School of Nursing Program Outcome Assessment Process

Four specific goals have been identified by faculty to guide the school in its development:

1. Educational programs are implemented to meet the mission of the School of Nursing and the University, the standards set by the profession, and societal needs.
2. The climate and environment in the School of Nursing facilitate faculty and student research and scholarly activities.
3. A competitive market position is maintained to enroll sufficient numbers of qualified students of diverse backgrounds to support the excellence of the educational programs.
4. Contributions to the health care of people are made through an emphasis on Christian, moral, and spiritual value systems within the context of Catholic teachings.

The Terminal objectives of the baccalaureate program in nursing are that the graduate will:

1. Demonstrate moral integrity in caring for all persons.
2. Synthesize foundational and theoretical knowledge from religion, philosophy, the humanities, and the natural and behavioral sciences in their practice of nursing.
3. Integrate the principles of primary health care in the delivery of compassionate, technically competent, holistic nursing care.
4. Demonstrate knowledge of the context in which professional nurses practice, including the biobehavioral, cultural, political, environmental, economic, ethical, legal, scientific, and spiritual dimensions.
5. Demonstrate effective skills in communicating and collaborating with clients, health care providers, and members of the community.
6. Demonstrate use of critical thinking skills in making informed judgments in the management of health for individuals, families, groups, and communities.
7. Apply leadership principles in practice settings, to influence and educate others in providing health care.
8. Reflect a commitment to self-development and the advancement of the profession of nursing through participation in educational, community, and organizational activities.
9. Use the nursing process to promote and restore health, and prevent illness in individuals, families, groups, and communities including vulnerable populations.
10. Evaluate research findings for application to professional nursing practice.

The School of Nursing undergraduate program uses a variety of measures to assess terminal objectives and student outcomes. Student performance in both clinical and didactic courses is evaluated by School of Nursing faculty based upon the defined objectives for the course. During coursework, faculty and clinical preceptors use graded course assignments, exams, clinical skills assessment, case presentations, clinical evaluations, seminar and research discussion; clinical journals, and nursing care plans. Completion of a standardized, comprehensive exam is required before the spring semester of the senior year. Students achieving below 70% on the exam are required to register the following semester for a noncredit course, “Directed Study for Professional Practice,” to assist in developing the problem solving and critical thinking techniques necessary to examine and resolve problems in clinical nursing. The policies clearly define grading criteria for both didactic and clinical courses. A minimum 2.0 is required in all nursing and required science courses.
Students also have an opportunity to assess program outcomes. BSN students complete course and faculty evaluations throughout the program; an end of program evaluation and exit interview; and an alumni survey within 3 years after graduation. Surveys are also sent annually to peers, colleagues, and employers who work with CUA BSN graduates to assess the abilities of the BSN graduates in demonstrating competence in program terminal objectives. Graduation rates and the NCLEX pass rates for RN licensure are also tracked annually to meet an 80% benchmark for passing the first time.

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The Master of Science in Nursing builds upon baccalaureate education in nursing. The goal of the Master of Science in Nursing is to prepare students within a specialized area of advanced practice for various types of roles.
Upon completion of the M.S.N. program, the graduate will have:

1. Acquired advanced knowledge from the sciences and the humanities to support advanced nursing practice
2. Integrated nursing theory into advanced practice
3. Demonstrated expertise in a selected role within a specialized area of advanced nursing practice.
4. Acquired advanced knowledge and skills for the utilization of and participation in research
5. Acquired advanced knowledge and skills to effect optimum delivery of health care services
6. Demonstrated ethical behavior and a respect for Christian values in advanced nursing practice
7. Acquired a foundation for doctoral study.

The School of Nursing uses similar measures to assess the terminal objectives and master’s student level outcomes. During coursework, faculty and clinical preceptors use graded course assignments, clinical skills evaluations, research critique, scholarly papers, and class participation to assess achievement of student learning objectives. The Capstone project, or thesis option, additionally provides students an opportunity to participate in ongoing research, or develop and implement individual research, reflecting synthesis and integration of advanced practice knowledge and evidenced-based practice. The comprehensive examination, given in the last semester of coursework, assesses students upon: 1) logical development of response; 2) clarity of written expression; 3) application of critical thinking skills in making a decision related to a problem situation; 4) application of theoretical, scientific, and clinical knowledge and skills from nursing and other disciplines to effect productive change in a problem situation; 5) description of the application of research utilization in a clinical setting; and 6) identification of the necessary resources, personal and environmental, to achieve a change in a problem situation. Most of the specialties in the Master’s program have associated national certification examinations. It is expected that 100% of graduates are prepared to pass national certification examinations given for their respective specialty. Patterns of employment reflect the jobs and career choices made by the graduates of the master’s program as well as the desirability perceived by employers and colleagues for well prepared graduates. Employment rates and specialty certification pass rates are tracked on an annual basis.

Students also have an opportunity to assess program outcomes. MSN students complete course and faculty evaluations throughout the program; an end of program evaluation and exit interview; and an alumni survey within 3 years after graduation. Surveys are also sent annually to peers, colleagues, and employers who work with CUA MSN graduates to assess the abilities of the MSN graduates in demonstrating competence in program terminal objectives. Graduation rates are also tracked annually.