

March 18, 2009

Rebecca Jones  
Chancellor  
West Suburban College of Nursing  
3 Erie Court  
Oak Park, IL 60302

Dear Chancellor Jones:

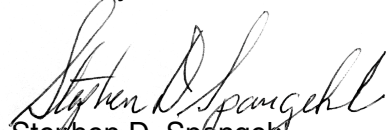
Enclosed is the report of the team that conducted the West Suburban College of Nursing Quality Checkup site visit. In addition to communicating the team's evaluation of your compliance with the Commission's Criteria for Accreditation and with the Commission's Federal Compliance Program, the report captures the team's assessment of your use of the feedback from your last Systems Appraisal and your overall commitment to continuous improvement.

I hope you will read and study the report carefully, because the team invested heavily in preparing for and conducting this visit, and its perceptions and advice are valuable to your institution. Please consider distributing it widely throughout your institution, since its positive feedback can be helpful in strengthening and broadening involvement in your quality improvement efforts.

A copy of the report will be read and analyzed by the AQIP Panel that reviews institutions for Reaffirmation of Accreditation at the time your review is scheduled. Prior to that review, we will send you a listing of the materials the Panel will consider, and give you an opportunity to update or supplement them if you so desire.

Since we are still working to develop a permanent Quality Checkup process that delivers real value to the institutions participating in AQIP, we would welcome any comments, cautions, or advice you wish to share with us, either about the visit itself, the report, or any related topic.

Sincerely,



Stephen D. Spangeli  
Vice President

QUALITY CHECKUP REPORT

# West Suburban College of Nursing

Oak Park, Illinois  
February 18-20, 2009

**Quality Checkup team members:**

**Glen W. Davidson**  
Professor of Psychiatry and Medical  
Humanities, Emeritus  
Southern Illinois University

**Charles Scriven**  
President  
Kettering College of Medical Arts

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## Background on Quality Checkups conducted by the Academic Quality Improvement Program

The Higher Learning Commission's Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) conducts Quality Checkup site visits to each institution during the fifth or sixth year in every seven-year cycle of AQIP participation. These visits are conducted by trained, experienced AQIP Reviewers to determine whether the institution continues to meet The Higher Learning Commission's *Criteria for Accreditation*, and whether it is using quality management principles and building a culture of continuous improvement as participation in the Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) requires. The goals of an AQIP Quality Checkup are to:

1. Affirm the accuracy of the organization's online Systems Portfolio and verify information included in the portfolio that the last Systems Appraisal has identified as needing clarification or verification (System Portfolio Clarification and Verification);
2. Review with organizational leaders actions taken to capitalize on the strategic issues and opportunities for improvement identified by the last Systems Appraisal (Systems Appraisal Follow Up);
3. Alert the organization to areas that need its attention prior to Reaffirmation of Accreditation, and reassure it concerning areas that have been covered adequately (Accreditation Issues Follow Up);
4. Verify federal compliance issues such as default rates, complaints, USDE interactions and program reviews, etc. (Federal Compliance Review); and
5. Assure continuing organizational quality improvement commitment through presentations, meetings, or sessions that clarify AQIP and Commission accreditation work (Organizational Quality Commitment).

The AQIP peer reviewer(s) trained for this role prepare for the visit by reviewing relevant organizational and AQIP file materials, particularly the organization's last *Systems Appraisal Feedback Report* and the Commission's internal *Organizational Profile*, which summarizes information reported by the institution in its *Annual Institutional Data Update*. The report provided to AQIP by the institution is also shared with the evaluator(s). Copies of the Quality Checkup report are provided to the institution's CEO and AQIP liaison. A copy is retained by the Commission for the institution's permanent file, and will be part of the materials reviewed by the AQIP Review Panel during Reaffirmation of Accreditation.

### Clarification and verification of contents of the institution's *Systems Portfolio*

The Team analyzed West Suburban College of Nursing's (WSCN) Systems Portfolio (2008) before arriving for the Quality Checkup visit in order to better understand changes made by the College since the first version (2006) was reviewed. During the visit, the Team verified and clarified our impressions through discussions held with College administrators and faculty leaders.

The Team reviewed WSCN's current Action Projects with project teams. Based on a review of the "Faculty Enhancement" Action Project, the Team recommends that WSCN consider broadening assessment efforts to include formative as well as summative assessment, and developing Faculty Enhancement techniques to prepare adjunct faculty, as well as full-time faculty.

After reviewing the "Helping Students Learn" Action Project, the Team recommends that WSCN more intentionally identify and inculcate into the curriculum those values promoted by the sponsoring Catholic orders. One way this could be done is to develop learning outcomes based on values, and assess success in teaching the values. We suggest that these values be intentionally embedded across the curriculum.

The Team recommends that WSCN consider models for its quality journey which start by identifying and aligning the most significant impact of its mission and vision, namely, the patient, for meeting the nine AQIP Categories, as well as for strategic planning and student development.

In the team's judgment, the institution presented satisfactory evidence that it meets this goal of the Quality Checkup. The institution's approach to issues, documentation, and performance are acceptable and complies with the Commission's and AQIP's expectations.

