

University of Indianapolis
School of Nursing
Graduate Nursing Program

Philosophy, Mission, and Goals

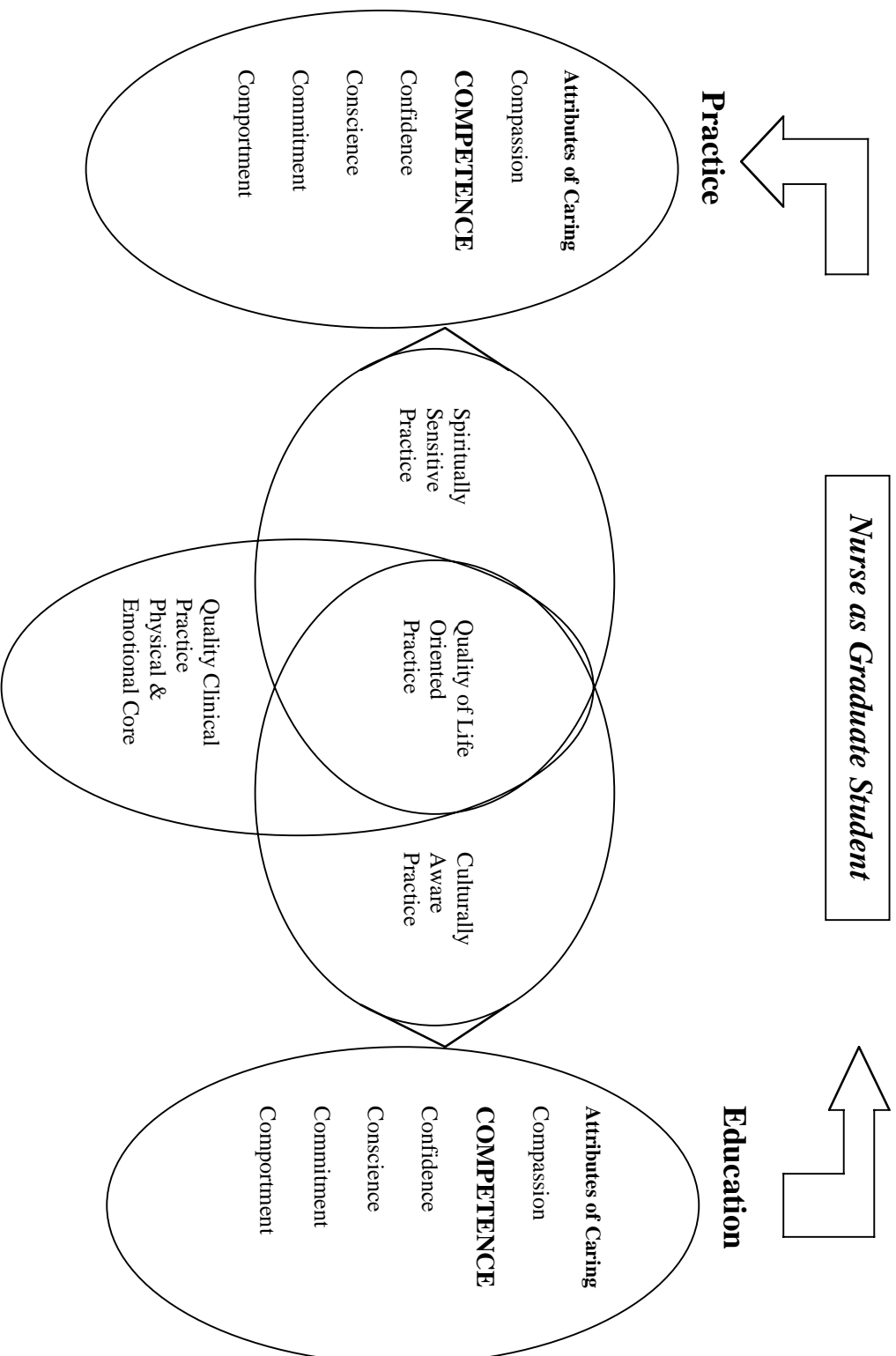
Philosophy of the Graduate Nursing Program

