BCCC’s nursing programs earn reaccreditation

The associate’s degree and practical nursing programs at Beaufort County Community College have earned reaccreditation by the N. C. Board of Nursing, school officials announced this week. The reaccreditation was issued with “no recommendations,” meaning the nursing board found no shortcomings in the program that required immediate attention.

“BCCC is proud of its nursing school and particularly proud of the finding of ‘no recommendations’,” said Dean of Instruction Wesley Bedard in announcing the reaccreditation. “I want to congratulate Director of Nursing Laura Billey, Lead Practical Nursing Instructor Carolyn Lee and our nursing faculty on their diligent work throughout this process.”

A major focus of the five-year review by the N.C. Nursing Board is the school’s nursing curriculum. But the board also reviews other aspects of the college - from security to maintenance to library resources - as they affect the nursing school, according to Billey.

Education consultants from the nursing board review the school’s curriculum and test whether or not BCCC’s nursing program is doing what it says it is doing; that the school stays within the scope of nursing practice in its teaching and in its clinical work.

The reaccreditation process begins with the compilation of a Program Descriptive Report that details the entire nursing curriculum and the interaction of other campus departments with that curriculum. The report is followed by a two-day visit by the nursing board consultants.

“You learn the strengths of your program and areas where you might need some improvement,” Billey said. She and Lee headed the reaccreditation effort for the school’s associate degree and practical nursing programs.

One change that might be implemented as a result of discussions with nursing board consultants is the use of preceptorships for nursing students – students working one on one with a nurse for part of their clinical rotation, Billey said.

Billey said she was particularly pleased with the support the nursing school receives from the other departments on campus not only through the reaccreditation process but also throughout the year. This support, she said, was reflected in the nursing board’s review.

“They study showed our college to be very supportive of nursing,” she said. “Not all schools enjoy this degree of support.”

She also congratulated the nursing school faculty for their work throughout the review. “It’s really a testimony to our faculty that this went well,” she said. “They worked hard and were very positive throughout the entire process.”

This is the last time BCCC’s nursing school will undergo a five-year review of its program by the state nursing board. Under new accreditation procedures, the program will undergo a national review in eight years by the National League for Nursing.