

**GEORGIA HIGHLANDS COLLEGE**  
**COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM REVIEW**  
RN-BSN Program

## **I. Introduction**

### College information and mission:

Georgia Highlands College (GHC) serves as a point of access to higher education in Northwest Georgia. Founded in 1970 as Floyd College, a two-year institution of the University System of Georgia, the college is non-residential and maintains six sites in Rome, Cartersville, Marietta, Dallas and Douglasville. In May, 2011, the Board of Regents (BOR) approved a sector change to state college, a designation that allows GHC to offer a limited number of baccalaureate degrees. A Bachelor of Science in nursing was the first such degree. The first class to pursue the BSN began classes in the fall 2013. The dental hygiene program was approved by the BOR in May 2015 to begin offering the bachelor's degree beginning in the summer of 2015. Other four-year programs that meet the demands of GHC's service area will be added during the next decade. To meet the needs of Northwest Georgia, the college has expanded from its original site in Floyd County to add campuses in Cartersville, Dallas, Douglasville, East Rome (Heritage Hall), and Marietta. The enrollment for fall 2013 was 5,529 (36 percent men and 64 percent women) from several eastern Alabama counties and 67 counties in Georgia. There are 149 full-time faculty teaching learning support and core courses, supported by adjunct faculty. The Associate of Arts degree is offered in art, criminal justice, English, foreign languages, history, journalism, philosophy, political science, psychology, sociology and communications. The Associate of Science degree is offered in agriculture, associated dental sciences, biology, business administration, chemistry, computer information systems, computer science, economics, general studies, geology, health information management, human services, mathematics, medical technology, nursing, occupational therapy, pharmacy, physical therapy, physician's assistant, physics, respiratory therapy and teacher education. Associate of Science degrees offered in Dental Hygiene, Human Services, and Nursing are also considered part of the career programs at GHC. The chief executive officer is Dr. Renva Watterson, Interim President of the College. She has served in this capacity since May 2012 and will return to her role as Vice President of Academic Affairs on September 7, 2014 when GHC's new President, Dr. Donald J. Green, will start in this position. Dr. Green was Vice President for Extended and International Operations, at Ferris State University in Big Rapids, Mich. He was named as the president of Georgia Highlands College by the BOR of the University System of Georgia on June 6, 2014 after a national search. Dr. Green has served as both Vice Chancellor and Vice President at Ferris State. He received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Michigan State University, a master's degree in labor and human resource management from Ohio State University, and an Ed.D. in educational leadership from Western Michigan University. GHC is governed by the Georgia Board of Regents and is administered by the President of the college. The GHC has six academic divisions, each headed by a Dean who reports to the Vice President for Academic Affairs. The divisions include: Academic Success and E-Learning; Health Sciences; Humanities; Mathematics; Science and Physical Education; and Social Sciences, Business and Education. The Department of Nursing is under the Division of Health Sciences which incorporates nursing and dental hygiene and is located at the James D. Maddox Heritage Hall campus in downtown Rome, GA. The RN-BSN completion program faculty are also housed in this building. The BSN program was approved by the GBON for implementation of the program in March 2013. Full initial accreditation of the RN-BSN program was granted in fall of 2014 by the **Accrediting Commission for Education in Nursing** (ACEN through fall of 2019). In June 2014, SACS approved the RN-BSN with no recommendations.

### GHC Mission Statement:

To provide access to excellent educational opportunities for the intellectual, cultural and physical development of a diverse population through pre-baccalaureate associate degree transfer programs, career associate degree programs, and targeted baccalaureate degree programs that meet the economic development needs of the region.

