



COMPREHENSIVE ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW

Note: Enter "NA" wherever data are not applicable or not available for the program under review.

Program Characteristics

Academic Program Name: **Licensed Practical Nursing**

Degree: **One-Year Certificate**

Program CIP Code: **51.3901**

School and Department: **School of Health Professions, Department of Nursing**

Time frame for this review: **2017-2018/2021-2022**

Date of last internal review: **Spring 2016**

Current date program reviewed for this report: **Fall 2022**

Program Goal Statement and Student Learning Outcomes

Program goal statement:

Prepare students for employment as safe, effective Licensed Practical Nurses.

Program outcomes:

1. The program's most recent annual licensure examination pass rate will be at least 80% for all first-time test-takers during the same 12-month period.
2. The program demonstrates evidence of students' achievement in completing the nursing program, measured by a graduation rate of 80% per cohort.
3. The program demonstrates evidence of graduates' achievement in job placement measured by 80% of learners with employment offers at graduation.
4. The program's overall learner satisfaction is evidenced by 90% of graduates being highly satisfied with their preparation to become safe and effective nurses.
5. The program's preparation of graduates for life-long learning is evidenced by 80% of graduates identifying a plan to earn a higher degree or seek certification.
6. Employers of Dalton State nursing graduates will report 80% satisfaction with the graduate post-employment performance in critical thinking, communication, and therapeutic nursing interventions.



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Student learning outcomes:

1. Safety: Students will analyze, utilize, and support the nursing process to provide safe and effective nursing care by applying current evidence-based practice standards appropriate to the needs of the patient or population.
2. Professionalism: Students will analyze, utilize, appraise, and discuss professional nursing with the legal, ethical, and regulatory framework of the profession
3. Patient-Centered Care: Students will utilize, apply, design, and implement priority-based patient-centered care that respects individual preferences, values, and needs.
4. Teamwork and Collaboration: Students will utilize and collaborate with an interdisciplinary team, utilizing appropriate communication and leadership skills, to provide quality care.
5. Evidence-Based Practice and Technology: Students will utilize, apply, and differentiate the different uses of evidence-based practice (EBP) and technology to achieve high-quality patient care.



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Brief Assessment of Previous Program Review

Outcome of previous program review (brief narrative statement).

In a review of the previous program review, the LPN program has maintained approval from the Georgia Board of Nursing (GBON) without concerns. Students not only achieved the student and program learning outcomes while in the nursing program but exceeded the state and national NCLEX pass rates. The students demonstrated an average NCLEX pass rate of 95.6% for first-time test takers.

There was a growing concern about headcount and FTE due to the closure of other technical-based healthcare programs that affected the interest in the LPN program.

Students reported satisfaction with the program and with their instructors. Most of the students planned to continue their education.

In the previous review, changes were being made to the program to align with students to continue their nursing education, which will be addressed below.

What improvements have occurred since the last program review or assessment?

In July 2017, the LPN program was transferred from the Department of Allied Health to the Department of Nursing.

In Fall 2019, the program transitioned from 16 to 12 months. This change allowed students to complete the LPN certificate in less time, allowing them to enter the workforce faster.

In 2017, the renovations for the new Simulation Center were completed. The new Simulation Center allowed the utilization of high-fidelity simulators in our nursing curriculum's teaching, learning, and evaluative processes. Using the Simulation Center has improved the student's critical thinking and adaptation of nursing concepts in a safe learning environment. A minimum of one simulation was added to all LPN courses. These simulations allow students to learn from their mistakes to improve future patient care.

The nursing department changed resources from the Assessment Technologies Institute's (ATI) testing service product to Elsevier's Health Education Systems Incorporated (HESI). After careful consideration, the faculty voted to discontinue the ATI testing service. The program began using HESI in the Fall of 2020.

During the academic year 2017-2018, the LPN program added more clinical experiences. More hospital clinical rotations were added to help meet hospital-based LPNs' demands. The clinical preceptorship was changed from the long-term care facility to the hospital setting. Before the pandemic, LPNs were primarily used in office and long-term care facilities. LPNs were not utilized in the hospital setting. Post-pandemic LPNs primarily work



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in the hospital setting instead of the doctor's office and long-term facilities.

What changes or revisions have been made to the program, its curriculum, or its program/student learning outcomes since the last program review? Please include a follow-up discussion of the previous review's action plan.

In July 2017, the LPN program moved from under the supervision of Allied Health to the Nursing Department. This allowed for collaboration between all nursing faculty about nursing education for our students. This change helped to increase the LPN program's application pool because the LPN program was able to admit students who did not qualify for the ASN program. The change also allowed for a stepping stone for the students to continue their education in the ASN or the new LPN/Paramedic to ASN Bridge programs. In Fall of 2017, the current Program Director stepped down as director, and the Nursing Chair, Dr. Sylvia Driver, took over as LPN Program Director.

