A PROPOSED SELECTION PROCESS
WITH RATIONALE
FOR
APPLICANTS TO THE ASSOCIATE DEGREE NURSING PROGRAM
AT
SANTA BARBARA CITY COLLEGE

PREPARED BY:
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PHILOSOPHY

A PROPOSED SELECTION PROCESS/ASSOCIATE DEGREE NURSING PROGRAM

SANTA BARBARA CITY COLLEGE

The selection procedures for nursing students at Santa Barbara City College are designed so that the outcome is the successful preparation of a registered nurse who is knowledgeable, safe, sensitive, and competent. All facets of the selection process aim to be fair and equitable. The process reflects equal opportunity for all who meet entrance requirements. The criteria for admission are congruent with community college philosophy and with established national and state criteria for associate degree nursing programs.

Associate degree nursing students must be capable of achieving success in program requirements which include subject matter in nursing, the sciences, and liberal arts courses. This combination enables the nurse to approach patients with a background of knowledge, skill, and acceptance of the varied backgrounds from which patients emerge.

The selection criteria are developed to assure that students have the needed abilities to succeed in the program.
INTRODUCTION

For the past several years, the selection process for nursing students has been an issue of concern within the College. This is due to the impacted nature of the program and the desire on the part of the Board of Trustees and the professional staff to find an equitable and suitable procedure. Consequently, a new system has been devised each year in an attempt to find such a procedure that would result in the selection of good nursing students and, at the same time, satisfy more of the Community College District's population.

On January 14, 1979, Dr. Mertes established a committee with the following prescribed goals:

"...to develop a selection procedure for the A.D.N. program. The purpose of an expanded committee is twofold: to develop a specific procedure for the A.D.N. program and, if appropriate, to recommend a possible college-wide policy for all impacted programs..."

The committee was convened for the first time on February 15, 1979, and has been meeting regularly since. Much discussion, research and referencing of pertinent information has occurred. An effort has been made to discuss each item having potential as an objective selection criterion, and whether or not such a requirement was defensible.

Specific concerns raised by members of the Board of Trustees were also discussed at length. These include:

1. The "long lines" of applicants picking up or returning applications at the same time.

2. The use of the grade point average (G.P.A.) as a prerequisite to selection for participation in the program.

3. The use of interviews as a means of screening.

4. The advantages of using a point system as the means of determining final selection as opposed to using a lottery system.

5. The establishment of a pool of candidates through the use of scores on achievement tests in mathematics, English and science.

One additional concern raised by Dr. Mertes was the degree to which students entering the program are proficient in basic skills (reading, writing, mathematics) so that upon completion of program requirements, the nursing profession can be assured that Santa Barbara City College can virtually guarantee the proficiency in basic skills which is required of the registered nurse graduate.

PREMISES GUIDING THE DEVELOPMENT OF A.D.N. SELECTION CRITERIA

1. Regardless of admission procedures used for impacted programs, it will always be necessary to turn away qualified applicants.

2. Residency requirements should be congruent with those of the California Education Code.
PREMISES GUIDING THE DEVELOPMENT OF A.D.N. SELECTION CRITERIA (Continued)

3. Equal opportunity should be provided for all who meet entrance requirements, including recent high school graduates, re-entry men and women, and minority applicants.

4. The selection process should be based on criteria which reflect abilities demonstrated to be necessary for successful completion of the A.D.N. program.

5. Applicants should possess levels of basic skills equivalent to 12th grade proficiency, including knowledge in English, science and mathematics.

6. Success in the nursing program requires health, academic ability, and appropriate personal characteristics.

PROPOSED SELECTION CRITERIA

1. Residency

Criterion: An applicant to the nursing program must be a member of the Santa Barbara Community College District and, if not a member of this District, must be a resident of Santa Barbara County with an interdistrict permit from the Allan Hancock District. (Allan Hancock College does not have an A.D.N. program.)

Rationale:

a. This criterion is based on Santa Barbara Community College policy and the California Education Code.

b. This requirement alleviates the need to give Santa Barbara Community College District clients interdistrict permits to attend other colleges.

2. Previous Education

Criterion: High school graduation or its equivalency will be required of each applicant.

