Dear ARC Nursing Program Applicant:

The demand for nursing program enrollment far exceeds supply. Selection is competitive and there is no guarantee of enrollment. Students who enter the program do so having knowledge of the nursing role and a sound desire to be a nurse. Given enrollment limitations, it is critical.

“Nursing is something you need to do for yourself.” These were words spoken by one of our first semester nursing students. The student completed all prerequisites, applied multiple times to the nursing program and was finally selected. The student chose nursing for sound reasons: recession proof career, good wages, flexible work hours, and family advice. After a few weeks in the nursing program, the student realized that nursing was not the right career choice. As the student put it at an exit interview from the program, “I have the heart and smarts for nursing,” but not the passion and desire for nursing.

The scenario above is not an isolated one. When considering program reapplication, please consider fully investigating the nursing profession. You can start by asking yourself the following questions:

1. Why do you want to be a nurse?
2. Have you ever worked in a hospital setting and observed the role of registered nurses?
3. Would you be willing to take on that role and its significant responsibilities?

If you don’t know the answers to these questions it is important that you seek the answers to determine if a nursing career is for you. Students are encouraged to attend the ARC Nursing Information session offered multiple times throughout the academic year (see nursing website for details). Many students also find it valuable to interview a working nurse and ask the following questions. If you had to do it over again, would you choose nursing as a career? What do you like best about nursing? What do you like least about nursing? Answers to these questions will give you a sense of whether nursing is a long-term career fit.

Best wishes and good luck in your career selection.

ARC Nursing Department
Dear ARC Nursing Program Applicant:

Students often arrive to the nursing program with little information about the rigors of nursing school. It is true that completion of prerequisite courses is demanding and being able to finally apply should be celebrated! However, as one Board of Registered Nursing member stated, “Nursing school is a beast like none other.”

Why is nursing school so difficult? There are several reasons, some of the most common noted by current nursing students are discussed here.

- Nursing school is a full-time job. Think of taking anatomy, physiology, and microbiology all at the same time. This is a typical nursing course. Minimally, students should expect to spend 60-plus per week hours in class, clinical, studying for class, and preparing for clinical.

- Roles shift in the home. Students and their families should not expect the nursing student to fulfill the same roles at home during the nursing program. One need only listen to the statements of gratitude to family and friends read at nursing pinning ceremonies (graduation) to understand. Most students thank everyone for understanding the less than clean homes, fast food dinners, and lack of attendance at family events.

- The learning curve is steep. Students enter clinical after only five weeks in school. Of course, responsibilities related to patient care are limited and developed as the student progresses through the program. However, students are always, by nursing practice, responsible and accountable for their actions (or inactions) regardless of their level in the nursing program.

- Students provide actual patient care. The bottom-line concept in nursing is protection of patient’s safety. State law requires students to be carefully supervised while providing patient care. Supervision requires faculty and staff to ensure that students are adequately prepared to provide patient care. Students who are not prepared to safely care for clients (patients) are sent home. It is never ok for students to not fully understand the care provided to patients under their care.

It has long been known that students need to be academically, socially, emotionally, and financially stable to promote program success. While applying to the program, consider preparing yourself by

- Completing program co-requisites (speech and sociology/anthropology) and requirements for degree and graduation competencies prior to program entry.

- Developing a savings account. Financial strain is second only to family demands as a reason for needing to drop out of the nursing program. Students who work more than 20 hours per week are at a significantly higher risk of failing. A great nurse once said, “Everyone should have gas in the tank and money in the bank.” Once arrangements have been made, develop contingency plans: Plan A, Plan B and Plan C.

- Becoming knowledgeable about the demands of nursing school. Talk to nurses about their nursing school experiences. Then, share this information with family and friends before starting school. Arrange in advance for family and friends to assist with childcare, house maintenance, or meals.

- Understanding how stress is handled. Nursing school is stressful and everyone handles stress in a different way. Identify the healthy activities that decrease your stress and make them habits now.

- Utilizing college resources. ARC has a wide breadth of resources designed to promote student success. Engagement with those resources prior to program entry is of greater benefit than waiting until program enrollment when it is often too late to benefit from these services. Suggested college resources include, but are not limited to: counseling, financial aid, Career Center (scholarship resource), Re-entry Center, “The Spot”, and the Student Nurses Association.

- Watch total college units attempted! There are limitations at any college on the number of units students have completed to remain eligible for financial aid. Contact Financial Aid for additional information.

The ARC Nursing Program prides itself on the promotion of student success. We enjoy a low permanent program attrition rate. Nevertheless, not every student who enters the nursing program attains the goal. Faculty and staff serve as partners on the path to RN licensure. Students must be willing to put in the time, energy, and effort necessary to reach the goal. Sacrifices will be made. Students who make nursing school the highest priority are those who will be successful.

We wish you the best in pursuit of a nursing degree.

ARC Nursing Department