The University of Indianapolis School of Nursing values high academic standards, faculty-mentored learning, excellence in professional practice, and a Christian philosophy of **CARE***^[1] embracing diverse populations. In preparing nurses for a graduate degree, our educational philosophy encompasses assertions regarding **CARING*** within nursing education and nursing practice.^[2] Moreover, the philosophy of the graduate nursing program is congruent with the beliefs of the university at large and with the School of Nursing, in particular. The University of Indianapolis' motto "Education for Service" is observable in our individual teaching philosophies and interactions with students and is foundational to our program goals. Education for service is personified in Advanced Practice Nurses (APN) as they make significant contributions to the health of our society. Accordingly, the shared values of "education for service" and "**CARING*** within education and practice" are the heart of our mission.

Effective practice is based on theory that has been tested by research and is anchored in **CARING***. The Graduate Nursing Program has embraced a broad-based definition of **CARE*** as described by Dr. Simone Roach and explained in her book, **Caring: the Human Mode of Being**. Her work illustrates caring in six complementary categories of attributes—compassion, competence, confidence, conscience, commitment, and comportment—which are hallmarks to the profession of nursing. (See the glossary following this document for a condensed explanation of each attribute.) Additionally, while cultural, spiritual, and other quality-of-life considerations can be captured within the category of compassion and confidence, the faculty in the University of Indianapolis Graduate Nursing Program believe these considerations merit additional emphasis.

The **CARING*** nurse exhibits cultural competence, which acknowledges norms and mores of groups; however, though necessary, this cultural competence is insufficient to allow for individual needs within a culture. The **CARING*** nurse understands that even though an individual within a given culture may espouse cultural norms, that individual might waver from exact adherence to that norm via an existential quest (e.g., as a result of illness, disempowerment, and psychosocial developmental changes). Furthermore, the **CARING*** nurse must realize that spiritual care supports not only the individual's quest for God or Supreme Being but also his or her existential quest for meaning. This quest for God and meaning is in continual transformation; therefore, clinical practice must include cultural and spiritual care in order to render competent **CARE***. For these reasons, we choose the more inclusive concept "**quality of life orientation**" as our quintessential goal for **CARING*** nursing practice, because it allows for a broader analysis of factors that impact an individual's life at any moment

University of Indianapolis School of Graduate Nursing Philosophy Model



Quality of Life orientation is the willingness and knowledge to perceive, to the greatest amount possible, the *essential nature* of the patient's experience; when quality of life is described, the basic domains of physical, psychological, social, spiritual and economic well-being are typically implied. Our faculty believe that quality-of-life-oriented education is an excellent avenue for applying philosophical principles from which advanced practice nurses can appreciate, as much as possible, the full extent of health, illness, and other existential concerns of patients. Therefore, we believe this quality of life orientation is essential to the CARING* clinical decision-making process.

Having just asserted that **CARE*** is the attitude/attribute that our faculty believe is requisite for rendering competent nursing practice, in like manner, **CARE*** is the attitude that our nursing faculty have pledged to exhibit toward students. The faculty believe that each student is unique with individual talents and concerns and that nursing education is the engagement of the student and teacher as interactive partners in scholarly learning. Learning occurs in an environment of trust, mutual respect, and recognition of the uniqueness of each learner. Teaching strategies emphasize the recognition of graduate students as professionals. The faculty recognizes that the student brings exclusive situations that require flexibility and tailoring the course of study as much as possible while maintaining the integrity and quality of the Graduate Nursing Program. True education includes harmonious development of the entire person, and quality of life is manifested in the quality of learning. Finally, it is through this CARING* philosophy of nursing education that we enter into a covenant^[3] relationship with the graduate students

Mission:

This Christian-based master's program prepares nurses as **CARING*** professionals for expanded nursing roles and provides a foundation for doctoral studies.

