

**Response to Prof. Barbara R. Kelley's Review over the Implementation of the Recommendations Made by the Evaluation committee of Nursing Departments in Israel (April 2013)**

**General response of Prof. Kelley regarding the implementation of the recommendations:**

According to the implementation report of October 27, 2012, the Department of Nursing (DON) at the University of Haifa has been able to successfully implement many of the November, 2010 recommendations of the EC.

While many of the recommendations require a response and support from the university and the school, the DON has advocated, often successfully, for such support. The EC recommendations also included changes to be made by the Nursing Division of the Ministry of Health. The MOH did comply with some of the recommendations and core curriculum requirements were modified (The four nursing programs reported different changes in the MOH core curriculum for nursing programs).

HU has strengthened its nursing program through the addition of new faculty members and realignment of the supervision and teaching of undergraduate clinical nursing courses to nurses. The DON successfully negotiated with the Dean of the Technion's Faculty of Medicine to terminate their collaboration and move toward being an independent program conferring a BSN. Establishment of the Cheryl Spencer Nursing Research Center will put the DON in the forefront of Israeli and international nursing research efforts.

The implementation report evidenced a successful commitment and hard work on the part of the nursing leadership and faculty at HU DON. They are to be commended.

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<b>BA Program:</b>			
1. The EC strongly recommends that the Core curriculum mandated by the Ministry of Health should be reduced to assure minimum safety levels only. The nursing faculty of the University of Haifa should review the core curriculum and the curricula of their department to broaden the choice of electives and take into account the rapid changes in health care delivery and the roles for which nurses must be prepared.	The DON has reviewed the curriculum with suggestions for broadening the range of electives. They have met with the head of the nursing division at the MOH along with other heads of academic nursing departments in Israel. These meeting resulted in a decision to eliminate the required core curriculum which will reduce the credit requirements from 155 to 126 and allow a more flexible BA program.		

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2. Clinical nursing knowledge should be taught by expert nurses rather than by medical faculty.	The DON instituted a committee to search for expert nurses with academic and clinical backgrounds. This resulted in the hiring of six nurses to teach five courses.		
3. The nursing and medical faculty should explore ways to strengthen their collaboration. For example, physicians could teach both medical and nursing students in areas of their expertise, e.g. new surgical procedures or new imaging diagnostics and nurses could teach both nursing and medical students in their areas of expertise, e.g. oncology, pain and symptom management, gerontology and care of geriatric patients, women's health, genetics and ethics.	A joint meeting between representatives of the DON and the Faculty of Medicine at the Technion resulted in the nursing faculty having responsibility for supervision and teaching of undergraduate clinical courses. Twelve physicians were recruited for teaching the clinical courses, 10 as teaching fellows in the DON and 2 as faculty members. Nine new lecturers were recruited to teach the pre-clinical courses, one of these was appointed as coordinator of the entire pre-clinical courses.	It is unclear in the implementation report why physicians were recruited to teach the clinical courses to nursing students. It is also unclear if the nine new lecturers are nurses or physicians.	<b>(D)</b> All the newly recruited lecturers were junior faculty members. Of these, 1 is an expert psychiatric nurse, 1 is an MD, 6 are life science researchers, and 1 is a social science researcher. The DON continually searches for expert academic nurses for teaching the medical and pre-clinical courses, to be appointed as senior faculty. We would like to note that we are in a period of transition, as this year we have recruited one tenure track nurse lecturer, an expert in Gerontology; and within two years we expect to recruit three additional nurses— all of whom have been selected by the DON to do doctoral studies in one of the top ten universities in the US. These PhD studies are funded by the Cheryl Spencer Fund.

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4. Establish a simulation laboratory with up to date equipment and technologies, including faculty-generated simulation scenarios, which will enable students to acquire basic and advanced nursing skills and enable faculty to standardize learning and evaluation of students in clinical skills.	The DON purchased special simulation software and a video camera and trained staff in online mentoring and using computerized simulation in teaching. They have contacted international institutions to cooperate in design and use of simulation techniques. The faculty is in the process of designing and using computerized simulations and will introduce this mode of teaching in all clinical areas by 2013-2014. This academic year the faculty plan to use virtual reality technology in training students.		<b>(D)</b> In line with the EC recommendation, we plan to implement simulations for teaching practical clinical studies. These simulations will be conducted by human actors in order to better address patient–nurse encounters and clinical decision making processes. The simulations will be accompanied by actor, mentor and group feedback. Additionally, computerized simulations are now in the developmental stage, and the first platform will be designed for medication administration. For these processes, we have recruited a nursing PhD student for a part-time job.
5. Implement a timely student notification process of clinical site assignments that will allow students to make provisions for family and work obligations.	A change was made to the student notification process. Students are notified one month earlier than previously and the information is available to the students on the DON website.		
6. Evaluate distance learning modalities for incorporation into the nursing curriculum to strengthen self-learning practices.	The faculty added e-learning assignments to the clinical studies courses. E-learning in mentoring is new criteria for evaluating mentors. Every mentor has a website enabling him/her to communicate with students and faculty members.		

