

Nursing Coordinating Group Minutes

Minutes

February 26, 2004

Present: Jane Baker, Montana Tech College of Technology; Jean Ballantyne, Montana State University-Bozeman; Roger Barber, Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education; Dick Brown, Montana Hospital Association; Jill Caldwell, State Board of Nursing; Jacque Dolberry, Salish Kootenai College; Regent Mike Foster; Angie Grove, Legislative Audit Division; Cynthia Gustafson, Carroll College; Cheri Jimeno, Montana State University-Northern; Danette Melvin, Montana Tech; Regent Lynn Morrison-Hamilton; Lois Muir, The University of Montana; Mary Pappas, MSU-Northern; Vernon Pederson, MSU-Great Falls College of Technology; Kim Powell, State Board of Nursing; Susan Raph, Montana State University-Bozeman; Regent Richard Roehm; Jean Shreffler-Grant; MSU-Bozeman; Karen VanDaveer, Montana Tech; Margaret Wafstet, UM-Missoula College of Technology; Kathy Wankel, Miles Community College; Paul Williamson, UM-Missoula College of Technology; Ellen Wirtz, UM-Helena College of Technology

Status of the Montana Hospital Association Survey:

The Montana Hospital Association is nearing completion of a survey to determine employment needs and shortages in several health professions throughout Montana, including nursing. The survey participants included all hospitals and nursing homes in the State, as well as home health and hospice organizations. Approximately 120 surveys were distributed, and about 25 have been completed and returned to date, primarily from nursing homes. The largest hospitals have asked for more time to complete the detailed survey, according to Dick Brown from the Montana Hospital Association. When an analysis of the surveys is completed, a report will be presented to the nursing committee.

Legislative Audit of Transfer Issues:

The Legislative Audit Division will conduct a performance audit of transfer issues in the Montana University System, at the request of the Legislative Audit Committee. The campus presidents and chancellors have been notified about the audit, according to Angie Grove from the Audit Division.

The Audit Committee is interested in how the transfer process works in the Montana University System, according to Ms. Grove, particularly the kinds of problems that students encounter as they move from one campus to another. The Audit Division will also focus on particular academic programs, including nursing, Ms. Grove said.

At the conclusion of the audit, a draft report will be prepared and shared with the Board of Regents, the Commissioner's office and the campuses for comment. A final report will be submitted to the Legislative Audit Committee sometime in the fall in preparation for the 2005 Legislative session. The final report may well contain recommendations about the transfer process, and those recommendations could be directed to the Regents, OCHE and/or the campuses, Ms. Grove said.

Status of the Helena Clinical Capacity Study:

The clinical capacity study on the city of Helena, commissioned by the State Board of Nursing, should be completed by the end of March and presented to the Nursing Board at its April 2004 meeting. The consultant hired to complete the study was, coincidentally, in Helena initiating her work at the same time the Nursing Coordinating Group was holding its meeting.

The study grew out of a request by the Helena College of Technology to initiate a two-year RN nursing program in the Capitol City. The ability of the Helena medical community to “absorb” such an expansion and provide adequate clinical experiences for more nursing students became a concern with the COT proposal, particularly from the Carroll College nursing program.

Hopefully the consultant’s report will resolve the questions raised about appropriate clinical settings in Helena, Jill Caldwell from the State Board of Nursing said. Equally important, the report should give the State Board some guidance on adequate clinical settings for all nursing programs in the State of Montana, including rural communities.

Status of Program Approval Process:

The State Board of Nursing and the Commissioner’s office have been working on a coordinated approval process for nursing proposals. The latest drafts of those processes were distributed to the meeting participants; and after extensive discussion, the group members reached consensus on the proposals.

Roger Barber and Jill Caldwell were asked to make two (2) modest changes to the review processes: the submission deadlines for any proposals covered by the review processes will be December 1 and September 1; and “expansion of programs” will be more carefully defined. The two proposals will then be submitted to the State Board of Nursing and the Montana Board of Regents for their review and approval. The new approval process should be in place, with both Boards, by early fall 2004.

Review of Recommendations Concerning Nursing Education:

After reviewing a list of nine (9) possible initiatives that could be undertaken by the Nursing Coordinating Group, and after extensive discussion about the possibility of moving forward on any of the initiatives, the group decided to:

- bring in an outside consultant or facilitator;
- ask that facilitator to help the nursing programs in Montana identify a common core of general education and nursing courses for all LPN degree programs in the State.

Roger and Jill were asked to develop a “charge” for the facilitator; and to identify someone who could take on that work for the Group. Lynn Hamilton agreed to help with the draft of that charge.

The Group also agreed to prepare a list of current articulation agreements between nursing programs in the State. Roger was asked to coordinate that project.

Review of Nursing Program Initiatives.

The Group also quickly reviewed the status of nursing proposals that are somewhere in the review and approval pipeline:

- 1) the Level II proposal from the Missoula College of Technology comes before the Board of Regents, at its March meeting, for action. That proposal would convert the current two-year LPN to a certificate program, and authorize the COT to offer an A.S. registered nursing degree.
- 2) the Miles Community College proposal to take its two-year R.N. program to Glendive and Sidney goes before the Board of Regents, as a Level I proposal, at the March meeting.
- 3) the Helena COT proposal, which is quite similar to the Missoula plan, is still under review at the State Board of Nursing, and is waiting for the results of the clinical capacity study in Helena.
- 4) MSU-Billings is apparently in the very early stages of discussion about a possible masters degree program in nursing education.