


COLLEGE OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

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**MEMORANDUM**  
January 16, 2001

TO: Tom Gale, Interim Provost  
FROM: Jeffrey Brandon, Dean   
RE: Outcome Assessments

Attached are the copies of the outcome assessments from the departments of the College of Health and Social Services.

If there are any questions please do not hesitate to contact me at 646-4693.

**Outcomes Assessment Plan and Report  
Department of Health Science  
New Mexico State University**

**Academic Year 1999-2000  
(Fall 1999, Spring 2000, Summer 2000)**

**Prepared by:  
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Assistant Professor  
Department of Health Science  
Prepared December 1, 2000**

## Introduction

The current outcomes assessment plan and report provides the following information:

1. Outcomes Assessment Plan
2. Methods of assessment used
3. The performance measures or criteria used to determine student learning
4. Results and anticipated use of the results of the outcome assessment activities
5. Dissemination of results

The report will discuss the department's undergraduate program first and then the graduate program offered by the department and will cover the five points listed above. The outcomes assessment plan, methods of assessment used, and the direct performance measures/criteria used to determine student learning (1, 2, 3) are compiled and presented together in a tabular form first for the undergraduate program and then for the graduate program.



	<p><b>Performance Measures Used:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No. of students enrolled in HLS 499 in the academic year 1999-1000</li> <li>• Grades received: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No. of A's</li> <li>No. of B's</li> <li>No. of C's</li> </ul> </li> <li>• External reviews: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Excellent</li> <li>Very Good</li> <li>Good</li> <li>Fair</li> <li>Needs improvement</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>D. Pass rate on the professional certification Examination for "Certified Health Education Specialist (CHES)."</p>	<p>Undergraduate students are encouraged to take the national professional certification examination ('Certified Health Education Specialist'-CHES) either in the last two semesters before they graduate or immediately after graduation. Copies of the examination results are directly sent to the department biannually.</p> <p><b>Performance Measures Used:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No. of students who took the CHES exam for (Academic Year 1999-2000)</li> <li>• No. of students who passed the exam</li> <li>• Pass rate</li> </ul>

#### 4a. Results of Outcomes Assessment Activities

The following section describes the results related to the direct measures used to assess student learning outcomes in the undergraduate program:

##### **A. Percentile scores on the English writing assessment test/exam offered in HLS 100:**

One of the important undergraduate students' learning measures is the percentile scores in the department's English writing test/exam. Students are required to score 37 percentile or greater to be successful. During the Fall 1999, Spring 2000, and Summer 2000, a total of 23 students took the writing test/exam with the following results.

<i>Number of students who were enrolled in HLS 100 during Fall 1999, Spring 2000, Summer 2000:</i>	<u>23+ 39=62</u>
<i>Number of students who took the test/exam:</i>	<u>23</u>
<i>Number of students who scored a passing grade of 37 percentile or greater:</i>	<u>21</u>

##### **PASS RATE:**

##### **B. Field experience evaluations by agency preceptors:**

Each undergraduate student enrolls in a 6-credit hour field experience course and completes 320 clock hours of internship to gain practical/hands-on experience in the fields of public health and community health education. The following results were recorded on the direct students' learning measures.

<i>Number of students enrolled in the field experience course during Fall 1999, Spring 2000, and Summer 2000:</i>	<u>35</u>
<i>Number of students who received an adequate/positive evaluation from their field experience preceptors:</i>	<u>35</u>
<i>Number who received an overall course grade of "C" or better:</i>	<u>32*</u>
<i>Number of students who presented their work as an oral presentation:</i>	<u>32*</u>
<i>Number of students who have submitted their portfolios:</i>	<u>30*</u>

\* Lower numbers represent the fact that a few students continued with their field experience beyond one semester and are currently in the process of submitting their portfolios and making their oral presentation in Fall 2000.

All of the students (**100%**) enrolled in the field experience course received adequate/positive evaluations from their field experience preceptors. A total of **91%** received an overall course grade of "C" or greater at the completion of their field experience. Similarly, a high percentage of the students presented their work (**91%**) and submitted their portfolios to the department (**86%**). The

field experience course is an essential component of the undergraduate program and reflects students' abilities to apply classroom knowledge and learning to practice settings and community based public health and health education projects and interventions.

**C. Student's overall course grades and evaluations from external reviewers in HLS 499:**

HLS 499, the departmental undergraduate Capstone course requires students to receive an overall course grade of "C" or better and receive a "Good-Excellent" evaluation from external reviewers on their class assignments/projects. This course is designed to be a comprehensive overview and integration of the content covered in the undergraduate program and its application to three community-wide public health and community health education projects. The following results were obtained for this student-learning measure.

<i>Number of students who enrolled in HLS 499 during Fall 1999, Spring 2000, Summer 2000:</i>	<u>27</u>
<i>Overall student grades:</i>	
<i>Number of A's:</i>	<u>1</u>
<i>Number of B's:</i>	<u>18</u>
<i>Number of C's:</i>	<u>6</u>
<i>External Reviews:</i>	
<i>Excellent:</i>	<u>5</u>
<i>Very Good:</i>	<u>13</u>
<i>Good</i>	<u>7</u>

Overall, 93% of the students received a "C" or better grade in the course, a majority (72%) of the students received a "B" grade. With regards to the external evaluations, 20% received an excellent evaluation, 52% received a very good evaluation, and 28% received a good evaluation.

**D. Pass rate on the professional certification examination for the "Certified Health Education Specialist (CHES):"**

Undergraduate students in the department are encouraged to take the certification exam during the final two semesters of their study. Practitioners in the community indicate the relevance and utility of this certification exam. Potential employers indicate that the certification provides a standard to evaluate job applicants. The undergraduate program curriculum covers the content included in the CHES certification examination. Additionally, the department offers a 1-credit CHES preparation course. The following results were obtained for this student-learning measure.

