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Woodring College of Education

2018

Social Justice as an integral component of an RN-BSN program

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Recommended Citation

Lonneman, William DNP, RN; Espina, Christine DNP, RN; and Bear, Sarah EdD, RN, "Social Justice as an integral component of an RN-BSN program" (2018). *Woodring Scholarship on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion.* 31.

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SOCIAL JUSTICE as an integral component of an RN-BSN program

"Professionalism and the inherent values of altruism, autonomy, human dignity, integrity, and social justice These are the days when I realize

What are our outcomes and student feedback?

Some students do not react favorably:

are fundamental to the discipline of nursing".

(AACN, 2008, BSN Essential VIII)

What is social justice?

It begins with "acting in accordance with fair treatment regardless of economic status, race, ethnicity, age, disability, sexual orientation, and gender identity" (AACN, 2008). But it entails more than how we treat individuals in patient care situations. As the AACN Position Paper (2017) states: "In the pursuit of social justice, institutions, systems, structures, policies and processes should advance fairness and equity (Buettner-Schmidt & Lobo, 2012)".

At Western Washington University, we believe that our curriculum should offer knowledge, skills, and experiences that awaken students and empower them to understand the realities of social injustice and to work within systems and structures (both within health care settings and in the community) to effect change.





Foundational Course: NURS 305 "Social Justice and Healthcare" (1st quarter):

- Topics introduce key concepts related to social justice: self-awareness, privilege, oppression, systemic racism, intersectionality, equity, systems theory, determinants of health, health disparities, unequal treatment
- Guest speakers bring expertise, first-hand experiences, strategies to address needs (migrant workers, undocumented students, Indigenous peoples, disabled, LGBTQI)
- Group exercises, videos, and active learning projects, including interviewing someone from a vulnerable population and a Systemic Racism assignment (see examples on this poster) allow for variety of ways to encounter the material

Integration and reinforcement of this foundation occurs throughout the program:

"I withdrew because of how political the classes were. I had differing opinions than many of the people in the class and I felt as though I couldn't stand up for my opinions. I also felt as though this social justice class was a lot of extra work that had nothing to do with nursing compared to other BSN programs that I had looked into."

"Overall the class (NURS 305) was fine. At times I felt I was backed into a corner, that the way I feel is wrong and that is frustrating."



How did this concept become so central to our program?

Western Washington University and the Woodring College of Education are committed to equity and justice as outlined in their Mission, Vision, and Values statements. For example: "The vision of Woodring College of Education fosters community relationships and a culture of learning that advance knowledge, honor diversities, and promote social justice".

- NURS 412: Policy Leadership and U.S. Healthcare (2nd quarter)
 Includes political process, Nurses' Day at the Capitol, advocacy, Adaptive and Transformational Leadership
- NURS 432: Community-Based Care for Vulnerable Populations (3rd quarter)
- NURS 433: Community-Based Care for Vulnerable Populations Practice Experience and NURS 423: Organizational Change for Quality & Safety Practice Experience (3rd quarter)

60-hour practice experience project for both courses with community partners; includes weekly reflective journals asking the students to consider "ways that you have experienced privilege or oppression"

- NURS 452: Global Health (4th quarter)
- NURS 443: Interdisciplinary Care Coordination Practice Experience (4th quarter)

30-hour practice experience, students observe the care coordination process and identify how they might improve it for patients at highest risk



Most recognize the value:

"I thoroughly enjoyed this class. It challenged my thoughts and ideas about my own biases. I feel 'awakened' by this experience."

"I think this course is a great addition to the nursing program. It offers a great foundation for people to learn about social justice and disparities certain folks have."

"I loved this class, the course content, class discussions, class assignments, etc..., all led to a deeper understanding of social justice and healthcare and our role as nurses."

"This class opened my eyes further to the current injustices in society and healthcare. I still reflect on it almost on a daily basis."

"These are the days when I realize why it's important that I came back to school."

In 2011, to form the program, WWU appointed a nursing education consultant and gathered a committee including community partners from practice, community college educators, and interdisciplinary faculty from WWU. This committee identified social justice as foundational to the program's curriculum: "Faculty, staff and students honor diversity, uphold social justice and advance system changes that promote healthy communities resulting in safe, high-quality health care for all." (RN-to-BSN Mission Statement)

How do we integrate social justice into the curriculum?

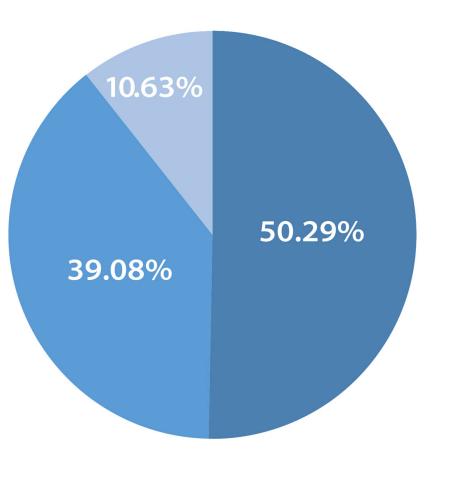
Application essay questions set the tone:

- Describe experiences you have had working in diverse communities or with disadvantaged populations.
- Describe special talents or skills you have (such as language fluency, research, or travel experience) that reflect your commitment to equitable care of vulnerable populations."



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 Infant deaths per 1,000 live births: 4.89 Net worth of your family is \$134,000 Household income is 71,300 72% chance of owning a home 4.5% chance of being unemployed 10% chance of living in poverty 36% chance of getting a bachelors degree 1/17 chance of going to jail 	 Infant deaths per 1,000 live births: 3.86 Net worth of your family is \$91,000 Household income is 77,900 57% chance of owning a home 3.6% chance of being unemployed 12% chance of living in poverty When buying a home, will be shown 20% fewer homes than white homebuyers. 54% chance of being bullied at school (more than any other racial/ethnic group) Make up <1% of Hollywood's leading roles (despite making up 5.4% of the total U.S. pop.) 	 Infant deaths per 1,000 live births: 5.01 Net worth of your family is \$14,000 Household income is 43,300 45% chance of owning a home 7.2% chance of being unemployed 24% chance of living in poverty 67% chance of graduating from high school (lowest of all racial/ethnic groups) 80% chance of attending a school where there is more than a half-minority population 15% chance of getting a bachelors degree Make up 5.8% of speaking or named characters in US media (despite making up 17% of the total U.S. population) 65% more likely to be detained or committed in juvie than whites 1/6 chance of going to jail in your lifetime and 2.3 times more likely to go to jail than white people 40% chance of having no health coverage 	 Infant deaths per 1,000 live births: 10.93 Net worth of your family is \$11,000 Household income is 43,300 43% chance of owning a home 10.3% chance of being unemployed 26% chance of living in poverty 3 times more likely than white children to be suspended 74% chance of attending a school where there is more than a half-minority population 23% chance of getting a bachelors degree If you have an 'black' name, you have to apply to 50% more jobs than whites to get a callback College graduates will be twice as likely to be unemployed as college graduates overall 1/3 chance of going to jail in your lifetime and 5 times more likely to go to jail than white people 20% longer prison sentences than white people who commit the same crime 38% more likely to be given a death sentence than white people for the same crimes 1 out of 13 chance of losing your right to vote due to felony disenfranchisement 21 times more likely to be shot by the police

Post-graduate survey responses (six cohorts, cumulative)



How well did the program equip you to advocate for access to and delivery of equitable health care services with an understanding of the influences of individual, socio-cultural, legal and policy factors?

ExcellentVery goodGood

