

INTRODUCTION

The Faculty of Nursing, University of Toronto, welcomes the opportunity of sharing with the readers of this issue of *Nursing Papers* some of the curriculum changes recently effected in the basic baccalaureate program.

Nearly eight years ago a review of the teaching of nursing in this course was begun with revision in mind; very shortly, the inescapable conclusion was reached that tinkering with one or two subjects would only compound the existing difficulties. A new approach was needed and resulted in a new program. Now, in 1973, one class has completed the revised program and a second is nearing graduation.

Although the time chosen for the revision was fortuitous, it came at a juncture when nursing education in Ontario was under close scrutiny. *Proposals for the Future Pattern of Nursing Education in Ontario* had been published by the Ontario Department of Health in 1965. While this plan was primarily concerned with diploma education, there were implications for university schools directly related to expansion. There were, as well, other indirect implications related to curriculum change, foremost among which was the establishment of educational objectives which would clearly differentiate between the two levels of preparation.

The same year, on campus, a Presidential Advisory Committee on Undergraduate Instruction in the Faculty of Arts and Science was constituted. The recommendations of this Committee laid the foundation for a new program tantamount to a quiet revolution in Arts and Science. This intense examination of the curriculum of a major division, coinciding as it did with the desire for greater involvement on the part of students, gave an entirely new dimension and excitement to the process of teaching and learning.

No new approach to the curriculum could be considered without an acute awareness of those most closely involved, the students. A student comes to the program with a unique background of knowledge and experience, coupled in many instances with a spirit of adventure and a desire to give service. This individuality and concern for others on the part of the student forms a base for the course of study. It makes it possible to encourage students to use themselves significantly in order to grow. This assumption was valid only if it was accepted that the first-year student comes with a quite different base of knowledge and experience than did an incoming student a few years earlier. The great acceleration of social change with its accompanying implications for the individual in a post-industrial

society called for new approaches in health care. Graduates of the future would need different competencies than did their predecessors.

Since obsolescence of any set body of teaching would be almost immediate, a new approach must provide for flexibility, encourage thought, and be arranged by principles. The student must be assured of an educational base which would provide the knowledge and skills necessary to the understanding and management of the changing health-illness needs of the individual, family, and community. In addition, students would need opportunities to develop a variety of skills which would foster flexibility and independent learning as well as furthering independent analysis of concepts, theories, and principles.

The Committee considering curriculum change was cognizant of the foregoing events and considerations. Based on these factors and on explorations of curriculum changes in other settings, a series of statements, reports, and recommendations were presented to the entire staff for discussion. These formed the working documents from which the curriculum was developed. In spite of the general desire for more meaningful involvement in matters related to their learning, the students did not accept the invitation to join the Committee for nearly a year, after which time they became, and continue to be, active participants in curriculum planning.

The articles which follow are all related to the new curriculum. Jean Wilson provides an overview of the four years, while the contributions of Barbara Johnson and Nora Parker discuss specific key components reflecting the change in emphasis in the new program.

Kathleen King
Dean and Professor, Faculty of Nursing
University of Toronto