<i>Number of students who took the certification exam:</i>	<u>6</u>
<i>Number of students who passed the exam:</i>	<u>5</u>
<b><u>PASS RATE:</u></b>	<b><u>83%</u></b>

Overall, 20-30% of the undergraduate students tend to take the certification exam before they graduate from the BCH program. Busy schedules, work and school issues, and cost of the exam have served as barriers to students taking the exam in the final semester or two of their study. However, students indicate their intention to take the exam after they graduate and become

employed. However based on those who do take the exam while they were in school, the pass rate has been very high (83%).

#### 4b. Anticipated Use of Results

The results from the outcomes assessments related to direct student learning measures will help guide the undergraduate program coordinator and other faculty in making decisions and changes in course content, course offerings and schedule, inclusion of field experience sites, and in offering special courses such as the CHES preparatory course. One of the areas for improvement is to find ways to reduce the perceived barriers to help students successfully complete the CHES exam while enrolled in the program. The results have and will continue to influence the department's hiring of new tenure-track and/or full time faculty and/or adjunct faculty. The results of past assessment's reports have been crucial in the successful re-accreditation of the Bachelor of Community Health program for five more years, 2000-2005.

The outcomes assessment from the previous academic year lead to the following changes in the undergraduate program that have direct impact on undergraduate student learning:

- Course offerings (in particular core course) are scheduled on a regular cycle
- HLS 485, the CHES preparatory course is now being offered
- New tenure track faculty have been hired
- A new field experience brochure has been developed detailing the key aspects for students and field experience preceptors. Additionally the number and types of sites have been expanded
- The BCH oversight committee with current student, alumni, and community representation has been instituted to serve in an advisory capacity to the undergraduate program coordinator
- Availability of application forms on the departmental web-site

#### 5. Dissemination of Results

The results of the assessment of direct student learning measures will be disseminated in the following ways:

1. Distribution of the written report to all full time faculty.
2. Sharing of a summary of the findings and results with all faculty (full time, part time, and adjunct).
3. Submission of the written report to the College Dean and to the Vice President, Dr. Juan Franco and Executive Vice President, Dr. John Owens.
4. Make available the current and previous outcomes assessment reports to all department personnel by having copies available in the departmental library.



<p>D. Final thesis or non-thesis option</p>	<p>department biannually.</p> <p><b>Performance Measures Used:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No. of students who took the CHES exam for (Academic Year 1999-2000)</li> <li>• No. of students who passed the exam</li> <li>• Pass Rate</li> </ul> <p>Departmental graduate students have the option of completing comprehensive exams (written and oral, non-thesis option) or a research-based theses and its defense (thesis option). Both culminating events are open to all students and faculty. Each exam/student thesis committee is chaired by a departmental faculty (of students' choice), a departmental faculty member, and a dean's representative (from another department).</p> <p><b>Performance Measures Used:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No. of students who graduated in the Academic Year 1999-2000</li> <li>• No. of students who selected the comprehensive exam option</li> <li>• No. of students who were successful in the comprehensive exam option</li> <li>• No. of students who selected the thesis option</li> <li>• No. of students who successfully defended their thesis</li> </ul>
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#### 4a. Results of Outcomes Assessment Activities

The following section documents the results obtained from the direct measures used to assess graduate students' learning in the MPH program.

##### **A. A grade of "B" or better in MPH core courses:**

The graduate (MPH) students are required to take 11 courses that are considered core courses in the program. Student learning was assessed by documenting the number of students who received a "B" or better in each of these courses. This data is compiled in the table below:

Course No.	No. of students enrolled	"B" or better grade
MPH 500	13	11 (85%)
MPH 510	11	8 (73%)
MPH 520	11	6 (55%)
MPH 530	15	12 (80%)
MPH 540	6	6 (100%)
MPH 550	7	6 (86%)
MPH 570	5	5 (100%)
MPH 572	5	5 (100%)
MPH 573	3	3 (100%)
MPH 574	3	3 (100%)
MPH 579	6	6 (100%)

As the table above indicates, a majority of the students had received a "B" or better grade in the core courses. The one exception to this rule is that a student may receive a "C" grade in a course but has to maintain an overall GPA of 3.0 in the program. Thus far all MPH students have met this requirement.

##### **B. Field experience evaluations by agency preceptors:**

An essential ingredient of student learning is their ability to apply and integrate classroom and theoretical knowledge to practice. The field experience course provides this unique opportunity and is a required course in the MPH program. The program has been flexible to allow for students to serve as interns in either local or state/national agencies that meets their interests and needs.

Each graduate student enrolls in a 3-credit hour field experience course and completes 160 clock hours of internship to gain practical/hands-on experience in the fields of public health and community health education. The following results were recorded on the direct students' learning measures.

*Number of students enrolled in the field experience course during  
Fall 1999, Spring 2000, and Summer 2000:* 3

*Number of students who received an adequate/positive evaluation  
from their field experience preceptors:* 3

*Number who received an overall course grade of "B" or better:* 3

*Number of students who presented their work as an oral presentation:* 3

*Number of students who have submitted their portfolios:* 3

The field experience course is an essential component of the graduate program and as indicated previously reflects students' abilities to apply classroom knowledge and learning to practice settings and community based public health and health education projects and interventions.

***D. Pass rate in professional certification examination "CHES:"***

Like the undergraduate students, departmental graduate students are encouraged to take the certification exam during the final two semesters of their study. Practitioners in the community indicate the relevance and utility of this certification exam. Potential employers indicate that the certification provides a standard to evaluate job applicants. The graduate program curriculum covers the content included in the CHES certification examination. Additionally, the department offers a 1-credit CHES preparation course. The following results were obtained for this student-learning measure. The results below reflect the combined numbers for the graduate and undergraduate program.

