

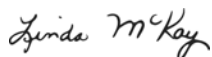
**Department of Nursing Student Handbook  
2009-2010**

Dear Fitchburg State College RN/BSN Nursing Student:

Welcome to the RN/BSN program at Fitchburg State College. This Handbook, revised Spring 2009, is effective for all registered nurse students currently enrolled in the Department of Nursing. The Handbook provides you with information about the Department, the curriculum, and departmental academic policies. Faculty advising and using this Handbook as reference material will assist you in successfully completing this program.

The policies in the Fitchburg State College Catalog apply to all students except in those instances where the Department of Nursing policies are delineated in this handbook. Thus the FSC college catalog and this student handbook will serve as references while you are enrolled as a registered nurse major at Fitchburg State College. The policies and practices presented in this Handbook are subject to annual review and revision. Please review this Handbook as soon as possible and refer to it throughout the program.

The faculty and the administration of the College are excited about the opportunities afforded by our unique program. We are committed to your personal success and the success of the program.



Linda McKay, MS, RN  
Chairperson  
Department of Nursing

Revised annually  
Last revision Spring 2009

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**2008-2009**

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## **Disclaimer Statement 2009/2010**

**Spring 2009**

**Please note the rules, regulations, policies, courses of study, and academic requirements that appear in the college catalog and this handbook were in effect at the time of their publication. Like everything else in the catalog or handbook, they are published for informational purposes only, and they do not constitute a contract between the College or the Nursing Department and any student, applicant for admission or other person.**

**Whether noted elsewhere in the catalog or the handbook or not, the College and the Nursing Department reserve the right to change, eliminate, and add to any existing (and to introduce additional) rules, regulations, policies, courses of study and academic requirements.**

**Whenever it does so, the College or the Nursing Department will give as much advance notice as it considers feasible or appropriate, but it reserves the right in all cases to do so without notice.**

*Linda McKay*

**Linda McKay, MS, RN  
Chairperson  
Department of Nursing**

## CRIMINAL HISTORY BACKGROUND OR CRIMINAL OFFENDER RECORDS INFORMATION (CORI) CHECKS

The Massachusetts Board of Registered Nursing has the expectation that all nurses are of Good Moral Character as do all clinical settings. Many other nurse licensing boards and/or agencies have similar requirements.

CORI checks are completed for all students on matriculation into the nursing program. Agencies may require students to update the CORI check prior to participation in an education experience. An agency may refuse to accept a student as a result of a CORI check, and Fitchburg State College assumes no obligation to locate an alternative site and cannot guarantee the completion of degree requirements. **All students are required to notify the Department Chair of any changes in their CORI status.**

## **HISTORY OF DEPARTMENT OF NURSING AT FITCHBURG STATE COLLEGE**

Fitchburg State College was chartered as Fitchburg State Normal School in 1894 by the General Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. In 1933, the title was changed by an Act of the Legislature to State Teachers College at Fitchburg, and in 1962 the name was further altered to State College at Fitchburg. The General Court granted permission in 1968 to formally change the name to Fitchburg State College.

In 1943, the State Teachers College and the Burbank Hospital School of Nursing initiated a program that combined two-and-one half academic years of courses at the College with two-and-one half calendar years (including eight week summer sessions in the first two years) at the Burbank Hospital School of Nursing. Students who completed this program were initially awarded a Bachelor of Science in Education degree by the College – the only type of degree that it was authorized to grant at that time. These students, however, did not complete courses that would fulfill the requirements for a major in Education. The Burbank Hospital School of Nursing awarded the diploma in Nursing for the courses that were completed at the institution under this arrangement with the College. This portion of the program was accepted by the College as partial fulfillment of its requirements for the degree that it granted. In succeeding years, several modifications were made to the courses taken at the College and to the time plan at the Burbank Hospital School of Nursing.

In 1954, a consultation visit was completed to determine measures that might be taken to develop the program in nursing at the college so that it could eventually secure accreditation by the National League for Nursing. Subsequent to this visit, the Burbank Hospital School of Nursing conducted a diploma program and a separate program for students who were enrolled at the College under the combined plan. Both the diploma program and the hospital-based portion of the combined program received accreditation from the National League for Nursing at the first possible opportunity. The program for the College-enrolled students featured a separate faculty roster, the necessity for students to meet admission requirements for both Burbank Hospital School of Nursing and Fitchburg State College, and additional clinical experiences in community health nursing and leadership. In 1960, the College changed the degree to Bachelor of Science in Nursing Education.

Local academic and community leaders, including the Principal of the School of Nursing at Burbank Hospital, were among those who concurred with the national trend of that time of converting single-purpose teacher-training institutions into multipurpose institutions of higher education. When progress was underway toward that goal, the Burbank Hospital Board of Trustees requested that the Massachusetts Board of Education seek funds from the General Court to enable the College to assume administrative and educational responsibility for the entire program leading to the baccalaureate degree, including the major in Nursing. The Board of Education did request such funds and the General Court approved the initial funds for the appointment of a faculty in Nursing at Fitchburg State College in 1962.

Initially, two faculty from the separate faculty roster at Burbank Hospital School of Nursing accepted appointments to Fitchburg State College along with other appointees and, as the program developed, others of these faculty members also transferred employment to the College. The combined program ceased to exist in 1964, although the diploma program continued until its closure in 1982. The Fitchburg State College degree was changed to a Bachelor of Science, major in nursing. The program initially admitted only freshmen and transfer students with no previous preparation in nursing. The first Department offices were located in two rooms on the third floor of Thompson Hall but, as the program gradually became large in numbers of students and faculty, the Department moved first into the White Cottage across Highland Avenue in 1967 and expanded to the Green Cottage as well in 1969. In 1968, at the first possible opportunity, the program was reviewed by the National League for Nursing Council of Baccalaureate and Higher Degree Programs and granted initial accreditation.

In 1970, the program began admitting its first registered nurse students. These nurses came as full-time students or, if part-time, started their baccalaureate studies through the Division of Graduate and Continuing Education until ready for their senior year. Also in the early 1970's, federal funds under the Nurse Training Act became available on a per capita basis (capitation funding) for those accredited programs willing to expand their enrollment of students entering at the beginning of the program. As a consequence, the program grew rapidly through increased freshman admissions, tripling the numbers of students graduating per year from the beginning to the end of this decade. Due to the pressure of numbers, in 1976 the Department again moved back to the third floor of Thompson Hall which was renovated with the support of capitation funding into six offices and two laboratory spaces, one for audio-visual technician who, along with the many part-time faculty needed during the expansion, were paid from grant monies rather than State funds.

Curriculum structure changed in the mid-seventies toward a more integrated approach, and many new affiliation agencies were required to accommodate this curriculum model and the placements for the larger student body. A preceptored practicum for seniors also added to the variety and geographical spread of agencies used for clinical placement. The National League for Nursing visit in 1976 resulted in continuing accreditation for the maximum possible eight years.

As 1980 approached, two new departmental projects were launched. The first was the establishment of a chapter of Sigma Theta Tau, the International Honor Society of Nursing named Epsilon Beta at its acceptance at the national biennial convention in 1979. The chapter continues to induct an average of forty student and community nurse candidates as members per year. Programs and work meetings are offered locally.

In the second project, learning opportunities for registered nurse students in an area deficient in available accredited nursing programs were expanded. As a result of a request and seed money from District I, Massachusetts Nurses Association, the Department agreed to bring its registered nurse track on a wholly part-time basis into that region by using the facilities of the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Opened in

1979, the off-campus courses were offered until 1986 when the project was terminated due to financial constraints and lack of sufficient student enrollment. A total of eighty-five students received Fitchburg State College nursing degrees from that effort.

