Executive Summary
The Essentials of Baccalaureate Education for Professional Nursing Practice (2008)

This *Essentials* document serves to transform baccalaureate nursing education by providing the curricular elements and framework for building the baccalaureate nursing curriculum for the 21st century. These *Essentials* address the key stakeholders’ recommendations and landmark documents such as the IOM’s recommendations for the core knowledge required of all healthcare professionals. This document emphasizes such concepts as patient-centered care, interprofessional teams, evidence-based practice, quality improvement, patient safety, informatics, clinical reasoning/critical thinking, genetics and genomics, cultural sensitivity, professionalism, and practice across the lifespan in an ever-changing and complex healthcare environment.

Essentials I-IX delineate the outcomes expected of graduates of baccalaureate nursing programs. Achievement of these outcomes will enable graduates to practice within complex healthcare systems and assume the roles: provider of care; designer/manager/coordinator of care; and member of a profession. Essential IX describes generalist nursing practice at the completion of baccalaureate nursing education. This Essential includes practice-focused outcomes that integrate the knowledge, skills, and attitudes delineated in Essentials I – VIII. The time needed to accomplish each Essential will vary, and each Essential does not require a separate course for achievement of the outcomes.

The nine Essentials are:

- **Essential I: Liberal Education for Baccalaureate Generalist Nursing Practice**
  - A solid base in liberal education provides the cornerstone for the practice and education of nurses.

- **Essential II: Basic Organizational and Systems Leadership for Quality Care and Patient Safety**
  - Knowledge and skills in leadership, quality improvement, and patient safety are necessary to provide high quality health care.

- **Essential III: Scholarship for Evidence Based Practice**
  - Professional nursing practice is grounded in the translation of current evidence into one’s practice.

- **Essential IV: Information Management and Application of Patient Care Technology**
  - Knowledge and skills in information management and patient care technology are critical in the delivery of quality patient care.

- **Essential V: Health Care Policy, Finance, and Regulatory Environments**
  - Healthcare policies, including financial and regulatory, directly and indirectly influence the nature and functioning of the healthcare system and thereby are important considerations in professional nursing practice.

- **Essential VI: Interprofessional Communication and Collaboration for Improving Patient Health Outcomes**
  - Communication and collaboration among healthcare professionals are critical to delivering high quality and safe patient care.
- **Essential VII: Clinical Prevention and Population Health**
  - Health promotion and disease prevention at the individual and population level are necessary to improve population health and are important components of baccalaureate generalist nursing practice.

- **Essential VIII: Professionalism and Professional Values**
  - Professionalism and the inherent values of altruism, autonomy, human dignity, integrity, and social justice are fundamental to the discipline of nursing.

- **Essential IX: Baccalaureate Generalist Nursing Practice**
  - The baccalaureate-graduate nurse is prepared to practice with patients, including individuals, families, groups, communities, and populations across the lifespan and across the continuum of healthcare environments.
  - The baccalaureate graduate understands and respects the variations of care, the increased complexity, and the increased use of healthcare resources inherent in caring for patients.

Learning opportunities, including direct clinical experiences, must be sufficient in breadth and depth to ensure the baccalaureate graduate attains these practice-focused outcomes and integrates the delineated knowledge and skills into the graduate’s professional nursing practice. Clinical learning is focused on developing and refining the knowledge and skills necessary to manage care as part of an interprofessional team. Simulation experiences augment clinical learning and are complementary to direct care opportunities essential to assuming the role of the professional nurse. A clinical immersion experience provides opportunities for building clinical reasoning, management, and evaluation skills.