

# School of Nursing

## Frequently Asked Questions



### Rationale

#### Why is a new school of nursing needed right now?

- Minnesota and the United States more broadly are experiencing a nursing shortage. In starting a new School of Nursing, St. Thomas seeks to help serve the health needs of more people and more diverse urban and rural populations by educating culturally responsive nurses who proactively improve whole-person healing.
- For a long time, students have expressed interest in a nursing program at St. Thomas. Data from St. Thomas indicates that when students state "major not offered" as their reason for leaving the university, nursing is the most cited major. We believe that such a program fits perfectly with the mission of St. Thomas to advance the common good.

### Accreditation

#### Will the nursing program be accredited?

- The School of Nursing will seek accreditation for both the BSN and the MSN from the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE). Per standard CCNE accreditation procedure, these programs will be eligible for accreditation after enrolling students for two semesters. St. Thomas is seeking to ensure that the first graduating class will graduate from a CCNE-accredited program.

### Program Specifics

#### What programs does the School of Nursing offer?

- The School of Nursing offers a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) and a Master of Science in Nursing (MSN). Both programs will prepare students for entry into the nursing practice.

## **What will the nursing programs prepare students for?**

- Both the BSN and the MSN are "pre-licensure" programs, meaning they prepare students to sit for the NCLEX-RN® licensure exam by the National Council of State Boards of Nursing. We will prepare students throughout the programs for success on this exam.
- Our nursing programs are intended for future nurses who will be prepared to work as generalists, meaning they will be able to work in a variety of settings upon graduation. The programs do not prepare students for advanced practice specialty roles (such as Nurse Practitioner roles).

## **Will there be any specialty tracks or areas of emphasis within the nursing programs?**

- Both the BSN and MSN programs will provide a unique emphasis on whole person wellness, social determinants of health and health equity, interprofessional collaboration, and advocacy and systems change. In the MSN program, students will receive enhanced coursework in these areas, known as the "interprofessional core." The programs will focus on preparing students as generalists for entry into nursing practice.

## **How long will the BSN and MSN programs take to complete?**

- The BSN is a traditional 4-year undergraduate program.
- The MSN is a 20-month program, provided students have completed the prerequisite coursework.

## **How many students do you expect to enroll in the BSN and MSN programs?**

- In the inaugural academic year of the School of Nursing, we aim to enroll 50 BSN students and 50 MSN students.

## **Where will you have clinical sites?**

- St. Thomas has established partnerships with clinical sites around the region that are congruent with the mission of the university and the vision of the School of Nursing to ensure students receive a high-quality nursing education.

## **Who are/will be the faculty for this program?**

- St. Thomas will follow the board of nursing and the CCNE standards for educationally and experientially qualified faculty. Our exceptional faculty and staff members come with a wide range of experience and backgrounds (both in practice and in higher education) who will bring diverse perspectives and approaches to providing nursing education.

## **Admissions/Enrollment**

### **Will I need an undergraduate degree in nursing or experience in nursing to pursue the MSN?**

- No. The St. Thomas MSN program is suitable for students with no background in nursing. The program prepares students for licensure and entry into the practice.

### **What are the application requirements for the proposed BSN?**

- The School of Nursing utilizes a holistic admissions process (see description below) in its review of applications. Application requirements include a review of the applicant's academic record, experiences, personal statement, multiple mini-interviews, and a simulated activity.

### **Will the St. Thomas BSN program require a separate application?**

- Yes. The BSN requires a secondary application after admission and enrollment at St. Thomas. Interested students will apply in the spring semester while completing prerequisite courses.

### **What will be the application requirements for the MSN?**

- The School of Nursing will utilize a holistic admissions process (see description below) in its review of applications. Application requirements will include a review of the applicant's academic record, resume, personal statement, three letters of recommendation, and a simulated activity to assess teamwork and collaboration.

## **Do I apply directly to the MSN program or to the University of St. Thomas?**

- The MSN requires an application through NursingCAS: an online application service where students can apply to multiple programs with one application.

## **What is holistic review and why is it important?**

- Holistic review assesses an applicant's unique experiences in addition to traditional measures of academic achievement such as grades. This review facilitates consideration of a broad range of factors reflecting the applicant's academic readiness and contribution to the incoming nursing class. Since the School of Nursing's vision includes advancing health equity and social justice, St. Thomas nursing students should possess the background, qualities, and skills to provide culturally responsive care to meet the needs of a rapidly diversifying patient population.
- To learn more about holistic review and the evidence for this important admission process, please visit the American Association of Colleges of Nursing's overview.

## **Can I transfer into the School of Nursing from another university? If I have already started my education at St. Thomas, can I transfer into the nursing program?**

- The School of Nursing and the Transfer Admissions office will work with students to consider which courses are equivalent and will meet prerequisites or program requirements.

## **If I am enrolled as a student at an institution within the Associated Colleges of the Twin Cities (ACTC), such as Macalester College, Hamline University, Augsburg University or St. Catherine University, will I be able to take nursing classes at St. Thomas?**

- No. Only four-year, degree-seeking St. Thomas students will be able to take courses within the BSN program at St. Thomas.



*Note: As the School of Nursing and its proposed programs continue to develop, this document will be updated with the latest information available.*