<http://www.highlands.edu/site/mission-and-institutional-goals>

### RN-BSN Mission Statement:

To provide educational opportunities designed to produce a baccalaureate graduate nurse who demonstrates professional, ethical and accountable behaviors, interpersonal communication, comprehensive assessment, clinical decision-making and collaboration skills, teaching and learning

capabilities, and provides evidence-based practice and leadership in diverse and complex health care settings. <http://www.highlands.edu/site/bsn>

- Program purpose and structure

The RN-BSN program’s purpose is to provide a teaching/learning environment which promotes inclusiveness, accessibility and provides learning opportunities, programs and services of excellence in response to documented needs. The structure for the nursing courses is 100% online with 32 credits in nursing and 28 pre or co requisite courses. There are two clinical courses; one in leadership/management and one in community health which can be completed in the student’s workplace or community with approval of course faculty and employer.

- Program student profile  
All students are licensed Registered Nurses in the state of Georgia. The student body is diverse representing an age range of early 20’s to 62, males and minorities (Hispanic, African-American, multi-racial), represent 10%, and 5% were either LPN or paramedic RN bridge students. Over 90% of students are working adults with other responsibilities of home, family, and community interests.
- Campus locations and method(s) of delivery  
The Dean of Health Sciences, faculty, and staff are located at Heritage Hall, Rome Georgia. Method of delivery for the RN-BSN program is online, asynchronous (only exception is the preceptorship/clinical experience).
- Alignment of program mission with department, school, and, institutional mission

The philosophy of the RN-BSN Program is to maintain a teaching/learning environment which promotes inclusiveness, accessibility, and provides educational opportunities, programs and services of excellence in response to documented needs. The mission of Georgia Highlands College is to provide access to excellent educational opportunities for the intellectual, cultural, and physical development of a diverse population through pre-baccalaureate, associate degree transfer programs, career associate degree programs and targeted baccalaureate degree programs that meet the economic development needs of the region. The BSN faculty recognizes the need to build upon registered nurses’ previous knowledge and skills to advance into a BSN degree program. The RN-BSN program provides a strong educational basis to prepare graduates to practice as professional nurses in a variety of diverse health care settings including community settings and /or nursing leadership/management.

Alignment of program mission with department, school, and, institutional mission	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>GEORGIA HIGHLANDS COLLEGE</b> <b>Philosophy:</b></p> <p>Expressed in the beliefs that education is essential to the intellectual, physical, economic, social, emotional, cultural, and environmental well-being of individuals and society and that education should be geographically and physically accessible and affordable <a href="http://www.highlands.edu/site/mission-and-institutional-goals">http://www.highlands.edu/site/mission-and-institutional-goals</a></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Mission Statement:</b></p> <p>To provide access to excellent educational opportunities for the intellectual, cultural and physical development of a diverse population through pre-baccalaureate associate degree transfer programs, career associate degree programs, and targeted baccalaureate degree programs that meet the economic development needs of the region. <a href="http://www.highlands.edu/site/mission-and-institutional-goals">http://www.highlands.edu/site/mission-and-institutional-goals</a></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>GHC Goals:</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>DEPARTMENT OF NURSING</b> <b>RN-BSN PROGRAM</b> <b>Philosophy:</b></p> <p>To provide a teaching/learning environment which promotes inclusiveness, accessibility and provides learning opportunities, programs and services of excellence in response to documented needs. <a href="http://www.highlands.edu/site/bsn">http://www.highlands.edu/site/bsn</a></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Mission Statement:</b></p> <p>To provide educational opportunities designed to produce a baccalaureate graduate nurse who demonstrates professional, ethical and accountable behaviors, interpersonal communication, comprehensive assessment , clinical decision-making and collaboration skills, teaching and learning capabilities, and provides evidence-based practice and leadership in diverse and complex health care settings. <a href="http://www.highlands.edu/site/bsn">http://www.highlands.edu/site/bsn</a></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>BSN Student Learning Outcomes (SLO):</b></p> <p>The BSN student learning outcomes are to:</p>

