Nursing Alumni Surveys: 2011 Graduates

Report #275

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Introduction

The Office of Institutional Development and Technology conducted surveys of College of the Canyons’ RN and LVN – RN nursing alumni who graduated in the Spring 2011 and Fall 2011 semesters to assess graduates’ satisfaction with the preparation and training they received through the nursing programs at COC. Alumni were also requested to forward an employer survey to their current supervisor if they are currently employed. Surveys of all alumni requested information intended to assess the current position in which the alumnus is employed, current salary, employment status (full- or part-time), and future educational plans. Surveys of RN and LVN-RN alumni consisted of the same items, except one additional item on the LVN-RN survey that pertained specifically to the effectiveness of the Bridge course in the LVN-RN program.

The survey instrument for nursing alumni employers was intended to assess the competency of the nursing alumni in various areas within the nursing position they are employed.

Methods

The Nursing Program Director, with assistance from the Office of Institutional Development and Technology, developed a questionnaire that contained closed-ended questions intended to assess nursing alumni satisfaction with the preparation and training they received through the nursing programs at College of the Canyons.

Procedures

Surveys were distributed through surveymonkey.com on March 20, 2012 to nursing alumni identified by the Nursing department as nursing graduates in Spring 2011 and on July 2, 2012 to nursing alumni identified as nursing graduates in Fall 2011. Of the 102 surveys distributed to nursing alumni, 45 surveys were completed, resulting in a response rate of 44 percent. All 102 invited nursing alumni were provided with a link to a survey through surveymonkey.com to forward to their immediate supervisor. Of the 102 employer surveys provided to nursing alumni participants, 1 survey was completed. Completed questionnaires were coded and tabulated using Excel (2010) and SurveyMonkey. Refer to Appendix A for a copy of the questionnaire, Appendix B for a listing of the summary of counts and percentages of response frequencies, and Appendix C for open-ended responses.
Results

Satisfaction with Various Aspects of the Registered Nursing Program

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of satisfaction with various aspects of the Registered Nursing Program at College of the Canyons. Figure 1 illustrates the percentage of respondents that were “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with various aspects of the Nursing program.

As illustrated in Figure 1, the majority of respondents indicated that they were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the following aspects of the Nursing program:

- Overall preparation received for respondent's Nursing position (93 percent),
- Quality of instruction in the Nursing program (93 percent),
- Availability of Nursing courses at times respondent could take them (93 percent),
- Support provided by Nursing faculty to respondent's position as an RN (91 percent),
- Support provided by College non-teaching staff to nursing students (88 percent),
- Availability of Nursing faculty outside of the classroom (84 percent), and
- Preparation respondent received for the NCLEX (64 percent).

As compared to the Nursing Alumni Survey of 2010 Graduates, satisfaction has increased with the support provided by Nursing faculty to the respondent’s position as an RN (18 percent increase), quality of instruction in the Nursing program (11 percent increase), overall preparation respondents received in their nursing position (10 percent increase), and availability of Nursing...
courses at times respondents could take them (2 percent increase). Satisfaction has decreased with the support provided by College non-teaching staff to nursing students (3 percent decrease) and the availability of Nursing faculty outside of the classroom (1 percent decrease).

**LVN to RN Program**

**Seven respondents** indicated that they graduated from the LVN to RN program.

Respondents indicating that they graduated from the LVN to RN program were asked to indicate their level of satisfaction with the Bridge course.

Three respondents indicated that they were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the Bridge course. Two respondents indicated a “neutral” response regarding their satisfaction with the Bridge course. One respondent indicated that they were “dissatisfied” with the Bridge course.

Percentages are not reported for sample sizes less than ten.

**Competency with Various Aspects of the Nursing Program**

As indicated in Table 1, the majority of respondents feel “very competent” with various aspects of the Nursing program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency Description</th>
<th>Very Competent</th>
<th>Somewhat Competent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communicate effectively with patients, families, and the healthcare team utilizing multiple communication methods including personal interactions and information technology.</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilize knowledge, skills, and attitudes, from the physical and behavioral sciences, the humanities, and nursing sciences to provide safe and effective care applying evidence based practice.</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apply the steps of the nursing process integrating critical thinking strategies necessary to provide patient centered care to diverse populations.</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrate the professional, legal, and ethical components of nursing in clinical practice while demonstrating accountability and self-direction.</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to function in the roles of provider of care, manager of care, and member of the nursing profession.</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate leadership by safely coordinating the care of multiple patients, while delegating to and collaborating with the healthcare team, patient, and family to provide the highest quality of care.</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Use of Knowledge/Skills Learned in Various Courses**

Figure 2 illustrates the percentage of respondents indicating that they use the knowledge and/or skills from each of the required nursing courses listed “frequently” or “occasionally.”