In 2017, when the LPN program joined the Nursing Department, the faculty joined various nursing committees to enhance the standards of nursing education.

The nursing committees:

- a. Curriculum Committee – develop and update the current curriculum to reflect changes mentioned above and to follow and demonstrate where DSC core values, Quality and Safety Education for Nursing (QSEN), National League for Nursing (NLN), and Institute of Medicine (IOM) competencies are reflected. In addition, a new curriculum organizational grid was developed based on these standards.
- b. Exam/Test Writing Committee – develop a DSC nursing test bank. All faculty received a copy of the National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) examination test plans. The faculty wrote at least ten questions for each topic taught and submitted it to the committee. The committee reviewed exams for each nursing course. The validity of questions was determined, and questions were either kept, changed, or discarded in establishing the test bank. In the following years, it was determined that nursing could not purchase a test bank program. Therefore, the faculty analyzed their test using the DSC educational platform D2L and uploaded valid tests/questions to the Nursing Department Test bank in GAVIEW. The Exam Committee monitors the test bank.



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- c. Grievance Committee – develop the forms and process to handle any nursing student grievance. Guidelines are explained to the first-year cohort at orientation and are in the student handbook.
- d. Faculty Bylaws and Diversity Committee – develop the nursing faculty bylaws handbook with guidelines for full and part-time faculties. The diversity guidelines were dedicated to creating a more inclusive community grounded in respect and appreciation for individual differences. The committee continued developing and editing the bylaws and guidelines in the following years as needed.

The newly renovated School of Health Professions (SHP) Simulation Center opened in Fall 2017. In addition, the School of Health Professions hired a full-time Simulation Coordinator. This coordinator works with each department, training the faculty on facilitating the simulation events.

Adding simulations to all LPN courses has improved the student's critical thinking and adaptation of nursing concepts in a safe learning environment. The simulations allow students to learn from their mistakes to improve future patient care. To help students collaborate with other students in the School of Health Professions, interdisciplinary simulations once per year.

In Fall of 2019, Evolve Elsevier provided a free trial product for adaptive quizzing in the pediatric course. After reviewing the students' reviews and seeing the students' success improve in the course, this product was added to all classes in Spring 2020. This product allows students to test their knowledge of the didactic material, just as the National Licensure Exam (NCLEX). The quizzes are based on the student's performance.

The program combined ASN and LPN nursing skills lab faculty to help improve the skills lab experience for the students. This change provided more faculty to assist in the skills lab and new skills lab experiences to facilitate student learning.

Additional changes incorporated into the nursing program included utilizing the flipped classroom approach, which allowed for focusing class time on critical thinking case studies and interactive teaching.

In the Fall of 2019, the program changed the LPNS 1001 Med Calculation course from a drug calculation course to a drug calculation and pharmacology course. The new course, Introduction to Pharmacology and Dosage Calculation NURS 1112, also meets the ASN pharmacology course requirement. The program follows the course requirement that students must achieve 100% on the final drug calculations test to pass this course. Students have three chances to earn 100% for the exam. After the first and second unsuccessful attempts on the NURS 1112 Final Exam, students make appointments with one of the instructors of this course for one-on-one tutoring. If students are not successful on the third attempt, they fail the course.

The program also implemented a once-per-semester 20-question drug calculation quiz in which students must achieve 100%. Students have three chances to earn the 100% for the quiz. The quiz is given on the first day of class in the second and third semesters. If the student does not pass the quiz with 100% on the third attempt, the student must drop the course.

In 2019, when the program changed to a 12-month program, the students needed help with having many nursing courses simultaneously. The Nursing Chair decided to incorporate the pediatrics content into all classes



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to mimic the ASN program. This change allowed students to continue the 12-month program without focusing on too many courses.

In Fall 2019, Jennifer Parker was promoted to Director of the LPN program. Dr. Sylvia Driver continued as the Nursing Department chair.

After careful consideration, the faculty voted to discontinue Assessment Technologies Institute's (ATI) testing service. The program began using HESI in the Fall of 2020.

The LPN faculty voted to adopt a new textbook for the Nursing Fundamentals LPNS 1006, Medical-Surgical Nursing I LPNS 1012, and Medical Surgical Nursing II LPNS 1022. These books were implemented in the Fall of 2019. All LPN courses now use the same publisher resulting in greater discounts to the students for purchasing the book and continuity of products.

Due to the pandemic, clinical site visits by faculty were limited. However, starting in 2022, this has improved. During this time, faculty communicated closely with clinical site visits through phone, email, and virtual meetings.

As a result of the pandemic, hospitals increased the desire for more LPN staff. This resulted in more hospital clinical rotation opportunities and hospital preceptorships in the senior leadership course.

In 2019, local healthcare employer recruiting luncheons were implemented during the senior leadership course. This brought the employers face-to-face with the students to facilitate post-graduation employment.