<p>To achieve this mission of being a gateway to success for students, Georgia Highlands College has articulated the following goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Effect quality teaching and learning focused on academic achievement and personal and professional growth.</li> <li>-Provide comprehensive student services that encourage and enable all students to be successful learners.</li> <li>-Engage students in a challenging atmosphere that prepares them for responsibility and leadership in an evolving global environment.</li> <li>-Utilize appropriate technologies to advance programs, services and operations to support teaching and learning.</li> <li>-Maintain efficient and effective administrative services and facilities to support all programs of the college.</li> <li>-Foster community relationships that facilitate partnering for mutual success</li> </ul> <p><a href="http://www.highlands.edu/site/mission-and-institutional-goals">http://www.highlands.edu/site/mission-and-institutional-goals</a></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Integrate knowledge gained from the arts, sciences and nursing to deliver safe, ethical, and therapeutic nursing care.</li> <li>2. Apply principles of leadership/, management, and evidence-based practice to positively impact healthcare outcomes.</li> <li>3. Synthesize reliable evidence and research from multiple sources to improve practice, make clinical judgments and positively influence patient outcomes.</li> <li>4. Manage care to achieve quality, cost effective and ethical outcomes in the delivery of health care for individuals, families and populations.</li> <li>5. Explore the impact of political, financial, regulatory and environmental agencies on quality patient care outcomes and nursing practice.</li> <li>6. Analyze effective communication and collaboration skills within an inter-professional team to provide patient-centered and evidence-based nursing care.</li> <li>7. Apply health promotion and disease prevention strategies to assist individuals, families, groups, and communities in maintaining and/or improving health across the lifespan.</li> </ol> <p><a href="http://www.highlands.edu/site/bsn">http://www.highlands.edu/site/bsn</a></p>
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- Significant environmental changes since last review (e.g. changing student demographics, impact of technology, external requirements from accrediting bodies, stakeholder feedback, changes in SACS and BOR policies, assessment initiatives, program changes, etc.)  
The program attracts a diverse student body. The asynchronous online mode of instruction is ideal for working RNS that are employed on different shifts, days and places of employment.

## II. Student Data

- Number of students in program (past three years) 172 (2013-2016)
- Enrollment in most commonly selected courses in each area (past three years) All students are required to take NURS 3301, 3302, 3303, 3304, 4401, 4402, 4403, 4404. All students select one 3 credit elective from either NURS 3305 (Informatics), 3306 (Health care in diverse cultures), 3307 (Independent study), 3308 (Perioperative nursing) or 3309 (Public health nursing).

Course Enrollment		
Semester/Year	Course	# Students
Fall 2013	NURS 3300 (Ethical Issues in Nursing)	7
	NURS 3301 (Concepts of Professional Nursing)	28
	NURS 3303 (Issues & Nursing Perspectives)	25
	NURS 3302 (Health Assessment) Students	27
Spring 2014	NURS 3304 (Foundations of Nursing Research)	26
	NURS 4401 (Community Health Assessment)	21
	NURS 4402 (Leadership & Management)	22
	NURS 3303 (Issues & Nursing Perspectives)	3
	NURS 3300 (Ethical Issues in Nursing)	2
Summer 2014	NURS 3302 (Health Assessment)	3
	NURS 3305 (Nursing Informatics)	13
	NURS 4402 (Leadership & Management)	1
	NURS 4403 (Capstone Project) Students:	22
	NURS 4404 (Clinical Leadership Practicum)	20
	NURS 3301 (Concepts of Professional Nursing)	2
Fall 2014	NURS 3305 (Nursing Informatics)	6
	NURS 3303 (Issues & Nursing Perspectives)	18
	NURS 3302 (Health Assessment)	17
	NURS 3301 (Concepts of Professional Nursing)	19
	NURS 4404 (Clinical Leadership Practicum)	5
	NURS 4403 (Capstone Project)	2

