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AUTHOR Pipes, V. David
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ABSTRACT

In summer 1983, an evaluation of the nursing program at Caldwell Community College and Technical Institute was conducted to determine whether program objectives were being met, to measure program success, and to identify areas needing improvement. Surveys were sent to 19 early (pre-1978) and 47 recent Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) graduates; 17 early and 68 recent Registered Nurse (RN) and Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN) graduates; 27 students who left the program before graduation; 12 advisory committee members; 39 employers; and 6 nursing instructors and the program chair. Based on responses from 28% of the early and 35% of the recent LPN graduates, 23% of the early and 52% of the recent RN/ADN graduates; 26% of the early leavers; 50% of the advisory committee members; and 54% of the employers, the study revealed: (1) recent graduates tended to rate instructional quality higher than early graduates; (2) compared to early graduates, recent RN/ADN graduates more often indicated that they would have preferred entering a bachelor's program; (3) both LPN and RN/ADN graduates passed state nursing examinations at high rates, and had a high rate of employment; and (4) employers rated 58% of the LPN and 65% of the RN/ADN graduates as "some" or "much" better than graduates of other schools. The surveys identified program needs in the areas of instruction and skill training, student support services and the library, and continuing education. Survey instruments and response data are appended. (Author/LAL)

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EVALUATION OF THE NURSING PROGRAM AT CALDWELL COMMUNITY COLLEGE
AND TECHNICAL INSTITUTE - Summer, 1983

V. David Pipes
Program Evaluation Specialist

Caldwell Community College and Technical Institute

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Abstract

Title: Evaluation of the Nursing Program at Caldwell Community College and Technical Institute - Summer, 1983

Author: V. David Pipes, Program Evaluation Specialist

Statement of the Problem: This study was one in a series designed for the periodic evaluation of all occupational programs at CCC & TI. The purpose of this and the other studies is the collection of information and judgements to facilitate planning, to aid in the improvement of programs, and to meet accountability demands. Some of the more specific objectives of the evaluation of the nursing program are to determine whether program objectives are being met, to measure program success in terms of student, instructor, supervisory and employer satisfaction, to identify aspects of the program needing improvement, and to inform the public of the outcomes of educational expenditures.

Procedure: The evaluation process is designed to allow all staff to participate in activities that directly affect them. A Survey Instrument Planning (SIP) committee developed or modified all survey instruments used in the evaluation process. This committee consisted of the department chairperson for allied health programs, nursing instructors, the Dean of the Office of Educational Development, the Director of the Learning Resource Center, the Dean of Student Development and the program evaluation specialist.

Information was gathered through surveys of program graduates, employers, the advisory committee, program instructors and the department chairperson. Information from these sources was then compiled and analyzed.

The Results:

Identified Trends -

1. the quality of instruction, as reflected in comparisons of early and recent graduate ratings, appears to be getting better at both Level I (LPN) and Level II (RN/ADN);
2. more students in both levels appear to be working while in school;
3. increasing numbers of graduates from both levels are saying that they would have preferred entering a BSN program if they had it to do over again, and fewer would prefer a straight ADN program;

4. most Level I graduates would still choose the LPN/ADN option program, and increasing numbers of Level II graduates would choose the option program again;
5. increasing numbers of Level I students are pursuing higher level degrees (the same appears to be true of Level II graduates, although the data is inconclusive);
6. greater percentages of Level II than Level I graduates attend continuing education workshops; however, decreasing percentages of Level II graduates appear to be attending these sessions; and
7. employers predict the greatest future demand for RN's, followed by LPN's, and the least demand for nursing assistants.