The program changed the Nutrition NURS 1113 and Allied Medical Terminology ALHT 1130 courses from pre-requisites to co-requisites. This allowed for a more extensive application pool and acceptance of the overflow of students from the ASN program.



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Student Demographics						
Enrollment	Fall 2017	Fall 2018	Fall 2019	Fall 2020	Fall 2021	% Change
Headcount	78	89	63	40	40	-48.7%
FTE	64.25	69.92	46.83	31.83	29.58	-54.0%
Enrolled Full-time	31	28	27	21	10	-67.7%
Enrolled Part-time	47	61	36	19	30	-36.2%
Female	72	81	59	38	35	-51.4%
Male	6	8	4	2	5	-16.7%
Alaskan Native/Native American/American Indian						N/A
Asian, Hawaiian, Other Pacific Islander		3			1	N/A
Black/African American	8	1		2		-100%
Hispanic	27	30	32	12	21	-22.2%
Multi-racial		1		2		N/A
Undeclared	1	2	2	2	2	100%
White	42	52	29	22	16	-61.9%

Analysis and comments on student demographics.

Admission to the licensed practical nursing program is based on equal opportunity. The program has a transparent, strictly objective admission process. Students have access to the admission worksheet on the Dalton State LPN webpage. Students are admitted based on the top 24 highest scores in the application pool. Points are awarded for overall GPA, nursing admission test, completion of all pre and co-requisites, grade received in biology, math, and English courses, and CNA certification.

The decrease in the headcount and FTE during this review process may be attributed to the decline in student enrollment and the growing demands placed on nursing during the pandemic. The decrease in the enrollment numbers may also be attributed to how students are classified. Many students have exceeded the certificate level credit hours for financial aid and changed their majors to the ASN pathway.

The Department of Nursing at DSC encourages diversity among our students. However, according to Minority Nurse (<https://minoritynurse.com/nursing-statistics/>), 7% of LPNs are male. For Fall 2021, 12.5 % of declared LPN majors were male. This number is greater than the statistics reported by the Minority Nurse.



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Faculty Indicators of Program Quality	Fall 2017	Fall 2018	Fall 2019	Fall 2020	Fall 2021	% Change
School (not Department) faculty teaching in the program (excluding Areas A through E)	5	5	5	5	5	0%
Full-time program faculty	5	5	5	5	5	0%
Part-time program faculty	9	9	9	9	9	0%
Total program faculty	5	5	5	5	5	0%
Percent of program classes taught by full-time program faculty	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	0%
Gender (full-time and part-time faculty)	Fall 2017	Fall 2018	Fall 2019	Fall 2020	Fall 2021	% Change
Male	0	0	0	1	1	100%
Female	9	9	9	8	8	-0.11%
Race/Ethnicity (full-time and part-time faculty)	Fall 2017	Fall 2018	Fall 2019	Fall 2020	Fall 2021	% Change
Alaskan Native/Native American/American Indian	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Asian, Hawaiian, Other Pacific Islander	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Black/African American	0	1	1	1	2	N/A%
Hispanic	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Multi-racial	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Undeclared	0	0	0	0	0	0%
White	14	13	13	13	12	-0.14.3%
Tenure Status (full-time faculty)	Fall 2017	Fall 2018	Fall 2019	Fall 2020	Fall 2021	% Change
Tenured	0	0	0	0	0	0%
On-tenure track	3	3	4	4	4	33%
Non-tenure track	2	2	1	1	1	-50%
Rank (full-time faculty)	Fall 2017	Fall 2018	Fall 2019	Fall 2020	Fall 2021	% Change
Professor	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Associate Professor	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Assistant Professor	3	3	4	4	4	33%
Instructor/Senior Lecturer/Lecturer	2	2	1	1	1	-50%



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Faculty Indicators of Program Quality

Highest degree (full-time faculty)	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	% Change
Doctorate	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Specialist	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Master's	3	3	4	4	4	33%
Bachelor's	2	2	1	1	1	-50%
Associate's/Other	0	0	0	0	0	0%

Provide additional details, analysis, and comments regarding faculty indicators of program quality.

Overall, the number of LPN faculty remained the same during this review period. However, there was a change in faculty related to degree, rank, tenure status, gender, and race/ethnicity.

In 2017, the LPN program was reassigned from the Department of Allied Health to the Department of Nursing. This change allowed faculty to be shared as needed and to teach across all courses in the Department of Nursing. With this change, the nursing skills lab faculty was shared between both nursing programs and the faculty split nursing skills according to expertise.

The LPN program had a 50% decrease in non-tenure-track faculty and an increase of 33% in tenure-track faculty from 2017-2021. The program had a 50% increase from Lecturer to Assistant Professor during 2017-2021.

