FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT School of Nursing Faculty of Health Sciences Cyclical Review Period: 2021–2022

Date: October 26, 2022

I. Evaluated Programs

- Master of Science Nursing (MScN)
- Master of Science Nursing Specialization in Feminist and Gender Studies
- Graduate Diploma Primary Health Care for Nurse Practitioners (PHCNP)
- Master of Science Nursing with Graduate Diploma Primary Health Care for Nurse Practitioners (MScN+PHCNP)
- Doctorate in Philosophy Nursing (PhD)

II. Evaluation Process (outline of the visit)

This Final Assessment Report on the above programs was prepared from the following documents: 1) the self-study report produced by the academic unit; 2) the report of the external evaluation following the virtual visit; 3) the responses prepared by program leadership, Jean-Daniel Jacob and Dawn Stacey, and a response by Lucie Thibault, Dean, Faculty of Health Sciences.

The virtual site visit took place on January 31 and February 2, 2022, covering both graduate nursing programs and was conducted by the following two external evaluators: 1) Sylvie Larocque, Laurentian University and 2) Christian Rochefort, Université de Sherbrooke.

During their virtual visit, the external evaluators met with the following individuals and groups: 1) Sylvie Lamoureux, Associate Vice-Provost, Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies; 2) Jean-Daniel Jacob, Director of the School of Nursing; 3) Lindsey Sikora, Research Librarian; 4) Amanda Vandyk, Assistant Director, Undergraduate Studies; 5) Mélanie Côté, Coordinator, Accreditation and Program Evaluation; 6) Lucie Thibault, Dean, Faculty of Health Sciences; 7) Dawn Stacey, Assistant Director, Graduate Studies and Research; 8) various professors; 9) about 20 MScN, PHCNP, and PhD students; 10) several administrative support team members; 11) Paulette Guitard, Vice-Dean, Governance; 12) Christine Dallaire, Vice-Dean, Academics; and 13) Marijke Taks, Vice-Dean, Research.

The visit was carried out virtually due to the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic. The reviewers were provided a comprehensive self-study brief that had been previously presented and discussed at the School Assembly prior to revision.

III. Summary of the Reports on the Quality of Programs¹ EMPHASIZING THE STRENGTHS AND IDENTIFYING CHALLENGES

STRENGTHS

- High quality support from faculty. Professors have strong research expertise as
 demonstrated by the number of research chairs, research groups and awards/distinctions
 they have received. Five are Fellows of the American Academy of Nursing, one is a Fellow
 of the Canadian Academy of Nursing and two are Fellows of the Canadian Academy of
 Health Sciences and the Royal Society of Canada respectively.
- The MScN+PHCNP program's structure, high level of expertise, and support from professors, as well as its clinical simulation laboratories, are highly valued and contribute to students' learning.
- The possibility to take the MScN program online is greatly valued.
- All programs are offered in both English and French, and both languages may be used for assignments.
- Excellent practices to ensure the quality of teaching and research training. This includes
 requiring young professors in permanent positions to supervise graduates in a cosupervision model with a more experienced colleague. A similar mentoring program is
 available for teaching.
- Proactivity and a desire to constantly meet the needs of students.

CHALLENGES

 Despite the efforts made in recent years, communication and information availability issues were raised.

- In the combined MScN and PHCNP program, the workload and requirement for independent learning can be a source of performance anxiety and psychological distress.
 Consequently, local initiatives should be implemented to better support University of Ottawa students enrolled in this program (e.g. study strategies, psychological support, student mentoring community).
- The curriculum of the PhD program should be reviewed. The students and the self-study highlight the need to integrate principles of equity, diversity, and integrity (EDI), as well as cultural safety. Advanced quantitative research methods should be integrated in the revised program. Students express concern about content repetition between courses, and a greater variety of courses is desired.
- MScN students also expressed a desire to have access to a broader selection of courses.
 A situation that could be improved with more interdepartmental collaboration within the Faculty.

¹ Based on excerpt, often verbatim, from the self-study, the external evaluation report, and the program and decanal responses.

IV. Program Improvements²

The programs under evaluation are in conformity with the standards of the discipline. The following recommendations aim at maintaining or increasing the level of quality already achieved by the programs.

