

Nursing Department Philosophy 2010

The nursing program is based upon Christian-Anabaptist faith beliefs, as well as the Standards for Baccalaureate and Masters Education established by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing, and is consistent with EMU's mission and vision. This philosophical statement identifies the major underpinnings for the program and the nursing department's philosophy of education.

The discipline of **nursing** is concerned with how nurses interact with people in relation to their health and within their total environment. Nursing at its core is caring for people within their health experience. **Persons** are viewed holistically in terms of needs that vary with developmental stage and cultural background. Individuals, families, groups and communities, as clients, are approached within a sacred covenant framework. Trust among partners, loyalty, responsibility, mutual obligations and unconditional faithfulness characterize a covenant relationship. **Health** is seen as relative and as encompassing both wellness and illness. Wholeness and healing, the goals of nursing care, are viewed from a Christian perspective. The **environment** is viewed as including both natural and socio-cultural systems. Health care systems are especially important components of the environment. Nursing is characterized by a variety of functions, Christian Anabaptist approaches to caring, roles and professional responsibilities. The discipline of nursing is thus best built upon knowledge from the natural and behavioral sciences and the liberal arts.

Preparation of both the masters and baccalaureate professional nurse requires the development of intellectual and affective capacities. The effective nurse is able to think critically, feel deeply, communicate clearly, interact meaningfully, act morally, assume responsibility and exhibit a thirst for knowledge.

A number of beliefs underlie the educational environment we seek to create. Foundationally, we believe that personal growth is essential for professional growth and that interdependence in a covenant relationship with faculty facilitates this growth. Growth is enhanced when teachers provide honest feedback within a supportive framework. Learning is also promoted when student involvement is increased, when students are partners in learning, when the goals of learning are clear, and when the student has the opportunity to practice desired skills. Mastery based learning within the covenant framework is facilitated by faculty and students partnering together. Flexibility in curriculum design enhances learning for students with diverse educational and cultural backgrounds. The educational experience incorporates a variety of methodologies in recognition that not one teaching method meets everyone's learning needs.

Graduates at both levels have the capacity to develop a personal art of nursing that grows from an excellent knowledge base, their own personal resources, a sense of the sacred in moments and places, and a profound sense of respect for all people. Graduates are self-directed and engage in continual learning and development. They are accountable for their own actions but work collaboratively with clients, other health team members, and communities within which they practice. As professionals, they seek to improve health care via approaches which promote peace and justice through involvement in church, community and political and professional organizations.

Baccalaureate prepared graduates are generalists prepared to function as beginning practitioners in a variety of settings with a focus on individuals, families, or groups of clients. They have the capacity to develop a personal art of nursing that grows from an excellent knowledge base. Graduates are self-directed and have the foundation necessary to engage in

graduate study. Students are prepared to function as leaders in whatever setting or role in which they practice.

Master's graduates are prepared to lead and collaborate in complex health care systems. They can bring about change within these systems through approaches such as empowerment, reconciliation, partnership, presence, justice, service and advocacy. Master's graduates become change agents and a voice for clients and the profession that is authentic, credible and effective in improving relationships, promoting patient safety, enhancing patient outcomes and creating healing health care environments.