The LPN program had an increase in diversity in our faculty. During this evaluation period, there was an increase in the number of male and Black/African American faculty teaching in our LPN program. As presented in the student demographics, there is a lack of diversity in nursing. Therefore, there is a lack of diversity in available nursing instructors.



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Indicators of Measures of Quality

Student Input	Fall 2017	Fall 2018	Fall 2019	Fall 2020	Fall 2021	% Change
Mean ACT score	18	18	18	20	18	0.0%
Mean SAT score	876	870	846	913	906	3.4%

If applicable to your degree program, provide any additional external quality assurance data/information or results (e.g., professional accreditation results, National Survey of Student Engagement [NSSE], market rankings, etc.).

Accreditation:

The LPN program has continued accreditation with the Georgia Board of Nursing (GBON). The last in-person review for re-accreditation by GBON was in 2011 and passed without concerns.

In 2020, the first-time test takers' PN NCLEX pass rate dropped to 78.38%, with a four-year average of 90%, Georgia's four-year average of 90.31%, and the National four-year pass rate of 84.62%. Based on these results in 2021, the GBON required the LPN program to complete a Self-Evaluation review. A Plan of Action and Assessment for 2020 NCLEX Scores of first-time Writers was sent to the GBON, discussing the changes that had occurred during this review period. In addition, this was during the pandemic, which affected student learning and clinical placements. During 2020, students and programs were kicked out of clinical rotations due to the COVID pandemic for several months. Learning opportunities were limited when students were allowed back into the healthcare facilities for clinical rotations. Students were not allowed to come to the college campus face to face learning. Instructors moved the face-to-face classes to synchronous classes via Zoom and Microsoft Teams until students could return to campus. The GBON accepted the proposed PN Program Self-Evaluation Review without any further concern.

In 2021, the LPN program's first-time test takers' NCLEX pass rate was 94.44 %, above the national average of 79.60% and the Georgia average of 87.5%.

In 2022, the LPN program first-time test takers' NCLEX pass rate was 93.33 %, above the national average of 79.93 % and the Georgia average of 84.68%.



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Indicators of Measures of Quality

Student Output	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	% Change
Exit scores on national/state licensure (If applicable)	90%	93%	97%	78%	93%	3%
Graduating majors' mean GPA	3.41	3.29	3.21	3.25	3.19	-6.5%
Employment rate of graduates (if available)	No data	No data	90%	100%	100%	N/A%
Number of students entering graduate/professional programs	0	0	0	0	0	0

Describe the extent to which students have achieved current program outcomes during this program review cycle (most recent year).

Program Outcome #1: *The program's most recent annual licensure examination pass rate will be at least 80% for all first-time test-takers during the same 12-month period.*

- During this review period, 2017-2022, the LPN program has demonstrated an average pass rate of 90.2% for NCLEX-PN first-time test takers. This exceeds the state (88.82%) and the national (82.06) averages.
- In April 2022, the GBON reported that DSC LPN students had a 100% pass rate for the first quarter.

Program Outcome #2: *The program demonstrates evidence of students' achievement in completing the nursing program, measured by a graduation rate of 80% per cohort.*

- In Spring 2022, the LPN reported 80% of the cohort had program completion.

Program Outcome #3: *The program demonstrates evidence of graduates' achievement in job placement measured by 80% of learners with employment offers at graduation.*

- In 2019-2020, 90% of our students were employed upon graduation.
- During 2020-2022, 100% of our students were employed upon graduation.

Program Outcome #4: *The program's overall learner satisfaction is evidenced by 90% of graduates being highly satisfied with their preparation to become safe and effective nurses.*

- Due to a change in the program outcomes, no data was available for this outcome.

Program Outcome #5: *The program's preparation of graduates for life-long learning is evidenced by 80% of graduates identifying a plan to earn a higher degree or seek certification.*

- Due to a change in the program outcomes, no data was available for this outcome.

Program Outcome #6: *Employers of Dalton State nursing graduates will report 80% satisfaction with the graduate post-employment performance in critical thinking, communication, and therapeutic.*

- The Department of Nursing holds an annual advisory board meeting with our local healthcare facilities each summer. During this meeting, data is collected about employee satisfaction. During 2020-2021, we could not assess this data due to the Pandemic. However, in 2022 employee satisfaction surveys were consistently favorable for our LPN graduates.



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Describe the extent to which students have achieved current student learning outcomes during this program review cycle (most recent year).

Student Learning Outcomes:

1. **Safety:** Students will analyze, utilize, and support the nursing process to provide safe and effective nursing care by applying current evidence-based practice standards appropriate to the need of the patient or population.

The class will achieve 60% or greater on the group score of the QSEN outcomes on the Safety component of the proctored PN Comprehensive Predictor exam.

Results: 70% for Summer 2022 graduating cohort

Results: 62% for Fall 2021 graduating cohort

The Course Exam Analysis of Safety questions for LPNS 1051 will average 80%.

