Visions Realized and Dreams Dashed: Helen Penhale and the First Basic Integrated Baccalaureate Program in Nursing in the West, at the University of Alberta 1952-1956

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C'est en 1919 que des programmes fondamentaux de diplômes en sciences infirmières ont débuté au Canada à l'université de Colombie-Britannique. Ce programme-là et les autres qui suivirent ailleurs représentaient une forme non intégrée où un programme de diplômes en sciences infirmières offert par un hôpital était complété par des cours universitaires en lettres, en sciences humaines et en sciences appliquées. En 1942, l'université de Toronto mettait en place un programme de baccalauréat fondamental et innovateur en sciences infirmières. Il s'agissait du premier programme intégré où les sciences infirmières étaient enseignées par l'université et où ces cours étaient proposés conjointement avec des cours universitaires d'autres matières. Avant le rapport de la Commission royale d'enquête sur les services de santé de 1964, il y eut seulement deux tentatives pour mettre en place des programmes intégrés au Canada. L'université McMaster mit en place un programme en 1946 et l'université de l'Alberta en 1952, tentative qui se révéla infructueuse.

L'étude avait pour objet d'examiner la situation lorsqu'un programme fondamental de diplôme était mis en place puis terminé dans les années cinquante à l'université de l'Alberba. Il est important de comprendre le fondement de ce conflit pour comprendre certaines questions qui ont été cruciales avec le temps par rapport au mouvement concernant l'établissement de programmes universitaires fondamentaux de diplômes pour les infirmières et infirmiers. Il est également utile de saisir la discrimination relative au sexe des infirmières et des étudiants en sciences infirmières qui prévalait au niveau de la santé et de l'enseignement. Même si le conflit étudié à l'université de l'Alberta était très difficile pour les infirmières impliquées, et bien que la directrice qui s'était montrée assez téméraire pour mettre en place le programme quitta son poste lorsqu'on mit fin sommairement au programme, l'analyse des événements qui se sont passés donne un aperçu de l'ambiance dans laquelle baignait l'enseignement des sciences infirmières au niveau du baccalauréat et de certaines questions relatives à son évolution dans le temps.

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The first basic degree program in nursing in Canada was established at the University of British Columbia in 1919. This program and those that followed elsewhere were of the non-integrated form, wherein a diploma program offered by a hospital was supplemented by university courses in the arts, humanities, and sciences. In 1942 an innovative basic baccalaureate program in nursing was established at the University of Toronto; courses in nursing, given by the university, were offered in conjunction with university courses in other subjects. Only two other attempts were made to set up integrated programs in Canada prior to release of the Report of the Royal Commission on Health Services of 1964: McMaster University established a program in 1946, and, in an attempt that was ultimately unsuccessful, a program was established at the University of Alberta in 1952.

The purpose of this study was to examine the conditions surrounding the initiation and termination of a basic degree program in the 1950s at the University of Alberta, in order to understand the key issues in the movement to establish basic university degree programs for nurses, and the gender discrimination relative to nurses and nursing students that has prevailed in health and education. Although the conflict at the University of Alberta was a very difficult one for the nurses involved, and although the Director who had the temerity to establish the program relinquished her position when the program was summarily terminated, this episode in Canadian nursing history provides insight into the climate in which baccalaureate nursing education existed and into some of the issues relative to its development.

The history of nursing education in Canada has been characterized by slow progress, frustrating struggles, heartbreaking compromises, and, occasionally, well-deserved victories. Often the successes are more readily recalled than the hardships and setbacks that were an integral part of achieving important goals. Failure to analyze setbacks results in an obscuring of the effort required to improve standards of education and establish nursing as an academic discipline. The purpose of this paper is to explore a chapter in the history of nursing education at the University of Alberta that illustrates how the efforts of a strong nursing leader to establish an integrated degree program were stifled by powerful opponents. Since the context of nursing education at the University of Alberta is representative of that in Canadian universities in the 1940s and 1950s, an understanding of the conflict is useful in recognizing issues involved in establishing basic integrated degree programs in nursing.[1]

Emergence of the Integrated Degree Program

University education leading to a degree in nursing began in Canada with the establishment of a degree program at the University of British Columbia in 1919. In 1920, national and provincial Red Cross societies provided funds to universities for courses in public health nursing which facilitated the establishment of degree programs in a number of universities. Since the courses were arranged in conjunction with a

diploma program offered by a hospital, responsibility for teaching all courses for which the degree was granted did not rest with the degree-granting institution. A series of surveys, including the Goldmark Report of 1923,[2] the reports of the Committee on the Grading of Nursing Schools of 1928 and 1934 in the United States,[3,4] and the Weir Report of 1932[5] in Canada, resulted in a new awareness of disquieting deficiencies in the education of nurses and drew attention to the need for courses and programs at the university level.

The introduction of an integrated degree program in 1942 at the School of Nursing of the University of Toronto was the culmination of 16 years of experimentation in basic educational preparation for nurses spearheaded by E. Kathleen Russell. It was made possible by a grant of $250,000 from the Rockefeller Foundation. Although there was an outpouring of public support for nursing as an essential service during the war years, only this generous support allowed for the implementation of an integrated degree program at a time of significant social upheaval on the world stage when some university schools were struggling for their very survival.[6]

However, the majority of university schools continued to offer non-integrated degree programs and there was no movement to more expensive integrated ones. Between 1942, when the Toronto program was introduced, and 1967, with the Report of the Royal Commission on Health Services[7] which castigated universities for continuing to espouse an educationally-flawed model, there were only two exceptions to this trend. The first was the establishment of an integrated degree program at McMaster University in nearby Hamilton, Ontario, in 1948; then in Western Canada, at the University of Alberta, an important attempt was made to establish a degree program in nursing, using the integrated program as a prototype.