<b>Spring 2015</b>		
	<b>NURS 4402 (Leadership &amp; Management)</b>	<b>17</b>
	<b>NURS 3303 (Issues &amp; Nursing Perspectives)</b>	<b>18</b>
	<b>NURS 3302 (Health Assessment)</b>	<b>2</b>
	<b>NURS 3304 (Foundations of Nursing Research)</b>	<b>34</b>
	<b>NURS 3301 (Concepts of Professional Nursing)</b>	<b>17</b>
	<b>NURS 4401 (Community Health Assessment)</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Summer 2015</b>		
	<b>NURS 4402 (Leadership &amp; Management)</b>	<b>14</b>
	<b>NURS 3305 (Nursing Informatics)</b>	<b>12</b>
	<b>NURS 3303 (Issues &amp; Nursing Perspectives)</b>	<b>8</b>
	<b>NURS 3306 (Healthcare in Diverse Cultures)</b>	<b>7</b>
	<b>NURS 3302 (Health Assessment)</b>	<b>10</b>
	<b>NURS 3301 (Concepts of Professional Nursing)</b>	<b>6</b>
	<b>NURS 4401 (Community Health Assessment)</b>	<b>12</b>
	<b>NURS 4404 (Clinical Leadership Practicum)</b>	<b>17</b>
	<b>NURS 4403 (Capstone Project)</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Fall 2015</b>	<b>NURS 3301 Concepts of Professional Nursing</b>	<b>35</b>
	<b>NURS 3305 (Nursing Informatics) Students</b>	<b>15</b>
	<b>NURS 3303 (Issues &amp; Nursing Perspectives)</b>	<b>29</b>
	<b>NURS 3302 (Health Assessment)</b>	<b>44</b>
	<b>NURS 4401 (Community Health Assessment)</b>	<b>2</b>
	<b>NURS 4403 (Capstone Project) Students:</b>	<b>11</b>

- Student credit hour generation in most commonly selected courses in each area (past three years). The national standard for baccalaureate education is 120-124 credits. The range is 120-140. At completion of the RN-BSN program a total of 125 hours are completed (60 in the BSN; 65 in the ASN). Currently, Georgia Highlands' BSN completion program is 60 credits. Thirty-two hours are in nursing courses and 28-29 are general education depending on the science sequence. With articulation of nursing credits from the ASN, the BSN program is 125 credit hours. There are plans of study for students to complete the program in 3 semesters full-time or 4-5 semesters part-time with admission in fall, spring or summer semester.
- Success in attracting and retaining a diverse student body  
Throughout 2013-2015, student body comprises RN individuals ranging in age 21-62, diverse race, ethnicity, geographic locations throughout the state of Georgia, Alabama and Tennessee; diverse work settings and specialty areas within the state of Georgia and state of Tennessee.
- Retention rates (past three years). The expected level achievement set for retention in each course was 90% or greater of students enrolled in each class would achieve a C or better. This outcome was achieved in each course over the last three years.
- Graduation rates (past three years) The expected level of achievement for graduation was set that 75% or greater of full time students would graduate in 4 semesters or less and part-time students would graduate in 8 semesters or less. This outcome has also been achieved over the last three years.

### III. Faculty Data

- Number of full-time and part-time faculty  
The current Academic Dean of Health Sciences is Dr. Janet Alexander. She serves as the administrator of the nursing and dental hygiene departments and also directs the RN-BSN program. Dr. Alexander holds a BSN and MSN from the University of Alabama in Birmingham, an educational specialist degree in education administration and a doctor of education in educational leadership from Samford University. There are two full-time faculty; one faculty holds an earned doctorate in nursing (DNP) while the other holds a MSN and is currently enrolled in a DNP program

Responsible use of part time faculty and faculty overloads (Appropriate use of faculty through efficient scheduling) Presently, there are no part-time faculty teaching in the RN-BSN program. There are no faculty overloads.

