

The University of Memphis Loewenberg School of Nursing

Statement of Focus

Memphis Nursing is committed to advancing health through excellence in nursing education, practice, research and service. In comparison to other states, Tennessee ranks 45/50 in its death rates from heart disease and cancer and ranks 43/50 in firearm deaths (National Center for Health Care Statistics, 1997).

Casting a long shadow across Tennessee's health care problems that span the continuum of care is the deepening nursing shortage across the United States that will produce a shortfall of 800,000 registered nurses in 2020. Tennessee now ranks second among all states for its registered nursing shortage that is primarily located in Shelby County. Since Tennessee only graduates 1500 new registered nursing students per year (National Council of State Boards, 2002), attempting to fill 36,000 vacant registered nursing positions in 2020 will pose a significant problem. Additionally, Tennessee will also have the highest nursing faculty shortage rate for the 16 southeastern states (Southern Regional Education Board *Red Alert*, 2002).

The grim data about the nursing shortage includes the following patient outcomes: 1) a 31% higher mortality rate for patients having routine surgery in hospitals with high patient-nurse ratios (Aiken et al 2002); 2) 1700 deaths in Pennsylvania hospitals that could have been prevented by a 60% baccalaureate prepared registered nursing staff and a 1:4 nurse-patient ratio (Aiken et al 2003); and 3) one in four *reported* sentinel events (deaths or serious injury) of hospitalized patients was due to a shortage of nurses (JCAHO, 2002).

Against this health care backdrop, **Memphis Nursing** offers a BSN program with multiple entry options, including fast-track and accelerated options; a dual degree program with Jackson State Community College; and an MSN program with multiple entry options for nurse practitioners, nurse educators, and nursing administrators. We will continue to develop, create, and offer innovative ways for people to *do something meaningful and become a nurse*. On-going faculty research includes caregiver burden (Lackey), caring in the nurse-patient relationship (Finch and Thomas), symptom reduction in oncology patients (Shiba), primary care for disabled women (Mele), health care decision-making (Axley), barriers to health care for Hispanic persons (Burchum), health care literacy (Speros), symptom reduction in families with a suicide (Norris and Aiken), and caregiving during the Yellow Fever epidemic in Memphis (Norris and Aiken).

Although the opportunities and challenges are many, the School is currently focused toward: 1) strengthening faculty scholarship, and 2) increasing the use of electronic resources to deliver instructional programs.

Additions to Statement of Focus

The relationship between the areas of focus for the UoM and the LSON are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1. Relationship Between Areas of Focus for UoM and LSON

UoM Guiding Principles	LSON
Technology	100% of all courses use WebCT; the MSN program is a hybrid (50% on-line and 50% on site) program; nursing is woefully behind community colleges in technology – Although Sim-Man has been on a requested equipment list for years, Memphis Nursing could use JSCC's Sim Man if they were closer.
Interdisciplinary partnerships	Lackey and Chang (FCBE) are collaborating on a research study; the MSN core includes one business course; 25% of the MSN admin concentration is in FCBE
Urban Research University	1 in 9 Memphians is employed in health care. The consulting group working with Memphis hospitals has clearly stated that health care in Memphis cannot move forward without a better prepared nursing workforce.
Scholarship	Highest priority for LSON; LSON Chair of Excellence is dedicated to this single purpose.
UoM Areas of Focus	LSON
Health care	Nurses are the single largest health provider group in the US and the area of greatest shortage (see focus statement)
Biotechnology (missed opportunity)	There are no <i>biotechnologies</i> that will be developed whose end-user will not be a nurse. Ex: a serendipitous discussion with a faculty member whose research involves testing failed artificial joints indicated that it never occurred to him that body mass had any effect on artificial joints. It is the single most important factor in the need for joint replacement and subsequent failure of implanted joint.
Teacher Education (missed opportunity)	A high percentage of certified teachers leaves the profession in 3 years. One of the factors overwhelming teachers is the mainstreaming of medically fragile children and children with chronic health conditions into the classroom without sufficient nursing infrastructure. Memphis City Schools have no registered nurses providing school health care. Ex: Hall's (2003) project at Kate Bond school indicated that few children with asthma had the <i>required</i> treatment plan in their record; most had multiple inhalers to be used; most of the inhalers were empty; and absentee rates for these students were high. We have hundreds of these examples.
Community Change and Social Justice	The community assessments conducted by NURS 4127 Community Health nursing students are widely used by agencies <i>outside of the UoM</i> . Two nursing faculty are among

	<p>the knowledgeable in the US about sexual assault victims. While not used by UoM faculty, they are used extensively by the criminal justice system in Memphis and are largely responsible for the high conviction rate in Memphis.</p> <p>All bioterrorism plans for Memphis include the LSON as a primary responder. Nursing will coordinate others (law and education students) as the people who would, for example, be trained immediately to give smallpox vaccine should there be a smallpox epidemic.</p>
Business and Civic Leadership	<p>If UoM does not prepare sufficient nurse administrators with a sufficiently strong financial background to manage scarce health care/staffing dollars, the nursing shortage in Memphis will rapidly accelerate as nurses continue to live in Memphis while practicing elsewhere in the US.</p>
Technology	<p>See above on technology</p>