

Executive Summary

Self-Study 2005

Accreditation is essential for an institution of higher learning. Under the authority of the Higher Education Act, accreditation is required for institutions to gain access to federal financial assistance. Transfer institutions also require accreditation for valid and meaningful articulation agreements. Accreditation extends across state lines, assuring students, parents, and the public that an institution adheres to high standards of quality based on research and successful professional practice.

This self-study is conducted in partial fulfillment of requirements for accreditation by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. This summary provides an overview of the major findings of the Good Samaritan College of Nursing and Health Science Self-study Report 2005. The last self-study was conducted in 2003, resulting in candidacy for accreditation. The College is now preparing for the September 19-21, 2005 visit to the campus by a team of external consultant-evaluators for initial accreditation.

Over the past five years, the Good Samaritan College of Nursing and Health Science has emerged as an institution of higher learning that is student-centered, academically rigorous, and forward looking. The mission has been disseminated broadly and endorsed enthusiastically by the Board, administration, faculty, staff, and students. The programs, activities, and policies of the College are implemented with attention to mission directives.

The past five years have witnessed major strides in planning. Throughout this period, the mission has guided College planning and budgeting, thereby preserving the institution's distinct identity. Progress has been made along several dimensions with the addition of a general education assessment plan, centrality of general education in the College programs, and a more intense learning focus. Impressive progress has been made in the commitment to teaching and learning.

An emphasis on teaching is evident both in budgetary decisions and in classroom transactions. Faculty members are effective instructors who take pride in their students' learning. Faculty members take advantage of opportunities to improve their teaching through professional development, particularly in instructional technologies, and they are recognized with teaching awards and honors. Progressing as a consciously student-centered institution, the College has formulated assessment strategies that benefit students. Learning goals are publicized, programs are improved with assessment data, and instructors modify their strategies based on data from students.

The College continues to be enriched by strong connections among its constituents and with the broader community. Schools, health centers, businesses, and community agencies offer students invaluable practical experiences. These constituencies provide a wealth of information for the College.

The College embraced the recommendations of the consultant-evaluators since the 2003 HLC accreditation review. Today, campus-wide learning, particularly student learning, is given the focused attention that is its due. These and other accomplishments reveal that Good Samaritan College is well positioned to move forward and face the challenges summarized in this self-study document.

In the process of analyzing the new criteria and planning this report, it was decided to focus the report on responses to the five new criteria. However, it is also important to address this report according to the HLC four crosscutting themes:

The Future Oriented Organization
The Learning Focused Organization
The Connected Organization
The Distinctive Organization

Realizing this topical approach to an overview has great merit, it is imperative to speak to the themes in this summary. We fully believe that the statements made in this section are supported by the data discussed in this document.

The Future-Oriented Organization

Engages in planning

The College definitely models the use of strategic planning. The very emergence of our institution as a college is demonstration of a future orientation. The history presented in Chapter One reflects the timeline of development. The decision to form the College was based on the needs of our students, the needs of the community, the needs of TriHealth and Good Samaritan Hospital, and the future capability of the then envisioned College. Since 2001, the College has operated on a five-year strategic plan. The College solicits broad input from constituencies, both on and off campus. The College responded to a concern raised in the 2003 HLC accreditation visit to link strategic planning with budgeting. The restructured strategic planning and budgeting cycle is now in place. Evidence abounds that planning is a strength of the College.

Is driven by the mission

Good Samaritan College of Nursing and Health Science is focused on its mission of providing a quality education that leads to a life consistent with Catholic/Christian values. No decision, large or small, is exempt from the commitment made by the Board, president, administration, faculty, and staff to that mission. From the first contact with the College, both new students and new staff are clearly presented that mission.

Understands social and economic change

The College stays in touch with its constituencies and responds to social and economic changes, within the scope allowed by our specialized nature. Most recently, an aggressive effort to accomplish the College technology plan reflects the changing society and our students to an information age. The facility planning also demonstrates the broader understanding of the College's capacity and needs for the future.