During the early 1980's, the student population stabilized. However, by 1986, the national trend toward a decline in nursing program applications did impact the Department of Nursing. Federal funding dried up due in part to earlier projections of a nursing surplus (a projection which has since been demonstrated to be inaccurate), but increased State support enabled the Department to retain faculty and support staff needed to maintain the program's quality. Student acceptances shifted from almost total reliance on new high school graduates and registered nurse admissions to increased sophomore transfers, particularly from the 'mature' student population. While the dip in applications appears to be over, the diversity of the student population continues to expand. Subsequently, the current student population includes new high school graduates, 'mature' students, and registered nurses, as well as men and women returning to college seeking career changes.

In 1983-4, the long-standing Nursing Student Association became a chapter of the National Student Nurses Association. This group has been and continues to be very active on campus. Chapter status with the National Student Nurses Association has broadened student opportunities for involvement.

In 1984, following a change in state regulations that permitted part-time study in state colleges, a part-time track on campus for registered nurse students was initiated with the assistance of an Area Health Education Council (AHEC) grant to publicize its initiation.

The Department moved again in 1984, just prior to its very successful National League for Nursing re-accreditation visit. Some of the offices on the third floor of Thompson Hall were returned to classroom status, while College administrative offices on the first floor were reallocated to the Nursing Department. In addition, Department secretarial services were expanded. A statewide review of publicly funded nursing programs in 1983 resulted in Regents' funding for updating and expansion of facilities and equipment. The Jane Minasian Nursing Laboratory, the Grace Gummo Learning Center and the student-faculty lounge were expanded/created. To maintain the quality of the Learning Center in the Spring of 1991, the Department applied for and received a grant to expand its interactive computer learning capabilities.

To address new and evolving health needs in society the program curriculum was revised and expanded. In 1987, content was expanded in the areas of health assessment, gerontology, research, and leadership and management. In addition, a portfolio assessment pilot program for registered nurse student placement in the senior year was initiated. The members of the class of 1991 were the first graduates of this revised curriculum.

For some time, graduates of the program as well as community nurses and faculty members had expressed interest in the establishment of a graduate program in nursing. Staff from the division of Graduate and Continuing Education had received many

inquiries about graduate programs. In response, in the Fall of 1993, the faculty voted to study the possibility of such a program.

Working with the Academic Affairs office and consulting the guidelines for graduate program development from the Higher Education Coordinating Council, the College's Graduate Council, and the National League for Nursing, a feasibility study was conducted, with surveys to potential students and prospective employers in the region. The need for a program preparing advanced practice nurses was established and, after further study and Advisory Committee input, a Masters of Science degree with a major in nursing (forensic nursing) was chosen for further proposal development. This focus was seen as particularly suited to the College, with its new masters program in Criminal Justice and its Forensic Case Work program in conjunction with the masters in Counseling. Additional consultation was obtained from the President of the International Association of Forensic Nurses and support from nursing, health and criminal justice leaders in the Montachusett region was forthcoming. After further deliberation by the College administration and its Board of Trustees, the proposal was forwarded to the Higher Education Coordinating Council and approved in March 1996. The first class was admitted into the two-year part-time program in the summer of 1996.

The Department had continuous accreditation from the National League for Nursing until April 2001. At that time the Department received accreditation from the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) for both the baccalaureate and masters' programs. The decision to move from NLN to CCNE professional nursing accreditation was made after a careful discussion and debate by the nursing faculty. In April 2001 the Baccalaureate and Masters' programs were accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education.

In Fall 2002, the then sophomore class began progression in a revised curriculum. The intent of the change was to better prepare students by: (1) increasing medical-surgical clinical experiences, (2) reorganizing how content is taught to better meet learning styles and (3) modifying content to address the professional registered nurse licensing exam (NCLEX). This first class in the revised curriculum graduated in May, 2005.

As the history presentation demonstrates, many changes have taken place over the past forty-three years in the nursing program offered by Fitchburg State College. One thing, however, has never changed and never will: the commitment of the Department to provide its students with the best possible education and in so doing prepare them for the demands of professional nursing at the beginning and advanced practice levels.

The faculty of the Department of Nursing believes in the following premises:

- Professional nursing is an applied science and art based on concepts from the natural and behavioral sciences and humanities, which are integrated into a unique configuration both in theory and practice. The delivery of professional nursing care requires critical thinking. It involves a systematic approach to meeting clients' health needs, the application of skilled practice activities in the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains, relationships characterized by the therapeutic use of self, and accountability for nursing actions and decisions. Professional

nursing is dynamic in its approach to practice and has a responsibility to: identify society's evolving health needs; influence society's concept of health while remaining sensitive to different approaches to health and health care; initiate and participate in the planning and delivery of health services; and improve nursing practice through scholarly pursuits. The environment for the practice of professional nursing extends to any setting where the health needs of society must be met.

- Undergraduate nursing education prepares a nurse generalist and leads to the first professional degree. It prepares the practitioner to provide direct and indirect care to individuals, families, and groups, and to assume beginning leadership roles. Graduate nursing education builds upon the knowledge and competencies acquired in baccalaureate nursing education using a curriculum specific to the area of nursing specialization. It prepares the practitioner to assume advanced leadership in the community and the health care system, and to contribute to the development of nursing science and the improvement of health care.
- Education is a process of teaching and learning in which growth occurs. The goal of education is to assist humankind as learners towards self-actualization and to enhance their ability to be responsible members of society. Teaching involves determining learning objectives, creating an environment that offers a multiplicity of experiences, guiding the development of the learner's potential according to individual needs, and evaluating and affirming the achievement of learning objectives. Opportunities for advanced placement in the curriculum are provided through validation of previously acquired academic and clinical competencies. Learning is an active on-going process requiring motivation. Individuals learn throughout life that which has meaning and value to them. Learners have the right and responsibility to participate in the planning and evaluation of their educational program.
- The role of the faculty member at the undergraduate level is guidance of the learners' personal growth and their attainment of competencies commensurate with the role expectations of entry-level professional nursing practice. This is accomplished by developing and implementing a curriculum that promotes integration of knowledge from a broad range of disciplines with professional study. The role of the faculty member at the graduate level is to facilitate creative inquiry and achievement of specialized role competencies. This is accomplished through application of principles of adult education: self-direction, commitment to lifelong learning, and participation in and evaluation of learning activities.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of the Fitchburg State College Department of Nursing is to prepare professional nurses capable of meeting societal healthcare needs in a variety of settings. In their teaching, the faculty nurtures respect for diversity, social responsibility, and a commitment to excellence. Collaborative and interactive teaching methods foster the use of critical thinking to build a strong foundation for the practice of holistic nursing. Legal, ethical and professional standards guide the faculty in teaching the art and science of nursing.

## **TERMINAL OUTCOMES**

Upon completion of the nursing program, the graduate will:

1. Synthesize knowledge from the liberal arts, sciences, and nursing as a foundation for safe, client-centered care.
2. Integrate principles of communication in professional practice.
3. Synthesize knowledge to provide holistic, culturally congruent care to diverse populations in a global environment.
4. Incorporate current research and critical thinking in the management of client care.
5. Incorporate ethical principles in professional practice.
6. Comply with regulatory, legal and professional standards.
7. Incorporate principles of management in professional practice.

## **CURRICULUM**

The nursing curriculum is designed to progress in complexity.

### **Nursing Arts and Science Prerequisites**

All students must successfully complete Writing I & Writing II; Biology 1200 Anatomy & Physiology I & Biology 1300 Anatomy & Physiology II; Psychology 1100 General Psychology; & Sociology 1100 Introduction to Sociology. All science courses must be completed with a 2.5. The Accuplacer Mathematics Placement Exam or the required pre-college level mathematics readiness courses also must be completed prior to the registration for MATH 1700. Successful completion of these courses provides registered nursing majors with a solid foundation for their courses in nursing practice.

## **Patient/Client**

During the first two RN/BSN courses, students focus on the patient/client's special nursing care needs which may be the individual and/or his family, as well as a group. On the senior level, the concept of the patient/client further expands to include communities. In the last semester of the senior year, the patient/client is one with complex health problems and is usually found in the acute care setting.

