



**Samuel Merritt  
University**

**COLLEGE OF  
NURSING  
RN TO BSN  
PROGRAM**

# **Scholar's Handbook**

**2022-2023**



Designated Watson Caring Science Academic Affiliate

## CHAIR WELCOME LETTER

Dear Scholars, Welcome to Samuel Merritt University's RN to BSN Program!

On behalf of the RN to BSN program faculty and staff, I am very excited to welcome you into this educational path. As you know from your prelicensure programs, you are embarking on an adventure. You will not come out of it as the same person. We are excited to share this path and guide your learning and development.

Our team is honored that you chose our program and are eager to help you navigate new systems and achieve program outcomes.

The purpose of our program is to help registered nurses:

- *Discover their vision*
- *Find their voice*
- *Tell their story*
- *Own their practice*

Our faculty and staff are only a phone call or e-mail away. The best way to reach me is via email: [mbeck@samuelmerritt.edu](mailto:mbeck@samuelmerritt.edu). Additionally, you may phone me at: (916) 678-3170. The phone number is my Sacramento office. Though I am not often in my office, if you call and leave a message, it gets sent to me via email. Please feel free to reach out to me as appropriate and needed. However, your faculty and location staff are your first stop for information needs.

Today and in the coming months, you will be exposed to a great deal of information. Please use the resources that we share with you. You will find that most of the answers to your questions are easily found. We prefer to avoid word of mouth and go to the written policies. Your most relevant policies can be found in the following documents:

- SMU Catalog and Student Handbook <https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/catalog>
- Course Syllabi Online in each of your Canvas Courses
- The RN to BSN Scholars Canvas Site <https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/aii/canvas/signin>

This handbook includes selected information from the SMU Catalog and Student Handbook to support your transition period into our program.

Again, welcome to Samuel Merritt University. Our team is eager to partner with you in this exciting new stage of your career and remains firmly committed to your success.

**Mark D. Beck, DNP, MSN, BS, RN,**  
HeartMath™ Certified Instructor, Caritas Coach™  
Interim Program Director/Assistant Professor  
RN2BSN Program  
Samuel Merritt University  
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Sacramento, Ca 95833

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## RN-BSN STUDENT POST-ADMISSION CHECKLIST

All incoming scholars must complete the student health requirements. Please visit the Student Health Portal (link is below) to enter your health information, as well as upload all the required supporting documents. There is an instructional guide at the site to aid you. All health information must be submitted online as soon as possible after being accepted into the program - 30 days before classes start to avoid registration holds.

Did you....

- Upload the requirements for student health into the Student Health Portal system  
<https://studenthealth.samuelmerritt.edu>
- Forward your SMU email to your personal email account if desired?
  - **All email communication from the School of Nursing and the RN to BSN Program will be sent to your SMU email address.**
  - **Always communicate with faculty and staff using your SMU email. Personal email messages are not recommended.**
- Complete the background check and drug abuse testing?
- Pay your fees?  
Register for classes? Registration is available at Quick Links/SMURF on the university website. <https://smurf.samuelmerritt.edu>
- 
- Purchase any required course textbooks?
  - Book list and purchase options are available at the **SMU BOOKSTORE** or books can be ordered online from vendors such as Amazon or Online.  
<https://www.bkstr.com/samuelmerrittstore>

**Call Student Services Personnel listed below for questions about:**

**510-879-9289**

<https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/discover/student-experience/student-services>

- Counseling Services
- Tutors
- Financial aid
- Tuition payment issues
- Registration issues
- Access to SMU email
- Access to CANVAS (**For Canvas questions, see help section in CANVAS - available 24/7 hours**)
- Student Support Clinics
- SMU *Be Well* Initiatives

## **CAMPUS LOCATIONS: Student Services**

### **Fresno:**

TBA:  
559-705-2422  
1791E Fir Avenue  
Fresno CA, 93720

### **Oakland:**

Katherine LeRoy  
Assistant Director  
510-879-9200  
X7302  
3100 Summit Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor,  
Oakland, CA 94609  
[kward@samuelmerritt.edu](mailto:kward@samuelmerritt.edu)

### **Sacramento:**

Molly Greiner,  
Student Services Coordinator  
916-678-3167  
2710N Gateway Oaks Dr., 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor,  
Sacramento, CA 95833  
[mreiner@samuelmerritt.edu](mailto:mreiner@samuelmerritt.edu)

### **San Francisco Peninsula**

Tatiana Tejeda,  
Student Services Coordinator  
650-292-5564  
S. Amphlett Blvd, Suite 300,  
San Mateo, CA 94402  
[ttejeda@samuelmerritt.edu](mailto:ttejeda@samuelmerritt.edu)



## RN to BSN Program Overview

The RN to BSN program is designed to support working Registered Nurses who want to earn a BSN. The program is offered on all four campuses in Fresno, Oakland, Sacramento, and San Mateo. Admission is in spring and fall semesters. The program is part time (6 units per semester) over five semesters (20 months). Scholars are expected to take all courses in a semester and each semester in sequence. Normally all courses are taken in residence.

Samuel Merritt University's RN to BSN program is designed to help working RNs gain the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to change health care delivery. As a RN- BSN scholar, you will start the program with a meditation course to help strengthen your therapeutic presence and enrich your self-care practices. You will deepen your knowledge of the evidence and science that supports expert nursing care. You will hone your communication and teamwork skills. Because much of the health care system is designed for industry rather than patients, we will build your confidence and leadership skills to transform delivery systems into healing environments.

