March 30, 2012

Dear Prospective Nursing Student:

You are receiving this communication because you have indicated an interest in the John Tyler Community College nursing program and I want to inform you of changes in the nursing curriculum in response to changes taking place nationally with regard to nursing education. You probably are aware that there are three ways someone can become licensed as a registered nurse. A student can enroll in a diploma in nursing program, an associate degree in nursing program such as we have at John Tyler, or a baccalaureate degree program usually located at a four year college or university. Each of these three approaches prepares graduates to sit for the state licensure exam called the “NCLEX.” After successful completion of the NCLEX exam a nurse is considered a registered nurse.

The A.A.S. degree in nursing from John Tyler is a highly recognized academic degree and our graduates usually do very well on the NCLEX licensure exam and usually gain employment. We have partnered with two universities that share our nursing philosophy in an effort to support our nursing program graduates as they continue their education toward a baccalaureate (BS in Nursing) in nursing degree because we believe that continued academic progression is very important to the profession of nursing. Further, we believe that nurses must engage in lifelong learning to produce ever better patient outcomes. Information currently in the nursing literature and abundantly presented at professional nursing conferences and through their organizations indicate that at some point in the not too distant future, an associate degree nurse will need to achieve a BSN.

ODU and VCU Schools of Nursing have offered our graduates wonderful opportunities. The goal that JTCC has with ODU and VCU is seamless progression for our nursing program graduates and both universities encourage the students going into their RN to BSN programs to complete the additional coursework at John Tyler for the lower tuition fees. In addition, our programs are now working together to provide you with a plan of study accepted at ODU or VCU so that you have a smooth transition into their RN to BSN programs.

We have continued to work with both universities to make sure that our program requirements gain the most amount of academic credit at either VCU or ODU. Recently we received written communication from both universities that they will accept BIO 141 and 142 for the Anatomy and Physiology requirements. Both universities do require additional science credits and in preparation for your continuing academic career, you should become familiar with the requirements of whichever RN to BSN program you prefer. We are currently working out the details of the formal articulation agreements with these universities and as soon as that is complete we will make that information available through the counseling offices at JTCC and through the nursing program itself at JTCC.

Some students at JTCC have enrolled in and completed BIO 231 and 232 in anticipation of their career development. Students who have completed these higher level anatomy and physiology courses will receive additional credit for their grades in those courses in the admission process to the nursing program. Additionally, if these students completed the science pre-requisites for BIO 231 and 232 they are most likely further along in their
progression to the RN to BSN requirements.

The summer and fall program offerings do include BIO 141 and 142 and will be available for your registration if you need to complete the anatomy and physiology requirement. Please be reminded that the nursing program admission process does require a year of high school biology and a year of high school chemistry prior to BIO 141 and 142. If you do not have the high school sciences required by the nursing program, you will need to complete that requirement before applying to the nursing program.

The nursing faculty is working to revise the information packet to reflect these changes, but we wanted you to have this information in anticipation of summer and fall registrations. Please see your nursing faculty advisor for any specific questions you may have, and please be advised that nursing program faculty is not necessarily available after May 12. If you are unable to see your faculty advisor over the summer, you should feel free to call the Nursing Education Center at 622-8715 and leave a message requesting that a nursing program faculty return your call or you can send an email to me at dulmer@jtcc.edu and we will help you with your program decisions.

There are many changes taking place in the nursing profession. These are good changes and the faculty at John Tyler is working hard to make sure that our nursing students are well prepared in new areas of emphasis such as working with aging populations, diverse populations, evidence based nursing practice, and the strong emphasis throughout healthcare on patient safety initiatives. These changes in the nursing program curriculum itself are less visible to you than those in our pre-requisites.

The nursing program faculty at John Tyler is excited about the future of nursing in Virginia. We are very fortunate to have strong partners in Old Dominion University and Virginia Commonwealth University. Our partners are eager for our graduates to advance into their programs. There are many details that will need your attention in your professional nursing journey and your nursing program faculty is eager to assist you as you design your future in professional nursing.

Best wishes to you in your journey.

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