The majority of respondents indicated that they use the knowledge/skills from the following courses in their current positions either “frequently” or “occasionally”:

- Anatomy & Physiology (98 percent)
- Psychology (93 percent)
- English (writing skills or English composition and literature) (91 percent)
- Speech (88 percent)
- Microbiology (84 percent)

**RN Program Content Usefulness in Current Position**

Overall, 95 percent of respondents indicated that the content of the RN program is reflective of what happens on the job. Specifically, 58 percent of RN alumni indicated the content is “very reflective” and 37 percent indicated that the content is “somewhat reflective” of what happens on the job.

**Additional Credentials Obtained Since Completing the Nursing Program**

Respondents indicated that they have obtained the following credentials since graduating from COC:

- ACLS (18)
- PALS (6)
- NIHSS (3)
- NRP (3)
- MAB (2)
- BLS (1)
- CNA (1)
- CPR (1)
- CPT1 (1)
- ECC (1)
- ECG (1)
- EKG (1)
- EMT (1)
- ENPC (1)
- HHA (1)
- M license (1)
- Pharmacy certificate (1)
- Phlebotomy certificate (1)
- TNCC (1)
### Professional Organization Membership

Respondents indicated that they are members of the following organizations:

- American Nurses Association (ANA) – 5 respondents
- California Nursing Association (CNA) – 2 respondents
- Emergency Nurses Association (ENA) – 2 respondents
- Association of Perioperative Registered Nurses (AORN) – 1 respondent
- Bachelor of Science in Nursing Student Association (BSNSA) – 1 respondent
- Home Health Aid (HHA) – 1 respondent

### Public/Community Service

Respondents indicated that they are involved with the following public or community services:

- Religious/spiritual activities – 5 respondents
- American Cancer Society – 1 respondent
- American Diabetes Association – 1 respondent
- Healthcare volunteer – 1 respondent
- HealthyU – 1 respondent
- Leukemia and Lymphoma Society – 1 respondent
- Operation MEND – 1 respondent
- Out of the Darkness Suicide Awareness – 1 respondent

### Scholarly Activities

Respondents indicated that they are involved in the following scholarly activities:

- Chron’s disease/colitis research – 1 respondent
- UCLA hypertension research study – 1 respondent
- Women veteran’s healthcare utilization research – 1 respondent

### Professionally-Oriented Educational Programs

Forty-five percent of respondents indicated that they have taken professionally-oriented educational programs since graduating from the nursing program at COC; specifically:

- Continuing Education Units (CEU) – 13 respondents
- In-Service programs at place of employment – 7 respondents
- Classes leading towards an advanced nursing degree – 7 respondents
- Classes leading to an advanced degree outside the field of nursing – 6 respondents
- Workshops (other than at your place of employment) – 3 respondents
**Pursuit of Higher Education**

Ninety-eight percent of respondents indicated that they plan to pursue a higher degree. Respondents indicated that they are enrolled or plan to begin classes at the following times:

- Currently Enrolled – 46 percent (19 respondents)
- Next year – 39 percent (16 respondents)
- Two to three years – 12 percent (5 respondents)
- More than three years – 3 percent (1 respondent)

Fifty-one percent of respondents indicating that they plan to pursue a higher education indicated that they plan to enroll on a *full-time* basis, while 49 percent of respondents indicated that they plan to enroll on a *part-time* basis.

The majority of respondents indicating that they plan to pursue a higher education plan to eventually pursue an *MS or higher* (48 percent), 27 percent indicated that they plan to pursue a *BS/BA*, and 25 percent plan to pursue a *doctorate*.

The majority of respondents plan to enroll in a *traditional college or university* (66 percent), while 34 percent indicated that they plan to pursue an *external degree program*.

Forty-five percent of respondents indicated that they are currently enrolled in an *ADN to BSN program*. Of those enrolled in an ADN to BSN program, respondents indicated that they are attending the following schools:

- California State University – Dominguez Hills - 19 respondents
- California State University – Northridge – 3 respondents
- University of Texas – Arlington – 3 respondents
- Western Governors University – 3 respondents
- National University – 2 respondents
- University of Phoenix – 1 respondent
- Arizona State University – 1 respondent

No respondents indicated that they are currently enrolled in an *ADN to MSN program*.