- Ability to meet or exceed program expectations with number of faculty members available. The program expectations and goals have been met with the current faculty number.
- Student/faculty ratio  
Faculty: student ratio is 1:26. If enrollment increases, part-time or full-time faculty will be hired as needed.
- Average class size is 30 per class
- Appropriateness of Faculty credentials  
Both RN-BSN faculty have the appropriate credentials to practice and teach in the state of Georgia. Both faculty are licensed RNs in Georgia with a MSN. Dr. Vincent is also licensed as an Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN) and board certified as a Psychiatric Mental Health Clinical Nurse Specialist (PMHCNS) with the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC). Both have teaching and educational experience in online learning  
One faculty preparing to take the CNE (Certified Nurse Educator) exam
- Success in attracting and retaining high quality faculty members
- Success in attracting and retaining a diverse faculty. There is no problem attracting and retaining a qualified and diverse faculty in the RN-BSN program.
- Professional Development opportunities for faculty  
100% of BSN faculty maintain expertise through continuing education, formal education, and professional, EBP, or scholarly activities or presentations.  
The faculty in the BSN program maintains proficiency in their areas of expertise through continuing education, educational sessions offered through GHC or course work if enrolled in doctoral study  
Encouragement to continue professional development. Opportunities to attend professional development seminars and participate as presenters.  
Full-time faculty are engaged in ongoing development and receive instructional and online technologies support.  
All faculty are mentored by an experienced faculty member. The principles of mentoring nursing faculty is located in the policy and procedures in section 16: <http://www.highlands.edu/site/policy-and-procedure-manual-section-16-ix>.  
Expectations and responsibilities are reviewed with the mentee by the mentor. The mentor guides the mentee and provides information related to the faculty's role as an instructor, an introduction to committees of the college, nursing, and requirements for learning through Faculty Academy. Faculty Academy "engages all new faculty in opportunities for orientation, growth, and development over a 2-1/2 year period through a series of workshops and online resources. All faculty participate in a series of training sessions designed to familiarize them with GHC policies and practices:

#### IV. Facilities and Equipment

- Adequacy/effective use of facility resources (classrooms, laboratories, performance and rehearsal spaces, etc.)  
BSN faculty have input and ongoing collaboration with e-learning faculty, staff and its director on online learning needs. Recent renovations to the Heritage Hall campus in 2012 added two BSN faculty offices, an administrative assistant's office, a conference room, equipped for video conferencing, and the Dean of Health Sciences office suite on the second floor of the building. All faculty and staff are equipped with state of the art computers, office equipment, furnishings, and access to online and face-to-face learning opportunities and educational/ training sessions.
- Identification of equipment necessary  
Provided with state of the art computers, internet access, office equipment, furnishings  
  
Distance education faculty members are provided with a college laptop computer and technical support. Technology support, for both faculty and students, is available through the Information Technology Department (IT). The IT department is available via phone during staff office hours: Monday-Thursday 8:00am-5:30pm; Friday 8:00 am-noon. Floyd and Heritage Hall: (706) 295-6775; Cartersville: (678) 872-8086. If technical work is needed, faculty can submit a work ticket request to [rt@highlands.edu](mailto:rt@highlands.edu) .
- Equipment costs

Fiscal, technological and learning resources are sufficient to meet the needs of the faculty and students engaged in the online RN-BSN program. Fiscal appropriations for salaries, operating expenses, travel, and equipment needs are met.