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<b>RN-BA Program:</b>			
1. Online and web-enhanced methodologies should be considered to increase the enrollment in the RN-BA program to upgrade the knowledge and skills of nurses currently in the workforce.	The DON maintains two off-site completion programs for nurses, Nazareth for Arab students and Bnei Brak for ultra-orthodox students. The faculty has plans for an annual nursing workshop/conference to be funded through the Cheryl Spencer Research Center. The conference this year was on medication administration errors and was well attended.		
2. Design an accelerated RN-MA program to facilitate the progression of appropriate candidates directly to masters' and doctoral programs.	The DON has designed a tailored program for one student accepted into an RN-MA program. They plan to expand this offering over the next 3 years so 7-10% of graduate students will be in this track.		
<b>Students:</b>			
1. Expand the pool of qualified candidates with the institution of a second degree program designed for people with prior university degrees that leads to a BA and/or an MA in nursing.	The DON has plans to establish a second degree program for qualified candidates.	Continue to work on designing a second degree program for non-traditional students. The elimination of a required core curriculum should facilitate the establishment of such a program.	<b>(D)</b> In line with this recommendation, we continue to identify and encourage outstanding undergraduate candidates to enroll in our graduate program. For example, we use the research seminar in the BA program as an academic platform to identify outstanding students and offer them the opportunity to develop their seminar papers to thesis proposals.

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<b>Research:</b>			
1. Provide academic and research mentoring for junior faculty.	A new staff member who is an expert in grant and peer reviewed article writing has been recruited to work as a mentor with junior faculty members. There is in place a statistician to help the junior faculty members and two faculty members have been appointed to help new faculty within the nursing department.		
2. Institute dedicated research grants for nursing faculty.	The newly inaugurated Cheryl Spencer Nursing Research Center will assist in funding grants and research for the nursing faculty according to determined criteria within an annual cycle. In February 2012 winning grant applications were funded with \$2000 in seed money as well as \$500 awarded to MA student applicants.	Continue to seek university and external monies to sustain the ongoing work of the Cheryl Spencer Nursing Research Center.	

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3. Offer full promotion and tenure recognition for participation in interdisciplinary research.	The nursing faculty is engaged in national and international interdisciplinary research.	Collaborate with other disciplines to advocate at the university level for tenure recognition for interdisciplinary research. Identify ways in which nursing faculty conducting interdisciplinary research can carve out independent projects that the university will recognize for tenure and promotion.	<p><b>(D)</b> The University of Haifa now promotes several interdisciplinary initiatives. The DON is one of the collaborating partners in such projects (e.g., elderly exclusion). It is reasonable to assume that interdisciplinary research and projects will be one criterion for the promotion of individual staff members. In addition, and in line with your recommendation, the DON is now proposing that this criterion be used when the University authorities evaluate departmental quality.</p> <p><b>(U)</b> The main principle guiding the recruitment and promotion of faculty members at the University of Haifa is academic excellence. Undoubtedly, since the importance of interdisciplinary research has become a fundamental element in the development of science and research in the last decades, the recruitment and promotion process values and encourages interdisciplinary cooperative endeavors.</p>
4. Advocate in clinical settings (hospitals, community health centers) for nursing faculty and students to conduct research projects.	Nursing faculty are in the process of collaborating with practicing clinicians in hospitals and communities in research projects. A goal of the Cheryl Spencer Nursing Research Center is to advocate, facilitate and fund research projects in clinical settings.		

