

JMU Nursing Student Association (NSA): Engaged Citizens, Engaged Learners

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Purpose of JMU NSA:

- To assume responsibility for contributing to nursing education at JMU in order to provide the highest quality of health care.
- To provide JMU programs representative of fundamental interests and concerns to nursing concerns.
- To aid in the development of the whole person, his/her professional role, his/her responsibility for health care of people in all walks of life.

The Main Foci of JMU NSA:

- Service to the community through physical means (i.e. volunteer hours)
- Service to the community via donations (e.g., gifts to local homeless children, oral care supply drive)
- Educational events (e.g., organizing monthly professional speakers & yearly "Awareness Days" on health topics)
- Fundraising to promote student leadership through participation in professional events (e.g., state and national convention, and legislative dinners.)

Methodological Innovations:

- Students earn points for attending meetings, making donations and participating in organization events. Students who reach a set goal are given a cord to wear at graduation.
- Most of the students do not earn academic course credit for their work; they participate in service learning on a voluntary basis.
- NSG 490 – Nursing Leadership is an elective offered where students can earn academic credit for active involvement in JMU NSA. This is optional.



Example of Reciprocal Inspiration – Senior Prom

- A once a year event held at JMU's Festival Ballroom.
- Free luncheon and "prom" for elders.
- Gift baskets for door prizes
- Ballroom decorations match theme for the year
- JMU music department participates as a "band" for the prom.
- Aramark donates the food for the prom
- Approximately 150 local elders from regional senior centers and nursing homes
- Elders and students dress according to the theme of the year, have lunch, and dance
- Because the students see ill elders every week in the hospital as they provide care, the senior prom is educational for the students as they engage with active elders and form intergenerational relationships.

Conclusions/ Implications:

- Students active in JMU NSA gain hands on experiences, develop critical thinking and problem solving skills, and connect with community members.
- Faculty benefit by aiding in the development of future healthcare providers, who are engaged in their communities and are strong leaders and by getting to know the students on a more personal level.
- "Learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" (Kolb, 1984, p. 38).
- New experiences lead to the development of new concepts.