

**GEORGIA SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY**  
**College of Health and Professional Studies**

**SCHOOL OF NURSING PROGRAMS**  
**FACT SHEET**

**Dean, College of Health and Professional Studies: Frederick Whitt, PhD**

**Chair, School of Nursing: Jean Bartels, PhD, RN**

**Bachelor of Science in Nursing**

Number of Students in the Major (1996-2001):	1123	(11% increase each year)
Number of Degrees Conferred (1996-2000):	307	(51% increase since 1996)
Percentage of Minority Students:	32%	(31% increase since 1997)
Percentage of Male Students:	8-13% per year (National average: 4%)	
Number of Faculty (Full Time Equivalent):	13.67	
Percentage of Faculty with Doctoral Degree:		
Tenure Track	Year 2001 = 67%; Year 1999 = 55%	
Total	Year 2001 = 60%; Year 1999 = 28%	
Percentage of Minority Faculty:	Year 2001 = 22%; Year 1999 = 6%	

**Master of Science in Nursing**

Number of Students in the Major (1996-2001):	244
Number of Degrees Conferred (1996-2001):	116
Percentage of Minority Students:	13%
Number of Faculty (Full Time Equivalent):	3.54
Percentage of Faculty with Doctoral Degree:	
Tenure Track	Year 2001 = 100%; Year 1999 = 80%
Total	Year 2001 = 80%; Year 1999 = 60%
Percentage of Minority Faculty:	Year 2001 = 20%; Year 1999 = 20%

**Program Accreditation Status:**

Approved by the Georgia Board of Nursing (4 years) Fall 2000—2004  
Accredited by the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission (8 years)  
Preliminary Approval by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (4 years)

**Program Initiatives**

Rural Nursing Outreach Program  
    Nursing Clinic in Portal, Georgia serving 150 clients  
    Migrant Outreach Nursing Clinics in 3 rural Georgia counties  
Center for Nursing Scholarship—Center for collaborative faculty research and publication

**Awards and Recognitions**

In 2001, the Baccalaureate program was recognized as a model program by the Georgia Board of Nursing

In 1998, the *U.S. News & World Report* ranked the Masters program in the top 5% of Nurse Practitioner Programs in the United States. Since that time, the program has been consistently ranked in the top percentages in the nation.

**SCHOOL OF NURSING  
MISSION, PHILOSOPHY, GOALS, STRATEGIES**

The mission, philosophy, purposes, and goals/objectives of Georgia Southern University’s School of Nursing guide the activities and operation of the School and set a foundation for all academic, service, and administrative functions of its programs. Recognizable strengths, the mission, philosophy, and purposes of the School have resulted in a cohesive and collaborative educational environment evident in the School’s work.

Faculty and staff seek to create and maintain, for themselves and for students, a climate of reflection, inquiry, and continuous improvement. Their efforts focus on the goals and processes of education within the context of the regionally identified need to uplift southeast Georgia’s educational attainment, cultural opportunities, economic growth, environmental quality, scientific and technological progress, and social and personal well-being. Devoted to “teaching first,” the hallmark of Georgia Southern University’s School of Nursing is to provide a comprehensive student-centered university experience that promotes student growth and success through creative strategies for using technology, enhancing learning, and connecting actions to community needs. This commitment is further captured in the School’s focus on the strategic plan adopted from the University’s philosophy.

**Strategic Themes Addressed by the School of Nursing (SON)**

<b>STRATEGIC THEME</b>	<b>SCHOOL OF NURSING INITIATIVES*</b>
Academic Distinction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distinguish the SON faculty as national leaders in nursing education</li> <li>• Distinguish the SON as national leader in comprehensive regional university programs for nursing education</li> <li>• Assure continuous improvement processes necessary for academic distinctiveness for all SON Programs</li> </ul>
Student-Centered University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raise level of academic and professional achievement of students in all SON programs</li> <li>• Raise level of faculty expertise and competence in scholarship of teaching</li> <li>• Enhance development of students as involved and committed professionals</li> </ul>
Technological Advancement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refine and expand use of technology in delivering nursing education</li> <li>• Support and promote development and use of technology in the SON</li> </ul>
Transcultural Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote transcultural teaching/learning across all SON programs to assure cultural competence for faculty/students</li> </ul>
Private and Public Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand the influence of the SON through collaborations with the School’s Community of Interest</li> <li>• Assure the continued growth and expansion of the SON through resource development initiatives.</li> </ul>
Physical Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop the SON’s physical plant as a teaching/learning environment of distinction</li> </ul>

**\*School of Nursing Initiatives taken from School of Nursing Five-Year Strategic Plan (2000-2005)**

The mission and philosophy statements of the School of Nursing set forth the beliefs of the faculty, as gleaned from discipline standards, and provide the foundation from which the curricula for its programs emanate. These give direction to the sequencing of the nursing courses and to the planning of meaningful learning experiences that culminate in the development of competent undergraduate and graduate nurse professionals. The School of Nursing vision, mission, and purposes are stated in the present tense to communicate the belief that creating an institution and programs appropriate to the educational needs of rural southeast Georgia is an ongoing process. The mission and

philosophy statements reflect values and beliefs regarding nursing's basic concepts (person, nursing, health, environment) and the enabling factors that shape nursing's role in the health promotion process (human caring, ethical principles, communication, critical thinking, empowerment, research, cultural sensitivity, health care technology).

### **SCHOOL OF NURSING MISSION AND PURPOSES**

The primary focus of a regional university is to serve the needs of a specific region, rather than an entire state, in the areas of teaching, research, and service. Consistent with this focus, the mission of the School of Nursing of Georgia Southern University is to work to help meet the nursing and health care needs of southeast Georgia. This mission will be accomplished through a multifaceted approach that incorporates teaching, research, and service.

