

# NLNAC

National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission, Inc.

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Assistant Dean for Curriculum  
Warren County Community College  
Washington, New Jersey

March 17, 2003

James A. Burran, PhD  
President  
Dalton State College  
213 North College Drive  
Dalton, GA 30720

Dear Dr. Burran:

It is my pleasure to inform you that the Board of Commissioners approved the continuing accreditation of your nursing program at their meeting on February 26, 2003. **The Commission approved the associate degree program for continuing accreditation and scheduled the next evaluation visit for Fall 2010.** The details of the accreditation visit and the decision put forth by the Commission have been sent to the head of your nursing program.

The National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission, and its predecessor, the National League for Nursing, have stood for standards of excellence for all types of nursing education for over 50 years. By choosing to be accredited by NLNAC, you and your faculty have demonstrated your commitment to the highest standards of nursing education. Your successful accreditation shows that your school does indeed meet these high standards.

Congratulations on this outstanding achievement. We look forward to continued successes for your nursing program.

If I or the staff can be of any assistance to you please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Barbara R. Grumet  
Executive Director

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ROBERT A. SINTICH, EDD  
Assistant Dean for Curriculum  
Warren County Community College  
Washington, New Jersey

Trudy Swilling, MSN, RN  
Chairperson  
Division of Nursing  
Dalton State College  
213 North College Drive  
Dalton, GA 30720-3797

Dear Ms. Swilling:

This letter is formal notification of the action taken by the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission at its meeting on February 26, 2003. **The Commission approved the associate degree program for continuing accreditation and scheduled the next evaluation visit for Fall 2010.**

Deliberations centered on the Self Study Report, the School Catalog, the Program Evaluator Report, and the recommendation for accreditation proposed by the program evaluators and the evaluation review panel.

The Commission affirmed the patterns of strength and concern as identified through the peer review process.

#### *Patterns of strength are:*

- a) Administrative support for the nursing program;
- b) Nurse administrator;
- c) Nursing faculty;
- d) Program evaluation.

#### *Patterns of concern are:*

- a) None

On behalf of the Commission, we thank you and your associates for your cooperation. If you have questions about this action or about Commission policies and procedures, please write or call the Director of Accreditation Services or a member of the NLNAC Staff.



Susan Abbe, PhD, RN  
Director of Accreditation Services

cc: Carol J. Hodgson, PhD, RN Program Evaluator  
Abbie Bailey, MSN, RN Program Evaluator

Enc. Evaluation Review Panel Summary

# NLNAC

National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission, Inc.

## DALTON STATE COLLEGE DALTON, GEORGIA

### FALL 2002 ACCREDITATION CYCLE Associate Degree Nursing Program

#### ACCREDITATION HISTORY

**Associate Degree Program:** Continuing Accreditation  
Established: 1968; Initial Accreditation: June 1970; Date of Last  
Evaluation Visit: November 1994

#### OVERVIEW OF NURSING PROGRAM

Length of program: 5 Semesters, 70 Semester Hours  
Number of students currently enrolled: 117, Full-time: 46, Part-time: 71  
Number of faculty: 9, Full-time: 8 (including Nursing Division Chair), Part-time: 1

#### Evaluation Review Panel Recommendation

Associate Degree: Continuing accreditation for eight years. Next scheduled visit –  
Fall 2010

The patterns of strength and concern stated below are to be used by the program in nursing in its continued quest for quality. A pattern of strength is an outstanding practice that serves to commend the program; a pattern of concern is an aspect of the program that continues to need attention.

#### Patterns of Strength

1. Administrative support for the nursing program, as evidenced by; fiscal resources; state of the art learning center.

Reference: Standard I, Mission and Governance: Criterion 1  
Standard V, Resources: Criteria 15, 18

2. Nurse administrator, as evidenced by; commitment to the nursing education program and student success; leadership; involvement in college wide and nursing department activities; high level of respect for the program within the college and the community.

Reference: Standard I, Mission and Governance: Criterion 3

3. Nursing faculty, as evidenced by: academic and experiential qualifications; advanced practice certifications in a variety of areas; dedication and commitment to student success.

Reference: Standard II, Faculty: Criterion 5, 6

4. Program evaluation, as evidenced by: comprehensive plan for program evaluation and evidence of implementation for program improvement.

Reference: Standard VI, Educational Effectiveness: Criterion 22, 23

Patterns of Concern

None

Reviewer analysis is based on the Self Study Report, School Catalog, and Program Evaluator Report. The Self Study Report was developed based on *Accreditation Manual, 2002* and *Interpretative Guidelines for Standards and Criteria 2002, Associate Degree Programs in Nursing*.

**REPRESENTING ACCREDITATION STATUS TO THE PUBLIC**

Accurately presenting the programs' accreditation status to the public requires use of the statement:

Accredited by the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission.

If a program releases incorrect information regarding its accreditation status, the contents of a site visit report or accreditation actions with regard to the program(s), the institution must make a public disclosure of correction.

National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission, Inc.