Identified Program Strengths -

1. a high rate of certification passage on the state nursing examinations (Level I - 100% passing every year since 1976 except 1981 in which 97% passed; Level II - 100% passing in 1982 and 1983);
2. a high rate of employment in nursing (Level I - 86%; Level II - 98%);
3. of those employed as nurses, a high rate of employment within fifty (50) miles of CCC & TI (Level I - 66%; Level II - 54% but 100% in western N.C.);
4. among Level II graduates, 16% report working in supervisory capacities;
5. high ratings of the quality of program instruction by graduates (rated "good" or "excellent" by 89% of Level I respondents; 91% of Level II respondents);
6. high ratings of didactic training, especially in the areas of medical, surgical, obstetrics, pediatrics, basic life science, anatomy and physiology;
7. high ratings from employers of Level I graduates in cooperation, attitude, communication skills and providing patient care, and of Level II graduates in professional ethics, technical skills, patient education, and medication administration; and
8. in comparing CCC & TI graduates with graduates of other programs, ratings of "some better" or "much better" were given by 58% of employers to Level I graduates, and by 65% of employers to Level II graduates.

Identified Program Needs -

Instruction and skill training:

1. more and better clinical training in first-aid, trauma care, emergency room procedures, intensive care and cardiac care;
2. more clinical experience in caring for multiple patient loads in general and more clinical contact with pediatric patients;
3. expansion of instruction in obstetrics (maternal-infant) and pediatrics (maternal-child) to one quarter each;
4. better training and instruction in nutrition and diet therapy, pharmacotherapeutics, psychiatric nursing (Level II) and abnormal psychology (Level II);
5. more math, especially in regard to dose calculations;
6. improvement in the General Psychology course (Level I), especially consideration of inclusion of a unit on abnormal psychology;
7. better training in patient education (Level I) and maintaining medical records (Level II);
8. more emphasis on leadership skills (Level II);
9. consideration of inclusion of basic chemistry in Level II;
10. explore measures to reduce faculty turnover; and.
11. explore possibilities of using advisory committee members in clinical settings where possible.

Student support services and LRC:

1. more effective and positive communication and assistance to students seeking financial aid;
2. more active job placement efforts for program graduates;
3. more assistance in preparing students for job application process;
4. expanded and consistent hours for bookstore operations;
5. more effective handling of textbooks and supply requests; and
6. a greater variety of nursing magazines available through the LRC.

Continuing Education:

1. exploration of the possibilities of establishing more cooperative arrangements with four-year institutions to ease the transition of ADN graduates to BSN programs with minimal loss of credit hours; and
2. an effective response to continuing education needs of local LPN and ADN graduates.

Evaluation of the Nursing Program
at Caldwell Community College and Technical Institute

Introduction

Evaluation of occupational programs is essential to determine their worth and to provide for continued improvement and effectiveness. The word "evaluation" has many different meanings depending upon the need it is designed to meet and whether the focus is on process or product. The working definition used in the evaluation of programs at Caldwell Community College and Technical Institute (CCC & TI) is as stated by Wentling (1980). He defines evaluation as

"... the collection of information and judgements to facilitate planning, to aid in the improvement of programs, and to meet accountability demands."

The Executive Council of CCC & TI has stated that the purpose of program evaluations is to meet the following six objectives:

1. to gather information relative to planning, decision-making and determination of resource allocations for a program;
2. to determine whether program objectives are being met;
3. to identify aspects of a program needing improvement;
4. to measure program success in terms of student and/or employer satisfaction;
5. to inform the public of outcomes of educational investments and expenditures; and
6. to verify that programs are meeting state, federal and voluntary accrediting agency mandates.

A seventh objective to be met by the Business Office is to measure the cost effectiveness of programs.

Evaluation Organization

Evaluation Specialist

The Evaluation Specialist is responsible for coordinating the evaluation process for each data source. This person is also assigned the responsibility of receiving, organizing, maintaining, and reporting data that relate to an instructional program or to individual personnel within a program.

Survey Instrument Planning (SIP) Committee

Program evaluation at CCC & TI is designed to allow all staff to participate in evaluation activities that directly affect them. Faculty members also are represented in planning committees related to the evaluation of programs in which they teach.

