

Executive Summary – 2019 Academic Program Review (Graduate)

School of Nursing, University of Victoria

Strengths of the School

The School of Nursing at the University of Victoria is recognized nationally for graduate program excellence. A particular strength is the school's reputation for delivering innovative and accessible graduate nursing education using online distance delivery platforms attracting students from across Canada. Nursing faculty achieve highly respectable success securing research grants in a competitive provincial and national funding environment. The research and scholarly achievements of the School of Nursing faculty bring international attention and respect to the University of Victoria and should be visibly celebrated.

The School of Nursing's graduate faculty and leadership are to be commended for conducting an internal review of graduate programs in 2016. This comprehensive document aligns the strategic plan for the school (2015-2020) with a vision to offer sustainable graduate programs of high quality to meet the demands of the nursing profession now and into the foreseeable future. The quality of the student experience and student outcomes are central to the realization of the vision and goals of the school. The faculty reflected on strengths and the need to build on past and current research and scholarly activity to inform succession planning. A comprehensive human resource succession plan was completed to address the anticipated retirements over the next few years. This self-study also provided a comprehensive internal review of strengths, vulnerabilities and opportunities to guide the external review (2019).

Curriculum Review

The SON Committee structure was created in 2008 and revised in 2015 and uses a shared-governance model for governance of masters and doctoral programs. The oversight for the four (4) MN program options (APL, NUED, NP, NUHI) and the PhD program appears solid with student representation on the committees. The graduate-education administrative team was described by both students and faculty as integral to the smooth functioning of the programs.

This is especially important with the number of program options and the reliance on teleconference and distributed learning technologies for course delivery, advising, committee meetings and research meetings.

The School of Nursing has created a vision for graduate education that takes into consideration the current and future needs of graduates for the programs offered. They have embraced their strengths, identified their vulnerabilities and created a vision for opportunities to explore. The outcomes identified in the vision will require robust support from the University of Victoria to be fully realized. In particular, the reliance on technology for program delivery and the engagement of graduate students on research projects with faculty requires a strong infrastructure that meets stakeholder demands. With support, the School of Nursing at the University of Victoria has the potential to be the premier site for distributed learning for graduate education in Nursing in Canada.

Supporting Students, Maintaining Quality and Enhancing Faculty Expertise.

The School of Nursing is to be commended for reflecting and adapting to the changing demographics of students and for implementing strategies to strengthen the quality of graduate education while maintaining robust programs of research. These strategies arose out of a self-study review of admissions and programs in 2016-2017. A particular highlight is that the school has identified a progressive strategy to prepare Indigenous nurses at the doctoral level. Their experiences can be an example for the rest of Canada as we focus on graduating more nurses nationally with PHDs to fill growing vacancies in education.

Curriculum review is described in the self-study as the responsibility of the graduate education/MN curriculum and PhD committees. The committees are encouraged to complete a formal review of courses required to meet the degree expectations in both the Masters and PhD programs. The degree requirements are considerable across all programs especially for the Nurse Practitioner students. A review can identify core course requirements and reflect on possible changes to the number of courses required to meet the degree expectations without sacrificing quality.