Focuses on the futures of constituents

The College seeks, processes, and responds to input from a broad range of constituents. Using alumni, Board members, employers, area colleges, student, and faculty input, the administration looks not only to immediate concerns but also to long-term issues. Most recently, the College recognized the importance of faculty development for the long-term advancement and growth of the institution. The funding of technology is of primary importance and is also incorporated in fundraising and development planning.

The College has formed articulation agreements with local colleges and universities for our students to complete Bachelor of Science degrees. A partnership has been formed with Xavier University to preceptor graduate students specializing in nursing education as we do our part to educate the next generation of nursing faculty.

Integrated new technology

The College has aggressively completed our technology plan in response to a concern raised in the 2003 HLC accreditation visit. The College is moving to a complete digital environment in our media center. Technology has emerged throughout the College, as the addition of computers, software, internet access and communication, electronic manikins and audio-visual equipment evidence dramatically. Technology is being carefully selected and implemented to serve the campus. The funding of future technology is of primary importance and is incorporated in development planning.

The Learning-Focused Organization

Assesses student learning

The development of the general education goals, the general education assessment plan, and inventory of student learning outcomes assessment represents an effective effort to integrate assessment into the culture of the College. Today, under the direction of the Director of Institutional Advancement and Assessment and the Assessment Committee, assessment drives decisions across the campus. In the academic sector, curricular, pedagogic, and resource decisions derive from learning outcomes that are measured and evaluated. What was a concern in 2003 is now an organizational strength.

Supports learning

The College demonstrates its commitment to student learning and excellence by providing resources to support that learning. Technology improvements that include expanded access to computers, classroom improvements, manikins, microscopes, and improvements with the internet all demonstrate the College commitment. The increase in faculty, for both general education and nursing, in fiscally difficult times is another example of the commitment. Finally, facility planning completed by the College demonstrates we are looking to the future. Virtually, all of the square footage increase in the plans is for the teaching environment.

Creates the capacity for lifelong learning

Students are immersed into a unique environment through a strong general education program that prepares them for the nursing profession. Students leave the College with a solid foundation of knowledge, skills, and dispositions that positions them not only to succeed in their careers but to further their education in those careers and to continue learning to meet the changing work and world environment they will encounter.

Strengthens organizational learning

Good Samaritan College is committed to growing as an institution, not in size necessarily, but in effectiveness. Affirming a call to centralize general education, the faculty strives to improve our general education goals, the general education assessment plan and processes, and the data needed for decision-making. The development of the College Readiness Program and the Capstone assessment will help the College help the students be successful and help the College learn about itself and move confidently into the future.

The Connected Organization

Serves the common good

Driven by a mission, vision, and goals that clearly espouses the values of the College and that serve the common good – values-based education, wellness, ethical behavior, and good citizenship – administrators, faculty, staff, and students try to model these values in all their actions. One measure of success is the positive relationship that exists between the College and the community. The College emphasizes curricular and co-curricular programs and activities that provide an opportunity to grow and learn.

Serve constituents

The College is dedicated to serving its constituents. For its students, the College provides a quality education in the nursing discipline that prepares them for successful careers and a life based on high standards of professional behavior and service. For the College community of faculty and staff, GSC provides opportunities for professional development that draw upon the assets of TriHealth; and College fundraising and development that are dynamic and support fulfillment of each individual's needs. For the Alumni, the College provides an avenue of service and support for each member to foster an ongoing commitment to the experience of learning and to this educational institution. For the community, the College has a 109-year history of providing professional nurses to the community of healthcare providers.

Creates a culture of service

As a Catholic institution, our mission and goals are based on values of service. The nursing profession, at its core, is a discipline based on service. Good Samaritan College, like Good Samaritan Hospital, was founded on the principles represented by the parable of the Good Samaritan. The College plans and provides curricular and co-curricular programs and activities that emphasize service. Administrators, faculty, staff, and students have participated side by side in these planned programs and student-organized projects.