61 Broadway - 33<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
New York, New York 10006  
212-363-5555 x153 Fax: 212-812-0390 www.nlnac.org

## PROGRAM EVALUATOR REPORT

Dalton State College  
Dalton, Georgia

**Program Type:** Associate Degree

**Purpose of Visit:** Continuing Accreditation

**Date of Visit:** October 22-24, 2002

### GENERAL INFORMATION

#### Educational Unit in Nursing

**DALTON STATE COLLEGE**  
Division of Nursing  
213 North College Drive  
Dalton, GA 30720-3797

**Nurse Administrator:**  
Trudy Swilling, MSN, RN  
Chairperson/Associate Professor

Telephone: (706) 272-2463/4432  
Fax: (706) 272-2533  
E-mail: tswilling@em.daltonstate.edu

**State Board of Nursing Approval Status:**  
Georgia Board of Nursing  
Date of Last Review: 2001  
Action: Full Approval through December 2005.

**Accreditation Status: Program**  
**NLNAC**  
Date of Last Review: Fall 1994  
Action: Continued Accreditation. Next review  
in 8 years.

#### Name of Parent Institution

**DALTON STATE COLLEGE**  
Dalton, GA

**Chief Executive Officer:**  
James A. Burran, PhD  
President

**Accreditation Status: Institutional Accrediting Body**  
Southern Association of Colleges and Schools,  
Commission on Colleges  
Date of Last Review: 1994  
Action: Accreditation Reaffirmed with a follow-up report  
due October 1994. 1996 Third follow-up Report  
received and accepted. Next visit 2003.

SITE VISIT INFORMATION

**I. INTRODUCTION**

**Program Evaluator Team:**

**Chairperson**  
Carol J. Hodgson, PhD, RN  
Division Chair, Director ADN Program  
Health Occupations Division  
Texarkana College  
2500 N. Robison Road  
Texarkana, TX 75599-0001  
Telephone: (903) 832-5565 ext. 3403  
Fax: (903) 831-1037  
E-mail: chodgson@texarkanacollege.edu

**Member**  
Abbie Bailey, MSN, RN  
Director of Nursing Education  
Health Sciences Division  
Carl Albert State College  
1507 S. McKenna  
Poteau, OK 74953-5207  
Telephone: (918) 647-1350  
Fax: (918) 647-1332  
E-mail: abailey@carlalbert.edu

**NLNAC Criteria Used:** 2002

**Program Demographics:**

**Year Nursing Program Established:** 1968

**Faculty:**

**Full-time:** 8 (including Nursing Division Chair)

**Part-time:** 1

**Students:**

**Total enrollment:** 117

**Full-time:** 46

**Part-time:** 71

**Length of Program:** 5 Semesters: 2 Academic Years Plus One Summer; 70 Semester Hours: 37 Nursing and 33 General Education

**Third Party Comment:**

The nursing unit had a reasonable process for soliciting third party comments. The methods used to announce the accreditation visit to the program's community of interest were:

Notice in Campus news on the College Website

Article in 7 local and regional newspapers during the first week in October, announcing the open forum to be held on the second day of the site visit and inviting interested persons to submit comments in writing to be shared with the Program Evaluators. Two local newspaper ads were viewed, one from the Daily Citizen and one from the Chatsworth Times. In addition, a hard copy of the article from the student newspaper on the website was made available for review.

Third party comments were not received in response to the solicitation.

Two letters were received, one from the Director, Patient Care Services at a regional health care facility and one from the Senior VP and CNO for Patient Care Services from an 800 bed, Level I trauma and academic medical center in Chattanooga, TN. Comments included the following:

*I am proud to say that personally and professionally Dalton's nursing program is one of the best our region has to offer.*

*We have the opportunity to employ nurses from across the entire region. The graduate nurses that we hire from Dalton College are well prepared for today's environment. We always welcome the opportunity to hire as many of your graduates as possible.*

*I have had the opportunity of working with and hiring several nurses from your program, and I must say that I have always been impressed. Graduates from your program have always shown the competency and expected skills needed to give good patient care.*

*I want to say, "Thank you" and to let you know how proud I am to be a graduate of your program. I will forever be an advocate of Dalton State College, and the Division of Nursing.*

Two interested parties attended the open forum on the second day of the visit, the Director of the LPN program at Dalton State College and a nurse administrator from a regional health care facility. Both were extremely complimentary of the program, its faculty and its graduates. Both expressed the positive reputation of the program in the professional community.

