

Rutgers School of Nursing Assessment Plan 2015-2016

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Preface

On July 1st, 2014, the legacy UMDNJ School of Nursing and the legacy Rutgers College of Nursing integrated into a new entity known as the Rutgers School of Nursing (RU-SON). The integration presented opportunities to examine the strengths and weaknesses of existing assessment processes, scan for best practices nationally, and develop an assessment plan grounded in a data-driven approach to the achievement of the mission, vision, and goals of the newly formed school.

This document represents the inaugural assessment plan for the RU-SON. For a detailed look into the planning and research that went into the development of this plan, please refer to the “*Evaluation and Assessment – Initial Planning Report*” written in June of 2014.

Introduction

The 2015-2016 Rutgers School of Nursing Assessment Plan was devised to concurrently serve dual functions. The core function of assessment at the RU-SON is to systematically deliver actionable information to leadership in order to guide quality improvement initiatives at the institutional¹ and program level. In addition, assessment processes must sufficiently create demonstrable evidence of effectiveness monitoring and quality improvement efforts to external constituents such as accreditors, state governing bodies, and the public via publications and rankings. To this end, the assessment plan was devised with the following two goals in mind:

The intent of the 2015-2016 Assessment Plan is to position the School of Nursing to simultaneously be:

- a *data-informed* institution that is able to make well-informed, evidence-based decisions to continually improve program effectiveness, teaching/learning processes, and inform strategic planning processes (internal function)
- and*
- a *data-integrated* institution that collects, organizes, and reports data in a manner that demonstrates and provides clear evidence of institutional effectiveness to accreditors, the public, and all other external constituents (external function)

revised
December 2015

The 2015-2016 Rutgers School of Nursing Assessment Plan outlines the methodology, timeline and key information produced by each individual assessment. Discussions on creating an effective, formal process for the utilization of these assessments are currently underway with a target to have these processes formalized by the fall 2016 semester.

¹ Throughout this report, “institutional” refers to the RU-SON, not the parent Rutgers institution.

Three Foundations

The assessment plan consists of three foundations to lay the groundwork for a data-informed and data-integrated School of Nursing. In addition to delivering actionable information to guide quality improvement initiatives, these foundations will equip the RU-SON with the ability to present evidence of assessment to external constituents that is organized, comprehensive, and complete. The three foundations of the assessment plan are as follows:

- I. **Institutional Assessments** - Implement a comprehensive suite of institutional assessments which are administered and analyzed on a cyclical basis. These assessments will focus on institutional and program effectiveness using indirect measures drawn from student populations at each stage of the student life cycle.
- II. **Program Assessment** - Implement a systematic process for the assessment of student learning housed within an electronic evidence repository with reporting capabilities (Nuventive TracDat). These assessments will focus on program effectiveness using direct measures embedded into each program's curriculum.
- III. **Reporting and Analytics** - Develop accurate and efficient analytical reporting capabilities and the ability to monitor key performance metrics. This objective includes statistical programming that is replicable on a semester-basis as well as the construction of relevant databases containing key information for longitudinal analysis.

Institutional Assessments

As outlined in the 2010 Michael Middaugh book, "Planning and Assessment in Higher Education", to improve institutional effectiveness, institutions must gather feedback from students throughout all phases of the student life cycle. Relevant, actionable data will be collected from students during each of these phases through carefully crafted in-house instruments, participation in national surveys, and resources such as the National Student Clearinghouse StudentTracker query system. Below is a list of the seven institutional assessments that will be administered annually, followed by detailed descriptions.

- The Subsequent Enrollment of Accepted Students (SEAS) Report
- The New Student Questionnaire
- The Student Satisfaction and Engagement Report
- Course Evaluations
- The Non-Returning Student Report
- The Skyfactor/AACN Exit Assessment
- The Alumni Survey

The Subsequent Enrollment of Accepted Students (SEAS) Report

Population: The SEAS Report examines the applicants who were admitted to the RU-SON but declined our admissions offer by opting not to enroll at the RU-SON.

Methodology: The population will be examined using the following triangular method:

- **Part A.** An analysis of our institutional admissions data to determine what types of qualified students we are losing during the admissions process.
- **Part B.** An analysis of subsequent enrollment data obtained from the National Student Clearinghouse StudentTracker query system to determine how many of these students enrolled elsewhere, and where those students opted to enroll.
- **Part C.** A survey will be administered to the population inquiring as to why these students opted not to enroll anywhere or to enroll elsewhere.

Schedule: Administered annually each fall post-census (October) and presented in report format by January

Processes informed: The SEAS Report informs our marketing and recruiting teams by supplying information about what type of students we are losing during the admissions process, what institutions we are losing those students to, and why those students opted to enroll elsewhere. Information from the report also feeds into the RU-SON benchmarking initiative by allowing us to identify who our most prominent competitor institutions are.