Rationale: This requirement conforms with California Board of Registered Nursing regulations.

3. Academic Competencies

Criterion: An official copy of S.C.A.T. scores (Form 1A-12th grade proficiency), taken no more than two years prior to application deadline, is required. (Attached to application.)

a. English Ability
   1) S.C.A.T. verbal score: 50
   2) If verbal score is below 50, completion of one semester OR quarter of college composition (English 1 at S.B.C.C. OR equivalent) with a C grade or better.
3. Academic Competencies (Continued)

b. Mathematics Ability
   1) S.C.A.T. mathematics score: 30
   2) If mathematics score is below 30, completion of one semester OR quarter of college algebra with a C grade or better.

c. If at any time before or after admission, the professional staff feels there is reasonable doubt of a student's ability to do college level work in English or mathematics, he/she may be required to take a competency examination in either or both of the above subject areas. Failure to demonstrate competency will result in denial of admission or dismissal from the program.

Rationale:

a. The criteria listed above are related to statistical data related to past A.D.N. students at Santa Barbara City College.

b. From the S.C.A.T. Manual:
   "...S.C.A.T. measures specific developed abilities rather than abstract, hard-to-explain psychological traits.

   ...measures abilities which many investigators of educational aptitudes have found to be most closely related to success in school learning.

   ...the verbal, quantitative, and total scores are reliable measures of an individual's ability."

c. All applicants will be tested by the S.C.A.T. thereby allowing all applicants to be compared to national norms.

d. It will allow the opportunity to gather consistent data on all applicants, students, and graduates for purposes of research.

e. Applicants who do not meet required verbal or quantitative (mathematics) test scores will have the option of successfully completing selected courses in both English or mathematics.

f. English comprehension is required by California Board of Registered Nursing regulations.

g. The alternatives to satisfactory S.C.A.T. scores are more stringent than any previously required for the A.D.N. program at Santa Barbara City College.

4. Chemistry Requirement

Criterion: A course in chemistry must have been successfully completed within the last five (5) years.

a. High school chemistry with laboratory (1 year course) completed within last five years with a C grade or better.

b. If above not achieved, must have completed one semester OR one quarter of college chemistry with laboratory within last five years with a C grade or better. (Chemistry 1 OR 4 at S.B.C.C. OR equivalency)
4. Chemistry Requirement (Continued)

c. If at any time before or after admission, the professional staff feel there is reasonable doubt of a student's ability to demonstrate basic knowledge of chemistry, he/she may be required to take a competency examination in chemistry. Failure to demonstrate competency will result in denial to or dismissal from the program.

Rationale:

a. Knowledge of chemistry is increasingly needed in nursing practice.
b. Knowledge of chemistry is needed as a prerequisite to other required science courses.
c. The chairman of the Chemistry Department at Santa Barbara City College has indicated that a five year limit is reasonable for retention of basic concepts.

5. Algebra Requirement

Criterion: A course in elementary algebra must have been completed by all eligible applicants.

a. High school elementary algebra (1 year course) with a C grade or better.
b. If above is not achieved, must have completed one semester OR one quarter of college elementary algebra with a C grade or better. (Math 7 at S.B.C.C. OR equivalent)
c. If at any time before or after admission, the professional staff feel there is reasonable doubt of a student's knowledge of basic algebra, he/she may be required to take a competency examination in algebra. Failure to demonstrate competency will result in denial or dismissal from the program.

Rationale:

a. The previous requirement of Math 1 (basic mathematics) did not bring an applicant up to the level of college mathematics equivalency now needed in the A.D.N. program.
b. The above is a new requirement for applicants.
c. Knowledge of mathematics is increasingly needed by all registered nurses.

6. Physical Health

Criterion: A health examination which has been proven to be satisfactory must have been completed within 18 months of the application deadline. (Attached to application.) If, at any time (either before or after acceptance into the program), the physical or emotional health is such that it is a potential threat to the well-being of patients, the applicant will be denied admission to the nursing major or subsequently dismissed from the program.
6. Physical Health (Continued)

Rationale:

a. Physical and emotional health is necessary for the practice of nursing.
b. A satisfactory health examination is required of each student in all of the health agencies utilized by faculty and students from Santa Barbara City College.
c. The 18 month time limit is set so that applicants who may not be accepted upon first application will not have to repeat and pay for another health examination at the time of a possible re-application one year later. However, if accepted to the program after a second application, it will be necessary to have the physical examination within one year prior to actual date of entrance into the program.