**Persons/Groups Interviewed:**

**Individual Conferences:**

**Campus:**

Trudy Swilling, MSN, Division Chairperson of Nursing  
James Burran, PhD, President of Dalton State College  
John Black, PhD, Vice President for Academic Affairs  
Tommy Godbee, BBA, Vice President for Fiscal Affairs  
Jodi Johnson, MBA, Vice President for Enrollment and Student Services  
Carol Treible, MEd, Director of ACE Center  
Kevin Wellwood, Director of Financial Aid and Veterans Services  
Liz Bagley, MLn, Library Director

**Hamilton Medical Center:**

**Administrators:**

Karen Wisdom, RN, MSN, Chief Operating Officer  
Jan Keys, RN, Director - Medical-Surgical Services

**Alumnae:**

Andrea Winkle-Holbrook, RN, Staff Nurse - Oncology  
Rita A. Patrick, RN, Clinical Manager - Pediatrics  
Meghann Ownbey, RN, Staff Nurse  
Susan Irvin, RN, Staff Nurse  
Peggy Orr, RN, Staff Nurse  
Christine Bond, RN, Staff Nurse  
Connie Belue, RN, Home Health Staff Nurse  
Tara Skiffen, RN, Staff Nurse  
Torri Kyker, RN, Staff Nurse  
Kim Brown, RN, ER Staff Nurse  
Jane Watkins, RN, Oncology Staff Nurse  
Brenda J. Guinn, RN, Director - OB Maternal  
Vicki White, RN, Clinical Manager - Recovery Room  
Kim Brown, RN, Clinical Manager - ER

**Hutcheson Medical Center:**

**Administrators:**

Ceil Golightly, Chief Executive Officer  
Heidi Moon, RN, Director Medical-Surgical  
Nancy Raines, RN, Service Line Manager - ER  
Pat Conley, RN, Service Line Manager - Surgery  
Linda Love, RN, Service Line Manager - Float Pool  
Sandra Meadows Sinnard - Computer Programs  
Martha Quinn - Infection Control  
Diann Shields-Bell, Operating Room  
Judy Holder, RN, Nurse Manager - OSU  
Jeaneane Hullender, RN  
Sheena Gullo, RN - PCU  
Donna Worthington, RN - ED  
Steve Grubb, RN - HJ and SACS  
Sharon Klein, RN, Administrator for Women's Health

**Alumnae:**

Tina Roberson, RN  
Sherri Scroggins, RN  
Sandra Meadows-Siniard, RN  
Teresa Thomas Novak, RN  
Leigh Harris, RN  
Danita Breeden, RN  
Amy Bolden, RN  
Judy Pitts, RN  
Valerie Baker, RN  
Carol Worley, RN



**General Education Faculty - Dalton State College:**

Wayne Bosche', PhD, Associate Professor of Mathematics  
Andrew Meyer, PhD, Assistant Professor of Biology  
Robert Weathersby, PhD, Professor of English and Chair of the Division of Humanities  
Kerry Dunbar, PhD, Associate Professor of Biology  
Donald Davis, PhD, Associate Professor of Sociology  
Henry Codjoe, PhD, Director of Institutional Research and Planning

**Public Meeting:**

Tony Carter, RN, Director of Nursing - Murray Medical Center  
Sheila Croft, RN, Coordinator of LPN Program - Dalton State College

**Group Conferences:**

**Campus:**

Nursing Students

Sophomores, n = 45

Freshmen, n = 34

Division of Nursing Faculty and Technical Assistant, n = 9. Members representing all courses of nursing curriculum

General Education Faculty, n = 6

Public Meeting, n = 2

**Classes Attended:**

Nursing 2201 Health and Illness I (Classroom)

Nursing 1103 Fundamentals of Nursing II (Campus Lab)

**Hospitals:**

Preconference, Hamilton Medical Center, n = 11 (ten students and one instructor)

Preconference, Hutcheson Medical Center, n = 11 (ten students and one instructor)

**Agencies and Facilities Visited:**

Hamilton Medical Center

Hutcheson Medical Center

**Documents Reviewed:**

**Catalogs/Handbooks/Manuals**

Dalton State College Catalog and Handbook 2002-2003

2002 Nursing Student Handbook

Service Learning Notebook

Dalton State College Faculty Handbook

Dalton State College Statutes

Dalton State College Website

Master Facilities Plan

Job Descriptions for faculty, Dalton State College

Dalton State College Advisor's Handbook

Part-time Faculty Handbook

Board of Regents University System Policy Manual

### **External Constituencies**

Rules and Regulations, Georgia Board of Nursing  
NCSBN NCLEX-RN Program Reports  
Letter of Approval, Georgia Board of Nursing  
NCLEX-RN Pass Rates  
Licenses for Nursing Faculty  
Regional Accrediting Agency (SACS) Letter of Accreditation  
U.S. Department of Education FY 2000 Official Cohort Default Rate Notification Letter  
Georgia Board of Nursing Site Visit Reports

### **Nursing/Institutional Documents**

Advisory Committee Minutes  
Coordinating Council Minutes  
Enrollment Data  
Systematic Plan for Program Evaluation and Assessment of Outcomes  
Evaluation Timetable for Assessment of Outcomes  
Fact Sheet and Nursing Program Brochure  
Schedule of Classes (on Website)  
Grade Distribution  
Graduate/Employer Surveys and Results (1998-2001)  
Student-Teacher Conference Record  
Student Files (3 sophomores, 3 freshmen, 3 LPN to RN, 3 withdrawn)  
Student Advising Assignments and Materials  
Faculty Annual Evaluation Process  
LPN Credit-by-Exam Data  
Budget 2002-2003  
Faculty Files (Vitae, Annual Evaluations, Licensure Verification, Transcripts)  
Agency Contracts  
Financial Aid Forms  
Library Holdings and Policies  
Evaluation of facilities, supplies and instructional materials

