

Department of Nursing Overview

The Department of Nursing at Gonzaga University, an integral part of the School of Nursing and Human Physiology, offers programs designed to meet the needs of undergraduate and graduate students who are seeking to expand their knowledge of nursing and to ensure that their nursing practice is based on the best available evidence. Programs offered by the Department of Nursing are grounded in the Jesuit traditions of social justice, care and compassion, commitment to excellence, finding God in all things, and service to others, as well as in the Ignatian principle of tailoring education to time, place, and person. The Department welcomes students from diverse cultural, spiritual, and experiential backgrounds; values the contributions of diverse learners; and believes the educational experience is enriched by this diversity. Graduates are educationally and experientially prepared to practice in an increasingly complex healthcare system and to provide leadership to advance the profession of nursing.

Vision

The vision of the Department of Nursing is to shape the future of healthcare by transforming nurses and nursing.

Mission

The Department of Nursing shapes the future of health care by providing undergraduate and graduate students with a nursing education that is rigorous, innovative, relevant, and grounded in Jesuit and nursing values. We prepare nurses to practice in today's complex health care environment and to provide leadership in the service of others.

Philosophy

The faculty of the Department of Nursing believes that a liberal education is essential to the preparation of professional nurses. The faculty also believes that accessible and flexible nursing programs are necessary to improve individual, family, community, and societal health, and to increase quality and accessibility of health and nursing care services. The Department's programs and program delivery methods are specifically designed to address the needs of underserved populations: registered nurses with unmet educational needs and consumers/communities with unmet health care needs. The faculty's beliefs about people and environment, leadership, health, nursing, and education provide the foundation for the design and implementation of its programs.

People and Environment

- People are complex, multidimensional, integrated beings.
- The worth, dignity, human rights, and complexity of every individual must be valued and protected.
- Each individual's unique talents must be fostered.
- Because individuals are social beings, they form groups that are characterized by shared interests and goals; these relationships are dynamic and changing.
- Families, groups, and communities can be the focus of nursing care; however, they are also a part of the environment in which care for an individual is provided.

Education

- Teaching is sharing expertise in the process of learning and empowering learners to learn.
- Learning is the acquisition of knowledge, skills, competence, and confidence; it is a lifelong activity.
- Learners and faculty share responsibility for the learning environment; however, individual learners must assume the responsibility for their own learning and must participate in shaping their own learning experiences as well as foster the learning of other learners.
- The teaching-learning relationship is learner-centered. Teachers seek active engagement with learners and use a variety of strategies to create and maintain an environment that fosters curiosity, imagination, creativity, critical thinking, and self-appraisal.
- There are different ways of learning, but it occurs more readily when its outcomes apply to real-world situations and have personal meaning for the learner.
- Each learner brings different life experiences, abilities, and needs to the teaching-learning experience. Faculty and other learners must acknowledge and capitalize on the unique attributes of one another.

Nursing

- Nursing is a goal-directed and caring discipline with its own body of knowledge and domain of practice. Nursing's domain for practice is human experiences and responses to actual and potential alterations in health status.
- Nurses provide essential services to society that are separate from but complementary to those offered by other health care disciplines. Nurses work in concert with other health care professionals to meet the health care needs of those served.
- Nursing has its own unique and evolving body of knowledge, but both draws from and contributes to the knowledge of other scientific and humanistic disciplines. Nursing is directed by nationally accepted standards of practice, a code of ethics, legally defined parameters in each state, and setting-specific rules and regulations.
- The practice of nursing is complex and highly interactive. Nurses often act autonomously, but also value and work in collaborative relationships.
- Nurses must have a well-developed sense of self-awareness and the ability to value differences in others.

- When formulating nursing interventions, nurses consider the socio-political-cultural-moral-legal environment, and appreciate the unique characteristics and perspectives of those with whom they interact.

Health and Well-Being

- Health is a dynamic state and a process that is dependent on the integration of body, mind, and spirit.
- Health is culturally defined, valued, and practiced. It reflects the ability to perform activities of daily living in a culturally meaningful manner.
- Well-being is a goal within one's state of health.
- Health is a condition of individuals, families, communities, and populations. Well-being can be achieved by each of these entities.
- Having an illness or a handicap does not preclude well-being.

Leadership

- Leadership is a dynamic process of mutual influence directed toward the accomplishment of defined, measurable objectives.
- Effective leaders base their work on clearly articulated personal values. They recognize their effectiveness is derived from a solid knowledge base, personal skills and qualities, and the ability to establish partnerships with others.
- Effective leaders exert influence to orchestrate change by nurturing and empowering others; they are consensus-builders and do not insist on unanimity.
- Successful leaders selectively de-emphasize power and authority and foster mutual responsibility for outcomes.
- Successful leaders acknowledge the importance of effective followership.
- Leaders accept the ultimate accountability for outcomes, but willingly share credit for success.