

Report on the Florida State University School of Nursing Seminar on Excellence in Nurse Education

Prepared by
Raoul A. Arreola, Ph.D.
The University of Tennessee Health Sciences Center

1. The Seminar Agenda

On August 18, 2004, the Florida State University School of Nursing conducted a day long seminar on *Achieving, Sustaining, and Recognizing Excellence in Nurse Education*. The objective of the seminar was to develop a plan for promoting the development, support, and recognition of key skills and competencies required for Nurse Education excellence at Florida State University. Based on both the National League of Nursing's published statement of the 8 Core Competencies of Nurse Educators and the meta-professional model of higher education faculty developed by R. A. Arreola, M. Theall, and L. Aleamoni (2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004), the faculty considered the following questions:

Part 1: Skill Sets Required - *What skill sets should ALL faculty in the School of Nursing possess in order to ensure excellence in the nurse education program?*

Part 2: Support Services Needed - *What support services should be provided for faculty in order to enable them to become proficient in the identified skill sets?*

Part 3: Mandatory Training - *Should training be made mandatory for certain skill sets? If so, which ones?*

Part 4: Recognizing Excellence - *Should the evaluation of certain skills be part of the annual faculty performance assessment?" Also, "Should an assessment of certain skills be considered in promotion, tenure and merit pay decisions?"*

Part 5: Plan for Excellence - *What actions should the School of Nursing take to support the faculty in gaining and/or enhancing and sustaining the skills identified as part of the NLN core competencies? (Issues to consider include policy changes, personnel support, resources & materials, professional enhancement programs, seminars, workshops, etc.)*

In order to facilitate consideration of these issues six discussion groups of approximately 6 faculty per group were formed. No effort was made to have individual groups represent any organizational sub-grouping or any special interest. Thus faculty were not assigned to any specific group. The group sizes were kept relatively small so as to permit maximum participation in discussing the questions above. At the end of the day each group gave a short slide presentation to the entire faculty summarizing their deliberations and conclusions. The slides used by each group in their presentation are shown in the **APPENDIX**.

2. Results of the Group Discussions

Although each group presented various conclusions and recommendations, certain common threads, majority views, or consensus recommendations are apparent. These are presented below in terms of the five specific questions faculty were asked to address.

2.1 Skill Sets Required - *What skill sets should ALL faculty in the School of Nursing possess in order to ensure excellence in the nurse education program?*

Each faculty discussion group developed a list of skills or skill sets they recommended that ALL faculty in the School of Nursing should possess. Although there were some differences among the groups, the following skill sets were identified by *at least* three of the six groups:

- 2.1.1 Content expertise
- 2.1.2 Practice/clinical skills
- 2.1.3 Research techniques
- 2.1.4 Instructional design, delivery, assessment (measurement & outcomes assessment)
- 2.1.5 Course management
- 2.1.6 Learning theory
- 2.1.7 Information technology
- 2.1.8 Group process/team building
- 2.1.9 Communication Styles
- 2.1.10 Conflict management/resolution
- 2.1.11 Human development
- 2.1.12 Public Speaking

This list can be considered a core set of skill sets that the faculty generally consider important to possess as Nurse Educators.

Other skill sets identified by only one or two groups included skills in educational research techniques (as opposed to research techniques in nursing and nursing science), statistics, personnel management and supervision, and cultural & ethical competence.

2.2 Support Services Needed - *What support services should be provided for faculty in order to enable them to become proficient in the identified skill sets?*

Several clear directions for faculty support services were identified.

- 2.2.1 Establish a mentor or mentoring program in which experienced faculty assist new or inexperienced faculty in gaining the knowledge, skills, and expertise necessary to perform in the various faculty roles in the FSU School of Nursing.
- 2.2.2 Provide a structured program of released time and monetary support to remain current in one's base profession skills (i.e., content expertise, practice/clinical skills, & nursing research techniques.)