At the onset of each program evaluation a Survey Instrument Planning (SIP) committee is appointed. This committee develops or modifies all survey instruments and assists in the coordination of evaluation activities. This committee consists of the following members:

- the department chairperson for the program being evaluated;
- program instructors;
- an LRC representative;
- a Student Development representative;
- the Dean of the Office of Educational Development; and
- the evaluation specialist.

Method of Evaluation

The basic strategy of the evaluation process is to generate input from as many appropriate sources as possible. For the nursing program these included the following:

- program graduates;
- early leavers, i.e. students who discontinue their studies before completing the program;
- current and potential employers of graduates;
- advisory committee members;
- nursing instructors; and
- the chairperson of the Allied Health Department.

Information from these sources is then compiled and analyzed. Appropriate reports are distributed to the Executive Council, the department chairperson, the LRC director, the Dean of Student Development, the nursing instructors, the program advisory committee and the CCC & TI archives.

The Nursing Program

Graduates of accredited programs of nurse education are prepared to function as beginning practitioners in a variety of situations, including hospitals; nursing homes; clinics; doctors', dentists', and veterinarians' offices; industry; and in some instances, public health facilities.

A student enrolled in the associate degree nursing program has career options at two points during the training. Upon successful completion of the first year (Level I, Licensed Practical Nursing), the student is prepared to practice as a practical nurse and is eligible for practical nurse licensing examinations. The student is also eligible to apply for the second year of the nursing program.

Upon successful completion of the second year (Level II, Registered Nursing), the student is prepared to practice with technical competence, is eligible for registered nurse licensing examinations, and qualifies for an associate degree in nursing (ADN). These examinations are administered by the North Carolina Board of Nursing and are given twice each year, in February and July.

Satisfactory placement scores in reading, math, and English must be achieved prior to entry into this program. For more specific policies concerning the nursing program, see the student handbook.

Survey Process and Response Rate

The Graduate Surveys

Graduates of levels I and II of the nursing program were divided into two groups; "early" (Appendix A - Level I, Appendix C - Level II), and "recent" (Appendix B - Level I, Appendix D - Level II). Early graduates were defined as those former students who graduated before

1978. Recent graduates were those who graduated from 1978 through 1982.

Survey forms for the early graduates of both Level I and Level II were identical except that Level I graduates were asked to indicate whether they were in the Watauga or Caldwell (Hudson) program. Level II has no program in Watauga County. Recent graduates of both levels received more detailed questionnaires requesting information and ratings of core training areas, related course work, student support services and Learning Resource Center (LRC) services. Since some Level II graduates completed Level I at places other than CCC & TI, an additional, special form was developed and sent to those recent graduates who completed both levels at CCC & TI. This additional form requested information specific to Level I.

All groups were sent an initial mailing followed by a second mailing to non-respondents. The following are the response rates for each group:

Level I - early graduates = 19 of 68 or 28%;
Level I - recent graduates = 47 of 133 or 35%;
Level II - early graduates = 17 of 75 or 23%; and
Level II - recent graduates = 68 of 131 or 52%.

The Early Leaver Surveys

All former nursing students who had completed at least thirty-two (32) credit hours but who discontinued their studies before graduating were surveyed. Seven (7) of twenty-seven (27) of these early leavers completed and returned questionnaires for an overall response rate of 26%. A summary report of their response can be found in Appendix E.

The Advisory Committee Survey

On November 9, 1982, the program evaluation specialist explained the evaluation process to the nursing advisory committee members during a scheduled meeting. Evaluation forms for members were distributed at that time. Absent members were sent a copy of the minutes of the meeting, evaluation forms and information explaining the evaluation process. Six (6) of twelve (12) committee members returned evaluation forms for a 50% response rate. The summary of the advisory committee evaluations can be found in Appendix F.

