

University of Washington School of Nursing Graduate School Review 2005 Self Study

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Section G: Graduate Students

G.1. Recruitment and retention

G.1.a. Please describe recruitment/outreach programs to attract graduate students. Specifically address outreach to underrepresented groups. Describe the measures you use to assess the success of your efforts. How successful have they been?

Locally, the SoN partners with key leaders and professional organizations such as Washington State Black Professionals in Health Care, Mary Mahoney Professional Nurses Organization, and the Chicano/Latino Mentorship Network. Outreach is done every year at the SeaFair community festivals in partnership with GOMAP and the Collaborative Access Network on Diversity and Outreach (CAN-DO). Additionally, the SoN establishes a presence with campus-wide cross-cultural organizations and at their events in order to reach out to current UW undergraduates through partnerships with OMA, GOMAP, EOP, and UW undergraduate advising.

Nationally, the SoN actively recruits underrepresented students annually at national conferences for Latino, Native American, and African American nurses. In addition to the National and Western Name Exchange programs, prospective minority students are recruited from undergraduate nursing programs through collaborations with other nationally ranked Schools of Nursing through our leadership and involvement in the National Organization of Graduate Nurse Admissions Professionals. Diverse pre-applicants to the SoN's graduate degree programs are also offered individualized advising and mentorship from current students and faculty of color in an effort to enhance a personal connection between the applicants and the School. Please see Attachment 5 for the SoN 1999-2004 and 2004-2009 Five-Year Recruitment and Retention Plans.

The availability of funding through SoN programs such as the NIH-funded programs described in section C.2 allows the SoN to recruit the most talented scholars in a particular area of focus to graduate and postdoctoral study at the SoN. The funds have been particularly beneficial in the recruitment and retention of underrepresented minority students to the doctoral program.

Measures used to assess recruitment efforts include monitoring of faculty, student, and staff involvement, increased personalized follow-up and continued contact with prospective students, increase in applications and matriculations, and marked improved environment. Recruitment/Outreach efforts have been successful. Despite a slight decrease in overall graduate applicants, minority applications rose from 15% in

1999 to 18% in 2004, with the doctoral program, alone, yielding an increase of minority admits from 5% in 1999 to 25% in 2004.

G.1.b. What are your retention rates for master's and doctoral programs? To what do you attribute attrition? What steps are taken to minimize attrition?

From 1995-2005 the retention rate for the master's program was 90% while for the same period, the rate for the doctoral program was 93%. Factors contributing to attrition include transfer of spouses/partners to other states and jobs during a compromised economy, death, long-term illness, transfer to other schools/programs, financial difficulties in combination with the severity of a national nursing shortage which has resulted in guarantees of competitive salaries as well as bonuses to current RNs. In order to minimize attrition, the School aggressively pursues funding to offset the challenges students face with rising tuition costs and other financial responsibilities. Additionally, a personal mental health counselor is available to students as a free and confidential service. All students have access to a state of the art learning lab. Retention of diverse students is also sustained by direct efforts to address and normalize diversity, starting from the first moment the student is exposed to the School from diversity-focused workshops to experiences in the classroom where multiple courses that promote cultural competency are offered by faculty members who implement diverse pedagogic techniques, modes of communication, and mentoring styles in order to meet student needs.

G.2. Advising, Mentoring and Professional Development

G.2.a. In what ways do you communicate academic program expectations to students? Such information should include: timelines, phases and benchmarks of the degree program; procedures for committee formation; coursework, exam and presentation requirements; and standards of scholarly integrity.

From initial contact with admitted graduate students in the SoN and throughout their programs of study, academic program expectations are communicated via the SoN Web site. Students are told in an orientation letter and in-person at the SoN orientation that they are responsible for familiarizing themselves with SoN policies and procedures in their on-line student handbooks regarding timelines, phases and benchmarks of the degree program; procedures for committee formation; coursework, exam and presentation requirements; and standards of scholarly integrity. In addition to a section of information for all students (<http://www.son.washington.edu/students/all.asp>), program-specific information is given to students via program-specific sites: <http://www.son.washington.edu/students/masters.asp> for masters students, and <http://www.son.washington.edu/students/phd.asp> for doctoral students.

G.2.b. In what ways do you inform students of your unit's graduation and placement record? Such information should include time to degree; average completion rates (Master's and Ph.D.); and employment of graduates two and five years after degree completion.

The SoN informs students about graduation and placement records in both formal and informal ways. Information about time to degree is provided to students via the Web. Explicit curriculum grids for over 20 masters degree focal areas are provided to potential and current masters students at http://www.son.washington.edu/students/mnms_focalareas.asp. By this means, students can ascertain time to degree for full- or part-time students (on average 2-3 years). For PhD students, time to degree is also listed on the Web at <http://www.son.washington.edu/eo/phd.asp>. The PhD program may be completed in anywhere from three to ten years, with the average time to degree being 4.8 years. Information about completion rates and employment of graduates is provided upon request.

G.2.c. Please attach an example of your departmental mentoring/advising plan. Such information should include evidence that each students' work and progress are being evaluated on at least an annual basis and that the results of the evaluation are communicated to the student.

