

# Program Review Executive Summary

## Division of Nursing

### Majors Reviewed:

- Nursing, A.A.S.
- LPN to RN, A.A.S.
- Nursing, B.S.N.
- RN to BSN, Completion Online
- Master of Science in Nursing, Nursing Education Concentration (M.S.N.)

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**Pennsylvania  
College of Technology**  
A Penn State Affiliate

Penn College Nursing has a long-standing history of providing quality nursing education since 1963. Over the decades, the Division of Nursing has grown and adapted to meet the needs of students and industry demands. The Division of Nursing currently includes five program options: Nursing, Associate of Applied Science (Nursing, A.A.S.); LPN to RN, Associate of Applied Science (LPN to RN, A.A.S.); Nursing, Bachelor of Science in Nursing (Nursing, B.S.N.); RN to B.S.N., Completion (B.S.N., Completion); and a Master of Science in Nursing, Nursing Education Concentration (M.S.N.). Beginning in Fall 2023, the Division will add a part-time evening and weekend Nursing, A.A.S. program option, and in Summer 2024, the Division will launch the College's first Post-Master's Certificate in Nursing Education.

All pre-licensure programs (Nursing, A.A.S.; LPN to RN, A.A.S.; and Nursing, B.S.N.) and the post-licensure, undergraduate nursing program (B.S.N., Completion) are accredited by the Accreditation Commission on Education in Nursing (ACEN), with a planned site visit for continuing accreditation in Fall 2023. The M.S.N. program earned ACEN candidacy status through December 31, 2023, with a planned site visit for initial accreditation in Fall 2023. A final decision on accreditation status will be announced in May 2024. All pre-licensure programs are also fully approved by the Pennsylvania State Board of Nursing (PA SBON).

The U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (2022) projects a 6% growth in the RN workforce over the next decade, with over 200,000 vacant nurse positions. In addition, employment needs for master's prepared nursing instructors are expected to increase by 22% across the nation. The Division of Nursing strives to meet those demands by removing unnecessary barriers to attract more students and utilizing experienced faculty who have a passion for implementing innovative teaching methods to support student learning. Furthermore, the many laboratory spaces, state-of-the-art simulation resources, and the surrounding healthcare facilities provide students with the hands-on experience necessary to develop clinical judgment skills so they can perform comprehensive, safe patient care.

Penn College nursing graduates have consistently maintained licensure pass rates well above the state and national averages, and nearly 100% of graduates gain employment within six months of graduation (many securing a job before graduation). The Nursing Advisory Committee members attest that Penn College Nursing graduates are entering the profession well-prepared.

Despite many strengths, the Division of Nursing faces challenges, including an increase in competition for clinical placement due to surrounding nursing programs, maintaining competitive tuition rates, a lack of ethnic diversity among students and faculty, and a decrease in registered nurses seeking nursing education as a career field.

Recommendations to maintain program excellence and facilitate growth include:

- increasing diversity among the Division of Nursing student population and faculty;
- exploring grant opportunities to fund simulation equipment and nursing student scholarships;
- improving part-time faculty mentorship to assist them with providing quality nursing education and bolster connectedness to the Division of Nursing and the College;
- creating new pathway agreements with career and technology center (CTC)/career and

- technical education (CTE) programs;
- exploring alternative methods of recruiting students and marketing the nursing program options (especially the graduate degree options); and
  - improving student success and retention by focusing on reducing unnecessary barriers and promoting mental health/coping/stress management strategies.