The School of Nursing is committed to the education of nursing students at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. To meet the nursing needs of southeast Georgia, students are recruited from this region. The faculty believe that students who live, work, and are educated in the region will be more likely to remain after graduation and, thereby, fill vital health care needs.

The faculty also believe that excellence in teaching is an integral part of the educational process. Quality teaching and positive faculty - student interactions are imperative for the development of caring and knowledgeable nurses. Teaching is enhanced by faculty participation in practice, doctoral studies, continuing education, and mentoring. The improvement of teaching is a continuing process that reflects a commitment to excellence by both administration and faculty.

Research activities, sponsored or guided by the School of Nursing are directly responsive to regional needs. Consistent with the University's position, applied research is the predominate, although not exclusive, focus of nursing research projects. Exploring regional health care needs, evaluating the effectiveness of clinical interventions or programs which were created to meet identified needs, and analysis of health care delivery issues are examples of research projects supported by the School of Nursing and integrated into the curricula.

The service mission is met in a variety of ways, including professional practice, consultation, and collaboration. The nursing faculty serve as resource persons to the university, the community, clinical agencies, and the nursing profession. Relationships between the university, the community, and clinical agencies, which are forged and maintained through these types of activities, are vital to the advancement of nursing care, and to the improvement of health in the region.

The foundation of these beliefs is the value placed on the holistic nature of human beings, concern for the quality of human life as it relates to experiences and concerns people have about health. The purposes of the School of Nursing are to:

1. Promote and advance the quality, accessibility, and availability of nursing education and nursing care for the rural population of southeast Georgia by:
  - a. providing for the education of baccalaureate and master's level nursing students capable of delivering high quality nursing care with skills and knowledge in keeping with the Statutes of the State of Georgia and as defined by nursing accreditation bodies;
  - b. providing the opportunity for upward mobility for the registered nurse;
  - c. providing instruction which focuses on the ethnic, cultural, and social content necessary to enable nurses to deliver care in a manner acceptable to the diverse population of the southeast region of Georgia;

- d. providing a regional academic center for professional nursing which contributes to the expertise of the profession and the well being of the community by promoting scholarly activities, creative endeavors, and continuing education for nurses;
  - e. providing an educational base upon which graduate study may be built for specialization in nursing as a clinician, educator, administrator, or researcher;
  - f. promoting the placement of baccalaureate and masters prepared nurses in rural health care shortage areas;
2. Influence the course and progress of the health care delivery systems in the rural southeast region of Georgia by:
- a. preparing nurses to contribute to strategic planning and change in community health care organizations; and
  - b. preparing nurses with appropriate skills to function effectively with community groups to impact health policy;
3. To increase the effectiveness of nurses as individuals and nursing as a discipline by:
- a. promoting professional identification and commitment;
  - b. teaching caring and mutually enabling factors that will enhance the personal and professional growth and development of nurses;
  - c. promoting professional autonomy and multi-disciplinary collaboration;
  - d. preparing self-directed, life-long learners, capable of initiating change and adapting to the rapidly changing environment;
  - e. providing preparation for self-governance and participation in the institutions of a democratic society; and
  - f. enhancing the quality and excellence of nursing care delivered in the region.

### **SCHOOL OF NURSING PHILOSOPHY**

The philosophy of Georgia Southern University's School of Nursing is congruent with the values and mission of the university. Nursing is a practice discipline that includes both didactic and clinical preparation. Nursing education is based on theory, research, and practice in nursing and other disciplines. The goal of nursing education is to prepare critically thinking, skilled nurses who act to promote, maintain, and restore health through partnership with persons, families, groups, and communities. The focus of Georgia Southern University's School of Nursing is placed on knowledge and skills required to provide competent rural nursing care. Graduate nurses maintain currency in nursing and increase their knowledge and skills through clinical practice and continued education. With these demographics in mind, faculty purposefully plan for and use varied clinical and classroom learning environments focused on diverse populations representing the area's specific characteristics (e.g., age, income, rural status, race, disease/disease risk and so on) to assure students are able to attend to regional needs after graduation. Consistent with these regional demographic characteristics and conscious of the rural context that houses the institution, the faculty have sought learning experiences that assure students' development as professional nurses able to meet the regional health care and nursing workforce needs. The School has secured contractual agreements with over 150 hospitals, clinics, and community agencies that collectively address the diverse health care needs of the rural community in which the university resides and the graduates practice. Eighty percent of the School's graduates stay and work in rural Southeast Georgia after graduation.

**Georgia Southern University  
SCHOOL OF NURSING**

**DISTINCTIVE EFFORTS TO FOSTER STUDENT LEARNING**

The School of Nursing faculty have individually and collectively been impressive in their efforts to improve teaching and student learning. Typically, the School of Nursing holds a minimum of two faculty development sessions each academic year. Recent workshops include: Discerning the changing demographics of and educational pedagogy for today's learners; Changing expectations for nurse professionals (with an emphasis on the American Association of Colleges of Nursing Essentials of Baccalaureate Education for Professional Nursing Practice); Understanding the characteristics and capabilities of learners; Learning principles for building a cohesive and coherent curriculum and a cohesive learning environment; Developing students communication abilities across the curriculum; Using self-assessment as a learning strategy for professional development; Assuring students' achievement of learning outcomes through "Project Success" (a unique faculty designed program to assist students in preparing for taking their post graduation licensure examination); and Clinical teaching strategies for improving critical thinking and decision making in practice. All faculty attended a minimum of one presentation at the Center for Excellence in Teaching (CET) at Georgia Southern University with three faculty presenting overviews of equipment and teaching/learning projects in the CET. Faculty participate in teaching circles at the CET and two are University mentors to new faculty. All faculty have participated in at least one off campus continuing education experience in the discipline this past year. In Fall 2000, the School's Office of Scholarly Excellence began a monthly series of Brown Bag Seminars and a Faculty Research and Scholarship Interest Group. Approximately 61% of faculty attended these offerings each academic year.