### **Nursing Unit Minutes**

Faculty Minutes 1999-2002  
Coordinating Council Minutes

### **Course Materials**

Course Notebooks for all Courses with the Following:  
Course Syllabi  
Clinical Evaluation Tools  
Unit and Final Exams, all courses  
Clinical Agency Descriptions  
Student Evaluations of Agency  
Student Course Evaluations  
Agency Evaluation of Students

## II. Evaluation Of Criteria

### Mission and Governance

**Standard:** There are clear and publicly stated mission and/or philosophy and purposes appropriate to postsecondary or higher education in nursing.

**Criteria:**

1. *Mission and/or philosophy of the nursing education unit is congruent with that of the governing organization, or differences are justified by the nursing education unit purposes.*

The mission statement of Dalton State College, found in the 2002 Nursing Student Handbook and on page 11 of the 2002-2003 College Catalog, is reflected in the philosophy and outcomes of the Nursing Program. Comparison of both documents by the Program Evaluators revealed no inconsistencies. Provision is made in the Systematic Plan for Program Evaluation for annual examination of the philosophy in light of the college mission statement. Faculty and the Division Chair for Nursing state that only minor editorial changes have been made since 1998.

2. *Faculty, administrators, and students participate in governance as defined by the parent organization and nursing education unit.*

The Self Study Report pp.19-21 describes the process for faculty's participation in the governance of the college. Faculty may become involved in a number of standing and ad hoc committees by a variety of means. They may be appointed by either the President or Vice President for Academic Affairs, they may be elected by the campus-wide Committee on Committees, or they may volunteer by contacting the administrator involved to express their interest in serving on a specific committee. In accordance with the faculty statutes of Dalton State College, full-time faculty are not required to hold more than one elected committee appointment yearly. Review of faculty vitae and conversations with nursing faculty, the College President, and the Vice President for Academic Affairs verified that there is nursing representation on many campus-wide committees such as personnel search, library, faculty evaluation, strategic planning, retention, and tenure review committees.

Nursing faculty participate in governance of the nursing program through assuming responsibility for evaluation of the seven divisional goals. Individual faculty members present the data and analysis of their respective goals at faculty meetings according to the predetermined timetable. This division of labor ensures involvement of all faculty and provides a structure for evaluation of the program's established goals. The faculty minutes demonstrate that decisions regarding the program are made, based on the evaluation.

The organizational charts found on pp. 3-4 of the Self Study Report and in the Appendix of the Dalton State College Faculty Handbook show the lines of direct authority and communication within the college. They indicate that the Chair of the Division of Nursing has direct communication with the Vice President for Academic Affairs. Interviews with the VP for Academic Affairs, the President, and the Chair verified the lines of authority to be as delineated on the charts. Interviews with nursing faculty, faculty of support courses, and other college personnel affirmed that the Chair of Nursing is actively involved in many aspects of the college, as a whole. Students, faculty, and administrators commented on the efficiency, experience, and caring attitude displayed by the Chair.

As described in the Self Study Report on p. 22, nursing students are afforded the opportunity to serve on selected institutional committees, although students expressed that few nursing students take advantage of the opportunity because of time constraints. Nursing students do participate as elected representatives to the nursing faculty meetings. Two freshman and two sophomore nursing students are elected by their respective classes to attend meetings and bring matters of student concern to the faculty and to report to their classes. Minutes of faculty meetings verify attendance of student representatives. Students reported satisfaction with the process whereby they have input into decision-making.

3. *Nursing education unit is administered by a nurse who is academically and experientially qualified, and who has authority and responsibility for development and administration of the program.*

The administrator of the nursing program is Trudy Swilling, RN, MSN, who has been employed at Dalton State College for 31 years. She has been program administrator for ten years. Her vita, transcripts, and proof of licensure indicate that she holds the credentials and has the nursing practice and teaching experience as indicated in the Self Study Report, pp. 24-26. Her title is Chair of the Division of Nursing for Dalton State College. Organizational charts, interviews with the College President, VP for Academic Affairs, and faculty, and the job description for the Division Chair verify that she answers administratively to the VP for Academic Affairs.

Like the other five Division Chairs at Dalton State College, Mrs. Swilling was appointed by the President of the College upon recommendation of the VP for Academic Affairs and approval of the State Board of Regents. According to the Statutes of Dalton State College, she has the responsibility for administering and supervising the work of the division. These responsibilities include preparation and administration of the division budget, making recommendations for faculty employment, evaluation of faculty, and teaching a reduced teaching load as assigned by the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

For the current semester, the Division Chair of Nursing is involved in team teaching the classroom theory portion of Nursing 1101, a first-year nursing course. The teaching responsibility is shared among 4 faculty. Mrs. Swilling is not carrying a clinical teaching load. Both the Chair and nursing faculty agree that while the load is heavy, the Chair has time for both teaching and administrative duties. Mrs. Swilling is on a twelve month contract; thus she is employed during the summer when no nursing courses are offered. This allows extended time for administrative duties without teaching responsibilities.