- 2.2.3 Provide both technical support and training in information technology including specific training in the use of the computer as well as using Blackboard as an instructional delivery tool.
 - 2.2.4 Provide access to internal and external consultants on, and specific training in, the following *meta-profession* skill sets:
 - 2.2.4.1 Instructional Design
 - 2.2.4.2 Instructional Delivery
 - 2.2.4.3 Instructional Assessment
 - 2.2.4.4 Learning Theory
 - 2.2.4.5 Human Development
 - 2.2.4.6 Conflict Management
 - 2.2.4.7 Group Process/Team Building
 - 2.2.4.8 Personnel Supervision/Management
 - 2.2.4.9 Communication Styles
 - 2.2.5 Provide a regular program of peer/mentor feedback on all areas of performance to assist and guide professional growth.
-

2.3 Mandatory Training - *Should training be made mandatory for certain skill sets? If so, which ones?*

There were two main position expressed concerning mandatory training. One position was that mandatory training should be a function of the annual evaluation or peer review process. That is, faculty should be required to engage in training only for those areas of performance in which the evaluation/peer review process indicated there was a weakness. The other position was all faculty should participate in the training for a specific set of core skills.

Regardless of the position taken, the following skills and skill sets were noted:

- 2.3.1 Information technology including:
 - 2.3.1.1 Blackboard
 - 2.3.1.2 PowerPoint
 - 2.3.1.3 Word
 - 2.3.1.4 File Management
 - 2.3.1.5 E-mail
 - 2.3.2 Instructional Design, Delivery, and Assessment
 - 2.3.3 Course Management (clarify School procedures relative to grading, purchasing, clinical evaluations, etc.)
 - 2.3.4 Required training (School supported) in one's base profession's content expertise & clinical skills.
 - 2.3.5 Utilization of University resources (Library, etc.)
-

2.4 Recognizing Excellence - *Should the evaluation of certain skills be part of the annual faculty performance assessment?*” Also, *“Should an assessment of certain skills be considered in promotion, tenure and merit pay decisions?”*

There were a variety of points of views expressed by the faculty relative to these questions. The picture that emerges is that the faculty appear to be of the opinion that the current annual faculty performance assessment already makes sufficient allowance for the evaluation of a broad range of faculty skills and competencies. However, for those indicating that certain skills and skill sets should be routinely evaluated for everyone (as well as considered in the promotion, tenure, and merit pay process) the skill sets associated with *instructional design, instructional delivery, and course management* were specified. Also noted was the necessity to evaluate a faculty member’s information technology skills.

The point was also expressed that the feedback provided by the evaluation process should be constructive and helpful in assisting the faculty member to plan a specific professional growth plan.

2.5 Plan for Excellence - *What actions should the School of Nursing take to support the faculty in gaining and/or enhancing and sustaining the skills identified as part of the NLN core competencies? (Issues to consider include policy changes, personnel support, resources & materials, professional enhancement programs, seminars, workshops, etc.)*

The major objective of the session was to develop directions for an FSU School of Nursing plan for excellence in Nurse Education. A number of proposals were offered and are summarized below:

- 2.5.1** Develop and offer a program of regularly scheduled (perhaps monthly) faculty seminars on the issues of instructional delivery, design, and assessment, as well as the use of information technology.
- 2.5.2** Implement a program of Senior Mentors in which experienced faculty serve as resources to new or inexperienced faculty in helping them adjust to the FSU School of Nursing program and achieve high levels of performance.
- 2.5.3** Identify and make use of FSU-based instructional design support services.
- 2.5.4** Implement a program to identify, and routinely make faculty aware of, the instructional support and other resources available at FSU. Issue periodic guides or ‘reminders’ of those services and resources.
- 2.5.5** Design and implement a regularly scheduled peer evaluation system that provided meaningful and constructive feedback to faculty. Feedback should include the identification of campus resources and services that can be of assistance.

- 2.5.6 Provide a program of regularly scheduled, funded, released time for faculty to enhance and/or maintain their clinical practice skills.
- 2.5.7 Implement a program for recognizing and rewarding excellence with monetary and/or formal documented recognition within the School.