The Employer Survey

Names of current and potential employers were compiled from instructor suggestions and graduate survey returns. A total of thirty-nine (39) employers and/or supervisors were surveyed and twenty-one (21) returned completed questionnaires for a 54% response rate. Seventy-one percent (71%) of these respondents had employed or were currently employing graduates from Level I. Eighty-six percent (86%) had employed or were currently employing Level II graduates.

The summary report on employer responses can be found in Appendix G.

Supervisory and Instructor Evaluations

All nursing instructors and the chairperson of the Allied Health Department were given the opportunity to evaluate the nursing program, student support services, and the LRC. A total of six questionnaires were completed and returned. The complete summary of these evaluations can be found in Appendix H.

Survey Results - Level I (LPN)

Level I of the nursing program is a two-site operation. The primary site is located in Caldwell County on the Hudson campus of CCC & TI. An extension site is located in Watauga County at the Watauga County Hospital. A comparison of the responses from graduates of these two program sites revealed few significant differences. One of these was a difference in the employment status of recent graduates while in school. No recent Watauga graduates worked full-time during their matriculation, whereas five (5) or 16% of the Hudson students did. Also, a higher percentage of recent Watauga students than recent Hudson students did not work while in school. These percentages were 40% and 25% respectively.

Response comparisons between early and recent graduates indicates that increasing numbers of students have been working part- or full-time while in school. Where 47% of the early graduate respondents reported working while studying, 71% of the more recent graduate respondents reported working. Also, recent graduates working part-time during study are working on the average two hours per week more than their earlier counterparts.

Current Employment Status of Graduates

Among recent graduates, 94% are reportedly working in the nursing field. Two (2) graduates were unemployed but both were continuing their training in nursing. The one (1) respondent reporting work in another field stated that she preferred secretarial work to nursing.

Among early graduates, 68% reported current employment in the nursing field, while 16% were unemployed and another 16% were employed but not in nursing. All of those employed in other fields stated that they preferred their present occupation to nursing. Of the unemployed, one (1) could not work and one (1) had family responsibilities which prevented employment. Of the six (6) unemployed or employed in other fields, four (4) had been employed as a nurse at some time since graduation.

Location of Employment and Job Titles

Eighty-four percent (84%) of the early graduates employed in nursing found jobs and remain in the vicinity of CCC & TI. Only one (1) early and one (1) recent graduate reported working out of the state. One (1) was employed as an infection control nurse, one (1) as an industrial nurse, and the rest were staff nurses.

Of the recent graduates, only 66% reported working near CCC & TI. However, 25% gave no indication of their place of employment. Three (3) recent graduates reported job titles of head nurse, nurse supervisor, and director of nursing. Twenty-nine (29) were staff or charge nurses, and seven (7) were RN applicants.

Income and Satisfaction with Income

Recent graduates were very willing to share information regarding their income as LPN's. Only 17% did not respond to this request. However, 32% of the early graduates gave no information about their income. There appears to be no significant differences between the income levels of the two groups although two (2) early graduates did report making between \$6 and \$7 per hour, while no recent graduates reported making this much. The majority, 71%, of the combined groups responding to this request reported making between \$5 and \$6 per hour.

The early graduates were generally split in their opinions of whether their rate of pay was satisfactory for one year of training, although both of those making \$6 - \$7 per hour were satisfied. Recent graduates overwhelmingly agreed that \$5 to \$6 per hour was satisfactory for their LPN training.

Licensing

All early and recent graduate respondents reported that they currently held an LPN license in N.C. and two (2) also held a Tennessee license. Even those currently employed outside of nursing had maintained a license.

Rating the Quality of Instruction

Level I nursing graduates gave high ratings to the program's overall quality of instruction. Ninety-two percent (92%) of the recent graduates and 84% of the early graduates rated the quality of instruction as "good" or "excellent." Only one (1) graduate from the combined groups gave a rating below "good." This early graduate of the Hudson program gave instruction an "adequate" rating. There were no "poor" ratings in either group.

Would They Do It Again?