The New Student Questionnaire

Population: The New Student Questionnaire examines all newly enrolled students at the RU-SON

Methodology: An in-house, web-based survey focusing on the following areas:

- Factors in their decision to apply to and attend the RU-SON
- Expectations and concerns of newly enrolled students
- Cross-applicant institutions and school choice data

Schedule: Administered annually each fall post-census (October) and presented in report format by January

Processes informed: The New Student Questionnaire informs the recruiting team with information on factors that influenced students to apply and enroll at the RU-SON such as the school website, campus visits, marketing materials, etc. The report collects data on student expectations and concerns to inform Student Services. Lastly, the report collects cross-applicant data to inform the RU-SON benchmarking initiative by allowing us to identify our most prominent competitor institutions. A formal process for the use of this data will be finalized

The Student Satisfaction and Engagement Report

Population: All enrolled students at the RU-SON

Methodology: An in-house, web-based survey focusing on the following areas:

- Satisfaction with the services, education, and resources they are receiving at the RU-SON
- Level of academic engagement

Schedule: Administered annually each spring post-census (February) and presented in report format by May

Processes informed: The Student Satisfaction and Engagement Report informs Student Services leadership by supplying satisfaction data on the services and facilities provided by the RU-SON. The report also informs academic leadership on the level of student academic engagement since research supports that academic engagement is the biggest predictor of persistence and graduation.

Course Evaluations

Population: All enrolled students and faculty at the RU-SON

Methodology: In collaboration with the Rutgers Center for Teaching Advancement and Assessment Research (CTAAR), students in all RU-SON courses are given the opportunity to evaluate all courses and instructors via the online Rutgers University intranet. Additionally, faculty members are asked to complete a self-evaluation for each section they teach. The following evaluations are conducted through this system:

- Evaluations of didactic instructors (students)
- Evaluations of clinical instructors (students)
- Clinical experience surveys evaluating clinical sites and preceptors (students)
- Faculty self-evaluations (faculty)

Schedule: Administered three times per year (fall, spring, and summer semesters). Didactic results are analyzed by CTAAR and posted online within the Rutgers University intranet system (quantitative only) with access to full didactic results (including open-ended comments) provided to academic deans within the RU-SON. Analyses of the clinical instructor evaluations and the clinical experience surveys are conducted in-house and provided to Deans via the Institutional Research and Assessment restricted drive.

Processes informed: The Course Evaluation process supports the faculty tenure and promotion process at the RU-SON. The process also provides valuable information to academic leaders on the clinical experiences of our students. The process allows us to evaluate not only our faculty, but preceptors and clinical sites which we have partnered with. Faculty self-evaluations are meant to serve as a reflective tool for faculty members to use for self-improvement, and a formal process for using aggregate data from student course evaluations and faculty self-evaluations will be created by fall 2016.

The Non-Returning Student Report

Population: The Non-Returning Student Report examines matriculating students who were enrolled in the prior fall semester at the RU-SON but are not enrolled in the current fall semester (excluding graduates)

Methodology: The population will be examined using the following triangular method:

- **Part A.** An analysis of our institutional admissions data to determine what types of students are attriting from the RU-SON
- **Part B.** An analysis of subsequent enrollment data obtained from the National Student Clearinghouse StudentTracker query system to determine how many of these students are drop-outs versus transfer-outs, and identifying transfer-out institutions
- **Part C.** A survey will be administered to the population inquiring as to why these students opted to drop-out/transfer-out

Schedule: Administered annually each fall post-census (October) and presented in report format by January

Processes informed: The Non-Returning Student Report allows academic leadership to internally evaluate attrition patterns at the RU-SON and their causes. The report allows us to calculate our transfer-out rate, a vital metric in monitoring the health of our institution. The report also collects subsequent enrollment data to inform the RU-SON benchmarking initiative by allowing us to identify who our most prominent competitor institutions are.

The Skyfactor/AACN Exit Assessment

Population: The Skyfactor/AACN Exit Assessment examines BSN, MSN, and DNP students in their final semester of enrollment at the RU-SON prior to graduation.

Methodology: The Skyfactor/AACN Exit Assessment is a national survey designed specifically for BSN, MSN and DNP nursing programs accredited by CCNE. The online survey instrument is administered by the third party assessment firm Skyfactor.

Schedule: Administered three times per year (January, May, and October) by EBI with annual results becoming available each fall. Key results are then presented in report format by January.

Processes informed: The Skyfactor/AACN Exit Assessment collects student perception data on program and institutional effectiveness, and aligns survey questions pertaining to student learning with the AACN Essentials. An in-depth analysis is provided by Skyfactor containing robust benchmarking data from hundreds of participating nursing schools. This data is shared with faculty to develop action-plans for curricular improvement.

The Alumni Survey

Population: Alumni, 10-12 months post-graduation

Methodology: An in-house, web-based survey focusing on the following areas:

- Employment data
- Future educational plans
- How well their RU-SON program prepared them for the work place

Schedule: Administered three times per year (January, May, and October semesters) with key results presented in report format by year's end.

Processes informed: The Alumni Survey provides employment rates, an important metric in determining program effectiveness and a required element in CCNE accreditation reporting. Student feedback from alumni also helps to inform both academic affairs and student services on what helped prepare them for the workplace, and what was absent in their education that would have helped prepare them.