As a result, students rate the quality of their instruction very high. The mean student rating of instruction for the program in 2001 was 4.32 (on a scale where 5.0 was "excellent"); in 2000 the mean was 4.28; and in 1998, it was 4.30.

Similarly, the School of Nursing faculty have been pioneers in the development and use of technology for teaching learning experiences. They were among the first in the university to develop distance learning and WebCT courses and have developed an entire program track offered through distance technologies. Notable exemplars of technology used in the School include:

Distance Learning and Online Courses

- BSN Program: One required course and one elective course are being developed as online courses in the prelicensure BSN Program. The senior capstone course was developed as a technology infused course using Computer Assisted Instruction (CAI) technology (with the help of a Board of Regents technology grant).
- RN-BSN Program: One required course and two elective online courses were developed and offered collaboratively with a faculty member from Health and Kinesiology. An additional required online course was offered in Spring 2001. In addition, virtually all the RN-BSN Program courses are offered via distance learning at three Southeast Georgia sites.

- WebCT is being utilized as an adjunct to classroom teaching in virtually all of the RN-BSN courses and many of the BSN courses. Twelve faculty completed an on-line asynchronous "Teaching On-Line" course in March, 2001.
- Distance learning opportunities are offered to Brunswick for 4 of 6 graduate core courses and 2 of 3 advanced practice core courses. WebCT is being utilized in 76% of the graduate curriculum for FNP students: 66% of graduate core courses, 100% of advanced practice core courses, and 72% of FNP specialty core courses incorporate internet experiences.
- A survey of over 200 prospective and current students regarding interest in online nursing programs/courses was conducted. The data will be used to plan future online courses and to offer the entire RN-BSN Program online. Surveys to date indicate strong interest in increased online learning opportunities by this group of learners.
- Drs. Hodnicki and Hanson, in partnership with the University of Georgia School of Pharmacy faculty, received a 3 year, \$300,000 grant from the Federal Division of Nursing to update advanced practice nurses (APN) in Georgia on pharmacology information. The grant funded the production of new on-line syllabi and teaching tools that were also incorporated into the MSN program.
- Drs. Cornwell, Wood and Hodnicki completed the March 2001 Georgia Southern University On-line Retreat to develop MSN courses scheduled for on-line delivery that began in Fall 2001.

#### Computer and Other Technology Assisted Instruction

- 100% of classroom instruction in all School programs is multimedia based.
- Faculty and students develop and employ PowerPoint, In-Focus, Video, and CD ROM technology in their presentations and classroom learning experiences; a video portfolio is maintained and evaluated as a part of each student's academic Student Outcome Portfolio.
- Faculty create their own CD's and videos to assist student learning.
- Approximately 50% of the nursing faculty offer course examinations on the computer using A+, a test creation and analysis software publication.
- Numerous courses use the computer laboratory for course activities, allowing students access to internet resources as well as faculty created Web CT connections both during and outside of class.
- Creative uses of technology abound. As an example, one faculty member teaches microscope diagnostic skills using computer lab and In-Focus technologies.

The framework of the nursing program at Georgia Southern University is Health Promotion Throughout Life. Goal attainment of health promotion involves therapeutic nursing interventions that include the enabling factors of: human caring, communication, ethical principles, critical thinking, empowerment, research, healthcare technology, and cultural sensitivity. These constructs, embedded in nursing standards for education and practice, form the basis for the development of program objectives and all teaching, learning, and assessment experiences in the School of Nursing curriculum. It is the faculty's expectation that students, through developmentally appropriate and increasingly complex learning experiences, achieve all program objectives and entry into the professional practice of nursing through

licensure examination. By the time of graduation, baccalaureate students are expected to:

- Appraise the outcome of implemented therapeutic nursing interventions/enabling factors in health promotion used in the care of persons, families, groups, and communities.
- Demonstrate competence incorporating changing healthcare technology in nursing care.
- Integrate ethical principles in nursing care of persons, families, groups, and communities.
- Evaluate current and changing rural health care needs influencing persons, families, groups, and communities based on cultural and ethnic diversity.
- Incorporate human caring within all aspects of nursing practice.
- Demonstrate responsibility and accountability within nursing practice.
- Evaluate the outcome of critical thinking in the provision of therapeutic nursing interventions with persons, families, groups, and communities.
- Implement the nursing process through nurse-person partnership to promote, maintain, and restore health.
- Utilize research findings in nursing practice based on critical analysis of research.
- Actively engage in leadership and management skills using collaboration, advocacy, empowerment, interpersonal communication, and teaching in nursing practice.
- Employ therapeutic communication in the provision of nursing care.

Building on these undergraduate expectations, masters degree students, by the time of graduation, are expected to:

- Demonstrate leadership ability in nursing and in community organizations.
- Synthesize ethical principles into the management and evaluation of health care delivery concerns in culturally, geographically, and physically diverse settings.
- Demonstrate high-level expertise in culturally sensitive therapeutic nursing interventions.
- Demonstrate responsibility and accountability in the development of the advanced practice nursing role.
- Demonstrate competence in the knowledge and skills necessary to develop and manage holistic clinical care as an advanced practice nurse.
- Apply critically analyzed theory into advanced practice directed towards persons, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
- Conduct research and/or evaluation related to nursing and health care.
- Incorporate critical thinking into advanced practice nursing.
- Demonstrate human caring in all aspects of advanced practice nursing through nurse-person partnership.
- Employ therapeutic communication in the provision of advanced practice nursing.
- Manage health care delivery through effective communication, technology, and multidisciplinary collaboration.
- Participate in policy-making that impacts advanced practice nursing and empowers rural and underserved populations.