The Division Chair of Nursing currently serves on a number of campus-wide committees as described on page 25 of the Self Study Report.

Comments made by nursing students, alumni, agency personnel, nursing and general education faculty, and college administrators indicate that the Division Chair of Nursing is held in high regard as both a nurse and a Program Director. According to current and past students, Mrs. Swilling demonstrates a caring and approachable attitude toward students, prospective students and faculty. They cite her leadership as a strength of the program and one of the reasons that the program is well-respected in the area.

4. *Policies of the nursing education unit are consistent with those of the governing organization, or differences are justified by nursing education purposes.*

Faculty at Dalton State College are employed by the University System for the state of Georgia. The Dalton State College Faculty Handbook, Dalton State College Statutes, and the Board of Regents of the University of Georgia Policy Manual outline the policies in effect for all faculty. The standard teaching load for full-time faculty members is 27 credit hours per academic year or a minimum of 15 contact hours per week in the technical and nursing divisions. Nursing faculty carry 16 to 19 teaching hours per semester. These hours include both classroom and clinical instruction. Nursing Faculty assignments are made to comply with the rules of the Georgia Board of Nursing, which mandate a student: faculty ratio of not more than 20:1 for classroom and not more than 10:1 for clinical.

Other policies in effect for nursing faculty are those in effect for faculty in other disciplines. While funded via the state university system of Georgia, the salary scale is determined by the local administration within a range set by the State Board of Regents. Within the last year, to raise the nursing faculty salaries to be more competitive with salaries in nursing practice, the college administration provided for a one-time salary adjustment for nursing faculty. Faculty and administration verified that the adjustment amounted to approximately \$2000 per individual faculty and was a step toward making faculty positions more attractive in the job market.

**Strengths:**

Administrative and community support to enable the activities and functions of the nursing program.

Efficient, caring program director.

Reputation of the program within the college and in the community

## Faculty

**Standard:** There are qualified and credentialed faculty, appropriate to accomplish the nursing education unit purposes and strengthen its educational effectiveness.

**Criteria:**

5. *Faculty members (full- and part-time) are academically and experientially qualified, and maintain expertise in their areas of responsibility.*

As noted in the Self Study page 31, there are 8 full-time faculty and 1 part-time, temporary faculty member. Six of the full-time faculty hold the rank of Assistant Professor and 2 are Associate Professor. All nursing faculty have master's degree nursing preparation. One faculty member holds an EdD. Two full-time and the part-time faculty hold Family Nurse Practitioner certification.

The Nursing Program Director and faculty were able to describe activities such as current clinical practice, workshops, and graduate education that promote professional expertise in areas of teaching responsibility. Nursing students reported that the faculty are well prepared and exhibit expertise in both the classroom and laboratory settings.

6. *Number and utilization of full- and part-time faculty meet the needs of the nursing education unit to fulfill its purposes.*

A team teaching concept is used by the nursing faculty for course delivery. Faculty appeared to work well together and complimented one another in skills and professional expertise. The part-time faculty member's teaching responsibility is primarily in the clinical laboratory with allows for a faculty-student ratio not in excess of 1:10. With the impending retirement of the program director a team has been formed to conduct an internal search for a replacement. In addition, advertisement for an additional faculty member to replace the new program director is in progress.

7. *Faculty performance is periodically evaluated to assure ongoing development and competence.*

Nursing faculty performance is formally evaluated annually by means of the Faculty Member's Annual Report and Nursing Division Chairperson Summary. The focus of evaluation is improvement of teaching effective and the process is consistent throughout the college. Nursing students evaluate each faculty member at the conclusion of each semester. The outcome of the annual faculty evaluations is used in recommending renewal or non-renewal of non-tenured faculty contracts. In addition, the evaluation process is utilized in awarding tenure and merit salary adjustments. One nursing faculty member serves on the college evaluation committee.

8. *The collective talents of the faculty reflect scholarship through teaching, application, and the integration and discovery of knowledge as defined by the institution and the nursing education unit.*

There is evidence of diversity in clinical focus areas within the nursing faculty. Teaching positions are filled based upon identified specialty needs. File documents indicate the faculty keep current in nursing knowledge through a variety of methods. Students, graduates, and clinical agency personnel verbalize that faculty are knowledgeable and current in areas of expertise and is demonstrated through interaction with the students in the clinical setting.

**Strengths:**

Qualified, experienced faculty that is highly respected in the college and the community.

Varied areas of expertise of faculty and service of faculty in nursing roles apart from college employment.

## Students

**Standard:** The teaching and learning environment is conducive to student academic achievement.

**Criteria:**

9. *Student policies of the nursing education unit are congruent with those of the governing organization, publicly accessible, non-discriminatory, and consistently applied; differences are justified by the nursing education unit purposes.*

Nursing students are governed by policies of the college. Program evaluators verified that student policies are clearly stated and published in the 2002-2003 College Catalog and Student Handbook.