## **Health**

Students have opportunities to apply their knowledge of health promotion, risk management, and illness care. On the senior level, students focus on health at both ends of the continuum. In the first semester there is emphasis on chronic problems requiring home care, and also community health where health promotion, risk management, disease prevention, and services are key to the health of communities. In the last semester, students have opportunities for early continuum activities; however, their concentration is on complex health problems requiring acute care services.

## **Nursing**

The curriculum emphasizes higher level application of nursing care components, such as the therapeutic use of self, and communication. The senior level focuses on a collaborative role and task competence, and the increasing use of leadership and management principles.

## **Environment**

Environmental influences on health and access to health care, including historical, social, economic, political, and cultural factors, are integrated in the first two nursing courses.

In the first semester of the senior level, the emphasis is on the delivery of nursing care to individuals, families, and groups in the community. The second semester focuses on the care of patients/clients with complex health problems, which may occur in any settings.

The Fitchburg State College Department of Nursing faculty members believe that learning is an active, on-going process requiring motivation. Individuals learn throughout life that which has meaning and value for them on cognitive, affective, and psychomotor levels. All clinical nursing courses contain learning experiences in each of these domains.

Learning activities are sequences so there is an increase in complexity at each level. Students begin their learning by assimilating concrete didactic content and proceed to an exchange of ideas between faculty and student. They progress to demonstration of the ability to process didactic material in selected actual and hypothetical nursing

situations. Students conclude by utilizing a collaborative approach with faculty and clinical preceptors to set goals and objectives for self-directed learning.

### **References**

Bloom Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: *The Classification of Educational Goals* (1956). New York: David McKay.

*The Essentials of Baccalaureate Education for Professional Nursing Practice* (1998). Washington, D.C. American Association of Colleges of Nursing.

Massachusetts Board of Registration in Nurse Practice Act Regulations  
<http://www.mass.gov/dpl/boards/rn>

*Nursing's Social Policy Statement, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition* (2003). Washington, D.C. American Nurses Association.

*Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice* (2004). Washington, D.C. American Nurses Association.

(Revised 3/09/00; Edited for congruence with curriculum revision 5/05.)

Fitchburg State College  
Department of Nursing  
**RN-BSN ON-LINE CURRICULUM**

**AD RN's** A total of 60 credits composed of nursing and liberal arts and science courses taken at another accredited two-year educational institution, if evaluated by the Registrar as equivalent to those offered at Fitchburg State College, are acceptable in transfer. An additional 15 credits of liberal arts and science courses may be accepted in transfer from another accredited four-year educational institution.

**Diploma RN's** Those nursing courses listed with an asterisk (\*) may be acquired by taking the appropriate tests from the NLN ACE II exams (NACE). Arrangements must be made through the Department of Nursing at Fitchburg State College.

<b>Required upon Entrance</b> These courses may be acquired through NLN ACE II exams ( <b>Diploma RN's only</b> ) <b>NLN ACE II Exams must be completed prior to enrolling in Nursing courses.</b>			
*NURS2500 Pathopharmacology I	3	Summer:	
*NURS2600 Pathopharmacology II	3	NURS3500 Concepts of Nursing I	3
*NURS2910 Nursing Care of the Childbearing Family	5	NURS3650 Topics: Portfolio Prep.	1
*NURS3910 Nursing Care of the Mentally Ill Client	5	NURS3600 Concepts of Nursing II	<u>3</u>
*NURS3920 Nursing Care of the Child	5		7
*NURS3930 Nursing Care of the Adult	<u>10</u>		
	31		
<b>Graduates of associate degree programs receive 31 credits for their nursing courses taken at the associate degree level. These 31 credits must be completed prior to enrolling in Nursing courses.</b>			

Fall:		Spring:	
NURS4000 Nursing Research **	2	NURS4800 Selective Practicum	10
NURS4400 Community Health Nursing	<u>5</u>	NURS4850 Nursing Leadership & Management	<u>2</u>
	7		<u>12</u>

Summer:		
NURS4500 Nursing Care of Diverse Populations	2	Liberal Arts and Science electives can be taken before the Nursing course sequence begins, concurrently with the Nursing course sequence or upon completion of the Nursing course sequence.
NURS4510 End of Life Care		
NURS4520 Intro. to Forensic Nursing	<u>3</u>	
	5	

\*\* MATH1700 Statistics must be successfully completed prior to enrolling in this course.

121 Total Credits is required to graduate (62 Nursing/59 LA&S)



Fitchburg State College  
Department of Nursing  
**Liberal Arts and Science Requirements for Bachelor of Science**  
**NEW LA&S PROGRAM – BEGINNING FALL 2008**  
**Diploma RN-BSN Track**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ YOG \_\_\_\_\_

	Semester Hrs.	<b>Nursing Requirements</b>	Semester Hrs.
<b><u>Content Clusters: * two courses from the clusters below must have a Global Diversity Designation</u></b>		<b>ACE II Challenge Exams (Pass/Fail)</b>	31
<b><u>Arts</u></b> (5 courses; a minimum of 15 cr.) One of these courses must have a global diversity non-western designation.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NURS2500 Pathopharmacology I (3 cr.)</li> <li>• NURS2600 Pathopharmacology II (3 cr.)</li> <li>• NURS2910 Nursing Care of the Child Bearing Family (5 cr.)</li> <li>• NURS3910 Nursing Care of the Mentally Ill Client (5 cr.)</li> <li>• NURS3920 Nursing Care of the Child (5 cr.)</li> <li>• NURS3930 Nursing Care of the Adult (10 cr.)</li> </ul>	
<u>Writing I (ENGL1100)</u> _____	3		
<u>Writing II (ENGL1200)</u> _____	3		
<u>Art or Music</u> _____	3		
<u>Literature</u> _____	3		
<u>Elective</u> _____	3		
<b><u>Citizenship</u></b> (3 courses; a minimum of 9 cr) Intro to Sociology fulfills the global diversity designation.		NURS3500 Concepts of Nursing I	3
<u>Hist.</u> _____	3	NURS3600 Concepts of Nursing II	3
<u>General Psych (PSY1100)</u> _____	3	NURS3650 Topics: Portfolio Preparation	1
<u>Intro to Sociology (SOC1100)</u> _____	3	NURS4400 Community Health Nursing	5
		NURS4500 Nursing Care of Diverse Populations	2
<b><u>Science, Math, Technology</u></b> (4 courses; a minimum of 12 cr.)		NURS4510: End of Life Care	3
<u>Applied Stats (MATH1700)</u> _____	3	<b>or</b>	
<u>Anatomy &amp; Physiology I (BIOL 1200)</u> _____	4	NURS4520: Introduction to Forensic Nursing	
<u>Anatomy &amp; Physiology II (BIOL1300)</u> _____	4	NURS4000 Nursing Research	2
<u>Survey of Microorganisms (BIOL2700)</u> _____	3	NURS4800 Selective Practicum	10
		NURS4850 Nursing Leadership & Mgmt.	2
<b><u>Option C</u></b> (4 courses; a minimum of 12 cr with a minimum of 6 cr. at or above the 2000 level.)			Total: 62
<u>Human Growth &amp; Dev (PSY2200)</u> _____	3	Other Liberal Arts & Sciences Requirements:	
_____	3	<b>*Readiness:</b>	
_____	3	<u>Mathematics</u>	
_____	3	Level I: Placement Exam ( ) or	
_____	3	Basic Math I ( )	
		Level II: Placement Exam ( ) or	
<b><u>Free Electives</u></b> (2 or 3 courses; a minimum of 8 cr.)		Basic Math II ( )	
_____	3	<u>English</u>	
_____	3	Placement Exam ( ) or	
_____	3	Basic College Writing ( )	
	Total: 59	<b>*Math Readiness Requirement is required of all transfer students. Institutional credit only; does not count toward graduation credits. This requirement must be met prior to entering the Nursing Curriculum.</b>	
		<b>Courses listed in bold typeface require a minimum grade of 2.5 to progress.</b>	

## **ADMISSION (READMISSION) POLICY PROGRAM POLICIES FOR ADMISSION**

### **A. COURSE EXEMPTION**

Course exemption for students in the nursing major is accomplished in two ways. For non-nursing courses, students must submit an official transcript to the Registrar of the college for evaluation. For nursing courses, students must submit an official transcript to the registrar's office showing their grade for the course in question. A copy of this transcript, as well as a course description and a syllabus will be submitted to the Department Chair. The Chairperson, in consultation with appropriate faculty, evaluates the course in relation to the comparable course offered by the Nursing Department. Course exemption is awarded based on the similarities of the courses, as well as the grade achieved in the course to be used in place of a required nursing course. Courses to be accepted in lieu of a required nursing course must have a grade of 2.5 or better, and must have been taken at a Board of Registration in Nursing approved and NLN and/or AACN accredited school.