## RN TO BSN PROGRAM Goals and Philosophy

### How we teach

- With a focus on meaningful content applicable to nursing practice
- With passion and enthusiasm
- With compassion, love, and commitment
- With role modeling of professional values
- With active and effective technology-enhanced strategies
- With creative strategies to promote multiple ways of learning and knowing
- With a focus on the diverse strengths and experiences of each learner

### How we assess learning

- By using planned assessments and structured feedback
- By using valid rubrics and guidelines
- By maintaining high standards for both teachers and learners

## PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES

The RN to BSN nursing program builds on a foundation of science and liberal arts, strengthens professional practice, and provides a foundation for graduate study. Based on the School's philosophy and purposes, upon graduation, RN to BSN scholars will:

1. Demonstrate respect for the inherent dignity of individuals and groups in the delivery of nursing care within an appropriate moral, ethical and legal framework.
2. Integrate theory, research and knowledge from nursing, the physical, behavioral sciences, and humanities to improve the quality of care provided to clients.
3. Use effective communication principles in facilitating professional relationships with clients, families, and health care system colleagues.
4. Demonstrate clinical reasoning in planning, delivering and evaluating care directed at disease prevention, health promotion and restoration, across the life span to diverse clients.
5. Critically analyze research findings for application in the provision of therapeutic, evidence-based nursing interventions.
6. Analyze the effects of changing social, cultural, legal, economic, global political and ethical trends on healthcare policy, financing and regulatory environments.
7. Collaborate effectively with multidisciplinary practitioners to promote illness prevention and the health and welfare of individuals, families and communities.
8. Apply standards of practice within an ethical decision-making framework in the provision of nursing care that meets clients' health care needs.
9. Using transformative principles of unitary caring science, develop self and others to enhance the interprofessional nursing role in teams and organizations.
10. Use emerging health care information technologies to evaluate client care and advance client education.
11. Articulate a philosophy of self-care and professional development.

[Academic Program Overview/RN to BSN/Program Learning Outcomes](#)



## **RN TO BSN DEGREE REQUIREMENTS**

Registered Nurses with an Associate Degree who wish to obtain a Baccalaureate Degree in nursing may apply to the RN to BSN Program. RN graduates from diploma programs will be evaluated individually. Successful completion of a criminal background check required health forms, and BLS for Healthcare Providers is also required prior to matriculation (See “Background Check Policy, page 133 of the 2016-2017 SMU Student Catalog). Normally, all program credits (30) must be completed in residence. The requirements for admission to the program are:

- An Associate Degree in Nursing or current enrollment in a RN program
- An unencumbered CA RN license (has not been restricted by the CA BRN)
- 70 transferable semester credits—all credits counting toward the Associate Degree in nursing are transferable

## **RN TO BSN GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS**

- Completion of all courses stipulated by the program and the SMU School of Nursing, with a cumulative GPA of no less than 2.0
- Satisfaction of the program’s residency requirement (currently 30 credits)

## CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

Education for the professional nurse builds on the liberal arts and sciences and skilled nursing practice, values, and attitudes. The RN to BSN curriculum is grounded in Caring Science, and applicable knowledge and theory from nursing and other disciplines. The RN to BSN program is a part-time program with sequential coursework. Scholars are expected to take all courses in a semester and each semester in sequence. Normally all courses are taken in residence.

|                   |  |           |
|-------------------|--|-----------|
| <b>TERM ONE</b>   | <b><i>Caritas Processes: 1) Loving Kindness<br/>2) Authentic Presence/ Honor Others</i></b>          |           |
| GENED 400         | MBSR & Neuroscience of Change  | 3.0       |
| GENED 435         | Applied Research & Statistics I  | 3.0       |
|                   | Total  | 6.0       |
| <b>TERM TWO</b>   | <b><i>Caritas Processes: 3) Nurture Transpersonal Practices<br/>4) Trusting Relationships</i></b>    |           |
| NURSG 460         | Quality, Safety & Leadership I   | 2.0       |
| GENED 444         | Health Policy  | 2.0       |
| NURSG 436         | Applied Research & Statistics II   | 2.0       |
|                   | Total  | 6.0       |
| <b>TERM THREE</b> | <b><i>Caritas Processes: 5) Authentic Listening<br/>7) Teaching within Others' Frame</i></b>         |           |
| NURSG 464         | Quality, Safety & Leadership II  | 2.0       |
| NURSG 452         | Caring Science 1   | 2.0       |
| NURSG 456         | Genetics & Genomics  | 2.0       |
|                   | Total  | 6.0       |
| <b>TERM FOUR</b>  | <b><i>Caritas Processes: 6) Arts &amp; Sciences in Caring<br/>8) Create Healing Environments</i></b> |           |
| NURSG 466         | Quality, Safety & Leadership III   | 2.0       |
| NURSG 475L        | Community/Public Health Nursing Practicum  | 2.0       |
| NURSG 475         | Community/Public Health Nursing  | 2.0       |
|                   | Total  | 6.0       |
| <b>TERM FIVE</b>  | <b><i>Caritas Processes: 9) Tend Basic Human Needs<br/>10) Open to Mystery &amp; Unknown</i></b>     |           |
| NURSG 468         | Quality, Safety & Leadership IV  | 2.0       |
| NURSG 454         | Caring Science II  | 2.0       |
| GENED 490         | Humanities and the Human Condition   | 2.0       |
|                   | <b>Total Units</b>   | <b>30</b> |

## **RN TO BSN COURSE DESCRIPTIONS**

### **GENED 400 MBSR & the Neuroscience of Change**

The central focus of this course is training in Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR). The neuroscience of change, unitary caring science, and reflective practice are introduced. Informed by a mind/body practice and an in-depth personal exploration of meditative awareness in everyday life, the place of the meditative mind in professional practice is explored. Scholars develop their capacity for awareness, cultivation and application of intrinsic qualities in their personal and professional relationships. These qualities include non-judgement, concentration, openness, flexibility, equanimity, wisdom, warmth, and compassion for self and others and lead to a deeper appreciation of interdependence and connectedness in our daily lives. Scholars learn to use MBSR, reflective practice and the neuroscience of change to support therapeutic presence and create safer healing and work environments. This is a blended course with online synchronous & asynchronous components. 2 Units

### **GENED 435 Applied Research & Statistics I**

This course is the first in a two-part series for understanding research findings. Descriptive, inferential, and non-parametric statistical tests are introduced. Scholars learn to interpret common statistical results to evaluate research findings. Scholars learn computerized literature search processes and read quantitative research. The course focuses on identifying relationships between research questions, statistical analyses, and research findings. This is a blended course with online synchronous & asynchronous components. 3 Units

