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Nursing Alumni Surveys: 2020 Graduates Report Number 334

College of the Canyons

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Institutional Research, Planning, and
Institutional Effectiveness

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Introduction

The Institutional Research, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness Office conducted surveys of College of the Canyons' (COC) RN alumni who graduated in the Spring 2020 and Fall 2020 semesters. The purpose of these surveys was to assess graduates' satisfaction with the preparation and training they received through the nursing program at COC.

An employer survey is typically sent to local hospitals to assess the competency of the nursing alumni in various areas within the nursing position they were employed. However, in 2019/20 the Nursing department was in the process of meeting with their advisory committee to determine ways to increase the response rate from previous years. Therefore, the employer survey was not sent to the employers of the 2020 graduates.

Methods

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

Procedures

Surveys were distributed through surveymonkey.com on December 1, 2020 to nursing alumni identified by the Nursing department as graduates in Spring 2020, with a reminder sent on December 7, 2020. Surveys were distributed on July 1, 2020 to nursing alumni identified as graduates in Fall 2020, with a reminder sent on July 12, 2020.

Subjects

Of the 60 surveys distributed to alumni from Spring 2020, 13 surveys were completed resulting in a response rate of 22 percent. Of the 34 surveys distributed to alumni from Fall 2020, 15 surveys were completed resulting in a response rate of 44 percent. Cumulatively, of the 94 surveys distributed to College of the Canyons' Nursing alumni, 28 surveys were completed, resulting in a response rate of 29 percent.

Instruments

Survey questions were aligned with the program outcomes. The survey included 22 closed-ended questions which assessed satisfaction with various aspects of the Nursing program, competency with various aspects of the Nursing program, use of the knowledge/skills learned in specific classes, content usefulness,

professional development pursuits, higher education pursuits, and employment status. The survey also included 11 open-ended questions intended to allow respondents to reply in a manner less structured than the Likert-type questions in an effort to assess barriers, factors that help performance, and provide an opportunity for respondents to provide additional comments.

Completed questionnaires were coded and tabulated using Excel (2019) and SurveyMonkey.

Results

Competency with Various Aspects of the Nursing Program

As indicated in Table 1, the majority of respondents indicated that they are “very competent” or “somewhat competent” in various aspects of the Nursing program surveyed. Caution should be used when interpreting comparison of groups with small sizes.

As compared to the Nursing Alumni Survey of 2019 Graduates, the percentage of respondents indicating that they are “very competent” in the following aspects of Nursing have increased more than 5 percentage points:

- Communicate effectively with patients, families, and the healthcare team utilizing multiple communication methods including personal interactions and information technology (increased 7 percentage points in 2020)
- 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 (increased 10 percentage points in 2020)

As compared to the Nursing Alumni Survey of 2019 Graduates, the percentage of respondents indicating that they are “very competent” in their ability to function in the rolls of provider of care, manager of care, and member of the nursing profession decreased 7 percentage points in 2020.

Table 1. Level of Competency Respondents Indicated they have for Various Aspects of the Nursing Program

	2019 Very Competent	2019 Somewhat Competent	2020 Very Competent	2020 Somewhat Competent
Communicate effectively with patients, families, and the healthcare team utilizing multiple communication methods including personal interactions and information technology	75% (n=20)	21% (n=6)	82% (n=23)	18% (n=5)
Knowledge and ability to care for older adults	75% (n=21)	25% (n=7)	79% (n=22)	21% (n=6)
Integrate the professional, legal, and ethical components of nursing in clinical practice while demonstrating accountability and self-direction	71% (n=20)	29% (n=8)	75% (n=21)	25% (n=7)

Table 1. Level of Competency Respondents Indicated they have for Various Aspects of the Nursing Program (continued)

	2019 Very Competent	2019 Somewhat Competent	2020 Very Competent	2020 Somewhat Competent
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	71% (n=20)	29% (n=8)	75% (n=21)	25% (n=7)
Apply the steps of the nursing process integrating critical thinking strategies necessary to provide patient centered care to diverse populations	75% (n=20)	25% (n=7)	71% (n=20)	29% (n=8)
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	61% (n=17)	39% (n=11)	71% (n=20)	29% (n=8)
Ability to function in the roles of provider of care, manager of care, and member of the nursing profession	75% (n=21)	21% (n=6)	68% (n=19)	32% (n=9)