### **B. EDUCATIONAL MOBILITY**

The Department of Nursing recognizes that career decisions and the selection of the program of study necessary to enter nursing are the responsibility of the individual and are based on career goals, abilities and resources. As career goals are revised, and nurses seek to gain competencies not achieved in their basic nursing education program, educational mobility enables an individual to move from one educational level to another with acknowledgement of acquired competencies and minimal repetition of previous learning. The development and implementation of efficient and creative methods for identifying and evaluating prior learning and experience is the responsibility of nurse educators. The faculty of the Department of Nursing support educational mobility, and stand ready to help students achieve their goals.

### **C. ADVANCED PLACEMENT**

All candidates for advanced placement within the nursing department must hold a current Registered Nurse license. Advanced placement to the Department of Nursing is awarded in two ways: through articulation agreements and within the Registered Nurse track of the department. The Department of Nursing has articulation agreements with eight community colleges. These Agreements grant advanced placement to graduates of these colleges who hold a Massachusetts registered nurse license, and who achieved a minimum grade point average of 2.5. Graduates of non-articulated but accredited registered nurse programs who meet the minimum GPA are also eligible for advanced placement. Those applicants who do not meet GPA standards are also able to obtain advanced placement

through the use of NLN ACE II exams, which grant Fitchburg State College credit for a score of 90 or better.

**D. READMISSION TO THE DEPARTMENT OF NURSING**

Students who withdraw from the department or college in good standing may request readmission. The application first goes to the Registrar, who then consults with the chairperson of the Department of Nursing. Readmission depends on clinical space availability. If it has been longer than two years, the student may be required to repeat courses.

Students who have left the department or college and are not in good standing at the time of departure are not guaranteed readmission to the college or to the Department. The student must first gain readmission to the college. If the student left due to academic or clinical difficulty, to be considered for re-admission to the Department, a written letter is required. The letter should include information which describes the reason for the academic or clinical difficulty, and what has been done to assure that the difficulty will not reoccur. This letter is considered by the Student Policies Committee, who recommends action to the Department Chairperson. The final decision rests with the Department Chairperson. Readmission depends on clinical space availability. If the student has been away for more than two years, they may be required to repeat courses. The academic standards of the Department are followed. No student will be re-admitted if they have failed two or more nursing courses.

**COLLEGE READMISSION PROCEDURE**

Students who are not readmitted to the Department of Nursing may be eligible to be readmitted to the college. Please refer to the College Catalog.

**STUDENT POLICIES**

**I. Policies Related to Eligibility for Course Registration:**

**A. Professional Requirements (*Failure to comply with these requirements will prohibit you from attending clinical experiences.*)**

Two weeks prior to the first day of the senior clinical course and yearly thereafter, all students are required to submit to the course coordinator evidence of:

**1. Health Records**

- a. Annual physical exam documentation;
- b. Annual PPD (TB test) and proof of a negative chest X-ray if the PPD test was positive;
- c. Two doses of measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine or serologic proof of immunity;
- d. A booster dose of TD or Tdap within the last 10 years;
- e. Three (3) doses of hepatitis B vaccine and a copy of dated immune titer;
- f. Proof of chicken pox or immunization.

2. **Personal Liability Insurance**  
Students must have professional malpractice coverage if enrolled in any clinical course. Currently, the College provides this personal liability coverage for all nursing students. If this College coverage should change, students will be responsible for purchasing their own professional liability insurance.
3. **Current CPR Certification** - is through the American Heart Association-BLS for Health Care Provider. AHA certification is to be completed prior to September 1 of the senior year. AHA provides certification for a two year period; certification by AHA prior to September 1 of sophomore and senior years will prevent delays in a student's starting clinical experience on time. Students without current AHA CPR certification will not be allowed to start clinical experience. Delaying clinical experience will jeopardize a student's ability to complete courses and may result in course failure.
4. A Criminal Offense Record Investigation (CORI) is required.
5. Registered Nurse students are required to hold a current RN license in good standing.

## **B. Progression Policies in the Nursing Program**

1. To be in good standing in the major, nursing students must achieve a minimum grade of 2.5 or better in each course. Registered nurse students who fail one nursing course will be allowed to repeat that course. Students may repeat only one nursing course through the entire program. Failure to achieve a grade of 2.5 or better when the course is repeated will result in dismissal from the major. Any subsequent grade of less than 2.5 in any other nursing course will result in dismissal from the major.
2. Registered nurses are tested on drug calculations at the beginning of two semesters.
  - a. The two semesters include:
    - Senior fall semester.
    - Senior spring semester.
  - b. Students must achieve a 90 percent on each test to pass the clinical component of the course in which they are enrolled.
  - c. For students who fail the test, one retake is offered within two weeks of the first test.
  - d. Students who do not obtain a 90 percent grade on the test retake fail the clinical component of the course and, therefore, the entire course.
3. The clinical components of nursing courses are graded as "pass" or "fail". If the clinical component is failed, the student fails the course. Any student who fails the clinical component or withdraws due to difficulties in clinical performance of any nursing course:

- a. May apply for readmission to the failed course when it is next offered if the student is eligible to progress; and
- b. Must submit a letter of intent prior to the registration period that includes:
  1. a statement of the reason for the clinical failure or withdrawal;
  2. a description of the rationale for readmission;
  3. documentation of maintenance of knowledge and clinical skills during the intervening period;
  4. projected strategies for successfully fulfilling course outcomes.
- c. The Student Policies Committee may require further documentation in the form of written communication and/or interview with the Committee.
- d. Readmission to the nursing course must be approved by the Department of Nursing Student Policies Committee and the Department of Nursing Chairperson.
- e. Only one readmission after clinical failure or withdrawal due to clinical difficulties is permitted.

## II. Policies related to evaluation

### A. Fitchburg State College Grading System:

95-100	A	4.0
92-94	A-	3.7
89-91	A-/B+	3.5
86-88	B+	3.3
83-85	B	3.0
80-82	B-	2.7
77-79	B-/C+	2.5
74-76	C+	2.3
71-73	C	2.0
69-70	C-	1.7
67-68	C-/D+	1.5
64-66	D+	1.3
60-63	D	1.0
0-59	F	0.0

### B. Grading System for clinical part of course:

The clinical performance component of each course will be graded as Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory. A student who does not satisfactorily complete a given clinical laboratory experience in any nursing course will receive a 0.0 for the course.

## III. Academic and professional integrity

Nursing has a strong moral basis. Fitchburg State College Department of Nursing subscribes to the American Nurses' Association's *Code for Nurses* and Standards of Nursing Practice. The *Code* (see appendix) is based on the fundamental principle of respect for persons. Other ethical principles underlying the *Code* are autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence, veracity, confidentiality, fidelity, and justice. One of this nursing program's main objectives is that nursing students and graduates will

exhibit professional behavior of responsibility and accountability for individual nursing judgments and actions that is consistent with the profession's ethical *Code*. Nursing faculty and nursing students must maintain high standards of integrity and respect for one another in the academic and professional settings.