Each masters student is provided with a faculty academic advisor upon entry to the program. As they transition to thesis or scholarly project, they may maintain this advisor, or advisement may be transferred to the Chair of the Supervisory Committee. See http://www.son.washington.edu/students/mnms_advisement.asp for a detailed look at the roles of these advisors. In addition to academic advising and mentoring, each advisor evaluates the student quarterly and annually on their progress, as outlined at http://www.son.washington.edu/students/mnms_student_evaluation.asp. Students are notified in writing of the outcome of the annual review.

Doctoral students are provided with a faculty academic advisor as well as a student mentor upon entry to the program. As they transition to dissertation stage, the Chair of the Supervisory Committee takes on role of advising and mentoring PhD students, including approval of the students' programs of study. The roles of the advisor and of the Chair of the Supervisory Committee are clearly outlined for students at http://www.son.washington.edu/students/phd_advisement.asp. PhD students are evaluated annually and notified in writing of the outcome of the annual review by the PhD Coordinating Committee, as outlined at http://www.son.washington.edu/students/phd_evaluation.asp. In Autumn Quarter 2004, a new First Year Feedback Process was piloted and will be evaluated for needed adjustments.

G.2.d. Please attach a copy of your professional development plan. Such a plan should address questions such as: “What are the career opportunities for a master’s or Ph.D. graduate in your field?” “What skills/experiences contribute to success in the various academic and non academic career paths listed above?” Include information on conferences students are encouraged to attend and how they are prepared for the experience.

Because nursing is a professional and well as an academic endeavor, the SoN is obligated to incorporate professional as well as academic standards into our masters degree programs. SoN masters degree programs are focused on preparing graduates for advanced practice roles, many of them associated with certification and licensure. Thus, professional development plans are typically known and identified by students upon application to the program. The vast majority of masters students come to the UW SoN affiliated with at least one professional nursing organization, such as the American Association of Critical Care Nurses, the King County Nurses Association, the American Nurses Association, etc. They also know upon application what skills and experiences they need to succeed in that particular area of advanced practice. Masters students receive email as well as hard-copy postings of multitudes of nursing conferences around the region, country, and world. Many of them present their scholarly projects and theses at such conferences, and are encouraged and mentored to do so by their faculty advisors.

The PhD program is focused on research, and welcomes nurses as well as non-nurses in the program. Career opportunities for these graduates are research positions in industry and health care institutions as well as research and teaching positions in academia. Throughout the PhD program, students gain research skills and experiences that they practice, and upon which they continually build, laying the foundation for success in their career paths as researchers. The students’ individual professional development plans are devised in conjunction with faculty mentors, who incorporate these plans into formation of the students’ programs of study. Information about career opportunities is sent to students via email and posted in hard copy in carrel rooms and on SoN bulletin boards. PhD students also receive email as well as hard-copy postings of multitudes of professional conferences in which they may be interested. Many of them present their research at such conferences, and are encouraged and mentored to do so by their faculty advisors. Additionally, the SoN provides funding for attendance and presentations at research conferences for PhD students.

G.3. Inclusion in governance and decisions

G.3.a. In what ways do you include graduate students in the governance of your department?

Graduate students are actively involved in the governance of the SoN. MCC and PhDCC are comprised of graduate faculty members of the SoN who have expertise in the program's curriculum, including three departmental representatives plus the elected chair. The AD for AS (or a designee) is an *ex-officio* member of the committee. These committees also include student representatives. Student representatives have one collective vote regardless of the number of student representatives serving on the Committee. Students who are interested in serving on the Committee are encouraged to identify themselves to any faculty or student representative to the Committee. Additionally, student representatives are solicited at the beginning of each academic year. The Committees meet once a month and the usual term of service is two years. These student representatives also participate in the School's GC, which meets monthly as well.

G.3.b. Please describe your grievance process and characterize the nature of any grievances that have been lodged over the past 3 years. If the characterization is likely to reveal any students' identities, please address this issue in a separate but accompanying document addressed to the Dean of the Graduate School.

The SoN directs all graduate students to UW guidelines on student grievance procedures by directing them to <http://www.washington.edu/faculty/facsenate/handbook/03-04-01.html>. In addition to UW Academic Grievance Procedure outlined in Graduate School Memorandum No. 33 (Revised July, 1983) at <http://www.grad.washington.edu/Acad/gsmemos/gsmemo33.htm>, graduate nursing students follow UW SoN Academic Services Memorandum No. 24: Complaint or Grievance Procedure for Graduate Students in the SoN at http://www.son.washington.edu/students/all_policies_grievance_grad.asp. The SoN has not had any grievances lodged over the past three years.

G.4. For graduate student service appointees, please describe appointment process, average duration of appointment, mix of funding among the various appointments, criteria used for promotions and salary increases, ways graduate student service appointees are supervised, and training graduate student service appointees receive to prepare them for their specific role.

The SoN has a very small number of ASEs, most of whom are appointed to one-quarter or one-year positions. The SoN has a standard procedure for appointment process; criteria for promotions, salary increases, and evaluation/supervision; and training of ASEs. This procedure is outlined in detail at http://www.son.washington.edu/faculty/support/logistics_ta.asp.

Funding for the various graduate student appointments in the SoN comes from a variety of sources, including Federal grants, fellowships, and traineeships; state funding to support, for example, program evaluation and teaching; and graduate school funds.