### **NURSG 436 Applied Research & Statistics II**

This course is the second in a two-part series for understanding research findings. Scholars are introduced to evidence-based practice, hierarchies of evidence, qualitative research, and the PICOT format for clinical questions. Scholars conduct computerized searches for evidence, read qualitative and quantitative research, and summarize findings that address questions related to the discipline and practice of nursing. This is a blended course with online synchronous & asynchronous components. 2 Units

### **GENED 444 Health Policy**

This course explores the historical, political, and economic forces that shape health care systems in the US and across the globe. Social values and mechanisms for reimbursing health services are investigated. Research findings on access to health care, quality of health care, and costs are compared. Scholars read about health policy across the political spectrum to contextualize and develop their own values and positions, paying particular attention to research on access, costs, and aggregate population outcomes. This is a blended course with online synchronous & asynchronous components. 2 Units

## **RN TO BSN COURSE DESCRIPTIONS (continued)**

### **NURSG 452 Caring Science 1**

The first course in this 2-part series assesses the scholars' knowledge required to recognize common responses to human health problems, identify gaps, and establish communities of learning. Scholars investigate the inter-relatedness of the unitary human being including the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual dimensions. Scholars learn to recognize common underlying dysfunctions, the interrelatedness of body systems, and how these manifests in the patient at the point of care. This is a blended course with online synchronous & asynchronous components. 2 Units

### **NURSG 454 Caring Science II**

The second course in this two-part series focuses on the integration of pathophysiological and pharmacological knowledge to address conditions commonly encountered in the continuum of care. This course also focuses on complex and multisystem dysfunction encountered in the continuum of care. Scholars learn patient centered care and best practices using a unitary caring science approach. This is a blended course with online synchronous & asynchronous components. 2 Units

### **GENED 456 Genetics & Genomics**

Scholars evaluate knowledge and attitudes about genetics and genomics; explore educational interventions that enhance literacy in genetics and pedigree analysis; examine the risks and benefits of genetic testing; discuss the ethical, legal, social, and privacy issues related to emerging technologies such as direct-to-consumer marketing of genetic tests, pharmacogenomics, and epigenetics. Related ethical, legal, and social implications that affect resource allocation and health policy are discussed. This is a blended course with online synchronous & asynchronous components. 2 Units

### **NURSG 460 Quality, Safety & Leadership I**

The chief purpose of leadership in the healthcare industry is to ensure safe, quality patient care. The first course in this four-part series focuses on self-knowledge, ethics, and informatics. Scholars complete a variety of instruments to identify preferences and develop communication and teamwork skills, especially with those who have markedly different preferences. Using the American Nurses' Association Code of Ethics for Nurses as a framework, scholars explore professional challenges associated with meeting the four key components of the professional nursing role: clinician/ practitioner, teacher-learner, leader, and scientist. The informatics component focuses on emerging technologies used to record, retrieve, and critically analyze clinical data to improve nursing care. This is a blended course with online synchronous & asynchronous components. 2 Units

## **RN TO BSN COURSE DESCRIPTIONS (continued)**

### **NURSG 464 Quality, Safety & Leadership II**

The chief purpose of leadership in the health care industry is to ensure safe, quality patient care. The second course in this four-part series focuses on organizational missions, cultures of safety, models of change, and aggregate outcomes. Scholars identify datasets used to evaluate practice against standards, identify a local quality or safety problem, and begin their e-portfolio. This is a blended course with online synchronous & asynchronous components. 2 Units

### **NURSG 466 Quality, Safety & Leadership III**

The chief purpose of leadership in the healthcare industry is to ensure safe, quality patient care. The third course in this four-part series focuses on national and international patient safety goals and local quality improvement initiatives. Governmental and voluntary agencies that regulate health care are introduced. Scholars investigate organizational cultures and inter-professional teamwork strategies to lead change and support health work environments. This is a blended course with online synchronous & asynchronous components. 2 Units

### **GENED 460 Quality, Safety & Leadership I**

The chief purpose of leadership in the healthcare industry is to ensure safe, quality patient care. The first course in this four-part series focuses on self-knowledge, ethics, and informatics. Scholars complete a variety of instruments to identify preferences and develop communication and teamwork skills, especially with those who have markedly different preferences. Using the American Nurses' Association Code of Ethics for Nurses as a framework, scholars explore professional challenges associated with meeting the four key components of the professional nursing role: clinician/ practitioner, teacher-learner, leader, and scientist. The informatics component focuses on emerging technologies used to record, retrieve, and critically analyze clinical data to improve nursing care. This is a blended course with online synchronous & asynchronous components. 2 Units

### **NURSG 464 Quality, Safety & Leadership II**

The chief purpose of leadership in the health care industry is to ensure safe, quality patient care. The second course in this four-part series focuses on organizational missions, cultures of safety, models of change, and aggregate outcomes. Scholars identify datasets used to evaluate practice against standards, identify a local quality or safety problem, and begin their e-portfolio. This is a blended course with online synchronous & asynchronous components. 2 Units

## **RN TO BSN COURSE DESCRIPTIONS (continued)**

### **NURSG 466 Quality, Safety & Leadership III**

The chief purpose of leadership in the healthcare industry is to ensure safe, quality patient care. The third course in this four-part series focuses on national and international patient safety goals and local quality improvement initiatives. Governmental and voluntary agencies that regulate health care are introduced. Scholars investigate organizational cultures and inter-professional teamwork strategies to lead change and support health work environments. This is a blended course with online synchronous & asynchronous components. 2 Units

### **NURSG 468 Quality, Safety & Leadership IV**

The chief purpose of leadership in the healthcare industry is to promote healthy work environments that deliver safe, quality patient care. The final course in this four-part series focuses on developing the knowledge, skills and attitudes to transform health care delivery in the United States. Scholars finalize practice improvement projects, share them with clinical partners, and design a project evaluation. This is a blended course with online synchronous & asynchronous components. 2 Units