**Employment Status**

**Current Employment Status**

*Half* of the respondents (50 percent) indicated that they are employed *full-time*, followed by *still looking for a job in Nursing* (38 percent), employed *part-time* (7 percent), and *not looking, continuing their education* (5 percent).
Length of Time Before Obtaining a Job

Respondents who indicated that they are currently employed were asked to indicate how soon they obtained their first job in nursing after completing the COC Nursing program. Respondents indicated that they obtained their first job in nursing:

- *Prior* to leaving the program – 1 respondent
- *Less than one month* after completing the program – 8 respondents
- *Two to three months* after completing the program – 2 respondents
- *Four to six months* after completing the program – 7 respondents
- *More than six months* after completing the program – 3 respondents

Twenty-four respondents provided contact information for the name/address of the hospital/clinic in which they are currently employed. Respondents indicated that they are currently employed by:

- All Saints Healthcare (1)
- Archbold Memorial Hospital (1)
- Bakersfield Memorial Hospital (1)
- Centinela Hospital Medical Center (1)
- COC Health Center (1)
- Henry Mayo Newhall Memorial Hospital (2)
- Holy Cross Hospital (1)
- Kaiser Permanente (1)
- Midland Memorial Hospital (1)
- Mission Community Hospital (1)
- Northridge Hospital (1)
- Omnicare (1)
- Osteon Surgery Center (1)
- Providence Holy Cross Medical Center (2)
- Silver Lake Medical Center (1)
- Simi Valley Hospital (2)
- Southern California Gastroenterology Group (1)
- White Memorial Medical Center (1)

Respondents were asked to provide the title of the position in which they are currently employed. Results were as follows:

- Registered Nurse (no specialization indicated) – 15 respondents
- Registered Nurse (specialization indicated) – 6 respondents, specifically:
  - Medical/Surgical (2 respondents),
  - Emergency Room (2 respondents),
  - Labor and Delivery (1 respondent),
  - Stroke/Telemetry Unit (1 respondent), and
- Nurse consultant (1 respondent)
- Wellness Coordinator (1 respondent)
**Orientation Program**

Ninety-one percent of respondents indicated that their employer provided an orientation program in conjunction with their position.

Respondents indicated the length of their orientation program to be as follows:

- 1 - 2 weeks – 8 respondents
- 3 - 4 weeks – 1 respondent
- 5 - 6 weeks – 4 respondents
- 8 - 10 weeks – 1 respondent
- 12 - 14 weeks – 1 respondent
- 16 - 20 weeks – 4 respondents
- 6 months – 1 respondent
- Ongoing – 1 respondent

**Annual Salary/Income**

As indicated in Table 2, the majority of respondents indicated that their annual salary is over $50,000.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annual Salary/Income</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than $20,000</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$20,000 to $24,999</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$25,000 to $29,999</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$30,000 to $34,999</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$35,000 to $39,999</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$40,000 to $49,999</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50,000 or above</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Work Setting**

The majority of respondents (68 percent) indicated that they are currently employed in an *acute care multidisciplinary hospital*, followed by *outside of an acute care facility* (26 percent) and in an *acute specialty hospital* (4 percent). Percentages do not total 100 percent due to rounding.

Within these two areas, respondents indicated working in the following specific areas:

- Acute Care Multidisciplinary Hospital (16 respondents):
  - Emergency Department (5 respondents),
  - Medical (4 respondents),
  - DOU (1 respondent),
  - GI Lab (1 respondent),
  - ICU (1 respondents),
  - Medical/Surgical (1 respondent)
  - Obstetrics (1 respondent),
  - Peri-operative (1 respondent), and
Nursing Alumni Surveys – 2011 Graduates

- Telemetry Certified Stroke Center (1 respondent).
- Outside of an Acute Care Facility (6 respondents):
  - Sub-acute care (2 respondents),
  - Ambulatory care (1 respondent),
  - College clinic (1 respondent),
  - GI center (1 respondent), and
  - Skilled nursing facility (1 respondent).
- Acute Specialty Hospital (1 respondent):
  - Post-Anesthesia Care Unit (1 respondent).

**Maintenance of Nursing Knowledge/Skills**

The majority of respondents (71 percent) indicated that they have participated in continuing education opportunities in order to update their knowledge and skills and provide the best care. Specifically, respondents indicated that they have participated in one or two additional training opportunities (43 percent), followed by three or more training opportunities (28 percent). Twenty-nine percent of respondents indicated that they have not participated in any continuing education since completing the program.