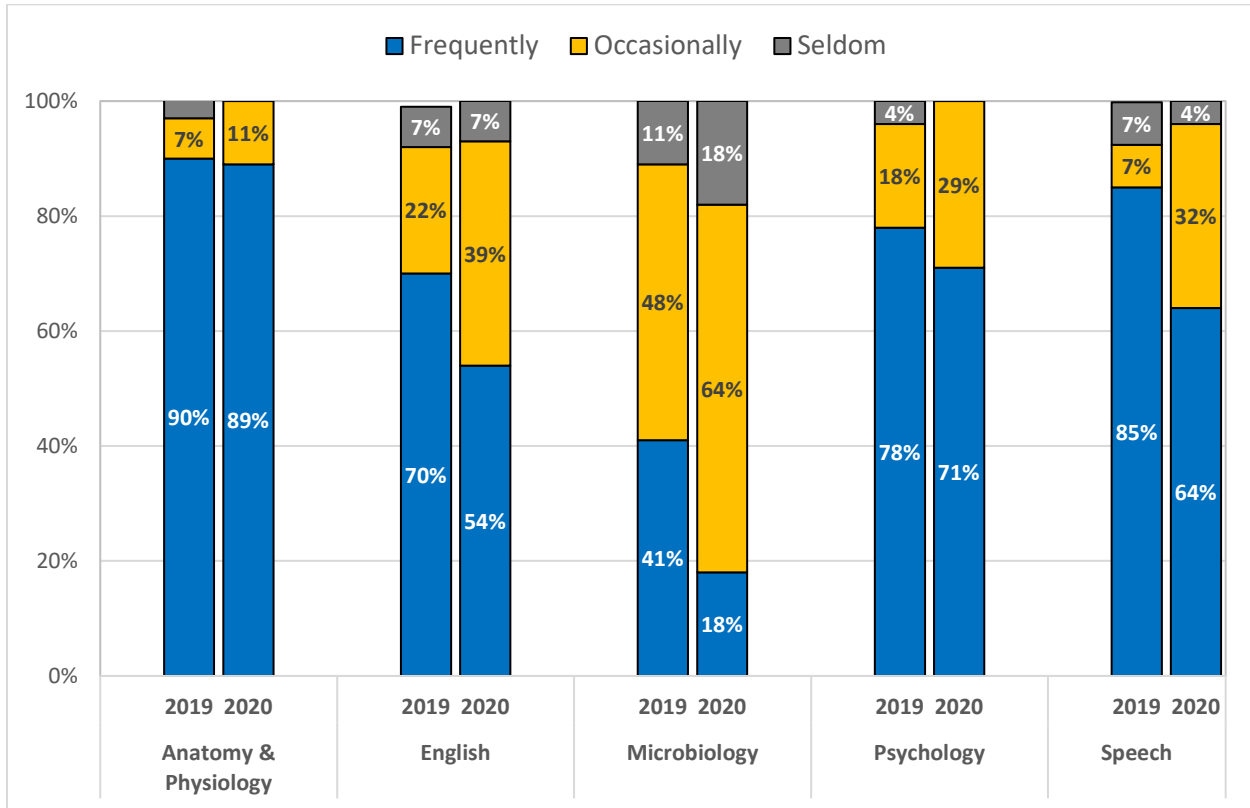
Use of Knowledge/Skills Learned in Various Courses

Figure 1 illustrates the frequency with which respondents indicated that they use the knowledge and/or skills from each of the required nursing courses listed.

As compared to the Nursing Alumni Survey of 2019 Graduates, the percentage of respondents indicating that they “frequently” use the knowledge and/or skills from the following classes decreased by more than 5 percentage points in 2019:

- Microbiology (decreased 23 percentage points in 2020)
- Speech (decreased 21 percentage points in 2020)
- English (decreased 16 percentage points in 2020)
- Psychology (decreased 7 percentage points in 2020)

Figure 1. Frequency with which Respondents indicated that they use Knowledge and/or Skills from Required Nursing Courses



The majority of respondents in 2020 indicated that they use the knowledge/skills from the following courses in their current positions either “frequently” or “occasionally”:

- Anatomy & Physiology (100 percent)
- Psychology (100 percent)
- Speech (96 percent)
- English - writing skills or English composition and literature (93 percent)
- Microbiology (82 percent)