Delegating Authority for Nursing Education to the University

The appointment of Helen Eileen Marie Penhale as Director of the School of Nursing at the University of Alberta followed the resignation of Agnes J. MacLeod, who had been on leave for active duty with the Canadian armed forces from 1943 to 1946. Miss MacLeod left the post of Director upon her return to Canada, to become matron-in-chief for the Department of Veterans' Affairs.[8] At the time of her appointment, Miss Penhale had been a faculty member of the Institute of Public Health of the University of Western Ontario. A native of St. Thomas, Ontario, she was a graduate of the Mount Sinai School of Nursing in New York and held bachelor's and master's degrees from Teachers

College, Columbia University. The announcement of her appointment in the March 9, 1946, edition of the *Edmonton Bulletin* noted: "She is well known in Edmonton, having taught for two seasons at the university summer school for graduate nurses."[9]

Prior to Miss Penhale's appointment, the following item appeared on the agenda of the September 14, 1945, meeting of the University of Alberta Hospital Board: "Letter from Dr. Newton Re. Organization of Training School."[10] In the letter, Dr. Robert Newton, President of the University and a member of the Hospital Board, put forward new ideas in relation to the structure and operation of the School of Nursing. He proposed that

> the Director of the School of Nursing should have complete jurisdiction over the instruction of students both in the University and in the University Hospital, while the Superintendent of Nurses in the hospital should have supervision of service, duties, discipline, et cetera.[11]

Dr. Angus McGugan, Medical Superintendent of the Hospital,

> pointed out that the University grants not only degrees to degree students, but diplomas to the diploma students, and that the University reasonably might expect a large measure of authority in the direction of those basic subjects dealing with the science of nursing, for instance such subjects as physiology, anatomy, et cetera.[12]

Dr. McGugan argued further that the Canadian Nurses' Association had developed standards for the nursing curriculum "in both the Science of Nursing and the Art of Nursing, and that one should be careful not to take any steps which would divorce the Art of Nursing from the Science of Nursing and vice versa."[13] "It was further pointed out that control of the school of Nursing insofar as matters of policy and curricula are concerned is now vested in the Council of the School of Nursing."[14] Following some discussion, it was concluded that University Hospital representation on the Council was sufficient to exercise control despite concern over the new arrangements whereby the University would assume control of the School of Nursing in its entirety.

The following statement underscores the extent to which senior nursing staff members of the School of Nursing participated in the nursing service of the hospital:

> It was further indicated that hospitals depend upon their teaching staff for a great deal of hospital administrative work, particularly supervision. At the present time our Instructor of Nurses and our Surgical and Medical Supervisors make rounds in the hospital and are competent to act for the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent of

> nurses on holidays, weekends, and at such other times as occasion may require. The Superintendent was of the opinion that this arrangement should maintain and the Training School Officers should not regard themselves as teachers only with no responsibility for the operation of the hospital.[15]

It was noted that "while there is no set-up similar to Alberta's in Canada, there are several in the United States"[16] and that Dr. McGugan was "of the opinion that the working arrangement between the University and the University Hospital should be as close as possible and that the Science of Nursing and the Art of Nursing should be intimately correlated." However, he cautioned that "we should not lose sight of the fact that we are graduating nurses and...should not attempt to graduate an individual qualified to carry on modified medical practice."[17] The matter was deferred; Dr. McGugan was instructed to gather further information on this matter and to consult with the Medical Advisory Board, the Superintendent of Nurses and the Council of the School of Nursing.[18] A reference in the minutes to the "unique" arrangement between the University Hospital and the University of Alberta indicates that the University Hospital administration was satisfied with the joint diploma and degree programs. The arrangement was undoubtedly unique in Canada at the time, and it is likely that there were few centres in the United States where hospital administrators held such a high degree of control over a university degree program in nursing.

At the next regular meeting of the Board there was again "considerable discussion...regarding the organization of the Training School."[19] Board members asked that "representations" from the Superintendent of Nurses and the Medical Superintendent be "made available to the Board so that they may be studied prior to the next meeting."[20] Another deferral followed at the next meeting: "After considerable discussion it was decided to postpone any action on this matter until the members of the Board have had a further opportunity to consider the whole question."[21] When Dr. Newton was absent from the November 9, 1945, meeting, the matter was deferred once again.[22] The number of deferrals would indicate that the Board was unwilling to consider a matter involving the authority of the University in the absence of its President. It also hints at some apprehension over the form of organization proposed.

Despite lingering doubts, however, the proposal was approved unanimously at the following meeting, with Dr. Newton in attendance, and he moved "that a Director of the School of Nursing of the University of Alberta be appointed and that such Director have charge

of the instructional services both on the Campus and in the hospital."[23] A few months later the Dean of Medicine announced to the Board Miss Penhale's appointment: "Dr. J. J. Ower indicated that he had been requested by Dr. Newton to advise the meeting that Miss Penhale had been engaged as Director of the School of Nursing."[24]It is not known whether the new arrangements relative to the authority of the Director of the School had been made at the request of Miss Penhale as a condition of employment. However, this is likely given that approval of the changes preceded the announcement of her appointment by a scant four months. The question of whether or not there may have been some anxiety about the decision to alter the roles of the Director of the School of Nursing and the Superintendent of Nurses of the University Hospital is raised in an item in the meeting of the Hospital Board following the announcement:

> The Superintendent indicated that in the near future it would be advisable that the duties of the Director of the School of Nursing be outlined clearly in order that there be no misunderstanding regarding the duties of the Director of the School of Nursing and the Nursing Superintendent of the University Hospital.[25]

The matter was tabled in Dr. Newton's absence.[26] At the next meeting the following item was recorded in the minutes: "The matter of clarifying the duties of the Director of the School of Nursing and the Superintendent of Nurses at the University Hospital was presented for consideration. It was decided that this matter should not be considered until the Director arrives in Edmonton."[27]

Further Debate on the Organization and Operation of the School

A question raised in correspondence from the Minister of Health was considered by the University Hospital Board at its meeting of September 13, 1946. Although the substance of the question itself is interesting, of particular interest here is the possible impact of the Minister's opinion on the vesting of administrative authority for the School of Nursing. The Minister

> had questioned the advisability of requiring nurses to have senior matriculation standing as a prerequisite to admission to the Training School. It was pointed out to the Minister that senior matriculation is a requirement of admission to the University of Alberta and that the Training School comes under the administration of the University.[28]

According to the minutes,

> The Minister questioned this statement and contended that the University of Alberta Hospital Act of 1929 placed the authority for the

> education and training of medical students and nurses under the Hospital Board: Section 7, Subsection c.[29]

Since there apparently had been no previous discussion of this matter, it was deferred until the President of the University and the Dean of Medicine could consider it further. Nothing more was found in the Board minutes in relation to the Minister's interpretation of the 1929 University of Alberta Hospital Act except for a cryptic statement in the minutes of the December 27, 1946, meeting: "The Superintendent raised several questions regarding the administration of the School of Nursing and considerable discussion followed."[30] This discussion may or may not have referred to the question of legal authority for administration of the School of Nursing.

