DePaul University  
Academic Program Review  

Memorandum of Agreement -- July 1999

Department of Nursing

As a result of DePaul University's Academic Program Review Process, Cycle I, the participants in the process enter into the following agreements. The participants understand that this document will be available to be made public once the signatures are in place: for the unit, the chair of the unit's review committee and the department chair/program director; for the college/school, the dean; for the Academic Program Review Committee, the unit subcommittee members; for the university, the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Acknowledgements

The Academic Program Review Committee and subcommittee members would like to thank the Nursing faculty for their dedicated and sincere engagement in the program review process. The faculty have been flexible and have proven to be excellent colleagues throughout the process. The Department of Nursing has gone through a number of substantial changes over the past five years, the most significant of which was the closure of the pre-licensure program in 1993. This program closure led to the reduction of the number of faculty in the department as well as to the perceived threat of departmental closure. Working with the APRC subcommittee members, the Nursing faculty used the review process as an opportunity to address this perception and other points of tension, and also to highlight the strengths of the department: the department's contributions to community service and to DePaul's Vincentian mission, the success of its graduates, and its potential for growth and expansion. In subsequent conversations about the self-study, the dean made clear that there is no plan to eliminate the department, especially given rising enrollments and current economic conditions. The APRC subcommittee members offered recommendations about the future directions of the program, in agreement with the department and dean, as listed below.

Common Issues and University-level Commitments

During Cycle I, the unit program review self-studies raised several issues generally in common that have important university-wide implications. In subsequent conversations about these major issues, the units, the deans, the Academic Program Review Committee members, and the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs all have recognized the need for university-level coordination to support units in the following areas: a) advising activities; b) recruitment and marketing efforts; c) structures that facilitate cross-departmental and cross-college collaboration; d) improvement of the university-level data collection and reporting efforts on academic programs; e) assessment efforts and research on students; and f) efforts to maintain connections with alumni. To follow up on these common issues and determine the appropriate courses of action needed to address them at the university and unit level, the Academic Program Review Committee and the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs agree to do the following:

1. The Academic Program Review Committee agrees to prepare a summary report on Cycle I to the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs which discusses these and other issues that have important connections to other university-wide initiatives, especially to the Strategic Plan. That report will be made public, along with the Memoranda of Agreement.
2. The Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs agrees to direct the appropriate university-level offices to work with the units and their deans on how to effectively address these issues.
3. The Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs will require a progress report in June of 2000 from the appropriate offices that will be shared with the Academic Program Review Committee.
4. The Academic Program Review Committee will invite representatives from the appropriate offices to an Academic Program Review Committee meeting in the fall quarter of 1999-2000 academic year to follow-up on these issues and discuss possible courses of action.

In addition to these university-level commitments, the following are issues and actions agreed upon at the unit level.

**Issues and actions agreed upon**

**Department Plans for Program Expansion**

1. The department and dean agree that the department's earlier suggestion to create a Ph.D. program would not be the best use of resources, and the department has agreed to reconsider this idea. Instead, the department and the dean agree to consider adding a new certificate program and a master's degree program for entry into nursing practice to give the program a competitive edge over other Nursing programs in the Chicago-land area.

2. The department and the dean agree that although there will be risks associated with starting a new program (low enrollments, small class sizes), these are acceptable risks given the potential benefit of such a program to the department and to the College. The dean encourages the department to build on its strengths.

3. The department and the dean agree that the department has met the demands of its current expansion to the suburban campuses and will not look to build upon that expansion yet. The department wishes to develop the capacity to commit fully to any new programs so that the program quality is not compromised.

**Expansion of Faculty**

4. The department and dean agree that as a temporary arrangement, the department will recruit two regularized half-time positions rather than adding one new full-time tenure-track faculty.

5. The department chair and the dean agree that, as the department grows, they will continue to discuss the possibility of adding full-time tenure-track faculty.

**Resource Allocation**

6. In earlier discussions about the major issues raised during the self-study process, the dean agreed to increase the department's equipment budget in response to the faculty's concern that the current level of funding was constraining the department's ability to stay current with new developments in nursing education. The dean also agreed to allocate part-time clerical support in order to relieve some of the pressure on the department secretary.

7. The dean agrees to continue to be responsive to the department's budgetary concerns. The department chair and the dean agree to continue conversations about resource allocations on a regular basis.

**Issues and actions on which there is agreement to do further work and continue conversations**

1. The Nursing department and the dean acknowledge that there is a creative tension surrounding the program's flexibility: the department is entrepreneurial and extremely responsive to opportunities in the field, yet there is a need for a long-term strategy and stability. The department and the dean agree to continue to have ongoing discussions about how the department can best meet the demands of a rapidly-changing field.
2. The department and the dean recognize that the new cohort of thirty students who have entered the UC Hospital program can serve as an anchor, to set a record of success. By tracking these students, the department can make informed judgments about the curriculum and the direction of the program.

3. The department would like to explore possibilities of receiving assistance in efforts to market the existing and new programs and efforts to recruit new students. The issue of marketing support was raised in several other reviews and can be further discussed with other university offices.

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A hard copy of this document was signed by:

Chair of the Unit Review Committee/Department Chair: Susan Poslusny

APRC Subcommittee members: John Dean and Sue O'Curry

Dean of the College: Michael Mezey

Executive V.P. for Academic Affairs: Richard Meister

*The hard copy with signatures is on file in the Office of the Associate V.P. for Academic Affairs and is available upon request.