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Report to the Education and General Committees of the
Northern District School of Nursing on matters affecting the
Staffing and Administration of the School of Nursing.

11.2.1963

The following facts and comments are submitted for the information and consideration of the Committee.

Apart from the senior administrative staff (Miss Long, Miss Turner, Miss Scott) at the present time five tutors are employed, one of whom will be leaving within a few months.

Viz:-	Sister W.H. Stock	-	Sister Tutor Diploma
	Sister W.I. Donohoe		" " "
	Sister V.M. Bannfield-Smith		" " "
	Sister J. Edgar	-	Assistant unqualified tutor who completed training 15.4.61. Miss Edgar has given assistance with P.T.S. during 1961 & 1962 but for family reasons has had extended leave periods between schools. Her resignation has been submitted for June '63.
	Sister L.G. Pinch (nee Chant)		Completed training 25.2.62. Commenced duty January 1963 and will take over Sister Edgars duties when she leaves. Her employment is of a temporary nature.

Sister Scott - Assistant Dean - Education, is responsible for the educational programme and her duties include:-

- (a) Contacting lecturers and arranging time tables.
- (b) Advising and supervising the tutorial staff.
- (c) Teaching duties - usually for Final State and Staff Nurse students but also for some First, Second and Third year subjects as the occasion arises.
- (d) Examining students in Practical Nursing.
- (e) Checking and reviewing test and examination papers.
- (f) Preparing reports on student nurses
- (g) Interviewing nurses
- (h) Attending meetings and conferences.

Much time is spent in answering queries (from hospital or other sources) on teaching and educational matters or in general discussion with the tutors on day to day problems which may arise.

Sister Turners duties are mainly Administrative - and are those associated with the general maintenance of Lister House and hostels, records (which are considerable), general correspondence, as well as the supervision of the students health programme. Sister Turner does give lectures to P.T.S., First, Second and Third year nurses - but the number is small and is not a major part of her activities.

The existing staff situation is most unsatisfactory and will become even more so with the anticipated future commitments of the School in respect of the training programme.

Factors which cause the tutorial staff to express dissatisfaction are:-

- (1) The office and classroom accommodation and facilities.
Viz:- cramped facilities, lack of privacy, small classrooms and the necessity for fitting students into all available space.
- (2) The general lack of space - for library and study purposes, storing equipment, office records etc.
- (3) The necessity for putting all students through the same cramped curriculum.

(4) The frustration of "pushing" girls through examinations and the lack of opportunity for real learning.

(5) The constant pressure and repetitive nature of their teaching programme.

(6) The lack of follow through and contact with nurses when they leave the school and go into hospital duty.

(Although it is the policy of the School to send tutors into the hospitals, pressure of work has rarely allowed opportunities for them to go.)

(7) Senior qualified tutors feel they have little opportunity for using their initiative and training.

(8) Junior assistants would like more guidance from the senior staff and instruction in teaching methods.

Some of the factors which cause the Administrative staff concern are:-

1. The difficulties of giving adequate supervision to all aspects of the training programme.
2. The variable abilities and capacities of the tutorial staff.
This leads to:-
 - (a) uneven distribution of the work load (even amongst the qualified tutors.)
 - (b) wide variations in the standards of teaching.
 - (c) difficulties in respect of examination marking, compilation of tests etc.
 - (d) personality difficulties and friction between staff members.

Owing to the shortage of tutors it has often proved necessary to "take a pair of hands" - and on occasions unsuitable staff have been persuaded to remain.

If the School is to fulfil its function this state of affairs must cease.

In 1963 - the School will be responsible for more detailed supervision of the students training programme - and the work load on the Administrative staff should be re-assessed and distributed more effectively. The delegation of duties will be possible only if sufficient staff are employed - both in quantity and quality.

In the general hospital field "Qualified Tutors" are usually appointed to "Charge" positions. In the School - Qualified Tutors are often classed as assistants. Some of these Sisters have many years of senior experience and are quite capable of taking charge of large teaching departments. (Anomalies arise in that where unqualified tutors are in charge of hospital teaching departments, their status and salary may be superior to Qualified tutors who are employed in the School as Assistant tutors.)

In my opinion the School would be better served by the employment of suitably Qualified tutors who are given the status of "Charge" sisters and who are capable of assuming the duties and responsibilities of such a position - and who could release the Administrative staff for dealing with matters affecting policy and the general educational programme.