At the next bimonthly meeting of the Board, on January 10, 1947, Miss Penhale and the Instructor in Basic Sciences, Miss McIntosh, were invited "to make representations regarding the organization and operation of the School of Nursing."[31] Miss Penhale provided the following possibilities:

> The position of the Director of the School of Nursing, Associate Professor of Public Health Nursing and Health Education is not sufficiently clear to make for good working relationships. I have outlined two plans which might be considered. A third was presented to the body on October 12th, 1945.[32]

She was referring to the plan submitted to the Board by Dr. Newton some five months prior to her appointment, which lends weight to the possibility that the reorganization requested by Dr. Newton had originally been raised by Miss Penhale as a condition of her employment. The two plans outlined by Miss Penhale before the Board included an arrangement known as Plan A:

> (a) The Director of the School is a campus official who has under her in the hospital a Director of Nursing Service and a Director of Nursing Education. The hospital officials here might continue to be known by their present titles of Superintendent of Nurses and Senior Nursing Instructor. These two, once a policy has been established, could function without detailed supervision. In case of any clash of interests or difference of opinion which they themselves could not reconcile, the Director of the School would arbitrate. If the difference were a major one, affecting policy, the Director would probably carry it to the Council of the School of Nursing for discussion and decision.[33]

According to Miss Penhale's organizational design, in Plan B:

> (b) The Director of the School of Nursing is in charge of nursing education on the campus and in the hospital.[34]

Since Miss Penhale and Miss McIntosh were not members of the Board, they then retired from the meeting. After some debate, the Board expressed approval of Plan A and "instructed the secretary to write the Director of the School of Nursing and request her to present a plan for the organization and operation of the School of Nursing, such plan to be forwarded to the secretary for presentation at the next regular meeting of the Board."[35] The administrative organization of the School of Nursing was the only item on the agenda of a meeting that lasted three hours, so this was clearly a controversial matter. Although both plans extended the authority of the Director of the School of Nursing, Plan A went further than Plan B, because implementation of a new program would require control of the sizeable nursing service component provided by students, and Plan A stipulated that the Director would have this control. Plan B was closer to the plan Dr. Newton had originally proposed in 1945, and would have had the effect of ensuring that the Director of the School of Nursing controlled nursing education both in the hospital and in the university, while she would have no responsibility for nursing service in the hospital.

The next meeting of the Board, on January 24, considered Miss Penhale's "A Proposed Plan of Organization and Operation of the School of Nursing." She was called in to "explain several details."[36] Dr. McGugan was recorded as recommending that the report be submitted to the Superintendent of Nurses and the Hospital Medical Advisory Board for their information and recommendations.[37] More revealing is a statement attributed to Dr. McGugan:

> He also indicated that the plan proposed to delegate considerable responsibility and authority for nursing education and nursing services to the University either directly or through the Council of the School of Nursing, and referred to Section 7, sub-section c of the University of Alberta Hospital Act.[38]

Clearly the earlier interpretation of the Minister of Health, that responsibility for the School of Nursing was vested in the Hospital by virtue of the provisions of the University of Alberta Hospital Act, had been accepted by Dr. McGugan and the Board. The Superintendent also "pointed out that the proposed plan would mean a material increase in the cost of the School of Nursing."[39] Following further discussion, Dr. Newton made the following motion: "That the Board approve Miss Penhale's plan in principle and ask her to begin putting it into effect as may be practicable. It was further requested that Miss Penhale keep the Board informed of her progress from time to time."[40]

Although the plan was approved and the principals were so informed, the degree of concern over this matter appears to have been considerable. It is probable that the Board and the Superintendent were not completely satisfied that the new directions in nursing education taken by the University and the Hospital were practical and desirable. However, this was not the end of the discussion of Miss Penhale's plan. Although the plan was approved at the meeting of January 24, 1947, the first item on the agenda of the regular Board meeting of February 13 related to the matter again:

> A revised draft of the organization of the School of Nursing, University of Alberta, was presented for consideration. The draft was considered at length. It was moved by Dr. Ower, seconded by Dr. Newton, that the revised draft, with certain alterations, be approved. Carried.[41]

It is perhaps significant that all of the motions on the reorganization of the School of Nursing at University Hospital Board meetings were made by the University President. Apparently Dr. Newton's support for Miss Penhale in her desire to establish an integrated degree program was unwavering, despite arguments put forward by the Hospital Superintendent.

An item on the agenda of the December 12, 1947, meeting provides some insight into the prevailing educational philosophy of members of the Hospital Board, in that it addresses concern about the contribution of nursing students to the Hospital:

> The Superintendent pointed out that two preliminary students and one undergraduate in her second year had withdrawn from the School of Nursing. He pointed out further that this represented a loss of a very material sum of money to the hospital in the training of these individuals and that an attempt should be made to devise some safeguard for the prevention of withdrawals in the future.[42]

Attrition of students was seen primarily in an economic light, undoubtedly because hospital operations were subsidized by the substantial contribution made by students. It appears that curriculum concerns and the educational needs of students were viewed as secondary to economic considerations.

