Contact: Diana Gonzalez

ANESTHESIA NURSING PROGRAMS
ACCREDITATION REPORT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA

Action Requested: Receive the accreditation report for the Anesthesia Nursing Programs in the College of Nursing at the University of Iowa.

Executive Summary: The Anesthesia Nursing Programs (1) underwent a self-study that addressed the standards and criteria defined by the accrediting body; and (2) had an on-site visit by peer evaluators. The master's (re-accreditation) and doctoral (initial accreditation) programs were accredited for the maximum ten-year period through 2020. This accreditation report addresses the Board of Regents Strategic Plan priority to provide "educational excellence and impact."

Background:

◆   Description of Programs.

   ☑   The *Master of Nursing Practice in Anesthesia Nursing (MSN)* is a 30-month program with a curriculum which includes basic information in pharmacology and anesthesia principles. Courses are sequenced to provide the student with didactic lectures that occur prior to clinical assignments in the anesthesia specialty area. Students take courses in Anesthesia and Pharmacology for the Health Sciences, Human Anatomy, Physiology, Pathophysiology, Basic Principles of Anesthesia Practice, and Advanced Principles of Anesthesia Nursing. The last class of MSN students will graduate in 2012. Future classes of anesthesia nursing students will be admitted to the Doctor of Nursing Practice Program.

   ☑   The *Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) Anesthesia Nursing Program* is jointly sponsored by the College of Nursing and the Carver College of Medicine. It is designed for RNs with a minimum of a bachelor's degree in Nursing (BSN, BAN) who wish to pursue a career as a nurse anesthetist (CRNA) and prepares expert clinicians to be leaders in the profession of nurse anesthesia and the U.S. health care system. The DNP is a 36 month 80-credit intense course of study. Practicing CRNAs with an MSN degree may complete their DNP degree by taking 29 additional graduate credits. This program was approved by the Board of Regents in June 2007 and admitted the first class in Fall 2007.

◆   Purpose of Accreditation. An accredited educational program is recognized by its peers as having met state and national standards for its development and evaluation.

◆   Accrediting Agency.   The accrediting body for these programs is the Council on Accreditation of Nurse Anesthesia Educational Program (COA).

◆   Review Process. The self-study prepared by the Anesthesia Nursing Programs contained the responses to the standards required by the accrediting body: governance; resources; program of study; program effectiveness; and accountability. There was an additional standard for practice-oriented doctoral degrees.

◈   <u>On-Site Team Report</u>. In April 2010, the visiting team determined that the Anesthesia Nursing Programs met the requirements for accredited status although there were three criteria that were partially in compliance and one criterion that was not in compliance.

◈   <u>Sample Strengths Identified by the Visiting Team</u>.

    ☑ "Program has a strong history of producing highly qualified providers who are highly skilled and can work in any anesthesia setting."

    ☑ "Certification examination success is above national means."

    ☑ "Clinical experience is outstanding in volume and acuity."

    ☑ "Students get rich experience in regional anesthesia, CVC insertion, and other key skill areas."

    ☑ "The Program Director has taken positive steps to effect purposeful change, engage the community of interest, and work closely with the College of Nursing to move the program forward."

    ☑ "The students report that stimulation and other interactive educational experiences greatly enhance the educational experience."

◈   <u>Summary of Student Achievement</u>.

    ☑ "Attrition in the program is very low. There is a 4.6% attrition rate since program inception."

    ☑ "Certification first-time pass rates are 97% with 100% total pass rate."

    ☑ "Employment rates are 100%."

◈   <u>Areas Needing Improvement</u>. (University responses are in italics.)

    ☑ Standard I, Criterion A10 – The institution's and/or program's committee structure is appropriate to meet program objectives, and includes public, student, and faculty participation. **Partial compliance** – "Documentation of regular meetings of program committees is not available. The new program director has re-instituted meetings; one Steering Committee meeting has been held in the past six months. A meeting of the Admission Subcommittee was also held. The program needs to show evidence that its public member attends Steering Committee meetings and is engaged in committee activities."

        "The University of Iowa Anesthesia Nursing Program has held a number of electronic curriculum and evaluation committee meetings since the new program director took over. Clinical preceptor CRNAs and clinical coordinators are communicated with regularly and asked for their input about what changes in the curriculum, class schedule, clinical schedule, etc. are needed. The program director scheduled a steering committee meeting for August 17, 2010. This was the first possible date that a majority of members including the public member could attend due to summer vacations. The minutes of this meeting will be forwarded to the COA office by August 24, 2010. Regular steering committee meetings are planned bi-monthly throughout the Fall and Spring semesters and as needed otherwise. A clinical coordinators meeting is planned for October 24, 2010 in conjunction with the Iowa Association of Nurse Anesthetists meeting. This will facilitate attendance by clinical coordinators located throughout the state."

