



# The University of Texas at Austin School of Nursing

## School of Nursing Philosophy

We, the faculty of The University of Texas at Austin School of Nursing, present herein our shared values and perspectives so that these may guide us in our teaching, research, and curricular decision making.

As faculty members of The University of Texas at Austin, a major research institution, we believe that the advancement of the profession of nursing depends upon the generation of knowledge through scholarly inquiry and its dissemination in curricula that prepare students for excellence and leadership in nursing and society. The faculty is dedicated to providing an environment of innovative educational excellence to prepare students for a complex and changing world.

As faculty members of a school of nursing, we believe that nursing is a caring health profession, whose practice is built on knowledge, theory, and research. The nursing profession provides indispensable health services to persons, families, groups, and communities. Those services emphasize the promotion, maintenance, and restoration of health and alleviation of suffering, as well as in health policy formulation. We believe excellence in nursing is achieved by thoughtful use of the nursing process and attention to clients' needs and values. Further, we affirm the intrinsic dignity and worth of every person as a composite of unique genetic and cultural attributes and diverse physical, psychological, spiritual, and social needs.

As health professionals, we recognize the complex nature of health—as a feeling of well-being, as the capacity to perform to the best of one's ability, and as adaptation to varying situations throughout the life cycle. Health care for individuals, communities, and society requires the efforts of many professions. Among health professions, nursing contributes a unique perspective by emphasizing a holistic view of each person within his or her family and community environment. In that context, individuals have the right to participate in decisions affecting their health care and well-being; the right to function at their most independent level, and the right to refuse care or services. Furthermore, specific nursing interventions should take place within a recognized framework of cultural variations and norms.

As educators, we express a firm commitment to excellence within the University and, in particular, to excellence in nursing scholarship. To foster that scholarship, we share with students the responsibility to create an educational climate that fosters civility and reflects democratic attitudes and beliefs, stimulates intellectual inquiry and creativity, and encourages the development of students to their highest potential. As educators, we believe that critical thinking is a core competency of all professional nurses and foster the development of these skills in all of our programs. We, as a faculty, further believe that continued learning throughout a career is essential to maintaining standards of professional competency for both faculty

members and alumni. We recognize and value the contributions of our clinical colleagues in nursing and other professions and collaborative partners in the community who support our missions of education, research, and scholarly practice.

As a teaching faculty within a professional discipline, we believe that degree programs which provide entry into practice, whether at the undergraduate or graduate level, should prepare students to be accountable and knowledgeable members of the profession, and partners with other professionals in planning, delivering and evaluating high quality health care. Recognizing the changing nature of occupations among adults, we support multiple degree pathways for entry into professional nursing. Each must be based on sound educational principles and encourage excellence and leadership in nursing.

Because nursing as a discipline has demonstrated tremendous scholarly growth, we strongly affirm the belief that nursing education, including baccalaureate, masters and doctoral, is founded on mastery of nursing scholarship. Nursing scholarship involves both the theoretical and research contributions of nursing scholars, as well as processes of research and intellectual inquiry which challenge those contributions. We encourage educational experiences that clarify ethical issues. The baccalaureate program prepares nurses to practice effectively as generalists within the health care system, functioning in roles as providers, designers, managers, and coordinators of care. It provides students with the opportunity to acquire theoretical knowledge and competence in the practice of nursing and an appreciation of professional nursing's historical, present, and potential impact on society. The baccalaureate program fosters the development of professional values and value-based behaviors.

Further, because nursing is a professional discipline, clinical scholarship forms a core within which graduate nursing education takes place. That core includes, but is not limited to, the phenomena of concern to the nursing discipline: person, environment, health and nursing. In master's education, the phenomena are examined in terms of scholarly clinical practice. In PhD doctoral education, the emphasis is on original research and theory development related to nursing phenomena. The DNP program supports the scholarly development of nursing professionals for future leadership roles in the delivery of health care.

In both master's and doctoral education, phenomena of concern to nursing are studied intensively. To be responsive to graduate students' goals, we, as faculty, encourage tailoring of educational experiences within curricular plans. In addition, to participate fully in the University community graduate nursing students should study scholarly works of those other disciplines that share nursing's broad concerns for individuals in families and communities. As faculty, we encourage educational experiences that assist students to develop skills as critical thinkers and ethical decision makers.

As a community of scholars, faculty members at all levels should demonstrate a spirit of scholarly inquiry in teaching, research, and practice. We wish to be known for our intellectual excellence and our collegial manner in human relationships.

Faculty, alumni, and students contribute educational, consultative, and health services to the community. The faculty believes health policy is an integral part of effecting change in a democratic environment. To that end, the faculty is committed to contributing to the formulation of health policies at the local, state, national, and international level to optimize health care delivery services.

Lastly, as faculty, we strive for excellence in educational programs that position our graduates for leadership roles in health care settings of the future, able to adapt to and direct a rapidly changing health care environment.