**Support for Good Teaching.** School of Nursing faculty teaching at the undergraduate and graduate levels have received numerous awards and honors in the past several years providing evidence of an ongoing commitment to scholarly excellence in teaching. Recent examples include Dr. June Alberto who received the College of Health and Professional Studies Teaching Award in 1995, the Statesboro

Business and Professional Women's Organization Woman of Achievement in 1998, and the College of Health and Professional Studies Excellence in Service Award in 2001. Dr. Elaine Hapshe received the College of Health and Professional Studies Teaching Excellence Award in 2000. Dr. Jean Bartels received the Educator of the Year Award from the Wisconsin Nurses Association in 1999, the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee Center for Nursing Cultural Awareness, the Sensitivity/Milwaukee Area Health Education Center Award in 1999, and the University of Wisconsin Alumni Association Graduate of the Last Decade Award in 1998. She received the American Association of Colleges of Nursing Political Activism Award for her testimony on nursing shortage issues to the US House of Representatives Committee on Education and the Workforce in 2001. Ms. Alison Rushing received a Scholars Award from the Society of Rogerian Scholars. Ms. EIDonna Hilde received the College of Health and Professional Studies Outstanding Teaching Award in 1996. Ms. Cathy Shriver was awarded the 1998 Georgia Southern Excellence in Service Award. Dr. Donna Hodnicki received the College of Health and Professional Studies Excellence in Scholarship Award in 1999, was inducted as a Fellow of the American Academy of Nursing (FAAN) and was appointed by Dr. Donna Shalala, Secretary of Health and Human Services to serve 1998-2001 on the National Health Care Service Corps National Advisory Council. Dr. Charlene Hanson received the Nurse Practitioner Lifetime Achievement Award in 1999 and is a Fellow of the American Academy of Nursing (FAAN). She served as a member of the National Advisory Committee for Rural Health under President Reagan and as a member of the National Advisory Committee for Nursing Education and Practice under President Clinton. She is currently serving as the co-chair of the Georgia Governor's Health Care Workforce Technical Advisory Committee (of the Health Strategies Council) created to address the state's current and future health care workforce needs, focusing specifically on nursing, allied health, and behavioral health professions.

## **PROGRAM SUCCESSES AND UNIQUE LEARNING EXPERIENCES**

### **Bachelor of Science in Nursing Program**

**Graduation Rates:** Retention rates for the BSN Program average above 86% per admitted class. The retention rate for the December 2000 class was 86.9% and for the May 2001 class, 80%. Over the past five years, the BSN student withdrawal rate for academic reasons was less than 5% per year; for the past year, the rate was 1.25%. In the RN-BSN Program, the student withdrawal rate for academic reasons was less than 1%. In the past 4 years, only one RN-BSN student withdrew for academic reasons.

**NCLEX (Licensure) Pass Rates:** The Georgia Southern School of Nursing NCLEX licensure pass rate averages rank high compared with the state and nation. The mean 5-year pass rate (1996-2000) for GSU is 91%, ranking the School of Nursing second in the state of Georgia among 15 comparable Georgia universities. In 2000, the School of Nursing ranked third among all comparable Georgia universities, with a pass rate of 95%. This fact is even more impressive when comparing this 95% pass rate to those of the State of Georgia (83%), all Southeastern states (84%), and USA totals (84%) for the year 2000.

### Georgia Southern School of Nursing Licensure Pass Rates

YEAR	PERCENT PASS RATE
1996	87%
1997	92%
1998	93%
1999	88%
2000	95%
2001	88%
<b>Mean 1996-2000</b>	<b>91 %</b>

**Job Placement Rates:** The May 2000 exit survey of the Georgia Southern School of Nursing graduating seniors revealed that 82% of the students had been offered a position prior to graduation or taking their licensure examination. By choice the remaining students elected to seek employment after they had successfully passed their licensure examination. Consistent with prior years, 100% of those seeking positions were immediately employed upon successfully passing the licensure examination. For many years, employers have contacted the School seeking an opportunity to come to the campus to recruit Georgia Southern graduates.

**Aggregate Student Performance Outcome Data:** The School of Nursing has implemented a comprehensive program evaluation plan since 1985. A significant focus for the plan is the outcome achievements of students and graduates. Faculty conduct comprehensive reviews of student outcomes as a means for improving the individual learning of each student as well as providing aggregate information for use in ongoing program refinement and improvement. Selected outcome measures are outlined below.

**Student Outcome Portfolios:** All students in the nursing program are required to keep an academic video and written portfolio documenting their achievement of program outcomes through selected presentations, projects, papers, assessments, clinical evaluations, and self-reflections over the course of their study in the nursing major. These portfolios are evaluated and scored once each year against contextually valid criteria adopted by the collective faculty. A review of Senior BSN students' as well as the RN-BSN students' academic portfolios reveals that students have met or exceeded faculty expectations for critical thinking, communications, therapeutic nursing interventions, and self-reflection since use of portfolios began in 1997-1998. The most recent comparative portfolio study comparisons of the same students' scores between their Junior and Senior years of study revealed a consistent, significant increase in scores for each domain. A significant between group difference ( $p \leq .0001$ ) was found between students in their Junior level of study and the same students in their Senior level of study in the areas of critical thinking and therapeutic nursing intervention skills. There was also a significant difference between the communication skills ( $p \leq .002$ ) and self reflection skills ( $p \leq .05$ ) of students in their Junior and Senior levels of study.