Policies specifically for nursing students are clearly spelled out in the Nursing Student Handbook and include selection and admission, academic progression, conformity with ADA guidelines, grading, health, and validation of prior learning/articulation. Interviews with the Division Chair for Nursing, The faculty, VP for Enrollment and Student Services, and students verified that the information regarding admission and progression are clearly outlined in printed materials and on the internet and that policies are uniformly applied.

The Division Chair for Nursing clarified that the "three alternate curriculum plans" mentioned on p. 38 of the Self Study Report is actually referring to 3 admission plans. The plan that is instituted for the individual applicant is based on admission test scores, prior course work, and GPA. The students described the process as outlined on p. 171 in the college catalog.

10. *Students have access to support services administered by qualified individuals that include, but are not limited to: health, counseling, academic advisement, career placement, and financial aid.*

Students verified that they have access to all services provided by the college. They cited the Academic and Career Enhancement (ACE) Center as being particularly helpful in offering a wide range of services. All nursing students, including those pre-nursing students who declare the major, are assigned a nursing faculty member as their advisor to assist in academic planning. Financial aid is available in the form of grants, loans, and scholarships. Students described the process of obtaining financial aid and expressed no difficulties in making application. Loan recipients described the methods by which they have been informed of their responsibilities in loan repayment.

Program evaluators verified that support services are administered by qualified personnel.



11. *Policies concerned with educational and financial records are established and followed*

Program evaluators found the policies regarding educational and financial records to be as described on p. 45 of the Self Study Report. Nursing student files are kept in a locked cabinet within the Division of Nursing. The college adheres to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 in regard to student records.

**Strengths:**

Clearly stated student policies.

Thorough academic advisement process.

Comprehensive financial aid services.

## Curriculum and Instruction

**Standard:** The curriculum is designed to accomplish its educational and related purposes.

**Criteria:**

12. *Curriculum developed by nursing faculty flows from the nursing education unit philosophy/mission through an organizing framework into a logical progression of course outcomes and learning activities to achieve desired program objectives/outcomes.*

Faculty minutes (1999-2002) verified that the curriculum was developed by nursing faculty and is evaluated continuously. The curriculum's organizing framework was found to link the program philosophy to the program objectives. The five major concepts: Maslow's hierarchy of needs, growth and development, health-illness continuum, safety, and critical thinking/nursing process/clinical decision making and the ten curriculum threads were evident in the course objectives, course content, clinical objectives, clinical evaluation tools, written assignments, and student portfolios. Course objectives and assignments progressed from simple to complex throughout the curriculum, indicating the use of a taxonomy in planning the sequencing. Unit objectives are clearly keyed to reflect the program and course objectives which they address.

Both faculty and students verbalized an understanding of the curriculum, philosophy, objectives, and organizing framework and how they are evident in the courses. Students expressed understanding of theory and clinical evaluation and the rationale for both.

Evaluations of the students are consistent with objectives and competencies of the didactic and clinical components of the program. Of particular note to the Program Evaluators was the use of student portfolios to show the students' progression in critical thinking throughout the program. However, in examining unit and final tests, program evaluators found minimal progression in the cognitive level of test items. For example, many items on sophomore level exams were written at the fact or comprehension level. This finding was shared with the Division Chair for Nursing, who stated that the faculty had already identified this as an area for further study and improvement.

The overall curriculum plan is found in the College Catalog, p. 173 and in the Nursing Student Handbook. There is a process in place by which LPNs may earn up to 14 semester credit hours by exam to obtain advanced standing in the program. Students described the process as being not used very much by applicants, probably due to the testing involved.

Program Evaluators visited students in both classroom and clinical settings. A variety of teaching methods were employed in the classroom setting. In clinical, students were able to describe their objectives for the day and showed evidence of their preparation for clinical learning.

13. *Program design provides opportunity for students to achieve program objectives and acquire knowledge, skills, values, and competencies necessary for nursing practice.*

The Associate Degree Nursing program at Dalton State College is designed to be completed in 4 academic semesters plus 1 summer semester. Students are admitted only in the fall semester. Program Evaluators verified via interview and student records that admission criteria are followed as described in the Self Study Report, p. 87.

14. *Practice learning environments are selected and monitored by faculty and provide opportunities for a variety of learning options appropriate for contemporary nursing*

Clinical facilities available to and utilized by the nursing program are primarily acute care settings, although some extended care and community agencies are used. Program Evaluators visited 2 sites being used. Clinical facilities seem to be more than adequate to provide the learning experiences to meet the needs of the program. A majority of the nursing staff at Hamilton Medical Center, one of the primary clinical sites, are Dalton State graduates. There is little competition for clinical space at that facility since only the associate degree and practical nursing students from Dalton State College use the site for clinical experiences. This helps students by allowing clinical experiences to be concurrent with theoretical studies. Students and alumnae expressed an appreciation for the clinical experiences afforded there.

