D.N.P. program, authorized by the Illinois Board of Higher Education in 2013, is scheduled for its first review on the eight-year program review cycle in 2021-2022.

This is the first review of the Ph.D. in Nursing program on the eight-year program review cycle. The program was developed through a partnership with the University of Iowa and authorized by the Illinois Board of Higher Education on February 5, 2018. The program enrolled its first student in summer 2008 and conferred its first doctorate in May 2013.

The Ph.D. in Nursing program is one of two nursing doctoral research programs at public universities in the state and one of four such programs at any Illinois university. It is the only such program located outside the Chicago metropolitan area.

Enrollment and Degrees Conferred, 2010-2017

Ph.D. in Nursing, Illinois State University

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Enrollment, fall census day	15	14	21	26	22	22	22	22
Degrees conferred, graduating fiscal year*				1	5	1	2	4

* Summer, fall, and spring terms (e.g., graduating fiscal year 2017 consists of the following terms: summer 2016, fall 2016, and spring 2017)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY PROGRAM REVIEW SELF-STUDY REPORT

Program goals

To prepare nurses with a high level of expertise ...

- To lead the development of science to advance effective practice, education, and health care policy,
- To serve the evolving healthcare interests of humankind through the integration of research, teaching, practice, and service,
- To educate, mentor, and guide the next generation of clinicians, researchers, policy-makers and educators,
- To lead and collaborate across disciplines to promote scholarship, teaching, mentoring, practice, and service.

Student learning outcomes

Student learning outcomes associated with each program goal are set forth in learning objectives associated with each required nursing course.

Program curriculum (2017-2018)

Graduation requirements: 66 credit hours beyond the master's degree consisting of 27 credit hours of core nursing courses, 6 credit hours of research practica, 9 credit hours of statistics and measurement courses, 9 credit hours of elective courses, and 15 credit hours of dissertation work. All students must successfully complete a dissertation comprised of original research.

Program delivery

The Ph.D. in Nursing program is offered on the Normal campus.
All courses in the program are delivered face-to-face.

College faculty (Fall 2017)

18 tenure track faculty members (4 Professors, 5 Associate Professors, and 9 Assistant Professors)
55 non-tenure track faculty members (18 full-time and 37 part-time, totaling 26.36 FTE)

Courses in the Ph.D. in Nursing program are taught by full-time tenured or tenure track faculty members. All tenured or tenure track faculty members in the college have a doctorate. Those teaching nursing content have either a Ph.D. or a Doctor of Nursing Practice (D.N.P.). One faculty member is a doctorally-prepared statistician who teaches statistical methods and serves as the college statistician. All tenure track faculty members are expected to establish and implement a plan of scholarship. Peer-reviewed contributions by faculty members have included journal articles, presentations at regional, national, or international conferences, continuing education publications, and grant submissions, among others. In Fiscal 2017 nursing faculty members collectively received external grants totaling \$3.4 million to support research projects from Fiscal 2018 through Fiscal 2021.

All non-tenure track faculty members in the college are expected to possess either a master's degree in nursing or a doctorate in nursing (either a D.N.P. or Ph.D.). Many non-tenure track faculty members supervise students at clinical sites, and full-time non-tenure track faculty members are active in service activities at the college and university levels.

Mennonite College of Nursing faculty members have received numerous teaching, research, and service awards bestowed by the University or by entities external to the University since the 2009-2010 program review. Among the external recognitions are a Distinguished Leader Award from the Emergency Nurses Association, Book of the Year Award from the *American Journal of Nursing*, Article of the Year Award from the *Journal of Psychosocial Nursing and Mental Health Services*, and an Innovations in Professional Nursing Education Award bestowed by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing for faculty re-design of the pediatric clinical experience in the undergraduate nursing program.

Specialized accreditation

Although all other academic programs of the Mennonite College of Nursing are accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE), neither CCNE nor any other specialized accreditation association accredits doctoral research programs.

Changes in the academic discipline, field, societal need, and program demand

Nursing continues to be a very sought after career. With the increasing complexity of healthcare, doctorally-prepared nursing researchers are needed to advance nursing science. There is also a state and nationwide need for doctorally-prepared nursing researchers to teach students enrolled in post-secondary nursing programs. Although the demand among healthcare providers for both entry-level nurses and advanced practice nurses is increasing, a

shortage of nursing faculty limits the number of students able to be accepted into baccalaureate and master's level programs.

The Ph.D. in Nursing program in the Mennonite College of Nursing is intended in part to provide a pipeline of doctorally-prepared nurses qualified to teach and mentor baccalaureate and master's level students in the college. In 2015 the Mennonite College of Nursing was named one of four preferred educational partners in Illinois for the nearly 37,000 associates employed by Advocate Healthcare system. That system is headquartered in Downers Grove (Illinois) and operates the Advocate BroMenn Healthcare facility in Normal. It is hoped that designation as a Preferred Educational Partner will result in greater interest in the Ph.D. in Nursing program.

