

ASN Program Philosophy

The philosophy of the nursing programs evolves from a **long-standing history of successfully educating nurses** and a commitment to the college mission and values.

Nursing, an evolving art and science, respects **diversity of ideas, cultures and people**. The nursing faculty strive to educate and actively engage students to:

- provide and manage holistic care,
- advocate for the well-being of persons
- uphold professional standards and
- serve as **leaders and change agents**

in a variety of **dynamic healthcare environments**.

The mission of the nursing programs is to prepare nurses who positively impact society. The faculty believes this is best accomplished by providing future professionals with a learning environment modeled by scholarly educators who are professional, competent, and service-oriented. The educational environment must foster quality in scholarship and promote accountability, professionalism, and service-orientation.

The philosophy is eclectic by design. An eclectic philosophy recognizes the contributions from nursing as well as general education theorists. The philosophy enhances and forms the basis of the organizational framework for the curriculum and the teaching/learning methods utilized by faculty for student learning.

The philosophy of the program includes five broad concepts central to the practice of nursing. The concepts include:

- Holistic Nursing
- Client
- Health
- Environment
- Education

Holistic Nursing

Holistic nursing is an applied science, utilizing the knowledge and skills attained in the disciplines of natural and social sciences, humanities, mathematics, arts, and nursing courses. As both an art and an emerging scientific discipline, nursing uses communication, technology, critical thinking, values, research, and leadership in the assessment and implementation of quality care across the lifespan. By utilizing critical thinking and decision-making, nursing formulates a plan of care to assist the client in maintaining a state of optimal well-being. Nursing focuses on a caring practice to assist, support, or delegate the actions of others, as appropriate, in order to promote wellness, prevent illness, or help the client face limitations or death. The faculty believes in preparing nurses to be competent professionals, practicing in a legal and ethical manner in a variety of professional roles. Utilizing effective communication techniques and caring principles, nursing practice encompasses both independent interventions and collaboration with other health care providers.

Client

Client is an individual with biophysical, psychosocial, cultural, and spiritual components. Continual change results when the client, a dynamic entity, interacts with others and the environment. The client possesses the freedom to think, to choose, and to act. The client is influenced by internal and external factors that affect optimal health. Nursing recognizes the significance of relationships within families, groups, and communities as these relationships can both alter and support health status. An individual becomes a client when served by the health care provider.

Health

Health is a dynamic phenomenon defined by the client's perceptions of his or her holistic well-being or optimal system functioning. Disruption in health is caused by imbalances of any internal or external subsystem. The faculty view health on a continuum with varying degrees of well-being and diminished health. Optimal health is achieved through interaction with the health care system. Nurses can function at any point on the continuum with the primary focus of nursing care being health promotion and health maintenance.

Environment

Environment includes all internal and external dimensions that affect the dynamic relationships of a client. The health care delivery system is affected by the environment. The environment is constantly changing, and the nurse must be goal-directed to provide an environment conducive to the client's optimal health. Throughout the nursing program, students will be exposed to a variety of health care environments and will incorporate the impact of these environments into their work and nursing care.

Education

Education is a lifelong process for both the nurse and the client. Nursing Education should include general and scientific knowledge to prepare the nurse with a foundation for service and practice today and in the future. Education should be individualized, taking into account cultural diversity, health beliefs, and individual learning styles. Through education, the learner develops the skills of critical thinking, independent and collaborative decision-making, communication, value formation, and cultural sensitivity. Effective learning is optimized through educational principles which incorporate and respect the learner's values, health beliefs, life experience, and previous knowledge. Learning is cultivated by a commitment to personal and professional development through inquiry, self-motivation, and respect for the uniqueness of individuals.

In providing the community with competent beginning nurse professionals The faculty believes an associate degree nurse is a nursing generalist who is prepared to successfully take the National Council State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) Licensure Examination (NCLEX-RN). The associate degree nurse is accountable, adaptable, and capable of functioning as a Registered Nurse in a variety of settings.

ORGANIZATIONAL FRAMEWORK

The organizational framework of the associate degree of science in nursing program is derived from the philosophy. The framework supports the vision, mission and values of the college which include quality, integrity, caring and knowledge. The framework provides rationale for curriculum decision-making and organizes learning in a logical, sequential manner. The curriculum is designed to prepare graduates to become competent beginning nurse professionals. The curriculum promotes the value of education, formally and informally, preparing graduates for life-long learning.

The curriculum recognizes the dynamic changes in health care, which are affected by an aging population, high acuity, client demographics, cultural diversity, technological advances and health care trends. The flow of the nursing curriculum is designed to meet the demands of change and to promote learning.

The organizational framework is based on an eclectic philosophy. An eclectic philosophy is one that draws knowledge and assumptions from nursing as well as general education theorists. It will assist to augment and form the basis of the organizational framework for the curriculum and the teaching/ learning methods utilized by faculty for student learning.