- **Recommendation #1:** Follow through on the revisions to the doctoral program.
- **Recommendation #2:** Follow through on revising the strategic plan for the School of Nursing.
- **Recommendation #3:** Review and improve communications mechanisms between the School of Nursing and graduate students.
- Recommendation #4: Diversify the admission offers as a strategy to enhance recruitment.
- **Recommendation #5:** Review the process for awarding admission scholarships to make them accessible to as many masters students as possible.
- **Recommendation #6:** Making changes to the documentation system to track reasons for drop-outs and program changes.

V. Action Plan

The Action Plan was produced jointly by the School of Nursing and the Faculty. This Action Plan, which is already being implemented, indicates the School's agreement with all the external evaluators' recommendations. However, the Dean indicated in their response that one of the proposed actions for the recommendation #5 was not retained since it is contradictory with the operations of the Faculty of Health Science and uOttawa - decreasing the average for graduate student awards (from 9.0 to 8.0) is not in the Faculty and University's budgets.

VI. Conclusion

The School of Nursing offers high-quality graduate programs that meet the standards of the discipline. The strengths of the programs include bilingualism, a well-established continuous improvement culture, the relevance of the programs to societal needs, faculty expertise and support, simulation laboratories, and clinical experiences for students in the nurse practitioner program. Suggestions for improvement are mostly constructive, with the emphasis on improving already successful programs rather than indicating that fundamental changes are required.

Following this very positive assessment of the programs, the Committee wishes to thank everyone who took participated in the evaluation. The Committee also commends the participants for their rigorous approach and praises the quality of the self-study reports and the external evaluation report.

Schedule and Timelines

A progress report that outlines the completed actions and subsequent results will be submitted to the evaluation committee by **December 15, 2024**.

The next cyclical review will take place in no more than eight years, in **2028-2029**. The self-study brief must be submitted no later than **June 15**, **2028**.

² Based on the External Evaluation Report.

Université d'Ottawa | University of Ottawa

School of Nursing (Unit) Response and Action Plan

Faculty:

• Faculty of Health Sciences

Programs* evaluated:

- Master of Science Nursing (on-campus, distance)
- Master of Science Nursing Specialization in Feminist and Gender Studies (on-campus only)
- Graduate Diploma Primary Health Care for Nurse Practitioners (on-campus only)
- Master of Science Nursing with Graduate Diploma Primary Health Care for Nurse Practitioners (on-campus only)
- Doctorate in Philosophy Nursing (on-campus with distance starting Fall 2022)

Note: all programs offered in English and French

Cyclical review period:

• 2021-2022

Date:

• March 15, 2022

General comments:

On March 8, 2022, the School of Nursing (SoN) was made aware of the External Review Report produced in the context of the cyclical program evaluation. We were extremely pleased with the positive evaluation of our graduate programs. Given that the nursing graduate programs have committed to providing outstanding learning and research experiences, we were pleased to see that the external reviewers found that our "MScN, PHCNP, and PhD programs were of excellent quality", that "student satisfaction was high" and that "no major issues with the program, the learning objectives, courses or management of the programs were discovered". The report makes six (N=6) recommendations, of which none are considered high priority. We take all of the recommendations seriously and feel confident that by addressing them, we can further strengthen our graduate programs. The recommendations and our response, produced jointly by the School of Nursing and the Faculty, are included below.

Date:

January 23, 2023

General comments: Thank you for providing us with suggestions that will continue to strengthen the quality of our graduate programs and student experience. Please see our responses below.

| Priority | Actions to be undertaken | Assigned to | Timeline | Curriculum |
|----------|--|---|------------------|------------|
| Level* | | | | change? |
| 2 | Revise PhD curriculum to ensure access to a variety of courses in research methodology offered by the SoN or other academic units within our Faculty or other Facilities. | Assistant Director – Graduate Programs, and Graduate Programs Committee | December 2022 | Yes |
| | <u>Comment:</u> Can EDI and cultural competency/ safety be included here? | | Fall 2023 | |
| | Response: Yes. First, there are training modules available that can be integrated within our research methodology courses, as well as content experts who will be teaching these courses. Please note that our doctoral program curriculum modification changes have been approved and professors will be developing the new research methodology courses this year for the 2023-2024 academic year. Faculty members have the flexibility to develop their courses within the context of academic freedom, but the courses must respect and fulfill the course description and requirements as approved by the Senate. | | | |
| | This is a priority in our School, and we have been integrating activities this past year to further address this priority. Please see action number 4 for further information. | | | |