3 Proposed Plan of Action

Based on the results of the faculty seminar, as well as experience in working with hundreds of colleges, schools and universities, I would propose that the FSU School of Nursing take the following actions:

- 3.1 Schedule at least three (required¹) half-day seminars for faculty over the remainder of the academic year that encompass the following topics:
 - 3.1.1 *Information technology* – specifically the use of Blackboard in the delivery of online instruction and the basics of PowerPoint, Word, Excel, and E-mail.
 - 3.1.2 *Instructional design* (specifically the writing of learning objectives and their relation classroom or online activities)
 - 3.1.3 *Instructional assessment* (specifically the design and construction of reliable examinations and the use of statistically appropriate grading procedures).
- 3.2 Schedule at least three (optional) half-day seminars for faculty over the remainder of the academic year that encompass the following topics:
 - 3.2.1 *Communication styles* – (recommend Stuart Atkin’s LIFO training)
 - 3.2.2 *FSU Support Services Orientation* – a seminar, perhaps offered by an experienced faculty member of the School of Nursing, on the various instructional and other support services available on the FSU campus. Would recommend an actual walking tour to see the centers/offices and meet actual individuals offering the services)
 - 3.2.3 *Conflict Management/Group Process/Power* – an overview of the principles of managing conflict, identifying and using the roles people play when working in groups, and the sources and use of power in organizations.
- 3.3 Establish a true faculty mentoring program. Elements of the program should include:
 - 3.3.1 Require that all current faculty in their first year of appointment as a faculty member identify a senior faculty member who will agree to serve as their mentor.

¹ By required it is meant that the School as a whole should specify these seminars as a School-wide activities in which all faculty will be expected to participate. Ideally classes and meetings for that day should be cancelled so that the only agenda item for the faculty is the seminar.

- 3.3.2 Faculty mentors must agree to design a specific program of professional development with the new faculty member that includes classroom visits, guidance in instructional design, test construction and grading, guidance in clinical instruction, orientation to School and university policies and procedures, and general assistance in acclimating to the role and responsibilities of a faculty member within the FSU School of Nursing.
 - 3.3.3 Formulate a policy that specifies recognition, reward, released time, or other considerations for faculty who serve as mentors.
 - 3.3.4 Establish an evaluation procedure whereby faculty serving as mentors are evaluated in their performance as mentors.
- 3.4 Develop an FSU School of Nursing formal statement of the definition of teaching excellence. Recommend appointing a committee of faculty to consider the results of the faculty seminar to which this document refers and propose a statement to be adopted by the School. The elements of teaching excellence were discussed during the seminar and there should be little difficulty in coming to an agreed-upon formal statement. The following is intended to be an *example* only of such as statement:

As Nurse Educators we, the faculty of the Florida State University School of Nursing, are committed to excellence in both our clinical practice and in our teaching. Excellence in teaching is not a goal but a commitment to a process – a process of continually ensuring that we are fully conversant with all aspects of the science and art of nursing as well as maintaining a high level of knowledge and skill in the sociological, psychological, and pedagogical techniques necessary to design and deliver a program of experiences that transforms the student into an ethical, caring, and competent nurse.

A statement of this sort could be accompanied by a reference to the NLN Core Competencies for Nurse Educators and the attendant skill sets identified during the seminar.

- 3.5 Improve the current faculty evaluation system. A revised faculty evaluation system that makes systematic use of valid, reliable, and constructive peer feedback, as well as appropriate student rating information will go far in promoting overall excellence. Several times various groups noted the desire for a more systematic peer review process. Ideally the faculty evaluation system and the professional development program should be carefully integrated. That is, if some aspect of a faculty member's performance is going to be evaluated there should be some matching or concomitant program, seminar, or support service designed to assist the faculty in gaining and enhancing the skill necessary for that performance.
-

4 Final Comments & Recommendation

Scattered throughout the discussion group presentations were recommendations for more money for faculty salaries. Although not unusual, the apparent premise of these recommendations in the context of a discussion on teaching excellence calls forth an interesting and important question. Often the point was made that money and released time should be made available to faculty for the purpose of enabling them to enhance or maintain their clinical practice skills, and/or attend conferences, workshops, and seminars in their *base profession*. The serious question that emerges here is, given the limited resources of the FSU School of Nursing (or any college or school for that matter) is it appropriate to provide funds and released time for faculty to become more proficient in the one area in which they are already most proficient? Does a commitment to teaching excellence require that more resources be focused on the development and support of the faculty's *meta-professional skill* (for which they may have had little or no training)? Or, should resources first be spent in supporting a faculty member's efforts to maintain and enhance their *base profession* knowledge and skills?

