

Attending: Mary Sheehy Moe, Deputy Commissioner for Two-Year Education; Sylvia Moore, Deputy Commissioner for Academic and Student Affairs; Sandra Sacry – UM Helena COT; Danette Melvin – Montana Tech; Mary Nielsen – UM Missoula COT; Myrna Ridenour – Flathead Valley Community College; Cindy Rossmith – MSU-Billings COT; Mary Pappas – MSU-Northern

Update on Operational Rules

In reviewing the Operational Rules for Implementation, the following updates were suggested to align the rules with current practice:

Rule 5) PN-only programs are currently offered by Montana State University-Great Falls College of Technology and Flathead Valley Community College. FVCC would like to add the ASN option by adding Semesters 5 and 6 of the model curriculum in order to serve their students and their communities better.

Rule 6) The Registered Nursing programs that follow the model curriculum are located at Montana Tech of The University of Montana, The University of Montana-Helena College of Technology, The University of Montana-Missoula College of Technology, Montana State University-Northern, and Montana State University-Billings College of Technology. Montana Tech and MSU-Northern do not offer the PN exit option in the model curriculum [*although Operational Rule #9 specifically guarantees that option for students in the model RN curriculum*]. To serve students better, the other programs require all fourth-semester students to take the Leadership course, so that those who are not admitted into Semesters 5 and 6 may sit for the NCLEX-PN and become LPNs.

Rule 7) The Registered Nursing programs that do not follow the model curriculum are located at Miles Community College and Montana State University-Bozeman.

Rule 10) The Transition to Registered Nursing course is currently offered by five (5) nursing programs. Montana Tech is authorized to offer the course, with the didactic portion online, but has never needed to offer it. MSU-Northern offers the course each spring semester, with the didactic portion offered on-line. Miles Community College offers the course with the didactic portion on interactive television. In addition, MSU-Billings offers the course both spring and fall semesters with the didactic portion online, as well as summer session as needed, and UM-Missoula and UM-Helena also offer the course. [*All programs offering the model curriculum now offer the Transitions course as part of Semester 5. The intent of the original rule was to ensure that a didactic option for this course was available through distance-delivery to all Montana students throughout the year so the proliferation of courses and the absence of an online offering fall semesters may need to be addressed. It is not clear that the “skills day” component of the course is consistently provided as outlined in Rule 10b.*]

Footnote) The footnote clarifying the PN emphasis of the model curriculum at The UM-Missoula College of Technology is no longer the case and should be eliminated.

Model Nursing Curriculum

1. Directors are concerned that the Anatomy and Physiology FLOC has not completed its work. They have heard the A&P I and II that has been designated as the common course in all nursing curricula may not be deemed equivalent by the FLOC. Deputy Commissioner Moe will follow up with Dr. Macgregor, Director of the Transfer Initiative.
2. Campuses have needed considerable flexibility in providing Semesters One and Two as outlined. The operational rules provide that flexibility, as long as no additional coursework, alternative coursework, or hidden prerequisites are required. It was agreed that switching Nutrition to the second semester on

those campuses requiring Inorganic Chemistry as a prerequisite for the course was consistent with the operational rules since both courses are required in Semesters One and Two. However, requiring Biology as the prerequisite for Nutrition would be either a hidden prerequisite or an additional course and would not be acceptable.

3. Although all campuses require College Algebra for the students in their own programs, some campuses accept students who transfer in having completed a different college-level math course. Other campuses accept only College Algebra from transfer students. The operational rules are clear that College Algebra is the required course and that students must have received a C or better in that course.¹ It was also noted that accepting only College Algebra for the pre-nursing math course makes the playing field even when students apply for admission into the nursing program.
4. FVCC has encountered a problem with the differing pre-nursing math requirements for nursing programs that students may begin at FVCC. While the model nursing curriculum requires College Algebra, MSU's program requires M 216, Intro to Statistics, which has Probability and Linear Math as a prerequisite.² When students at FVCC initially plan to transfer to MSU's program but later decide to apply for FVCC's program, the difference in the math course is a problem. Moreover, the math faculty at FVCC believe that Probability and Linear Math is more appropriate to the nursing profession than College Algebra. A number of program directors agreed that College Algebra did not always prepare students for the computation-related tasks of PNs and RNs. Others noted that Probability and Linear Math is not a perfect fit either. To ensure that students are able to do the computation-related tasks of nursing, some programs provide additional modules of instruction that are more related to the requirements of the field.

Several options for addressing this problem were advanced:

- a. Creating a math course better-aligned with the needs of the nursing profession.
 - b. Replacing the College Algebra requirement with Probability and Linear Math.
 - c. Requiring either College Algebra or Probability and Linear Math.
5. Other than the pre-nursing courses, the courses in Semesters 3, 4, 5, and 6 seem to be posing few problems. They are being delivered as described, with the changes in Leadership Issues and Transition to Nursing noted in the Operational Rules section of this document. On some campuses – e.g., MSU-Billings – they are being delivered every semester to allow for more students entering the program and, subsequently, the workforce.

Future Directions

1. We need to resolve the math issue.
2. We need to follow up on Anatomy and Physiology I and II.
3. We need to bring the operational rules up to date and communicate to the campuses that these are rules. When new directions on your campus suggest that the rules should be modified, let's modify them before taking those directions.
4. We need to develop a communication tool that allows students who were not accepted into the nursing curriculum on one campus to take advantage of open spaces on other campuses in a timely manner.
5. We need to develop performance measures and metrics for a common assessment of Montana's nursing programs.

¹ Operational Rule 3.

² MSU's catalog indicates that the nursing program there does require Intro to Statistics, but any math course with a 100 or higher course number will suffice as a prerequisite.