

THE DEPARTMENT OF NURSING

Mission

The Department of Nursing is committed to preparing competent baccalaureate graduates who can provide quality nursing care for diverse populations at all system levels (i.e. individuals, families, communities, and populations) within diverse health care settings.

Philosophy

The curriculum is based on the concepts of nursing, person, environment, health, and nursing education and *The Essentials for Baccalaureate Education for Professional Nursing Practice* (AACN, 2008). The UAPB program is developed based on constructivist theory and is grounded in evidenced based practice standards. The role of constructivism in the BSN program is one where the learner is treated as an adult; the student is able to make decisions about his or her educational needs and be an active participant in that educational process. The faculty believe these processes leads to the development of the ability to think critically (Rolloff, 2010). Because the baccalaureate nursing education prepares generalists who learn to critically think and use evidence as the basis for practice, constructivism as a programmatic educational theory allows learners to build knowledge as part of a process for organizing and making sense of their experiences.

Additionally, the curriculum is based on the following core concepts: communication, critical thinking, clinical reasoning, clinical judgment, health promotion, human diversity, illness and disease management, professional values/ethics, and role development.

Nursing is a practice discipline, profession, and an art that is concerned with the experiences and responses of individuals, families, communities, and populations to health, illness, disease, and death. Through client centered ‘modalities’ nurses promote, restore, and maintain optimal health and when death is imminent, nurses provide support that allows the person to die with dignity. Thus, nursing is caring competence.

In a caring environment, the nurse is an advocate for the client communication is open, and the quality of care is improved. The nurse enacts three practice roles: provider of care, manager of care, and member of the profession. Nurses use a systematic approach based on critical thinking and clinical reasoning to determine appropriate nursing interventions needed, implement those interventions, and evaluate client outcomes. Critical thinking infers that the nurse identifies, evaluates, and uses evidence to guide logical reasoning and decision making. Finally, nurses have to be technologically competent to assess and document the health status of clients, document care given, and to collaborate and communicate efficiently and effectively with other members of the health care team.

The concept of **person** includes individuals, families, communities, and populations who are the recipients of nursing care. People are holistic beings who have

similar cultural, emotional, intellectual, physical, social, and spiritual characteristics. In addition, people are unique, sentient beings who are capable of abstract reasoning, creativity, aesthetic appreciation, and assuming responsibility for self and others.

The **environment** entails those internal and external factors which influence health. The nurse manages the environment to assist the client in achieving health. The curriculum incorporates Quality and Safety, Education in Nursing (QSEN) standards and nationally established safety goals. A safe environment is one with the absence of internal and external threat or danger or opportunity for error.

Health, including disease and illness, is an expression of the interaction between the person and the environment along a continuum. Health is achieved when there is a balance between the dynamic interaction of physiological, psychological, cultural, and spiritual components. Health restoration assists those individuals whose health is compromised to returning to their former health status, and if this is not achievable, to obtain the highest level of health possible. Health maintenance assists clients to prevent the development of illness/disease.

Nursing Education/Learning prepares graduates to practice within professional guidelines and professional standards. The faculty believe that education is achieved best in an environment of trust that is developed between the teacher and the learner. In this environment, students learn to trust the teacher and themselves, thereby, becoming competent in delivering safe and appropriate nursing care. Thus, the teaching-learning environment supports the acquisition of clinical competence through continual improvement in clinical reasoning, clinical judgment, and the implementation of appropriate nursing interventions. This environment supports the development of nursing leaders who are capable of influencing health care delivery and health care policy decisions. Finally, this supportive teaching-learning environment fosters the development of a love for life-long learning in graduates. This technical learning environment requires that faculty engage in continuous educational and professional development.

Baccalaureate Nursing Education prepares graduates for entry into professional practice as generalists. This is achieved by building on a liberal arts and science foundation and preparing students to think critically, thereby, enhancing the continual development of clinical reasoning and clinical judgment abilities. Finally, baccalaureate nursing education prepares graduates with a foundation for master's study.