It is recommended that the FSU School of Nursing administration undertake a study of this issue since it has broad-scale implications whichever direction is taken. Also, if the School of Nursing to make a public commitment to *teaching excellence*, it would be best if the term 'released time' stop being used. It has been my experience that the general public (and state legislators in particular) take the term 'released time' as implying that faculty consider teaching an onerous duty from which they must be 'released' to pursue other, more desirable, professional activities. The concept of 'released time' can be interpreted to mean that university pays a teacher not to teach, and then has to hire somebody else and pay them to teach what the 'released' teacher should be teaching. Any philosophical discussion among the faculty concerning the meaning of teaching excellence may wish to consider these issues.

5 References

- Arreola, Raoul A. 2000. *Developing a Comprehensive Faculty Evaluation System*. Anker Publishing, Inc., Bolton, MA.
- Arreola, Raoul A., 2000 *Higher Education's Meta-Profession*. The Department Chair, Vol. 11, No. 2
- Arreola, R. A., Aleamoni, L. M., & Theall, M. 2001 *College Teaching as a Meta-Profession: Reconceptualizing the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*. Paper presented at the 9th Annual Conference of the American Association for Higher Education, 2001.
- Arreola, R. A., Theall, M., & Aleamoni, L. 2003 *Beyond Scholarship: Recognizing the multiple roles of the professoriate*. Paper presented at the 2003 convention of the American Educational Research Association.
- Arreola, R. A. 2004. *Scholarship Re-Conceptualized: An Evaluative Perspective*. Presented at the 2004 convention of the American Educational Research Association.
- Theall, M. 2002. *Leadership in faculty evaluation and development: some thoughts on why and how the meta-profession can control its own destiny*. Paper presented at the 2002 convention of the American Educational Research Association.

APPENDIX

Slide Miniatures of Faculty Group Presentations

GROUP 1

Part 1: Skill Sets Required

- Content expertise
- Practice/clinical skills
- Research techniques
- Instructional design, delivery, assessment
- Course management
- Learning theory
- Information technology
- Group process/team building
- Communication
- Conflict resolution

Part 1: Skill Sets Required

- Human development

PART 2: Support Services Needed

- Updated computer training
- Support for maintenance of content expertise
- Monetary support including release time to update skills
- Planned educational workshops on site for faculty to update or maintain skills
- Release time to maintain clinical practice

PART 3: Mandatory Training

- Instructional design
 - Class management
- Instructional delivery
- Instructional assessment
- Learning theory
- Information technology
 - Blackboard
 - Accessing the library

PART 4: Recognizing Excellence

- “Should the evaluation of certain skills be part of the annual faculty performance assessment?”
 - NO
 - Already addressed in annual evaluation

PART 4: Recognizing Excellence

- “Should an assessment of certain skills be considered in promotion & tenure (and merit pay, if any) decisions?”
 - NO for P & T
 - Already addressed in annual evaluation
 - YES for merit pay
 - Depends on how evaluated
 - Review design, delivery, and assessment
 - Utilization of information technology

PART 5: Plan for Excellence

- Continuing education programs (monthly) on improvement of teaching delivery, design, and assessment; information technology
- Every faculty member attends one conference in their specialty area every year (release time plus monetary support)
- 10% faculty raise annually
- Provide one day release time with pay each week to maintain faculty clinical practice
- School negotiates partnerships with local healthcare agencies to maintain faculty practice/clinical updates

PART 5: Plan for Excellence

- Obtain and retain a grants proposal writer to assist faculty members in writing grants
- Every three years each faculty is provided one semester with pay to update clinical skills, research, obtain education for professional development

