SCHOOL OF NURSING  
Baccalaureate Study in Nursing  
Goals and Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes

The baccalaureate program prepares students for beginning professional nursing practice. The School of Nursing offers five options depending on the student’s past academic history and career goals: Basic Program, Second Degree Program, R.N. to B.S.N. Program (Completion Program for Registered Nurses) and a Combined B.S.N./M.S.N. Program for Registered Nurses. Students in the program are prepared to maintain and promote client adaptation in a variety of health care settings through theory and utilization of the nursing process. The curriculum of the BSN program, which is 120 credits, is organized according to four central concepts: Nursing, Caring, Ethics and Professionalism. These concepts are integrated in the curriculum through a health care educational model with its foundation in the natural and behavioral sciences (chemistry, microbiology, anatomy and physiology), religion, philosophy, English, humanities and liberal studies. During these two years students are exposed to beginning nursing and health care concepts that are foundational to the content presented during the junior and senior years where specific nursing content is addressed in depth through clinical and didactic coursework. The curriculum is congruent and guided by The Essentials of Baccalaureate Education for Professional Nursing Practice (AACN, 1998) and the content of the National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses (NCLEX) administered by the National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN).

Goals for Student Learning

Terminal objectives for program graduates include the ability to:

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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 bio-behavioral, 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.

11. Employ information management, information technology systems and patient care technology supports to improve quality of care and decision-making.
Student Assessment Outcome Measures

The SON BSN program uses a variety of direct and indirect measures to assess curriculum and teaching-learning practices. The written SON evaluation plan details the metrics used to assess curricular and teaching-leanring practices. The abilities of students and graduates in relation to the specific program terminal objectives are evaluated throughout the program (formative evaluation) and after graduation (summative evaluation).

The SON has a systematic multi-source evaluation process in place that provides ongoing feedback on program outcomes.

Outcomes for each program are assessed at repeated time points for all program levels.

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**Direct Measures**

**NCLEX.** NCLEX pass rates are obtained on a quarterly basis and compared to the District of Columbia pass rates as well as regional and national pass rates. The SON subscribes to a service by the National Council of States Boards of Nursing to receive trend analysis data and data about aggregated student performance in particular
knowledge domains. The records of students failing the NCLEX are analyzed to identify any trends or commonalities.

HESI. In their senior year during the Spring semester, students take a standardized exit exam which is both diagnostic of deficiencies in knowledge pertinent to the NCLEX exam; this exam thus provides an indication of student probable performance in the NCLEX exam unless intervention occurs.

Progression Rates. Data related to admission, retention, graduation, and attrition rates are maintained within the SON. Students are permitted to progress through full time or part time study. Full time students in the BSN program usually complete the program in four years. The graduation rate is defined as the number of BSN and MSN students who graduate within 5 years of admission and the desired outcome indicator is a 90% graduation rate for these students.

Employment Rates. Employment rates are determined via End of Program and periodically administered surveys of alumni. The 1 yr and 5 yr survey data is used.

Indirect Measures

Formative Evaluation. BSN students complete course and faculty evaluations for each course, as well as an end of program evaluation. The Undergraduate course evaluations are completed on-line and off loaded and aggregated through CPIT. Reports are made available on line for faculty after grades have been finalized. Undergraduate End of Program Survey. BSN students complete an end of program evaluation prior to graduation and then are surveyed a year after graduation regarding achievement of program objectives. The Undergraduate End of Program survey, developed by the SON, is a comprehensive assessment tool based upon the terminal objectives of the BSN
program. Students respond to 20 demographic items followed by 51 items using a 5 point Likert scale that represents the quality satisfaction scale in five areas: quality of education, satisfaction, quality of life at CUA, influences upon personal life and professional practice, and preparation in defined BSN essentials and program objectives. Internal consistency reliability, measured using Cronbach’s coefficient alpha was .96.

**Focus Group Interviews.** Graduating seniors are offered the opportunity after program requirements are met to participate in focus group interviews to identify program strengths and weaknesses as well as any other agenda items relevant to evaluation which they wish to have discussed/examined.

**One Year Alumni Survey.** One year after graduation, former students receive an alumni evaluation. BSN graduates receive the Alumni Evaluation one year after graduation that contains congruent items found on the end of program tool to allow comparison trending between this survey and the end of program results. Additionally, the survey measures student satisfaction with student learning outcomes, program satisfaction, employment status, professional memberships, community service, continuing education, and graduate school intentions.

**Peer, Colleagues & Employer Surveys.** Surveys are also sent annually to peers, colleagues, and employers who work with CUA graduates to assess the abilities of the BSN graduates in demonstrating competence in the program’s terminal objectives. These surveys provide close to a “360 degree” evaluation of performance. Participants are selected from lists of regional clinical agencies where students are placed or where
graduates have been hired. In the next year, we will developing, testing, and distributing a Peer/Employer tool for BSN graduates to be disseminated one year after graduation.

Use of Results to Improve Student Learning

Outcomes data are distributed, analyzed, and trended in through the respective SON curriculum committees. In addition, following our 2007 site accreditation visit, the SON established an Evaluation Committee which serves as a clearinghouse for all evaluation data related to SON academic programs and which also has responsibility for revising the evaluation plan and ensuring that plan activities are implemented.

Outcomes data has been used to improve student learning. For example, the Undergraduate End of Program Survey was administered to the 43 BSN graduates in academic year 2005-2006. Results showed overall satisfaction with the program, with all of the mean item scores ranked at least 3.6 on a 5 point scale. Scores ranged from 148 to 254 out of a possible range of 51 to 255 points, showing that the students as a group (n=39), were satisfied with their education at CUA SON. Some of the recommendations that emerged from this survey and past evaluative data were to improve technology resources, place more emphasis on assessment and skills courses, and update the library collection. In response to these and past recommendations, over the past two years, the Donley Technology Center was renovated and expanded, a new simulation lab was installed in the Clinical Laboratories, and the Nursing-Biology book collection was systematically scrutinized to remove outdated texts and identify gaps to be filled in the collection. Another recommendation that emerged from end of program evaluations was a request for a lounge area for both undergraduate and graduate students, especially for
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In response, the SON remodeled the student lounge on the 3rd floor of Gowan Hall with direct input from students and added four computers for student use. This area is now accessible from 7 AM until 10 PM for all students. The SON will continue to monitor responses to the surveys for feedback on these improvements and other items of concern.

In addition, in response to larger class sizes and concerns that this could affect the NCLEX pass rate, faculty voted to implement a standardized exit exam (HESI) for all graduating seniors beginning in Spring 2006. Preliminary results from the first administration of the exam indicated that only 11 students achieved a score greater than 850. Commencing in Fall 2007, all seniors will now complete the HESI exit exam. Academic advisors and course faculty now have access to scoring by subject and competency so that these data can be used to address any curriculum or content issues identified. Students achieving less than 80% on this diagnostic exam are being strongly encouraged to take a review course or develop a remedial plan of study for the NCLEX exam. In addition, introduction of other HESI exams developed for specific content domains, as well as the HESI assessment examination focused on the basic competencies needed for success in upper division nursing classes are being phased in for use with the sophomore and junior classes.

Finally, responsiveness to evaluative data is evident in the process of curriculum revision. As a consequence of the ongoing baccalaureate program evaluation in 2006-2007, the faculty restructured the baccalaureate curriculum to allow both leveling of content and incorporation of new content regarding quality, safety and health informatics.
This revision reduced the credit requirement from 129 credits to 120 credits and is being phased in starting with the freshman class of 2007-2008.