**Barriers Preventing Excellence in Performance as an RN**

Ten respondents provided comments reflecting barriers they feel have prevented them from excelling in their performance as an RN; specifically:

- Not having a BSN (2 respondents),
- Loss of priority registration due to a lapse in school attendance (1 respondent),
- Lack of confidence (1 respondent),
- No preceptorship opportunity (1 respondent),
- Lack of opportunities in general for new graduates (1 respondent), and
- Additional hands-on experience with IV lines (1 respondent).

Three respondents indicated that they had no barriers preventing them from excelling in their performance as an RN.

**Factors Helping Performance as an RN**

Thirteen respondents provided comments reflecting factors that have helped them with their performance as an RN, specifically:

- On-the-job training (7 respondents),
- RN program at COC (3 respondents),
- Residency programs (3 respondents),
- Clinicals (3 respondents),
- Orientation (2 respondents),
- The New Grad program (1 respondent), and
- The ability to work with other new graduates (1 respondent).
Additional Comments

Ten respondents provided additional comments regarding the Nursing program at College of the Canyons. Overall, the comments reflected 5 categories, including additional information provided to graduates, positive comments, faculty feedback, additional NCLEX preparation, and “other.” Specific comments included the following:

Additional information provided to graduates (4 respondents)

- “I feel students should be accurately informed about the current job market for new grads. Students should be advised to obtain employment in a hospital, in any capacity, to increase their chances of getting a position [in] a new grad program.”
- “…I also felt that we were not given enough support/information on continuing our education into a [BSN/MSN] level.”
- “I feel that we were not informed of how bad the nursing shortage is till third or fourth semester. I felt like the instructors painted the availability of jobs, or lack [thereof], with a rose painted brush.”

Positive comments (3 respondents)

- “Excellent program and wonderful staff”
- “COC has an excellent nursing program. I've learned my skills well from COC, and because of the dedication staff has for their students have allowed us all to excel.”
- “The nursing program at COC provided me with a great education…”

Faculty feedback (3 respondents)

- “Some of the instructors need to be counseled on professional behavior. High stress and fear does not promote learning.”
- “Help students feel like they will succeed. Try to [nurture] them, not tear them down…”
- “…the instructors were very inconsistent. I feel the program needs to screen their clinical instructors as well as their lecture instructors more frequently…”

Request for additional NCLEX preparation (2 respondents)

- “…I felt I received little to no preparation for the [NCLEX] from [COC]; it would have been nice if the program had organized review classes for us during our 4th semester…”
- “…more prep for NCLEX. I passed on my first attempt (I did approx 4500 practice questions myself) but I know at least 2 fellow students who didn't.”

“Other” (2 respondents)

- “Please add some type of preceptor program.”
- “None.”
Nursing Alumni Surveys

One respondent completed the Nursing Alumni Employer survey. Percentages are not reported for sample sizes less than ten.

Employee Competency in Various Areas of Nursing

The one respondent “strongly agrees” that the nursing alumnus is competent in the areas of nursing listed below:

- Ability to function in the role of provider of care, manager of care, and member of the nursing profession.
- Utilizes knowledge, skills, and attitudes, from the physical and behavioral sciences, the humanities, and nursing sciences to provide safe and effective care applying evidence based practice.
- Applies the steps of the nursing process integrating critical thinking strategies necessary to provide patient centered care to diverse populations.
- Communicates effectively with patients, families, and the healthcare team utilizing multiple communication methods including personal interactions and information technology.
- Demonstrates leadership by safely coordinating the care of multiple patients, while delegating to and collaborating with the healthcare team, patient, and family to provide the highest quality of care.

Direct Supervision of Nursing Alumni

The respondent does not have direct supervision of the alumnus.

Additional Comments/Suggestions

No open-ended responses were provided.
Summary of Findings
Registered Nursing Alumni Survey

Satisfaction with Various Aspects of the Registered Nursing Program. More than eighty percent of respondents indicated that they were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the availability of Nursing courses at times respondents could take them, support provided by College non-teaching staff to nursing students, availability of Nursing faculty outside of the classroom, overall preparation received for respondents’ Nursing positions, and the quality of instruction in the Nursing program.

LVN to RN Program. Seven respondents indicated that they graduated from the LVN to RN program. Respondents had varied levels of satisfaction with the Bridge course.

