

DEPARTMENT OF NURSE ANESTHESIA

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The program was first organized in 1969 as the School of Nurse Anesthetists, thus becoming the first academic program to be implemented in the newly organized School of Allied Health Professions (now the College of Health Professions).

A letter of intent for a proposed Master of Science in Nurse Anesthesia program was submitted to the commonwealth's Council on Higher Education in 1977. When approved in May 1978, the graduate degree in nurse anesthesia became the first such offering within the profession of nurse anesthesia. While of major importance to the university, it marked a significant milestone for the profession of nurse anesthesia. The first class of graduate students was admitted in the fall of 1979 and graduated in the fall of 1981. A second hallmark was achieved in 2007 with approval of the Doctor of Nurse Anesthesia Practice program. The first Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists entered the post-master's DNAP program in January 2008. Soon to mark the beginning of a new era, the program anticipates enrollment of the first cohort of students into the entry-to-practice DNAP option in 2017. The VCU Graduate Council approved this transition in 2015 and the application for approval by the Council on Accreditation of Nurse Anesthesia Educational Programs was submitted and approved in 2016.

Mission and philosophy

Mission

The mission of Virginia Commonwealth University is to provide a fertile and stimulating environment for learning, teaching, research, creative expression and public service. Essential to the life of the university is a faculty actively engaged in scholarship and creative exploration — activities that increase knowledge and understanding of the world and that inspire and enrich teaching.

The university is dedicated to educating full- and part-time students of all ages and diverse backgrounds in an atmosphere of free inquiry and scholarship so that they may realize their full potential as informed, productive citizens with a lifelong commitment to learning and service.

The mission of the Department of Nurse Anesthesia is to provide learners with the knowledge and skills necessary to work as part of an interprofessional team to serve the public through the delivery of safe, cost-efficient, quality anesthesia services. The department strives to develop leaders and scholars who will advance the specialty of nurse anesthesia through research, scholarship and public service. The department achieves this mission by establishing an environment that promotes excellence, values diversity, stimulates creativity and recognizes achievement.

Philosophy

The philosophy of the department reflects the core values of the faculty and provides the foundation for the curriculum. The department's philosophy is synergistic with the mission and goals of VCU and the College of Health Professions.

The department is a social agency dedicated to the education and development of health care professionals in the specialty of nurse

anesthesia. Consequently, the faculty recognizes and accepts the responsibility entrusted to it for the learning experiences for its graduate students.

The philosophical orientation of the faculty is that learning is a developmental process through which cognitive, affective and psychomotor behaviors are developed and modified. This process includes the acquisition of information, the transfer and application of knowledge, the evaluation of new skills, and the development of a professional attitude and bearing.

The faculty further subscribes to the belief that the learning process is both positive and rewarding for the student; that it is a transaction between the student and teacher executed through formal and informal processes with an objective to prepare knowledgeable and skillful graduates. Hence, learning is a lifelong process that results in a change in thinking, valuing and behaving. The educational process includes teacher-learner interaction in setting goals, selecting and assessing learning experiences, determining instructional methods, and evaluating the learner's progress. Learning experiences are designed to facilitate continuity in attainment of knowledge, skills and attitudes consistent with educational objectives, the individual needs of students and safe patient care. Students are respected as unique individuals possessing dignity, worth and the right to equity in educational opportunities. Faculty and students share the responsibility for creating an educational climate that reflects democratic values, fosters intellectual inquiry and creativity and encourages the maximum development of each individual's potential.

The American health care system is becoming progressively complex. Technological advances and changing economic patterns foster competition for scarce resources while the patient population is becoming quite diverse. It is increasingly essential for the CRNA to provide care in a manner that collaborates with and values the contribution of other health professionals. As advanced practice nurses working in an ever-changing health care system, CRNAs are well-positioned for roles in research, teaching, policy-making and resource management and as integral members of interprofessional teams.

Graduate education in nurse anesthesia builds upon the education and experiences of the professional registered nurse holding an appropriate baccalaureate degree. Graduates are prepared, through a frame of academic excellence, to become proficient advanced-practice providers and leaders in the specialty and to make scholarly contributions to the health care system and community.

Students who complete the requirements for this degree will receive a Doctor of Nurse Anesthesia Practice.

- Nurse Anesthesia Practice, Doctor of (D.N.A.P.) (<https://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/school-allied-health-professions/nurse-anesthesia/nurse-anesthesia-practice-dnap/>)