



THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT / THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK / ALBANY,
NY 12234

To: Higher Education Committee
From: Valerie Grey
Subject: Initial Institutional Accreditation: Memorial School of Nursing
Date: June 1, 2011
Authorizations:

SUMMARY

Issue for Decision

Should the Board of Regents grant accreditation to Memorial School of Nursing?

Reason(s) for Consideration

Required by State regulation.

Proposed Handling

This question will come before the Higher Education Committee at its June 2011 meeting, where it will be voted on and action taken. It will then come before the full Board at its June 2011 meeting for final action.

Background Information

Memorial School of Nursing was founded in 1901. Until 1997, the School existed as an educational unit of Albany Memorial Hospital. Since then, the School's parent organization has been Northeast Health, a comprehensive health care system. In 1997, the Board of Regents authorized the School to grant the Associate in Science (A.S.) degree in Nursing. The School's single registered program, which prepares candidates for RN licensure, is registered jointly with Hudson Valley Community College. Hudson Valley contributes liberal arts and sciences courses to the registered program's curriculum; Memorial provides the nursing content and awards the degree.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board of Regents accredit with conditions Memorial School of Nursing for a period of three years ending June 30, 2014, with the condition that all recommendations made by the peer review team are met by May 27, 2012. The School would be required to provide a progress report, due May 27, 2012, on the actions taken to address the peer review team's recommendations.

Regents with a conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest on this application are asked to recuse themselves from participating in the deliberation and decision.

Attachment

Information in Support of Recommendation

Peer Review Visit

In preparation for a visit by a peer review team, Memorial School of Nursing prepared a self-study following the requirements for self-studies in the *Handbook of Institutional Accreditation*. On March 30, 2010, a peer review team ("Team") visited the School. It examined the self-study and other documents; met with faculty, students, Chief Executive Officer of Northeast Health, School Director, and other administrators; examined the facilities and academic, clinical, and administrative resources; and observed class and clinical settings. The Team made 15 recommendations and recommended accreditation with conditions for three years, with the condition that all recommendations in the report be met by May 27, 2012.

The Team's recommendations primarily clustered around the programs of study, resources, and administration standards.

- Concerns about the programs of study centered on the need for the School to establish formal plans and mechanisms to evaluate the curriculum and revise course materials and evaluation tools to demonstrate how students progress through increasingly complex cognitive domains. Since student outcomes (in terms of NCLEX exam pass rates) are strong, the concern is less with the current quality of student preparation than it is with establishing formal mechanisms to ensure, document, and sustain a strong curriculum.
- The findings related to the resources and administration standards reflect in part the School's standing as one entity within the larger and evolving corporate parent, Northeast Health. The Team found that the School needs a stronger, more institutionalized voice and presence within the Northeast Health system. It wrote, "A mechanism or process, such as a strategic plan that extends down to the level of the School, with explicit metrics that are evaluated annually, is needed to ensure support and advocacy for the School's mission, role, and standing."

The Department transmitted the team's draft compliance review report to Memorial School of Nursing, providing it 30 days to prepare a written response correcting factual errors and addressing any other aspect of the report. The School accepted the draft report's recommendations and included evidence and plans that the recommendations are or will be implemented. The draft report, Memorial School of Nursing's response, and the Department's preliminary recommendation for accreditation action became the final compliance review report.

Based on the School's self study, the site team's report and the School's responses, the Department found that the institution is in substantial compliance with the standards for institutional accreditation. As a result, the Department recommended accreditation with conditions for a period of three years, with the condition that all recommendations in the report be met by May 27, 2012. The School would be required to provide a progress report, due May 27, 2012, on the actions taken to address the Team's recommendations.

Regents Advisory Council Review

As required by Subpart 4-1 of the Regents Rules, the Department transmitted the final compliance review report, including its preliminary recommendation for accreditation action, for consideration by the Regents Advisory Council on Institutional Accreditation. (The Advisory Council is established in §3.12(d) of the *Rules of the Board of Regents* “to review applications for accreditation and renewal of accreditation pursuant to Part 4 of this Title, and such other matters as the department may ask it to review, and make recommendations to the Regents and the commissioner based on its review.”)

On May 27, 2011, the Advisory Council met to consider Memorial School of Nursing’s application and to make a recommendation to the Board of Regents. In a public meeting, it met with representatives of the School, the chair of the peer review team, and the staff coordinator of the accreditation review. Following presentations by Memorial School of Nursing, the team chair, and the staff coordinator; questions; and discussion, the Advisory Council unanimously is making the following recommendation to the Board of Regents on accreditation action, with one abstention:

Accreditation with conditions for a period of three years ending June 30, 2014, with the condition that all recommendations in the report are met by May 27, 2012. The School would be required to provide a progress report, due May 27, 2012, on the actions taken to address the Team’s recommendations.

Commissioner’s Review

Neither Memorial School of Nursing nor the Acting Deputy Commissioner of Higher Education appealed the Advisory Council’s recommendation. Therefore, pursuant to Subpart 4-1, the Commissioner adopted the Council’s recommendation as his recommendation to the Board of Regents.

The attachment to this item sets forth the range of accreditation actions authorized under Subpart 4-1 of the *Rules of the Board of Regents*.

Rules of the Board of Regents

Subpart 4-1, Voluntary Institutional Accreditation for Title IV Purposes

§4-1.2 Definitions.

As used in the Subpart:

(a) *Accreditation* means the status of public recognition that the Commissioner of Education and the Board of Regents grant to an educational institution that meets the standards and requirements prescribed in this Subpart.

(b) *Accreditation action* means accreditation, accreditation with conditions, probationary accreditation, approval of substantive changes in the scope of accreditation, and denial, revocation, or termination of accreditation.

(c) *Accreditation with conditions* means accreditation that requires the institution to take steps to remedy issues raised in a review for accreditation, and provide reports and/or submit to site visits concerning such issues, provided that such issues do not materially affect the institution's substantial compliance with the standards and requirements for accreditation.

(d) *Adverse action* or *adverse accreditation action* means suspension, withdrawal, denial, revocation, or termination of accreditation or preaccreditation.

(q) *Probationary accreditation* means accreditation for a period of time, not to exceed two years, during which the institution shall come into compliance with standards for accreditation through corrective action.