Collaborates

The College collaborates with diverse organizations and groups to achieve many of its goals. This model of collaboration is represented in program workings of the College by participation in the Ohio Board of Regents mobility initiatives and the articulation agreements with regional colleges and universities. The College collaborates in regional initiatives through the Greater Cincinnati Health Council and the Greater Cincinnati Consortium of Colleges and Universities good citizenship through community and professional organizations. A recent

agreement to provide mentors for graduate student preceptorships symbolizes these relationships.

Engages in healthy internal communication

The College maintains open and direct communication links. Numerous on-campus and off-campus publications, regular faculty and administration meetings, electronic communication links, committee structures, and accessibility of the President, administration, faculty and staff that only a small institution can afford, allow and encourage communication among all the parties. Concerted changes in technology, Edline, and internet and the use of email are opening communication avenues. Nevertheless, communication is always a concern to keep everyone informed of administrative decisions.

The Distinctive Organization

Has an unambiguous mission

Good Samaritan College of Nursing and Health Science have an unequivocal mission statement that is made available to all constituencies in a variety of forums. The College is mission-centered and mission-driven in planning and allocating resources. The College strives to be the regional leader in providing nursing and health care education in a unique Catholic and hospital-based college environment.

Appreciates diversity

The value the College places on diversity is woven throughout its mission documents. Diversity of thought and culture, intellectual freedom, equal opportunity, and preparing students to contribute to a changing and diverse society are essential parts of our College. Diversity and equity do not end with published statements. The College endeavors, throughout the programs, to educate its students regarding cultural diversity. The philosophy of general education and the nursing program philosophy provide a broad base that is relevant to all educated persons. As TriHealth initiates a system wide diversity program, the College will easily adapt from focusing on the mixture of diversity within the organization to understanding that we are diverse and our need to address its impact on each other daily, personally, and professionally.

Is accountable

The College demonstrates its accountability by striving to comply with all legal and ethical obligations incumbent upon an institution of higher education. These include, but are not limited to, compliance with federal, state, and local laws and the strictures of regional and specialized accreditation agencies. Therefore, the College strives to fulfill the commitments and expectations, in so far as possible,

implied by its mission, presence, and contractual obligations. This accountability is made available to the College's constituents through numerous on-campus and off-campus publications.

Is self-reflective

Good Samaritan College of Nursing and Health Science is a young college but has emerged from a 109-year history of a commitment to education and service. As this college came about, we engaged our constituencies in evaluation processes that lead to the development of the mission, vision, and goals. Through ongoing planning processes at multiple levels, evaluation processes built into shared governance, we continually appraise our ability to fulfill our mission.

Is committed to improvement

Good Samaritan College of Nursing and Health Science has established an ongoing process for evaluating the needs of its constituents. The purpose of quality improvement in education is to "improve quality of learning and instruction, to increase satisfaction of the learners, and to ensure that graduates are competent to meet the needs of the society in which they will work and live." The College's focus on continuous improvement is consistent with this broader view in higher education. Better facilities, better preparation of faculty, stronger and broader academic programs, better networking among constituencies, and greater service will continue to be important to our future.

Criterion Summary

Criterion One

The mission documents define and shape the priorities and operations of the College. Support and commitment to the institutional mission and institutional integrity are apparent in the day-to-day activities of the institution and its long-range planning. The College's established planning, decision-making, communication, and assessment processes are all designed specifically to evaluate and direct programs in consideration of mission-related goals. Thus, these internal processes set forth the commitment of Good Samaritan College of Nursing and Health Science to its institutional mission. This affords the College the opportunity to operate with integrity, as well as to uphold public trust. The patterns of evidence demonstrate that Good Samaritan College of Nursing and Health Science fully meets this accreditation standard for initial accreditation.

Evidence that demonstrates the criterion is met:

The College mission and goals clearly define an institution of higher education.

The Board of Trustees, administration, faculty, staff, and students are aware of and support the mission and goals.

The mission and goals are publicly stated and are published in a variety of ways to assure the College constituencies are informed.

The Board of Trustees has approved a Strategic Plan that is guided by the College mission and goals.

The College has a history of assessment and uses outcomes to guide and direct decision-making.

The "Care and Share" program reflects the mission and values of the College.

