Assessment of the Associate Degree Nursing Program
St. Charles Community College

2007-2008 Academic Year

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I. MISSION AND GOALS

College Mission and Vision Statement

St. Charles Community College is an accredited, affordable, and accessible learning environment providing life-changing opportunities for personal growth and professional success. We will be a community college recognized for leadership in academic excellence, student success, instructional and technological innovation, and community responsiveness.

Nursing Program Mission and Philosophy

In keeping with the mission of St. Charles Community College, the mission of the Associate Degree Nursing program is to meet the needs of the community by preparing competent graduates for entry level nursing practice in a variety of settings.

The Associate Degree Nursing Graduate is prepared for entry level practice as a licensed registered nurse providing direct care, based on the nursing process of assessment, planning, implementation, and evaluation of care. The practice of the associate degree nurse encompasses three basic roles: provider of care, manager of care, and member of the profession of nursing, as outlined by the National League for Nursing. The associate degree nurse’s approach to client-centered care is reflected through a collaborative approach involving the client, family, significant others, and members of the health care team. To practice quality nursing care, it is essential that the nurse understand ethical and legal standards for practice, as well as lines of authority and communication within the work setting.

Nursing education provides opportunities to gain current knowledge of nursing concepts, principles, processes, and skills. Students build on the necessary cognitive, psychomotor and affective abilities throughout the curriculum. Learning is a collaborative effort between the learner and the educator. The educator’s role is to facilitate learning, foster critical thinking and evaluate students according to the specified competencies.
Nursing Program Goals

The overall goal of the Associate Degree Nursing program is to educate competent graduates who are prepared for entry level nursing practice in a variety of settings. The Nursing Program also strives to prepare graduates who are successful in passing the National Council Licensing Exam for RN’s (NCLEX-RN), and graduates who are prepared to continue their nursing education at a four year university. Terminal graduate competencies related to the role of the associate degree nurse are included in the Nursing Student Handbook.

The goals for the nursing program assessment are summarized as follows:

1. 100% of students, who complete the clinical preceptorship experience in the last semester, will receive clinical performance evaluations of at least “Satisfactory” or better, on the preceptor evaluation form.

2. The class average score for graduating students will be above the national average probability of passing score on the Health Education Systems, Inc. Exam (HESI).

3. The class average score for graduating students will be above the national norm on the Critical Thinking Module of the C.A.A.P. Academic Proficiency Test.

4. The aggregate graduating class pass rate for nursing students taking the NCLEX-RN licensure exam for first time candidates will be above the national average.

5. At least 90% of graduates contacted will be employed in a nursing role within six months of program completion.

6. 70% of students enrolled in NUR 103 will graduate from the ADN Nursing Program within two years.

7. 100% of the graduating nursing students will rate their overall satisfaction with the nursing program as good or higher.
II. PROGRAM ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENTS

A variety of instruments are utilized to assess the outcomes of the Associate Degree Nursing Program. Although student achievement and progress is continually assessed throughout each semester, the instruments chosen for program assessment represent the final outcomes after completion of the entire program.

Preceptorship Evaluations

The final clinical experience in the program is a “preceptorship”, during which students work individually with an RN in a clinical setting. Students work a total of 80 to 84 hours according to the schedule of the mentoring registered nurse. Nursing students observe and function within the roles of provider of care, manager of care, and member of profession. This experience is designed as a transitional experience to help students identify the responsibilities of a registered nurse in a clinical setting. The RN preceptors evaluate the students according to clinical performance and professional behaviors. The preceptor student evaluation form is included in the appendix.

HESI Exit Exam for Nursing

The HESI (Health Education Systems, Inc.) Exam is designed as an exit exam for all students enrolled in the last semester of a nursing program. The content covers all areas of the nursing curriculum, and the test questions are designed to be similar in content and format to the National Council Licensure Exam. The score received can predict the students’ probability of passing the NCLEX-RN. The average national pass rate, for the last several years, on the NCLEX-RN has been approximately 86 percent. Students who receive a probability score below the national pass average on the HESI Exit Exam have a less than “average” probability of passing the NCLEX-RN. HESI predicts those with a 90% or above probability score should pass the NCLEX-RN. Those with a probability score below 90% should prepare carefully for the NCLEX-RN. Students with a probability score of 84% or less should plan remediation prior to the licensing exam.