Ideas and Values: Miss Penhale Earns Respect in the Community

The new Director of the School of Nursing clearly had to take command of a changing enterprise very quickly, as she was called to present plans for the organization and development of the School of Nursing within a

few months of her arrival at the University of Alberta. In a keynote address to a Canadian Nurses' Association convention, Miss Penhale articulated her concern for helping students to gain as much as possible from their education:

> The future of nursing depends upon the vision we have for our own future and upon our ability to guide, encourage and direct our students toward being complete students. Encouraging students to master a body of knowledge and certain skills is not enough; we have a responsibility to start them on a program of self-education and to give them the fundamental insights and ways of thought that will enable them to draw the maximum profit from their later education in the school of experience.[43]

Miss Penhale had a vision of education as self-directed and as a lifelong process, concepts that educational philosophers would espouse in decades to follow. In the same address she enumerated attributes she considered essential to the "complete student": a high standard of conduct, discriminating judgement, devotion to truth, discipline, decision-making, action, initiative, and love of adventure.[44] She described the integrated baccalaureate nursing curriculum she and her colleagues had implemented:

> The objective of the integrated academic and basic professional program is to select well-qualified young women and prepare them for community nursing service in hospitals and public health agencies; at the same time, to give them a perspective on the opportunities for professional women and needs of communities for their active participation as citizens.[45]

Some two decades later, Miss Penhale made the following observation:

> The type of program we attempted to design was one with a much broader base [broader than previous programs], especially in the social science area. It would require more courses in this discipline as well as requiring nurse-teachers qualified to help students utilize the concepts they had learned in the classroom.[46]

Miss Penhale was particularly concerned by duplication of experiences in the clinical learning environment. While she believed that some repetition was valuable, she deplored wasting time that could be used to better advantage.[47]

It is apparent also that Miss Penhale earned the respect of her peers as she became involved in professional activities soon after her arrival. She became acting President of the Conference of University Schools of Nursing, a national organization. She was also elected President of the

Alberta Association of Registered Nurses, in 1953, serving until 1955. At the University, the minutes of the Executive Committee of the Board of Governors of March 3, 1948, record her promotion: "Miss H. E. M. Penhale, from Associate Professor to Professor of Nursing, and to continue as Director of the School of Nursing, at $4,500 per annum, from April 1, 1948 (Appointment to be extended without definite term)."[48] Within two years of her appointment as Associate Professor and Director of the School, Miss Penhale was granted a full professorship with tenure; it must be concluded that her performance was deemed highly commendable, if not distinguished within the university. Universities of the 1940s and 1950s were relatively small institutions and nursing education was a modest undertaking in comparison to other disciplines. It is likely that academic promotion and tenure rested primarily with administrators. In the case of Miss Penhale's promotion to Professor, the final decision probably rested with President Newton.

Conflict over Educational and Service Responsibilities

Following the approval of the new administrative structure for nursing education and service, it appears that the arrangement seemed at the outset to be satisfactory, notwithstanding the concern prior to the approval of the changes in February of 1947. The first indications of discord appear in the minutes of the May 13, 1949, meeting of the Hospital Board, with a reference to a special committee that had been appointed "to consider the matter of nursing services in the hospital."[49] The only matter described in any detail relates to the duties of the Director of the School of Nursing. The following presentation from Miss Penhale was read into the minutes:

> In reply to your request to bring suggestions to the meeting in writing in order to expedite discussion may I present the following:
>
> 1. A Director was appointed on March 8, 1946. The specific duties of the Director were tabled and have probably never been too clearly defined.
>
> The new set-up has been in operation almost three years and has obviously not worked. Is it wise to continue the present organization or revert back to the former set-up?"[50]

It appears that Miss Penhale was unhappy with the division of responsibilities and had raised the matter for consideration. The Board response was reported as follows:

> The Chairman directed that the questions raised in Miss Penhale's letter be considered at the two June meetings of the Hospital Board and that Miss Penhale be invited to attend the Board meeting on

> Friday, June 10th, to discuss this matter, and that the Superintendent of Nurses, Miss Helen Peters, be invited to attend the meeting on Friday, June 24th.[51]

The conflict would apparently be played out before the Board, with separate appearances by Miss Penhale and Miss Peters, followed by discussion and decision by the Board.

Miss Penhale appeared as directed at the next regular meeting. The minutes note: "Miss Penhale, Director of the School of Nursing, was called to discuss the matter of the organization of the School of Nursing as she had questioned as to whether or not the presently existing organization was operating to the satisfaction of the Board."[52] The minutes paraphrase Miss Penhale's representations:

> The organization as it presently exists is satisfactory. The operation of the organization is not satisfactory in that according to Miss Penhale, Miss Peters still does a certain amount of the work that belongs strictly to the Department of Nursing Education and does not accept the responsibility for certain duties which belong to nursing service, particularly the matter of making rounds in the hospital.[53]

At the meeting of June 27, "Miss Peters was then requested to come into the meeting in order that she and the Board might discuss certain phases of the organization and operation of nursing education and nursing services in the hospital."[54] Miss Peters indicated to the Board that she believed the existing organization to be satisfactory and also that it might "be expected that there will be some conflict of interests between those primarily interested in nursing education and those primarily interested in nursing service."[55] She intimated, however, that the problem was not as acute as Miss Penhale had suggested, stating that "differences of opinion and problems arising therefrom might be readily adjusted at conferences of the interested parties."[56] Miss Peters recommended that "the duties and responsibilities of the Director of the School and the Superintendent of Nursing Services should be clarified further, and specified in as much detail as possible."[57] Her opinion was that the day-to-day operation of the plan for organization approved by the Board was working much more smoothly than it had previously. Further downplaying the problem, she stated that "the most acute problem at present is the scarcity of graduate nurses."[58]

The minutes which record the difficulty with the organizational plan considered by the Board use much more curt, abrupt language in describing Miss Penhale's representation than in describing Miss Peters' representation. As for resolution of the matter, the minutes include only the following statement to indicate the response of Board members:

"After Miss Peters left the meeting the Superintendent was instructed to deal with the whole matter in the light of the information which he had obtained at the various meetings held to discuss nursing problems in the hospital."[59]

An Integrated Degree Program Is Established at the University of Alberta

In the meantime, Miss Penhale moved forward to revise the curriculum. Her plan was to eliminate the five-year non-integrated program in favour of a four-year integrated degree program, and this was approved according to a letter from President Newton to Miss Penhale on June 20, 1950:

