



## **School of Health Sciences: Nursing Program Philosophy**

The School of Health Sciences Nursing Program, as an integral part of Georgia Gwinnett College, is dedicated to holistic nursing education, based on a strong foundation in liberal arts, math, science and technology. A concept-based curriculum theoretically grounded in “caring” will prepare leaders able to manage care and promote positive transformations for the health of individuals, families, groups, communities, populations, systems and for nursing practice.

### **Caring**

Caring is a mode of being, which is developed when relating to others with trust, humility and honesty (Boykin and Schoenhofer, 2001). Caring is not an outcome but is created in the moment by shared interactions and communications with people. Caring is realized when the unique attributes and experiences of oneself and others of diverse backgrounds and cultures are recognized and respected. A caring perspective guides human interactions and can transform nursing practice and the systems in which nursing care is delivered. Nurses engage in people’s lives in authentic caring relationships to improve health.

### **Health, People, and Environments**

Health is a multi-faceted phenomenon which affects all matters of human life. Health is not static, but changes on a continuum of wellness and illness; not as a physical state alone, but as a sense of well-being in all dimensions of human life. As holistic beings, people have emotional, spiritual, physical, social and cognitive aspects and function within dynamic social, physical, institutional, economic and political environments which can impinge or enhance health. Environmental alterations have the potential to cause illness and create vulnerabilities in individuals, families, groups, communities and populations. Because health is subjective and personal, people have the right and responsibility to self-determination and to expect a patient-centered focus to their care. The goal for nursing practice is to assist others to achieve a positive state of being marked by spiritual, physical, cognitive and emotional wellness, or a dignified and compassionate death.

### **Nursing and Nursing Practice**

Professional nursing practice is knowledge based, value driven, ethically rooted and marked by skill in thinking and doing to promote health across the lifespan in individuals, families, groups, communities and populations. The professional nurse must be morally responsible, be intellectually honest, be accountable for actions and act with integrity. Development of nursing knowledge is rooted in theory and dependent on evidence from which research is translated into practice to provide safe and effective care. Nurses function collaboratively and autonomously within professional standards engaging in self-reflection, self-regulation and commitment to professional development. The primary charge for nursing is to deliver safe, competent, quality care, using technology and informatics skills. Nurses engage in political leadership as servant



leaders, advocate for clients and interact with other disciplines and community stakeholders to improve the health of individuals, families, groups, communities and populations.

### **Nursing Education**

The School of Health Sciences nursing faculty believes that their participation in the educational process emanates from a natural feeling to serve and a desire to nurture. Educators who provide a receptive, supportive and engaging learning environment will best inspire a student's transformation into a professional nurse. At a time when the amount of information exceeds one's ability to know, a new model for education – which emphasizes concepts, creativity and critical thinking as tools to create new knowledge and solve problems – is essential to achieving the mission and vision of the nursing program.

The faculty believe the invitational educational environment first proposed by Purkey and Novak (1996) can be used with a concept based curriculum to offer a vibrant social, educational and cultural learning environment. An invitational educational environment stimulates enhanced learning that is social, physical, cognitive, spiritual and emotional. Faculty view themselves as collaborators, directors of learning and role models for the evolving nurse and support students' self-development as nursing professionals. Students intentionally participate and connect collaboratively – intraprofessionally and interdisciplinarily – in a variety of settings. This type of learning fosters critical thinkers, problem solvers, lifelong learners and leaders for the future of health care. In serving others, the nurse can have unique, rich, personal and professional learning experiences, which can illuminate disparities and vulnerabilities, and better prepare students for the 21<sup>st</sup> century global health care needs.

### **References**

- Boykin, A., and Schoenhofer, S. (2001). *Nursing as caring: A model for transforming practice*. Sudbury, Massachusetts: Jones and Bartlett.
- Purkey, W. W., and Novak, J. (1996). *Inviting school success: A self-concept approach to teaching, learning, and democratic practice* (third edition). Florence, Kentucky: Wadsworth.