

Advising Pre-Nursing A.S. students

(for both BSN and AAS admission)

- **Pre-Nursing A.S. is the umbrella degree path for all students interested in nursing** - those who plan to complete the full A.S. degree for B.S.N. transfer AND those waiting to apply to the Vol State Nursing A.A.S. while they work on pre-requisites. You will need to advise for both options.
- **Similar to Health Science A.S. being the “holding spot” for students applying to our competitive health science programs, Pre-Nursing A.S. serves a similar function for Nursing A.A.S. hopefuls while also remaining a viable degree in itself for B.S.N. transfer students.** The only drawback is we have no designation in banner or degree works showing which path the student intends to pursue. We can use the “notes” option in Degree Works (at the right top of the page –click the 3 dots next to the envelope and then click on “notes” and “add a new note”) to put in more detail about the student’s desired goal.
- **Ask students if the B.S.N. transfer is their goal or if they plan to apply to the Nursing A.A.S. before advising about coursework!** Ask every time you meet as the course suggestions are different for each path (but of course do have overlap). Be careful how you ask this. Sometimes if I say, “do you want an associate of applied science in nursing or to earn the pre-nursing associate of science degree to transfer to a BSN,” they say “associate first” so I have to clarify “which associate?” because both the AAS and AS are an associate, so there can be confusion. Or they may not really know the difference so I am very clear in describing our program and how they would earn the nursing credential here to work as a nurse with the AAS but the Pre-Nursing AS pathway to BSN means they would do nursing school at a university.
- **MATH 1530 and MATH 0153 are the recommended math courses** for those who for Nursing A.A.S. hopefuls and most B.S.N. transfer students who need learning support math. However, **some students will want to take MATH 0105 and MATH 1005 first** if they plan to attend a BSN program that requires MATH 1130 such as WKU or Belmont. They can then do MATH 1530 a later semester if needed.
- **MATH 1530 and MATH 0105 is no longer an approved co-requisite pair.** New for the fall 2023-2024 catalog, students can no longer take MATH 0105 with any course except MATH 1005. The MATH 0105/1005 pair used to be for only those with a 17 or 18 ACT but now a new curriculum is being used and it is for ALL students needing algebra-based math for their degree. MATH 1530 will only go with MATH 0153 and the same is true for MATH 1010 and 0101.
- **BIOL 2010 has a new pre-req starting fall 2024.** The new requirement is college ready in reading and writing or concurrent enrollment in READ 0810 AND an ACT composite of 19 or higher, or an SAT composite of 990 or higher, or a minimum

score of 70 on the A&P Challenge Exam, or completion with a grade of C or higher of CHEM 1030 or BIOL 1030. No advisor can put in a permit for this so sciencechair@volstate.edu must be emailed to request a permit for the course.

- **CHEM 1030 should be the recommended first semester science if a student states they plan to transfer to a B.S.N. for nursing school even if they meet the BIOL 2010 pre-req.** Some will choose to do BIOL 2010 first, but it is highly recommended they do CHEM 1030 first even if they are not required to do so under the new pre-req requirement for BIOL 2010.
- **Nursing A.A.S. at Gallatin and Livingston have one entry point per year which is summer, and Springfield has one entry point which is fall.** It is important when advising to make it clear to students that all pre-requisites must be done or in progress by the spring semester of the year they plan to apply (deadlines are April 1st for Gallatin and Livingston and July 1st for Springfield) for them to apply to that cohort. This includes Springfield even though it starts in fall. If pre-requisites are not done by spring, they must wait a full year to apply.
- **Nursing A.A.S. pre-requisites can be done at any pace of the student's choice, but it can extend time to complete.** The catalog describes all programs as based on full-time enrollment with no learning support or pre-reqs needed, but many TN Reconnect students, for example, come part time for the pre-requisites. So, it is not required to complete all Nursing AAS pre-reqs in one year and is not possible for all students to even attempt this due to learning support needs, pre-reqs, etc. Our data shows very few are successful in gaining admission after attempting to get the pre-requisites done in 2 semesters due to having to double up on BIOL 2020 and BIOL 2230. This is where advising is so important to ask "what are your goals, when do you hope to start nursing school and where?" and make sure they understand they may take an extra year so what they think is a "2 year program" will likely be closer to 3 or more depending on several factors. It is not bad to take longer and in fact, will allow more time to be successful in the tougher courses. Many students who apply to our Nursing AAS either have the full Pre-Nursing AS complete or almost complete in the 2 years or so before they apply to our AAS program and I encourage this as a built in backup plan to our program. So realistically I talk about this program as a 3-year program.
- **BIOL 2020, 2020 and 2230 are often full before all students can register or they are upset we don't have much online.** The science department has been reining in the amount of fully asynchronous science courses since the pandemic for several reasons but mainly the failure rate is much higher online. I think now we generally have one section of fully online BIOL 2010 and 2020 and none for BIOL 2230. We also no longer offer these through TN Ecampus. If this changes in the future, remind students of the extra cost of Ecampus courses and that some

forms of financial aid don't cover the extra cost. Getting on a waitlist is the best option for students and is how math and science gauges need if they are able to offer more sections. They need to check their student email daily if on a waitlist. They only have 24 hours to claim the seat once offered to them. Eventually they would need to choose an alternate section once the semester is close to starting if they don't get a seat in the desired course. Encourage Pre-Nursing students who register late to make it a point from now on in future semesters to register early! Also, encourage some of the options such as night class or hybrid choices if available and stress that the in-person and hybrid do result in a higher success rate than fully asynchronous.