Due to the changing demands of the workplace and the variety of nursing programs available, the LPN graduates were asked, "If you had it to do over again, which type of program would you now choose - LPN with ADN (RN) option, a straight ADN program, a BSN program, or would not choose nursing?"

Among the early graduates, a strong preference (47%) was expressed for the LPN with the ADN option, the program offered at CCC & TI. Another 26% would now prefer a straight ADN, and 16% would choose a BSN program. Ten percent (10%) would not choose nursing again regardless of the program offered.

Recent graduates had different preferences. Recent Watauga graduates were evenly split between a preference for the LPN/ADN option and the BSN programs. None in this group preferred the straight ADN. Recent Hudson graduates expressed a stronger preference for the LPN/ADN option, about the same preference for the BSN, and a few preferred the straight ADN.

The combined Hudson and Watauga recent graduates expressed the strongest preference, 43%, for the LPN/ADN option. The reasons given for this choice centered around getting nursing experience as an LPN before deciding to continue studying for the ADN, and the opportunity to work as an LPN while pursuing the ADN. Another 28% of this combined

group expressed a preference for the BSN program because of better-job opportunities, more clout in the workplace, and more time to assimilate learning. Only 4% said that they would not choose nursing again.

Graduates were also asked if they would choose CCC & TI again. All of the early graduates stated that they would, and only two (2) of the recent graduates stated that they would not choose CCC & TI again. Both of those stated a preference for a four-year BSN program.

Pursuit of Advanced Degrees and Continuing Education

Recent graduates seem to be more ambitious than earlier graduates. Whereas none of the early graduate respondents reported working in supervisory positions and only 16% had pursued higher level degrees, three (3) of the recent graduates reported working as RN's in supervisory capacities and thirty-three (33), or 70%, had obtained or were presently obtaining degrees beyond their LPN diploma.

In addition, graduates were asked if they had attended workshops or classes since graduation which kept them up-to-date, and if so, how many hours per year they had completed. Exactly the same percentage of early and recent graduates, 53%, reported attending such classes. A slight variance among groups was noted regarding the number of hours per year devoted to continuing education. Early graduates averaged twenty-four (24) hours per year; recent graduates averaged twenty-six hours (26), and those who graduated from both Level I and Level II at CCC & TI averaged twenty-eight (28) hours.

Level I Recent Graduate Ratings of Skill Training Areas

Recent graduates rated the various skill areas of their training on a four-point scale with "excellent" a "4" rating and "poor" a "1" rating. A complete listing of these ratings and comments can be found in Appendix C, number 12. Ratings by Hudson and Watauga graduates did not differ significantly in any area.

Graduates apparently feel the most confident in the skill areas of maternal-child, maternal-infant, medical and surgical. The first two (2) received 3.4 ratings and the latter two (2) received 3.3 ratings. However, both Watauga and Hudson graduates complained that there were too few pediatric patients at their clinical sites for sufficient training. Both groups also complained that the obstetrics and pediatrics course included too much information for one course.

The only skill area rated below "fair" was nutrition and diet therapy. Graduates gave this area a low 1.7 rating and more negative comments than any other subject. Complaints were generally directed at poor teaching. One respondent commented that she had learned more about nutrition in obstetrics than in the nutrition class.

Ratings of Related Courses by Recent Graduates

Nursing students are required to take a number of courses outside the core of nursing classes, and recent graduates were asked to rate these on a four (4) point scale. These former students gave an outstanding rating of 3.6 to the Basic Life Science course. All ratings were either "excellent" or "good."

Hudson graduates gave significantly lower ratings to both Human Growth and Development and Sociology than the Watauga graduates did. In addition, General Psychology received the lowest combined average of all the related courses. In this case, Watauga graduates gave a slightly lower rating than Hudson graduates, but it should be noted that some Watauga students take General Psychology on the Hudson campus.

Recent graduates were also asked to suggest other courses which they felt should be included in the Level I curriculum. The only multiple response was for Abnormal Psychology. A unit on abnormal psychology is not taught in General Psychology and perhaps it should be.

