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A STRATEGIC PLAN AND FEASIBILITY STUDY TO EXPAND THE
B.SC. NURSING PROGRAMME TO OFFER A DIPLOMA IN NURSING AT
THE OPEN UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA

By

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REFERENCE ONLY

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Sri Lanka is faced with an acute shortage of nurses in the public and private sector, and trends and the increasing demands in health care make it imperative to open more viable and standardized opportunities for persons to enter into the profession of nursing and be better prepared to meet the present and future challenges in Sri Lanka.

Currently the Department of Health Sciences at The Open University offers a Bachelor of Science Degree in Nursing to Post Registered Nurses. The Government, Ministry of Tertiary Education and Training, the University Grants Commission and The Ministry of Health, Nutrition and Social Welfare have requested the Department of Health Sciences at The Open university of Sri Lanka to expand the programme to offer a Diploma in Nursing. Therefore, to meet the human resource need of increasing the country's need for quality qualified nurses in the health care sector in Sri Lanka, a feasibility study is carried out and strategic plan devised that demonstrates reliable, sustainable supports and resources (both input and output¹ resources) and the practicality of operating a high quality Diploma programme in Nursing.

The objectives and expectations of the proposed programme was explored through a macro analysis that included first, an introduction to The Open University of Sri Lanka, and to the existing Bachelor of Science in Nursing Degree Programme, a presentation of the Vision, Mission, and Strategic Objectives of the Department of Health Sciences. Further the analysis included a competitive profile matrix and internal and external factor analysis, five forces model of competition, threats, opportunities, weaknesses, and strengths (TOWS Matrix), strategies to achieve objectives, and a space matrix.

Poters Five Forces Model revealed that there was a need to craft a strategic plan to insulate the department at the university from competitive forces, and draft rules that would place added pressure on rivals. Other analysis revealed that there was a need to introduce an effective and up to date management information system and invest in developing relationships with governmental and non-governmental organizations, national and international universities, and health care organizations worldwide. Further

¹Input resources include such things as potential students and faculty; output resources include placement/employment demand for the "product" of the degree program, as well as less tangible reasons for providing the degree.

the analysis revealed the need to invest in aggressive campaigns to obtain commitment for a multi dimensional approach to learning, such as the opportunity for students to obtain practicum experiences in public and private hospitals, and in the community. The need to invest in research and development to innovate methodologies of creating a learning environment for students was also identified. In addition, the need was also identified to devise mechanisms to guarantee support and recognition for the nurses from the public, Government, and the respective Ministries regulatory bodies and the health care institutions in the private and public sector, nationally and internationally. Moreover, the analysis revealed the need for a transparent and effective management of working capital. Cost programme according to current market contexts, and budget accordingly for capacity and infrastructure development and programme development. In addition the need was identified to invest in innovative methods to staff recruitment and retention.

Towards this a strategic plan is devised and presented that includes the mission of the programme followed by key features of the programme, structure, target market, tentative curriculum, including the mode of assessments, strategy for practicum exposure, and infrastructure development required including the development of an education/clinical laboratory. Moreover, the section covers the human resources required, the operational model, organization, the revenue model, a market analysis. Further, the section of the paper addresses the implementation of the programme which covers, start up, knowledge building, and service partnering, marketing, management, human resources, budget, and action plan and the development and growth.

This report is concluded with a reflection in the personal, technical, project and interpersonal skills utilized in the project, and the skills required in the implementation of the project through lessons on leadership learned from Stephen Covey.