Competency with Various Aspects of Registered Nursing. One hundred percent of respondents indicated that they feel “very competent” with the following aspects of the Nursing program:

- Communicate effectively with patients, families, and the healthcare team utilizing multiple communication methods including personal interactions and information technology.
- Utilize knowledge, skills, and attitudes, from the physical and behavioral sciences, the humanities, and nursing sciences to provide safe and effective care applying evidence-based practice.
- Apply the steps of the nursing process integrating critical thinking strategies necessary to provide patient centered care to diverse populations.
- Integrate the professional, legal, and ethical components of nursing in clinical practice while demonstrating accountability and self-direction.
- Ability to function in the roles of provider of care, manager of care, and member of the nursing profession.
- Demonstrate leadership by safely coordinating the care of multiple patients, while delegating to and collaborating with the healthcare team, patient, and family to provide the highest quality of care.

Use of Knowledge/Skills Learned in Various Courses. The majority of respondents indicated that they use the knowledge and/or skills from Anatomy & Physiology “frequently.” About half of the respondents indicated that they use the knowledge and/or skills from English, Microbiology, and Psychology “frequently.” The majority of respondents indicated that they use the knowledge and/or skills from Speech “occasionally.”

RN Program Content Usefulness in Current Position. The majority of respondents indicated that the content of the RN program is reflective of what happens on the job.
Additional Credentials Obtained Since Completing the Nursing Program. The majority of respondents indicated that they have obtained their ACLS since graduating from COC.

Public/Community Service. Nearly one-quarter of the respondents indicated that they are involved in public or community services.

Professionally-Oriented Educational Programs. Nearly half of the respondents indicated that they have taken professionally-oriented educational programs since graduating from the nursing program at COC; more than two-thirds of those indicating they have taken these programs specified taking Continuing Education Units (CEU).

Pursuit of Higher Education. Nearly all of the respondents indicated that they plan to pursue a higher degree. Nearly half of the respondents are currently enrolled and more than one-third plan to enroll in the next year. Just over half of the respondents indicated that they plan to enroll on a full-time basis. More than half of the respondents plan to eventually pursue an MS degree or higher. The majority of respondents plan to enroll in a traditional college or university. Nearly half of the respondents are enrolled in an ADN to BSN program. The majority of those enrolled in an ADN to BSN program are attending California State University: Dominguez Hills.

Employment History. Half of the respondents indicated that they are employed full-time. More than one-third indicated that they are still looking for a job in Nursing. Of those indicating they are employed, nearly half indicated that they obtained a job less than one month after completing the program and nearly half of the respondents indicated that they obtained a job within 2-6 months after completing the COC Nursing program.

Current Position. Nearly all of the respondents indicated that the title of the position in which they are currently employed is Registered Nurse.

Orientation Program. Nearly all of the respondents indicated that their employer provided an orientation program in conjunction with their position. The majority of respondents indicated that the orientation program was between 1 week and 6 weeks in length.

Annual Salary/Income. The majority of respondents indicated that their annual salary was $50,000 or more.

Work Setting. The majority of respondents indicated that they are currently employed in an acute care multidisciplinary hospital.

Maintenance of Nursing Knowledge/Skills. The majority of respondents indicated that they have participated in continuing education opportunities in order to update their knowledge and skills and provide the best care.
**Nursing Employer Survey**

One respondent completed the Nursing Alumni Employer survey. Percentages are not reported for sample sizes less than ten.

The respondent indicated that they “strongly agree” that the nursing alumnus is competent in the areas of nursing listed below:

- Ability to function in the role of provider of care, manager of care, and member of the nursing profession.
- Utilizes knowledge, skills, and attitudes, from the physical and behavioral sciences, the humanities, and nursing sciences to provide safe and effective care applying evidence based practice.
- Applies the steps of the nursing process integrating critical thinking strategies necessary to provide patient centered care to diverse populations.
- Communicates effectively with patients, families, and the healthcare team utilizing multiple communication methods including personal interactions and information technology.
- Demonstrates leadership by safely coordinating the care of multiple patients, while delegating to and collaborating with the healthcare team, patient, and family to provide the highest quality of care.

The respondent indicated that they are not the direct supervisor of the nursing alumnus.
**Recommendations**

Upon review of the survey results the following recommendations should be taken into consideration for the nursing program at College of the Canyons:

- Explore reasons contributing to lower satisfaction with preparation for the NCLEX and identify strategies to increase satisfaction, such as preparation for the NCLEX.

- Explore ways of improving employee feedback, such as focus groups or modifying the survey procedures or instructions provided to alumni and their employers.