Program Assessment

While the institutional assessments highlighted in the prior section focus on institutional effectiveness using primarily indirect measures; program assessment focuses on the effectiveness of each academic program using direct measures of student learning embedded into each program's curriculum.

The Office of Institutional Research and Assessment will work with the Associate Deans, Program Directors, and faculty during the fall 2015 and Spring 2016 semesters to develop assessment plans for each of the three BS level programs, the three MSN programs which are not being phased-out, the thirteen DNP programs currently offered (10 post-baccalaureate and 3 post-master's) and post-masters certificates. The implementation process includes the following stages:

Overall Plan Development

The program assessment plan was developed over the course of several months following the July 1st, 2014 integration. TracDat software was customized to be used as an electronic repository for the collection, reporting, and archiving of all program assessment data. The assessment plan was shared with the Deans in August of 2014 and approved for implementation.

Development of Individual Program Assessment Plans

In fall 2015 and spring 2016, the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment will work with each individual program to develop and collect the requisite information needed to produce a program level assessment plans. An Excel assessment template was created for each program for developing and collecting the following:

- Program Learning Outcomes
- Curriculum Mapping – Alignment of courses to program learning outcomes
- Measures and Criteria – Assessment methods for measuring/quantifying student achievement of program learning outcomes
- Program Learning Outcomes Mapping – Alignment of program learning outcomes to degree-level outcomes and RU-SON goals

Embedding Program Assessment into the Curriculum

Led by the Executive Vice Dean, degree-level outcomes have been created in a manner using full faculty participation and were formally approved by faculty in November of 2015. As a next step, specialty outcomes, measures, and criteria that are based upon these approved degree-level outcomes will be formally embedded into each curriculum. This will be accomplished by requiring the inclusion of all programmatic measures on their appropriate syllabi.

Data Collection

The Office of Institutional Research and Assessment will devise data collection instruments within TracDat for the systematic collection of data for each program learning outcome. This data will feed into a four-column Annual Assessment Report which will be generated to identify outcome areas in need of improvement and guide the development of action plans.

Action Planning and Follow-Up

A formalized action-planning process is currently in development. As part of this process, deans and program directors will meet annually to identify areas of weakness based on the four-column Annual Assessment Report and devise suitable action-plans for improvement. All action-planning initiatives will be documented in TracDat and will appear in subsequent four-column Annual Assessment Reports to evaluate their impact. Targeted completion for a formalized process is by spring 2016.

Future TracDat Implementations (Beyond 2016)

Once program-level assessment processes are fully implemented, TracDat usage will be expanded to include mapping of course level outcomes to program-level outcomes. This practice will be a useful tool in curricular revision and alignment. There is no intention, however, at this point to collect course-level outcome data through the program assessment process. Additionally, the RU-SON is currently investigating the feasibility of using TracDat for the assessment of administrative units as a potential future initiative.

Reporting and Analytics

The Office of Institutional Research and Assessment mission statement states that the office exists to “accumulate, generate, maintain, communicate and disseminate institutional information to support assessment, assist with planning, and inform decision-making.” In this capacity, the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment is positioned to responsibly report this information externally to stakeholders such as accreditors, State and Federal agencies, and select publications. In order to meet these reporting demands, and ensure that key data is readily available for internal decision-making, the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment takes the lead on procuring stable, recurring analytics. The following reporting projects have been designated as goals to be accomplished by 2016.

Revised Retention and Graduation Matrices

As per the AACN response to the 2014 legacy UMDNJ School of Nursing and 2014 legacy Rutgers College of Nursing Continuous Improvement Progress Reports, there is a need for the revision in the way that program completion rates are calculated at the RU-SON. The Office of Evaluation will continue to work with the Office of Institutional Research and Planning (IRAP); the central Rutgers University Office of Institutional Research, to develop revised retention and graduation programming. It is expected that the programming is completed by the summer of 2016.

Electronic Licensure and Certification Databases

NCLEX and APN certification data currently exists in paper hard copy format at the RU-SON. To expedite the process of providing analysis, particularly longitudinal information, the Office of Evaluation is currently creating comprehensive electronic databases of NCLEX licensure data at the student level and APN certification data at the specialty level. This project is expected to be completed by December of 2015.

Identification of Benchmarking Groups

A strategy to create a peer, aspirant, and competitor benchmark groups has been outlined. The first deliverable in this project will be the generation of each list along with written documentation of the methodology used to create each list. This project is expected to be completed by summer of 2016.

Conclusion

With the integration of the legacy UMDNJ School of Nursing and the legacy Rutgers College of Nursing, we are presented with an opportunity to create a new School of Nursing that is truly data-informed, data-integrated, and able to clearly demonstrate institutional and program effectiveness. The 2015-2016 Rutgers School of Nursing Assessment Plan was devised to systematically deliver actionable information to leadership while creating clear and demonstrable evidence of systematic effectiveness monitoring and quality improvement to external constituents and the public. Ultimately, this assessment plan serves to equip the new School of Nursing with the informational tools necessary to bring it closer to the realization of its mission, vision, and goals. These assessments also serve as the foundation for taking the next step of creating an effective, formal process to utilize assessment data for continual improvement of our programs and services.

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