Results: 88.75% for Summer 2022 graduating cohort

Results: 85% for Fall 2021 graduating cohort

2. **Professionalism:** Students will analyze, utilize, appraise, and discuss professional nursing with the legal, ethical, and regulatory framework of the profession.

The class will achieve 60% or greater on the group score of the QSEN outcomes on the Professional Identity component of the proctored PN Comprehensive Predictor exam.

Results: 64% for Summer 2022 graduating cohort

Results: 68% for Fall 2021 graduating cohort

The Course Exam Analysis of Professionalism questions for LPNS 1051 will average 80%.

Results: 85% for Summer 2022 graduating cohort

Results: 98.75% for Fall 2021 graduating cohort

3. **Patient-Centered Care:** Students will utilize, apply, design, and implement priority-based patient-centered care that respects individual preferences, values, and needs.



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The class will achieve 60% or greater on the group score of the QSEN outcomes on the patient-centered care component of the proctored PN Comprehensive Predictor exam.

Results: 64% for Summer 2022 graduating cohort

Results: 62% for Fall 2021 graduating cohort

The Course Exam Analysis of Patient-Centered Care questions for LPNS 1051 will average 80%.

Results: 95.88% for Summer 2022 graduating cohort

Results: 96.25% for Fall 2021 graduating cohort

4. **Teamwork & Collaboration:** Students will collaborate with interdisciplinary teams, utilizing appropriate communication and leadership skills, to provide quality care.

The class will achieve 60% or greater on the group score of the QSEN outcomes on the Teamwork and Collaboration component of the proctored PN Comprehensive Predictor exam.

Results: 58% for Summer 2022 graduating cohort

Although students did not meet this goal, we will continue to evaluate. However, the other measurements of this tool met and exceeded the goal.

Results: 68% for Fall 2021 graduating cohort

The Course Exam Analysis of Teamwork and Collaboration questions for LPNS 1051 will average 80%.

Results: 91.88% for Summer 2022 graduating cohort

Results: 86.25% for Fall 2021 graduating cohort

5. **Evidence-Based Practice & Technology:** Students will utilize, apply, and differentiate the different uses of evidence-based practice (EBP) and technology to achieve high-quality patient care.

The class will achieve 60% or greater on the group score of the QSEN outcomes on the EBP and Technology component of the proctored PN Comprehensive Predictor exam.

Results: 52.5% for the Summer 2022 graduating cohort

Although students did not meet this goal, we will continue to evaluate. However, the other measurements of this tool met and exceeded the goal.

Results: 56% for Fall 2021 graduating cohort

Although students did not meet this goal, we will continue to evaluate. However, the other measurements of this tool met and exceeded the goal.

The End of Course Exam Analysis of EBP and Technology questions for LPNS 1051 will average 80%.

Results: 100% for Summer 2022 graduating cohort

Results: 100% for Fall 2021 graduating cohort



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Indicators of Measures of Quality

If available, provide additional information and/or results of other indicators of quality related to student output such as completer satisfaction surveys, employer satisfaction surveys, stakeholder satisfaction surveys, completion and continuation rates, attrition rates, starting salaries of graduates, etc.

Nursing as a major has a high attrition rate. According to the National League for Nursing, program attrition rates are around 20%. Factors associated with high nursing program attrition rates are an increased number of non-traditional students, high demand for personal time and resources, and difficulty with academic and clinical workload.

	Fall 2017	Spring 2018	Fall 2018	Spring 2019	Fall 2019	Spring 2020	Fall 2020	Spring 2021	Fall 2021	Spring 2022
Original Enrollment	22	22	26	19	23*	23	28	24	25	21
Graduated in 3 or 4 semesters	17	18	12	17	9*	16	16	16	16	17
% of Program Completion	77%	82%	46%	89%	39%*	70%	70%	67%	64%	81%

*Denotes the start of the 12-month program

During this review period, the LPN program faced several challenges. The program changed from Allied Health to Nursing. The program director and major changes in the teaching faculty changed. Until Fall 2018, the previous program director (with more than eight years of teaching experience) taught in the fundamentals course. In 2018, the previous instructor and program director left DSC, and a new nursing faculty member was hired to teach this course. Students and faculty endured the COVID pandemic's challenges to education and nursing. Students decided they did not want to be a nurse or could not handle the demands of a fast-paced program. Many of these factors played a considerable role in the percentage of program completions.

During this review period, the average LPN salary has increased from \$15.35 per hour in 2018 to \$20.35 per hour (plus differentials) in 2023. (This information is based on local healthcare agencies' presentations at recruitment luncheon events).

Employer satisfaction surveys are consistently favorable for our LPN graduates. The Fall 2022 employer summer satisfaction survey resulted in 100% of our employers being satisfied with our nursing graduates. During clinical site visits and campus recruitment fairs, employers continue to seek our LPN graduates for employment. Employers reported our LPN students to have a good work ethic and are prepared for the demands of the nursing field.