<i>Number of students who took the certification exam:</i>	<u>6</u>
<i>Number of students who passed the exam:</i>	<u>5</u>
<b><u>PASS RATE:</u></b>	<b><u>83%</u></b>

Overall, 10-20% of the graduate students tend to take the certification exam before they graduate from the MPH program. More students who intend to stay in this geographic area appear to take the certification exam. Busy schedules, work and school issues, and cost of the exam have served as barriers to students taking the exam in the final semester or two of their study. However, students indicate their intention to take the exam after they graduate and become employed. However based on those who do take the exam while they were in school, the pass rate has been very high (83%).

***C. Thesis or Non-thesis option:***

MPH graduate students have the option of selecting one of the two options available for their culminating event. The events are open to all students and faculty and are designed to evaluate students' overall knowledge, understanding, and skills in core public health topic areas as well as their special area of interest. The following results were compiled for the 1999-2000 academic year (Fall 2000, Spring 2000, and Summer 2000).

*No. of students who graduated in the academic year 1999-2000:* 8

*No. of students who selected the non-thesis option:* 5 (63%)

*No. of students who were successful:* 5 (100%)

*No. of students who selected the thesis option:* 3 (37%)

*No. of students who were successful:* 3 (100%)

*Number who received an overall course grade of "B" or better:* 3

*Number of students who presented their work as an oral presentation:* 3

*Number of students who have submitted their portfolios:* 3

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*No. of students who selected the thesis option:* 3 (37%)  
*No. of students who were successful:* 3 (100%)

A larger number of students selected the non-thesis option. However an increasing number are beginning to select the thesis option because of personal interest in pursuing graduate school. The recent accreditation of the MPH program and efforts to hire a research/biostatistician appear to play a role in changing the above trend.

The outcomes assessment from the previous academic year lead to the following changes in the graduate program that have direct impact on undergraduate student learning:

- Course offerings (in particular core course) are scheduled on a regular cycle
- New tenure track faculty have been hired as well as a visiting faculty to teach research and statistics courses
- The MPH oversight committee with current student, alumni, and community representation has been instituted to serve in an advisory capacity to the undergraduate program coordinator
- Establishment of the graduate student organization (MPHSO)
- Expansion of field experience sites located out-of-state
- Development of a better tracking data system on current and prospective MPH students
- Availability of all application forms on the department web-site
- The project option has been phased out with students having a choice between thesis /non-thesis option

#### 4b. Anticipated Use of Results

The results from these outcomes assessment efforts will guide the graduate program coordinator and other departmental faculty in making useful and effective decisions and changes in:

- a) Course content
- b) Course offerings and schedule
- c) Field Experience sites
- d) Hiring of faculty (full time and adjunct)

In fact, these activities helped the department make a successful and rational case for new faculty lines and/or fill existing vacant lines, and successfully apply and receive accreditation for its MPH program and plan for a new minor (in Border Health) to begin soon.

#### 4c. Dissemination of Results

The results of the outcomes assessment activities will be disseminated in the following ways:

1. Written report will be distributed to all full time faculty.
2. A summary of the findings and results will be shared with all faculty (full/part time and adjunct).

3. Report will be submitted to the College Dean and to Vice President, Dr. Juan Franco and Executive Vice President, Dr. John Owens.

**Department of Nursing**  
**Assessment of Student Outcomes 1999-2000**

The Department of Nursing Evaluation Plan includes input, process and outcome evaluations that occur on an on-going basis. Systematic assessment of undergraduate and graduate students' academic achievement are part of the overall plan. The Department's complete Evaluation Plan is available for review, however, this report addresses only student learning outcomes.

**1. A current copy of the nursing department's outcomes assessment plan.**

- See the attached *OUTCOME* portion of the overall evaluation plan. (In addition to the section that addresses Assessment of Student learning, the other sections address Faculty & Administration, Community/University Resources, and Curricula as part of the Input, Process, and Outcome Evaluation activities of the overall plan.)

**2. Outline of the nursing department's assessment activities in 1999-2000 within the context of the outcomes assessment plan.**

- Faculty in the department have identified key assignments and learning activities as measures of student learning in the essential areas of **critical thinking, communication, and therapeutic nursing intervention**. Each semester the designated graded activities are collected in each student's individual portfolio. The portfolio is used by the student as part of her/his on-going process evaluation and, by faculty, as part of the outcomes evaluation of the departments' learning programs. This is a Direct Measure.
- Students also use the portfolios for a final self-assessment of their development and learning in the core areas of critical thinking, communication, and therapeutic nursing intervention. This is a Direct Measure.
- Post-graduation, the Department's two Program Coordinators audit graduates' portfolios to assess student achievement in the areas of critical thinking, communication, and therapeutic nursing intervention. This is a Direct Measure.
- At the end of the degree program, the Department Chair holds a group exit interview with all students in the graduating class. Students are encouraged to review and address their academic experiences in terms of what helped and what hindered learning, what were strengths and weaknesses of their educational experiences, to what extent assignments

were linked to learning outcomes, and their overall satisfaction with the nursing program at NMSU. Students are asked to make concrete suggestions and are given examples of how recommendations from previous semesters have been implemented. This is an Indirect Measure.

- The department maintains a comprehensive data base for student and graduate demographics and monitors the variables of GPA, graduation rate & attrition, number of students who graduate with honors, and performance on standardized tests that document learning and are predictive of success on what students see as their singular most important learning outcome, passing the Registered Nurse licensing exam known as the NCLEX. Such standardized tests are Direct Measures.
  - The department sends an alumni survey to all BSN and MSN graduates at six, eighteen, and thirty-six months after graduation as a way to monitor the impact of our programs' learning experiences and our graduates' professional and academic advances. Our survey plan monitors attainment of professional credentials including:
    - State nursing licensure required to legally practice as a Registered Nurse, a Direct Measure.
    - National certifications (board certifications) graduates may obtain, a Direct Measure.
    - Patterns of employment, a Direct Measure.
    - Professional development, an Indirect Measure.
    - Satisfaction with their nursing education and learning, an Indirect Measure.
    - Scholarship, such as entering graduate programs or publishing research, a Direct Measure.
    - Service activities, an Indirect Measure.
- 3. A description of lessons learned from the assessment activities.**
- Portfolio review and year-end audits indicate that both undergraduate and graduate students achieve an appropriate level of competence in the areas of critical thinking, communication, and therapeutic nursing interventions. However, the following areas of concern related to student learning outcomes have emerged:
    1. Undergraduate students continue to overestimate abilities in the area of critical thinking.