7. Transcripts

Criterion: High school transcripts are required of all applicants; college transcripts are required if necessary to confirm completion of algebra, English, and/or chemistry requirements. The latter are also needed if the applicant has already taken any of the program’s required general education courses.

Rationale:

a. These transcripts are required by the California Board of Registered Nursing.
b. These transcripts are necessary in order to evaluate an applicant’s folder prior to selection.
c. These transcripts are necessary in order to validate the criteria for granting the associate degree.

8. Information Session

Criterion: Applicants meeting all other entrance requirements must attend one of several small group information sessions. A nursing faculty member and a certificated person from outside the nursing department will preside at each session.

Rationale:

a. This is an attempt to encourage "self-screening" of applicants. (Applicants may determine after attending information session that nursing is incompatible with their life styles, previous perceptions regarding the occupation, other responsibilities, etc.)
b. This requirement is a time-efficient method for mutual evaluation.
c. This requirement is a defensible system that is not designed to "weed out" candidates on a subjective basis.
d. This requirement will allow the opportunity to observe how a student relates with other students.
PROPOSED SELECTION CRITERIA (Continued)

8. Information Session (Continued)
   
e. This session will allow the opportunity for applicants to find out specific information about the program; time involved, type of nurse prepared in a community college program, the modular concept, specific costs, etc.
   
f. Group sessions would be less stressful for the applicants.
   
g. This session will allow either professional staff or an applicant to request a further meeting to discuss any specific items of concern.
   
h. This session will provide the opportunity for staff to reiterate in detail the requirement for basic skill competencies.

BASIC PROCEDURES FOR A.D.N. APPLICATION

1. Applications available from Admissions Office to all interested applicants on first working day following October 1st.

2. The deadline for submission of applications to Admissions Office will be the last working day of November of that same year.

3. Applications will only be accepted if all attachments are included:
   
a. Completed application form.
   
   
c. Completed form of physical examination.
   
d. Self-addressed, stamped postcard.

   Applications will only be accepted if all above required items have been received by designated date.

4. All transcripts must be received in the Admissions Office by February 1st. If applicant is still taking a required course, he/she will submit a "work in progress" form.

5. Mid February - all "ineligible" applicants will be notified and allowed to appeal. (See No. 9 below.)

6. Early March - Information Sessions held.

7. By April 1st - Random selection of "eligible" applicants. Notify all applicants of their status.

8. The unsuccessful candidates must re-apply to the program each year if they wish to pursue this goal. Their transcripts, test scores, and physical examinations will be retained for one year only. These candidates, however, must up-date their files regarding change of address, added classes completed, etc., and submit a new application.

9. The Appeal Process
   
a. Clarification of applicant's file. Must be within two weeks of notification of status.
BASIC PROCEDURES FOR A.D.N. APPLICATION (Continued)

9. The Appeal Process (Continued)

b. Appeal of evaluation of ineligibility.
   1) Applicant must submit written concern to a designated committee
      which will include representatives from: Student Services,
      Instruction Office, and Nursing Program.
   2) Written concern must be received within two (2) weeks of notifi-
      cation of applicant's status. Applicants will be informed of
      specific dates during which appeal can be made.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES'-CONCERNS

1. The "long lines" of applicants picking up or returning applications at
   the same time.

Response

a. No longer a limit on number of applications to be received.

b. Applications will be available from Admissions Office from October 1st
   until end of November.

c. Completed applications and other forms will be accepted after October
   1st by the Admissions Office but no later than the last working day
   of November. (Approximately eight (8) weeks.)

d. There will not be a need to be first in line on a specific date.