The College demonstrates integrity and full disclosure, and provides accessible information through the catalog, faculty handbook, student handbook, and web site.

Policies and practices express the ethical values of the College.

Evidence that demonstrates the criterion is met but needs institutional attention:

Broaden the College's characterization of diversity in view of changes to the TriHealth corporate strategy.

Apply due diligence to the evaluative process of the mission, vision, and goals in the next year.

Develop a more concise definition of what constitutes a complaint.

Criterion Two

Good Samaritan College of Nursing and Health Science is emerging as a collegiate entity during a period of fundamental transformation for education in general. Rapidly advancing technologies and an ever-changing global environment necessitate that institutions of higher learning be well-placed to respond to these developments.

In addition to strategic planning adjustments, the College has unhesitatingly directed attention towards improving its technology by completing a lofty technology plan in just two years. This institution has also been very proactive in addressing circumstances related to the shortage of nurses and nurse educators—the College is doing all it can to accommodate growing enrollments and has taken deliberate measures to meet staffing needs. The College has always enjoyed an atmosphere of multicultural tolerance; but the concept of diversity is being expanded to incorporate less obvious distinctions between individuals.

Quality at Good Samaritan College is a matter of fact. The College endeavors *to be the regional leader in providing nursing and health care education*. This is achieved through a strong resource base that includes qualified and dedicated faculty, administrators, and staff; an enthusiastic student population; and committed guidance from the leadership of TriHealth, Inc. The College also enjoys a high level of financial assistance in the form of contributions and endowments from alumni and other benefactors as well as the general fiscal support of the parent organization. Support from TriHealth/Good Samaritan Hospital is also evident in the physical plant and the explicit consideration of the College's future needs in the major renovations of the Good Samaritan Hospital campus.

The effectiveness of this college is additionally assured by actions that advance the institution and promote student learning. The College Assessment Program and its associated processes establish the standards of quality and provide the evidence of achievement. Data collection is continual and those data are readily employed in decision-making and planning; and planning has been shown to adhere to the mission, vision, values, and goals of this institution ad infinitum.

Evidence that demonstrates the criterion is met:

Coordinated planning processes center on mission documents that define the vision, values, goals, and strategic priorities for the organization.

Planning processes involve internal constituents and, where appropriate, external constituents.

The technology plan was aggressively implemented.

The College readily supports the educational opportunities afforded the administration, faculty, and staff.

Education and professional development are available through TriHealth.

A system of shared governance and management is in place and involves all levels of the College, Board, administration, faculty, staff, and students.

Evidence that demonstrates the criterion is met but needs institutional attention:

The recently completed facility plan requires multiple sources of financial support.

Following the completion of the first five year cycle of the Institutional Assessment Plan, the College will examine the model to ensure achievement of the College goals.

Expand scholarships and use the funds strategically in support of our mission to serve students of differing interests, plans, expectations, and ages.

Improve student attendance at meetings of standing committees.

Continue monitoring report of committee minutes for adequate citation and appropriate use of data.

Criterion Three

The foundation of Good Samaritan College of Nursing and Health Science is firmly rooted in the ideals established by the school from which it emerged. That former institution possessed a vibrant history of excellence in service and education that continues today. Our institution imparts a number of enduring measures that exemplify the quality of instruction: the attitudes and diligence of our current students; the accolades our students receive from clinicians; the performance of our graduates on the RN licensure exam; and the respect our graduates garner from their employers.

The College has definitely increased its awareness of and emphasis on student learning as a gauge of efficacy. This is unmistakable throughout the College Assessment Program. The College has deliberately developed program goals to drive student attainment of learning outcomes. Assessment processes have been concentrated to gather evidentiary data at all levels: course, program, and institutional. This is promulgated by the formalization of reporting for course and program-level assessment of student learning and the creation of an inventory of student learning outcomes assessment.

This expanded emphasis on student learning outcomes as a distinct measure of institutional effectiveness necessarily lends credence to instructional merit. The faculty of the College receives a high level of support for continuing education and professional development. The resources available to the College, its students, and its personnel (financial, human, physical) are extensive and have enriched teaching and learning.