**California Critical Thinking Disposition Inventory (CCTDI):** The CCTDI was developed to examine students' overall ability to think critically and their disposition to think critically (Facione, Facione, & Sanchez, 1994). The tool has been used at Georgia Southern as a screening mechanism to profile individual students as well as to identify the aggregate characteristics of each class. The CCTDI total score for pre-licensure Junior nursing students upon entry to the program has remained stable over the past 10 classes admitted and has hovered at or very near the Junior norm total score of 308. Students in the graduating class of 1998 class scored 315; in 1999, 311;

in 2000, 316; in 2001, 305; and in 2002, 297. Results of the CCTDI, along with other outcome data, are reported to faculty and discussed in General Faculty Meetings. Aggregate scores are used by faculty as an overall indicator of the class' critical thinking disposition, providing faculty with information for designing critical thinking experiences in individual courses and across the curriculum.

Nurses' Entrance Test (NET). The Nurse Entrance Test (NET)(Frost, 1998) is administered to pre-licensure students at the beginning of the nursing program at Georgia Southern. The NET examines the following areas of student ability: 1) Essential Math Skills; 2) Reading Comprehension; 3) Test Taking; 4) Stress Level Profile; 5) Social Interaction Tendencies; and 6) Learning Style. Scores are calculated in the aggregate as composite scores. In addition, individual reports for each student are generated, providing useful information regarding areas that may need focused learning experiences. Aggregate scores are evaluated by faculty and are used to guide curriculum experiences and advisor foci. In general, students perform at or above the normative sample in the majority of NET Exam categories. Students' composite percentage and percentile scores remain higher than the norm, as do those for math. The average composite percentage score (the mean of the Essential Math Skills and Reading Comprehension Scores) has remained relatively stable over the past six years. Students score consistently above the normative sample, averaging from seven to 11 points higher. Reading comprehension scores remain at or near the norm. The NET is useful for faculty and students in that it provides an initial assessment of the student's status on a number of important academic skills. Results are reported to faculty in the aggregate and also given to the individual student. The students are encouraged to discuss their scores with faculty advisors who assist them to plan remediation that may be helpful in enhancing their academic skills.

NLN Basics I and II. The NLN Basics I and II examinations have traditionally been administered to students at the end of the second semester of the Junior Year (JR II). Both Basics exams assess student understanding of fundamental aspects of nursing care. Overall, Georgia Southern students out-perform their national BSN norm comparison group counterparts on Basics I and II Exams in all areas. Scores in all areas have remained stable over the past six years. The exam results are validated by graduates' licensure pass rates that have remained stable and consistently above national BSN normative groups over the past six years

NLN Comprehensive Exam aggregate outcome data is used by faculty to plan unique experiences for specific learner needs as well as to review the entire curriculum. In the Senior capstone course, a faculty team reviews individual student test results from this examination taken earlier by the class. Topics covering questions that were missed by over 50% of the class are collated and used as foci for the assignment, Student-Led Review Topics. Students are expected to review each topic and provide comprehensive coverage of salient issues about that topic. The test results help to guide focal points for class discussion and peer review of content and exercises designed to better prepare students for the licensure examination. Additionally, these aggregate data, along with other outcome data, are used by the collective faculty to review the distribution and comprehensiveness of content across the curriculum.

NLN Comprehensive Examination. The NLN Comprehensive Nursing Achievement Test assesses students' comprehension of nursing concepts at the conclusion of the BSN program and serves as a practice test in preparation for the

licensure exam. Aggregate scores, in combination with other outcome data, are used to help evaluate the effectiveness with which the School of Nursing is meeting the objectives represented on the licensure examination. Scores are compared to those of similar educational programs throughout the country. The Comprehensive Nursing Achievement Test is designed to measure overall achievement at the end of the BSN curriculum. Overall, Georgia Southern nursing student results have remained stable for the past six years.

RN Computerized Adaptive Test (RN-CAT). The RN-CAT provides students with a realistic preview of their licensure examination experience. Candidates not only see and practice answering questions similar to those found on the licensure exam, they gain insight into their level of preparedness for the examination. Students receive both a national ranking score and subscores in each of the areas in the exam. They gain experience with computerized technology, interacting with the computer as they do for the licensure exam. Faculty teams teaching in the capstone course use the test scores to assist students in developing individual study plans in order to maximize their probability of success on the licensure exam. Since the exam is unique for each student, aggregate data are used to analyze patterns of student learning needs. That information is used in combination with other outcome data to identify areas that may need to be strengthened across the curriculum.

Mosby's RN Assess Test. The Mosby RN Assess Test is used as a preparatory exam for students in approaching the licensure exam. Faculty review results and focus on areas of weakness identified through the Mosby Assess Test in preparing course materials and specialized areas of concentration for each class. Aggregate data are useful to faculty in tracking Georgia Southern students overall scores compared to BSN normative scores. The mean Mosby score for Georgia Southern students from 1996-2001 is 61%, compared to 62% for the BS Norm group. Georgia Southern's scores have been identical to the BS Norm values for five of the last six years.

**BSN Student, Graduate and Employer Surveys:** Students in the undergraduate program are surveyed each semester regarding their experiences in the program. Periodic surveys and student group discussions are also conducted regarding specific foci such as the status of course and clinical experiences, advising opportunities, and learning resources. Student representatives to the Student Advisory Council conduct surveys of student recommendations, issues, and concerns prior to each meeting of the Council. Results of all surveys are immediately provided to faculty and School Committees for their analysis and responses (including program and policy revisions where appropriate). Most recent surveys of students' satisfaction with instruction in the program have resulted in ratings of 4.28 to 4.50 on a scale where 5.0 indicates "excellent."