2. The use of the grade point average (G.P.A.) as a criterion for selection to
   the program.

Response

a. Santa Barbara City College studies indicate little relationship be-
   tween high G.P.A.'s and success as a nursing student.

b. The variability in grades among high schools and colleges is such that
   it causes difficulty in drawing comparisons.

c. In place of the G.P.A., the substitution of guaranteed competencies in
   English, mathematics, and chemistry is a more reliable method for the
   prediction of success of nursing students.

3. The use of interviews as a method of screening.

Response

a. At Santa Barbara City College, there is no positive statistical corre-
   lation between rating of pre-entrance interviews and clinical evalua-
   tion of students by nursing faculty.

b. The amount of time needed to conduct appropriate interviews is excessive.
   Example: An individual interview for 200 applicants for approximately
   45 minutes each (plus 15 minutes to write notes) amounts to 66 profes-
   sional staff days. Group interviews, which might alleviate the time
   problem, tend to be dominated by the more aggressive applicant.

c. In order to be consistent, the same two people should conduct interviews.

d. Interviews can be a useful technique when considering a small number of
   applicants; however, they are not as valid for a large group of applicants.
3. The use of interviews as a method of screening. (Continued)

   e. According to State guidelines, the only questions which can be asked
      would have to be related to the field of nursing. This is a disadva-
      ntage for those who have never had any work experience in a hospital.

   f. Despite the preparation of a set of questions along with appropriate
      and inappropriate responses, cultural or personal biases may occur
      when an applicant displays an affect different from that of the inter-
      viewers.

   g. If an applicant meets all criteria and is denied admission on basis of
      an interview, the College may be subject to many community complaints,
      and/or legal actions.

4. The advantages of using a point system as the means of determining final
   selection as opposed to using a lottery system.

Response

a. Philosophical considerations and past experience give rise to the
   following pros and cons:

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<th>RANDOM SELECTION</th>
<th>POINT SYSTEM</th>
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<tr>
<td>PROS</td>
<td>PROS</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. No evidence that academic ability alone leads to a &quot;good&quot; nurse.</td>
<td>1. Some evidence that grades, G.P.A.'s and test scores are predictive of future academic performance in school as measured by grades.</td>
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<td>2. Many characteristics needed to be a &quot;good&quot; nurse. No objectively measurable way to screen on many of these characteristics or to weight which characteristics are most important.</td>
<td>2. Consistent with educational philosophy that equates good performance in school and future success.</td>
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<td>3. Faculty clinical assessment that students coming into program under lottery performed as well as those coming in under point system.</td>
<td>3. Person may be able to improve chances of getting in (though would probably be difficult to raise scores and G.P.A.).</td>
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<td>4. All who are deemed able to succeed in program are given equal opportunity to enter. Fair to high school graduate, college graduate, minorities, and re-entry applicants.</td>
<td>4. By looking at average characteristics of those who got accepted, a person may be able to estimate their chances of getting in the following year.</td>
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<td>5. Heterogeneous group of students, conducive to diverse educational experience.</td>
<td>6. Fewer number of complaints this year than previously.</td>
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<td>RANDOM SELECTION</td>
<td>POINT SYSTEM</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>CONS</strong></td>
<td><strong>CONS</strong></td>
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<td>1. Beyond basic criteria, past performance not used to select students.</td>
<td>1. High school graduates (recent) and minorities have less chance of being accepted because point system gives advantage to more highly educated person who will tend to have higher G.P.A., test scores, college units, etc.</td>
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<td>2. Nontraditional – intuitively, does not seem &quot;fair&quot; for student who has excelled in school in past.</td>
<td>2. No evidence that performance in school as measured by grades and test scores predicts success in job performance (nationwide problem).</td>
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<td>3. Nothing a person can do from year to year to better their chances of getting accepted once they meet minimums.</td>
<td>3. Most heavily weighted items in point system are usually academic abilities, but these are not sufficient to produce a successful nurse.</td>
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<td>4. Person would not know if he/she would be getting in one year to the next.</td>
<td>4. In a class of students who scored highly under the complex point system, a disproportionate number performed poorly in the clinical environment.</td>
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<td>5. Data show more academically able students with more college units less likely to enter when accepted and more likely to drop out of program.</td>
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<td>6. Because of demand for this program, as demonstrated in the past, those accepted will tend to have higher average G.P.A.'s, test scores, units completed than those entering 4-year programs elsewhere. Our A.D.N. program is then no longer a two-year program.</td>
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<td>7. Homogeneous group – not compatible to the contemporary educational scene. Entrance requirements then are not consistent with community college philosophy.</td>
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<td>8. Entire system is extremely cumbersome.</td>
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**Rationale For Recommending Random Selection**

a. It will always be necessary to turn away qualified applicants from impacted programs; therefore, a random selection procedure appears more equitable for all qualified applicants.