Response to previous program review recommendations

Because this is the first program review for the Ph.D. in Nursing program on the eight-year program review cycle, there were no previous program review recommendations for faculty to address.

Major findings

The Mennonite College of Nursing continues to help alleviate the national shortage of doctorally-prepared nurses through its Ph.D. in Nursing program. Since approval of the program by the Illinois Board of Higher Education in February 2008, fall enrollment in the program has steadily grown, peaking at 26 students in 2013 before stabilizing at 22 students. Thus, actual enrollments have matched enrollments projected in the spring 2007 application to IBHE. The program has conferred 13 doctorates since its inception (through Graduating Fiscal Year 2017), and four of those graduates have since joined the Mennonite College of Nursing faculty. Thus, the plan to develop a pool of doctorally-prepared applicants for difficult-to-fill Mennonite College of Nursing faculty positions has succeeded. The college evaluates its programs on a regular basis and revises curricula and program policies as needed to remain current and competitive. Modifications to the Ph.D. in Nursing program curriculum approved in 2016 to refocus the curriculum from content learning to skills development have positioned the program to continue its successes through the next program review cycle. Additional challenges and opportunities identified by faculty through the program review self-study process include increasing the number of full-time faculty members with a corresponding decrease in the number of part-time faculty members, developing and implementing a plan for faculty professional development, and increasing externally-funded faculty scholarship and the number of research publications resulting from that scholarship.

Initiatives and plans

- Determine and work toward the ideal combination of full-time and part-time faculty members that best meets student needs while maintaining sufficient flexibility to meet course scheduling demands.
- Compile and implement a professional development plan for college faculty.
- Evaluate effects of recruitment efforts, including the Preferred Provider designation by Advocate Healthcare, on enrollments in the Ph.D. in Nursing program and the Doctor of Nursing Practice (D.N.P.) program and the ability of the college to provide high quality doctoral-level nursing education.
- Develop and implement initiatives for increasing externally-funded faculty scholarship and the number of research publications resulting from that scholarship.

PROGRAM REVIEW OUTCOME AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE ACADEMIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

Review Outcome. The Academic Planning Committee, as a result of this review process, finds the Ph.D. in Nursing program to be in Good Standing.

The Ph.D. in Nursing program of the Mennonite College of Nursing (hereinafter "MCN" or "the college") was approved by the Illinois Board of Higher Education in February 2008 and began enrolling students that summer. This is the first review of the program on the eight-year program review cycle.

The committee recognizes the program as one of only two doctoral research nursing programs at Illinois public universities and one of only four such programs across all higher education sectors in the state. The program was established to help address the national shortage of post-secondary nurse educators who have a doctorate. Since its inception, the program has conferred 13 doctoral degrees. Four of the 13 graduates are now MCN faculty members.

The committee commends MCN faculty for developing and maintaining a curriculum that is appropriately rigorous and for increasing faculty scholarship, which informs curriculum development, teaching, and student mentoring. In accordance with the Plan for College Assessment adopted by faculty, the Ph.D. curriculum is reviewed at least once every four years. The most recent review, in 2015-2016, resulted in revisions that broadened the scope of the program beyond its initial emphasis on gerontology and changed the focus of the curriculum from content learning to research skills development. All courses in the program, including the six new courses resulting from the 2015-2016 curriculum review, have been designed specifically for doctoral-level education. From 2014 to 2016 the average number of peer-reviewed publications per tenure track faculty member per year in the college increased from 1.05 to 1.67, while the average number of peer-reviewed presentations per tenure track faculty member per year increased from 1.47 to 2.17. Faculty members draw on their research to mentor students with their own research and encourage their students to present their findings at external venues such as the Midwest Nursing Research Society.

The committee recognizes MCN for designation of Illinois State University as a Preferred Educational Partner by Advocate BroMenn Medical Center in Bloomington. As a result of this designation, Advocate BroMenn staff members enrolling in a nursing program offered by the college, including the Ph.D. program, are eligible to receive financial assistance from Advocate BroMenn to help pay their tuition and fees.

MCN and Milner Library have collaborated for many years to provide research resources and services in support of nursing students and faculty. Since the last program review, this collaboration has been extended to include the new Ph.D. in Nursing program. The nursing librarian orients new doctoral students to nursing research resources and library services and teaches sessions in the research colloquium and scholarly communications courses in the program. Through the program review self-study process, the college and library have developed short-, middle-, and long-term goals to further enhance this collaboration.

The committee has included analyses of comparator and aspirational institutions in the self-study report outline to provide faculty members opportunities to consider the niche the program has among its peers and to gather information for program planning. The self-study report briefly describes one comparator program in the state and one aspirational program, also located in Illinois. Expanded analyses of comparator and aspirational programs, including aspirational programs nationwide, could help faculty develop strategies for addressing priority initiatives faculty has identified for the next review, such as increasing student-faculty research collaborations, expanding professional development opportunities for faculty members, and further increasing faculty scholarship. Studying comparator and aspirational programs might also help faculty with exploration of alternate program delivery methods. Accordingly, the committee asks faculty to revisit their discussions of comparator and aspirational institutions and to summarize findings of those discussions in a report submitted to the Office of the Provost by May 15, 2019.