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| Priority Level* | Actions to be undertaken | Assigned to | Timeline | Curriculum change? |
|--------------------|--|---|------------------|--------------------|
| 2 | Linked courses in the PhD curriculum to established program learning outcomes (PLOs). | Assistant Director – Graduate Programs | December 2022 | No |
| 2 | Map Canadian Association of Schools of Nursing's (CASN) guiding principles for the doctoral level of study onto the new PhD curriculum. | Assistant Director – Graduate Programs | December 2022 | Yes |
| 2 | Integrate principles of equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI), including cultural competence and safety, into curriculum revisions. Comment: Is it possible to indicate where these principles will be integrated? If there are already activities occurring at the FHS or by the program that can be listed. Perhaps there are already academic activities in place? | Assistant Director – Graduate Programs | December 2022 | No |
| | Response: Yes. This is a priority in our School, and we have been integrating activities this past year to further address this priority. Please note that our doctoral program curriculum modification changes have been approved and professors will be developing the new research methodology courses this year for the 2023-2024 academic year. First, there are training modules available that can be integrated within our research methodology courses, as well as content experts who will be teaching these courses. Faculty members have the flexibility to develop their courses within the context of academic freedom, but the courses must respect and | | | |

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| Priority | Actions to be undertaken | Assigned to | Timeline | Curriculum |
|----------|--|-------------|----------|------------|
| Level* | | | | change? |
| | fulfill the course description and requirements as approved by the | | | |
| | Senate. | | | |
| | In addition, we have revived the School's Diversity Committee with | | | |
| | our first meeting scheduled for February 2023. Next, the Centre for | | | |
| | Research on Health and Nursing created a BIPOC group for our | | | |
| | nursing students; this group meets once a month. | | | |
| | It is important to note that we have several professors whose | | | |
| | research work on EDI and cultural competency/ safety is integrated | | | |
| | within their current courses. For example, Dr. Wendy Gifford's work | | | |
| | promoting health equity with disadvantaged and marginalized | | | |
| | groups, with a particular focus working with First Nations, Inuit, and | | | |
| | Metis for culturally safe health care, is integrated within NSG | | | |
| | NSG 6998 Special Topics in Nursing (Knowledge Translation) course | | | |
| | that she teaches yearly. A number of other professors also do | | | |
| | research on EDI, including cultural competence and safety, and | | | |
| | integrate these principles with their courses, such as Dr. Idrissa Beogo, Dr. Josephine Etowa, Dr. Craig Phillips, and Dr. Hélène | | | |
| | Laperrière to name a few. | | | |
| | Lapernere to name a rew. | | | |
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| Priority Level* | Actions to be undertaken | Assigned to | Timeline | Curriculum change? |
|--------------------|---|---|-------------------|--------------------|
| 2 | Consider allowing January admissions by removing prerequisites to allow students to take courses in desired sequence. Comment: Is the action rather to consult the professorship and graduate office on the feasibility of offering January admissions? If possible, what are the steps to be taken afterwards? Response: Yes, thank you for this clarification. Given that our doctoral program modifications have been approved, the prerequisites have been removed thus allowing students to take courses in their desired sequence, ensuring a more flexible course sequence; this will also account for students who are taking a leave of absence or other circumstances. The School of Nursing consulted with the Vice-Dean Academics who stated that January admissions are not possible due to a lack of resources to manage two separate admission periods, and because of the impossibility of managing our scholarship quotas with two admission periods. | Assistant Director – Graduate Programs, and Graduate Programs Committee | December 2022 | Yes |
| 2 | Further integrate experiential activities in preparation for an academic research career such as Canadian Institutes of Health Research's Reviewer in Training Program. | Assistant Director – Graduate Programs, and Graduate Programs Committee | September 2022 | No |