Equipment and Supplies

Recent graduates gave a strong affirmative response to the question, "Were adequate and up-to-date supplies/equipment available during your training?" Only two (2) or 4% gave a negative response, 11% gave no response, and 85% said "yes."

Ratings of Student Support Services

Recent Level I graduates gave their highest ratings, 3.2 on a four (4) point scale, to "Student Records/Transcripts." "Admissions Process" and "Registration Process" each received 3.1 ratings.

"Food Services" received the lowest rating, 2.2. This area, along with "Parking" which received the next lowest rating of 2.6, traditionally receive the lowest ratings of the student support services. However, one additional area of concern should be noted even though it

received a 2.9 rating. Of the thirty-nine (39) persons giving a rating of "Job Placement," twenty-two (22), or 56%, indicated that they didn't know enough to rate this area. Perhaps past graduates did not need this service due to the availability of jobs. However, recent trends of low hospital populations and a more competitive nursing job market, may create greater demands for job placement services offered by CCC & TI.

Ratings of Library Services

The services offered by the Learning Resource Center (LRC) received good to excellent ratings in all areas. The highest rating, 3.6, was given to "Individual assistance from library staff." Special commendation should be given to the entire LRC staff for achieving such a high regard from students.

The lowest rating was given to "Magazines." Five (5) graduates gave this area a "poor" rating, and the same number commented that the LRC needed to provide a better variety of nursing magazines. Despite these ratings and comments, this area still received a 3.0, "good," rating. This is further testimony to the high quality of the LRC.

Survey Results - Level II (RN)

As stated earlier in this report, Level II of the nursing program is operated exclusively from the Hudson campus of CCC & TI. There is no Watauga site. The survey results reported here will compare the early and recent graduate responses, and will make comparisons with the Level I survey results where it is appropriate.

Employment Status While in School

Response comparisons between early and recent Level II graduates indicates that fewer recent graduates than early graduates are working full-time while in training, 9% and 18% respectively, but that more are working part-time, 59% and 47% respectively. Both groups reported working an average of twenty-one (21) hours per week.

Current Employment Status and Job Titles

All recent graduates and 88% of the early graduates of Level II are reportedly employed in their field of training. Only two (2) early graduates, or 12%, are not employed in the nursing field. One (1) cannot work and the other prefers not to work. Both, however, have been employed as nurses at some time since graduation.

These rates of employment in nursing are much higher than those reported by Level I respondents, especially in the early graduate group. This is likely a reflection of a higher level of commitment by Level II students. Students entering Level II have "gotten their feet wet" in Level I and have decided that the nursing field is for them. Students entering Level I, on the other hand, are not always certain about their training choice. As stated earlier in this report, 32% of the early graduate respondents from Level I were either unemployed or employed outside the nursing field.

The vast majority of Level II graduates are working as staff or charge nurses. Twelve (12) of the seventy-six (76) respondents, or 16%, reporting job titles were working in supervisory capacities.

No Level II graduates, early or recent, reported working outside of the state of North Carolina. Figures on early graduate employment within the CCC & TI greater service area are uncertain because 20% did not indicate their place of employment. However, 63% of the recent graduates have remained in the service area. The 37% working outside the service area are all in western N.C.

Income and Satisfaction with Income

Most early graduates of Level II reported making \$7 per hour or more. Twenty-nine percent (29%) are making between \$7-\$8, and 47% are making between \$8-\$10 per hour. Also, regardless of pay rate, most early graduates, 65%, are reportedly dissatisfied with their level of income.

Among reporting recent graduates, 59% are making between \$6-\$8 per hour and most feel this is an unacceptable rate for two years of training. However, most of those making above \$8 per hour report satisfaction with their income levels. In fact, 52% of all recent graduate respondents report satisfaction with their pay rates.

Licensing

All but one (1) of the Level II respondents reported holding a current nursing license in North Carolina. One (1) early graduate is also licensed in Florida and another is licensed in Georgia. No recent graduates are licensed outside of North Carolina.

