

Preparing Future Nurse Leaders Holistically at a Faith-Based University

Pamela J. Hodges, PhD, MSN, RN and Lucindra Campbell-Law, PhD, RN, ANP, PMHNP

The University of St. Thomas Carol & Odis Peavy School of Nursing

Background

The School of Nursing (SON) strives to incorporate the mission, vision, & philosophy of the faith-based university into the preparation of future nurse leaders.

Students are educated intellectually, morally, & spiritually with a focus on a compassionate healing ministry & Catholic traditions of education & service.

It is essential to prepare nurse leaders with skills & tools to deliver holistic, compassionate healthcare.

The SON provides a sound foundation based on concepts of professionalism, moral leadership, shared governance, healthcare policy, quality & risk management, decision making, accountability, evidence based practice, & conflict resolution.

Development of the Sacred Vocational Program (SVP) as a component of the leadership course

Objectives

The goals of the project included:

- 1) to help students view their work as a sacred calling
- 2) to emphasize reflection while supporting the core concept of the nurse as an instrument of healing
- 3) to integrate the school's holistic philosophy into their own personal nursing philosophy
- 4) to provide a culminating experience for nursing students

Methods

- ◆ Originally designed as a 3-phase program.
 - 1) Recognizing: Share stories of what brought them to the healthcare profession & how work is connected to spirituality & understanding of the meaning of vocation.
 - 2) Reorganizing: Develop recommendations on how to improve the working conditions in their environment so that they can experience work as sacred vocation.
 - 3) Sacred Vocation Growth & Renewal: Examine sustainability & ongoing support of each other. Innovative & the 1st time such a program has been implemented in an undergraduate nursing program.
- ◆ Program developed by Rabbi Samuel Karff at the UT Health Houston McGovern Center for Humanities & Ethics
- ◆ The SON purchased & adapted to meet the needs of the curriculum
- ◆ Premise is effective healing begins with the nurturing the spirit of self
- ◆ Delivered over a 2 day period instead of using five 60 minute sessions.
- ◆ Students: 1) spent time on reflection of sacred vocations, self-care & how nurses can better care for themselves. 2) vowed to embrace nursing as a vocation & apply the dimensions to their practice. 3) formulated their philosophy of nursing based on the SON vision & reflections from the SVP.

Results

Students reported experiencing a significant change in their perception of nursing. They also vowed to embrace nursing as a vocation & apply the dimensions to their practice. Some comments from students included the following:

"I was able to ... reflect on the transformations in my life. It definitely helped me to look at nursing in a more holistic view."

"It felt like it came just in time, at the end of the program...This class spoke to me as a person, a student, and as a nurse."

"I enjoyed the past two days. It made me reflect on my thoughts and feelings experienced over the last two years of nursing school."

"I felt encouraged as a nursing student now transitioning to the working field."

"This was a great end to the semester and our nursing school journey...I think this should continue to be the last session in the course for each incoming cohort."

"Great ending to a long journey!"

"Presenter was able to transmit the true meaning of nursing as a ministry."

Conclusion

Students & faculty felt the SVP was a success; should continue as a component of curriculum.

The course offered concurrently with the senior capstone course was an appropriate curricular decision.

Determined to be both effective & feasible to incorporate the SVP into the curriculum.

References

1. Karff, Samuel E., (2009). Recognizing the Mind/Body/Spirit Connection in Medical Care. American Medical Association Journal of Ethics, 11(10), 788-792.
2. Porter-O Grady, T., & Malloch, K. (2013). Leadership in Nursing Practice: Changing the Landscape of Health Care, Burlington MA: Jones & Bartlett LLC.
3. Yoder-Wise, P. (2010). Leading and Managing in Nursing,(5th ed.). Elsevier. ISBN 13:9780323069779. Committee on the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

Acknowledgements

Special thanks to Dean Poldi Tschirch, Dr. Phyllis Waters, & Mary Caprio who were instrumental in the development of this project.

Sincere appreciation to the University of St. Thomas for continued encouragement & support

Acknowledgement of all the SON students who participated, faculty, & support staff who made this project possible.