Example of the Employer satisfaction survey:

DALTON STATE COLLEGE



NURSING DEPARTMENT

EMPLOYER SATISFACTION SURVEY

The Nursing Department at Dalton State College (DSC) is conducting an assessment of the work performance of the graduates of the nursing program. As an employer of graduate nurses from Dalton State College, we would appreciate your cooperation in completing this evaluation questionnaire. Findings will be used for the development, maintenance, and revision of the program, and/or program outcomes.

Graduate Year: _____

Question	Yes	No	N/A
1) Do you have Dalton State LPN, ASN (RN), or RN-BSN graduates on your nursing unit? (Please circle the type of graduates.)			
2) Would you rate the new nurse as having the knowledge, critical thinking abilities, and skills as appropriate for a new graduate?			
3) Overall, are you satisfied with DSC nursing graduates?			
4) How likely are you to recommend DSC's nursing programs for nurses in your organization?			
5) Does your organization promote professional development including obtaining a higher degree?			
6) Do you offer incentives for higher education for nursing staff?			
7) Investigative Question: Do you prefer to hire LPN, RN, or BSN prepared nurses? (Please check the appropriate type(s).)	LPN	ASN (RN)	BSN

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Describe efforts undertaken to achieve and maintain curricular alignment within the program and currency to the discipline.

To assist in achieving and maintaining curricular alignment within the program and currency to the discipline, the Department of Nursing has a nursing department committee structure for all nursing programs, which includes curriculum. Any changes to the nursing curriculum must be presented to the curriculum committee for review and then to the entire nursing faculty for voting. The final proposed changes are sent to the chair of the Department of Nursing before the change can be implemented.

Further information can be reviewed in the Curriculum Committee bylaws:

Curriculum Committee Bylaws

Name: Curriculum Committee

Curriculum development in nursing education is a scholarly and creative process intended to produce an evidence-informed, context-relevant, unified curriculum. Curriculum development is an ongoing activity in nursing education, based on empirical evidence and educational theory. These bylaws are a guide for the curriculum committee to assure articulation of student learning and program outcomes, and to support nurse educators in knowing how to achieve these goals.

These are the four main approaches involved in the change of curriculum.

Addition: - New elements are added to the existing curriculum.

Deletion: - Some elements are deleted to modify the curriculum.

Re-organization: - Nothing is added or deleted but only reconstruction of the existing curriculum is done.



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Curriculum revision: - making modifications and changes in the current curriculum to give new direction. Revision involves making changes in the existing curriculum in its aims, objectives, course contents, learning outcomes and assessment strategies.

Objective:

The purpose of the curriculum committee is to assure that the curriculum of each course of study in the nursing department reflect the knowledge and skills identified as necessary for competent progression of student learning outcomes.

The objective of the committee is to:

1. Annually evaluate the mission, philosophy, purposes objectives, curriculum, and courses for the ASN, BSN and LPN nursing programs.
2. Evaluate the curriculum in an ongoing manner.
3. Recommend curricular changes to the School of Nursing faculty for vote.
4. Forward proposed curricular changes to the Chair of the Nursing Program
5. Write designated section(s) of Self-Study Reports for accreditation.
6. Review and recommend revisions of these bylaws.

Membership:

Membership is reflective of selected members of all nursing faculty (LPN, ASN, BSN) with each member having one voting right. The term of membership shall be two years with members rotating off after serving two years. The Chair of the Nursing Department will determine new faculty members after a vacancy occurs. Committee assignments are based on faculty responsibilities and required faculty participation in departmental governance.

Officers:

The Curriculum Committee Chair is appointed by the Chair of the Nursing Department from the returning committee members to ensure experience with committee responsibilities. The Curriculum Committee Chair will abide by Robert's Rule of Order and shall be responsible for scheduling the meetings and taking minutes using the meeting template.

Meetings:

Meetings will be held at least twice a semester. Authority for special meetings will be the decision of the chair of the committee based on need. A quorum for meetings shall be 75% of appointed members if a vote is required.

Responsibilities of Committee Members and Faculty:



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Curriculum Committee Responsibilities:

The Curriculum Committee members are responsible for ensuring that proper steps are taken when curriculum is added, modified, or eliminated and that such changes are communicated at the full faculty meeting to all faculty and programs.

Individual voting members of the Curriculum Committee are thereby expected to fulfill the following duties:

1. Attending all Curriculum Committee meetings.
2. Serve as a resource to assist faculty in the development of curriculum proposals.
3. Compile course evaluations as submitted by the faculty at the close of each semester.