Graduates of the BSN Program are surveyed every two years regarding their satisfaction with learning experiences at Georgia Southern University as well as their current employment status. Results of the most recent survey indicate that: Graduates are employed in eleven different Georgia counties of which 80% are rural; 100% of the graduates are employed in nursing; 26% are certified in a specialty area; 22% directly access their elected officials; over 60% belong to a professional organization; and 12% are currently engaged in graduate studies. Graduates noted the following strengths of the program: Excellent instructors; Dedication to a rural focus; and Well-rounded curricula. Students commented that their learning experiences assisted them in understanding the importance of doing things correctly and in developing a sense of

obligation and empathy for others. Using a 5.0 point scale (with 5.0 being very good), graduates ranked their achievement of program outcomes at 4.40.

The employers of graduates are surveyed concurrently with graduates. Of those responding to the most recent survey, 62.5% directly oversaw the graduates' work. Ninety-five percent ranked graduates at 4.0 to 5.0 (on a scale with 5.0 being very well) in regard to how well graduates met their responsibilities, incorporated caring into their practice, communicated effectively, integrated ethical principles, managed the care of groups, and demonstrated accountability.

The School of Nursing also surveys its graduating Seniors each semester. Students surveyed in December, 2000 completed the Educational Benchmarking 2000 Nursing Education Student Satisfaction Survey that compared their satisfaction with six other national nursing programs in the same Carnegie Class: University of Nebraska at Omaha, South Dakota State University, Marquette University, Old Dominion University, Thomas Jefferson College of Health Professions, and the University of Florida. Of these comparison schools, Georgia Southern's graduates ranked second in their overall satisfaction with the program with a factor average of 4.37 compared with the group average of 4.35.

**Differences Between Georgia Southern Responses and Benchmark Institutions\***  
 Rank of Factors from Greatest Positive to Greatest Negative Difference\*

<b>SATISFACTION FACTOR</b>	<b>GEORGIA SOUTHERN GRADUATING SENIORS</b>	<b>ALL SIX BENCHMARK INSTITUTIONS</b>
Professional Values	6.52	5.99
Role Development	5.81	5.63
Core Knowledge	5.47	5.59
Overall Satisfaction	4.37	4.50
Technical Skills	5.97	6.14
Core Competencies	5.57	5.77
Facilities and Administration	4.14	4.34
Course Lecture and Interaction	4.92	5.13
Classmates	4.66	5.23
Work and Class Size	4.20	4.97

**Differences Between Georgia Southern Responses and Benchmark Institutions\* (CONT.)**  
 Rank of Factors from Greatest Positive to Greatest Negative Difference\*

<b>SELECTED COMPETITIVE QUESTIONS</b>	<b>GEORGIA SOUTHERN GRADUATING SENIORS</b>	<b>ALL SIX BENCHMARK INSTITUTIONS</b>
To what degree did the nursing program teach you to provide culturally competent care?	6.28	5.89
How satisfied are you with the computing resources at your school	4.90	4.53
To what degree did the nursing program teach you to incorporate nursing standards into practice?	6.03	5.72
To what degree did your senior clinical courses build on the foundation laid in previous courses?	5.63	5.36
To what degree did the nursing program teach you to demonstrate accountability for your own actions?	6.28	6.05
How satisfied are you with the ability of the faculty to act as effective role models in clinical practice?	5.55	5.40
How satisfied are you with faculty responsiveness to student concerns?	5.13	5.01
How satisfied are you with the ability of faculty to interact with students one-to-one?	5.18	5.13
To what degree did the nursing program teach you to integrate theory to develop a foundation for practice?	5.65	5.60

**\*RATING SCALE:**

7 = Very Satisfied    6 = Moderately Satisfied    5 = Slightly Satisfied    4 = Neutral    3 = Slightly Dissatisfied    2 = Moderately Dissatisfied    1 = Very Dissatisfied

**Community Advisory Council Survey:** A 35 member Community Advisory Council, composed of representatives from the School of Nursing's communities of interest, is convened yearly to address the practice and educational needs of nurses and health care agencies in Southeast Georgia. Members, some of whom are also alumni, represent interests in: acute care, long term care, rehabilitation, mental health, and substance abuse agencies; medical community; armed services; hospice; homeless shelters; migrant populations; and public health. The 2001 survey results indicated that 100% of respondents believed Georgia Southern graduates to be adequately to well prepared in all 20 practice areas surveyed. This information was reported back to the collective faculty for their review for potential revisions to theory and clinical courses.

**Alumni Success:** Program effectiveness is also measured by the extent to which alumni participate in their local community and professional organizations, receive awards, and practice after graduation. Georgia Southern BSN program

graduates hold leadership positions in public health, hospitals, hospice, research, and home health. Graduates have run for public office and won state awards in health related organizations. Selected recent exemplars include: a Hinesville, Georgia graduate who was named the TB Nurse of the Year for Outstanding Service in the Public Health Department and a graduate who was named the American Lung Association Georgia Volunteer of the Year. Alumni have also published articles for professional journals. An average of fifteen graduates are inducted into the professional and academic honor societies each year. A comprehensive survey of alumni is completed every two years.

**Awards, Honors, and Unique Learning Experiences in the Undergraduate Program:** In March of 1999, the BSN program was one of the first in Georgia to be named as a participant in the U.S. Army Cadet Command Partnership in Nursing Education (PNE) program. PNE designation enables students interested in nursing, who qualify for the Army ROTC Nurse Program, to attend Georgia Southern University on full four year scholarships covering tuition, books, student fees, and a stipend each month. Students interested in nursing who qualify for four year ROTC scholarships are required to attend a PNE program.