Recommendations. The Academic Planning Committee makes the following recommendations to be addressed within the next regularly scheduled review cycle. In the next program review self-study report, tentatively due October 1, 2025, the committee asks the program to describe actions taken and results achieved for each recommendation.

Continue and enhance efforts to increase student diversity. The committee commends the college for its commitment to student diversity across all of its academic programs and for its efforts since the last program review to increase that diversity. However, most efforts in the college to recruit a diverse student population seem targeted to prospective undergraduate students. Regarding diversity among doctoral students, a strategy articulated in the self-study report is focusing efforts first at the undergraduate level and then having that more diverse cohort of nurses enroll in the master's program and, in turn, the doctoral program. While this may be an appropriate strategy for the long-term, the committee recommends that the college develop and implement more immediate strategies for

recruiting for diversity at the doctoral level and retaining those students once in the program. The college might look to its aspirational programs for guidance in developing such strategies.

Explore additional means of infusing diversity into the curriculum. For students in undergraduate- and master's-level programs offered by MCN, the transcultural experience offered by the college may be a viable opportunity for students to experience nursing practices in other cultures first-hand. However, students pursuing a Ph.D. in Nursing are less likely to participate in such co-curricular experiences since the students typically complete the program on a part-time basis while employed full time. The committee encourages faculty to consider options to the transcultural experience for infusing diverse cultures and international perspectives into the Ph.D. curriculum. One alternative that might be explored is arranging virtual contacts with nurses, nursing administrators, or nurse researchers from diverse cultures and from other countries.

Continue and broaden efforts to increase faculty diversity. The committee recognizes the challenges faced by the college in recruiting applicants for faculty positions and in recruiting applicant pools that are diverse with respect to race, ethnicity, and gender/sex given the paucity of doctorally-prepared nurses in the U.S. The committee encourages the college to continue those efforts despite the competition from other nursing programs for faculty applicants. The committee recognizes the successes realized by the college in recruiting applicants by developing a pipeline of prospective applicants through its doctoral programs. However, the committee encourages the college to balance its use of this pipeline with recruitment of faculty members who have earned their doctorate at some other institution. That balance is important in building a faculty diverse with respect to interests, expertise, and experiences in addition to demographics.

Compile and implement an alumni relations plan. The committee recognizes the numerous strategies deployed by the college to track its alumni and to periodically seek feedback from them regarding the program, such as through administration of a survey to students immediately prior to their graduation and through analysis of alumni survey results. The committee encourages the college to formalize these and other strategies in a college-wide plan to guide alumni relations through the next program review cycle and beyond. On the doctoral level, faculty members typically develop lasting professional relationships with students through their work with students on their dissertations. Thus, with regard to the Ph.D. program, the college alumni relations plan could include processes for systematically documenting program outcomes information and program feedback gleaned through personal contacts with program alumni.

Continue student learning outcomes assessment. Through implementation of its Plan for College Assessment, outcomes of the Ph.D. program are systematically monitored and then used in discussions regarding the need for any changes to it. The plan is thorough in its identification of program outcomes data collected, when and by whom the data are compiled and reviewed, and target thresholds for each outcome. As is appropriate for doctoral education, the dissertation is a unique and key element of the assessment plan for the Ph.D. program. The committee encourages faculty to continue its program evaluation and assessment efforts during the next review cycle, using evaluation and assessment findings to guide program changes as needed. The committee asks that faculty systematically document those changes and the rationale for them.

Design and implement additional faculty development initiatives. Provide additional opportunities for faculty development. The committee recognizes that adding a doctoral program to a unit affects teaching and research in the unit as well as numerous aspects of unit operation. Since the 2009-2010 review of MCN programs, the college has fully implemented two doctoral programs: its Ph.D. program and a Doctor of Nursing Practice (D.N.P.). The committee recognizes the college for its encouragement of faculty to participate in professional development opportunities to support faculty in its implementation of the two doctoral programs. The committee concurs with the goal articulated by faculty in the self-study report of enhancing the quality of college faculty through additional faculty development opportunities. The committee also concurs with the goal of developing new initiatives to help faculty members further increase their scholarly activities, which are especially critical to the success of the Ph.D. and D.N.P. programs.

Monitor and evaluate effects of the Preferred Educational Partner designation on the program.

Designation of Illinois State University by Advocate BroMenn as a Preferred Educational Partner for nursing has the potential to increase the number of applicants for MCN programs and to increase enrollment in them. The direct impact of this partnership on the Ph.D. program may not be as great as the impact on the undergraduate and master's programs of the college. However, enrollment increases in those other programs could have indirect impacts on the Ph.D. program. The committee supports efforts of the college to monitor and evaluate the effects of the preferred partner program, as well as the effects of other recruitment efforts, on the ability of the college to provide high quality education, including education at the doctoral level.