It is the responsibility of the Nursing Faculty to submit curriculum additions, modifications, or eliminations to the Curriculum Committee for approval:

4. Evaluate courses based on Student and Program Learning Outcomes
5. Modification of an Existing Course
6. Creation of a New Course
7. Modification of an Existing Program
8. Creation of a New Program



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Indicators of Measures of Viability

Internal Demand for the Program	Fall 2017	Fall 2018	Fall 2019	Fall 2020	Fall 2021	% Change
Number of students enrolled in the degree program	78	89	63	40	40	-48.7%
Number of students who applied to the program (if applicable)**	No data	No data	No data	84/72	48/67	Unable to determine
Number of students admitted to the program (if applicable)**	44	45	46	53	42	-4.5%
Percent of classes taught by full-time faculty	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	0%

Describe additional details as deemed appropriate.

**Students are admitted to the LPN program in the Fall and Spring semesters. The numbers in the Fall columns denote the total number of students enrolled in that academic year's fall and spring semesters.

	Fall 2017	Spring 2018	Fall 2018	Spring 2019	Fall 2019	Spring 2020	Fall 2020	Spring 2021	Fall 2021	Spring 2022
Admitted to Program	22	22	26	19	23	23	28	25	26	16

The data indicated a decrease in students enrolled in the LPN program by 48%. However, there was a -4.5% decrease in the number of students admitted to the program. The change from a 16-month to a 12-month program is likely the reason for this decrease in students enrolled in the LPN program. The program requirements are the same as the 16-month program but are required to be finished in 12 months. The GBON requires the same class and clinical time for the 16-month and 12-month programs. The demands of these requirements can be challenging for a working student.

The didactic content of the LPN program is taught 100% by full-time faculty. Part-time faculty are only used for clinical instructing in healthcare facilities. The GBON mandate licensed nurses to oversee and take responsibility for the student during clinical rotations.



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Indicators of Measures of Productivity

Graduation	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	% Change
Number of degrees conferred	30	34	35	38	29	-3.3%
Total student credit hours earned	110	129	103	104	74	-32.7%

Describe any institutional-specific factors impacting time to degree.

The data indicates a -3.3% decrease in the number of degrees conferred and a -32.7% decrease in the total student credit hours earned. The changes may be attributed to the decline in the number of students accepted to the program in relation to the faculty and clinical sites and the transition from a 16-month to a 12-month program.



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Evidence of Program Viability

Based on evidence from **ALL** of the above information, data, and analysis, discuss whether continued resources should be devoted to this program. This discussion must be evidence-based. Your comments should consider external factors and address questions such as the following: Are your students getting jobs? What is the job outlook for graduates? Are students prepared for the jobs they get? How is the field changing? Are program faculty members in contact with employers and getting back feedback on graduates' job performance? Do employers state or suggest a need for changes in the program?

Resources should continue to be devoted to the LPN program, as evidenced by the increase in the number of students applying to the program, the qualified graduate LPN students, the above national and state average PN NCLEX passage rate, the number of students successfully obtaining jobs in nursing, and the positive feedback from employers.

The employer surveys have reflected that our LPN graduates are well prepared for practice in this demanding healthcare field. This feedback is received annually at our nursing advisory board and when faculty make clinical site visits.

Physical demands, stressful work environments, and the pandemic have contributed to nursing burnout (Hamilton, 2022). Resources devoted to this nursing program will help combat the nursing shortage by producing more LPNs in the workforce.

Our LPN program produces licensed nurses who are prepared for the demands of nursing practice. A new graduate nurse's attrition rate is 30% in the first year of practice and 57% during the second year of practice (Hamilton, 2022). This high attrition rate is mostly attributed to unprepared nurses and facilities not investing in the retention of new nurses (Hamilton, 2022). Our rigorous nursing curriculum helps to prepare our nursing student with the knowledge he or she needs in nursing practice. The DSC nursing program has an excellent relationship with our local nursing facilities to recruit and prepare our students for nursing practice. Having well-prepared nurses will help local hospitals save money in time and resources to retain nursing staff (Hamilton, 2022).

In 2017, Arli et al. stated that nurses needed to improve their critical thinking skills and positive aspects of caring. Optimal clinical practice can positively affect critical thinking and enhance that component of the caring nurse. Clinical judgment is perceptive understanding based on knowledge, empirical data, theory, and scientific inquiry (Claywell, 2018).

The changes in health care, such as the variability, rising cost, economics, quality of care, accountability for effectiveness, and efficiency in health care, are the forces that call for evidence-based practice (EBP) (Claywell, 2018). The evidence-based practice integrates the best available evidence, combines clinical expertise, and enables health practitioners of all varieties to address healthcare questions with an evaluative and qualitative approach (Claywell, 2018). Healthcare facilities strive to demonstrate EBP and expect their novice nurses to understand and incorporate EBP into their care.

One of the LPN program's student learning outcomes is to utilize critical thinking/nursing process/clinical judgment and best practices to provide safe, cost-effective, quality care at the level of a beginning nurse generalist. The LPN program will need continued resources to assist the LPN student in achieving this outcome and be prepared for the expected role of nursing team members.