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Recommendation 2: Follow through on revising the strategic plan for the School of Nursing

Unit response: The School of Nursing held a retreat in December 2021 to initiate discussions on what should be included in a new strategic plan. The actions to be undertaken outline our response to the suggestions of the external evaluators and our plans to establish a new strategic plan for our School of Nursing.

| Priority Level* | Actions to be undertaken | Assigned to | Timeline | Curriculum change? |
|--------------------|---|------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| 2 | Revise the strategic plan for the School of Nursing that fits within the components of the uOttawa strategic plan, the Faculty of Health Sciences strategic plan, as well as the input of other stakeholders (students, agency/community partners, etc.), | Director - School of Nursing | January 2023 | No |
| | while aiming to remain consistent with the standards of the nursing discipline and the needs of society, integrate the principles of equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) including cultural competence and safety into the revised strategic plan for the School of Nursing. | | | |
| 2 | Schedule additional strategic retreats with Faculty members as well as survey/consult stakeholders in developing and finalizing the strategic plan. | Director - School of Nursing | June-October 2022 | No |
| 2 | Submit the revised strategic plan for adoption at the School of Nursing School Council. | Director - School of Nursing | January 2023 | No |

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Recommendation 3: Review and improve communications mechanisms between the School of Nursing and graduate students

Unit response: Over the last 2 years, we have tried to improve communications with graduate students and appreciate this additional feedback on tailoring our messages the needs of graduate students by program. Based on this additional feedback, in March, we put in place email lists by program to target correct students, added the target audience at the start of all emails, and revised School Newsletters sent out each semester by adding headers by section for target programs. Since March 2020 (2 years), COVID-19 has had a major impact on students' experiences with changes in clinical placements, changes in procedures for preventing, monitoring, managing actual or potential COVID-19 exposures, and additional stresses at home with home schooling of children. The actions to be undertaken outline our response to suggestions from the external evaluators and our plans for addressing this recommendation.

| Priority Level* | Actions to be undertaken | Assigned to | Timeline | Curriculum change? |
|--------------------|--|---|---------------|--------------------|
| 2 | Continue progress in preparing staff for workplace activities to be able to cover for each other during illnesses, leaves of absence, vacations, and in situations of high workload by: 1. Meet with the SoN administrative staff to identify strategies to stabilize secretarial staff and how to cover for each other, 2. Draft standard operating procedures (SOP) for specific tasks of the position and coverage in various situations. Comment: I am not sure what is meant by this. I suspect it may be about the graduate studies office and their ability to cover one another in terms of expertise, but I am not sure. Can this be clarified? The impact would be increased access and reduced turnaround times for students looking for information. Response: Yes, this action is focused on ensuring staff coverage so that our students have continuity in accessing timely services by our administrative staff during times during illnesses, leaves of absence, vacations, and in situations of high workload. | Director – School of Nursing, and Assistant to the Director under guidance of Lynn Metthe | December 2023 | No |

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| 2 | Adapt our communication mechanisms with graduate students so that the right student receives the right information in a timely manner; but also, to limit information overload for students when a particular message is not relevant by: 1. Continue to tailor emails by target graduate program and/or by email list, 2. Clearly communicate expectations about participation in extracurricular activities (e.g., research rounds, TIPs), 3. Use student handbook and/or orientation to present the program, communications, and options for extra curricular activities, 4. Once these new communications mechanisms are in place, obtain feedback from graduate students on ways to further improve communications through surveys and/or group meetings. | Graduate Programs Committee, Assistant Director – Graduate Programs, and Administrative Assistant to Graduate Programs | ongoing Orientation June/August 2022 August 2022 March 2023 | No |
|---|--|--|---|----|
| 2 | In addition to the previous action point applicable to all graduate students, strengthen communication and supports provided by the uOttawa for students in the PHCNP program by: 1. Add link to uOttawa wellness programs to all program specific email communications and orientation sessions, 2. Explore re-establishing a student mentoring program, 3. Once these new mechanisms are in place, obtain feedback from PHCNP graduate students on ways to better support them through surveys and/or group meetings. Comment: Why is this only for the PHCNP program? Could the other programs benefit from the proposed actions? Response: Thank you for this question. Although the need for this was reported as particularly high in our students registered in the PHCNP program due to the heavy workload associated with this | Assistant Director – Graduate Programs and PHCNP program coordinator | May 2022 December 2022 March 2023 | No |

| pro | rogram, we recognize that all students may benefit from these | | |
|-----|---|--|--|
| ac | ctions, and we will integrate throughout our graduate programs. | | |