Additionally, two Board of Regents teaching and technology grants (approximately \$40,000) were awarded to faculty during the 1998-1999 academic year. The curriculum was recognized as a model of excellence by the Georgia Board of Nursing due to high level student performance on the nursing licensure examination. The BSN and RN-BSN Programs received nine commendations and was recognized as a model program by the Georgia Board of Nursing following the Board's Fall 2000 site visit. This past year, faculty provided over 12 curriculum and outcome evaluation consultations to Schools of Nursing in the state and nation. Two BSN Program faculty served as consultants on program development to Georgia Schools of Nursing. One faculty member serves on the Georgia Board of Nursing Education Council. One faculty member was selected in 2000 to attend the Georgia Southern On-line Faculty Retreat and three more were selected to attend the 2001 On-line Faculty Retreat.

The BSN Program offers a rural focus with extensive clinical experience hours. Throughout their course of study, students participate in practicum experiences in smaller, rural hospitals and local community agencies where they explore and come to understand the health care needs of the rural environment. Faculty engage students in a wide variety of applied learning experiences:

- Students are involved in community projects that result in significant change for both student and community. Since 1993, the School of Nursing Rural Nursing Outreach Program has served a major role in meeting the health care needs of the local rural community. With the addition of a primary care nursing clinic and a teen outreach clinic at the Rural Nursing Outreach Community Center in Portal, nursing faculty, staff, and students now serve over 150 clients, 43 as primary care clients. This past year alone, the Center has served 1031 clients in blood pressure clinics, conducted laboratory screenings for 118 clients (a number of whom have been diagnosed with early breast and prostate malignancies as a result of Center screenings), seen 52 clients with foot care needs, conducted aerobic classes for 112 elderly clients, provided prostate screening for 38 clients, and provided vaccinations for over 40 clients. An additional Community Nursing Center will be opened on the Georgia Southern campus with the completion of the School's new Nursing Building.

Additionally, School of Nursing faculty and students provide care through two migrant population health care initiatives in Tattnall, Toombs, and Screven Counties. Primary care, health screening, and health education activities are among the services provided to over 200 migrant workers and their families throughout the academic year.

- The diverse enrollment of the School of Nursing reflects the population of Southeast Georgia which helps the School to prepare a more sensitive, culturally competent practitioner.
- Students have clinical learning opportunities in a wide variety of clinical facilities including a new state-of-the-art regional medical center, a US Army community hospital, and tertiary care facilities and medical teaching hospitals in nearby Savannah. Students are introduced to the clinical area immediately upon admission to the BSN Program, and have a variety of clinical practica in areas such as adult health, nursing care of women/newborns and children/families, complex/critical care, community health, and leadership/management.
- Graduates are prepared for entry-level nursing positions in hospitals, schools, long-term care, primary care, and community agencies; for leadership positions after experience is gained; and for graduate school and teaching or research careers.
- Accelerated programs of study are offered for Licensed Practical Nurses and service corpsmen to allow them to progress more quickly through the undergraduate program because of prior learning and work experiences
- Faculty actively participate in quality care committees and provide continuing education opportunities for nursing staff at local care facilities
- A 35 member Community Advisory Committee, composed of the School of Nursing's communities of interest is convened yearly to address the practice and educational needs of nurses and health care agencies in Southeast Georgia. Members represent interests in: acute care, long term care, rehabilitation, mental health and substance abuse agencies; medical community; armed services; hospice; homeless shelters; migrant populations; and public health.
- Over 80% of the School's graduates choose to stay in rural communities, many in Southeastern Georgia, to practice.

### **Master of Science in Nursing Program**

**Graduation Rates:** Since the program began, retention rates for students admitted and enrolled have averaged 89%. Between 1998 and 2001, two students (less than 1%) have left the graduate program for academic reasons. Those students were counseled to seek an MSN in an area more suited to their ability and interests.

**ANA Certification Exam Pass Rates:** Nurse Practitioners must pass a national certification examination in order to practice in Georgia and all surrounding states. Since 1990 there have been 19 FNP graduating classes with a total pass rate of 98.7%. Fourteen graduating classes have a 100% first attempt pass rate on certification examinations (155/165). All graduates (100% of the last four classes) passed the national certification exam on the first attempt. In May 2001, the first Women's Health Nurse Practitioner graduates successfully passed their certification exam on the first attempt.

**Comprehensive Examination:** Prior to the semester conversion, students in the graduate program were required to complete and defend a research project as an exit program requirement. Effective with the August 2000 graduating class, students were required to take comprehensive examinations prior to graduation. 100% of the students since the August 2000 graduating class have passed the first administration of the examination at a satisfactory level.

**Student Portfolio Assessments:** All students in the graduate program are required to keep an academic portfolio documenting selected projects, papers, assessments, clinical evaluations, and self-reflections over the course of their study in the Master's Program. These portfolios are evaluated and scored once each year against contextually valid criteria adopted by the collective faculty. In the most recent review of Master's students' academic portfolios, over 50% of the students met or exceeded faculty expectations for the mean scores for the annual summary, self-reflections, communication skills, and nursing intervention expertise. Students scored at an average level in the areas of professional writing and critical thinking. Graduate students met or exceeded faculty expectations on 15 of the 18 Terminal Objective Outcomes for the program. In general, graduate student performance meets or exceeds faculty expectations in most areas. Findings suggest that students perform well above average in the critically important nursing areas of ethics, caring, responsibility and accountability in nursing practice.