References

Arlı, S. K., Bakan, A. B., Oatur, S., Erisik, E., & Yildiri, A. (2017). *Critical thinking and caring in nursing students. International Journal of Caring Science, 10(1), 471-478.*

Claywell, L. (2018). *LPN to RN transitions*. Elsevier.

Hamilton, Karla J Mayorga. *The Nursing shortage Part 1*. Legal Source, Health Lawyer, 07363443, Dec 2022, VOL 35 Issue 2



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Program Strengths and Weaknesses

Based upon this review, what are the strengths and weaknesses of the program?

Strengths:

1. The LPN program has maintained continued accreditation with the Georgia Board of Nursing without restrictions.
2. The annual pass rate of first-time takers of the NCLEX-PN has exceeded the state and national average for 2019 and 2022. The four-year average exceeded the state and national average at 90.82% (State 88.82% & National 82.06%).
3. The program has received strong support from our healthcare community, especially in 2017-2018, when the program was considered for deactivation.
4. Employers consistently recruit and employ our LPN graduates and indicate they are very pleased with their nursing educational preparation.

Weaknesses and concerns:

1. Many changes occurred in the program while the pandemic occurred. This made it difficult to assess properly.
2. We lost experienced LPN faculty in 2017-2019. The new faculty had to learn to teach in a fast-paced, demanding program while meeting the Georgia Board of Nursing requirements and the new pandemic clinical and classroom requirements. The new nursing faculty was very successful in meeting the needs of our students.

The program needs to:

1. Continue to seek and employ evidence-based and active teaching-learning strategies in the classroom and clinical settings to foster critical thinking within the curriculum.
2. Continue to monitor and evaluate end-of-semester evaluations of the SLO's and PLO's.



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Recommendations for Follow-Up and/or Action Plans (if needed)	
<p><u>Issue/Concern:</u></p>	<p>The student retention rate is of concern. Students often need more preparation for the demands of nursing school or have difficulty juggling nursing school and personal responsibilities. Students struggle to develop critical thinking skills in a 12-month, fast-paced program.</p>
<p><u>Specific action(s):</u></p>	<p>One change was implemented during the Spring 2023 semester. The LPN program changed the layout of the courses to prevent students from taking more than two nursing courses at the same time. For example, the Maternal Newborn and Medical-Surgical Nursing 1 course was taken simultaneously during an “A” session. The change was made to have these courses, “B” and “C” sessions, to allow students to focus on one content area at a time. We will continue to monitor the effect of this change.</p> <p>The LPN director is working with Human Biology professors to ensure that the content taught prepares students for the LPN program.</p> <p>Have an experienced nurse educator teaching the fundamentals course. Have a two-person teaching team to decrease the transitions between teaching techniques and styles.</p> <p>Provide more resources and tools to help students adapt to nursing school in the fundamentals course.</p>
<p><u>Expected outcomes:</u></p>	<p>The course layout change allows students to focus on one content area at a time. This change should increase student success and further increase student retention.</p> <p>The LPN students will be more prepared with basic human anatomy for the LPN program. Students who are more ready for the LPN program will be more successful.</p> <p>Students need consistency in the nursing program. Having an experienced faculty member teaching the fundamentals course allows for the instructor to recognize student struggles more quickly, help the students adapt to nursing school, and overcome challenges more quickly. (Began during Fall 2022)</p> <p>Providing additional resources and tools to students in the fundamentals course to help with study skills, time management, and strategies to adapt to nursing school should improve student success. (Began during Fall 2022)</p>



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<u>Time frame for achievement:</u>	Beginning August 1, 2027
<u>Person(s) responsible:</u>	Department of Nursing Chair, LPN program Director, faculty
<u>Resources needed:</u>	Marketing material for the LPN program. More LPN faculty to help balance the teaching load.



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Prepared by:

Signature Jennifer Parker, MSN, RN, LPN, Program Director Date: 5/5/2023

Dean's Approval:

Signature: Guia M. Kertulis-Tartar Date: 05/17/2023

Approval of the Chair of the DSC Comprehensive Program Review Committee:

Signature: Marilyn M. Helms Date: 05/17/2023

Vice President of Academic Affairs (VPAA) Categorical Summation:

Check any of the following to categorically describe action(s) the institution will take concerning this program.

- Program **MEETS** Institution's Criteria
 - Program is critical to the institutional mission and will be retained.
 - Program is critical to the institutional mission and is growing, or a high demand field, and thus will be enhanced.
- Program **DOES NOT MEET** Institution's Criteria for continuation.
 - Program will be placed on monitoring status.
 - Program will undergo substantive curricular revisions.
 - Program will be deactivated.
 - Program will be voluntarily terminated.
 - Other (Please elaborate):

VPAA Signature Bruno Hicks Date: 06/12/23

Bruno Hicks, Ed.D.
Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs
Dalton State College