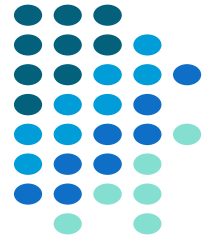


Undergraduate Nursing Honors Program to Advance Scholarship Within the Profession

Jill Nocella
PhD, APRN-BC
Associate Professor
William Paterson University
of New Jersey



1

Honors Programs

- Over 1,500 U.S. universities and colleges have honors programs or honors colleges (National Collegiate Honors Council, 2019)
- Honors programs and the community they create have shown to have positive effects on the emotional, social, informational, and academic domains they support (Diaz, Farruggia, Wellman, & Bottoms, 2019)



2

Nursing Honors Programs



- Honors education in nursing dates back to the 1960s with a focus on evidence-based practice for an evolving healthcare system
- Current nursing honors programs are challenged to provide a dedicated approach to implementing an enriched experience to support the needs of high-achieving nursing students (Lim et al., 2016)

3

Nursing Honors: Scholarship for the Nursing Discipline



- Focus on the AACN Essentials Domain 4: Scholarship for the Nursing Discipline (AACN, 2021):
 - Advance the scholarship of nursing
 - Integrate best evidence into nursing practice
 - Promote the ethical conduct of scholarly activities

4

Purpose



- To develop a nursing honors program that would allow students to conduct an individual research project over the course of their final four semesters of their baccalaureate program.

5

The Honors College



- Students apply to the Honors College as freshman and are selected based on SATs, highschool GPA, extracurricular activities
- Freshman and sophomore level courses offered as honors sections of undergraduate requirements
- Students apply to honors tracks at the completion of their sophomore year with the goal of completing an honors thesis
- Students must maintain a 3.25 GPA and complete civic engagement hours in order to remain in the Honors College

6

Nursing Honors: Implementation



- Clear objectives and outcomes
- One-on-one student mentoring; advisement
- Dedicated faculty members/support staff
- Support from administration; staffing/funding
- Collaboration with nurse educators from local hospitals and community centers
- Open lines of communication

7

The Nursing Honors Track: Course Progression



- Second semester sophomore year: NUR3500H Nursing Research (3 credits)
- First semester junior year: NUR3260H: Critical Thinking and Inquiry (3 credits)
- Second semester junior year: NUR3330H: Research Proposal Development (3 credits)
- First semester senior year: NUR4526H: Research Project Implementation (3 credits)
- Second semester senior year: NUR4530H: Research Seminar (3 credits)

8

Nursing Honors: Outcomes



- 15-20 students graduate in each Nursing Honors Track cohort
- Students surveyed in May at the completion of their thesis, prior to graduation:
 - Completion of an original research project- greater appreciation of scholarship within the profession
 - Learning the role of the novice researcher-importance of advancing the profession

9

Nursing Honors: Assessment & Evaluation



- Graduation and retention rates
- Student course end evaluations
- Exit survey- Honors College
- 1 year and 5 year post graduation surveys- All BSN students

- Development of a formal tool to measure graduates' enrollment in graduate programs, involvement in research, leadership positions

10

Nursing Honors Thesis: A Sample of Titles



- Factors That Affect Pediatric Nurses' Job Satisfaction
- Evaluating the Knowledge and Risks of Coronary Heart Disease Among Young Adult Filipino Americans
- Hospital Acquired Anemia and Diagnostic Blood Loss: A Review of the Best Prevention Strategies
- The Effect of the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit on Infant Sleep: An Integrative Review

11

Nursing Honors Track: Dissemination of Research



Council on Undergraduate Research

Dedicated to the Engagement and Support of Honors Undergraduate Learning
Northeast Regional Honors Council



Promoting Health through Nursing Science



12



References

- American Association of Colleges of Nursing. (2021). The essentials of baccalaureate education for professional nursing practice. <https://www.aacnnursing.org/>
- Diaz, D., Farruggia, S., Wellman, M., & Bottoms, B. (2019). Honors education has a positive effect on college student success. *Chapters from NCHC Monographs Series*. 55. <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/nchcmonochap/55>
- Lim, F., Nelson, N., Witkoski Stimpfel, A., Navarra, A., & Slater, L. (2016). Honors programs: Current perspectives for implementation. *Nurse Educator*, 41(2), 98-102.
- National Collegiate Honors Council. (2019). NCHC Online Guide. <https://www.nchcguide.com/nchc-directory/>