

DEPARTMENT OF NURSING PHILOSOPHY

In keeping with the Mission the faculty of the Department of Nursing grounded the curriculum using the nursing metaparadigm of person, environment, health, and nursing. In addition, learning and nursing education are included to form the basis for the department's philosophy.

Person

Each person is a unique creation of God endowed with dignity and self-worth. The person or client possesses physiological, psychological, sociocultural, developmental, and spiritual needs which are met in varying degrees through interactions with God, other persons, and the environment. Clients - whether they are individuals, families, aggregates or communities - provide the means for human relationships and interactions, which take place in diverse ways depending on context and environment. During an individual's life span, each person develops a personal system of values which give meaning and purpose to life.

Environment

The environment is composed of all factors, whether internal or external to the person (client), that influence the development and functioning of that person. Each person lives within and interacts with an ever-changing environment. The environment can be altered to positively or negatively affect the client's (i.e., individuals, families, aggregates and communities) health by modifying stressors and enhancing resources. The person is influenced by and responsive to the environment and can choose to alter their internal and external environments to impact their health and quality of life.

Health

Health is viewed as a dynamic state of being. Persons adapt to developmental and environmental changes over the life span. Meanwhile, developmental forces allow growth that enables the person to adapt and maximize potential. Health is evidenced in effective functioning within one's environment; illness occurs when there is a breakdown in the ability to deal with the environment whether due to physical (physiologic), psychological, social or spiritual variables. Wellness is defined as functioning at one's best, given the limitations of one's abilities and environment. Health care promotes, maintains, and restores the person to an optimal level of wellness on the health continuum. Health care is delivered in a variety of settings by an interdisciplinary team. Holistic care is the perspective which views each person as an organized whole and delivers care based on the integrated needs of the individual person. Each person has a claim to quality health care, delivered with respect for the individual and respect for differences among individuals.

Nursing

Nursing is an art, a science, and a profession. Historically, nursing as an art has been shaped by its Christian heritage. Nursing may be viewed as a personal calling, by which one fulfills service to others. Nursing as a science encompasses a specialized body of

knowledge built upon science and the liberal arts and has specified outcomes related to health and holism. Nursing science involves the study of life processes within the human system and environment for the purpose of assisting clients in the promotion, maintenance and restoration of optimal levels of wellness. Clients include individuals, families, communities, and/or societies.

Nursing as a practice profession is actualized through the nursing process, a decision making framework consisting of assessment, diagnosis, planning, implementation, and evaluation. Nursing as a profession is committed to the promotion of wellness of individuals, families and communities. The commitment to wellness extends beyond direct care to include research, planning and implementation of comprehensive health care services, and collaboration with other health professionals within a framework that respects the rights and dignities of all persons.

Learning

Learning is an active, interactive, goal-directed process which proceeds from the simple to the complex. Learners are endowed with intellect and free will, and are capable of self-direction and self-assurance. Learning is a continuous, lifelong process and results in the acquisition of new insights and behavioral changes. The amount of learning achieved is influenced by the learner's value system, experiences, knowledge, and active participation. Learning is enhanced in a Christian humanistic environment which fosters growth of ideas and appreciates human diversity in an open forum in which students freely and critically evaluate, raise questions, and formulate responses.

Nursing Education

Baccalaureate nursing education provides the foundation for professional nursing practice. Serving as role models, the faculty structure a variety of learning experiences which help learners engage in critical thinking, integrate knowledge, and acquire psychomotor skills necessary for the profession of nursing. The educational process within a Christian community enables the learner to develop professional competence marked by a respect for human dignity and an appreciation for diversity within the context of social responsibility. The undergraduate program prepares the graduate to function as a generalist in a variety of settings and provides the foundation for graduate education and advanced practice in nursing.

In accordance with the Mission of the College, the faculty are committed to promoting a life of intellectual vigor, aesthetic appreciation, religious sensibility and social responsibility for its student and community. These values and beliefs, coupled with standards for nursing practice and education, provide the basis for the curriculum in nursing.

Responsiveness to Professional Nursing Standards

In addition to commitment to the Mission of the College, the curriculum of the Department of Nursing at Saint Mary's College was developed to be congruent with the *AACN Essentials of Baccalaureate Nursing* (1998) and the *ANA Scope and Standards of Nursing Practice* (2003). Standards for practice are viewed as integral to the professional practice of nursing and fundamental to performing as a leader in the profession.

Students are introduced to the *ANA Standards of Nursing Practice* and to the *Nursing Code of Ethics* in their first nursing course. As students progress through the curriculum, these standards are reinforced in both theory and clinical courses. In addition, faculty reinforce self-reflection and self-assessment in relation to nursing practice standards through a variety of teaching methods. Evidence for incorporation of ANA Standards is demonstrated in course syllabi, lecture outlines and assignments. Clinical objectives and expectations are demonstrated in the evaluation of their clinical performance and reflect the ANA standards as well.

The foundational components of the *AACN Essentials for Baccalaureate Nursing* (1998) are incorporated throughout the curriculum. The components provide students a structure in which they acquire the knowledge base needed to function as a professional provider of care. In addition, the Catholic character of Saint Mary's College allows for ready incorporation of many of the values and professional behaviors cited as essential. Finally, the liberal arts nature of the College provides each student the opportunity for an education that includes mastery of the skills cited by the AACN as characteristic of the liberally educated person.

DEPARTMENT OF NURSING PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The Program Objectives of the SMC nursing program clearly demonstrate that the AACN essential components including core competencies and knowledge, professional values, and role development have been incorporated into the nursing curriculum at Saint Mary's College. Further evidence is available in course syllabi and is demonstrated in classroom and clinical activities. Program objectives for the nursing program were developed and approved by the faculty in 1991. In 1997 and 1998, the objectives were reviewed, revised and adopted to reflect a commitment to the Mission of Saint Mary's College, the Mission of the Department of Nursing, and professional nursing standards. The program objectives are published in the College Bulletin, *Department of Nursing Student Handbook*, the *Department of Nursing Faculty Handbook* on departmental web site and in each course syllabi.

By the completion of the nursing curriculum at SMC, graduates are expected to successfully demonstrate competence within the four domains which include the Professional Domain, Aesthetic Nature, Critical Thinking, and Communication. By the end of the nursing program at Saint Mary's College, graduates will:

Professional Domain

1. Develop a foundation for professional practice.
2. Use the nursing process in delivery of care to individuals, families and/or communities.
3. Assume responsibility for self-directed learning to promote professional and personal growth.
4. Perform psychomotor skills in complex client situations.
5. Demonstrate leadership skills in performing nursing activities.

6. Apply teaching/learning principles to the nursing care of clients and families.

Critical Thinking

7. Draw and document inferences based on observations of clinical patterns and relationships.
8. Employ scientific principles and theories from nursing in planning and providing nursing care.
9. Incorporate relevant research findings into plans of care.
10. Identify research problems and issues in clinical nursing practice.

Communication

11. Apply therapeutic communication principles in the delivery of nursing care.
12. Evaluate the effectiveness of communication techniques to facilitate professional interactions.
13. Communicate effectively as a member of the health care team to facilitate quality care delivery.

Aesthetic Nature

14. Integrate a personal framework of beliefs and values in delivery of nursing care.
15. Analyze conflicting values and beliefs in decision-making situations.
16. Assess spiritual well-being of clients and families.
17. Incorporate beliefs and values of clients and families in delivery of nursing care.