### Review of specific accreditation issues identified by the institution's last Systems Appraisal

The team continued to be concerned about whether the governance issue identified in the Systems Appraisal Report had been adequately addressed. According to the Bylaws of West Suburban College of Nursing, section 4.1 (b) "the Hospital CEO shall, as part of his delegated management authority over the Hospital and its divisions, have the power and authority to: (V) Approve the liquidation of the College, or the cessation of its operations, subject to the approval

of RHC.” This section, in particular, is considered troublesome. After meeting with members of the governing and sponsoring boards, as well as Sandra Bruce, the RHC CEO, we were assured appropriate legal action will be taken to affirm accreditation principles set forth by the Higher Learning Commission, including protection of the contract with students enrolled in WSCN degree programs. Draft resolutions were shared with the team while on site. The resolutions will appoint the Systems CEO to the College’s Advisory Board, thereby improving communication between the College and the governing Systems Board, explicitly committing the System to the Commission’s Accreditation Standards.

Review of the institution’s approach to capitalizing on recommendations identified by its last Systems Appraisal in the *Strategic Issues Analysis*.

The Team recognizes that in response to the reviewers’ Strategic Issue for Category One, WSCN has developed an Assessment Plan. The Team recommends WSCN consider participation in the Higher Learning Commission’s Assessment Academy.

For the other Strategic Issues the Team acknowledges receipt of adequate evidence of progress on these initiatives. In the team’s judgment, the institution presented satisfactory evidence that it met this goal of the Quality Checkup. The institution’s approach to the issue, documentation, and performance were acceptable and complies with Commission and AQIP’s expectations.

Review of organizational commitment to continuing systematic quality improvement

In the team’s judgment, the institution presented satisfactory evidence that it met this goal of the Quality Checkup. The institution’s approach to the issue, documentation, and performance were acceptable and complies with the Commission’s and AQIP’s expectations.

USDE issues related to default rate (renewal of eligibility, program audits, or other USDE actions)

In the team's judgment, the institution presented satisfactory evidence that it met this goal of the Quality Checkup. The institution's approach to the issue, documentation, and performance was acceptable and complies with the Commission's and AQIP's expectations. The financial aid default rate for WSNC for 2007 was zero. This is commendable.

Compliance with Commission Policy IV.A.8, Public Notification of Comprehensive Evaluation Visit

In the team's judgment, the institution presented satisfactory evidence by placing advertisements in three local newspapers, including the Chicago Tribune, and presenting evidence of these advertisements, that it met this goal of the Quality Checkup. Two responses to these were received. The institution's approach to the issue, documentation, and performance was acceptable and complies with the Commission's and AQIP's expectations.

Compliance with Commission policy 1.C.7, Credits, Program Length, and Tuition

In the team's judgment, the institution presented satisfactory evidence that it met this goal of the Quality Checkup. The institution's approach to the issue, documentation, and performance was acceptable and complies with the Commission's and AQIP's expectations.

Compliance with Commission policy IV.B.2, Advertising and Recruitment Materials

In the team's judgment, the institution presented satisfactory evidence that it met this goal of the Quality Checkup. The institution's approach to the issue, documentation, and performance was acceptable and complies with the Commission's and AQIP's expectations.

Compliance with Commission policy III.A.1, Professional Accreditation, and III.A.3, Requirements of Organizations Holding Dual Institutional Accreditation

In the team’s judgment, the institution presented satisfactory evidence that it met this goal of the Quality Checkup. The institution’s approach to the issue, documentation, and performance were acceptable and comply with Commission and AQIP’s expectations.

Compliance with Commission policy IV.B.4, *Organizational Records of Student Complaints*

In the team’s judgment, the institution presented satisfactory evidence that it met this goal of the Quality Checkup. The matrix presented in WSNC’s documentation for student complaints was an example of best practices. The institution’s approach to the issue, documentation, and performance was acceptable and complies with the Commission’s and AQIP’s expectations.

Other USDE compliance-related issues

None noted.

Other AQIP issues

None noted.

Other Recommendations

The Team is very impressed with the collaborative project that other Resurrection Health Care System educational units and WSCN envision. The project is called the “Strategic Imperative V: Dedication to the Education of Health Care Professionals (Educational Imperative).” The proposal would consolidate and coordinate the large medical residency programs, Saint Francis School of Radiography, the CAN Program, and perhaps the Clinical Pastoral Education program as well as the College of Nursing. Conversations with hospital administrators, executives and board members showed remarkable unanimity in support of this initiative. In light of this, the Team recommends its further development and timely implementation.

The Team is also impressed with the uncommon opportunity given WSCN to coordinate its

AQIP initiatives with the Magnet initiatives in the several hospitals of Resurrection Health Care System. It appears that the College has the opportunity to test its quality efforts for improving student learning with the quality efforts of nursing practice.

In addition, because of the opportunity to align best practices between learning and clinical exposure throughout the System, the Team recommends to senior System management that allocation of clinical learning resources and nursing practice opportunities in the several hospitals of the System be prioritized in favor of WSCN students rather than students enrolled in competing Chicago area nursing programs.

The Team agrees with RHC and WSCN leadership who indicated to the Team that, at present, there is inadequate space for the College. The Team observed that space provided to the College is not only overcrowded but also unattractive. We believe that, uncorrected, this could have a substantially detrimental impact on student learning, student satisfaction, and faculty morale.

The team found the new program in informatics and management to be creative and timely. We recommend that the College market the already approved program extensively and use the Resurrection Health Care System network to establish best practices for other health care educational institutions.

The Team thanks Chancellor Rebecca Jones and members of her staff for their many courtesies and hard work. We also appreciate the hospitality shown to us by other members of the System boards, administration and staff. The team was universally met with courtesy and attention to our concerns.