> The Board of Governors at a meeting June 16 approved the proposal of the School of Nursing, which came forward with the support of the Faculty of Medicine and the General Faculty Council, that beginning September, 1951, there be instituted an integrated course leading to the degree of Bachelor of Science in Nursing and that after September, 1950, no initial registrations in the present B.Sc. course in Nursing be accepted.[60]

He noted that the curriculum for the program would also require approval by the Board of Governors and advised that it be forwarded to them as soon as possible so that it could be included in the 1951-52 calendar. The new four-year degree program was not introduced in 1951 as originally planned, however, because it took longer to prepare the curriculum and secure the necessary support and approvals from the relevant councils and boards.[61]

At the regular meeting of the University Hospital Board held on 23 February 1951:

> A memorandum was presented from Miss H. E. Penhale relative to certain proposed changes in the nurses' training course. Essentially the memorandum recommended the introduction of the block system of ward training and the reduction of the Degree course from a five to a four year course. However the actual number of months spent in training in the Degree course essentially would be unchanged.[62]

The Board deferred a decision on the matter, and it was not raised again until November, when it was reported that "a modification of the block system of student nurse training in the University of Alberta Hospital was proposed by Miss Helen Penhale, Director of the School of Nursing, who was interviewed by the Board."[63] Considerable discussion was recorded and the minutes note that "the Superintendent indicated that he questioned the advisability of any innovation at a time

when there will be a very material problem in the matter of obtaining staff for the entire new wing."[64] However, Dr. McGugan went on to say that "in the opinion of Miss Peters, upon whom the responsibility for staffing the hospital rests, the proposed block system would facilitate nursing services in the hospital."[65] The matter was tabled until the next meeting, when it was approved on the motion of President Stewart.[66] The programs themselves were considered by the University Hospital Board at the March 28, 1952, meeting, when "Miss Penhale presented a brief in the matter of proposed changes in the basic programme leading to the degree of B.Sc. in nursing."[67] After "prolonged" discussion, Dr J. W. Scott,[68] Dean of Medicine, made a motion to approve the program. The proposals had been approved at a special meeting of the Council of the School of Nursing a week earlier, on March 21. The motion also directed the secretary to inform the General Faculty Council of the University that approval was forthcoming from the University Hospital Board.[69]

Following approval of the final version of the curriculum, the four-year degree program in nursing was implemented that September. Early the following year, a meeting of the Council of the School of Nursing considered the number of classes that would be admitted to the School of Nursing: "It was pointed out that with the change of the Degree course, there will now be three classes of pre-clinical students admitted each year."[70] Concern was expressed over the problems arising from the need to teach so many students simultaneously, and it was suggested "that the January class be eliminated."[71] Perhaps more revealing is the statement that "the loss of diploma students in this class might mean a serious loss of graduates from this school who will be available later as graduate nurses for the staff of this hospital."[72] The economic value of the student to the Hospital, as recorded in the minutes, foreshadows the difficulties that would ensue.

The Hospital Superintendent Moves to Thwart the New Program

Later that same year the Superintendent of the Hospital, Dr. McGugan, delivered what would be the death-knell of the new integrated program. At a special meeting of the University Hospital Board called on November 9, 1953, the sole item on the agenda was again "Organization Department of Nursing."[73] The minutes state ominously:

> The meeting was called for the purpose of discussing the organization of the Department of Nursing. Dr. McGugan, Superintendent, reviewed the present organizational chart and outlined the difficulties

> created by the Director of Nursing having dual responsibility to the University Hospital Board and the University Board of Governors.[74]

Dr. McGugan indicated that the need for recommendations on the matter had been precipitated by the illness of Miss Peters, Superintendent of Nursing Services.[75] He recommended the following:

> That a Director of Nursing be appointed in charge of all nursing service in the University Hospital and that the University Hospital School return to the arrangement in existence prior to 1945. The Degree nurses would receive their training on an internship basis but during the course of their three years in the hospital, would be under the supervision of the Director of Nursing of the University Hospital. The Director of Nursing of the University of Alberta would continue to indicate the subjects to be taught and the amount of time each nurse is to receive in each subject and would periodically require a report of each nurse concerned.

The Board voted in favour of the Superintendent's recommendation on the motion of Dean J. W. Scott, indicating that it was

> in concurrence with the opinion of the Superintendent, that the question of divided authority as represented by the present position of Director of the University of Alberta and the University Hospital School of Nursing has created problems and would prefer that a separate school of nursing be established by the University Hospital and it is hoped that this school could operate in collaboration with the University of Alberta.[76]

At the Executive Committee meeting of the Board of Governors of the University, "the President referred to administrative changes proposed by the University Hospital Board which would, in effect, remove responsibility for training and nursing service within the Hospital from the Director of the School of Nursing."[77] Further, the President reported that the Director "would still be responsible for the University's B.Sc. program, but Miss Penhale is not willing to stay on the University staff if the changes, to be effective January 1, 1954, are made."[78] The nature of the response of members of the Executive Committee of the Board of Governors is unrecorded in the minutes, save for the notation that "any such change, affecting the position of a member of the University, could not be made during the academic year, i.e., before May 15."[79] At the next meeting of the University Hospital Board, the response of the University Board of Governors was reported, indicating that they would be "agreeable to terminate the present arrangement as of May 15th, 1954."[80] The Board of Governors also made it clear that in the future candidates would be accepted from other diploma schools of nursing as well as those from the University Hospital, and that "it

would not be possible to present diplomas for University Hospital graduates at University Convocation."[81]

It is somewhat surprising, if not revealing, that at a meeting of the University Hospital Board Dr. Andrew Stewart, who had succeeded Dr. Newton as President of the University, proposed that "the Hospital Board proceed with the organization of its own school of nursing, to be effective May 16, 1954."[82] His motion was carried. It can be concluded, since the minutes of the Board of Governors record no disagreement to Dr. McGugan's plan, and in light of President Stewart's motion supporting the decision to initiate a separate diploma School of Nursing, that the University failed to provide support for the four-year degree program offered by its own School of Nursing. Thus the program was summarily terminated on the recommendation of the Superintendent of the Hospital and the Hospital Board, with the concurrence of the President of the University and the University Board of Governors. On March 23, 1956, the Board of Governors of the University of Alberta was informed that Miss Penhale's resignation would take effect on August 31.[83]

Why Was the Integrated Program Aborted So Soon After Its Inception?