Recommendation 4: Diversify the admission offers as a strategy to enhance recruitment

Unit response: We plan to consider strategies to enhance recruitment of MScN and PhD students in English and French. Currently, international students are not able to enroll in the MScN program unless they hold a license to practice in Canada. Therefore, international students only apply for graduate studies at the PhD level.

There is no plan to set up a microcredential program in Nursing but rather support diversity in learning opportunities by facilitating access for our MScN students to microcredential programs offered in other Faculties. The actions to be undertaken outline our response to the suggestions from the external evaluators and our plans for increasing diversity of admission offers. Although the external evaluators indicated this recommendation be in place within 4 years, the SoN would be able to address this by the end of 2022 because discussion about microcredential was started in 2021.

| Priority | Actions to be undertaken | Assigned to | Timeline | Curriculum |
|----------|--|--|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Level* | | | | change? |
| 3 | Consider possibilities of developing a new Master's program with a thesis option and remove the one required course with a clinical placement to encourage the recruitment of international students that do not hold a nursing license in Canada. | Assistant Director – Graduate Programs, with Graduate Programs Committee | February 2026 | Yes, new program; major modification |
| 3 | Promote microcredential programs offered by the Faculty of Education and coming soon at Telfer School of Management by: 1. Requesting to have 1 to 2 reserved seats for MScN students in Microcredential programs (e.g., Simulation in HealthEducation, Introduction to Health Education, Program Evaluation), 2. Revise information on elective courses on the School of Nursing website to include microcredential programs, 3. Revise recruitment materials to promote access to microcredential programs. | Assistant Director – Graduate Programs | June 2022 June 2022 October 2022 | No |

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Recommendation 5: Review the process for awarding admission scholarships to make them accessible to as many masters students as possible.

Unit response: Admission scholarships are administered by uOttawa central and some by the Faculty of Health Sciences; not by the School of Nursing. Analysis by central administration shows that graduate admission scholarships offered by uOttawa (PhD minimum GPA 8.0; MScN minimum GPA 9.0) are competitive with the U15s, while the value of the PhD admission scholarships are on average for the U15s.

For the 2022-2023 year, the Faculty provides special scholarships to all MSc students with a 8.0 to 8.99 admission average who enroll in a thesis program. The Faculty has also tailored this scholarship timing for the MScN student so they will receive it when they enroll in the thesis stream within the 2nd year of the program. The Faculty is considering whether to continue these scholarships for 2023-2026.

Although on campus PhD students and MScN students who receive regular admission scholarships also receive a second component in the form of teaching or research assistantships (TAs/RAs), there is no requirement for them to fulfill these hours. These hours can be waived and allow students to work in clinical practice and maintain their clinical knowledge and skills. During the pandemic, graduate students were given leaves of absence to allow them to provide essential clinical nursing services in our health system that was struggling to have adequate nurse staffing. The actions to be undertaken outline our response to suggestions from the external evaluators and our plans for addressing this recommendation.

| Priority | Actions to be undertaken | Assigned to | Timeline | Curriculum |
|----------|--|---|---|------------|
| Level* | | | | change? |
| 2 | Enhance the scholarship programs for graduate nursing students where appropriate by: | Vice-Dean Academic, Faculty of Health Sciences; | | No |
| | Ensuring our funding is competitive to other Canadian French programs. Enhance PhD admission Scholarships with a special award for 2022-2026. | Assistant Director – Graduate Programs; and Administrative Assistant to Graduate Programs | December 2022 December 2022 Orientations Ongoing – Fall | |