Table 2. Level of Competency Respondents Indicated they have for Various Aspects of the Nursing Program

	2019 Frequently	2019 Occasionally	2019 Seldom	2020 Frequently	2020 Occasionally	2020 Seldom
Anatomy & Physiology	90% (n=24)	7% (n=2)	4% (n=1)	89% (n=25)	11% (n=3)	0% (n=0)
Psychology	78% (n=21)	18% (n=6)	7% (n=2)	71% (n=20)	29% (n=8)	0% (n=0)

Table 3. Level of Competency Respondents Indicated they have for Various Aspects of the Nursing Program
 (continued)

	2019 Frequently	2019 Occasionally	2019 Seldom	2020 Frequently	2020 Occasionally	2020 Seldom
Speech	85% (n=23)	7% (n=2)	7% (n=2)	64% (n=18)	32% (n=9)	4% (n=1)
English	70% (n=19)	22% (n=6)	7% (n=2)	54% (n=15)	39% (n=11)	7% (n=2)
Microbiology	41% (n=11)	48% (n=13)	11% (n=3)	18% (n=5)	64% (n=18)	18% (n=5)

RN Program Content Usefulness in Current Position

Overall, 100 percent of the respondents indicated that the content of the RN program is reflective of what happens on the job. Specifically, 72 percent of respondents (18 respondents) indicated the content is “very reflective” and 28 percent (7 respondents) indicated that the content is “somewhat reflective” of what happens on the job.

Additional Credentials Obtained Since Completing the Nursing Program

Seventeen of twenty-eight respondents indicated that they have obtained thirty-five additional credentials since graduating from COC; specifically:

- Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS) – 14 respondents
- Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS) – 7 respondents
- National Institutes of Health Stroke Scale (NIHSS) – 2 respondents
- Neonatal Resuscitation Program (NRP) – 2 respondents
- Bachelor of Liberal Arts – 1 respondent
- Basic Life Support (BLS) – 1 respondent
- Comprehensive Perinatal Services Program (CPSP) – 1 respondent
- Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI) – 1 respondent
- Electrocardiogram (ECG) – 1 respondent
- IV Therapy certification – 1 respondent
- Management of Assaultive Behavior (MAB) – 1 respondent
- Public Health – 1 respondent
- Registered Nurse (general) – 1 respondent
- Stroke certification – 1 respondent

Professional Organization Membership

Five of twenty-eight respondents indicated that they are members of professional organizations; specifically:

- American Nurses Association (ANA) – 2 respondents
- Association of periOperative Registered Nurses (AORN) – 2 respondents
- AIDS Certified Registered Nursing (ACRN) – 1 respondent
- California School Nurses Organization (CSNO) – 1 respondent

Public/Community Service

Five of twenty-eight respondents indicated that they are involved with six public or community services; specifically:

- Alzheimer's Association – 1 respondent
- American Red Cross – 1 respondent
- Arthritis Foundation – 1 respondent
- Church activities – 1 respondent
- Food pantry – 1 respondent
- School health – 1 respondent

Scholarly Activities

No respondents indicated that they are involved in scholarly activities.

Professional-Oriented Educational Programs

Eight of twenty-eight respondents indicated that they have taken professionally-oriented educational programs since graduating from the nursing program at COC. As compared to the 2019 Graduates, the percentage of respondents indicating that they have taken professionally-oriented educational programs since graduating from the nursing program at COC decreased 22 percentage points in 2020.

Those that indicated that they have taken professionally-oriented educational programs since graduating from the nursing program at COC specified that they have taken the following:

- In-Service programs at place of employment – 4 respondents
- Classes leading towards an advanced degree outside the field of nursing (Bachelor's, Master's, Ph.D., other) – 4 respondents
- Continuing Education Units (CEUs) – 3 respondents
- Classes leading towards an advanced nursing degree – 2 respondents

Pursuit of Higher Education

One hundred percent of the twenty-five 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 – 60 percent (15 respondents)
- Next year – 32 percent (8 respondents)
- Two to three years – 4 percent (1 respondent)
- More than three years – 4 percent (1 respondent)

Fifty-two percent of the respondents plan to enroll on a full-time basis, while 48 percent of respondents indicated that they plan to enroll on a full-time basis.