Faculty and students have a responsibility to take appropriate action when they detect any form of academic or professional dishonesty. Students should bring concerns to the attention of the faculty responsible for a course or to the clinical instructor.

A student may be barred from class, clinical practice, laboratories, and examinations for unethical, unprofessional behavior, or persistent unsatisfactory behavior that includes, but is not limited to nonattendance, dishonesty, plagiarism, and/or failure to produce assignments to the satisfaction of the instructor. Students so barred will fail the course and may be dismissed from the nursing program and/or College.

#### **A. Definitions of Terms addressing issues of Integrity:**

- **Cheating** is a deception and a fraud. It is committed by using unauthorized sources of assistance and information during examinations or other academic exercises; copying from another's work; falsifying data; and using deception regarding absences and requests for class or clinical extensions. Cheating also includes voluntary assistance or involvement in assisting another student in an act of dishonesty, which is called collusion. Cheating may include submission of the same piece of work for different classes without the instructor's consent.
- **Plagiarism** is stealing another person's work by taking words, ideas, or other material and presenting them as one's own. Plagiarism is committed when a person uses another person's exact words or ideas with some changes without appropriately acknowledging the source of this work and giving credit to the author. Refer to the current American Psychological Association (APA) Publication Manual for further information on plagiarism.
- **Unprofessional Behavior** includes, but is not limited to, falsifying data; demonstrating a pattern of lateness and/or absences, inappropriate professional dress and appearance, and/or dishonesty; stealing, engaging in nursing practice under the influence of drugs, alcohol or other substances; delivering unsafe care within the realm of nursing standards appropriate to the expected level of practice.
- **Academic Dishonesty**  
The Department of Nursing follows the College Academic Dishonesty Policy found in the College Student Handbook and the college catalog. Students will be subject to one or more of the listed sanctions to be determined by the course teacher. Academic dishonesty may result in a grade of 0.0 for the exam or assignment and/or failure of the course; and/or dismissal from the nursing program.

## **B. Course Policies**

1. Class Attendance and Class Behavior

Students are expected to attend all classes. No exceptions due to work conflicts will be accepted. Classes will begin promptly at the assigned time. Students are also expected to be respectful to teachers and other students in the classroom. Recording devices in nursing lecture classes may be used if approved by the instructor.
2. The college policy regarding withdrawal from nursing course is in effect for all semester long courses. With nursing specialty courses, which are seven week courses, students wishing to withdraw without penalty must do so within two business days of completing 50% of the class hours of the course. The date is identified on the course calendars every semester. If the student officially withdraws after two business days of completing 50% of the class hours in this nursing specialty course, a grade of 0.0 is entered on the transcript.

A waiver of college or departmental policies is sometimes granted for documented, critical extenuating circumstances.
3. Term Papers and Other Written Assignments
  - a. Students must use the current American Psychological Association (APA) Publication Manual style guidelines for all papers required in the Department of Nursing.
  - b. All written assignments are due on the scheduled date. Any other arrangement must be made with the faculty.
  - c. Term papers will be submitted in electronic form.
4. Examinations
  - a. Students are required to take examinations on the scheduled dates and times. Arrangements must be made with faculty if a student has to make up an exam.
  - b. Students who are absent from a scheduled examination without prior permission may receive 0.0 for that examination.
5. Clinical Policies
  - a. Clinical experience is an integral part of nursing courses.

Students are expected to attend all clinical laboratory sessions and all scheduled clinical seminars. The clinical experience will begin promptly at the assigned time. Lateness is not tolerated.
  - b. Should an emergency arise whereby a student is unable to attend a particular clinical laboratory session or seminar, the student is expected to notify the faculty and agency before the beginning of the clinical day or as soon as possible thereafter. The faculty may request proof of reason for absence.
  - c. Clinical absences may require additional time or make-up assignments beyond that assigned for the course to satisfactorily attain clinical and/or terminal outcomes.
  - d. No student is permitted to be in the clinical area without the express

- knowledge or permission of the clinical instructor.
- e. Students are required to provide their own transportation for clinical practice, as stated in the College catalog.
  - f. Clinical experiences in some agencies may require evening, night or weekend shifts.
  - g. All courses with a clinical component include a group clinical seminar as an integral part of the practice component. Attendance is required.

6. Dress Code Policy

a. **Purpose:** Students are expected to comply with the professional dress code guidelines to maintain safety in the clinical setting, provide nursing care without further compromising a client's status, identify themselves as student nurses, learn about the presentation of self as a professional and promote the positive image of the nursing profession.

b. **Implementation:** The faculty member for each clinical group will determine the appropriateness of attire and reserves the right to dismiss the student from the clinical setting for failure to comply. The student will then be expected to make up the clinical experience. Repeated arrival to the clinical setting in inappropriate attire will compromise the student's passing the course.

**c. Dress Requirements:**

1. Students are required to wear the FSC Department of Nursing uniform for clinical experiences unless noted otherwise in the following paragraphs. The uniform consists of the specified green top and pants, a short white lab coat, which must be purchased through the Fitchburg State College bookstore, white or sheer stockings, knee-highs, or socks and clean white shoes or all white sneakers. Students must wear a name pin that identifies them as Fitchburg State College students, a plain watch with a second hand, and bring pen, bandage scissors, and stethoscope to the clinical agency.
2. During senior practicum (NURS 4801) students may wear the uniform of the clinical placement in lieu of the FSC uniform.
3. At all other times when students are representing the Department of Nursing and when the school uniform or white shirt/navy or black pants are not required, students must wear professional attire.
4. Unprofessional attire includes, but is not limited to the following: clothing which exposes the abdomen and midriff, low-cut necklines, T-shirts, sleeveless tops, tops with straps, tank tops, crop-tops, halter tops, hats, scarves, shorts, skorts, above mid-knee skirts, spandex, sandals, backless shoes, open toe shoes, shoes with heels higher than 2 inches, boots, leggings, sweat pants, stirrup pants or jersey pants, painter pants, transparent or seductive attire, clothing with rivets showing, sheer neon or glitter clothing, clothing made with jean (denim) fabric of any color, clothing with tears or stains, and sunglasses.

5. Clothing must be clean and wrinkle-free, and must fit properly. Clothing that exposes midriff or cleavage is not allowed. Proper undergarments must be worn and must not be visible.

6. Exceptions to this dress code may be made for religious or health related reasons.

7. Additional requirements:

Due to the increased chemical sensitivity in the general population, the wearing of scented products is not allowed.

Hair should be neat and clean. It should be arranged so it does not compromise patient care or student safety. Hair coloring and make-up must be conservative.

No rings except for plain bands (2 maximum) are permitted. No bracelets or neck jewelry are allowed; *one pair of small stud earrings is allowed*. Other body piercing and tattoos must not be visible.

Nails must be clean and short enough to allow for safe patient care. *Nail polish, if used, must be clear, freshly applied and free of chipping*. Per recommendation of the center for Disease Control, artificial nails are not allowed.

Some agencies may have additional policies with which students must comply.

8. Needle Stick Policy:

In the event of a needle stick injury in the clinical area the following guidelines must be followed:

a. The clinical agency's protocol and policies for immediate care must be followed.

If no policy exists, the student will be advised to report to the Emergency Room of choice or Student Health Services at Fitchburg State College and identify self as a nursing student with needle stick injury.

b. A written report of the incident, completed by the student and the instructor and signed by both, will be kept in the Department of Nursing in a locked cabinet.

c. Student will be followed up either by the FSC Health Services or by her/his health care provider.

All students carrying nine or more credits must be enrolled in a student health insurance plan offered by the college, or in a private comparable health insurance plan. See college catalog for details.

**C. Code of Conduct in Clinical Practice**

1. Safe Clinical Practice

a. Students are expected to demonstrate knowledge and skills appropriate to the level of study.