The strongest opposition to the integrated program clearly came from the University Hospital, in particular from the Medical Superintendent, Dr. Angus McGugan. There is also evidence that the new Dean of Medicine, Dr. John W. Scott, failed to support it.[84] Dr. McGugan wrote in 1964:

> With the appointment of the Associate Professor of Nursing of the University, Miss Helen Penhale, as the Director (August, 1946), the school became known and was in fact the University of Alberta School of Nursing (January 1947). This change was made against the advice of the hospital administration. Objections were based on the opinion that the principle of authority without corresponding responsibility is administratively unsound.[85]

We do not know to what extent the Superintendent of Nurses of the Hospital, Helen Peters, supported the new program and the change in the organization of the School of Nursing. She became terminally ill with cancer in 1953, cited by McGugan as a factor leading to his recommending that the schools be separated. He wrote that Miss Peters

> pioneered in the establishment of the recognition of nursing as a profession. She was definitely resistive to any attitude of condescension or patronage, or any attempt at domination directed at either herself,

> any particular nurse, or at the profession in general by the nouveaux riches or noveaux [sic] eleves.[86]

So we see that a deep communication impasse between Miss Peters and Miss Penhale may have been the basis of the problem. Words spoken in 1977 by Dr. Scott, Dean of Medicine during the latter part of Miss Penhale's mandate, indicate his support for the Board's position: "The thing that concerns me today is that nurses are becoming more and more 'doctors' and the people who do the *nursing* are the nursing aides. I'm sure there still are dedicated nurses, but a great many of them only come around as executives and keep records."[87] Some 20 years after the fact, Dr. Scott maintained that the division of the two schools of nursing in Dr. McGugan's time "was a good thing."[88]

It may also be that Jeanie Clark, appointed by Miss Penhale as First Assistant Superintendent of Nurses, failed to provide support for the new program when it was so badly needed. During Miss Peters' illness, Miss Clark, who had been her assistant, stepped into the position on an acting basis. Problems in the relationship between Miss Penhale and Miss Clark may be inferred from events described in Miss Penhale's memorandum to President Stewart on September 16, 1954. She states: "In my telephone conversation with Miss J. Clark, University Hospital, this morning, I was given to understand that the way in which I had handled two specific problems presented by two degree nurses, was considered as 'interference'."[89] These "problems" appear to have been battles for control of clinical education — battles predicated upon the financial value of the service to the hospital provided by students. To Miss Penhale, who had already lost her integrated degree program and much of her authority and responsibility through the actions of the Hospital Board and the University, this must have seemed like harassment.

Many factors weighed against Miss Penhale and the timing of the introduction of the four-year integrated degree program in nursing. In the postwar period there was an extreme shortage of nurses, which consumed and diverted the attention of hospital and nursing service administrators alike.[90] Students were seen as a work force of considerable value to the hospital, and their illness and attrition as a money-losing prospect. Since there were only two integrated university programs in nursing in the country at the time, both in Ontario, it can be concluded that understanding of this model of nursing education was limited. Evidence suggests that the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Toronto had been quite supportive of its own School of Nursing and the goals of its Director, Kathleen Russell. The lack of

equivalent support at the University of Alberta was undoubtedly an important factor in the failure to sustain an integrated baccalaureate degree program in nursing.[91]

In separate studies,[92] Kirkwood and Kinnear attribute the low level of power wielded by nursing faculty members of the era to administrative structures unfavourable to women. The low status of nursing in universities meant that without the support of more powerful male colleagues progress was difficult. Western Canadian conservatism, the paternalism of the period, and the vise-like control of nursing by hospital and medical administrators allowed nursing leaders little or no opportunity to make autonomous decisions in their own schools. Nursing was as universally female as medicine and public hospital and university administrations were universally male. It is likely that gender stereotyping and bias played a major role in influencing processes and outcomes. There is also the question of the key players: whether the outcomes would have been different if the presidency of the University had not passed from Dr. Newton to Dr. Stewart, if Miss Peters had not become terminally ill, or if Drs. McGugan and Scott had held more liberal ideas about nursing and nursing education. It is clear that the principal stakeholders here, namely physicians and hospital administrators, wielded significant power over nursing education and nursing service. When they failed to support the goals and directions advocated by key nurses, the balance of power turned against the nurses, who were outnumbered and who were excluded from the table where critical decisions about their discipline were made.

Considering that Helen Penhale was well known in her field, one may wonder why concrete support did not come from bodies such as the Conference of University Schools of Nursing (later the Canadian Association of University Schools of Nursing). However, circumstances within this national organization were far from normal, because of postwar pressures. Member organizations struggled with shortages of qualified faculty and with a large influx of military nurses as students in university nursing programs. Little was accomplished at a national level, local needs taking precedence.

> For much of the period between 1948 and 1951, Helen Penhale (Alberta) struggled [as acting president], with the help of the past-president, Kathleen Ellis (Saskatchewan), to keep the organization afloat while the president, Evelyn Mallory (British Columbia), and the vice-president, Sister Françoise de Chantal (Ottawa), were away on study leave.[93]

After 1948 the Canadian Association of University Schools of Nursing lost much of its strength and unity of purpose when Kathleen Russell and Alma Reid, directors of the only integrated university schools of nursing in the country, objected to an independent role for the organization. They favoured working with the Canadian Nurses' Association to further the interests of university nursing education. This dissension in the ranks of the association rendered it powerless to fulfil its mandate, a situation that prevailed until 1958.[94]

Why the Alberta Association of Registered Nurses did not object vehemently to the termination of the integrated degree program at the University of Alberta is a matter about which little information is available. Since Helen Penhale herself was its President and spokesperson during the program's transitionary period, the Association possibly believed that its representations would have been futile. The AARN had made many representations to the University about improving standards of nursing education over the years, since by virtue of the Registered Nurses Act of 1916 authority for monitoring standards of nursing education was vested in the University of Alberta Senate. According to Young,[95] such representations had fallen on deaf ears and the University consistently failed to fulfil its responsibility to ensure that standards of nursing education were maintained in the diploma nursing schools of the province.

