

Program Philosophy

Vanguard University gathers a community of learners resolved to blend the pursuit of academic excellence with growth as authentic Christians. The educational experience at Vanguard, therefore, promotes the integration of faith, learning, and living. The university believes that scholarship in the arts, sciences, and professional studies illuminated by Christian truth fosters the intellectual development, moral maturity, and spiritual vitality of students. The university motto—Truth, Virtue, and Service—expresses our conviction that learning involves the whole person: head, heart, and hands. The philosophy of the Nursing Program is consistent with that of the University as it seeks to equip students for a life of compassionate nursing leadership and service through a values-based nursing education.

Nursing is both a profession and a discipline that is responsive to changing health needs within an increasingly complex health care system. The nurse practices with ultimate compassion and respect for the inherent dignity, worth, and uniqueness of every patient, regardless of socioeconomic status, personal attributes, or health problems (ANA, 2001). Nurses, in collaboration with other health care professionals, promote optimal health care, quality and safety, and comfort of individuals, families, groups and communities through the systematic application of knowledge from nursing and related disciplines.

The faculty believes that a liberal arts education that integrates faith and life should be based on humanistic approaches that foster critical thinking and promote awareness of social, cultural, and spiritual similarities and differences among individuals. The faculty views each student as a unique person with special talents, abilities, needs, and goals. Cultural diversity, unique life experiences, and changing socioeconomic factors affect each student differently. To this end, faculty endeavor to be professor-mentors in a dynamic community environment that assists each student to realize their full potential and to discern God's purpose for their lives. The acquisition of professional knowledge and the promotion of academic excellence occur through active involvement of the student in the learning process. As adult learners, students assume primary responsibility for learning, while faculty provides and facilitates educational opportunities for knowledge acquisition and professional role development. We believe that an atmosphere of shared growth and inquiry within a dynamic community environment offers the maximum potential for development of the whole person.

The Essentials of Baccalaureate Education for Professional Nursing Practice (2008) and The Essentials of Master's Education in Nursing (2011) provide the foundation for the curriculum for both the baccalaureate and masters programs and are essential for the practice of professional nursing. This education provides the foundation for the development of professional knowledge, critical thinking, clinical reasoning, clinical judgment, ethical decision-making, leadership skills, and the independent and interdisciplinary pursuit of high standards of health care. Implicit in the practice of professional nursing is accountability for professional growth and practice, demonstration of advocacy and leadership, and commitment to the development and application of nursing theory, evidence-based practice, and research. Life-long learning leads to the optimal development of the individual nurse personally, spiritually, and professionally as well as the profession of nursing.

Vanguard Nursing Program Goals

1. To provide quality nursing programs which equip students for a spirit-empowered life of Christ-centered leadership and service.
2. To prepare graduates who can provide age appropriate, culturally sensitive, and competent care within a framework of scientific and professional accountability and function independently in a variety of healthcare settings.
3. To prepare graduates with the necessary foundation for further education and specialization within their chosen career path and who demonstrate commitment to lifelong learning and personal, spiritual, and professional growth.
4. To establish innovative educational and community partnerships that better prepare graduates to meet the complex needs of the population they serve.
5. To be recognized as a center of Christian nursing education that demonstrates spiritual vitality and academic excellence.

Student Learning Outcomes (revised and based on University's Core Student Learning Outcomes).

1. **Critical Thinking/Clinical Reasoning/Clinical Judgment:** Use a systematic approach in assessing, planning, testing, and evaluating innovative and evidence-based solutions to patient care problems across a variety of healthcare settings.
2. **Integration of Faith and Learning:** Develop and articulate an understanding of a Biblical worldview in integrating values of truth, virtue, and service in personal and professional life and in providing Christ-centered leadership and service.
3. **Holistic Learning:** Demonstrate responsibility and accountability for self and nursing practice, including engagement in life-long learning and ongoing professional growth.
4. **Communication:** Use communication theories and techniques to promote communication and collaborative relationships with intraprofessional healthcare team members, individuals, families, groups, and communities.
5. **Professional Excellence:** Use a problem solving approach in evaluating patient health status and in advocating for the patient and family, anticipating and reducing risk, and improving health outcomes.
6. **Cultural Competency and Citizenship:** Employ culturally sensitive nursing care and communication strategies while collaborating in community service programs that promote the health of diverse populations.
7. **Information and Technology:** Demonstrate technology skills in locating, retrieving, applying, and evaluating the integrity of information while using information responsibly and ethically.