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Title of Submission:        UA College of Nursing Transformation Plan White Paper

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List of Current Units That will be Reorganized/Consolidated:

1) Consolidate two Associate Dean positions.
2) Transition administrative positions to .50% FTE in summer months.
3) Eliminate 3.5 FTE Staff positions through reorganization and consolidation.
Background: The College of Nursing continues to build on its 50-year history of excellence in nursing education and research through ongoing transformation to meet the needs of the state and nation. These changes have occurred within a healthcare context that has a significant shortage of professional nurses throughout the health care system, as well as a significant nursing faculty shortage.

In 2002, the Arizona State Legislature mandated that the College of Nursing double our enrollment of students in our undergraduate programs by 2007. This mandate was accomplished with an academic-community partnership with the Tucson healthcare community. The innovative partnership, which has become a national model, enabled us to design a second-degree accelerated baccalaureate program to increase Arizona’s workforce. Enrollment in the partnership and traditional undergraduate programs doubled in 2007, and we will double the annual number of BSN graduates by December 2008.

Transformation of the undergraduate programs continues. In 2009, the traditional undergraduate program will transition from a five-semester BSN program to a four-semester BSN program, resulting in a more rapid entry of our graduates into the clinical workforce.

The nursing shortage is exacerbated by a national faculty shortage that is also expected to increase over the next decade. The faculty shortage limits enrollments and decreases the number of nurse scientists who are prepared to conduct independent programs of research on biological mechanisms to prevent and treat disease, health promotion/risk reduction, and patient care management across the life span. Our PhD program, the first doctoral program in nursing west of the Mississippi River, has provided rigorous academic preparation since 1976. Greater access to this quality program was achieved by using state of the art technology to deliver the content. The transition began in 2002 with TRIF funds. The transformation of the PhD program has further enhanced the quality of the program and enabled us to increase enrollment to respond to the nurse scientist and faculty shortage. It continues as one of the premier programs in the country, and the number of graduates is now four times the national average of PhD graduates.

The College of Nursing has also been a leader in preparing nurses for advanced practice, with the nurse practitioner programs dating back to the 1970’s. Building on the successful transformation of the PhD program, we received federal funds in 2003 to transform the nurse practitioner (NP) specialties using state of the art technologies, to respond to the needs of underserved and rural communities and the shortage of primary care providers. Online delivery of our NP specialties, which include primary care, adult, psychiatric mental health, and acute care, has enhanced our capacity to deliver high quality advanced practice nursing education to students throughout the state and nation. Students have preceptor clinical experiences as close to their home communities as possible, thus we have been able to transform our preceptor program by hiring adjunct faculty to supervise students. We have continued transformation efforts with the NP programs by accepting the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) recommendation for the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) as preparation for the highest level of nursing
practice. In 2006 federal funds were obtained to implement the DNP program. In 2008, we admitted the last cohort of Master’s degree NP students, as all of the NP specialties will be offered through the DNP.

In summary the College of Nursing has been transforming all programs and services since 2002 by streamlining programs and building initiatives to increase enrollment and graduation rates, and to improve access to high quality education to graduate students throughout Arizona and the nation. These changes have been accomplished in spite of limited State funds and an acute faculty shortage.

**Process:** The College of Nursing was guided by the premise that our programs, which respond to the critical nursing workforce and faculty shortages facing Arizona and the nation, will continue as high quality entities to maintain our national ranking and accomplish our mission to the university and state.

Forums were held with faculty (five), appointed professionals (two), classified staff (two), and students (two). Everyone was encouraged to submit written proposals, describing the proposed change, rationale, and projected savings. A total of 30 written responses were obtained from faculty, appointed professional, staff, and students. In addition, all office administrators (Student Affairs, Business Office, Technology Support, Research Office, and Development Office) were asked to examine how services/practices might be streamlined to increase efficiency without decreasing faculty and student support. Also, conversations occurred with the Deans of Pharmacy and Public Health to discuss ways to increase collaboration. The Business Office heads in the three colleges also met to explore ways to increase efficiency and effectiveness of our services.