C.A.A.P. Critical Thinking Test

Nursing students also participate in academic assessment by taking a portion of the nationally standardized C.A.A.P. (Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency) Exam. The students take the portion of this exam designed to assess “critical thinking” skills. Critical thinking is recognized as an area that is essential to success in nursing and is inherent in the nursing process approach to problem solving which is emphasized throughout the nursing curriculum. Critical thinking is essential in clinical practice, as well as the theoretical aspects of nursing.
Students admitted into the nursing program take the critical thinking portion of the C.A.A.P. Test at the beginning of the first nursing course (NUR 103), and then again during the last semester (NUR 254). Results are then compared for students when beginning and completing the nursing program at this institution. SCC student results can also be compared to national averages of students across the country in similar programs.

National Council Licensure Exam (NCLEX-RN)

The National Council Licensure Exam (NCLEX-RN) is designed to test knowledge, skills, and abilities essential to the safe and effective practice of nursing at the entry level. NCLEX examination results are used by boards of nursing to make decisions about licensure. Only boards of nursing can release NCLEX examination results to candidates. To take the NCLEX examination, candidates must apply for licensure in the state in which they wish to be licensed, and meet all of the board of nursing’s eligibility requirements for licensure.

NCLEX-RN examination results are mailed by the state board to candidates within one month after taking the examination. A diagnostic profile is mailed to candidates who fail the examination. Using this information, failing candidates can determine their areas of strengths and weaknesses, and design their study accordingly, prior to retaking the NCLEX examination. Graduate results are reported to nursing programs quarterly, along with comparative statistics of passing rates from other schools and other states.

Graduate Surveys

Graduate surveys are mailed approximately six months after graduation. Responses to this survey provide information on employment and areas of practice. Over the past several years, the return response rate for the surveys has been 25-35%. The response rate for 2008 graduates was 36%.

Graduates are also asked for feedback regarding their educational preparation for the role of a graduate nurse. Graduates rate their level of preparation on a scale of 1 (not at all), to 5 (well prepared), on each of the terminal graduate competency statements. Competencies are grouped according to the three roles of the associate degree nurse: provider of care, manager of care, and member of the profession of nursing. Survey results are tabulated and utilized for program evaluation and revision (See attached survey).

Graduation Rate

The graduation rate is calculated by subtracting the number of students who leave the program for personal reasons or fail during any of the four semesters, from the number that enter in the fall of NUR 103. Bridge, transfer, and returning students are not included in calculating the graduation rate.
SCC ADN Program Survey

The associate degree nursing program survey is completed by students at the end of NUR 254, the last nursing course. Graduating students rate their knowledge and experience related to the three roles of provider of care, manager of care, and member of profession. They are also asked to rate their overall satisfaction with the nursing program on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree), to 4 (strongly agree).

Results are aggregated along with student comments, and are utilized for program improvement.

III. PROGRAM ASSESSMENT DATA SHEETS

A. RN PRECEPTOR EVALUATIONS

Goal: 100% of students, who complete the clinical preceptorship experience in the last semester of the nursing program, will receive clinical performance evaluations of at least “satisfactory” or better, on the preceptor evaluation form.

Number of students completing the clinical preceptorship experience: 73

Number of students with clinical evaluations of at least “Satisfactory” performance: 73

Percentage of students with clinical evaluations of at least “Satisfactory” performance for the clinical preceptorship experience: 100%

Goal Met: Yes

Comments/Conclusions:

All students enrolled in the clinical preceptorship experience received evaluations at or above satisfactory in all areas evaluated. Student comments, overall, validated the success of the preceptor program.

Plan/Recommendations:

Clinical preceptorship is a valuable experience that provides a bridge between education and practice. The faculty has recommended that it continue to be a part of NUR 254.
B. HESI EXIT EXAM FOR NURSING

Goal: The class average HESI score for graduating students will fall within the range of predicting an “average or higher” probability of passing the NCLEX-RN Licensing exam with a score between 850-899.