Administrators, graduates, and students at both major clinical sites expressed satisfaction with the nursing program and commented on the positive image of the program in the community. Several students commented that they could have gone to other nursing programs but chose Dalton State because of its outstanding reputation.

As provided for in the Systematic Plan for Evaluation, both faculty and students evaluate the clinical facilities at the end of each course. Tabulated results are shared with the clinical agency. Clinical staff, in turn, evaluate the clinical rotation of students, and results are shared with the nursing faculty.

Clinical affiliation agreements were found to be current for all affiliating agencies.

**Strengths:**

Course and unit objectives are clearly labeled and reflect logical progression in relation to philosophy, organizing framework and program outcomes.

State-of-the art clinical facilities, which provide clinical experiences concurrent with theory learning objectives.

Comprehensive, continuous evaluation of resources by students and faculty, according to the Systematic Plan for Evaluation

Measurement of critical thinking via portfolio evaluation.

**Concern:**

Minimal progression of cognitive level of unit and final exam test items.

## Resources

**Standard:** Resources are sufficient to accomplish the nursing education unit purposes

**Criteria:**

15. *Fiscal resources are sufficient to support the nursing education unit purposes and commensurate with the resources of the governing organization.*

Dr. James Burran, President, Dr. John Black, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Mr. Tommy Godbee, Vice President for Fiscal Affairs, Ms. Trudy Swilling, Program Director all concurred to the program evaluators that the nursing unit is adequately supported commensurate with resource of the governing organization in comparison to other units in the college. Whenever possible, all requests supporting the nursing program are funded.

16. *Program support services are sufficient for the operation of the nursing education unit.*

The Program Director and nursing faculty report that the Technical Laboratory Assistant is a strong benefit to the nursing program. This person is responsible for inventory and requisition of laboratory supplies and equipment. Other duties include preparation for and clean-up of laboratory in conjunction with faculty led and student self-directed learning activities, assistance with the use of video equipment, and participation in recruitment activities.

The Program Director reports that the secretarial staff is adequate for the operation of the nursing program. This person's office is located in close proximity to that of the Program Director and interacts directly with faculty, staff, and students on a daily basis.

17. *Learning resources are comprehensive, current, developed with nursing faculty input, and accessible to faculty and students.*

Learning resources for the Dalton State College nursing program are comprehensive, provide current information and accessible to students, faculty, and members of the community. A tour of the Derrell C. Roberts Library revealed a modern, well-designed facility with state of the art learning resources. A physical expansion of the library was completed in 2001. Included in the library building are individual work spaces and comfortable new furnishings, enclosed group study rooms and areas designated as audiovisual viewing rooms, and 60 computer terminals with internet and printer access. Also available to the students and public are microfilm readers, multiple photocopiers and a fax machine. The library is open six days a week during the academic year for a total of 73 hours per week. Off site access to library card catalog and Internet resources is available to students and faculty by password entry.

Library holdings include a variety of materials on all major subject areas. These resources include: 744 nursing books either shelved as reference, reserve or on the open stacks. Over 100 nursing video and/or CD-Rom titles, and current subscriptions to over 60 nursing journals in paper format. An interview with Liz Bagley, Library Director, revealed a variety of methods by which the library user may access resources not housed in the Derrell C. Roberts Library. Users have access to interlibrary loan services and library share services where the student or faculty may be issued a user card that will allow them to go to another Georgia college library and check out resources. A popular resource used by both nursing students and faculty is the on-line electronic data bases. As demonstrated by the Library Director in a power-point presentation to the program evaluator, the library provides access to three data-bases for nursing: ProQuest, Medline and CINAHL. Through the Georgia Library Learning Online (GALILEO)

and GALILEO Interconnected Libraries and the Internet (GIL) an additional 173 holdings and services are available. As cited by the Library Director and Nursing Faculty, the library's nursing holdings are reviewed annually by nursing faculty. During this time out of date materials are discarded and new resources are added. Each nursing faculty member has the responsibility for ordering 12 new books each year. In addition, 1 nursing faculty member serves on the Library Committee.

Students are provided a tour of the library and power-point demonstration on use on the on-line data bases during the first nursing course. Students and faculty research is supported by a master's prepared Library Director and 3 master's prepared assistants, one of whom is available at all times that the library is open. Media/technical support personnel are housed in the library and assist students, faculty and library staff with the development of media presentations. In addition the campus library resources, students have access to library materials at the clinical facilities.

Dalton State College nursing students have access to computers situated in and around to nursing classroom building. A tour of the campus revealed 9 general purpose computer labs and 15 special purpose labs such as math lab, writing, reading, and testing labs. Technical assistants staff the labs and provide assistance to students and faculty. The campus laboratory is supplied with interactive learning resources. Nursing faculty have input on the selection of all software and equipment purchases for the laboratory. In addition to the interactive and video resources for students, the campus laboratory has 7 hospital style beds, 2 authentic manikins, various models that are shared with the science students and contemporary medical supplies. According to the nursing program director, all of the laboratory supplies are provided at no additional cost to students.