In the circumstances I would like the Committee to give some consideration to the following suggestions - or alternatively produce other recommendations with a view to overcoming the "crisis" in the teaching position.

1. Appoint a tutor in charge of:-
 - a. Preliminary Training School
 - b. First Year students
 - c. Second Year students
 - d. Third Year students

2. Appoint 3 Assistant tutors

These positions to be advertised. Salary to be commensurate with the status and responsibility of the tutor and should be sufficiently attractive to tempt senior qualified people to apply.

The possession of a teaching diploma should not be the sole consideration. Given intelligence and the right personality for the job, most Sisters can be trained in teaching methods.

Trained interviewers should assess the applicant before any appointment is made.

The present supply and demand may preclude adequate selection - but I personally feel it would be better to reduce the Schools' activities than appoint unsuitable people.

The tutors at present employed should be given the opportunity of applying for the Charge positions - but application should not be synonymous with appointment.

The tutors in charge of each group to be responsible for the detailed management and administration of each group in accordance with the rulings of the Education Committee and the direction of the Dean or her Deputy.

To include such things as:-

1. Making appointments with lecturers for the number and type of lecture as laid down by the Education Committee.
All appointments to be confirmed in writing under the hand of the Dean or Assistant Dean - Education. Lists to be submitted by the Tutor to the Secretary for the payment of fees.
2. Discussion of the lecture programme with Doctors and attendance at all lectures given by visiting lecturers. If this is not possible - arrangements to be made for an assistant to be in attendance.
3. Ensuring that the classroom and all equipment are kept in good order and condition and that articles required by a lecturer are left in readiness e.g. screen, projector, charts, instruments etc.
(Report anything which needs repair or replacement).
It is the responsibility of the tutor in charge to see that a lecturer is given attention and service.
4. Maintenance of class discipline (includes general behaviour and conduct, wearing of uniform, checking of study periods to see that they are used for this purpose, general tidiness of classroom etc.)
5. The preparation of time-tables and the arrangement of the lecture programme for each group.
6. Keeping all records required in respect of:-
The number of lectures given - and by whom.
The subject of each lecture - in sufficient detail for clarity.
The students attendance.
Any other information such as sick or special leave.
Marking and filling in the students procedure books and the proposed training charts.
All other class records.
7. The setting and correction of test and examination papers in accordance with the recommendations of the Education Committee.
8. Observing vigilance in respect of a students well-being and reporting cases of illness to Sister Turner.

9. Reporting any class difficulties to Sister Scott.
10. Interviewing and guiding students in their studies.
11. Preparing written reports on each student in the last week of the study block for submission to Sister Scott.
12. Assisting untrained and junior assistant tutors in the presentation of their work - and as far as possible instructing them in methods of teaching.
13. Covering all theory and practice of nursing lectures in accordance with the standards laid down by the Education Committee.
14. Making such other arrangements as may be necessary for the successful administration and good conduct of the study block.
15. Keeping the Administrative staff informed of all matters concerning the administration of the group.
16. Attendance at Nursing Conferences and meetings, and refresher courses. (To avoid abuse of privileges a maximum expense account to be determined by the School Committee.)
17. Submitting a written report to the Education Committee once every three months - and reporting verbally to the Education Committee at least once each year.
18. Visiting the hospitals between study blocks for the express purpose of:-
 - (a) following up students from their "group".
 - (b) observing nurses at work in the wards and where advisable and practicable assisting in ward teaching.
 - (c) discussing students progress with the hospital staff.
 - (d) correlating school and hospital tuition.

Depending upon the length of each block and allowing for time spent in preparing lecture programmes, finalising appointments, correcting papers etc. it should be possible for each Charge Sister to spend a minimum of 10 weeks in each year visiting hospitals in the region - subject of course to the maintenance of full staffing requirements, sick leave etc.

The School to be responsible for travelling expenses between the School and the Hospitals. - It is envisaged that the tutors will be accommodated by the hospitals (outside Bendigo) at current award rates for board and residence.

Assistant tutors

As several study blocks may be in session at the one time

e.g. in February 1963 - P.T.S.)
 First Year Block)
 Final Revision Block)

the tutor in charge of each group will need an assistant tutor to help her with the supervision and management of the class - and in particular for "practice of nursing" which forms the bulk of the nursing lecture programme. In these classes students set trays and trolleys under the supervision of the tutor, then describe the procedure and discuss all associated facts - such as drugs given and their effect, signs of complications etc. This is arduous and time consuming but the most effective method of covering technical nursing procedures.

