STATEMENT OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

I. Introduction

Once admitted to the Nursing Major at Northwestern College, the student is expected to demonstrate conduct and behavior which conforms to the Northwestern College and Department of Nursing values, identity, mission and goals, the Northwestern College Campus Expectations of Students, Academic Integrity Policy, Nurse Practice Act of the State of Iowa and all other applicable rules and policies of the College. The Department of Nursing reserves the right to refuse or discontinue the enrollment of any student whose conduct or behavior violates the standards set forth in this Statement or compromises the work of fellow students, the effectiveness of the faculty, and/or the ability to work positively in a Christian academic community consistent with these policies and guidelines.

The Statement of Professional Conduct is based on an understanding that the practice of nursing as a student or a licensed professional is based on a sacred covenant with society. It identifies expected professional and ethical conduct, a process for situations in which a student’s behavior does not conform to these standards as well as the grievance process for students, and grounds for dismissal from the program. This statement provides guidance for the nursing student in the personal and professional development of an ethical foundation and need not be limited strictly to the academic or clinical environment but is designed to assist in the wholistic development of the person. In applying for admission to the nursing major, applicants will be provided with a copy of this statement and they will be asked to sign an acknowledgement declaring their intent to adhere to it. The acknowledgement form will be retained in the student’s advising file.

II. Professional and Ethical Conduct

A. Standards for Professional Conduct

Nursing students at Northwestern College are active participants in the educational process which prepares them for entry into the profession of nursing. It is the faculty’s expectation that students will develop cognitive, emotional/relational, and psychomotor aptitudes necessary to meet the demands of professional nursing in the ever-changing environment of the health care delivery system. The Ability To Provide Safe Nursing Care Standard of the Department of Nursing describes the physical abilities nursing students need to possess in order to successfully achieve the program outcomes. As active participants, students are expected to develop professional behaviors beyond the classroom and clinical area which represent knowledge of personal and professional responsibilities, and behaviors consistent with the American Nurses’ Association Code of Ethics (2001) as identified below and the Code of Christian Nursing Ethics located in NSHBK 3.0, 3.1.6:
ANA Code of Ethics:

1. The nurse provides services with respect for human dignity and the uniqueness of the client unrestricted by considerations of social or economic status, personal attributes, or the nature of health problems.
2. The nurse safeguards the client’s right to privacy by judiciously protecting information of a confidential nature.
3. The nurse acts to safeguard the client and the public when health care and safety are affected by the incompetent, unethical, or illegal practice of any person.
4. The nurse assumes responsibility and accountability for individual nursing judgments and actions.
5. The nurse maintains competence in nursing.
6. The nurse exercises informed judgments and uses individual competence and qualifications as criteria in seeking consultation, accepting responsibilities, and delegating nursing activities to others.
7. The nurse participates in activities that contribute to the ongoing development of the profession’s body of knowledge.
8. The nurse participates in the profession’s efforts to implement and improve standards of nursing.
9. The nurse participates in the profession’s efforts to establish and maintain conditions of employment conducive to high quality nursing care.
10. The nurse participates in the profession’s efforts to protect the public from misinformation and misrepresentation and to maintain the integrity of nursing.
11. The nurse collaborates with members of the health professions and other citizens in promoting community and national efforts to meet the health needs of the public.

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B. Specific Professional and Ethical Expectations for Nursing Students

In order to provide wholistic, safe, and effective nursing care, nursing students have a societal responsibility to achieve theory and clinical-related learning outcomes at the conclusion of each course and at the program level and to demonstrate integrity in all aspects of the student experience. This expectation includes classroom, transportation, and clinical experiences, as well as communication with faculty, preceptors, clients, peers, the health care team, and others. The Department of Nursing expects students to be honest, respectful, accountable for their actions and protective of confidentiality and to adhere to the established standards of professional conduct in class, in laboratory, practicum and clinical experiences, and outside of academic setting.