### **NURSG 475 Community/ Public Health Nursing**

This course explores the concept of community as client and the unique practice characteristics of public health nursing (PHN) in the context of unitary caring science. The nursing process is used to guide public health nursing practice. Scholars differentiate between levels of prevention and explore ways to increase resilience and prevent disease. Scholars analyze social and structural determinants of health and utilize epidemiological evidence to guide community and public health nursing practice. Scholars learn about the impact of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) on health. This course meets the BRN didactic requirements for a PHN certificate, including mandated reporting. T This is a blended course with online synchronous & asynchronous components. 2 Units

### **NURSG 475L Community/ Public Health Nursing Practicum**

This practicum explores community as client and the unique practice characteristics of public health nursing (PHN) in the context of unitary caring science. Scholars develop relationships and cultivate partnerships to complete a comprehensive assessment of a community. Scholars apply the nursing process in the design and delivery of intervention(s) to improve the health of a community. Scholars evaluate their work and make evidence-based recommendations. This practicum meets BRN eligibility requirements for the PHN certificate. This is a face-to-face clinical course. 2 Units

**GENED 490 Humanities and the Human Condition**

Scholars explore how normative and deviant behaviors surrounding birth, life, suffering, and death are shaped in art—primarily novels, films and plays. Historical and cultural roles of caring for the sick and caring for souls are examined in relationship to a society's literature and its understanding of personhood and community. This is a blended course with online synchronous & asynchronous components.2 Units

## **RN to BSN PROGRAM FACULTY & STAFF**

### **Mark Beck, DNP, CENP, RN-BC, Assistant Professor**

Diploma, LA County Medical Center School of Nursing; BS, Loyola Marymount University; MS, Azusa Pacific University; DNP, University of San Francisco

### **Monica Bourke, MSN, RN, Adjunct Instructor**

Diploma, Good Samaritan Hospital, School of Nursing; BA, Xavier University; MSN, Loyola University

### **Damir Ceric, MA, Instructor**

BA, University of Missouri, St. Louis; MA, San Jose State University

### **Melody Cibock, MSN, RN, Adjunct Instructor**

BSN, Loyola University Chicago, MSN, Loyola University Chicago

### **Janelle Culjis, PhD, NP, Assistant Professor**

Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner, University of San Francisco, MSN, California State University Family Health Nursing: Role Focus: Gerontological Clinical Nurse Specialist and Nurse Educator

### **Leni Kaku, DNP, RN, FNP-BC, Assistant Professor**

BA, San Francisco State University; BS, MS, University of California, San Francisco; FNP Certificate, San Francisco State University; DNP, Samuel Merritt University

### **Cyrus La Farre, R.N., BSN, PHN, FNP, DNP**

BSN San Francisco State University. FNP Nurse Practitioner Program, MS Samuel Merritt University, DNP Samuel Merritt University

### **Tarina Levitt-Trujillo, MSN, RN, Adjunct Instructor**

### **Richard MacIntyre, PhD, RN, FAAN, Professor**

AAS, Santa Barbara City College; BS, Sacramento State University; MS, PhD, University of California, San Francisco



## **RN to BSN PROGRAM FACULTY & STAFF (continued)**

### **James Mitchell, PhD, Adjunct Assistant Professor**

BA, Lock Haven University; MA, Duquesne University; PhD, California Institute of Integral Studies

### **Donna Odierna, DrPH, Adjunct Assistant Professor**

BA, State University of New York Stony Brook; MS, California State University San Francisco; DrPH, University of California Berkeley; Post Fellow, University of California San Francisco

### **Myika Ramirez, MSN, RN, Assistant Professor**

BSN, University of Pennsylvania; MSN, University of Pennsylvania

### **Lindsay Sandberg-Duggan, MSN, RN, Adjunct Instructor**

BS, University of California, Los Angeles; MS, University of California, San Francisco

### **Nancy Symons, MA, Adjunct Instructor**

BA, University of California, Berkeley; MA, San Francisco Theological Seminary; MA, Pepperdine University

### **Michael Tijerina MSN, RN-BC**

MS, Capella University Minneapolis, MN, BS BIOLA University, La Mirada, AA Human Services, Cypress Community College, Cypress

### **Alice Vestergaard, EdD, MCHES, Instructor**

MA, BA, University of California, Los Angeles; MS, San Francisco State University; MBA, National University; EdD, Nova Southeastern University

### **Radhiya Walther, MSN, RN, Adjunct Instructor**

AA, Bronx Community College, BSN, Florida International University; MSN, Florida Atlantic University

## HOW TO FIND PEOPLE

<https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/faculty>

## WHO DOES WHAT

|   |                                     |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| Dept. Chair/Administration              | <b><i>Dr. Mark Beck</i></b>         |
| Operations                              | <b><i>Dr. Mark Beck</i></b>         |
| Community/Public Health<br>Nursing      | <b><i>Dr. Janelle Culjis</i></b>    |
| Genetics                                | <b><i>Dr. Haymond</i></b>           |
| Health Policy                           | <b><i>Dr. Richard MacIntyre</i></b> |
| Humanities                              | <b><i>Dr. Alice Vestergaard</i></b> |
| Leadership                              | <b><i>Dr. Richard MacIntyre</i></b> |
| Mindfulness &<br>Neuroscience of Change | <b><i>Dr. Mark Beck</i></b>         |
| Caring Science                          | <b><i>Dr. Mark Beck</i></b>         |
| Research/ Stats                         | <b><i>Prof. Damir Ceric</i></b>     |

## PROGRAM POLICIES

### ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION

#### Attendance

Attendance at synchronous sessions contributes to Scholar educational success. Most synchronous class sessions are recorded should a scholar need to miss a synchronous session for any reason. Links for recorded classes are posted in Canvas. Scholars are responsible for learning course content presented during synchronous learning sessions should an absence occur. If graded group work is done during a synchronous session, it is the responsibility of the scholar to contact the instructor in advance (unless due to a documented emergency,) to arrange for make-up/alternative assignments. Any mitigating circumstances should be discussed with your instructor at your earliest convenience.

