

*NLNAC receives a number of questions by phone and email. The questions presented here are typical of those received.*

**Question** In working with other faculty members engaged in my program's Evaluation Committee, we noted that 6.5.3 of the Standards and Criteria for baccalaureate programs addresses both graduate and employer satisfaction. In the past, we only collected data from our graduates. Are we in compliance?

**Answer** You are correct that nursing programs are required to collect program satisfaction data from both graduates and employers. In addition, please note that the Criterion specifically mentions qualitative and quantitative measures. The expectation is that you will not only send the commonly used surveys following completion of the program, but will also utilize qualitative measures with your graduates and their employers to determine their satisfaction with the program of study and the competency of graduates as they enter nursing practice. In addition, let me remind you that Criterion 6.3 states that evaluation findings are shared with communities of interest. An example might be with your Advisory Council when you present results of assessment measures and seek their input as to improvements in the program. Do not forget that documentation is essential to demonstrating compliance with all Standards and Criteria, so keep detailed and complete minutes from meetings as well as organized reports of findings from all types of evaluations being used by faculty to assess program components and student learning. As you know, it is integral to the success of the program to actually use findings in faculty decision-making. And graduate

and employer satisfaction can provide timely and directed information about graduate performance — a key indicator of program quality.

**Question** Our college is planning a name change in the next few months as part of a restructure of the state system to increase student access. How do we ensure that NLNAC reflects our new name in their listing of accredited programs? Also, our nurse administrator is retiring. Should we notify NLNAC of the new person when hired?

**Answer** Name changes are quite common these days, particularly in states that are shifting the mission of two- and four-year higher education institutions. A name change and change of nurse administrator are considered substantive changes and must be reported in accordance with Policy #14. NLNAC will not change the name of your governing organization in program records until we receive official written notification accompanied by approval from the appropriate state regulatory agencies, as well as approval from your institutional accreditor. Once these documents are received and reviewed, the name will be changed in the NLNAC listing as well as in program records. Once the new nurse administrator has been secured, please be sure to send written notification along with a recent CV for the individual. The materials will be reviewed in accordance with the Accreditation Standards and Criteria as to the qualifications of the new administrator.

**Question** I am the nurse administrator at a new nursing program. Our first class of graduates will complete the program of study in December 2010. The faculty and I would like to complete the Self-

Study Report and host the onsite review in February or March 2011. If we complete the process at this time, will the first class of graduates be covered under the new accreditation?

**Answer** Congratulations on your new program and interest in seeking accreditation for all students! However, please note that accreditation is effective as of the accreditation cycle in which the visit took place *and is not retroactive*. If you have a visit during the spring 2011 cycle, your accreditation will be effective as of that date; graduates who complete the program in 2010 will not be graduates of an accredited program. If you wish for all graduates to be considered from an accredited program, you should work closely with your mentor from the NLNAC professional staff in the candidacy process to ensure that your onsite visit occurs during the academic term in which the first group of graduates completes the program. If you have constructed a strategic plan and allowed sufficient time to complete the self-study process, you should be able to plan your visit to coincide with the first group of graduates. Unfortunately, a number of programs decide too late that they wish to seek accreditation, and they are unable to do so in a timely manner to capture all program graduates. We encourage new programs to engage in dialogue with us very early in the process of program development to ensure that the program will be in compliance with the Accreditation Standards and Criteria. More than 40 programs sought initial accreditation in the last academic year; the majority of newly established programs of all types were successful in timing the achievement of initial accreditation with their first group of graduates. 