- Indication of campus infrastructure to support facilities and program  
Physical resources are sufficient to ensure achievement of the nursing education unit outcomes, and meet the needs of the faculty, staff, and students. RN-BSN faculty and staff, as well as the majority of ASN faculty, are located at the Heritage Hall campus in downtown Rome. Classroom space is not utilized in the online RN-BSN instruction except during the orientation day in August of each year. Recent renovations to the Heritage Hall campus in 2012 added two BSN faculty offices, an administrative assistant's office, a conference room equipped for video conferencing, and the Dean of Health Sciences office suite on the second floor of the building. All faculty and staff are supplied with state of the art computers, office equipment, furniture, and given access to online learning opportunities, educational and training sessions. The GHC physical resources are sufficient to ensure achievement of student learning outcomes and program outcomes in the RN- BSN online program.
- Indication of adequacy/effective use of library resources and technology to meet demands of the program  
Library resources and technology are adequate, effective, and meet the demands of the program. Online RN-BSN courses provide students with embedded librarians for easy access. Complete library services are available on campuses in Rome, Cartersville, Marietta (in conjunction with Kennesaw State/ Southern Poly State University), and Paulding with a librarian and resource services at the Douglasville campus. There are three librarians identified as nursing librarians <http://www.highlands.edu/site/library>. Resources available in the libraries include: 332 databases of which 20 are devoted to nursing. Services to procure sources outside GHC include the University System of Georgia Universal Catalog and GIL Express and Inter-Library Loan. Print book holdings in all libraries total 75,000. There are 806 print books designated as nursing & health sciences. E books totaling 21,054 with nursing and 2,119 allocated to health sciences. Online journals in nursing and health sciences of indexed titles equal 13,398. There are 4, 435 online full-text nursing and health sciences journals available. There are 93 print journals with 16 of these being in nursing and health sciences. Nursing faculty have input into recommended resources and annually review holdings in campus libraries and online to determine if books are outdated or new resources are needed. The libraries have over 32,000 videos of which 4,192 are devoted to nursing and health sciences. There are over 120 computers with printers in the GHC libraries. Students can access these computers on the various campuses, and WIFI is available <http://www.highlands.edu/site/it-student-computer-access>. At the request of the course coordinator, a librarian can be embedded in to the course for easy online access. This is being implemented in the Research course (NURS 3304). There can also be a posted *GHC Libraries Nursing Resources Research Guide* in D2L courses as requested by faculty with the following links <http://getlibraryhelp.highlands.edu/nursing> : R2 Database - Search the full text of hundreds of medical, nursing, and allied health books. <http://www.galileo.usg.edu/express?link=r2dt-flo1> PubMed Special Queries-filters for use when searching in PubMed [http://www.nlm.nih.gov/bsd/special\\_queries.html](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/bsd/special_queries.html)

## V. Student Learning Outcomes Assessment and Curriculum (Quality of Teaching and Learning)

- Student success in achieving Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) of the program  
Faculty ensures that learning outcomes and program outcomes are achieved through the development of course objectives, assignments, and activities that are guided by the BSN SLOs. Faculty reviews and assigns a grade related to performance on course discussions, activities, and assignments. Evaluations by students at the end of each semester regarding courses or faculty performance are reviewed. Faculty then determines if any revisions are needed before the course is taught again.
- Student success rates in key program classes: 90% or greater of students enrolled in RN-BSN classes are successful with a grade of C or better
- Success of high-impact learning activities (Student-faculty research, service learning, writing-intensive coursework, capstone projects, internships, etc.)

**NURS 4404 Clinical Leadership Practicum:** This clinical preceptorship experience provides students with the opportunity to learn more about nursing leadership and management. This practicum requires students to complete

45 practice hours in guided preceptor experiences with a nurse leader/manager. Through interactions with a variety of health care providers, nurse leaders, and patients, the students gain understanding of organizations/systems, management, leadership development, evidence-based practice, inter-professional collaboration and communication, and quality improvement strategies. Student success is demonstrated through guided clinical experiences with a designated nurse leader/preceptor. Based upon completion of clinical objectives, the faculty and preceptor evaluate the student performance and the student in turn evaluates the assigned preceptor and hospital/place of preceptorship clinical. Course assignment rubrics are also used for course-related assignments and specifically measure each student's success.