The majority of the respondents indicating that they plan to pursue a higher degree plan to pursue a master’s degree (72 percent), while 16 percent indicated that they plan to pursue a doctoral degree and 12 percent plan to pursue a bachelor’s degree.

Employment

The majority of the twenty-five respondents (72 percent) indicated that they are employed full-time, 12 percent indicated that they are still looking for a job in Nursing, 8 percent indicated that they are employed part-time and not looking, continuing their education (respectively).

Caution should be used when comparing groups with small sample sizes.

As indicated in Table 3, the employment status of the 2019 Nursing graduates varied from the employment status of the 2019 Nursing graduates. Specifically, the percentage of respondents indicating that they are “employed full-time” increased 14 percentage points in 2020 and the percentage of respondents indicating that they are “still looking for a job in Nursing” decreased 26 percentage points in 2020.

Table 4. Employment Status Six Months after Graduation

	2019 Graduates (n=26)	2020 Graduates (n=25)
Employed full-time	58%	72%
Employed part-time	4%	8%
Still looking for a job in Nursing	38%	12%
Not looking, continuing my education	0%	8%
Do not intend to pursue a career as an RN	0%	0%

Length of Time before Obtaining a Job for 2020 Graduates

Respondents (N = 19) indicating 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 COC – 16 percent (3 respondents)
- One month or less after completing the program – 16 percent (3 respondents)
- Two to three months after completing the program – 16 percent (3 respondents)
- Four to six months after completing the program – 42 percent (8 respondents)
- Other:
 - 7 months (1 respondent)
 - Started work in January 2021 full time as an RN (1 respondent)

Hospital/Clinic Employed

Sixteen respondents provided the names/addresses of the hospital/clinic in which they are currently employed. Respondents indicated that they are currently employed by:

- West Hills Hospital (West Hills, CA) – 3 respondents
- LA County/USC (Los Angeles, CA) – 2 respondents
- Providence Holy Cross (Mission Hills, CA) – 2 respondents
- Valley Vascular Associates (Van Nuys, CA) – 2 respondents
- Ellison John TCC (Lancaster, CA) – 1 respondent
- Henry Mayo Newhall Memorial Hospital (Valencia, CA) – 1 respondent
- Medical City Dallas (Dallas, TX) – 1 respondent
- Palmdale Regional Medical Center (Palmdale, CA) – 1 respondent
- Remote Medical International (Santa Clarita, CA) – 1 respondent
- Santa Cruz Community Health Centers (Santa Cruz, CA) – 1 respondent
- Sherman Oaks Hospital (Sherman Oaks, CA) – 1 respondent

Current Position

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

- Registered Nurse (no specialization indicated) – 17 respondents
- Registered Nursing Supervisor – 1 respondent
- COVID-19 Tester – 1 respondent

Work Setting

Respondents were asked to indicate in which type of unit they are currently employed. Seventeen respondents indicated that they are employed in the following types of units:

- Medical/Surgical – 5 respondents
- Neurology – 3 respondents
- Telemetry – 3 respondents
- Emergency Room – 2 respondents
- Cardiac – 1 respondent
- Endoscopy Lab – 1 respondent
- Floater – 1 respondent
- Operating/Recovery Room – 1 respondent
- Sepsis – 1 respondent
- Skilled Nursing – 1 respondent
- Women’s Clinic – 1 respondent

Annual Salary/Income

As indicated in Table 4, the majority of respondents indicated that their annual salary is \$70,000 or more.

Table 5. Respondents’ Annual Salary/Income

Annual Salary/Income	Employed Full-Time (N=19)
Less than \$40,000	0
\$40,000 to \$49,999	1
\$50,000 to \$59,999	2
\$60,000 to \$69,999	0
\$70,000 to \$79,999	7
\$80,000 or more	7
Decline to state	2

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:

- COVID impeded the experience – 4 respondents
- Lack of experience – 3 respondents
- Personal situations – 2 respondents
- Confidence – 1 respondent
- Delayed care – 1 respondent
- Did not pass NCLEX – 1 respondent
- “In real life” is unlike the school experience – 1 respondent

Factors Helping Performance as an RN

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

- RN Program (overall) – 7 respondents
- On-the-job training – 4 respondents
- Clinical experience – 3 respondents
- New graduate program – 3 respondents
- Faculty support – 2 respondents
- Simulations – 1 respondent
- Help with personal situation – 1 respondent
- Internship – 1 respondent
- Online refresher course – 1 respondent
- Assistance from a student currently working in the Emergency Room – 1 respondent
- Prior experience – 1 respondent