b. The random selection procedure is based on defensible criteria related to successful performance in the nursing program.
Rationale For Recommending Random Selection (Continued)

c. Once a pool is established, random selection is the only fair means by which to ensure that all applicants have equal opportunity for selection.

d. Random selection will provide greater diversity in class make-up and cultural backgrounds.

e. The A.D.N. program, as a community college program, should be geared to the 13th and 14th grade level of performance. Random selection will provide equal opportunity to all who meet entry requirements, including high school graduates without college experience.

f. Academic abilities, because they have traditionally been considered to be "objective" measures, are usually most heavily weighted in a point system. Yet academic ability is just one of several characteristics necessary to produce a "good" nurse. There is little, if any, evidence to correlate academic ability with all facets of nursing competency.

g. There are qualities that cannot be evaluated in a screening process. Therefore, a random selection will be just as likely to produce qualified candidates as any screening-out process.

h. A point system is not defensible unless criteria can be found which show a relationship between such criteria and nursing proficiency. Such relationships have not been found.

i. Past performance in school, a very large component in the point system, is very much related to innate aptitude or intelligence. Thus, when we speak of good performance we may be putting a negative evaluation on an average ability student who is motivated and dedicated but did not achieve A's. A random selection would not discriminate against average ability students who may make excellent nurses.

5. The establishment of a pool of qualified candidates through the use of scores on achievement tests in English, mathematics, and science.

Response

a. The committee considered the use of achievement tests as an alternative to S.C.A.T. or other aptitude tests. However, the results of achievement tests tend to vary widely with the degree and nature of the candidate's preparation and can even vary over the course of a school year. There is wide variability across socioeconomic and cultural groups. Thus, achievement test scores cannot be adjusted for such factors in order to be a suitable alternative for an aptitude test.

b. Achievement tests are closely aligned with a point system.

c. Achievement tests are costly to the student. For example: College Board Achievement Tests (2 tests) = $12.50.
BOARD OF TRUSTEES' CONCERNS (Continued)

5. Response (Continued)

d. It takes approximately six weeks to receive test results which would delay selection process.

e. The testing dates for nationally-given achievement tests are restrictive.

f. There is no evidence that achievement tests screen better than the S.C.A.T.

g. According to Dr. Betty Dean, past Assistant Director of the Associate Degree Nursing Program at Santa Barbara City College, her review of the literature and her research indicated that there is no conclusive research to guarantee predicting success as a nursing student.

h. The conclusion reached by the committee at this point is that achievement tests are not a sufficiently valid substitute for aptitude tests to warrant their use as an alternative in the screening process.

DR. MERTES' CONCERNS REGARDING BASIC SKILLS

1. English

A S.C.A.T. score of 50 or completion of English 1 indicate a basic proficiency. Even though a S.C.A.T. score of 50 is attained, all students are also required to take English in the first semester.

2. Mathematics

Completion of one year of high school algebra is required. S.C.A.T. score of 30 or completion of one semester of college algebra indicate proficiency.

3. Science

Completion of one year of high school chemistry with laboratory OR one semester of college chemistry is required prior to admission to program.

4. Competency Testing

When staff has reason to believe that an applicant or a student lacks the necessary level of competency in any of the above fields, there are built-in provisions stating that this person may be required to take a competency examination in English, mathematics, or science.

CONCERNS FOR MINORITY AND RE-ENTRY APPLICANTS

Throughout the proceedings of the Selection Committee, consideration has been given to minority and re-entry applicants to be sure that equal opportunity has been provided. The proposed selection procedure has been designed so that no applicant, regardless of race or background, is denied access provided all entrance requirements have been met.