Our discussions led to a decision to eliminate two-post master’s certificate programs (informatics and rural health) due to very low enrollment in these programs. In addition 34 courses were eliminated from the academic catalogue due to very low enrollment over the past three years. Increased efficiency and productivity of staff in the Office of Student Affairs was noted as a result of implementation of automated system modules to manage operations, such as student application processing and scholarship allocation.

**Recommendation #1: Change the organizational structure.** The general consensus is that the organizational structure does not reflect changes that have occurred in the College of Nursing over the past decade. One major proposed change is to consolidate the functions of the two administrative associate deans (academic affairs and academic practice). A second proposed change is to realign faculty with the undergraduate and graduate programs, instead of the current practice and systems divisions, which are no longer reflect our programs and research strengths.

Reorganization of the administrative structure along undergraduate and graduate lines is expected to strengthen teaching in our programs, as faculty with similar expertise and interest will have greater opportunities to collaborate and solve common issues. This is expected to result in higher quality teaching and programmatic efforts to enable us to continue to rank in the top 10% of graduate programs in the country. If we consolidate the two associate dean responsibilities and reorganize along the two programmatic areas, strategies will need to be explored to facilitate a balanced coordination of programs, and stipends will be needed for faculty with additional responsibilities. It is anticipated that a Restructuring Committee will be appointed to develop the new organizational structure.

The decision to maintain the Associate Dean for Research and the Office of Research is considered critical to our goal in becoming a top ten school in research and scholarly funding. Expansion of services
in this office is needed to identify diverse sources of funding, to increase interdisciplinary research collaboration, and to implement strategies identified in the strategic plan to reward faculty for research and scholarly productivity.

The College of Nursing is actively recruiting for a permanent dean, with plans to fill the position by July 1, 2009. It is anticipated that the person will be selected early next semester, so that she/he will be able to participate in organizational restructuring.

**Recommendation #2: Decrease the FTE commitment of administrators to 50 % FTE in summer months.** This is not expected to have any effect on service. However, this change will enable faculty administrators with programs of research/scholarship to have additional time for their work. In conjunction with this recommendation, the College will also consider moving courses taught in the summer months to the academic calendar and transitioning all faculty on fiscal appointments without teaching responsibilities in the BSN partnership program during the summer months to academic appointments. Appropriate committees will be charged with reviewing our academic programs to consider faculty recommendations related to these programs.

**Recommendation #3: Eliminate a total of 3.5 staff positions.** The identified positions either do not provide services to directly support faculty and students, or other staff members can absorb the responsibilities currently assigned to these positions. Two (2.0 FTE) have recently been vacated within the Office of Development, and through reorganization, the responsibilities will be reallocated to the Business Office, Dean’s Office, and internally within the Development Office.

The other 1.5 FTE elimination will be achieved through internal reorganization, and potentially through consolidation of functions with other AHSC Colleges. We anticipate that through the application of new technology we will be able to achieve efficiencies that have not been fully realized. As technology improvements are implemented and assimilated, we expect additional opportunity to maximize efficiency and reduce staffing, where appropriate.

In summary, the College of Nursing will work to continue to provide outstanding undergraduate and graduate education to meet our State legislative mandate, maintain our accreditation and national rankings, and address the nursing workforce and faculty shortage. However, faculty salaries need to be more competitive to attract and retain faculty to teach in these programs. At the same time we must focus our efforts on maintaining and building resources and support for faculty programs for research to rank within the top 10 Colleges of Nursing.
Budget: Projected Savings

**Recommendation #1**
Consolidate two associate dean positions

$167,500

**Recommendation #1** may result in greater efficiency and less redundancy. On the down side, the programs may receive less administrative attention from faculty who also have teaching responsibilities and are conducting research.

**Recommendation #2**
Transition Administrative Positions to .50% FTE in summer months

$115,000

**Recommendation #2** will result in increased time for faculty research in the summer months if all courses are taught on an academic calendar. The assistant deans for Finance and Student Affairs will need flexibility to meet fiscal year and student responsibilities.

**Recommendation #3**
Eliminate 3.5 FTE Staff Positions through Reorganization and Consolidation

$200,900

**Recommendation #3** will not have any effect on teaching or research. However, the Development Office will need to streamline several ongoing development activities. Loss of positions will also result in increased responsibilities for other staff.

**Total budget impact on an annualized basis:**

$483,400