Ratings of Quality of Instruction

Level II graduates, like those from Level I, rated the quality of instruction at CCC & TI very high. Among recent graduates, 97% gave ratings of "good" or "excellent." Seventy percent (70%) of the early graduates gave the same ratings. Thirty percent (30%) of the early graduates gave ratings of "poor" or "adequate." This percentage fell to only 3% among recent graduates. This is a strong implication of a strengthening program as perceived by graduates.

Would They Do It Again?

As with Level I graduates, Level II graduates were asked to state a preference regarding the type of program - LPN with ADN option, straight ADN, or BSN - they would choose if they had it to do over again. As might be expected, this group expressed a stronger preference for a BSN program than Level I respondents. Forty-four percent (44%) of the Level II recent graduate respondents preferred a BSN program compared to 28% of the Level I recent graduates. The reasons given for this preference centered around better job opportunities and a perceived bias by hospitals for BSN's over ADN's.

Survey results also revealed a declining interest in a straight ADN program when comparing early and recent graduates. Among early graduates, 18% preferred the straight ADN, but only 9% of the recent graduates preferred this type of program. Interest in the LPN/ADN Option increased from 35% of the early graduates to 41% of the recent graduates. In addition, 6% of both early and recent graduates stated that they would not choose nursing again.

Asked if they would choose CCC & TI again, 71% of the early graduate group and 76% of the recent graduates said that they would. In both groups, the majority who would not choose CCC & TI again indicated that they would now choose a BSN program.

Pursuit of Advanced Degrees and Continuing Education

A greater percentage of recent graduates, 40%, than early graduates, 35%, have obtained or are obtaining a degree beyond the A.A.S. However, these results are inconclusive because 18% of the early graduates did not respond to this question. On the other hand, early graduates indicated greater participation in continuing education than recent graduates. Eighty-eight percent (88%) of the early graduate group reported that they spent an average of forty (40) hours per year in up-date workshops. This compares with the 78% of the recent graduates spending an average of twenty-eight (28) hours per year on continuing education. Suggestions for continuing education classes/workshops made by early and recent graduates of both levels can be found in Appendix D, number 19.

Level II Recent Graduate Ratings of Skill Training Areas

Recent graduates were asked to rate the various skill areas of their training in the same manner as Level I recent graduates. A complete listing of these ratings and comments can be found in Appendix D, number 8. The highest ratings on the four-point scale were given to "Medical," 3.5, and to "Surgical" and "Fundamental Skills," 3.4 each.

The lowest ratings were received by "Psychiatric" and "Diet Therapy." Each received a 2.3 rating. These two also received more "poor" ratings than other areas, 17 and 16 respectively, and more indications of need for further training by graduates, 26 and 29 respectively. Respondents added many comments about their psychiatric training. Most of these centered on poor instruction and the need for more intensive training in this area. Few comments were made regarding diet therapy training.

Three (3) additional areas warrant mentioning here. "Pharmacotherapeutics" received only a 2.6 rating and generated several calls for more intense training in this area.

The other additional areas worthy of comment are "Maternal-Infant," "Maternal-Child," and "Leadership." Although these areas, also referred to as OB and Peds, received "good" ratings of 3.2 and 3.1 respectively, Level II graduates were very vocal in criticizing the amount of class time spent in these areas and the associated clinical experience. Respondents generally encouraged expanding class time in each area from one-half ($\frac{1}{2}$) to one (1) quarter. They also expressed

frustration in complaining that there are too few pediatric patients in the clinical sites. Evidently the clinical time in these areas needs to be expanded or clinical rotation needs to be established in hospitals with a higher pediatric census.

A similar relationship between good ratings and negative comments occurred with "Leadership." Graduates rated the area 3.0 but comments seemed to contradict this good rating. One respondent stated, "I feel we were insufficiently trained in the theory and practice of leadership and assertiveness skills. Reality shock was the hardest in this area." In suggesting other courses which respondents felt should be offered, six (6) named leadership. Only chemistry was suggested as many times.