We have tried to correct this with more emphasis on how critical thinking is

demonstrated in the practice actions of the nurse. Research-Based Skills Manuals were adopted two years ago as a way to give more attention to the process of critical thinking, but this change has not been as effective with entering classes it was intended to influence. We will continue to use the Research-Based Skills Manuals and continue to have students assigned to review and update the manuals. We are also looking at adopting small group case study projects in a format similar to medicine's PBL (Problem Based Learning) method. Note that measuring the outcome of "Critical Thinking" goes well beyond our need to meet University Outcomes Assessment goals. Because our nursing program reflects the values of our major national nursing associations and our accreditors we must continue to look for ways to help students gain competence in critical thinking.

2. Student learning activities in electronic communication are not well-documented in student portfolios. We agreed at least two semesters ago that each course would require an electronic communication assignment, but there is little evidence in the portfolios of actions in the past year. Faculty are aware that the assignment may come from a WebCT course, on-line chat groups or Internet search assignments, among other methods. This is also important to our overall outcome plan and to nursing accrediting agencies because Communication, in the very broadest sense, is a desired outcome of our programs. We capture documentation of student achievement in written Communication, in Therapeutic Communication with anxious patients and families, and in Professional Communication with other health professionals, but we are not adequately documenting Communication via electronic methods.  
It is apparent that faculty must review the requirement and, if still in agreement about using an electronic communication assignment in each course, then implement the requirement.
- Exit interviews with graduating classes continues to be an important source of ideas for program review and revision of learning outcomes.
    1. Students this year again repeatedly stated that their positive evaluation of the importance of the "capstone" preceptorship and its positive impact on their learning This is the final semester experience for the undergraduate nursing program. Students

work the same schedule as their preceptor, which often entails 12 hour shifts or working the night shift. Students are required by their patients' conditions to link theoretical knowledge to their patients' constantly changing conditions. Critical thinking and rapid prioritizing are demanded. Communication skills, all prior nursing and pre-nursing courses, and the concurrent nursing management courses are used to give appropriate and therapeutic care to ill persons. Students consistently report that the preceptorship experience definitely meets course outcomes. The preceptor experience is a Direct Measure of learning, observable by faculty instructors and by agency preceptors. In response to student comments at the last two senior class exit interviews, the faculty is looking at trying to add a few more days to the preceptor course. (Only a year ago we added a week to the course at student urging.)

2. At this year's exit interviews students in both graduating classes stated that when charting they sometimes did not feel comfortable making entries into patient records. (There are widely variable ways by which health agencies document a patient's diagnosis, plan-of-care, treatments and outcomes.) This was a concern raised last year. In response, we invited a nurse-attorney to an all-department, all-student workshop January, 2000. Because the issue was raised again this year, we again invited the nurse-attorney to address more issues related to patient records charting. The attorney agreed, but was forced by a last minute trial to delay this year's presentation.  
We will continue to work with this attorney; her nursing license gives her immediate credibility with our students.
3. Another way we have tried to address charting issues, as well as establish consistent practice in using basic clinical skills, is through a "Skills Checklist" to be used by each student each semester. Students and some faculty, however, have argued the checklist is more trouble than it is worth. A majority of graduating seniors said the same thing at the past two exit interviews.  
Faculty have agreed that, starting January, 2001, using the Skills Checklist will be at each instructor's option.

4. The department has conducted a RN Completion program aimed at licensed Registered Nurses with the Associate Degree in Nursing for many years. The advent of basic degree program (generic BSN) naturally affected the RN Completion program. Each semester we accept between five and ten applicants to the completion program and they share division nursing courses with basic degree students. The RN Completion students usually feel isolated and have complained that it takes two or more years to finish the BSN degree, often because of work schedule conflicts. In the past, RN Completion students have been slotted into existing basic BSN degree classes that are, of course, dominated by the learning needs of the basic students. In addition, because the RN-to-BSN students are usually employed full-time as Registered Nurses and often have many years of clinical practice experience, their learning needs and interests are markedly different from those of the basic degree students and are actually similar to those of graduate students. Recently, in response to questions from the Legislative Finance Committee (summer, 2000) about the growing nursing shortage, we have looked at other RN-to-BSN programs in the nation and agreed to adopt a "One Year/One Day" model. If successful, this program will allow RN's to complete the BSN degree in one academic year by attending classes one full day each week, thereby minimizing work schedule conflicts. (The program assumes all general education classes and other university-required courses are completed.) Participating RN's will enter as a group each Spring semester and complete their remaining nursing courses mostly separate from basic degree students.

This program strategy was proposed Fall 2000 and approved by Dean J. Brandon for implementation Spring 2001.

5. We are responding to student recommendations to increase by one credit the BSN course, Pathophysiology.
- The department maintains a comprehensive data base for student and graduate demographics and monitors the relationships of a number of key variables including:
    - Attrition rates: In the undergraduate program the attrition rate was 28%. This is higher than the previous two years (10% for 1998-1999; 20% for 1997-1998), although there are no consistent reasons to explain why attrition increased. We graduated 48 basic degree students 1999-2000.

Attrition remains low in the graduate program and student academic achievement remains high. (NOTE: We continue to have students enrolled in selected graduate courses who are not in the nursing graduate program. This is because New Mexico's nurse practice act now gives advanced practice nurses who hold Master's degrees the right to secure prescriptive authority. For this reason, we have post-Master's graduate students returning to campus in order to add the three or four courses and practicum hours required to apply for prescriptive authority in New Mexico. We have created a post-Master's certificate program to track these students.)

