MU Department of Nursing

Philosophy

The Department of Nursing, situated within the School of Science and Mathematics, is an integral part of Millersville University of Pennsylvania. As such, it is in concert with mission statement of the University in the provision of undergraduate and graduate programs in nursing that achieve the highest standards of liberal arts education.

The MU Department of Nursing faculty embrace nursing as a professional discipline with both academic and practice dimensions. The unique body of nursing knowledge is derived from the humanities, physical, biological, psychological, social sciences, and nursing science.

As a practice profession, nursing is considered integral to healthcare delivery, providing both direct and indirect care to individuals, families, and community at local, state, national and global settings. Nursing practice is guided by theory and continually improved based on evidence. The practice of nursing focuses on holistic, relationship-centered care that facilitates health and healing. Nursing is committed to ensuring quality health care. Professional nurses engage in advocacy and political leadership to improve health and healthcare of the society.

As an academic discipline responsible for knowledge generation, nursing is committed to the following:

- Examining and analyzing knowledge of human experiences of health, illness, healing; human /technology interface; environmental contexts of health care; and quality cost effective outcomes
- Exerting positive influence on organizational contexts of health and health care
- Promoting quality and cost effective outcomes of nursing care
- Facilitating collaborative interdisciplinary communication among health care groups, as well, as among nursing practice, education and research
- Utilizing research findings and evidence to promote quality and improved care
- Developing a questioning mind and spirit of inquiry receptive to new ideas and approaches that contribute to advance nursing knowledge

As an academic profession, the MU Department Nursing faculty believe that higher education in nursing is responsible for preparing nurses through a competency-based curriculum emphasizing practice that is relational, reflective, responsive, respectful, and caring. The faculty believe in education’s responsibility to prepare nurses who advocate for social justice and are responsive to changing health care environments. The Nursing faculty are committed to promoting reflective
practice and leadership for social change all educational programs. Nursing begins with a foundation in arts and sciences and continues with nursing discipline knowledge relating to care in the human health experience across lifespan. The Nursing faculty believes nursing is a continual learning process, in both formal and informal learning venues. In conclusion, the MU Department of Nursing faculty believes the nursing profession is firmly rooted in both practice and academia, with a commitment to lifelong education and quality improvement.

The integrative framework reflects the philosophy, competencies and outcomes for the undergraduate and graduate programs in nursing at MU.

- The faculty believes that the major core values of caring, holism, diversity, excellence and integrity are identified across the levels and throughout the curriculum. The value of ethics is inherent within all. These values are intrinsic to nursing practice and are a integral part of the curriculum to serve as a foundation for competency development. These values are intertwined within each level and utilized throughout the content in all programs.
- The integrated concepts are embedded in the curriculum that flow from less to more complex building upon previous content to ensure development of depth at different levels within the educational process or levels of the program. Reflective practice occurs within the contexts which represents the fundamental phenomena of the professional discipline. These integrated concepts include: organizational context; relationship-centered care; evidence based practice; professional development; and quality and safety.
  - Organizational context is health promotion/disease prevention, chronic disease management through complex health care systems. Additionally, the organizational effectiveness as it relates to the health care context encompasses the leadership, patient characteristics, safety climate, ethical climate, teamwork and continuous quality improvement.
  - Relationship-centered care is about relationships formed by nurses to facilitate the delivery of care and the promotion of health. Relationships developed with patient, family, community, colleagues are focused on the human interaction, not the disease process. Within this concept is caring, within both therapeutic & professional relationships with members of the health care team and reflects respect & dignity for the uniqueness of others, valuing their diversity, as well as, empathy, mutual trust, and empowerment.
  - Evidence-based practice engages nurses in reflecting on existing knowledge and science in nursing/other disciplines to shape practice. Inherent in evidence-based practice is the need to continuously engage in a spirit of inquiry to enhance nursing knowledge and innovation.
  - Professional development incorporates the value of lifelong process of learning, refining and integrating values/behaviors consistent with the profession in order to most effective in their role and as members of the profession. The process of refining and integrating these abilities and attributes is professional development. Embedded within this concept is effective communication, therapeutic & professional, as in an interdisciplinary team or formal professional presentation and leadership which promote innovation and creativity.
Quality & safety requires an emphasis on system effectiveness in today's health care environment, economic climate and regulatory demands. This emphasis within the organizational structure on developing a culture of safety in health care requires nurses minimize risk of harm through both system effectiveness and individual performance while increase the likelihood of desired health outcome. Effective application of informatics, technology, communication and ethics are instrumental to developing a culture of quality and safety in healthcare.

In summary, the faculty believe these integrative concepts weave a curricular (Celtic knot) framework that guides program outcomes. The following four outcomes are a result of all the learning experiences during the program which lead to the mastery of essential nursing practice competencies. These program outcomes include competencies in human flourishing, nursing judgment, professional identity, and the spirit of inquiry.

**MU Nursing Program Outcomes**

1. Human flourishing is defined as an effort to achieve self-actualization and fulfillment within the context of a larger community of individual. The process is lifelong existential journey of hope, regret, loss, illness, suffering and achievement which encompasses the uniqueness, dignity, diversity, freedom and holistic well being of the individual within the larger family or community. The nurse role is to assist in efforts to reclaim or develop new pathways toward human flourishing.

   Competencies- The graduate
   
   - **BSN**: Incorporates the knowledge and skills learned in didactic and clinical courses to help patient, families, and communities continually progress toward fulfillment of human capacity
   - **MSN**: Functions as leader and change agent in one’s special area of practice to create systems that promote human flourishing.

2. Nursing Judgment encompasses three processes: critical thinking, clinical judgment, and integration of best evidence into practice. Nurse role is to employ this process to make decisions about clinical care, the development and application of research and dissemination of insights and research findings to the community.

   Competencies- The graduate can
   
   - **BSN**: Make judgments in practice, substantiated with evidence that synthesize nursing science and knowledge from other disciplines to provide safe, quality care and promote the health of patient, families and communities.
   - **MSN**: Make judgments in one’s special area of practice that reflect a scholarly critique of current evidence from nursing and other disciplines, as well as, the ability to identify gaps in knowledge so to formulate research questions.
3. **Professional Identity** involves the internalization of core values and perspectives recognized as integral to the art and science of nursing. The core values become self-evident as the nurse learns, gains experience, and grows in the profession. The nurse embraces these values in every aspect of practice while working to improve patient outcomes and promote the ideals of the nursing profession.

Competencies – The graduate will
   a. **BSN**: Express one’s identity as a nurse through actions that reflect integrity; commitment to evidence-based practice, caring, advocacy and safe, quality care for diverse patient, families, and community with a willingness to promote leadership in improving care.
   b. **MSN**: Implement one’s advanced practice role in ways that foster best practice, promote the personal and professional growth of oneself, demonstrate leadership, promote positive change in people and systems and advance the profession.

4. **Spirit of Inquiry** is a persistent sense of curiosity that informs both learning and practice. The nurse infused with the spirit of inquiry will raise questions, challenge traditional and existing practices and seek creative approaches to problems. A spirit of inquiry in nursing engenders innovative thinking and extends possibilities for discovering novel solutions in ambiguous, uncertain, and unpredictable situations.

Competencies – The graduate will
   a. **BSN**: Contribute to the development of science of nursing practice by identifying the question in need of study, critiquing published research, use available evidence as foundation to propose creative, innovative based solutions to clinical practice problems.
   b. **MSN**: Contribute to science of nursing in one’s specialty area of practice by analyzing underlying disparities in knowledge or evidence; formulating research questions; and systematically evaluating the impact on quality when evidence-based solutions to nursing problems are implemented.