GROUP 2

Sally’s Group

We’re merely Sally’s support staff

Part 1: Skill Sets Required

- Content expertise
- UTD Practice and clinical skills
- Clinical research application for continuous updating course content
- Proficiency in design, deliver, assessment

Part 1: Skill Sets Required

- ****Organization in a concise, appropriate, logistical manner – the mechanics of good classroom design.
- **Excellent interpersonal communication skills**
- Be prepared to bring the ethical behaviors to the students
- Proficiency in applied educational statistics
- Proficiency in educational outcomes measurement

PART 2: Support Services Needed

- Systematic review of all the previous skills/traits
- Program for ensuring the availability of senior faculty mentors for new faculty
- Ongoing assessment and mentoring for broadening critical skills
- Clear communication of curriculum goals and objectives, which are criterion referenced
- Technical support.

PART 3: Mandatory Training

- Faculty instructional support/assistance
- Understanding the curriculum and program structure, process and outcomes

PART 4: Recognizing Excellence

- Content expertise, clinical skills, research techniques, instructional design, delivery and assessment, course management, instructional research, psychometric and stats

PART 5: Plan for Excellence

- Senior mentors
- FSU instructional design support services
- Bring along new faculty slowly
- Improve communication of the curricula and program matters
- Continuous assessment and faculty dialogue

Philosophical agreement on attitudes and beliefs regarding the competencies of nurse educators.

- Develop a definition of excellence in teaching
- Fuel a paradigm shift to establish a new faculty culture based on this definition

The End

GROUP 3

Part 1: Skill Sets Required

- Content expertise
- Practice clinical skills
- Research techniques (level 1 research institute)
- Instructional delivery
- Instructional assessment
- *Learning Theory
- Human Development

Part 1: Skill Sets Required

- Communication styles

PART 2: Support Services Needed

- Free Educational offerings for content & practice
- Time and money to attend educational offerings
- Promote research with an in-house mentor
- Move toward director of research position
- Encourage accessing College of Ed assistance to teaching for faculty feedback on a regular basis

PART 2: Support Services Needed

- Seeking expertise from College of Education for learning theory

PART 3: Mandatory Training

- Faculty demonstrate competency in clinical skills (evaluator training)
- Mandatory standardized peer review process for theory and clinical instructional design and delivery

PART 4: Recognizing Excellence

- “Should the evaluation of certain skills be part of the annual faculty performance assessment?”
- No until identified by faculty
- “Should an assessment of certain skills be considered in promotion & tenure (and merit pay, if any) decisions?”

PART 5: Plan for Excellence

- Yes as identified in previous slides

GROUP 4

Part 1: Skill Sets Required

- Instructional Design – Basic understanding
- Instructional Delivery – A Must
- Instructional Assessment – A Must
- Course Management, if full-time or theory course
- Learning Theory
- Human Development
- Information Technology
- Public Speaking if in classroom
- Communication Styles

Part 1: Skill Sets Required

- Conflict Management
- Group Process
- Personnel Management – managing clinical groups

PART 2: Support Services Needed

- Blackboard Course and ODDL provides support for
 - Instructional Design
 - Instructional Delivery
 - Instructional Assessment
 - Course Management
 - Learning Theory
 - Information Technology
- FSU Human Resource courses on
 - Conflict Management
 - Group Process/Team Building
 - Personnel Management
 - Communication Styles

PART 2: Support Services Needed

- Human Development - ? If more is needed
- Public Speaking – Toastmasters?

PART 3: Mandatory Training

- Information Technology
 - Blackboard
 - Powerpoint
 - Word
 - File Management
 - E-mail
- Course Management/Instructional Assessment – clinical expectations, grade reporting, clinical evaluations

PART 4: Recognizing Excellence

- In this space respond to the question “Should the evaluation of certain skills be part of the annual faculty performance assessment?”
 - Instructional Design (including use of Information Technology)
 - Instructional Delivery
 - Course Management

PART 4: Recognizing Excellence

- Also, “Should an assessment of certain skills be considered in promotion & tenure (and merit pay, if any) decisions?”
 - Instructional Design and Delivery
 - Course Management