1. Specifically, professional and ethical conduct means that students will demonstrate:
   a. Honesty
   b. Integrity
   c. Accountability
   d. Confidentiality
   e. Respect for others regardless of race, religion, age, sex, nationality, or disability
   f. Adherence to all applicable policies and procedures
   g. Active participation in the learning process
   h. Safe practice when caring for clients
   i. Appropriate requests for supervision/guidance
2. Examples of inappropriate behavior include, but are not limited to:

   a. Breach of Academic Integrity (e.g., cheating, plagiarism)
   b. Use of inappropriate or threatening language
   c. Possession of weapons
   d. Unethical use of computers or software
   e. Harassment
   f. Use or sale of illegal substances

3. Other inappropriate behavior identified by the Iowa Board of Nursing as violating professional standards of conduct include but are not limited to:

   a. Breach of confidentiality
   b. Conviction or admission of any crime relating to the practice of nursing
   c. Any act or omission which may adversely affect the physical or emotional welfare of a patient or client
   d. Sexual misconduct
   e. Practicing nursing while under the influence of alcohol, illicit drugs, or while impaired by the use of legitimately prescribed medications or the symptoms of exiting health conditions.
   f. Unsafe clinical practice
   g. Practice outside the scope of nursing practice
   h. Falsifying reports/ misrepresentation

III. Concerns Related to Professional Conduct

There may be situations which arise when a student’s conduct in the classroom, clinical, practicum, or laboratory setting is unsatisfactory and causes faculty members to express concern. This concern is communicated to the student in a variety of ways. At times comments by a faculty member will communicate the faculty member’s concern to a student; however, there may be times when a more formal concern is expressed in writing. When this occurs the faculty member(s) will meet with the student and document their concern in writing on the “Professional Conduct Concerns Document.” A conference will be held with the student and it is expected that the student will respond with suggestions for the “Plan of Action” on the form and conform their behavior to the adopted plan.

It is expected that the written concern will lead to improved performance by the student. On occasion a student’s performance has established a pattern of concern or is so poor that the faculty member gives the student an Unsatisfactory (U) rating. The “U” will also be explained on the “Professional Conduct Concerns Document” and discussed in the conference to be held with the student. It is the student’s responsibility to satisfactorily complete any identified “Plan of Action.

A. Guidelines for Use of the “Professional Conduct Concerns Document.”

   1. Concerns Document forms are available in the Department of Nursing office.
   2. The Concerns Document is to be completed in the event that a student has demonstrated unprofessional behavior in contravention of this Statement, or unsatisfactory conduct in the classroom, clinical, practicum, laboratory, or instructional unit’s experiences or is
charged with breaking any of the previous inappropriate behaviors. Additionally, students will report to the Chairperson, any legal charges beyond parking tickets. This information will be shared with nursing faculty who have the student in class/clinical.

3. The Concerns Document is to be completed by the appropriate faculty member(s) in preparation for a conference with the student. The conference may be held with the student as designated by the faculty member(s) and is required whenever a “U” is given.

4. The concern is shared with the student during a conference and it is expected that the student will formulate a “Plan of Action” for improvement and record this on the Concerns Document.

5. A copy of the completed Concerns Document will be provided for the student and course coordinator and the original copy kept with the Department Chair. The course coordinator’s copy will be filed in the student’s clinical file and at graduation it will be placed in his/her graduate file.

6. The appropriate faculty member will follow up with the student to ensure compliance with any Plan of Action and will complete the “Outcome” column of the Concerns Document at the appropriate time.

B. Dismissal from the Nursing Major

Any student who violates the Professional Conduct Standard and/or is charged with violations beyond parking tickets, will be considered by the Nursing Faculty Organization for dismissal from the program. Any student being dismissed from the nursing program major shall receive written notification. Such actions by the Department of Nursing Faculty are covered by the grievance policy (refer to policy 3.0, 3.7).

C. Student Evaluation by the Faculty

Faculty continually assesses each student’s professional performance. All nursing students are evaluated formally at the end of each course, and at the end of the program. Any student who fails to maintain appropriate standards, as described in this statement, will be placed on probation or dismissed from the program after receiving written notification. A student may appeal any action of the nursing faculty following the process stated in the Nursing Student Grievance Procedure as identified in the Nursing Student Policy Handbook (3.0, 3.7).
Statement of Professional Conduct

I hereby acknowledge receipt of the Department of Nursing Statement of Professional Conduct and declare my intent to conform my behavior to the professional conduct standard by typing my name below and emailing this form to nursing@nwciowa.edu.

Signature ___________________________ Date ___________________________