- b. Students are expected to be prepared physically, intellectually, emotionally, and academically for clinical practice in order to provide safe, competent care.
2. Unsafe/Unsatisfactory Clinical Practice
    - a. Unsafe clinical practice is behavior that places the student, faculty member, client and/or staff in physical and/or emotional jeopardy.
    - b. Physical jeopardy is the risk of causing physical harm to one or more individuals.
    - c. Emotional jeopardy means that the student creates an environment of anxiety or distress, which puts the client, family, staff, and/or agency at risk for emotional or psychological harm.
    - d. Unsafe clinical practice is an occurrence, or pattern of behavior involving unacceptable risk. The student's clinical instructor preceptor, and/or the agency may evaluate such behavior as unsafe. The clinical instructor makes the final decision.
  3. Sanctions and Procedures for Clinical Unsafe Practice
    - a. An agency has the right to dismiss a student from that agency who has been evaluated by the preceptor and/or agency as clinically unsafe.
    - b. Any student who is evaluated as clinically unsafe by the clinical instructor will be removed from clinical practice with an unsatisfactory grade and will fail the course immediately.

**D. Student Appeal of Policies and Sanctions**

A student has the right to request a waiver of policy and appeal accusations of dishonesty. The process for waivers and appeal is found in the College Student Handbook and catalog. The correct procedural steps must be followed.

**E. Course Completion**

Each student must:

1. satisfactorily complete theoretical requirements, including examinations, papers, and other projects;
2. satisfactorily participate in seminars that are part of the course;
3. satisfactorily complete requirements for all clinical experiences; and
4. participate with instructors in final clinical evaluation conference.

**F. Confidentiality Policy**

1. The faculty of Fitchburg State College recognizes the importance of protecting the privacy and confidential information regarding patients, their families, employees, staff, and peers as well as the operations of agencies within which faculty and students practice.
2. It is the legal and ethical responsibility of every faculty member and student to maintain confidentiality and abide by laws pertaining to privacy including the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) guidelines. This policy includes materials discussed in both the classroom and clinical settings. Information pertinent to patients may be relayed only to those individuals who have authority to have that information. All information

pertaining to patients is confidential, regardless of form (verbal, hard copy, film or computerized form). Unauthorized access, use or disclosure is illegal.

3. By signing the Confidentiality Form faculty and students agree to:
  - a. Follow the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) guidelines;
  - b. Read, understand, sign and follow confidentiality and privacy policy statements before beginning each clinical experience. Policies vary from health care agency; students are responsible for reviewing them at the beginning of every clinical experience;
  - c. Protect confidentiality of patients, families, agency, employees, peers and agency at all times;
  - d. Access, use or share confidential information only as it is essential and allowed by law;
  - e. Never release protected health information to any unidentified source; the student must know the person to whom s/he is talking;
  - f. Not discuss patients in public; never discuss confidential information where others – patients, visitors or other employees-might overhear, including elevators, dining facilities and telephones *Protected health information is described in the HIPAA statement*;
  - g. Never leave patient records or information where unauthorized individuals might see them.
  - h. Not photocopy information from the patient's record except as specifically authorized.
  - i. Not access or attempt to access information other than information needed to complete the assignment for the day.

Student records are also protected by HIPAA and specific information is released to clinical agencies regarding immunizations and titers.

### **DEPARTMENTAL ADVISING**

All nursing majors are assigned to a nursing faculty member for advising purposes. Unless that person leaves or you request a change, you will have the same advisor throughout your years in the Department. The Department Chairperson serves as a backup advisor for unique problems or questions your advisor cannot answer. In particular, do not add or drop courses without checking with your advisor. You will meet with your advisor at least once a semester for advising.

Advisors also monitor your progress and receive notice of any academic problems you may be having in nursing or with your overall grades. Many academic problems or other college life concerns can be prevented or alleviated by early intervention. Your advisor can provide you with information to assist you in determining your best course of action, counsel you regarding potential consequences of your performance or suggest resources within or outside of the department that might be of help to you. The advisor's function is only to advise; it is the students responsibility to fulfill all program progression, and graduation requirements.

## LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES CURRICULUM

The curriculum of the Department of Nursing prepares a professional nurse. It is the philosophy of professional nursing educators that all graduates be not only well prepared for a professional career, but that they acquire a well-rounded liberal education. This philosophy is supported by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing, the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education, and Professional Preparation Project of the Center for the Study of Higher and Postsecondary Education. To that end, the degree requires that approximately half of the curriculum credits derive from liberal arts and science courses as described below.

**ART AND MUSIC:** LA&S courses include courses in this area to introduce the student to the uses of art and music in client therapy, in providing a therapeutic or soothing environment for clients, or even, in one case known, as an entry into medical illustration.

**BIOLOGY:** It is possible, though difficult due to number of laboratory hours, to minor in Biology with the addition of two upper division courses. The relevance to nursing is obvious and very attractive on a resume for entrance into a science-based graduate program.

**CHEMISTRY:** Advanced work in chemistry, particularly in organic areas, also is obviously relevant and useful to have on a transcript for graduate studies. The same potential problem with laboratory scheduling pertains, however.

**COMPUTER SCIENCE:** Increasingly, nurses are using computers not only for personal use such as in word processing, but also in clinical and educational settings. Many hospitals are using computers to access patient laboratory data or medication records, and are expanding these usages every year. In addition, graduate study requires a certain level of proficiency for statistical operations, library research, and developing educational programming.

**ECONOMICS:** No nurse can any longer ignore the impact that economics has had in recent years on health care. Economics underlies decisions about who receives nursing care, for how long, and in what setting. Understanding the American economic system is becoming essential for professional practice. It is also useful for personal financial decisions.

**ENGLISH:** Professional nurses are, frequently called on to write reports, submit proposals for institutional change or monetary support, or develop patient education materials. Good writing skills are essential for a professional image. Studying well-written literature is one way to develop a feel for good writing. It can also provide resources for helping a client endure a lengthy illness or confinement through reading. Children's Literature and Literature and Disability are nursing student favorites.

**LANGUAGES:** Professional nurses are particularly concerned with individualizing the client care they provide. It is essential that the client's culture, including their language, is taken into account in planning care. Think of the advantage of being able to converse

with a client in his/her own language. Employing agencies value applicants who can help them provide multicultural services.

**GEOGRAPHY AND ENVIROMENTAL/EARTH SCIENCE:** Many topics in this area impact on nursing issues. Nurses are involved with controlling stressors in the individual client's environment and, in community health, with the overall population, conservation, and environment.

**HISTORY:** It has been said that those who do not understand history are doomed to repeat it. In nursing, it is extremely useful to understand the historical context of the development of nursing practice and of the health care industry as a whole. Understanding the historical background of our own society and current world events also aids the nurse in understanding the clients to whom nursing care is being provided, their backgrounds, and their world perspectives. History of other cultures is very useful in broadening the nurse's repertoire of responses to those of different backgrounds.

**MATHEMATICS:** Proficiency in mathematics is a hallmark of any well educated person. Mathematics is used in all phases of nursing, from calculating drug dosages, to planning staff patterns, to budgeting for supplies and staff.

**PHILOSOPHY:** An understanding of logical reasoning and systems of thought is essential for any professional career. While critical thinking and ethical reasoning are incorporated into many nursing courses, their bases are to be found in the Department of Philosophy's offerings. Many experts feel that, without a good grounding in philosophy, one cannot call oneself well educated.

**POLITICAL SCIENCE:** Even though many nurses attempt to avoid "politics" it is impossible to do so in today's society. Whether acquiring an understanding of how the government works in order to influence health care or human service legislation and regulation, or how institutional policy for health care agencies is developed and implemented, nurses will find knowledge in political science very useful personally and professionally.

**PSYCHOLOGY AND SOCIOLOGY:** The program requires basic courses in these two disciplines. Further study is useful to broaden and deepen nurses' understanding of their individual clients and the family, group and societal structures and constraints in which they live. Medical Sociology is a favorite of nursing majors and helps them in understanding the health care system milieu.