#### Attending a different cohort's class

If unable to attend a particular synchronous session during the Scholar's regularly scheduled cohort, scholars may request approval to attend a synchronous class session with another cohort on a different day and time other than their home cohort. Scholars are responsible for requesting approval from the instructors at their home cohort and obtaining permission from the instructor(s) with the cohort they plan to attend, as soon as possible but not less than a week in advance of the planned change.

#### Changing Home Cohort

A change in home cohort requires a formal written request by completing a change petition (obtained at <https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/discover/student-experience/student-services/registrars-office> ) and approved by the Registrar's office and Program Chair before the start of a new semester.

#### Extended Length of Absence [LOA]

When a student is absent for an extended period, a viable make-up plan may not be feasible. In these circumstances, other options such as taking a Leave of Absence (LOA) or an assigned grade of an "incomplete," dropping the class or withdrawing from the University may be appropriate. It is the responsibility of the scholar to discuss mitigating circumstances with program faculty and staff. Due to university scheduling, scholars taking an LOA may not be able to enroll in all term specific courses upon return. This may delay program the graduation date.

The RN to BSN program is committed to adult learning principles and integrates them throughout the program. Although attendance is not formally taken in any class, absence from class does not excuse a scholar from the requirement to submit assignments on due dates. **It is important to communicate with your instructor and/or group members if you have mitigating circumstances that result in an absence.** Each course is considered a collaborative learning environment, and therefore every individual is a valued member. Your presence and participation in class enhances the learning experience through the sharing of perspectives, ideas, and thoughts. Therefore, every attempt should be made to attend and participate in all classes.

## PROGRAM POLICIES (continued)

### **CANVAS (ACCESSING ONLINE CONTENT)**

- Scholars are expected to access Canvas every few days. For **Canvas questions, see help section in CANVAS - available 24/7 hours) Seek Canvas Support first for resolution BEFORE contacting faculty. Faculty are NOT Canvas experts. Without a Canvas ticket of documentation of a technical issue, the scholar will not be granted a waiver for late or missing assignments.**
- Inform the instructor in writing of unresolved issues well **before** assignments are due. To receive important announcements from faculty, subscribe to automatic notifications in Canvas during the first week of the course.

If you have tried these resources and still need 1:1 help, you can set up an appointment with an Academic & Instructional Innovation (A&I) expert. You can phone the SMU Service Desk directly at 510-907-2555

### **COMPLAINT, DISPUTE RESOLUTION, AND GRIEVANCE POLICY**

The University definitions and policies related to complaint, dispute, and grievance can be found by searching on these terms in the [Student Catalog](#)

### **DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCESS - RN to BSN PROGRAM**

#### **Suggestions for Success**

- Work directly with the person involved.
- After class is not a good time to initiate difficult conversations as many faculty members are getting ready to teach another class. Scholars also need a break between classes. Ask the faculty member about meeting or scheduling a time to talk on the phone or via email.
- Remember that professional communication is an expectation of all parties. Venting and social media rants are not part of professional communication.
- The following steps are recommended for initial communication of issues in the RN to BSN Program. This is considered the “informal” part of the process. Most issues can be resolved informally.

## PROGRAM POLICIES (continued)

### **First Step—Write SBAR**

Write an SBAR within 48 hours of the precipitating event. An SBAR does the following:

- Presents issue in organized framework
- Includes relevant context
- Separates the writer’s assessment from the other steps
- Specifies the “ask”
- Helps keep the issue primary and the emotional impact secondary

### **Second Step—Email SBAR**

Email the SBAR to the faculty member and ask if they have time to discuss over the phone or in person before class.

### **Third Step—Dialogue**

Allow enough time for dialogue. This often requires 2-3 weeks of communication. Understand that some policy issues cannot be addressed by the faculty member. If course or program policy comes up during your conversation, the **lead faculty** may need to be involved.

### **Fourth Step—Decisions/ Program Director**

Decisions about grades rest with the faculty. Disputes about grades that do not result in failing the course should only be escalated to the program chair when the scholar believes the faculty acted in an arbitrary or discriminatory manner. For other issues not resolved after serious communication with the faculty, email the original SBAR along with related email discussion threads to the program director. Again, this step can take a few weeks, especially if the program director needs to take a policy to the faculty for consideration. If needed, see the University Catalog for the formal resolution process.

### **EMAIL & Canvas Email**

***It is essential to check your SMU email several times each week.***

- Please use the SMU email to communicate with faculty or staff.
- Please **do not use Canvas messaging** in assignments or in courses.

Members of the faculty do not check those regularly.

## GRADING POLICY

All RN to BSN scholars must achieve a minimum grade of C- (Grade Point: 1.7) to pass this course and a cumulative grade point average of 2.0 to maintain satisfactory academic standing each semester. A passing grade must be achieved in both clinical and theory components for successful completion of courses with a clinical component. Clinical grading is defined as satisfactory/ unsatisfactory. Grading criteria is specific to each course. Each syllabus will clearly state the requirements to pass the class. **Scholars are expected to read syllabi carefully.**

Final grades will be determined as follows:

|          |           |
|----------|-----------|
| 94 -100% | <b>A</b>  |
| 90 - 93% | <b>A-</b> |
| 87 - 89% | <b>B+</b> |
| 84 - 86% | <b>B</b>  |
| 80 - 83% | <b>B-</b> |
| 77 - 79% | <b>C+</b> |
| 74 - 76% | <b>C</b>  |
| 70 - 73% | <b>C-</b> |
| 67 - 69% | <b>D+</b> |
| 64 - 66% | <b>D</b>  |
| 60 - 63% | <b>D-</b> |
| <60%     | <b>F</b>  |

### Definitions

- A. Excellent.** Meeting the established criteria is insufficient for this grade. The faculty recognizes that determining what constitutes outstanding work at the university level is highly subjective and based on the unique backgrounds and perspectives of individual faculty members. When the A grade is assigned to an assignment, the score is most frequently 95%. This does not mean anyone “lost points.” 95% is a bright star equated with excellent work. On occasion a faculty member may assign 100%—the platinum star; however, “A+” is not an available course grade at the university level and the 100% designation is rare. When the majority of undergraduate work is evaluated as excellent the word loses its meaning.
- B. Very Good.** A “B” grade signifies above average undergraduate work. Generally, this is work that meets all or most of the established criteria and shows potential for developing greater insight. This grade is consistent with a recommendation for graduate school.
- C. Satisfactory.** A “C” grade signifies undergraduate work that fully meets related course learning outcomes and is consistent with professional and accreditation standards and expectations for baccalaureate nursing.
- D. Below Expectations.** A “D” grade signifies undergraduate work that is below expectations.
- F. Unacceptable** undergraduate work.