Older Adult Information

Eight respondents provided comments regarding things they found particularly effective that they learned about caring for adults through the COC Nursing program; specifically:

- Communication/listening – 3 respondents
- Advocating for patients – 1 respondent
- Aspiration precautions – 1 respondent

- Body changes in older adults – 1 respondent
- Dementia – 1 respondent
- Fall risk – 1 respondent
- Feeding – 1 respondent
- Hydration – 1 respondent
- Pharmacology – 1 respondent
- Pressure ulcers – 1 respondent

Additional Comments

Thirteen respondents provided additional comments regarding the COC Nursing program; specifically:

Positive comments (8 comments)

- “I [thoroughly] enjoyed all my time in the nursing program. It was amazing & I cherish all that was done for myself and the rest of my cohort. Thank you faculty for everything that you did for us!”
- “It was a good program. I felt as if it really prepared me. I also was very happy with the entire staff. I truly felt that they really wanted to have us succeed. They saw us as their future colleagues and not their students.”
- “The nursing program is the best program out there! The instructors were patient and knowledgeable. The curriculum and skills that they taught were very much necessary for the everyday job of the RN. I am very grateful to have been well prepared for my career. Thank you!”

“Other” comments or suggestions (5 comments)

- “Finding a job after the program was harder than expected”
- “I didn’t get to go to many specialty units, I thought this was a barrier to my learning.”
- “I understand it is important to stand behind the staff, but consideration needs to [be] given to the student in respect to PDPs. I am personally aware of several occurrences where the accused student was not given a proper forum for grievances.”
- “Lack of support finding new grad programs.”

Summary of Findings

2020 Registered Nursing Alumni Survey

Competency with Various Aspects of Registered Nursing. One hundred percent of the respondents (N = 28) indicated that they feel “very competent” or “somewhat competent” with the following aspects of the Nursing program:

- Ability to function in the roles of provider of care, manager of care, and member of the nursing profession
- Apply the steps of the nursing process integrating critical thinking strategies necessary to provide patient centered care to diverse populations
- Communicate effectively with patients, families, and the healthcare team utilizing multiple communication methods including personal interactions and information technology
- 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
- Integrate the professional, legal, and ethical components of nursing in clinical practice while demonstrating accountability and self-direction
- Knowledge and ability to care for older adults
- 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

Use of Knowledge/Skills Learned in Various Courses. Respondents frequently use the skills/knowledge they learned from Anatomy & Physiology, English, Speech and Psychology. Over two-fifths of the respondents frequently use the knowledge/skills they learned in Microbiology.

RN Program Content Usefulness in Current Position. 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. Respondents indicated that many of them have obtained their Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS) and/or Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS) since graduating from COC.

Professional Organization Membership. One out of every five respondents have obtained memberships in professional organizations.

Public/Community Service. One out of every five respondents are involved in public or community services.

Professionally-Oriented Educational Programs. About one-third of the respondents indicated that they have taken professionally-oriented educational programs since graduating from the nursing program at COC; over half of those indicated they have taken these programs specified taking in-service programs at their place of employment and have taken classes leading towards an advanced degree outside the field of nursing.

Pursuit of Higher Education. All of the respondents indicated that they plan to pursue a higher degree. More than half of the respondents are currently enrolled and nearly one-third plan to enroll in the next year. More than half of the respondents indicated that they plan to enroll on a full-time basis. The majority of the respondents plan to eventually pursue a master's degree.

Employment. More than 70% of the respondents are employed full-time.

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

Work Setting. Respondents indicated that they are employed in medical/surgical, neurology, and telemetry.

Annual Salary. The majority of respondents indicated that they earn at least \$70,000 per year.

Recommendations

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

- Consider ways to increase respondents' level of competency with the ability to function in the roles of provider of care, manager of care, and member of the nursing profession.
- Explore ways of improving employer responses, such as phone interviews or modifying the survey procedures or instructions provided to alumni and their employers.
- Consider other suggestions made by respondents.

References

LeValley, A. & Meuschke, D.M. (2021, September). Numbered Report 323. Nursing Alumni Surveys: 2019 Graduates. College of the Canyons: Santa Clarita, CA.