**SPEECH:** Nursing majors are not required to take the Speech and Listening requirement course because this outcome is integrated within the nursing courses. This is not because it is a useless or irrelevant course, but simply to allow more freedom of choice. Professional nurses are frequently called upon to speak before groups on health matters and should be able to provide a professional oral presentation at such times.

## CLINICAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

Nursing students are expected to demonstrate competency in a variety of clinical areas as a condition of graduation. All students must show evidence of satisfactory performance on clinical evaluations in order to successfully progress through and complete their nursing program.

The criteria for clinical evaluation in the sophomore and junior years, is based on Bondy's Criterion Reference Rating Scales.\* The rating scale and definition of terms is in the following:

### CRITERIA FOR CLINICAL EVALUATION

Scale Label	Standard Procedure	Quality of Performance	Assistance
Independent	Safe Accurate Effect     Each time Affect     Each time	Proficient; coordinated; confident Occasional expenditure of excess energy Within an expedient time period	Without supporting cues
Supervised	Safe Accurate Effect     Each Time Affect     Each Time	Efficient; coordinated; confident Some expenditure of excess energy Within a reasonable time period	Occasional supportive cues
Assisted	Safe Accurate   Each Time Effect     Most of the Time Affect     Most of the Time	Skillful in parts of behavior Inefficiency and uncoordination Expend excess energy Within a delayed time period	Frequent verbal and occasional physical directive cues in addition to supportive ones
Marginal	Safe but not alone Performs at risk Accurate – Not always Effect - Occasionally Affect - Occasionally	Unskilled; inefficient Considerable expenditure of excess energy Prolonged time period	Continuous verbal and frequent physical cues
Dependent	Unsafe Unable to demonstrate behavior	Unable to demonstrate Procedure behavior Lacks confidence, coordination, efficiency	Continuous verbal and physical cues
	Not Observed		

## DEFINITIONS

Safety: includes safety for client, nurse and others in the environment.

Accuracy: precision in applying knowledge base, in communication, in psychomotor skills.

Effect: achievement of intended purpose of behavior.

Affect: tone, manner of behavior, demeanor.

Clinical evaluation requires provision for inclusion of supporting statements or examples, opportunity for student self-evaluation and comments, and indication that the student has reviewed and discussed the ratings on the clinical evaluation tool. These are, therefore, included on all departmental clinical performance forms.

Bondy, K.N. (1983). Criterion-referenced definitions for rating scales in clinical evaluation. *Journal of Nursing Education*. 22:9, 376-382.

## PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

Becoming involved in Department of Nursing activities, such as the Student Nurses Association or Sigma Theta Tau or some other college organization will help prepare you for participation in professional organizations in your career after graduation.

There are a variety of professional organizations and groups to which nurses belong. A description of some major groups follows.

Sigma Theta Tau International is a selective international nursing honor society. Many graduates and faculty members, as well as community nurse leaders, are active members in the college chapter, Epsilon Beta.

The American Nurses Association is an organization that helps set standards (see Appendix A for the Code of Nurses) and is involved in political action toward quality nursing and health care.

There are also many associations representing specialty areas of nursing which provide informational journals and research opportunities for nurses, such as critical care, occupational health, infection control, oncology nursing, orthopedic nursing, maternity nursing, neurosurgical nursing, and just about any other specialty available. In addition, many health-related groups have a nurses' section, such as the American Public Health Association, the American Cancer Society, or the Lung Association. There is no lack of opportunities for nurses to become involved in the work and activities of organizations which promote health, high quality of nursing, and support of the nursing profession.

### Department Committees

The Faculty Committee of the Department of Nursing has a number of committees to foster the mission of the department: Student Policies, Admissions, Bylaws, Curriculum, and Liaison/Nominations. Students are encouraged and very welcome to serve on the Curriculum Committee (one student per level) which develops and evaluates the program's offerings toward the degree in nursing. Students can bring their own and their classmates' concerns and suggestions regarding their program of study to the Committee and have a vote in their resolution. The Liaison/Nominations Committee works with the Nursing Student Association and also recommends students for departmental awards at Honors Convocation. Students who would like to serve on departmental committees should forward a request to the department chairperson.

### Student Nursing Association

This student-run organization is sponsored by the department and supported by the Student Government Association of the College. All students are eligible to belong. It is affiliated with the National Student Nurses Association, and members are elected each year to attend the national convention. Activities are both social and professional. (see Appendix B for NSNA Student Bill of Rights).

### Epsilon Beta, Sigma Theta Tau Inc., International Honor Society of Nursing

The department sponsors a chapter, Epsilon Beta, of this prestigious honor society for nurses. Students in their junior and senior years as well as nurses in the community who have demonstrated academic achievement and leadership potential may be elected to membership. Opportunities for organizational leadership, communication and collaboration with nurse leaders in the New England area are available to members. Scholarly activities are sponsored both by the College chapter and collaboratively with other regional chapters.

### Financial Awards:

In addition to the college's Financial Aid Department, each year the following scholarships are awarded to qualified nursing students: Please refer to the College's Scholarship Application Bulletin for details on these scholarships.

**Annette Rose Mitchell Nursing Scholarship** awarded to a senior Nursing student who has maintained a 3.0 gpa for three years.

**Dr. Burnham Walker Memorial Scholarship** awarded to a full-time student majoring in Biology, Chemistry or Nursing based on financial need and academic achievement.

**Flora D. Mulholland Memorial Scholarship** awarded to a Nursing major evincing high scholastic achievement and a demonstrated financial need.

**Grace Gummo Nursing Scholarship** awarded to deserving students in the Nursing program.

**Lara A. Willard Memorial Scholarship** awarded to a female undergraduate nursing student evidencing scholastic achievement, demonstrating financial need and the potential to succeed.

## RESOURCES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF NURSING

Department Office located in Thompson Hall 324

Linda McKay (Chairperson)	<a href="mailto:lmckay@fsc.edu">lmckay@fsc.edu</a>	978-665-3221
Carla McGrath	<a href="mailto:cmcgrath@fsc.edu">cmcgrath@fsc.edu</a>	978-665-3221
Marci Horgan	<a href="mailto:mhorgan@fsc.edu">mhorgan@fsc.edu</a>	978-665-3023

The Resource persons available in the office are Carla McGrath and Marci Horgan, department secretaries. If they do not know the answer to your question, they can find someone who does. They can provide most departmental forms and know most departmental regulations. In addition, they can facilitate contact with faculty members as needed.

Faculty mailboxes are also located in the Department Offices. Use these boxes to communicate with your instructor or advisor.

### Faculty Offices – All in Thompson Hall

Nursing Faculty offices are all located on the second and third floors of Thompson Hall.

### Websites for Support

The Department of Nursing website can be found at [www.fsc.edu/nursing](http://www.fsc.edu/nursing). The site features Faculty and Nursing Students Association information, links to other websites and is constantly updated with current departmental and college news.

### Library

Information on the library can be obtained at the Library website at [www.fsc.edu/library](http://www.fsc.edu/library).

### Academic Success Center

The College maintains a number of academic and personal support services for all students. Most of these services are located on the third floor of Hammond. Information can also be found at the Fitchburg State College website for the Academic Success Center at [www.fsc.edu](http://www.fsc.edu).

The following is a list of these programs:

**The ACCESS Program and Minority Affairs Programs:** a state funded program to assist talented, low income and educationally disadvantaged undergraduate students;

**Counseling Services:** for short term, confidential counseling services to all students;

**Career Services:** for assisting students and alumni in planning for career decisions during and after enrollment at the College; also GRE's;

**Disability Services:** for support services for undergraduate and graduate students with disabilities enrolled in the day or evening division;

**Expanding Horizons:** a federally funded program for first generation undergraduate college students, low income students, or students with disabilities;

**International Education Office:** for study abroad opportunities, and to support undergraduate and graduate international students, and to provide cultural awareness programs;

**Mathematics Center:** for students who need peer tutors who specialize in one-on-one tutoring;

**Placement Test Center:** for administration of required placement tests;

**Tutor Center:** for free individual peer tutoring to assist students to increase their academic potential; and

**Writing Center:** for professional and peer tutors who work with students to improve their writing skills.

#### Affiliating Clinical Agencies

The Department of Nursing uses a variety of health care, health promotion, and related agencies to enhance the learning experiences of students. For this purpose the program maintains contractual arrangements with affiliating agencies. These contracts require that all students and faculty meet certain criteria in order to use the agency's facilities and clients for learning experiences. Students must be willing to adhere to agency policies in order to fulfill the requirements of the program. Students must provide their own transportation to the clinical agencies assigned. Arrangements for carpools are common and feasible up to the senior year.