**Job Placement Rates:** Results of the most recent graduate surveys show that 80% of the graduates are employed in Georgia, most working in rural counties; 96.2% of the graduates are employed in advanced nursing practice roles; 53.8% hold formal hospital privileges; 100% are certified in specialty areas.

**Student, Graduate and Employer Surveys:** Students in the graduate program are surveyed each semester regarding their experiences in the program. Periodic surveys and student group discussions are also conducted regarding specific foci such as the status of clinical practice opportunities and learning resources. Student representatives to the Graduate Committee and Student Advisory Council survey their peers for recommendations, issues, and concerns prior to each meeting. Results of all surveys are immediately provided to faculty and School Committees for their analysis and responses (including program and policy revisions where appropriate). Most recent surveys of students' satisfaction with instruction in the program have resulted in ratings of 4.27 to 5.0 on a scale where 5.0 indicates "excellent."

Graduates of the MSN Program are surveyed every two years regarding satisfaction with their learning experiences at Georgia Southern University as well as current employment status. In addition to the aforementioned job placement statistics, 84.7% of the graduates earned eight or more continuing education units in the past year (mode=30 CEUs); 92.3% belong to a professional organization; 96.2% have contact with elected government officials; and 30.7% hold voluntary positions on community advisory board. Graduates routinely note significant strengths of the program. In the most recent survey (July 2001), seventy percent of the graduates indicated that program outcomes were 100% met. The greatest strengths of the program were faculty mentoring, clinical hours, and learning assessment skills. Also cited as benefits were the didactic content, constructive feedback, preceptors, active faculty practice and political involvement, and faculty encouragement given to students.

**Alumni Success:** MSN program graduates hold remarkable leadership positions in health care and the community. Graduates have been active in health care policy development and reform, developed entrepreneurial health care delivery practices, and advocated for the needs of the communities they serve. They have published in scholarly journals, presented at professional conferences, and taken an active role in community development. Selected exemplars of graduate accomplishments include the following:

- One Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP) began a primary clinic in a rural community that had no access to health care. She successfully negotiated with the Brunswick Hospital to fund her clinic in Woodbine, Georgia where she continues to be the only health care provider for 30 miles. This graduate now sits on several community boards and is a member of the Georgia Board of Nursing Task Force for Advanced Practice Nursing. She is a frequent speaker on strategies for setting up Nurse Practitioner clinics. She is also an expert on the topic of reimbursement coding and documentation issues.
- A recent Family Nurse Practitioner graduate set up a nurse owned primary care clinic in Brunswick. She has hired three physicians to work in the practice, a first for the state of Georgia.
- One certified nurse midwife earned Family Nurse Practitioner credentials from Georgia Southern and then set up the first certified nurse midwife owned birthing center in Georgia. She has provided both midwifery and primary care services to rural families for a significant period of time. She has served as a preceptor for students in her clinic in Rincon, Georgia. She is an accreditation visitor for the National Birthing Center Accreditation Organization.
- Several Family Nurse Practitioner graduates have gone on for doctoral education; Six graduates are known to be in graduate faculty positions.

**Awards, Honors, Unique Learning Experiences in the MSN Program:** In 1998, the *U.S. News & World Report* ranked the FNP Program at Georgia Southern in the top 5% of Nurse Practitioner Programs in the United States. Since that time, the program has been consistently ranked in the top percentages in the nation. In 1999 and 2001, the graduate program was selected by the National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties as one of three national Nurse Practitioner programs to mentor faculty from across the nation on the integration of community content in Nurse Practitioner curricula. The program was cited as exemplary in providing a rural focus and extensive clinical experience hours to assist students to understand the unique health care needs of the rural environment.

Family Nurse Practitioner students complete 720 clinical practicum hours and Women's Health Nurse Practitioner students complete 660 clinical practicum hours with community preceptors (nurse practitioners and MDs) to learn hands-on application of clinical skills. Graduate students complete required research projects and theses in community agencies, private practice offices, health departments and individual subjects' homes. The Family Nurse Practitioner program was designed to utilize non-classroom settings in the clinical arena for learning. MSN students conduct family assessments that lead to interventions that promote the health of families in local rural communities. They complete clinical courses in a wide variety of hospitals and community agencies in clinical preceptorships with experienced nurse practitioners or physicians all over the state. MSN students in the primary care courses complete a health assessment on migrant children. They participate in the

activities of the Rural Nursing Community Outreach Center and a faculty led evening Migrant Clinic in Sylvania, Georgia. Students are involved in community-based research projects that result in significant change both for students and the communities they serve. An elective course open to MSN students in Global Community Health took several students to Ghana, West Africa where they completed research projects comparing rural care in both the United States and Ghana. The diverse enrollment in the program helps prepare a more sensitive, culturally competent practitioner. An accelerated program for RN-MSN program assists Registered Nurses with an Associate Degree or Nursing Diploma to shorten their time in achieving a graduate degree in nursing.

### **Summary**

The School of Nursing programs have long been beacons for Georgia Southern, bringing local, state, and national recognition for academic distinction to the University. The mission and strategic planning efforts of the School, actualized through its Baccalaureate and Graduate programs, have been consistently congruent with that of the University and innovative in the state. The School's long record of teaching effectiveness is captured succinctly in the outcome measures that indicate both student satisfaction as well as the academic and professional success of its graduates. The faculty, diverse, well prepared and productive as educators and scholars, have created and implemented innovative and rigorous programs that lead the state in producing graduates who are competent professional citizens. In this time of nursing shortages and increased demands for well educated health care practitioners, Georgia Southern's School of Nursing has been a model in meeting the demand for academic excellence and social responsibility.