

# IMPLEMENTING ACEN ACCREDITATION STANDARDS IN AN ASSOCIATE DEGREE LPN-RN PROGRAM



Lesley M. Krohn  
University of Missouri – Sinclair School of Nursing

## INTRODUCTION

### Problem:

National accreditation through the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN) is needed for the RN program at Arkansas Tech University – Ozark (ATU-O) as:

- National accreditation connotes excellence across state line<sup>5</sup>
- Benefits of national accreditation may include<sup>1</sup>:
  - Increased ability to attract future faculty and students
  - Increased eligibility of program for grants and outside monies
  - Provide students with more opportunities for grants to pay or reimburse tuition expenses
  - increased job opportunities for graduates
  - Increase the ability of graduates to enter subsequent BSN/graduate program
- Initial accreditation process will cost approximately \$13,415 compared to possible loss of \$13,215 for students that choose an accredited school over ATU-O<sup>1,2</sup>

### Literature Review:

- Explored three models of curriculum evaluation:
  - NLN's Excellence in Nursing Education model as implemented by Meridian Community College<sup>4</sup>
  - Nurse Evaluation Program<sup>3</sup>
  - Curricular Mapping<sup>6</sup>
- Additional key elements for curriculum review include<sup>7</sup>:
  - Evidence of ongoing curriculum review,
  - Evaluation methods used in each course
  - Student evaluations of the following:
    - Each course
    - Each faculty member
    - Student services,
    - End-of-program comprehensive surveys
- Concepts from all three curriculum evaluation models and key elements for curriculum review were incorporated into instruments developed for this project

### Purpose:

The research project will determine the degree to which the Associate degree nursing program at ATU-O aligns with Standard 4 Curriculum of the ACEN accreditation standards. Results will be used to identify areas where changes in the program's curriculum are necessary and will become a part of the self-study that will be submitted to the ACEN during the accreditation application process.

### Objectives

- 100% of courses required for program completion will be in compliance with ACEN Standard 4 Criteria.
- 16% of the overall ATU-O self-study will be ready for dissemination.
- Analysis of ADN end-of-program outcomes and faculty demographics will be evaluated for differences in accredited versus non-accredited programs in Arkansas

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

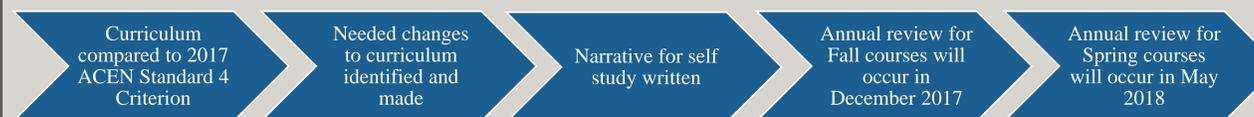
**Setting/Sample:** The setting for this project was ATU-O in Ozark, AR. The sample consisted of the curriculum and curriculum delivery methods. Additional data were collected regarding graduates and faculty of all associate degree programs in the state of Arkansas.

**Intervention:** Standard 4: Curriculum Criterion 4.1-4.11 were applied to the nursing program in an effort to increase the quality and effectiveness of the nursing education unit and establish a standard of excellence. Additionally, graduate and faculty data were presented to stakeholders.

**Measures:** The ACEN Standards and Criteria, particularly Standard 4 Curriculum was used to evaluate the program. A worksheet was developed to use as each course was reviewed.

**Research Design:** Continuous quality improvement project.

- Written narrative produced for qualitative data
- Chi-square of Independence used to analyze nominal data
- Mann Whitney U used to analyze ordinal data and Vargha Delaney used to describe magnitude of clinical effect
- Independent t-tests used to analyze ratio level data and Cohen's D used to describe magnitude of clinical effect
- Level of significance was  $p \leq .05$



## RESULTS

	Pearson Chi-squared	Degrees of Freedom	p Value
Sex	1.846	1	.17
Race	.627	2	.73
Age	6.476	5	.26
Highest Degree Earned	5.344	3	.15

Faculty Demographics.

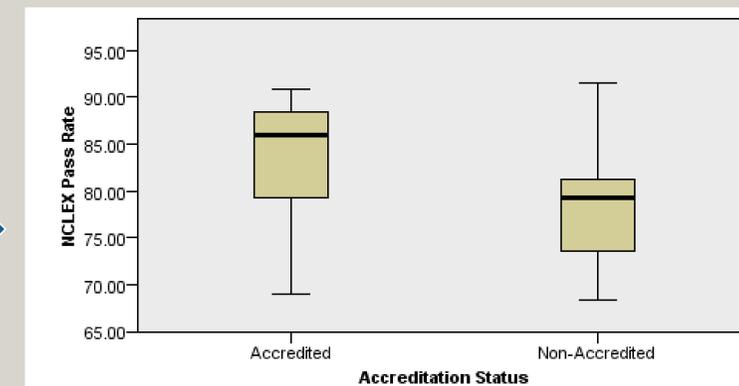


Faculty Salary Distribution

- Objective 1: Met, 100% of courses now compliant with ACEN Standard 4 Criterion
- Objective 2: Met, 50% of self-study is ready for dissemination
- Objective 3: Met, end-of-program outcomes and faculty demographics evaluated for difference between accredited and non-accredited nursing programs:
  - No statistical significance found in faculty demographics or end-of-program outcomes.

## RESULTS

- Associate degree faculty in Arkansas, regardless of accreditation status, are predominately white females between 40 and 59 years of age with a MSN.
- All male faculty were from the same accredited school of nursing.
- 3% of faculty teaching in an accredited program held a DNP, while 19% of faculty teaching in a non-accredited program held a DNP.
- Students completing an accredited nursing program saw a clinically significant increase in NCLEX pass rate.
- Curriculum changes included updating the end-of-program Student Learning Objectives, implementing new clinical evaluation tools, and updating course objectives in all courses with significant changes occurring in three courses.



NCLEX Pass Rates by Accreditation Status

## CONCLUSIONS

- All three objectives were met
- National accreditation remains a priority for the ATU-O RN program
- Annual curriculum review will occur using current ACEN Standards and Criteria
- Application for candidacy will be made once stakeholders commit to resource allocation

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