Other comments made by respondents indicate a perceived need for more clinical experience in general and specifically in intensive care units, cardiac care units and in emergency rooms.

Ratings of Related Courses by Recent Graduates

Level II recent graduates rated required courses outside of the core of nursing classes on a four (4) point scale. The graduates gave "Anatomy/Physiology" a superb 3.7 rating. Seventy-four percent (74%) of the ratings for this course were "excellent."

On the other hand, "Abnormal Psychology" received only a 2.2 rating. Sixty-four percent (64%) gave the course "adequate" or "poor" ratings.

A variety of courses and topics were suggested for inclusion in the RN curriculum. As previously stated, leadership and chemistry were both named by six (6) respondents each. Another three (3) named management and one (1) said "roles of leadership and management." "More math" was also mentioned three (3) times, especially in regard to dose calculations. Many other suggestions were made and the complete list can be found in Appendix D, number 10.

Equipment and Supplies

Like the Level I respondents, Level II graduates, 90%, felt that adequate and up-to-date supplies and equipment were available during their training.

Ratings of Student Support Services

Level II recent graduates gave lower ratings than Level I recent graduates to every category of student support services except one, the bookstore, which received a 2.7 from each group. Interestingly, the order of the ratings from top to bottom was almost identical. The major exception was "Job Placement." While Level I students gave this area a 2.9 average with no "poor" ratings, Level II respondents gave job placement a 2.25 rating. Only "Food Services" ranked lower at 2.1. Sixty-three percent (63%) rated job placement as "adequate" or "poor." Also, thirty-six (36) or 53% of the raters indicated that they did not know enough about job placement to give it a rating. This compares to the 56% of the Level I respondents who could not rate this area.

The bookstore generated the most comments of all areas. The most remarks, three (3), were critical of inadequate bookstore operating hours. Other comments referred to inadequate supplies and the expense of books.

Ratings of Library Services

As with Level I recent graduates, Level II graduates gave "Individual assistance from library staff" the highest rating, 3.6, of all library categories. Three (3) additional comments were highly complimentary of the LRC staff.

"Magazines," the lowest ranked LRC category of the Level I survey, received a slightly higher rating of 3.2 from Level II respondents. However, six (6) graduates commented on the need for more nursing magazines, thus reinforcing the ratings and comments from Level I.

The category given the lowest LRC rating in the Level II survey was "Library orientation" which received a 3.1. Six (6) respondents rated this area as "poor" and another three (3) claimed not to know enough about orientation to give it a rating.

Suggestions by Graduates for Program Improvement -
Levels I & II

Suggestions for the improvement of the nursing program from Level I and Level II early and recent graduates and early leavers have been combined in this report, since the responses from each group were essentially the same. Responses have been grouped into six (6) categories: instruction, instructors, curriculum, admissions, comments regarding the availability of BSN programs, and other general suggestions and comments.

Instruction

Some suggestions on improving instruction addressed needs for more and/or better training in the following specific areas: first aid, intensive care, trauma, abnormal codes, psychology, psychiatric nursing, and experience in providing care for multiple patients. Other suggestions called for less "busy work," less homework, and more classroom work.

Instructors

Eight (8) suggestions were directed specifically toward instructors. Some respondents felt that instructors needed to be more caring, more open minded, more helpful and less threatening. Several positive statements were also made such as, "Keep good instructors," and "Continue to provide the best nursing instructors available."

Curriculum

Many suggestions were made concerning the structure of the curriculum. Six (6) respondents suggested a need for more clinical work. Two (2) complained that the course load was too demanding for the time allotted for program completion. One (1) suggested adding one quarter to Level II to allow more time in obstetrics and pediatrics. Others called for more psychology, anatomy and physiology, and three (3) suggested fewer English courses.