Number of students taking the HESI Exam: 73

Aggregate class HESI score: 872

HESI score category: 850-899

Category Description: Average probability of passing

Goal Met: Yes

Comments/Conclusions:

The aggregate class score of 872 was achieved by SCC nursing graduates and represented an “average probability of passing” the NCLEX-RN exam on the first attempt. Individually, 26 students scored below the “average probability” of passing with 8 of these in “serious to grave danger” of failing. These students were counseled and provided with additional resources to prepare for the licensing exam. Based on the licensing exam scores for the 2008 graduating class (97.26%), the remediation was effective.

Plan/Recommendations:

The faculty agreed that the HESI Exit exam continue to be utilized as an assessment tool to identify areas of weaknesses for students, and to allow for remediation if necessary prior to taking the NCLEX-RN Exam.
C. CAAP CRITICAL THINKING TEST

**Goal:** The class average score for graduating students, will be above the National Average on the Critical Thinking Module of the CAAP Collegiate Academic Proficiency Test.

- Number of students taking the CAAP Test: 73
- Class average exit score: (Sp 08) 64.9
- National average score: (Sp 08) 60.9
- Class average on admission: (Fall 06) 64.3
- National average on admission (Fall 06) 60.9

**Goal Met:** Yes

**Comments/Conclusions**

The graduating nursing students scored 0.6 points above the national average on the CAAP Critical Thinking Exit Exam. The average score for this group of students when they entered the program in the fall of 2006 was 64.3 or 3.4 points higher than the national average. Overall, the critical thinking scores of SCC graduates were above the national average at graduation, and increased 0.6 points from fall 2006 to spring 2008. This small increase could be the result of the high entry scores indicating this group of students entered the program with excellent critical thinking abilities.

**Plan/Recommendations:**

Continue to use the CAAP critical thinking exam to evaluate the ability of students to think critically which is essential for nurses.
D. NCLEX-RN LICENSURE EXAM RESULTS

**Goal:** The aggregate class pass rate for nursing students taking the NCLEX-RN licensure exam for first time candidates will be above the national average.

Number of graduates taking the NCLEX-RN: 73

Number of graduates passing the NCLEX-RN on the first attempt: 71

Percentage of graduates passing the NCLEX-RN on the first attempt:

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SCC Percentage</td>
<td>97.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Average:</td>
<td>86.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Average:</td>
<td>87.85</td>
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</table>

Goal Met: Yes

**Comments/Conclusions:**

The Missouri State Board pass rates are now reported from January 1 through December 31 allowing nursing programs the ability to aggregate pass rates by nursing class. Previously the July 1 through June 30 reporting period divided class results because some of the graduating class took their licensing exam in June and, therefore, became part of the previous year’s reporting data. Of the 73 students who took the exam for the first time, 71 passed which resulted in a 97.26% pass rate. That rate exceeded the national average pass rate of 86.73 by 10.53 points. It also exceeded the MO state average of 87.5 by 9.41 points.

**Plan/Recommendations:**

The pass rate of 97.26% is the highest pass rate the SCC nursing program has ever reported. The faculty continues to work on curriculum review and revision to maintain the quality of the nursing program, and to adapt to changes in the role and scope of nurses within the changing health care environment.
E. GRADUATE SURVEY RESULTS/EMPLOYMENT

Goal: At least 90% of graduates contacted will be employed in a nursing role:

Number of Graduates: 73
Number of Graduates contacted through mail survey 26
Number of graduates contacted employed in a nursing role: 26
Number of graduates unemployed or working in another field (if known): 0
Percentage of graduates employed in a nursing role within 6 months after graduation: 100%

Goal Met: Yes

Comments/Conclusions:

Surveys were mailed to all 2008 nursing graduates. Twenty-six students responded by mail for a 36% response rate. All respondents stated they were employed in a nursing role.