**NURS 4403 Capstone Project:** Student success is measure by ability to apply and analyze the components of the research process through the completion and evaluation of a capstone project in his/her workplace. Capstone projects include: *teaching nurses about obstructive sleep apnea; increasing performance improvement of staff responsiveness in the emergency department; work environment's influence on retention and turnover of RNs; and blood glucose and patient outcomes following coronary artery bypass surgery.* Course assignment rubrics specifically measure each student's success Capstone project. Course assignment rubrics are also used for course-related assignments and specifically measure each student's success

**NURS 4401 Community Health:** Students focus on community nursing roles and practice related to health promotion and preservation in communities. Through these experiences, students apply health promotion and disease prevention strategies to assist individuals, families, groups, and communities in maintaining and/or improving health across the lifespan. Evidence of achievement is in the satisfactory journal entries of field experiences and completion of the 45 clinical hours. Clinical settings include but are not limited to clinics, outpatient service departments, schools, and rehabilitation centers. Students are evaluated on their ability to integrate and synthesize public health principles, epidemiology, healthcare disparities, community assessment, environmental health, and vulnerable populations. Specific evaluation regarding student's ability to successfully meet community field objectives. Course assignment rubrics are also used for course-related assignments and specifically measure each student's success.

- Adequacy/effective use of various instruction delivery modes: Effective and adequate online delivery modes include the use of power point, video, web sources, case studies, GHC library, and online librarians in each course.
- Successful advising system  
The RN-BSN program website, located on Georgia Highlands College website, is available to the public. The site provides program admission requirements, RN-BSN Curriculum, Georgia's RN-BSN Articulation Plan, and a link to the RN-BSN handbook. Advising of potential RN-BSN students is achieved through recruiting sessions at various hospitals/agencies/workplace, and other settings. Students may receive general program and course specific information via phone or email after contacting faculty/staff. Opportunities are available for students to make an appointment to meet with faculty or staff on a 1:1 basis and receive specific/detailed program information. Program brochures are also available during recruiting sessions and advising sessions. Brochures located in the RN-BSN departmental office and are available online.
- Other indicators of quality teaching/learning  
The student learning outcomes are used to organize the curriculum, guide the delivery of instruction, direct learning activities, and evaluate student progress. The outcomes are utilized to determine quality of teaching/learning and/or need of possible change of curriculum content.

Review the data from the student course/ evaluations, faculty input in BSN Faculty meeting, BSN faculty minutes, and End-of-the Semester Meetings minutes for needed changes to the curriculum, delivery of instruction, and/or learning activities

Faculty regularly review and revise the curriculum to include current content and expectations of the BSN graduate

Faculty annually review the general education courses to determine relevance in enhancing professional nursing knowledge and make recommendations for change as appropriate

Individual student pass rate with each course.

## **VI. Related Support and Service Activities**

- **Advising system**  
The RN-BSN program website, located on Georgia Highlands College website, is available to the public. The site provides program admission requirements, RN-BSN Curriculum, Georgia's RN-BSN Articulation Plan, and a link to the RN-BSN handbook. Advising of potential RN-BSN students is achieved through recruiting sessions at various hospitals/agencies/workplace, and other settings. Students may receive general program and course specific information via phone or email after contacting faculty/staff. Opportunities are available for students to make an appointment to meet with faculty or staff on a 1:1 basis and receive specific/detailed program information. Program brochures are also available during recruiting sessions and advising sessions. Brochures, located in the RN-BSN departmental office are available in the RN-BSN office.
- **Tutoring**  
All services provided by GHC and available to traditional students are also available to online learning students. GHC's Peer Tutoring Program and Volunteer Tutoring Program are accessible to all students attending/participating at GHC. RN-BSN students may make an appointment with faculty to arrange for tutoring regarding course needs.
- **Service learning**  
GHC's Office of Student life provides opportunities for students to participate in leadership skills and volunteerism. The services are available to the traditional student in addition to the non-traditional students or online student. Service areas include Leadership and Service Learning, Volunteerism and Service-Learning, Student Government, Emerging Leaders, Charge Into Leadership student conference, and Volunteerism and Service-Learning
- **Career planning**  
GHC's Career Central is a website available to all students providing informational links to several Career Skillshop (career topics). RN-BSN students also have potential to advance nursing careers or move to into another professional after successfully completing the RN-BSN program.
- **Adequacy/effective use of other resources or support services** There is 24 hour D2L and technical resources available to online students and faculty. Library resources are available online at and at various campuses