As noted by the program evaluators while attending classes, nursing classrooms and campus laboratory are multimedia equipped with mounted projection and television monitors that are used for power point and video presentations. Faculty use portable microphones for voice projection in the large classroom.

18. *Physical facilities are appropriate to support the purposes of the nursing education unit.*

Physical facilities are adequately equipped and meet the needs of the nursing program. All nursing faculty have single offices with computers and access to printers. Student computer laboratories are located in various areas around the campus and have pertinent software. The learning laboratory has sufficient practice stations and equipment to provide for student learning. Classrooms are located in proximity of the nursing faculty offices and are equipped with multimedia hardware for use during classroom activities. As previously addressed, faculty have access to voice projection microphones for use in the multi-tiered classroom.

Students report that the number of computers available is adequate. The number of computer terminals for student use has increased due to the recent expansion of the library facility.

**Strengths:**

Comprehensive library resources that are accessible 24 hours a day via Galileo on-line subscription service.

Recent expansion of library structure.

Multiple computer labs, easily accessible to students and faculty, with a strong technical support service.

Nursing Technical Laboratory Assistant, available for students and faculty.

### **Integrity**

**Standard:**     Integrity is evident in the practices and relationships of the nursing education unit.

**Criteria:**

19.     *Information about the program, intended to inform the general public, prospective students, current students, employers and other interested parties, is current, accurate, clear, and consistent.*

Published and on-line information about the nursing program is current, accurate, clear and consistent. Changes are made to the College Catalog/Student Handbook every two years. The nursing brochure and attractive and well organized with concise information. Prior to entering the nursing program, students are academically advised by nursing faculty and frequently interact with the program director. Upon entering the nursing program, students are provided with an orientation and Nursing Student Handbook. Students expressed a clear understanding of the expectations of the nursing program admission and progression policies.

20.     *Complaints about the program are addressed and records are maintained and available for review.*

The Program Director reports that there is a system in place to address and maintain records of complaints against the program. There have been no formal complaints filed within the past 5 years.

21.     *Compliance with Higher Education Reauthorization Act Title IV eligibility and certification requirements is maintained.*

As reported by Mr. Kevin Wellwood, Director of Financial Aid and Ms. Jodi Johnson, Vice President for Enrollment and Student Services, the institution has a written comprehensive program to promote student loan repayment that addresses: student loan information, counseling, monitoring, and cooperation with lenders. Based on the 5% student loan default rate review of the monitoring system in place, the program evaluation team concludes that the college is in compliance with the Higher Education Authorization Act.

**Strength:**

Current, accurate, clear, and consistent published or on-line information about the program

### **Educational Effectiveness**

**Standard:** There is an identified plan for systematic evaluation including assessment of student academic achievement.

**Criteria:**

22. *There is a written plan for systematic program evaluation that is used for continuous program improvement.*

The written plan for systematic program evaluation is in place as described on p. 108 of the Self Study Report. All program components are addressed and reviewed on a regular basis. To assure that all components are reviewed and that all faculty participate in the process, the 10 program outcomes are divided among the individual faculty members who are responsible to report findings to the faculty on a set timetable. Faculty minutes reflect that the systematic plan is used to identify areas of strength and concern, and modifications in the program are based on the findings.

23. *Student academic achievement by program type is evaluated by: graduation rates, licensure/ certification pass rates, job placement rates, and program satisfaction.*

Program Evaluators found that student academic achievement is evaluated by all the methods required. The program is greatly supported in evaluation by the Director of Institutional Research and Planning. The implementation columns on the written plan, as well as faculty minutes, indicate that findings from program evaluation are used by faculty in making decisions about matters that affect the program.

**Strengths:**

Active involvement of all nursing faculty in the continuous evaluation of program outcomes.

Support of the program evaluation process by the Office of Institutional Research.

Documented use of evaluation data for continuous program development and improvement.

**III. PATTERNS OF STRENGTHS AND CONCERNS AND ADVICE:**

Patterns Of Strength	Patterns Of Concern
Extent and breadth of support from administration and the community.  Efficient, caring program administrator.  Reputation of the program, faculty, and graduates.  Current, comprehensive library and computer resources.  Organization and utilization of systematic plan of evaluation for program improvement.	None

**IV. RECOMMENDATION FOR ACCREDITATION STATUS AND RATIONALE:**

**Recommendation:**

Grant accreditation with a revisit in eight (8) years.

**Rationale:**

When examined in light of the NLNAC criteria, the Associate Degree Nursing Program at Dalton State College was found to have consistent, strong college and program administration and support. Students, graduates, and employers express a high degree of satisfaction with the program. The graduates are successful in attaining licensure and employment.

Administrative and community support is evidenced by the provision of comprehensive resources for the operation of the program. The program has enjoyed a long history of success in the community and is the primary supplier of the nursing workforce in the community.

The Systematic Plan for Program Evaluation is applicable to the needs and outcomes of the program. The plan is consistently utilized by the faculty cohort as a means of continuous program development and improvement.