Evidence that demonstrates the criterion is met:

The College Assessment Program assures a multilevel approach to the measurement of student learning.

The addition of the Director of Institutional Advancement and Assessment provides leadership and oversight of assessment processes.

The development of the College Readiness Program and the Capstone assessment demonstrates the centrality of general education to the institution.

Financial support dedicated to faculty development demonstrates the organizational commitment to and support of effective teaching.

College resources (financial, human, physical) provide an environment for student learning.

The Inventory of Student Learning Outcomes Assessment conveys the broad based approach to assess student learning.

Faculty are highly qualified, with knowledge and experience in their respective disciplines.

The educational programs reflect the College mission and goals and are sound, proven, academically rigorous, and promote intellectual interaction between and among faculty and students.

The curriculum design provides a solid core of general education and is contemporary and congruent with the requirements for an associate degree.

Evidence that demonstrates the criterion is met but needs institutional attention:

Continue pilot of the Capstone assessment, focusing on refinement of the rubrics to secure consistency in measurement.

Strategic planning, in the face of a growing nursing faculty shortage, must assure academic excellence and quality of faculty.

Continue refinement of program to improve college readiness and student success.

Criterion Four

Good Samaritan College of Nursing and Health Science is dedicated to producing graduates who are *independently creative, informed and dependable, and socially aware and responsible*. This is obvious in the mission, vision, and goals of the College; and further evidenced by the repositioning of the general education program, aligning the curriculums, centralizing assessment, and expediting completion of the technology plan.

Lifelong learning is a central component of the educational objectives. The general education program endeavors to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary for a lifetime of intellectual discovery. The faculty and staff of the College are encouraged to continue their education; and the College sponsors a variety of educational programs for students, faculty, staff, alumni, and other constituents. These opportunities not only strengthen the quality of our personnel, but also display a paradigm of lifelong learning to the students.

Good Samaritan College is a dynamic and vibrant institution of higher learning. Its academic programs are responsive to change and the faculty actively seek to maintain pertinent curricula. This is served by the five-year cycle of program review, the implementation of a formal process for program and course planning, and the demonstrated ability to act outside the established review cycle if necessary.

Support for faculty, students, and staff is inherent at this college. The range of services available to students has been clearly articulated throughout the report. The philosophical basis of these services and the manner in which they are administered sets an ethical tone for what is, in turn, expected of students. The Student Conduct Policy dictates that students are to respect the rights of others and avoid behavior that is unethical or immoral. Social responsibility is an intrinsic value, exemplified in the mission and goals.

Evidence that demonstrates the criterion is met:

The College invests in the professional development of its faculty through work/loan and tuition support for continuing education.

Policies and procedures reflect contemporary ethical behavior expected of students, faculty, and staff.

The College's commitment to the value of lifelong learning is reflected in strategic plan initiatives, with 100% of the budget allocated to the acquisition of knowledge.

Administrators of the College develop professional skills by participation in the "Leadership Academy", a TriHealth program that advances leadership qualities.

Evidence that demonstrates the criterion is met but needs institutional attention:

Faculty teaching in the nursing program will verify adherence to the ten recommendations related to evidence-based practice in nursing education posited by the NLN position statement, Transforming Nursing Education.

The College longitudinal assessment of graduates should be strengthened to capture outcome data that measure lifelong learning.

Criterion Five

Good Samaritan College is steeped in a history of service to the community and continues this tradition by upholding its mission and goals. Engagement with the community occurs through numerous programs which the College arranges or in which it partakes. Students are also ready participants in a variety of service activities, whether through course requirements or as part of college-wide collaborations.

Continuing education programs, community education, workshops, employee training, and a variety of community service projects are provided by the College. Collaborations with other institutions of higher learning, affiliated organizations, and professional associations constitute other aspects of external involvement. The College also depends upon advisory boards to provide feedback for institutional advancement and improvement.