## **Student Expectations Regarding Group Work**

Some courses require small groups to prepare and submit graded assignments. Group process and teamwork are part of the academic curriculum for the program. To complete group assignments, scholars may need to schedule in person meetings, email each other, and/or talk via telephone outside of scheduled class time. The program recognizes that working in groups outside of class may present some challenges due to diverse geographies and differing work schedules. Scholars are expected to apply concepts from group dynamics and effective teams to complete assignments.

## **Requests for Extensions**

Requests for extensions on assignments must be emailed to faculty who may or may not approve them. The request must include 1) the course name; 2) the exact title of the assignment from the syllabus or Canvas; and 3) the new preferred due date—make a specific request that demonstrates professional agency.

## **Rubrics**

Carefully review the grading rubric on Canvas before beginning an assignment. The faculty establishes rubrics to describe what Grade A, B, and C work looks like for each criterion. Rubrics describe work at all grade levels including work that is less than satisfactory.

## **HEALTH RECORDS AND REQUIREMENTS FOR CLINICAL COURSES**

Admission requirements have been established within the University in collaboration with clinical agencies.

**Scholars are responsible for all requirements at the time of admission. Scholars cannot enroll in clinical courses without complete healthrecords.**

- **Criminal Background Check:** A background check is required for all entering scholars.
- **Drug-Test:** If required, scholars must have a clear 8-panel drug screen.
- **Live Scan:** If required, scholars must have a clear Department of Justice report. Agencies cannot share the results of a background check or live scan. Scholars may be required to complete more than one to meet the requirements of a clinical agency.

Registered Nurses are committed to the promotion of health, the prevention of illness and adherence to those principles and practices that promote safety and wellbeing for their patients and themselves. Therefore, the following policies are in accordance with the California Department of Health, Centers for Disease Control's Recommendations for Immunization for Health-Care Workers (MMWR-12/26/97/46(RR-18) ;(1-42)

and the various clinical agencies affiliated with Samuel Merritt University.

All incoming scholars are expected to provide validated proof of compliance with all health records and all related requirements for admission as outlined in the University *Catalog* and pre-admission materials. Scholars are expected to upload all required health records into the [Student Health Portal](#).

Scholars are required to complete all university health requirements and background check by the end of term one of the RN to BSN program. **Failure to complete the requirements will result in non-progression to term two. There are no exceptions.**

### **RN to BSN SCHOLARSHIP**

**This scholarship is for all semesters in which you are enrolled in the RN to BSN program contingent on the following:**

- Maintain cumulative GPA of at least 2.5.
- Maintain satisfactory academic progress towards your degree as defined in the SMU Catalog and Student Handbook
- Complete 6 units each semester

**\*\* The scholarship does not cover tuition for any courses from which you withdraw or for courses repeated.**

By accepting this scholarship, you agree to the above conditions, and you grant SMU permission to disclose your name and employer to donors.

Employer information is collected on the admission application.

We will not disburse the scholarship for students with a less than

2.5 cumulative GPA. Additionally, students enrolled in less than 6 credits in a semester will not receive the scholarship.

RN to BSN scholarships will be awarded in “Offered” status.

A student who accepts the award is agreeing to the terms outlined. Please do not accept RN to BSN scholarships on behalf of another student. The student must affirmatively accept the award.

### **GRADUATION FEE**

A graduation fee will be assessed to all scholars during their final semester in the program. This is automatically applied to the student’s account by the Bursar in the Financial Aid Office.



# College of Nursing

## **Mission** *(What we currently do)*

The School of Nursing prepares highly skilled nurse clinicians and nurse leaders who promote health and well-being across diverse populations and communities, recognize the importance of *Social Determinants of Health*, and practice with compassion, kindness, and respect.

## **Vision** *(What we strive for – our inspiration)*

Through innovations in nursing education, we prepare nurses who will improve the health and well-being of the people and communities we serve and transform their healthcare experience through:

- *Novel partnerships and collaborations*
- *Robust interdisciplinary training*
- *Conscientious and explicit use of research and evidence*
- *Pioneering innovations in nursing education*

## **Values** *(Our*

*guiding principles)* The faculty of SMU School of Nursing are guided by the following values:

- *Social Justice*
- *Diversity*
- *Lifelong Learning*
- *Teamwork*
- *Integrity*
- *Scholarship*



## COLLEGE OF NURSING POLICIES

### ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND CODE OF CONDUCT

The School of Nursing places great importance on high ethical and moral standards. Scholars are expected to be honest and trustworthy in all aspects of their educational program. In addition to the University academic integrity policy, the following special conditions apply:

### TESTING

The faculty controls the option of seating arrangements, movement in the room, leaving the room, and stopping an exam for violation of the honesty policy. Any violation of test security will be considered an act of dishonesty (e.g., copying tests, passing information to other scholars, and looking at another student's test). Online testing security measures identify plagiarism and other forms of cheating.