The tutor in Charge should delegate duties to her assistant and generally guide and assist her in her work.

Sister Scott Responsible to the Dean and the Education Committee for the Supervision and control of the tutorial staff and the educational programme.

To include:-

1. The administration and control of the Staff Nurse Training Course with the assistance of a junior tutor.
2. The conduct of the Revision Block with the assistance of the Third Year "Charge" sister.
3. Making arrangements for State Examinations.
4. Examining students in Practical Nursing at the end of the study blocks.
5. Interviewing students on all educational matters and preparing reports for submission to the Hospitals and the Victorian Nursing Council as required.
6. The checking of examination papers - both the setting and correction thereof.
7. The perusal and approval of typed notes before their distribution to students.
8. Investigating and reporting on the practical experience nurses receive in the hospitals and the value of the school tutors visits to hospitals.
9. Bringing defaults in the teaching programme to the notice of the Dean and the Education Committee - as well as difficulties in respect of non-co-operation of the teaching staff.

Education Committee

As part of the Schools responsibility for the administration of the Nurse training programme within this region there is an immediate need for the Education Committee to lay down rules relating to:-

1. The subjects to be included in the curriculum

- (a) to be taught in the School
- (b) to be taught in the Hospitals between "study blocks".

For various reasons the previous recommendations have not always been implemented.

Some factors which have caused breakdown are:-

Changes in staff - both in the School and the Hospitals.
lack of supervision " " " " " "
lack of staff and lecturers " " " " "

2. The syllabus of lectures - i.e. the number of hours to be allotted to each subject.

Some direction will also need to be given as to the method and form of tuition.

Whilst it is recognized that each tutor must be given the opportunity of developing her own ideas and teaching prowess - under the existing pattern of training it must be clearly laid down "how much" work should be covered in each block. Because of the divergences of opinion between tutors and also between lecturers this lack of agreement sometimes leads to gaps in the programme.

Over the years the original syllabus has been reviewed (often to fit in with the availability of lecturers) and at the present time the whole pattern of teaching needs to be reviewed and redefined.

3. The number and the type of examinations to be held in each study block

This is a controversial question and one open to much discussion. There is a tendency to place too much accent on examinations but unfortunately this remains the chief method of assessing a students ability. State Examinations conducted at the end of the First and Third year of training are largely "written" examinations - with many questions which require the essay type answer.

The previous recommendations by the School Committee in respect of these matters are long overdue for review.

4. The setting and the correction of examination papers.

This is a constant headache. The previous recommendations were intended to overcome some of the difficulties relating to Doctors papers but the situation is still very unsatisfactory. The Chief problem is that of the "standard" required. This varies considerably between lecturers and is a constant source of worry and friction between tutor and tutor, and tutor and lecturer.

5. Practical experience in hospital.

The Nursing Council has commented on the unplanned nature of students practical nursing experience. This is frequently dictated by the service needs of the hospital and has little relationship to educational requirements.

The Nursing Administrative staffs of the associated hospitals are responsible for rostering their nurses for ward duty - but the Council has inferred that the School as the training authority should give guidance in this matter.

It has clearly laid down that the School will direct the Base Hospitals as to the practical experience required and length of time to be spent in each department by students transferring from the district hospitals.

This will require considerable thought and will need to be assessed in the light of the practical experience, supervision and teaching which is available within the associated hospitals.

6. Records of hospital lectures, practical teaching and supervision.

The existing Nursing Council Procedure book does not adequately cover this aspect of training.

A "training chart" (temporary terminology) will need to be prepared by the School so that satisfactory evidence in respect of the foregoing can be produced.

With regard to lectures:

Much valuable study block time is taken up by revising material which is ostensibly learnt in hospital. The School teaching load would be reduced if some guarantee could be obtained that nurses have received certain specific instruction before entry to study blocks. This will need to be carefully policed to ensure that students receive equal opportunity for learning.

Hospital tutors often complain about the "lack of interest" nurses exhibit in respect of lectures and school tutors complain that nurses have not covered the background work. Inevitably students tend to "play off" one against the other.

As I see it, without the employment of suitable tutorial staff and the general re-organization of the teaching programme it will not be possible for the School to produce satisfactory results - nor fulfil its statutory obligations.

The Committees attention is drawn to the urgency of these problems.

N.W.LONG
Dean