Goals of the Graduate Nursing Program

The faculty will

1. provide a foundation for students to synthesize knowledge and competence, including spiritual sensitivity and cultural awareness from theory, science, and practice within nursing and related disciplines as a basis for their selected roles;
2. promote an engaging professional, compassionate persona reflective of personal-integrity and advanced nursing practice;
3. encourage and support the commitment of students, peers, and consumers in individual, familial, organizational, and community efforts toward the promotion of optimal health;
4. prepare students to identify researchable problems, engage in research activities, and utilize research findings that extend knowledge with confidence-in-nursing practice; and
5. nurture qualities in students, including comportment within the covenant of **CARING***, toward a meaningful life in recognizing personal and social responsibilities.

Outcomes of the Graduate Nursing Program

The graduates of the Master of Science in Nursing Program will be able to

1. demonstrate competence in expanded nursing roles, therefore creating a therapeutic and humanistic environment;
2. use leadership skills recognizing the value of comportsment, teaching, and collaborative strategies to deliver health care in an increasingly complex and rapidly changing world;
3. integrate knowledge of political, social, economic, legal, and ethical theories in confident decision making;
4. demonstrate a commitment to the advancement of professional nursing and compassionate professional growth; and
5. integrate conscience in valuing the dignity and worth of human beings as evidenced at their current quality of life state as unique and holistic into the expanded role while responding to the changing health care and environment.

^[1]We have chosen to represent the Dr. Roach’s six attributes of caring with a capitalized, bolded **CARE***, such that when “**CARE***” is seen in this document, this inclusive nature of caring is implied.

^[2]The relationship between CARING* nursing practice and CARING* nursing education is depicted in a model which accompanies this document.

^[3]A covenant of CARING* is the underpinning for our philosophy of graduate nursing education. We chose the concept of “covenant” to convey our interest in exceeding the minimal expectations implies by the word “contract.”

Addendum

Definitions of Concepts in Philosophy and Model (with references).

Commitment is a convergence of the desires and obligations and a deliberate choice to act in congruence with them; a quality that becomes so internalized as a value that obligations are not regarded as burdens.

Comportment is the reflection of caring for self and others in behaviors, dress, and language in harmony with a **CARING** presence.

Compassion is a belief that starts with an awareness of one's interconnection with all living creatures and moves toward a sensitivity that enables one to share with and make room for others.

Competence is the state of having the knowledge, judgment, skills, energy, experience and motivation required to respond adequately to the demands of one's professional responsibilities. The ability to care—and to care appropriately and adequately—requires that everyone has the freedom to learn and the opportunity to practice in his or her respective profession in a manner compatible with the dignity and needs of those he or she serves.

Competence in spiritual awareness champions spiritual well being as an approach that includes a religious component that recognizes a relationship with God and an existential component that recognizes the human need to find meaning in life (Ellison and Paloutzian).

Competence in Cultural Care values the learned shared and transmitted beliefs, norms, and life-ways of a particular group (Leininger 1995, pg, 7).

Competence in respect for Quality of Life acknowledges the patient's perception of his or her physical, psychological, social, spiritual, and economic well-being; i.e., the *totality* of the current lived experience.

Competence in clinical skills signifies that we acknowledge that health care endeavors require a specialized advanced-practice expertise and proficiency, which are used to evaluate and treat the physical and emotional needs of humans. For advanced practice nurses this includes physical diagnosis, hypothesis testing, and deductive reasoning, as well as medical management of conditions including prescribing pharmacological interventions, counseling, and referring to other health care specialists when necessary.

Confidence is a belief in one's own ability to accomplish goals; a sense of power. Confidence fosters trust without dependency, paternalism, or a response born out of fear or powerlessness.

Conscience is the center of personal integrity through which moral obligation is personalized, rising out of experience, in valuing self and others. Conscience is the call and manifestation of **CARE** (Heidegger 1962) as an intentional response that is deliberate, meaningful, and rational. Nursing judgment must be fine-tuned with knowledge and skill in moral reasoning.

Covenant is the relational responsibility that bonds the capacity to care with compassionate acts toward others (i.e. graduate students).

References

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