### ACADEMIC PROBATION AND DISMISSAL POLICY

Scholars who do not maintain a cumulative GPA of 2.0 will be placed on academic probation. See University Catalog for full probation and dismissal policy: [Student Catalog](#)

### ACADEMIC WRITING IN NURSING (APA)

All references used in written assignments must be documented. Failure to do so is considered plagiarism and can put a student at risk for no credit for an assignment or failure of a course. Scholars are expected to complete their own assignments. Copying the work of another person is dishonest. Guidelines for the proper citation of references used in any assignment can be found in the APA Manual (usually available in the bookstore). Here are additional resources:

- SMU Academic Support Services – [Writing Center](#)
- The “Owl” at Purdue [https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue\\_owl.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue_owl.html)
- You may also wish to take advantage of Internet resources such as, [www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com) to check your own understanding or plagiarism prior to submitting a paper. Some courses require a Turnitin Assignment.

### ACCIDENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE

A student involved in an accident or unusual occurrence that may cause actual or potential harm must report the incident to their clinical faculty immediately. Proper documentation of the incident must be made within 24 hours and sent to the clinical faculty. The report must also be submitted to the Program Director.

Student services designated to provide real-time support to faculty for student incidents (e.g., unprofessional behaviors, safety issues, accidents) and manage the interventions with students. Contact: Timothy Cranford, VP of Student Affairs, (510) 879-9223

## COLLEGE OF NURSING POLICIES (Continued)

### CE UNITS

Academic courses taken at a college or university do not require the SMU CE number. You document courses for the BRN CE requirement differently.

[www.rn.ca.gov/licensees/ce-renewal.shtml](http://www.rn.ca.gov/licensees/ce-renewal.shtml)

### CODE OF ETHICS FOR NURSES

The American Nurses Association (ANA) Code of Ethics for Nurses was developed as a guide for carrying out nursing responsibilities in a manner consistent with quality in nursing care and the ethical obligations of the profession. You are encouraged to download a free copy of the 2nd edition of the nursing code of ethics from the American Nurses Association for your own use at

<http://www.samuelmerritt.edu/library/ana>

### CONFIDENTIALITY OF PATIENT INFORMATION

Patients in health care institutions (hospitals, nursing homes, skilled nursing facilities, out-patient clinics, etc.) have a right to privacy and confidentiality regarding information about them, including the fact that they are a patient or resident of the institution. While in the clinical setting it is possible for a student to work with, have access to, and overhear information regarding patients, physicians, and others.

Therefore, information scholars receive during their clinical experiences is considered confidential.

Release of this data (oral, written, or electronic) in any manner to an individual or entity, which is not authorized to have this data, is a violation of Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) regulations.

### CONFIDENTIALITY OF STUDENT INFORMATION

Academic institutions are bound by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). FERPA mandates that we keep all student information confidential.

FERPA is to scholars what HIPAA is to patients in the healthcare arenas. For more information on FERPA see the [Registrar's Office Website](#)

As part of your admission process you were asked to complete a *FERPA Confidentiality of Information* form which will be kept in your student file should the university be asked about your student status. At the beginning of each program scholars are asked to sign a *Permission To Photograph* document for sharing in employer or university publications. These documents are kept in each student's school file.

## COLLEGE OF NURSING POLICIES (Continued)

### NURSING HONOR SOCIETY

Nu Xi At Large Chapter is a formally recognized chapter of the international nursing honor society, Sigma Theta Tau International (Sigma). The departments or schools of nursing from three universities in the San Francisco East Bay region participate in the support of Nu Xi At Large Chapter of Sigma. These institutions include Samuel Merritt University, Holy Names University and California State University East Bay. Undergraduate scholars at any of the three participating Universities are eligible for membership. To become a member the student must have completed at least ½ of the nursing curriculum, rank in the upper 35 percent of their graduating class or cohort and have achieved a GPA of at least a 3.0. Each semester, faculty members evaluate scholars who meet the criteria for membership. The student then receives an invitation from Sigma to join the honor society. The invitation is good for 1 year after the initial invitation. Scholars who are not invited to join during their academic program may choose to join as a Nursing Leader following graduation. For more information, please see the Sigma web site: <https://www.sigmanursing.org/>

## ACADEMIC CALENDAR

[Fall 2020 - Summer 2023 Trimester Academic Calendar](#)

## COUNSELING

Confidential counseling services are provided to assist scholars in making positive adjustments in their academic and personal lives. Professional counselors help in dealing with personal crises, self-esteem building, assertive skill development, problem solving, decision making, time and multiple role management, test anxiety and career development. Counselors do not provide diagnosis or treatment for severe emotional difficulties but can provide immediate and appropriate referrals.

Services are confidential and 10 free sessions are offered to each student. Scholars are encouraged to visit the Student Health and Counseling (SHAC) site at [www.samuelmerritt.edu/SHAC](http://www.samuelmerritt.edu/SHAC) for a description of available services and contact information to make an appointment. **The main phone number is: 510-879-9288.**

## COLLEGE OF NURSING POLICIES (Continued)

### LIBRARY INFORMATION

Library support to all enrolled SMU students is available online.

Virtual access to the library is available anytime by going to <http://www.samuelmerritt.edu/library>. To access these resources off campus, enter your SMU login and password when prompted.

Ask a Librarian <https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/library/ask-librarian>. Please consults website & library tab

### TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

As a scholar, technology will play a critical role in your success in the program. You are most likely planning to use your own personal laptop computer. Please make sure your equipment meets the minimum computer specifications [e.g., computer requirements, removable media, software, and hardware] access using the following link or cut and paste this link into your browser for tech requirements: <https://tinyurl.com/y8n3db4l>

#### **Removable media:**

USB Flash Drive – CD-DVD Drive

Additional hardware: Printer

#### **Software and Hardware Discounts:**

<https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/faculty-and-staff/its/technology-discounts>

#### **SMU Helpdesk: Contact list for computer/technical related questions**

Phone: 510-907-2555

Email: [helpdesk@samuelmerritt.edu](mailto:helpdesk@samuelmerritt.edu)

Web: <http://www.samuelmerritt.edu/helpdesk>

#### **CANVAS**

- Scholars are expected to access the canvas course at least 3-4 days every week and as often as required to successfully complete the course. Contact Canvas support if assistance is needed to resolve technical issues. Inform the instructor well before assignments are due if there are technical problems. Access to CANVAS (**For Canvas questions, see help section in CANVAS - available 24/7 hours**)