### **AVENUES FOR ADDRESSING CONCERNS**

Nursing majors who have concerns about the program or personal experiences have a number of avenues by which to address their concerns. Please refer to the FSC college catalog for the college guidance process.

#### Changing their major

Students should seek the counsel of their advisor and the chair of the department of the major into which they want to transfer before taking the serious step of changing their major. No nursing student will be denied a change of major out of the Department of Nursing, but the consequences of doing so need to be fully explored prior to a final decision. Specific consequences include increased semesters to complete another major, potential unavailability of reentering the nursing major or lack of accessibility to the desired other major.

### Concerns about the curriculum

Students have access to the department Curriculum Committee either through direct representation or by written communication or petition. Extensive evaluation of the students' perceptions of courses, agencies and curriculum objectives is conducted by the faculty on a routine basis, and students should take advantage of the opportunity offered by this process to contribute their ideas, concerns and criticisms. Students need to understand that curriculum change is a process that is not undertaken lightly nor without substantial evaluation of problems. The faculty encourages any and all dialogue regarding the need for change in the program.

### Involvement in changing College and Department policies

College-wide academic policies are determined by the governance mechanism of the All-College Committee and its standing sub-committees. Students interested in or concerned about college-wide policies can request that the Student Government Association nominate them for a position on these bodies or can develop their own proposals for change. Proposal forms are available from the ACC chairperson or from any department chairperson.

Departmental academic policies are developed by the departmental Student Policies Committee. While students do not have a vote on this committee, concerns or suggested changes may be communicated to the Committee for their consideration. Changes in policy recommended by this Committee usually have to be submitted to the All-College Committee's subcommittee on academic policy which recommends approval to the ACC which recommends approval to the President. If the President approves the change, it takes effect. All ACC meetings are open to the student body and, with permission of the chairperson; guests at meetings are allowed to address the committee.

### Concerns about faculty

The College mandates a procedure for student evaluation of faculty in every class for which the student is registered. Even though the effects of their anonymous ratings may not always be immediately evident to students, they may be assured that student evaluations are considered a vital part of any faculty member's personnel action process. If students have major concerns or issues about a faculty member's performance they may also bring it to the attention of the chairperson of that department.

### Problems between faculty and student

In all cases of disagreement between faculty and student as, for example grading, clinical evaluation etc., the student must attempt to resolve the situation through direct communication with the faculty member involved. Students may use their advisor for assistance in this process. If the issue to be resolved involves the course faculty team, communication with the course coordinator will be necessary. If still unresolved, the student may seek recourse from the Department Chairperson. If resolution is still not achieved the Dean of Student and Academic Life and, ultimately, the Vice President of Academic Affairs may be consulted. Students need to provide written documentation regarding the problem.

## Concerns with Application of Academic Policy

### College:

If the policy is a College-wide one, students should consult with their advisor regarding the feasibility of requesting a waiver of policy. Waivers require the comment and signature of the faculty instructor or advisor and the Department Chairperson before being submitted to the Dean of Student and Academic Life for a decision. Forms are available from the office of the Dean of Student and Academic Life.

### Department:

If the policy is a departmental one, Waiver Forms are available in the nursing office. Comment and signature from the instructor or advisor and a recommendation from the departmental Student Policies Committee is required before being submitted to the Department Chairperson for a decision. All waivers need to go through the procedural steps. They are not automatically granted. Students are encouraged to also submit an attached letter to the waiver, describing more fully their circumstances.

### Judicial Board Proceedings:

Please refer to your college catalog for a comprehensive explanation of this procedure.

## **Appendix A**

### **AMERICAN NURSES' ASSOCIATION'S CODE FOR NURSES**

1. The nurse provides services with respect for human dignity and the uniqueness of the client, unrestricted by considerations of social or economic status, personal attribute, or the nature of health problems.
2. The nurse safeguards the client's right to privacy by judiciously protecting information of a confidential nature.
3. The nurse acts to safeguard the client and the public when health care and safety are affected by the incompetent, unethical, or illegal practice of any person.
4. The nurse assumes responsibility and accountability for individual nursing judgments and actions.
5. The nurse maintains competence in nursing.
6. The nurse exercises informed judgment and uses individual competence and qualifications as criteria in seeking consultation, accepting responsibilities, and delegating nursing activities to others.
7. The nurse participates in activities that contribute to the ongoing development of the profession's body of knowledge.
8. The nurse participates in the profession's efforts to implement and improve standards of nursing.
9. The nurse participates in the profession's efforts to establish and maintain conditions of employment conducive to high quality nursing care.
10. The nurse participates in the profession's effort to protect the public from misinformation and misrepresentation and to maintain the integrity of nursing.
11. The nurse collaborates with members of the health professions and other citizens in promoting community and national efforts to meet the health needs of the public.

## **Appendix B**

### **N.S.N.A. STUDENT BILL OF RIGHTS**

The National Student Nurses Association has adopted the following bill of rights and responsibilities. The Fitchburg State College Nursing Student Association has endorsed this document.

1. Students should be encouraged to develop the capacity for critical judgment and engage in a sustained and independent search for truth.
2. The freedom to teach and the freedom to learn are inseparable facets of academic freedom; students should exercise their freedom with responsibility.
3. Each institution has a duty to develop policies and procedures which provides and safeguard the student's freedom to learn.
4. Under no circumstances should a student be barred from admission to a particular institution on the basis of race, creed, sex, or marital status.
5. Students should be free to take reasoned exception to the data or views offered in any course of study and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion, but they are responsible for learning the content of any course of study for which they are enrolled.
6. Students should have protection through orderly procedures against prejudices or capricious academic evaluation, but they are responsible for maintaining standards of academic performance established for each course in which they are enrolled.
7. Information about student views, beliefs, and political associations which instructors acquire in the course of their work should be considered confidential and not released without the knowledge or consent of the students.
8. The student should have the right to have a responsible voice in the determination of his/her curriculum.
9. Institutions should have a carefully considered policy as to the information, which should be a part of a student's permanent education record and as to the conditions of disclosure.
10. Students and student organizations should be free to examine and discuss all questions of interest to them, and to express opinions publicly and privately.
11. Students should be allowed to invite and hear any person of their choosing, thereby taking the responsibility of furthering their education.
12. The student body should have clearly defined means to participate in the formulation and application of institutional policy affecting academic and student affairs.

13. The institution has an obligation to clarify those standards of behavior which it considers essential to its educational mission and community life.
14. Disciplinary procedures should be instituted only for violations of standards of conduct formulated with significant student participation and published in advance through such means as a student handbook or a generally available body of institutional regulations. Grievance procedures should be available to every student.
15. As citizens and members of an academic community, students are subject to the obligations which accrue to them by virtue of this membership and should enjoy the same freedom of citizenship.
16. Students have the right to belong or refuse to belong to any organization of their choice.
17. Students have the right to personal privacy in their living space to the extent that the welfare of others is respected.
18. Adequate safety precautions should be provided by schools of nursing, for example, to and from student dorms, adequate street lighting, locks, etc.
19. Dress code, if present in school, should be established by student government in conjunction with the school, director and faculty, so the highest professional standards possible are maintained, but also taking into consideration points of comfort and practicality for the student.
20. Grading systems should be carefully reviewed periodically with students and faculty for clarification and better student-faculty understanding.