Plan/Recommendations:

Graduate surveys provide valuable information about employment opportunities for graduates of the SCC nursing program. They also report where graduates are employed and the type of health care settings they are entering. This allows the faculty to review preparation for various nursing roles and responsibilities, and changes to the curriculum if necessary.
F. GRADUATION RATE RESULTS

Goal: 70% of students enrolled in NUR 103 will graduate from the ADN Program within two years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Count</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of students entering NUR 103</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of students who failed or dropped prior to May 08</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of bridge, transfer and returning students entering after Fall 06</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of students entering fall 06 and graduated May 2008 (80-14)</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduation Rate</td>
<td>82.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Goal Met: Yes

Comments/Conclusions:

The graduation rate of 82.5% exceeds the goal of 70%. This may be influenced by the nursing program admission standards that ensure students admitted to the program have a high probability of completing the program. The community college nursing admission process admits students who meet the program requirements on a first come first served basis. Students are not ranked prior to admission to the program.

Plan/Recommendations:

The faculty annually reviews admission requirements to ensure the standards are effective in identifying students who have the ability academic ability to complete the program. This is essential since the number of applicants admitted each fall is limited to 80 students.
G. **PROGRAM SURVEY RESULTS**

Goal: 100% of the graduating nursing students will rate their overall satisfaction with the nursing program as good or higher.

Number of Graduates 73

Number of graduates rating their experience as good or higher 73

Percentage of graduates rating their experience as good or higher 100%

Goal Met: Yes

**Comments/Conclusions:**

The program survey was completed at the end of NUR 254 which is the last nursing course. All 73 students responded per the survey that their experience and satisfaction with the St. Charles Community College Associate Degree Nursing Program was good or higher. 51% strongly agreed and 49% agreed that their overall satisfaction with the program was good.

**Plan/Recommendations:**

The faculty reviews the program surveys to gain relevant information about the nursing program for review and revision as deemed necessary. The faculty value the information provided by the graduates and will continue to solicit their perceptions about the quality of the program and their evaluation relevant to preparation for entry level practice.
Section IV. Program Review Questions for Academic Year 2007-2008

1. The nursing program admits 80 students each fall semester into three sections of NUR 103. Enrollment into the nursing department is currently capped at 80 students. Additionally if there is space, LPN Bridge, transfer, and returning students are admitted to NUR 104 and 105. Second year enrollment has remained constant at approximately 70-72 students. The average class size for all sections is 25-26. The average clinical group size is 8 students.

2. There are numerous associate and baccalaureate level nursing programs in the metro area making it difficult to hire qualified adjunct nursing faculty. The SCC nursing program is approved by the state of Missouri which requires a minimum of a BSN, and accredited by The National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission which requires all nursing faculty to have a master’s degree with a major in nursing. Because of the nursing shortage of master’s prepared faculty, only 60% of the current full and part-time faculty have master’s degrees.

3. Applicants for the nursing program continue to increase with a list of 20-30 qualified students who are denied admission because the course is full. In order to increase enrollment and meet the needs of the health care community, additional full-time faculty need to be hired to maintain a quality program. Several health care agencies have reported a hiring freeze for 2009 due to decreased patient days and budget shortfalls so plans to increase enrollment have not been considered for fall 2009.

4. General education requirements for nursing students include Anatomy & Physiology I & II, Intro to Chemistry, Intro to Psychology, English Composition I & II or Literature, Microbiology, and Intro to Sociology.

5. Enrollment has remained constant for the past three years because of the cap on admissions to the program. Eighty students are admitted each fall and through attrition enrollment for all sections combined has averaged 140-150 total students.

6. The Missouri State Board of Nursing has approved a maximum enrollment of 120 students each fall. Due to the lack of full-time faculty, the inability to hire qualified adjunct faculty and the competition for clinical sites, there is no plan to increase the cap above 80 students.

7. There are seven full-time faculty including the department chair/director of the program. They include Koreen Smiley, Dept. Chair, Nancy McGough, Ginny Daugherty, Bernadette Moody, Linda Cole, Marilyn Miller, and Joetta Strassner.
8. Release time of 6 credit hours per semester is granted to the department chair, and three credit hours to the clinical coordinator. All faculty with the exception of the department chair have a combined clinical and classroom academic load.

