

Program Review Executive Summary

Nursing Program

Majors Reviewed:

- *Pre-Practical Nursing, A.A.S. (HNA)*
- *Practical Nursing, A.A.S. (HN)*
- *Nursing, LPN to RN Advanced Placement, A.A.S. (NRL)*
- *Pre-Nursing, A.A.S. (NRA)*
- *Nursing, A.A.S. (NR)*
- *Nursing Traditional, B.S. (BGN)*
- *Nursing RN to BSN Completion, B.S. (BSN)*

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The Nursing program at Pennsylvania College of Technology has been in operation for over 50 years. The practical nursing (NU) major began in 1963 as a certificate program and evolved into an associate's degree major as student and employer expectations rose. In 1988, the associate's degree (NR) major began and qualified graduates to be eligible for the registered nurse exam (NCLEX-RN). The NR major also offers practicing LPNs an opportunity to complete an associate's degree (NRL) and become eligible for the NCLEX-RN exam. In 1996, Penn College added an RN-to-BSN completion major (BSN) for registered nurses (RNs) who hold an earned associate degree or diploma and desire a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree; this option continues to offer opportunities for growth. In 2005, a pre-licensure Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree (BGN) was initiated and continues to grow as a result of employment trends requiring a BSN degree for entry-level RN positions. Since 1963 the Nursing program has supplied the community, state, and nation with over 1,500 highly trained professional nurses.

All of the Penn College nursing majors are fully accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN). A recent site visit in Fall 2015 was successful, with all majors receiving full ACEN accreditation status through the fall of 2023. In accordance with ACEN accreditation regulations, the full-time nursing faculty hold a minimum of a master's degree in nursing. Five of the full-time faculty/APT staff are prepared at the doctoral level, with eight additional faculty members presently working on a terminal degree in nursing or education. The program's faculty provide expertise from multiple specialties within the profession of nursing.

The applicant pool for nursing at Penn College remains strong. The program continues to maintain full occupancy in nearly all nursing majors. According to the American Association of Colleges of Nurses, the number of employed nurses is expected to grow from 2.75 million in 2014 to 3.19 million in 2024, an increase of 439,000 or 16%. The Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry also reports that the demand for registered nurses in Pennsylvania will grow from 136,470 in 2010 to 159,610 in 2020, a 17% growth. Accordingly, the program anticipates that Penn College Nursing graduates will continue to find employment opportunities in their field of study.

The Nursing program is dedicated to keeping abreast of the latest developments and trends in the profession of nursing and educational standards. To that end, a concerted effort, supported by the College, has been to develop a stronger simulation component to the educational offerings. The expansion of the learning laboratories over the past several years has made it possible to successfully incorporate simulation into the majority of the nursing courses.

Recommendations to maintain program excellence and facilitate increased enrollment include:

- Receive support to increase enrollment in the online RN to BSN major through reduced tuition.
- Continue development of an intensive care simulation laboratory.
- Improve employer and graduate survey response rates through use of social media.
- Improve 3-year mean NCLEX pass rates for the BGN major through various initiatives.
- Improve data collection for graduate employment information through the use of social media.
- Revise the BGN curriculum to update currency and rigor.
- Revise the NR curriculum to align with national and state standards for major credit load and completion time for an associate's degree.
- Revise HN major to ensure compliance with the ACEN standard 4 requirements to meet national and state standards for credit load and completion time.
- Separate from the School of Health Sciences to become a School of Nursing.