- Of the 12 students who entered the graduate program in 1997, six graduated in 1999-2000, one was still taking classes, four had left the program, and three were inactive.
- All of the six graduates met graduation requirements and passed their comprehensive examinations by unanimous vote of their committees.

■ A very important outcomes measure for graduating basic BSN students is their passing rate on the Registered Nurse licensure examination, the NCLEX-RN. The pass rate for first time takers (Spring '99 and Fall '99 NMSU nursing graduates) was 87.5%, close to the 91% pass rate of the previous OA report. This score is well above national averages. We use standardized national tests for students and this is an effective method for predicting NCLEX-RN board success. (Starting Fall 2000, we have changed vendors and now have a standardized, shorter, less expensive exam (students pay), that has a faster turnaround and more useful analysis of results. Results of such exams help each student identify weak areas of learning, if any, before graduates try to sit for the state board of examination. The relatively low cost of the most recent standardized test is such that next-to-last semester students want to take the test as well. The standardized exam tests critical thinking skills and is taken entirely on computer, which follows the model of the RN licensing exam. The license exam model consists of patient case studies and uses **computer adaptive testing**. Test direction turns, depending on how the student responded to the previous question (i.e., there can be several "correct"

ways to treat a condition). Depending on the student's abilities, the test can be very short or very long. We believe using the standardized test will especially help students identify areas to review before taking their nursing boards.

- Alumni surveys are sent to all graduates at six, eighteen, and thirty-six months as an indicator of the extent to which graduates are meeting program goals.

#### **Undergraduate Program Goals**

- To offer formal and informal educational opportunities for students which prepare them at the baccalaureate level for entry into professional nursing practice.
- To offer formal and informal education opportunities for Registered Nurses which prepare them at the baccalaureate level to enter professional nursing practice.
- To provide a foundation for individuals to pursue graduate nursing education.

#### **Undergraduate Learning Outcomes**

- Graduates of the four-year BSN program will be able to function as entry-level nurses in a variety of health care settings.
- Graduates of the BSN completion (RN-to-BSN) program will be able to function as professional nurses in a variety of health care settings.
- Individuals applying to graduate school will have received the necessary educational foundation in nursing to meet admission requirements for graduate-level work.

#### **Undergraduate Assessment Standards**

Goal: Eighty percent (80%) of the four-year BSN graduates will pass the state licensure examination, the National Council Licensure Examination-Registered Nurse (NCLEX-RN), on the initial attempt.

*The 1999-2000 first-time pass rate was 87.5%. **Goal met.***

Goal: Seventy-five percent (75%) of respondents to an alumni survey distributed six months following graduation will state that they are practicing as professional nurses in a variety of health care settings.

*For the six-month questionnaire sent on 12/99, thirty BSN graduates responded. Twenty-seven (90%) indicated that they were working full-time and two (6.6%) were working part-time in nursing in hospital or community settings. One responded she/he was not working by choice. Ninety-six percent (96%) of the BSN graduates (N = 23) responding to the 18 month*

*survey indicated that they were working full-time in nursing and one was working part-time. There were 21 BSN respondents 36-month survey. Sixteen (76%) indicated they were working full-time in nursing, two (10%) were working part-time, and two were not working by choice.*

**Goal met.**

Goal: Twenty-five percent (25%) of respondents to an alumni survey distributed 18 months following graduation will state that they have applied and been admitted to a graduate program of their selection.

*Two of the 23 respondents at 18 months (9%) were currently enrolled in graduate school.*

**Goal not met.**

This is a lower percentage than our stated goal and follows a previous failure to reach our goal. We continue with the strategy to increase student awareness of graduate education after earning their undergraduate degree. We encourage students to attend any graduate program and we urge those staying in the area to especially consider NMSU as their graduate program. We have also acquired Graduate Nurse Education Traineeships for graduate students who can attend full-time (most attend part-time) and especially for graduate students near the completion of their program. We are aware that most new BSN graduates have heard the "rule" to not enter graduate school until after honing skills at least two or three years in the trenches in order to rapidly and accurately prioritize and treat patient's problems. Some nursing graduate programs indeed restrict early entry to graduate nursing education in this manner. However many, including NMSU, do not use this rule. We will emphasize this when we talk to undergraduate students about graduate school. (We DO talk about graduate school to all students throughout the BSN program.) We note that most new BSN nursing graduates can earn more in their first year of nursing practice than their nursing professors. Some may see little incentive to return for a graduate degree except in higher paying nurse practitioner roles.

Goal: Of those who matriculated in a nursing graduate program, twenty-five percent (25%) of the respondents to an alumni survey distributed three years following graduate program matriculation will state that they completed the course for graduate study.

*Twenty-one BSN graduates responded to the 36-month survey. Of that number, none (0%) indicated that they had completed or were enrolled in graduate studies.*

*(Last year, 46% of thirteen respondents indicated they had completed or were enrolled in*

graduate studies.) **Goal not met.**

### **Graduate Program Goals**

- To offer formal and inform educational opportunities for nurses which enable them to build upon their formal undergraduate education in order to function in advanced practice roles.
- To provide a foundation for individuals to pursue doctoral education.

### **Graduate Learning Outcomes**

- Graduates will be able to function in advanced practice roles.
- Individuals applying to doctoral programs will have received the necessary educational foundation to meet admission requirements for doctoral-level work.

### **Graduate Assessment Standards**

Goal: Seventy-five percent (75%) of graduates responding to an alumni survey distributed 18 months following graduation will state that they are employed in advanced practice roles.

*Of the four MSN graduates responding to the 18-month survey, three were practicing full-time as advanced practice nurses. All three hold clinical specialty certification status, which includes meeting state and national certification standards. The fourth respondent works as a hospital staff nurse in an under-served area of New Mexico. **Goal met.***

Goal: Fifty percent (50%) of the clinical specialty graduates responding to an alumni survey distributed three years following graduation will state they hold clinical specialty certification.