Another factor making AARN intervention in the dispute difficult may have been divisions within the profession itself. The integrated program model was viewed by some nurses as usurping the power and authority of the major program model in nursing education at the time, the diploma program, and its sponsor, the hospital. Many nursing leaders who taught in and ran the diploma schools were strongly supportive of the diploma program and thus were disinclined to promote the development of competition in the form of an integrated degree program. The question of whether university education was appropriate for nurses was marked by overtones of unsupportive and highly discriminatory approaches to higher education for women. Whether to elevate nursing to university status from the diploma level, to allow women to attend university for four years when two was the norm for a nursing degree, and to forego the considerable revenues that accrued to hospitals from the nursing service provided gratis by diploma students were difficult issues in a society in which education for women was not valued.

The Conflict Is Settled — the Issue Endures

The intent in this paper was to explore the circumstances surrounding the development and implementation of a basic integrated baccalaureate degree program at the University of Alberta from 1952 to 1957. Miss Penhale came to the University of Alberta on the basis of an agreement with Dr. Newton that a new integrated basic degree program in nursing would be introduced. Critical factors included the nature of the agreement between the University and the Hospital for offering the programs and the relative degree of power carried by key individuals and the relationships that prevailed between them. A shift in the balance of power occurred when two central players were replaced during the transition. What became readily apparent is that the diploma and degree programs were highly intertwined in terms of the course of study, faculty, students, and the service provided in the hospital. In the absence of firm commitment of all parties, implementation of the new program would be extremely difficult. Although President Newton had supported Miss Penhale within the University and on the Hospital Board, his successor, President Stewart, took a contrary position and lacked commitment to the new integrated program. The hierarchical structure of universities at the time, the limited participation of women in universities generally, and the tenuous position of nursing as an academic discipline may explain the University's failure to come to Miss Penhale's defence. Issues of gender and the value placed on nursing as an academic discipline were also at play in the conflict over the goals and direction of the School of Nursing.

There is always some irony in history, and here it is found in the fact that slightly more than a decade after the integrated degree program introduced by Miss Penhale was terminated, a new four-year integrated program was established at the University of Alberta by her successor, Ruth McClure. The recommendations of the Royal Commission on Health Services of 1964, cited above, were clearly influential, as within a decade they resulted in closure of all non-integrated degree programs in Canada.[96] As forerunner of the integrated program established in 1966, the earlier program with two classes of graduates undoubtedly created a climate for eventual acceptance of the idea that the university should assume primary responsibility for the entire education of the nursing student in a degree program. Many Alberta nurses were deeply influenced by the ideas of Miss Penhale and the directions she advocated. When those who held the reins in the dispute over the program were succeeded by others, it became possible to make the case

for developing an integrated degree program in nursing at the University.

The termination of the program before the first class was even halfway through their program of studies is perhaps insignificant in the total scheme of things, for students would graduate from an integrated degree program offered by the University of Alberta 13 short years later. Failure is an important, if painful, means of learning. It is useful to examine such episodes to gain a greater appreciation of the complexity of change in large organizations, the nature of gender discrimination in health and educational settings, and the need for effective communication and true collaboration of all interested parties, in order to implement new program models successfully. This dramatic and well-documented episode in the history of university nursing education illuminates the interplay of forces facilitating and thwarting progress in curriculum innovation. Underscored are professional goals, including improving standards of university nursing education, achieving credibility for nursing as an academic discipline, and promoting equality for women in the university.

Endnotes

1. Primary sources of information include minutes of the University of Alberta Hospital Board, the Council of the Faculty of Medicine, the Council of the School of Nursing, and the Executive Committee of the Board of Governors at the University of Alberta; other documents in the University of Alberta Archives pertaining to the School of Nursing; School of Nursing calendars and yearbooks; and newspaper accounts. Although calendars and yearbooks are not specifically cited, they were consulted extensively and provided information of considerable value in relation to general knowledge of the situation in the School of Nursing and events occurring within the University Hospitals Board. Secondary sources include studies of nursing and nursing education and other documents.
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3. Committee on the Grading of Nursing Schools, May Ayres Burgess, Director. *Nurses, Patients and Pocketbooks* (New York: Committee on the Grading of Nursing Schools, 1928).
4. _____ . *Nursing Schools Today and Tomorrow* (New York: Committee on the Grading of Nursing Schools, 1934).
5. George M. Weir, *Survey of Nursing Education in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1932).

6. Janet C. Ross Kerr, "Bertha Harmer and McGill nurses fight closure of the School for Graduate Nurses during the depression." *Journal of Nursing History* 3, no. 2 (1988): 6-21.
7. Royal Commission on Health Services. *Report*, Vol.1 (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1964).
8. "Appointments at University Are Announced.", *Edmonton Bulletin* reprint, Helen Penhale file, Archives of the University of Alberta, Acc. no. 1120 - 2 (hereafter cited as AUA) 9 March 1946.
9. Ibid.
10. Minutes of the regular meeting of September 14, 1945, University Hospital Board Meeting Minutes, Archives of the University of Alberta Hospital, Book No. 4. (June 1940-February 1948), pp. 188-189 (hereafter cited as UHBMM/AUAH).
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid.
19. Minutes of the regular meeting of October 12, 1945, UHBMM/AUAH, Book No. 4. (June 1940-February 1948), p. 193.
20. Ibid.
21. Minutes of the regular meeting of October 26, 1945, UHBMM/AUAH, Book No. 4. (June 1940-February 1948), p. 196.
22. Minutes of the regular meeting of November 9, 1945, UHBMM/AUAH, Book No. 4. (June 1940-February 1948), p. 197.
23. Minutes of the regular meeting of November 23, 1945, UHBMM/AUAH, Book No. 4. (June 1940-February 1948), p. 199.
24. Minutes of the regular meeting of March 8, 1946, UHBMM/AUAH, Book No. 4. (June 1940-February 1948), p. 217.
25. Minutes of the regular meeting of March 22, 1946, UHBMM/AUAH, Book No. 4. (June 1940-February 1948), p. 218.
26. Ibid.
27. Minutes of the regular meeting of April 12, 1946, UHBMM/AUAH, Book No. 4. (June 1940-February 1948), p. 221.
28. Minutes of the regular meeting of September 13, 1946, UHBMM/AUAH, Book No. 4. (June 1940-February 1948), p. 234.
29. Ibid.
30. Minutes of the regular meeting of December 27, 1946, UHBMM/AUAH, Book No. 4. (June 1940-February 1948), p. 246.