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5. Work in cooperation with nursing faculty at Tel Aviv, Hebrew and Ben Gurion universities to design a national collaborative PhD program to be implemented within 3-4 years. The EC recommends that a ratio of 1 faculty member to 8 thesis and dissertation students (Masters and PhD) should be achieved within the next five years. In the short term, while working towards this target, a maximum ratio of 1 faculty member to 15 thesis and dissertation students should be achieved. These objectives would make the staffing for research advisement comparable to international norms.	The DON is preparing to submit to the CHE for approval a proposal for a PhD program at Haifa. The nursing faculty will also cooperate with the other universities to design a national collaborative PhD program in nursing.	The DON needs to continue to meet with the other university nursing programs to discuss a national collaborative PhD program that would share faculty and courses and take advantage of economies of scale and scarce resources, to be implemented within the next 2-3 years.	<b>(D)</b> The DON has already discussed this issue with other universities, and will continue to find ways for collaboration.
6. All graduate theses and future dissertations should be written in English to facilitate publication in the international nursing and health literature and outside evaluation.	The DON has designed and implemented a graduate course to teach students how to write peer reviewed papers. Students are encouraged to write their thesis in English which has resulted in five English language thesis.	Continue to offer English writing workshops and on-line self-help English writing programs.	<b>(D)</b> The DON will continue to encourage capable students to write their thesis and dissertation in English, and provide all the necessary formal and informal support.
<b>Faculty:</b>			
1. Assign the control and teaching of undergraduate clinical courses to the nursing faculty.	The nursing faculty is now responsibility for supervision and teaching of undergraduate clinical courses. Twelve physicians were recruited for teaching the clinical courses, 10 as teaching fellows in the DON and 2 as faculty members. Nine new lecturers were recruited to teach the pre-clinical courses, one of these was appointed as coordinator of the entire pre-clinical courses.	It is unclear why physicians were recruited to teach the clinical courses to nursing students. It is also unclear if the nine new lecturers are nurses or physicians. Continue to assign nurses to teach undergraduate nursing clinical courses.	<b>(D)</b> Please see our response to recommendation 3 regarding the BA Program, on page 2.

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2. Design and implement team teaching methodologies for nursing and medical courses.	Nursing faculty are occasionally invited to lecture to medical students in their area of expertise.	Continue to advocate for interdisciplinary teaching, clinical exposure and research projects with the medical faculty and students to facilitate interdisciplinary understanding and professional collaboration.	<b>(D)</b> We are consistently striving to set up interdisciplinary teaching teams in cooperation with the medical faculty.
3. Identify ways to recognize, reward and increase the involvement of both adjunct and clinical faculty.	Adjunct and clinical nursing faculty are encouraged to participate in academic and department activities.	Continue to work with clinical partners and university administrators to formally recognize time spent by adjunct and clinical faculty members toward professional advancement in their respective nursing positions.	<b>(D)</b> To reach this goal, the DON operates in two channels. First, we encourage expert nurses to participate in our teaching program, in order to share their experience with our students. Second, we advance multicenter research projects to promote collaborations between academia and clinical nurses and settings.
4. Hire a minimum of three PhD prepared faculty within the next two years in preparation for a collaborative national PhD program development and implementation.	The assignment of nursing faculty to undergraduate clinical teaching has allowed the DON to hire two faculty with PhD degrees.		
5. Institute a clinical track for nursing faculty with clinical expertise, comparable to the clinical track found in medicine.	The university's policy is to reduce the number of nursing faculty with clinical expertise.	It is unclear what this means, will the DON hire PhD prepared nurses with clinical expertise?	<b>(D)</b> The DON will make every effort to hire nurses with both a PhD and special clinical expertise.
<b>Resources:</b>			
1. Assign appropriate classroom space taking into account both large and small groupings and the requirements of different teaching methodologies.	The university intends to build a new building for the Faculty of Social Welfare and Health Sciences which will provide self-designed space for the DON.	In the meantime continue to advocate for appropriate space for student learning.	

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2. Add at least one new full-time administrative position within this academic year to meet the need for increased administrative support.	The DON has increased administrative support by 0.75.		
3. Establish a nursing simulation laboratory with up to date equipment and technologies for basic and advance nursing students.	The DON purchased special simulation software and a video camera and trained staff in online mentoring and using computerized simulation in teaching. They have contacted international institutions to cooperate in design and use of simulation techniques. The faculty is in the process of designing and using computerized simulations and will introduce this mode of teaching in all clinical areas by 2013-2014. This academic year the faculty plan to use virtual reality technology in training students.		<b>(D)</b> Please see our response to recommendation 4 regarding the BA Program, on page 6.