*Six MSN graduates responded to the 3-year survey. Three (50%) indicated that had successfully completed national certification requirements. **Goal met***

Goal: Fifteen percent (15%) of respondents to an alumni survey distributed three years following graduation will state that they have applied and been admitted to a doctoral program.

*Of the three MSN graduates responding to the 3-year survey, one indicated enrollment in a doctoral program. **Goal met.***

4. **A description of anticipated changes the nursing department's outcomes assessment activities as a result last year's assessment experience.**

The outcomes assessment process in the nursing department works by helping us identify potential areas for review and possible change. Our portfolio process has become more standardized in the last two years as we have reduced the number of required portfolio documents per course. Other potential changes in curricula and program have been described above.

At the Undergraduate Program level, current revisioning of the RN-to-BSN program is underway as a direct response to student learning needs. We are working on a simplified progression plan for RN-completion students that recognizes that practicing RN's who seek the BSN degree are sufficiently distinct from basic degree students and are more like graduate students in experience and motivation. Indeed, returning RN's seeking the BSN degree are more likely to attend graduate school after finishing the BSN since they have already proven that they are self-motivated learners.

At the Graduate Program level, last year's designation as "Level Two" in the Outcomes Assessments Report (after receiving "Level Three" the previous year) has resulted in a proposal to ask specific competency questions of the graduate student during her/his Departmental Oral Examination. For example, "How would you research the thesis of your comprehensive paper to validate your thesis?" and, "Compare and contrast your previous nursing practice roles and skills with the advanced practice nursing roles now open to you." There are several such questions and each graduating Master's candidate will need to reply to questions selected by faculty in terms of specific criteria identified as necessary to successfully address each question. We believe this is a Direct Measure of student learning. We will pilot this new outcomes measure with the Spring 2001 class.

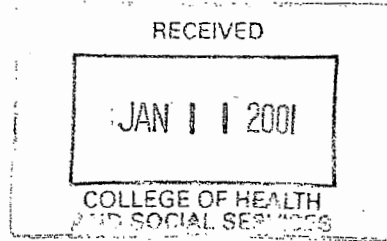
**5. A description of how results of outcomes assessment is communicated to all faculty the nursing department.**

The Department of Nursing Comprehensive Evaluation Plan was designed and implemented by the Evaluation Committee. Ongoing responsibility for monitoring the outcomes of the evaluation plan are delegated as appropriate to the Department Head, and Undergraduate and Graduate Program Committees. The plan itself specifies each assessment activity, who is responsible for implementing it, and when. The designated person is responsible for providing the feedback in a timely fashion to faculty. Each Fall the Department Head prepares the Annual Report which is distributed to faculty for discussion. Comprehensive

curricula reviews take place at the Annual Curriculum Review Workshop held every May. Information from the evaluation process and the student learning outcomes have a direct impact on program planning.

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

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## MEMORANDUM

TO: Jeffrey E. Brandon, Dean  
College of Health & Social Services

FROM: Barbara Chandler, <sup>BC</sup> Acting Department Head  
Department of Social Work

DATE: January 8, 2001

RE: Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes for the 1999-2000 Academic Year

Attached is a copy of the Department's outcome assessment plan and two annual progress reports, one for the undergraduate program and one for the graduate program.

The annual reports address the five points outlined in the memorandum of October 5, 2000.

If there are questions or the need for additional information, please contact me at your convenience.

**ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

**FOR THE  
BACHELOR OF SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM**

**SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK**

**COLLEGE OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES**

January 8, 2001

## INTRODUCTION

The School of Social Work continues to develop, implement and assess outcome measures linked to the overall goals of the BSW and MSW Programs. The School is committed to the long term benefits derived from a variety of outcome measures to meet its responsibility to provide a quality educational experience for every student. Students and community members participate in this ongoing outcome assessment process by eliciting input at a variety of levels from student exit surveys to surveys of alumni and employers. The outcome assessments for both BSW and MSW Programs are reviewed by the Faculty Affairs Committee, with the Program Coordinators having responsibility for insuring the implementation of the various outcome measures. The School continues to explore various measurement tools and to assess the feasibility of continuing or discontinuing particular outcome measures.

The School of Social Work achieved a level 3 stage of assessment development for the 1999-2000 academic year.

1. **CURRENT OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT PLAN MEASURES - BSW PROGRAM**

The undergraduate outcome assessment program for academic year 99-00 drew from the following outcome measures:

- Field Evaluations (internship experiences)
- Evaluation of the Integration of Classroom Learning into Internship Practice
- Culminating Research Projects
- Structured Exit Interviews with Faculty
- Alumni Interviews
- Employee Interviews

2. **OUTCOME ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES IN 1999-2000**

The undergraduate outcome assessment program for academic year 99-00 used the following outcome measures:

- Field Evaluations (internship experiences)
- Evaluation of the Integration of Classroom Learning into Internship Practice
- Culminating Research Projects

There are additional measures regularly used by the School but which are not used every year. These include the alumni, employer and student exit surveys. The student exit survey will be used in academic year 2000-2001 together with the other measures. All surveys were developed with input from students and faculty, and field tested prior to administration.

3. **WHAT WAS LEARNED FROM THESE ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES:  
CHANGES IN PROGRAM USING THE INFORMATION RECEIVED**

- Field Evaluations & Seminars

Field evaluations and seminars are a critical means of measuring outcome achievement throughout the program. The field evaluation incorporates all components of the curriculum, thus providing a comprehensive means of evaluating the knowledge and skills gained and applied by the student in relation to all curriculum sequences. The field seminars provide means for assessing the knowledge and skills gained by the students, especially their capacity to integrate and apply course content in the field settings. Field evaluations are competence based and no student receives a passing grade from the sequence unless the competencies have been met. The field evaluation process is an individualized evaluation session involving the student, field faculty member and the faculty liaison. No student can successfully complete the program of study without earning a passing grade in the field component.