PART 5: Plan for Excellence

- Make sure faculty are aware of resources available at the University, e.g., ODDL, Blackboard, computer and instructional techniques
- Continue support from SON computer lab and ACNS
- Continue to make Blackboard courses available for faculty – compensate if during summer
- Consider faculty attendance at these courses toward merit
- Support faculty attendance at educational conferences
- Share nursing educational journals (send via e-mail)

GROUP 5

Part 1: Skill Sets Required

- Basis skill sets : context expertise, clinical skills and Basic research techniques
- Professional skill sets
- Design, delivery and assessment, basic of learning theory and human development
- Today need information technology
- Public speaking to include effective communication
- Some conflict management

PART 2: Support Services Needed

- Time and money for continuing education
- Release time for clinical practice
- Identification of resources to assist with funding opportunities, statistics
- University provides opportunities to support design, delivery and assessment
- In house tech support
- Peer/student feedback for communication styles
- Mentoring /role modeling/ using resources on campus for teaching improvement re: communication

PART 3: Mandatory Training

- Based on annual evaluation
- Self evaluation/personal goals
- Technology training Based on content and clinical areas taught
- Periodic updates on budget and finances
- Clinical evaluation and assessment of theory needs consistency so must have training
- Mandatory training needs to be on an individual basis—everybody does not have to be everything to everyone

PART 4: Recognizing Excellence

We should evaluate individuals learning needs for teaching excellence and a plan should be in place to foster growth in that area. Evaluation process should be “helpful” and specific as to what changes are expected. Different levels of expertise in teaching may be acceptable.

Peer evaluation should be part of the process in addition to student evals. End of semester course meetings can serve as a venue for teaching evaluation of faculty in that course.

PART 5: Plan for Excellence

- Periodic reminders of where resources are located within the university
- Continue orientation for new faculty to division and university
- Institute regular peer evaluation—development of more efficient forms for peer evaluation
- Providing accessible mentors for faculty. May be other faculty or support personnel for one on one guidance.
- Recognition of excellence through monetary reward and/or written documentation in file

GROUP 6 (Revised)

Part 1: Skill Sets Required

- Content expertise
- Research techniques
 - (FSU is Carnegie Research I institution)
 - Knowing who to contact for statistical expertise
- Instructional delivery
 - Course management
 - Interactive mindset- get all students involved.
- Student assessment

Part 1: Skill Sets Required

- Communication Styles
- Learning Theory
- Human Development
 - Cultural competence
- Information Technology
- Public Speaking
- Personnel Management
 - Delegation, utilization of support staff
- Group process, team building.

PART 2: Support Services Needed

- Clinical Competence
 - Faculty Mentors for newer faculty
 - Clinical Nurse Specialists
- Instr Design, Learn Theo, IT:
 - University-based classes/workshops
 - Access to experts inside and outside of organizations
 - Knowledge of how to access resources

PART 3: Mandatory Training

- Should attend university-based training courses for areas that are perceived or demonstrated weaknesses
- Funding should be provided to faculty for attending training

PART 3: Mandatory Training

- Suggested areas for training:
 - Content expertise- demonstrate currency(CEUs)
 - Learning theory
 - Human development
 - Instructional assessment
 - Information technology
 - Personnel management
 - Communication styles

PART 4: Recognizing Excellence

- “Should the evaluation of certain skills be part of the annual faculty performance assessment?”
- Yes- It allows the School of Nursing to maintain a level of excellence in teaching that is consistent with the mission and provides feedback to the administration and faculty as to how we are progressing.

PART 4: Recognizing Excellence

- “Should an assessment of certain skills be considered in promotion & tenure (and merit pay, if any) decisions?”
- Yes- it provides a positive reinforcement for maintaining and exceeding critical skills. This then serves as a motivation and incentive for others to strengthen their skills.

PART 5: Plan for Excellence

What kinds of actions should the School take to support faculty in gaining, enhancing and/or sustaining skills identified as part of NLN Core competencies?

- Incorporate educational offerings specifically focusing on critical skills utilizing all university expertise into faculty meetings on a quarterly basis
- Have mentors assigned to new faculty (whether new graduate or new to university)