## **VII. External Benchmarks and reviews if applicable**

- **External Accreditations earned** - Full national accreditation was achieved in Fall 2014 through the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN). The next accreditation visit will be fall 2019.
- **Awards or Honors** The RN-BSN program was ranked second in the nation of the 30 most affordable online RN-BSN degree programs by Great Value Colleges in 2015.
- **Licensure or certification rates** N/A
- **Job placement** - These students are already employed as RNs. Data is gathered 9-12 months post-graduation in regard to promotion or new job placements after attaining the BSN. Twenty per cent reported being able to get a promotion or attain a different job after completion of the BSN.
- **Salaries** - About 50% of the graduates reported their employers offered an increase in salary after attaining the BSN.
- **Standardized test scores** N/A
- **Graduate school admissions** - About 10% of graduates reported on the 9 month post- graduation surveys that they had been accepted to a master's program in nursing. Most often reported programs were FNP and nurse anesthetist.
- **Stakeholder satisfaction with the program** (student, alumni, employer, community partner) The stakeholders have input into program through the nursing advisory board and students and graduates offer input through course and program evaluations. Employers are surveyed annually on satisfaction with graduates.

## **VIII. Quality and Improvement**

- **Response to prior assessment**- Changes have been made based upon assessment findings from students, graduates, preceptors, and employers. For example, graduates and employers agreed that new graduates starting the BSN take one semester to focus on the new job/ orientation/training before starting school. In

response to this finding, new graduates that completed their associate degree in May are offered admission in the spring semester instead of fall semester.

- Response to changing environment (e.g. changing student demographics, impact of technology, external requirements from accrediting bodies, stakeholder feedback, changes in SACS and BOR policies, assessment initiatives, program changes, etc.) Changes are made if the requirements, policies

#### **IV. Recommendations**

- Recommendation for the program (program should be enhanced, maintained at its current level, reduced in scope, or consolidated/terminated).

Maintain and continue to enhance the program

Assessing the RN-BSN program, there are many strengths and also areas that can be improved. First and foremost, GHC attracts and enrolls highly qualified and motivated students in the first cohort. The baccalaureate program has strong leadership and support in the Dean, faculty and staff. Each of these individuals is highly committed to excellence and ensuring mastery of student learning outcomes. Online learning resources, information technology, administrative encouragement and guidance within the college, the library staff and resources, and clinical agencies and liaisons have fully supported the nursing faculty in enhancing the education of nursing students and strengthening this initial BSN program. Over eighty- per cent of students that enrolled full-time since 2013 have completed the program in 4 semesters or less.

Areas to continue to improve:

- Continue to recruit and retain qualified faculty
- Refine Assessment and Survey tools

In order to maintain a quality program, the recruitment and retention of qualified, diverse faculty will continue to be a challenge as many GHC faculty retire in the next few years. In addition, state budget appropriations continue to fluctuate annually. Recruiting qualified master's and/or doctoral prepared faculty is difficult in rural parts of the state. Retaining faculty after completion of their doctorate is difficult given competitive salaries in nearby metropolitan areas. The strategy of identifying qualified and available master's prepared faculty and growing our own through exploring various funding sources offering faculty scholarships or faculty loans for those pursuing a doctoral degree is being explored.

In addition to the BSN faculty enrolled in doctoral studies, there are three ASN faculty enrolled in doctoral programs in nursing. Each one of these faculty is receiving federal faculty loan or state funding to support their education. As the BSN program grows, this doctoral prepared faculty may be needed to teach BSN students. Developing more effective program assessment and survey tools and exploring ways to increase response rates from students and employers is also an area for improvement. Even with opportunity and reminders for completion, the return rate on student evaluations regarding some courses and faculty was low. Faculty are investigating alternative methods of delivering student and course/faculty surveys next semester as well as options for the Graduate and Employer Satisfaction surveys.