## Use of Outcome Results for BSW Program Refinement

- Sequencing of Courses

Prior to implementing the outcome assessment plan for the School of Social Work, the BSW program frequently allowed social work majors to take courses out of sequence. This policy continued in force for 1999-2000. This practice has been dramatically reduced due to the concerns expressed by both students and field supervisors.

- GPA Requirements

The BSW program continues to hold to the 2.5 GPA admission requirement implemented three years ago. In the last three years since implementing this requirement the applicant pool and the overall GPA of the applicants has risen. Of the sixty slots available for Fall 2000, 43 students came with 3.0 or above GPA and the remaining students are 2.5 and above.

- Field Evaluation Revision

Field evaluations were reviewed during Summer Session II 2000. They continue to reflect the curriculum and reflect the student's field learning experience.

- Syllabi Review

To address the students' concerns about the perceived lack of rigor in the program, the program continues an ongoing process of syllabi review and revision, tying outcomes to program objectives. This process has been completed in the practice and HBSE sequences and is presently underway in both the research and policy sequences.

- Class Schedule Changes

In response to the results from the exit surveys and requests over the years by students for more evening classes and a more flexible day schedule, the program offers a three-year plan for obtaining a BSW degree. This schedule is published in the current undergraduate catalog.

#### 4. **ANTICIPATED CHANGES RESULTING FROM PAST YEAR'S ASSESSMENTS**

- Curriculum - Practice Sequence Revision

In response to concerns and requests from undergraduate students the syllabi for the three practice courses have been revised to go into effect August 2001. The content of the practice sequence remains the same but topics are studies and skills learned in a more conceptual manner. This will provide students more time to practice course content and build on knowledge and skills previously acquired in their course work.

**5. HOW RESULTS OF OUTCOME ASSESSMENTS ARE COMMUNICATED TO FACULTY IN THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK**

The BSW Program Coordinator provides outcome assessment findings to faculty for their review and comment. The outcome assessment findings can be accessed through numerous mechanisms in the School including:

- Faculty Meeting - at least one per month
- Committee and Sequence membership
- The BSW Program Self-study - required for Council on Social Work Education
- BSW Interim Reports - required when requested by Council on Social Work Education
- Outcome Assessment Yearly Report
- Circulation through School mail
- School Listserv

The Faculty Affairs Committee consisting of five elected faculty representatives is responsible for reviewing the Outcomes Assessment on an annual basis.

The BSW self-study, interim report and outcome assessment report is on file in the School of Social Work.

**ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

**FOR THE  
MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM**

**SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK**

**COLLEGE OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES**

January 8, 2001

## 1. CURRENT OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT PLAN MEASURES - MSW PROGRAM

The graduate outcome assessment program for academic year 99-00 drew from the following outcome measures:

- Field Evaluations (internship experiences)
- Evaluation of the Integration of Classroom Learning into Internship Practice
- Comprehensive Oral Examinations
- Structured Exit Interviews with Faculty
- Theses or Culminating Research Projects
- Alumni Interviews
- Employee Interviews

## 2. OUTCOME ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES IN 1999-2000

The graduate outcome assessment program for academic year 99-00 used the following outcome measures:

- Field Evaluations (internship experiences)
- Evaluation of the Integration of Classroom Learning into Internship Practice
- Comprehensive Oral Examinations
- Theses or Culminating Research Projects

There are additional measures regularly used by the School but which are not used every year. These include the alumni and employer and student exit surveys. The student exit survey will be used in academic year 2000-2001 together with the other measures. All surveys were developed with input from students and faculty, and field tested prior to administration.

## 3. WHAT WAS LEARNED FROM THESE ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES: CHANGES IN PROGRAM, USING THE INFORMATION RECEIVED

- Field Evaluations and Seminars

Field evaluations and seminars are a critical means of measuring outcome achievement. The field evaluation incorporates all components of the curriculum, thus providing a comprehensive means of evaluating the knowledge and skills gained and applied by the student in relation to all curriculum sequences. The field seminars provide an additional means for assessing the knowledge and skills gained by the students, especially their capacity to integrate and apply course content in the field settings. Field evaluation is competence based and no student receives a passing grade from the sequence unless the competencies have been met. The field evaluation process is an individualized evaluation session involving the student, field faculty and faculty liaison. No student can successfully complete the program of study without earning a passing grade in the field component.

- Comprehensive Examinations

The comprehensive oral examination provides a capstone evaluation method. The oral exam is required by the NMSU Graduate School and must be successfully completed before the student can graduate. The oral exam, which is held during the last semester of the student's course of study, is approximately two hours in length. The oral examination committee consists of two School of Social Work faculty members and an additional member of the graduate faculty from outside the School. The additional member is appointed by the Graduate Dean as the Graduate School's representative to provide quality control of the examining process. During the examination the candidate is tested in all five social work sequence areas. For those students who have elected the thesis option, it is the focal point of the exam.

Social work faculty examiners evaluate the competency of each student in the five sequences on which they are examined. These evaluations are returned to the sequence committees for review and curricular improvement.

#### Use of Outcome Results for MSW Program Refinement

- Revision of Course Syllabi

In response to some concerns expressed by Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) regarding the concentration curriculum, two consultants were hired by the School to review with the faculty two courses in the MSW program (MSW 522 and MSW 512). Course goals and objectives were revised to more accurately reflect existing course content. The program continues an ongoing process of syllabi review and revision tying outcomes to program objectives. The research courses and research sequence in particular are being examined currently.

- Master of Social Work/Master of Public Administration Dual Degree Program

Responding to previous outcome surveys, at this time, the School of Social Work and the Department of Government continue to dialogue on developing an MSW/MPA dual degree program. The program is designed to allow a student in the dual degree program to complete the program in three academic years and to earn both the MSW and MPA degrees. For social work students, a dual MSW/MPA degree will provide an education in which social work knowledge and skill will be combined with administrative, programmatic and policy content offered by the MPA program unavailable in the social work program. This can result in a student with a broad academic and professional focus and will provide employment opportunities in a variety of government, nonprofit, social service and related sectors.