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| 3. Promote existing supplemental funds to support graduate | | |
|--|--|--|
| students at orientations and on our website including: | | |
| a) tri-council funding (CIHR, SSHRC, NSRC), | | |
| b) Mitacs Globalink Research Fellowship,_ | | |
| https://www2.uottawa.ca/etudiants-actuels/carriere- | | |
| apprentissage-experientiel/centre-experience- | | |
| recherche/bourse-mitacs-globalink, | | |
| c) research travel grants https://www2.uottawa.ca/faculte- | | |
| sciences-sante/subventions-voyage, | | |
| d) Conference travel grants https://www2.uottawa.ca/faculte- | | |
| sciences-sante/subventions-voyage, | | |
| e) virtual conference grants https://www2.uottawa.ca/faculte- | | |
| sciences-sante/subventions-voyage; and | | |
| f) School of Nursing awards. | | |
| | | |

Comment: Is it implied that it is in terms of funding?

Response: Yes. We have added that clarification.

Recommendation 6: Making changes to the documentation system to track reasons for drop-outs and program changes.

Unit response: We agree that data provided by the Institutional Research and Planning on attrition did not seem to represent actual attrition and this data was primarily 4 years old. Please note that although we encourage program changes from thesis to clinical project stream or clinical project to thesis stream, we do not track the number of students making these changes. The actions to be undertaken outline our response to suggestions from the external evaluators and our plans to better track withdrawals data in real time and processes to explore reasons for withdrawal.

| Level* | | | Curriculum change? |
|--|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| Continue to monitor when a student is not enrolled in ongoing activities for two terms without having an approved leave of absence, reached their time limit, have two failures, or are not reenrolled following a leave of absence. The Academic Office will inform the students of the situation and copy the thesis supervisor if appropriate. A list of unresponsive students who have not reenrolled will be sent to the Assistant Director – Graduate Studies to confirm that the files can be closed. When the file is closed, the Academic Office sends an email to the student with the thesis supervisor and Assistant Director – Graduate Studies copied. Comment: Will an anonymized database be kept to ensure that better data is captured for the next self-assessment? Many units find it helpful to manage their own admission, enrollment, transfer and withdrawal data to ensure that they have a good grasp of the challenges. This may be included in the last action item for this recommendation. Response: Yes, please see the last action item for further information. | Assistant Director – Graduate | Spring 2022 September 2023 | No |

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| 2 | Students asking to withdraw will be instructed to complete the withdrawal form that includes an option to provide reasons for withdrawal. This form is submitted as a service request that requires approval of the Assistant Director – Graduate Studies. Then the Assistant Director - Graduate Studies will reach out to the student to explore their experience in the program and look for alternate solutions (e.g., "exit interview"). | Academic Office, Assistant Director – Graduate Program, and Administrative Assistant to Graduate Programs | September 2022 | No |
|---|---|--|-------------------|----|
| 2 | Ask Institutional Research and Planning for further explanation on the adherence and attrition data for the graduate programs. And explore ways to have more time sensitive reporting of this data. | Director - School of Nursing, and Assistant Director – Graduate Program | May 2023 | No |
| 2 | Implement a procedure to track attrition and program changes in real time within the School of Nursing if it is not possible to obtain this time sensitive data from Institutional Research and Planning. Comment: Why informally? Would it not be beneficial to have the data? Could you consider student surveys to identify stressors? Response: We have imbedded a new process for tracking attrition and program changes within the School of Nursing. Students who decide to withdraw from our graduate programs either directly communicate with the Assistant Director – Graduate Program, or the thesis supervisor/ academic advisor communicates with the Assistant Director – Graduate Program with the Administrative Assistant Director – Graduate Programs maintains a list of students who have withdrawn. When possible, we include the reason for the withdrawal so that we can be aware of any issues within the school that could be improved. | Assistant Director – Graduate Program, and Administrative Assistant to Graduate Programs | September 2023 | No |

| According to the data collected, the main reason for withdrawal has | |
|--|--|
| been personal/ family reasons and work related. | |
| In addition, the School of Nursing will be developing an end-of-year | |
| graduate student survey to gain a better understanding of our | |
| students' satisfaction with our programs, student experience, | |
| current challenges faced by our students who are nurses working | |
| within the pandemic while balancing graduate school, as well as | |
| exploring their particular needs. The results of this survey will help | |
| us to be more responsive to our students' needs through the | |
| development of workshops, events, and supports. | |
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