☑ Standard III, Criterion C11 – Distance education programs and courses satisfy accreditation standards and achieve the same outcomes as traditional educational offerings. **Partial compliance** – "Both students and guest faculty indicate ongoing issues with distance education offerings including problems with transmission causing class delays, lack of guest instructor familiarity with methods of transmission, lack of technical support, and lack of alternatives for obtaining the material. Outcomes do not appear to differ between cohorts given the overall success of students in the program."

"The University of Iowa has offered a distance education format for the program since 2004. This has enabled students with families and established professional networks to remain in their home communities to receive their education. All students who attended the program via this distance format have successfully completed the program, passed the NBCRNA national certification exam and are employed as CRNAs. Most are employed in their home community where they received their education. Three years ago, the University of Iowa terminated the contract with the original company that had been delivering live video, audio, and captured didactic lecture content to the distance site. The new vendor for distance education software proved unsuccessful to meet our students and professors needs. This year, the University contracted with a new vendor to provide asynchronous digital capture of all lecture material, which is available to the student within four hours of the live lecture. This new system was extensively tested by the IT division and was used very successfully during the Summer 2010 semester. During Summer 2010, the system provided 97% of captured lectures to students within four hours, 75% within one hour, and about 50% in less than one hour. The University also has a second system in place that delivers live real-time two-way audio of the lecture content while it is taking place. This provides a redundancy that was not in place in the past should either of the new systems fail. The new software also allows for additional functionality and delivery modes that the older software did not. For example, the digital video is able to capture screen graphics, video presentations, and instructor body language at a much higher resolution than was possible with the prior system.

Both students and professors that have experienced this system are very satisfied. Students are able to view and review the lectures multiple times on their schedules. They are also able to review the lectures again before comprehensive exams. The system has the capability for live, synchronous broadcasting which the IT division will be Beta-testing during the Fall 2010 semester. The University will be using this lecture capture system campus-wide this fall.

The hardware and software in the program's electronic distance classroom have been updated with this new, more functional, less complicated equipment and software. The department of Anesthesia and College of Nursing IT personnel have agreed to provide dual support to the program to make sure the students and instructors needs are met. A meeting will be held the week before the Fall 2010 semester begins and all subsequent semesters to show all instructors for that semester how to work the technology. Instructions will also be placed next to the computer and the desk podium in the classroom where lectures are given. Carver College of Medicine and College of Nursing IT personnel are fully engaged and actively verifying all technology in all classrooms that will be used for the Fall 2010 semester.

☑ Standard IV, Criterion D3e – The program relies upon periodic evaluations from its communities of interest to determine program effectiveness; c. Employer evaluations of recent graduates. **Non-compliance** – "Employer evaluation data is not available. A plan is in place to identify employers of graduates, conduct surveys, and obtain this data."

"The program attempted to contact ALL employers that have hired program graduates since the last accreditation visit. Employers were sent surveys and results have been collected and summarized. Response rate to our surveys was 64%. An excel file for data on the cumulative employer responses as to the quality of and employer satisfaction ratings for our graduates was submitted."

☑ Standard IV, Criterion D3d – The program relies upon periodic evaluations from its communities of interest to determine program effectiveness; d. Alumni evaluations of the program. **Partial compliance** – "Only one (1) class' data is available since the midpoint of the program's accreditation cycle. This data is required annually. CRNA graduates, clinical affiliates and physicians working with graduates verbally state that graduates are highly competent and sought after for employment."

"The program has attempted to contact all graduates of the program since the last accreditation visit. Graduates were initially sent a survey in the mail to which the response rate was 19%. Many of the graduates with whom we have regular contact that did not return the survey were contacted. Most stated that the survey was too long, took too much time, and they would not have time to send it back. The survey was then converted to a simple response form in an easy to use electronic format. This form was then e-mailed to the graduates who could open it, answer the questions, save it, and return it to the program administrative assistant electronically. Those who did not return this short form survey were contacted in person and program staff recorded those responses. Cumulative response rate to these three attempts was 71%.

The College of Nursing Office of the Dean is collecting information from a variety of vendors to perform this data collection electronically for all educational programs within the College. The anesthesia nursing programs will continue to collect this valuable information until the College feels confident to manage this task for us."

◇ Accreditation Status. In November 2010, the Council on Accreditation awarded continued accreditation to the Anesthesia Nursing Programs at the University of Iowa for the maximum ten-year period through 2020. This decision recognizes the program for providing a graduate level curriculum leading to the awarding of the Master of Science in Nursing and the Doctor of Nursing Practice degrees. As is required for all accredited programs, the programs must submit anonymous faculty and student evaluations at the mid-point of the accreditation cycle. The DNP program must also submit a focused self-study on Standards relevant to the doctoral degree for review by the Council with the evaluations. All suggestions for improvement have been addressed by the University.

"The Council would like the program to know that very few programs are granted accreditation with no progress report required. Even fewer programs have achieved the maximum accreditation of ten years."

In 2010*, U. S. News and World Report* ranked the nurse anesthetist program as #5 in the country.