9. The job market for nursing professionals has been very strong in the past. In the 2008 graduate survey, 100% of the respondents had jobs in the health care field. The current economic climate has forced some area health care agencies to initiate a hiring freeze which if maintained may impact the hiring prospects for the 2009 nursing graduates.

Section V. Comments

The viability of the St. Charles Community College Associate Degree Nursing program is very positive. Graduates of the program are highly recruited by local health care agencies. Employer Surveys indicate that graduates of the program are adequately prepared for entry level nursing positions in a variety of settings. Most importantly, graduates of SCC continue to perform well on program indicators including the HESI Exit Exam, CAAP Critical Thinking Exam, and the NCLEX-RN Licensing Exam. With the continuing strength of the program and the nursing shortage, graduates of the nursing program will be able to achieve their personal and professional goals.
Summary of Results

The St. Charles Community College Nursing Program met all of the stated goals for the 2007-2008 academic year.

Program Goal #1 100% of students who complete the clinical preceptorship experience in the last semester, will receive clinical performance evaluations of at least “satisfactory” or better, on the preceptor evaluation form.

Goal Met
A total of 73 students participated in the NUR 274 clinical preceptorship. One hundred per cent of the students received a grade of “satisfactory” by their clinical instructors. The five week 84 hour clinical experience provides students with a transitional experience bridging the gap between education and practice.

Program Goal #2 The class average score for graduating students will be at or above the national “average probability of passing” score on the Health Education Systems, Inc. Exam (HESI).

Goal Met
The HESI exam is a nationally normed exam that compares graduates of all RN nursing programs. The SCC aggregate score of 872 was above the “average or higher probability of passing the NCLEX-RN “score of 850. This score indicates, as a class, the SCC graduates have an average or better than average probability of passing their licensure exam. This score is important when evaluating the effectiveness of the nursing curriculum in preparing graduates to pass their licensing exam and to effectively practice as registered nurses.

Program Goal #3 The class average score for graduating students, will be above the national norm on the Critical Thinking Module of the C.A.A.P. Academic Proficiency Exam.

Goal Met
All students were testing at the beginning of the nursing program, and then again at the end of the final semester. The national average score was 60.9 for all students taking the exam. SCC nursing students had an average score of 64.3 on admission and 64.9 at graduation exceeding the national average. The critical thinking exam measures the ability of students to creatively problem solve which is akin to the nursing process method of
problem resolution utilized in the nursing setting. The ability to think more critically and creatively increased as they progressed through the program.

Program Goal #4  The aggregate graduating class pass rate for nursing students taking the NCLEX-RN exam the first time, will be above the national average.

**Goal Met**
The class pass rate for the NCLEX-RN was 97.26% which exceeded the national level of 86.73 as reported by the Missouri State Board of Nursing. Students must pass the NCLEX-RN in order to practice as a registered nurse. The exam may be repeated until the graduate successfully passes.

Program Goal #5  At least 90% of graduates contacted by mail or telephone, will be employed in a nursing role within six months of program completion.

**Goal Met**
Phone and written surveys were sent to all 2008 graduates with a response rate of 36%. Of those returned, 100% of the graduates were employed in a nursing role. SCC nursing graduates have no difficulty obtaining nursing jobs in area health care institutions. The SCC nursing program graduates are highly recruited and employer surveys indicate that they function at or above expectations as new graduates.

Program Goal #6  100% of the graduating nursing students will rate their overall satisfaction with the nursing program as good or higher.

**Goal Met**
Program evaluations were completed by 73 nursing graduates. All graduates (100%) reported their satisfaction with the SCC nursing program as “good” or “very good”.

In conclusion, the SCC Nursing program meets its overall objective to educate competent graduates who are prepared for entry level nursing practice in a variety of health care settings as indicated by meeting all of the program assessment goals. The nursing program assessment goals are effective in evaluating the program and will be maintained. Overall, the St. Charles Community College Nursing Program provides an accredited, affordable, and accessible learning environment providing life-changing opportunities for personal growth and professional success as outlined in the college mission statement.