- Increasing Clinical Content

The School supports and promotes the issues raised by students, alumni and community participants regarding perceived inadequacies in clinical content and continues to assess practice courses so that they include more practice knowledge

and skills. Practice focused on special topics courses (e.g., substance abuse, multi-cultural families and administration) are now offered to add to this content. The School continues to sponsor an annual workshop reviewing the Diagnostic & Statistical Manual, which provides mental health assessment criteria.

- Program on Alcohol and Other Drugs

In response to the students' and community's requests for a broader curriculum, an interdisciplinary minor related to practice with people involved with alcohol and other drugs is fully operational and graduated its first students in Spring 2000. This minor prepares students for the licensing examinations in this field of practice. It is envisioned that this minor will serve as a model for other areas of emphasis that are congruent with generalist and family-centered practice.

- Broadening Elective Options

Again, in response to the requests for broadening elective options, additional electives are being planned. In 1999-2000 a family centered practice with substance abusive families, family centered program administration and a course on violence in the family were offered.

- Possible Interdisciplinary Gerontology Program

An additional interdisciplinary gerontology minor on undergraduate and graduate levels is being explored. This would include courses from the School of Social Work that addresses this growing population.

- Roswell Part-Time Off-Campus Program

The Roswell Part-time Program began in the Spring 1999 semester and the Roswell Part-time Advanced Standing Program began in the Summer II 2000 semester. This program is a response to the need for graduate-level social workers in the eastern part of the state and has been approved by the Council on Social Work Education. The program graduated its first class of MSW Part-time Program students in December 2000. The program will graduate its Roswell MSW Part-time students and its second class of MSW Part-time students in December 2001.

- Development of a Program in Albuquerque

The School is presently exploring the development of an MSW program in the Albuquerque area. The MSW program would be delivered through distance education and course work would be provided utilizing a combination of web-based learning and on site delivery by social work faculty. The program would be provided on weekends and have a coordinator for distance education program delivery based in Albuquerque. Plans must be developed and submitted for approval to both the Council on Social Work Education and the LFC. A Distance Education Committee has been formed in the School of Social Work to move on this initiative.

## How Information Will Be Used in a Short-Term and Long-Term Program Planning

The School of Social Work must continue to meet the educational needs of its students. It also must address its broader mission of serving the people of the state and addressing the social welfare needs of its people. To do this, we must have knowledgeable, skilled and ethically grounded social workers. It is the mission of the School to provide social workers of high caliber. To do so, the School must assess, in a regular, systematic way, the School's performance in developing knowledge, skill and ethical grounding in its students. The School must also assess the needs of the community, region and state to ensure that our students are meeting their needs for highly trained social workers.

The information that the School gathers through its many assessment procedures is used to evaluate the effectiveness of the program, to determine areas needing improvement, to strengthen all areas of the curriculum, and to test programmatic and curricular innovations. Individual courses and sequential courses continue to be evaluated for relevance and timeliness of content and their broader integration into the curriculum. Sequences are evaluated for vertical integration of course and fieldwork and for the integration of sequences within the curriculum. The fieldwork program continues to be evaluated, particularly for the fieldwork settings' appropriateness and effectiveness as learning environments. Students, graduates of the program, employers and the public will be asked to share information on programmatic and curricular needs and program effectiveness in Spring 2001 and Summer 2001 as part of our ongoing assessment process.

Long-term assessment will employ both direct and indirect measures. Longitudinal assessment will assess the continued improvement of the applicant pool into the BSW and MSW program, success in developing and maintaining a diverse student body, and continuing success in maintaining a relevant and timely curriculum. Measures of success among graduates can also inform the program about its effectiveness and relevance.

#### 4. EXPECTED CHANGES IN OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT

To measure overall achievement, the MSW Program Coordinator continues to examine for possible use, the *Area Concentration Achievement Test* designed to point out the academic weaknesses and strengths of graduating social work students. Because it is a standardized test, it can also be used to measure multi-year trends.

Specific assessments to be employed in the future include outcome assessment of the part-time programs, both on-campus and in Roswell. We are currently engaging in an assessment of the two programs as they continue to develop. In December 2001, the part-time program will graduate its first students.

Distance education technology is currently being incorporated into MSW courses. Methods of evaluation are currently being reviewed for use in the program. We will assess how various configurations of distance education courses are evaluated on both

educational and satisfaction measures. Evaluation of the need for and feasibility of additional distance education sites such as for the American Indian population in the Four Corners areas of New Mexico and a site in Albuquerque continues to be a need for the state of New Mexico.

To support the diverse populations of the southwest we will need to assess both the style and content of courses offered in multicultural settings.

The creation of a two track social work program, one focusing on direct practice (family-centered practice) and one focusing on administration is a consideration for the MSW program. The feasibility of such a two track program continues to be debated within the program.

An important area for further assessment focuses on reasons students remain in or leave the program. This is particularly severe for American Indian students. Assessing reasons for staying in or leaving the program will help us to better understand how we can improve student retention and enrich the long term well being of our student population.

#### **5. HOW THE RESULTS OF OUTCOMES ASSESSMENTS ARE COMMUNICATED TO ALL FACULTY IN THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK**

The MSW Program Coordinator provides outcome assessment findings to other faculty for their review and comment. The faculty has access to this information through a number of mechanisms in the School including:

- Faculty Meetings
- Committee and Sequence Membership
- MSW Program Self-study
- MSW Program Interim Reports
- Outcome Assessment Yearly Report
- Circulation through School mail
- School Listserv

The MSW program self-study and MSW program interim reports are required for the Council on Social Work Education.

In addition, the Faculty Affairs Committee (consisting of five elected faculty representatives) is responsible for annually reviewing outcome assessments.

A copy of the MSW program self-study, interim report and yearly outcome assessment report is on file in the School of Social Work.