31. Minutes of the regular meeting of January 10, 1947, UHBMM/AUAH, Book No. 4. (June 1940-February 1948), p. 247.
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid.
35. Ibid.
36. Minutes of the regular meeting of January 24, 1947, UHBMM/AUAH, Book No. 4. (June 1940-February 1948), p. 248.
37. Ibid.
38. Ibid.
39. Ibid.
40. Ibid.
41. Minutes of the regular meeting of February 14, 1947, UHBMM/AUAH, No. 4. (June 1940-February 1948), p. 250.
42. Minutes of the regular meeting of December 12, 1947, UHBMM/AUAH, Book No. 4. (June 1940-February 1948), p. 290.
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44. Ibid.
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46. Betty Wilson, *To Teach this Art: The History of the Schools of Nursing at the University of Alberta 1924-1974* (Edmonton, AB: Hallamshire Publishers, 1977), p. 95 (from an interview with Miss Penhale in the mid-1970s).
47. Ibid.
48. Meeting of the Executive Committee of March 3, 1948, Executive Committee of the Board of Governors of the University of Alberta, AUA Acc. no. 71-164-10-12, p. 13.
49. Minutes of the regular meeting of May 13, 1949, UHBMM/AUAH, Book No. 5. (March 1948-April 1953), p. 63.
50. Ibid.
51. Ibid.
52. Minutes of the regular meeting of June 10, 1949, UHBMM/AUAH, Book No. 5. (March 1948-April 1953), p. 67.
53. Ibid.
54. Minutes of the regular meeting of June 27, 1949, UHBMM/AUAH, Book No. 5. (March 1948-April 1953), p. 71.
55. Ibid.
56. Ibid.
57. Ibid.
58. Ibid.

59. Ibid.
60. Letter from President Newton to Miss Helen Penhale, June 20, 1950, School of Nursing - General, AUA Acc. no. 68-1-1070, box 95.
61. Minutes of the regular meeting of February 23, 1951, UHBMM/AUAH, Book No. 5. (March 1948-April 1953), p. 153.
62. Ibid.
63. Minutes of the regular meeting of November 23, 1951, UHBMM/AUAH, Book No. 4. (March 1948-April 1953), p. 190.
64. Ibid.
65. Ibid.
66. Dr. Andrew Stewart had succeeded Dr. Robert Newton as President of the University of Alberta in 1950; see Walter H. Johns, *A History of the University of Alberta, 1908-1969* (Edmonton, AB: University of Alberta Press, 1981), p. 489.
67. Minutes of the regular meeting of March 28, 1952, UHBMM/AUAH, Book No. 5. (March 1948-April 1953), p. 213.
68. Dr. John Scott succeeded Dr. J. J. Ower as Dean of the Faculty of Medicine in 1948; see Elise A. Corbet, *A History of Medical Education and Research at the University of Alberta* (Edmonton, AB: University of Alberta Press, 1990), p. 198.
69. Ibid.
70. Minutes of the regular meeting of the Council of the School of Nursing, January 28, 1953, School of Nursing, AUA Acc. no. 68-1-1069, box 94.
71. Ibid.
72. Ibid.
73. Minutes of the special meeting of November 9, 1953, UHBMM/AUAH, Book No. 6. (May 1953-January 1958), p. 25.
74. Ibid.
75. Ibid.
76. Ibid.
77. Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting, November 24, 1953, Board of Governors and Executive Committee Minutes, AUA (January 1953-October 1954), p. 146.
78. Ibid.
79. Ibid.
80. Minutes of the regular meeting of December 18, 1953, UHBMM/AUAH, Book No. 6. (May 1953-January 1958), p. 33.
81. Ibid.
82. Ibid.
83. Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting, March 23, 1956, Board of Governors and Executive Committee Minutes, AUA, Acc. no. 71-164-13-15 (November 22, 1954-February 1, 1957).

84. Wilson, p. 171.
85. Angus McGugan. *The first fifty years. A history of the University of Alberta Hospital — 1914-1964* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Hospital, 1964), p. 37.
86. Ibid., p. 38.
87. Wilson, p. 171.
88. Ibid.
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90. Tony Cashman, *Heritage of Service: The History of Nursing in Alberta* (Edmonton: Commercial Printers, 1966), p. 305; Alberta Association of Registered Nurses, Minutes (Edmonton: The Association, October 25, 1941), p. 530.
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92. Rondalyn A. Kirkwood, "Discipline discrimination and gender discrimination: The case of nursing in Canadian universities, 1920-1950," *Atlantis* 16, no. 2 (1991):52; Julia L. Kinnear, "Disappointment in discourse: Women university professors at the University of Manitoba before 1970," *Historical Studies in Education* 4, no. 2 (1992):269.
93. Rondalyn Kirkwood and Jeanette Bouchard, *"Take counsel with one another" A Beginning History of the Canadian Association of University Schools of Nursing 1942-1992* (Kingston: Canadian Association of University Schools of Nursing, 1992), p. 13.
94. Ibid., pp. 36-38.
95. Susan L. Young, *Standards in diploma nursing education: The involvement of the University of Alberta, 1920-1970.* Unpublished Master's of Nursing thesis (Edmonton: University of Alberta, 1994) p. 222.
96. Janet C. Ross Kerr, *Financing University Nursing Education in Canada: 1919-1976.* Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1978), pp. 60-77.