

April 17, 2006

To: Faculty Council

From: Pat Carter, School of Nursing

Re: School of Nursing Faculty Forum on Curricular Reform

The School of Nursing Faculty Forum on Curricular Reform met on Wednesday March 1st from 3-4:30pm in Nur 1.108.

There were 40 School of Nursing faculty and 4 staff in attendance. There was representation from the undergraduate and graduate, tenured, tenure track, and clinical tracks. Four representatives from the curriculum task force were also present.

Attendees were informed that the meeting was to be recorded for the purposes of compiling this report. Prior to the meeting each faculty member was provided with a copy of the Task Force report, the guide for discussion distributed by the Faculty Council, and the Faculty Council e-mail for direct comments. Faculty members were encouraged to send comments directly to the Faculty Council if they were unable to attend the Forum meeting or if they had additional thoughts following the meeting.

The forum began with a brief overview of the Task Force purpose, given by Evan Carton. Discussion of the elements of the Task Force report proceeded following the outline provided by the Faculty Council.

The first set of questions/comments pertained to the signature courses. Questions raised were: "how are FIGS and Plan II different from signature courses?", "How will the signature courses accomplish their goals with such large classes?", "What is the reality of being able to find, train, and retain such a large cadre of qualified TAs?"

The next issue addressed was the integrated core. There was general support for the concept of strands; however, the practical application of strands on as large a scale as the University was a concern. Regarding Flag courses, several faculty asked "how would the science & technology course be different from existing courses?". Additionally, there were concerns that the Flags or Strands would require some component of faculty development in order to be successful. One faculty member stated, "if these [science & technology] courses are to be future think courses, we need to make sure the faculty are up to speed on the technology as well. Will there be opportunities for faculty members to take these courses?" There was overwhelming support for increasing the writing component elements.

Deferring the declaration of a major until the second year had mixed comments. Some faculty agreed that some students were not mature enough to make such a decision directly out of high school; however, others stated that deferring the major would lead to more confusion, not less. A majority of the faculty were concerned with the advising

students would receive if they were not “nursing” majors. This issue was of great concern given the strict adherence to the pre-requisite courses that is necessary in order to make application to the professional sequence courses in a timely manner. There are some courses that are only offered once per academic year and if students are not advised to take those courses at a particular time, it could result in a delay of making application to the professional sequence for up to 1 year.

Other faculty questions regarding deferring declaring a major included: “how is this process different from being undeclared? , “how will the stigma of being undeclared be addressed?” There is also the issue of Coordinating Board funding for the School of Nursing being tied to the number of nursing students. If declaring a major were deferred, numbers of nursing students would drop, decreasing funding available to the school.

Regarding advising, there were several questions raised: “how will we be assured that our “nursing” students will receive the appropriate advice regarding course sequencing?” “How will moving the advising to the University College decrease confusion for students?” “Advising is a very complex process for one major, how can University College advisors be expected to “know” all the possible routes for all the majors?”

The recommendation to establish of a University College was received with mixed reviews. Some faculty expressed that the funds could be better used to further the development of the existing programs. While other faculty expressed an understanding of the “need for a new entity” in order to obtain external funding support.

Additional concerns expressed by the group were the drain on the faculty required to support signature and flag courses. At the School of Nursing adding faculty lines will not solve the problem of the lack of qualified individuals to fill those lines.