



VIEW*S* & VISIONS

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Reputation is Everything

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Dr. Robert E. Gunter is the President of Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College in Logan, West Virginia. In this capacity, he leads a dedicated team responsible for providing quality education to the residents of southern West Virginia. He pairs his personal philosophy, to remain “student-centered, faculty- and staff-focused and community-minded,” with an already proven formula for institutional excellence. He provides strategic direction serving both traditional and non-traditional students.

Dr. Gunter previously served as Vice President for Workforce Education at Arkansas State University Mid-South, where he was responsible for all aspects of technical education, including all technical credit and non-credit bearing courses, the secondary shared-time technical center and various workforce development grants. Prior to Mid-South, he served as Deputy Director for Career and Technical Education at the Arkansas Department of Career Education in Little Rock. As part of the management team, he was responsible for a multi-million dollar federal and state budget that funded career and technical education programs and services.

Dr. Gunter earned his doctorate in secondary education administration/technology education from Arizona State University. He received his master’s degree in vocational and adult education and his bachelor’s degree in vocational and adult education/industrial arts education from Auburn University.

One early January afternoon, during my first month as president of Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College (Southern), I came across a group of students taking a break for lunch. They were all dressed in black scrubs, talking to one another and studying for upcoming tests. I spoke with them for a moment and, during that conversation, one young lady asked if I was going to close the school, as it had just started snowing. I asked why, thinking they were all from West Virginia and should be accomplished at driving in the snow. The young lady said, “I live in a small town north of Charleston and the longer it snows, the more difficult it will be for me to get home.” Wondering why this student was driving so far to attend Southern, passing other colleges and universities with nursing programs along the way, I asked her why. She gave me a quick, but telling, answer. “Because it has the reputation as being the best in the state.”

After carefully considering her answer, I believe our reputation is built on several key factors. First, Southern has reputable and experienced faculty and staff serving our nursing students. The nursing faculty have diverse educational backgrounds and all hold a master of science in nursing (MSN) degree with the exception of two who hold bachelor of science degrees in nursing and are currently enrolled in MSN programs. Six members of faculty are practicing nurse practitioners. One faculty member has earned her doctorate degree in education (EdD) and one faculty member is enrolled in a doctorate of nursing practice (DNP) program.

Another factor contributing to our reputation is that nursing faculty are dedicated to both the



success of their students and the college. They bring a wealth of information to the classroom and clinical setting for Southern’s nursing students. Many of them hold part-time jobs as nurse practitioners or a hospital staff position. This allows faculty members the financial freedom to be able to hold teaching positions as well as keep their skills current in today’s quickly changing medical environment.

The curriculum is continuously evaluated to improve attainment of program outcomes and promote student success.

Southern faculty also engage in scholarly activities by attending seminars and workshops in their area of interest to enhance teaching techniques. Each faculty must complete a minimum of 12 contact hours of continuing education to meet state licensure requirements, and each meet or exceed this expectation. Southern’s high-quality curriculum devotes a significant amount of study on content relevant to contemporary nursing practice. The nursing faculty members challenge themselves to constantly improve the experience for the student. One such way incorporates a team-teaching concept where all nursing courses are taught by a team of two to five instructors who share classroom responsibilities. This concept allows instructors to teach in their area of expertise. Each instructor



Nursing program graduates at Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College participating in the Spring 2017 Nursing Pinning ceremony

has a group of not more than eight to ten students for clinical experiences.

The curriculum is continuously evaluated to improve attainment of program outcomes and promote student success. Exams are routinely blueprinted to verify exam content validity and effective distribution of questions that reflect knowledge, application and comprehension. Southern's nursing faculty provide remediation of exams for all students that fall below nursing program standards of performance.

Southern's program utilizes a variety of instructional techniques and activities, including classroom lecture, discussion, written work, group projects and clinical rotations that incorporate the Quality Safety Education for Nurses (QSEN) competencies' evidence-based practice (EBP) into the clinical experience.

Southern also builds confidence, needed to treat actual patients, by providing on-

campus labs with simulation technology and medical mannequins that can provide opportunities for mirroring or amplifying real situations with guided experiences in a fully interactive and safe environment.

It is said that being a nurse is part science and in large part, talent. There's no doubt that there's plenty of in-depth medical knowledge and techniques to be learned, but putting those lessons into practice is where Southern's program shines.

With frequent assessment, struggling students are identified early and provided opportunities to move toward a better understanding of how to be successful in the nursing program. Southern instructors contribute hours of their own time providing tutoring services for remediation and exam preparation. They do this because they have the expectation that all students will succeed.

After proudly serving the past two years as president, I now completely understand

why students from all around West Virginia choose Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College for their nurse training. We do everything right! ▽