The curriculum is planned to provide learning experiences in the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. Throughout the curriculum, the study of nursing is coupled with the study of liberal arts, sciences, and humanities to enhance student knowledge and understanding of the client as a holistic being and the environment in which the client functions. General education, nursing concepts and sub-concepts are developed, supported, and expanded as the learner progresses through the curriculum. The curriculum centers on the nurse using the nursing process to assist the client across the lifespan of any level of health, to achieve fulfillment of physiological, psychosocial and spiritual needs.

The organizational framework illustrates the articulation of the philosophy of nursing concepts (Holistic Nursing, Client, Health, Environment and Education), and sub-concepts (Legal and Ethical Behaviors, Interdisciplinary Approach, Nursing Process, Teaching/Learning, Communication, and Safe and Caring Interventions). The concepts and sub-concepts are integrated throughout the curriculum via the attainment of course by course competencies which lead to the assimilation of program student learning outcomes. This formative and summative developmental process provides the basis for the organizational framework in the study of nursing (Billings & Halstead, 2009).

Legal and Ethical Behaviors

Legal and ethical behaviors are activities and processes that demonstrate professional practice including knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, and norms which promote accountability for individual actions and behaviors.

Nurses practice within the ethical, legal, and regulatory frameworks of nursing and contemporary professional practice standards. Students learn that nursing standards provide legal/ethical guidelines for effective nursing care. Faculty assist the student to recognize the relevance of legal and ethical implications within a variety of individual, client, and professional situations.

The nursing curriculum provides students with opportunities to become responsible, self-directed individuals prepared to make contributions as members of the nursing profession and healthcare

community. Legal and ethical behaviors such as prioritization, delegation, safe care delivery, accountability, and responsibility are integrated and expanded into performance expectations, as described in course by course competencies. The faculty assist the learner to develop increased responsibility for his/her own learning and to incorporate behaviors consistent with a commitment to life-long learning.

Interdisciplinary Approach

Interdisciplinary approach is a collaboration of human, physical, financial, and technological resources to promote optimal client and organizational outcomes.

Nurses are expected to collaborate with physicians, other healthcare team members, peers, community agencies, clients and family members. Collaboration requires the team to focus on client needs, basing the coordination and decision-making process on client preferences and the availability of services and resources. Students learn that nurses can play a key and lead role in the promotion of an interdisciplinary team approach, which enhances holistic, client- centered care in a variety of healthcare environments.

Early curriculum content introduces interdisciplinary approach principles. Further opportunities exist throughout the nursing program to apply theory to practice across a variety of healthcare settings. Care management, not only includes an understanding of client-focused social, economic and environmental changes, but, additionally, includes continuity of care perspectives to enhance and optimize client well-being.

Nursing Process

The Nursing Process is a systematic, problem solving approach used as a framework to deliver nursing care and influence client outcomes.

It is important for nurses to be effective in problem-solving approaches for clinical decision-making to achieve optimal client-centered outcomes. The quality of client care is dependent on the ability of the associate degree nurse to effectively combine a problem-solving approach with the nursing process in order to formulate plans of care which result in appropriate decision making, or critical thinking judgments. Systematic problem-solving approaches and the nursing process are taught early in the curriculum, strengthened, and refined by continuous and repeated application in various class/clinical settings, involving varied client populations across the lifespan.

Teaching/Learning

Teaching/Learning incorporates cultural diversity, health beliefs, and learning styles that impart knowledge or skills to promote health.

Early in the curriculum, teaching methods and learning principles are introduced. Students are expected to focus on teaching principles related to client/family learning. Students learn to apply teaching/learning principles among diverse populations in a variety of settings.

Communication

Communication is the dynamic process of exchanging information through verbal, non-verbal, written, and electronic modes.

Effective communication is essential to promote positive interactions and outcomes. Initial nursing courses emphasize respectful nurse-client interactions, working with colleagues, and basic therapeutic communication skills. Succeeding courses continue to focus on communication skills and nurse interaction with individuals, families, groups of clients and the health care team in a variety of settings.

Safe and Caring interventions

Safe and caring interventions are behaviors derived from the knowledge and understanding of scientific principles, nursing theory, and evidence-based practice/research that address the physiologic, psychosocial, and spiritual needs of the client/family.

The beginning nursing student learns basic client care skills and service which are technical in nature. Technical nursing skills gradually increase in complexity from the beginning of the program to the completion of the curriculum. Interventions include the demonstration of caring, quality, and safe client-centered measures.

References:

Billings, D.M., & Halstead, J.A. (2009). Teaching in nursing: A guide for faculty (3rd ed.). St. Louis: Elsevier Saunders.

National League for Nursing, (NLN). (2010). Educational competencies for graduates of associate degree nursing programs. Sudbury, MA: Jones and Bartlett.

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