The College strives to meet the needs of its constituents in a manner that is most beneficial and appropriate to each party. The emergence of the College took place under the auspices of numerous agents: administration and staff, faculty, students, TriHealth leadership, community leaders, alumni, employers, nursing professionals. These relationships are indispensable and continue to inspire the direction taken

by the College. Strategic planning is, to a large extent, based upon the evaluation of assessments from various constituents. The evidence provided illustrates that the College will, within the confines of its resources, act in the best interests of its constituents.

Evidence that demonstrates the criterion is met:

The College mission, vision, and goals were developed with input from a broad base of constituents.

Each assessment plan involves internal and external constituents in ongoing evaluation cycles.

The richness of the diversity in the student body has contributed to our engagement with the community.

The College has connected with the community by providing professional educational offerings.

The College, through articulation agreements with regional colleges and universities, provides graduates with opportunities for seamless completion of bachelor degrees.

Evidence that demonstrates the criterion is met but needs institutional attention:

Broaden the scope of service learning in the curriculum.

Complete the articulation agreement with Regis University to provide a distance learning opportunity for our graduates to complete a bachelor degree.

Summary of Responses to the 2003 Visit

Every attempt has been made to maintain or improve the strengths recognized at the last visit. Clearly, the College recognized the need to focus on areas requiring attention but this was not at the expense of any other services, programs, processes, or procedures. The personnel of the institution maintained the commitment to excellence in all areas while striving to improve based on the suggestions of the consultant-evaluators.

The responses we have provided clearly indicate that the College has been extremely proactive in addressing the three concerns noted by the consultant-evaluators. General Education has become a principal focus of the College; assessment has become a centralized function and the processes have been streamlined; the Board of Trustees approved a new model that links strategic planning to the annual budgeting cycle.

The faculty, staff, and administration undertook a great deal of activity to bring the General Education Program to the forefront of the educational offerings of the institution.

- Established general education as the foundation upon which all other programming builds
- Revised general education goals
- Developed an assessment plan specifically for the General Education Program
- Solidified entry-level testing
- Created the College Readiness Program and expanded services and resources to meet the needs of this initiative
- Increased library holdings related to general education
- Piloted a capstone assessment in Nursing V

The assessment of student learning has always been a very important aspect of the College's quest for exceptional institutional effectiveness. This has become readily apparent through a number of initiatives put into place over the past several years:

- Hired a Director of Institutional Advancement and Assessment (new position)
- Formalized process for reporting and planning program- and course-level assessment
- Instituted use of more direct and indirect, summative and formative assessment measures
- Developed an Inventory of Student Learning Outcomes Assessment
- Centralized data management functions under the Director of Institutional Advancement and Assessment
- Established need and process for linking results of entry-level testing to other outcome data

The President of the College developed a model that links the planning process to the budget.

- Achieved overwhelming support from the Board of Trustees for the new model
- Evolved the strategic planning process to link more evidently with the budgeting cycle
- Connected strategic planning directly to opportunities for change and/or improvement
- Integrated planning and assessment

The College also needed to address several concerns that met the criteria but still required some attention from the institution. Briefly summarized:

- Changed the organizational structure to incorporate a new position, Director of Institutional Advancement and Assessment
- Revised the bylaws to improve the structure for faculty leadership
- Audited personnel files and strengthened adherence to established records policy
- Benefited from increased number of parking spaces that were a result of a major construction project
- Completed the technology plan
- Realigned enrollment management functions
- Evolved the assessment of student learning outcomes into an independent function, separate from the specific evaluation of institutional effectiveness
- Centralized activities pertaining to the assessment of student learning outcomes under the purview of the Director of Institutional Advancement and Assessment
- Expanded the breadth of general education offerings and noticeably incorporated general education goals and outcomes into all courses
- Increased library holdings in direct support of general education
- Added members with higher education knowledge and experience to the Board of Trustees
- Participated in the development of the Hospital's master facility planning in order to ensure that needs of the College will be addressed
- Formalized the program and course-level planning processes in order to directly incorporate information resulting from the assessment of student learning
- Created a means (Strategic Plan Goal Summary) to illustrate how the educational programs address the overall goals and strategies of the strategic plan