#### **EMAIL**

Scholars receive an SMU email address upon entry of the program. Student email is utilized as the **primary** mode of correspondence between, student, faculty, and staff in an effort to streamline communications throughout the University community. SMU faculty and staff shall use the samuelmerritt.edu email system as the **primary**

communication mode for the distribution of official documents and information to the University community. **Students are highly encouraged to look at their Samuel Merritt email messages at least 3-4 times weekly.**

All students are asked to insert a signature line at the end of each email message. Below are examples of email signatures:

Jane Doe, RN  
RN to BSN Nurse Scholar, O421  
Spring 2021 Cohort  
Samuel Merritt University  
[Jane.doe@samuelmerritt.edu](mailto:Jane.doe@samuelmerritt.edu)

Jack Doe, RN  
RN to BSN Nurse Scholar, S421 Spring  
2021 Cohort  
Samuel Merritt University  
[Jack.doe@samuelmerritt.edu](mailto:Jack.doe@samuelmerritt.edu)

Jack Doe, RN  
RN to BSN Nurse Scholar,  
M421 Spring 2021 Cohort  
Samuel Merritt University  
[Jack.doe@samuelmerritt.edu](mailto:Jack.doe@samuelmerritt.edu)

Student email is stored in Microsoft Office 365 and hosted in a cloud environment. Scholars are expected to check their email as well as manage file content on a regular basis throughout their entire enrollment. Anytime an individual's storage becomes excessive the University reserves the right to reduce the user's email contents to an appropriate level.

## TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS (continued)

### OTHER TECHNOLOGY

While tablets, smartphones and other mobile devices may allow for completion of some coursework, they should not be used for access or transmissions in Canvas. When using tablets, the functions in Canvas are limited. This will result in your missing critical information, such as assignments. Please ensure you have a Windows or Mac based computer available to complete coursework.

For questions:

- Create a support ticket at
- Phone the Help Desk at 510-907-2555 8:00 AM – 6:00 PM Monday-Friday

## UNIVERSITY POLICIES

### **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Samuel Merritt University affirms the belief that integrity, truth, respect, and honesty are the foundations for our interactions as an academic institution. All scholars are expected to abide by the policies of academic honesty and integrity as outlined in the catalogue/ student handbook. Please note that the Code of Ethics is published in the [Student Catalog](#)

Since dishonesty in any form harms the individual, other people, the community, and the University, policies on academic integrity will be strictly enforced. We expect you to be familiar with the guidelines for behavior, to follow them, and to know the consequences of violating these standards of ethical behavior.

As noted in the Student Handbook/University Catalog, faculty reserve the right to deal with individual instances of academic dishonesty by imposing sanctions such as failure on a paper or project or even failure of the course.

### **CHILDREN IN THE CLASSROOM**

Statement from the Prelicensure Student Handbook:

*Pursuant to University policy HR-011 and the Code of Conduct (University Catalog and Student Handbook) minor children of employees or students are not permitted to attend any classes or labs unless as an approved participant in the learning experience. In addition to potential risk to the safety and well-being of the child, the potential for disruption of the educational effort and the sensitive and often confidential nature of discussion in nursing classes makes it necessary to restrict the presence of children in the learning environment.*

### **COMPLAINT, DISPUTE RESOLUTION, AND GRIEVANCE POLICY**

The University definitions of complaint, dispute, and grievance can be found by searching on these terms in the [Student Catalog](#)

### **COURSE EVALUATION**

Scholars can provide feedback to the instructor during the course. All scholars are expected to complete an anonymous course evaluation at the end of each course term.

### **DISABILITY RESOURCE CENTER**

Samuel Merritt University recognizes disability as an aspect of diversity that is integral to society and to the campus community. It is the policy and practice of Samuel Merritt University to create inclusive learning environments. The Disability Resource Center (DRC) works with students and faculty to create accommodations when necessary to provide equal access to university services and facilities. If you would like to discuss disability-related needs, please contact the DRC

for a confidential appointment at [drc@samuelmerritt.edu](mailto:drc@samuelmerritt.edu). Accommodations cannot be applied retroactively, so please reach out early. Here is a [link](#) to the DRC resource page.

### **RECORDING OF LEARNING ACTIVITIES**

Audio recordings of class lectures are permitted in this program, with advance notice to the instructor. Recordings should not be posted online or otherwise disseminated outside the class. Recording small group or one-on-one conversations should not take place without the agreement of all parties being recorded. Recordings should be destroyed after the course is completed.

### **TITE IX STATEMENT**

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender is a Civil Rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, etc. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find the appropriate resources here: [Sexual Assault and Violence Prevention](#).

### **WITHDRAWAL FROM COURSE**

After the end of the drop/add period, a student may withdraw from a course without academic penalty up until the midpoint of the course, as specified in the course syllabus, or when no more than 50 percent of the course has been completed, whichever occurs last. A student may withdraw from a single course only once. The course remains on the student transcript with a grade of "W". Petitions to withdraw from a course beyond this period would be approved only for serious and compelling reasons such as serious accident or illness. The approval of the instructor and the department chair are required on the petition form, which the student files in the Registrar's Office. If the petition is granted, the course remains on the student record with a "W" grade. If the petition is denied or the student fails to complete course requirements without formally withdrawing, the grade will be determined by the instructor based on the grading policy and requirements as noted in the course syllabus (See Withdrawal from the University and Refund Policies).





Please remove this signed page from handbook and return it to your faculty.

**Statement Confirming Receipt of the 2022-2023  
RN to BSN Program Scholar's Handbook**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (Print Name)

acknowledge that I have received a personal copy of the Samuel Merritt University RN to BSN Program Scholar's Handbook 2020–2021.

I understand it is my responsibility to become familiar with the contents of this handbook and to abide by the policies, procedures, and educational objectives contained herein during my matriculation in the program.

I accept the fact that policies and procedures may be revised and added at the discretion of program administration and that, when notified in a timely and appropriate manner, I will hold myself accountable to those new directives.

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Signature

Date