- **Degree Works can confuse students who have a goal to apply to the Nursing A.A.S. but they see all the extra gen-eds and other requirements of the Pre-Nursing A.S. which is what they must be under until they gain admission to the Nursing A.A.S. program. The “what-if” button can help** – click “what-if” in Degree Works then choose Nursing A.A.S. as the major and then click the blue “view/refresh what-if audit” button in the lower right. The student will then see only the needed pre-reqs for the A.A.S. program. If they do need a “filler” course while waiting to apply to the Nursing A.A.S. they can take any course under Pre-Nursing A.S. to stay compliant with financial aid parameters. Have them focus first on the 8 needed pre-requisites. I phrase it to them this way – Pre-Nursing AS is the “hangout spot” for the AAS and it has 20 classes. Only 8 of these are needed for the AAS, so focus on those first and if you need a filler class to meet TN Promise or Reconnect enrollment requirements then use some of the other 20 course options and they will eventually work for you when you do a BSN bridge. Or if they don't gain admission to our program, completing the AS and moving on to a BSN is a good backup plan.
- **The Nursing A.A.S. pre-requisite GPA needed to be considered is now a 2.9 or higher.** This only includes the GPA in the 27 hours of pre-reqs required for the program and overall GPA will not be used. The pre-requisites include ENGL 1010, PSYC 1030, fine art/humanities course of choice, MATH 1530, BIOL 2010, BIOL 2020, BIOL 2230, elective of choice (HED 220, ENGL 1020, COMM 2025 OR PSYC 2130). If the student has more than one elective or fine art/hum course, the highest grade will count. Many more students apply than will gain admission to the AAS at Gallatin (Livingston is not as competitive and Springfield remains to be seen since it is so new). Many Pre-Nursing AS students will ultimately not have the needed GPA to apply or be competitive for admission. This is where having discussions about either repeating courses or looking at other programs such as Nashville State or BSN options in the area are needed. Sometimes broaching the topic of a major change or an LPN at a Tennessee College of Applied Technology or other medical options we or other schools offer that may be less

competitive can be needed for those who are below the needed GPA. I like to talk from the outset about having a plan A, B and C with nursing. Plan A might be our Nursing AAS, plan B Nashville State AAS (due to being a little less competitive) and then finishing the full Pre-Nursing AS and looking at BSN options could be plan C. Or even beyond these, a major change perhaps.

- **Refer students to Financial Aid for questions relating to whether all semesters of pre-requisites and the Nursing A.A.S. program will be covered.** TN Promise only covers 5 semesters, so if that is all the student is getting, they would run out of funds. TN Reconnect covers 5 years from when then start using it. Many students who say they are a TN Promise student don't realize that they are also getting Hope Lottery or PELL, so it is risky for advisors to give out information about financial aid issues. It is fine to warn students that some scholarships have time limits, and it could result in having to pay out of pocket if they take an extra year to complete the program, but suggest they speak to Financial Aid directly about their specific situation.
- **We now offer and "LPN bridge" option** – We have always welcomed those with an LPN to apply to our program, but they previously got no credit for their LPN. They can now place out of the 1st semester of the program. They must meet all the same pre-reqs and requirements as any applicant.
- **If I have other questions about the Nursing A.A.S. program not addressed in this document, where can I find the answers?** The nursing web page: <https://www.volstate.edu/academics/nursingaas> and info packet: <https://www.volstate.edu/sites/default/files/documents/nursing/NursingInformationPacket.pdf> as well as the frequently asked questions page: <https://www.volstate.edu/academic/nursing/frequently-asked-questions> on the website have most of the detailed information an advisor or student may want to know about the program.
- **Pre-Nursing A.S. students who plan to transfer to a bachelor's need to research the schools they are interested in** to see what math is required (MATH 1530, 1130 or both), other specific course requirements like nutrition, lifespan, PE or Bible courses for religious schools, etc. They also need to see if the school requires any pre-requisites that are only offered at the university, the minimum GPA to apply and the average GPA of a "successful applicant" to the program and any other requirements such as HESI, Kaplan or TEAS testing, application deadlines, etc. Some students are unaware how far in advance they must apply to nursing school and that it is most often a two-step process – apply to the university first, and then the nursing program. It is up to the student to be in charge of knowing program requirements and deadlines.
- **Remind students that nursing is a competitive pathway!** Our program has only 24 seats per cohort, and we have far more applicants than seats. B.S.N programs

are also competitive. They need to focus on their GPA and having a backup plan such as applying to multiple programs or looking at less competitive option in or out of the medical field. Generally, if a student can't keep a 3.0 they won't be competitive for nursing school (and our program at Gallatin usually requires a higher GPA to gain a seat such as 3.5 or above in the 8 pre-reqs despite the 2.9 minimum to apply). If you work with any student with a lower GPA be sure to talk about all the supports on campus including reaching out to their professor first if they are struggling. The link about the "College Success Zone" below is a good one stop shop for the resources the college offers in terms of learning commons, tutor.com and other supports.

<https://www.volstate.edu/collegesuccess>

Likewise, being ready to broach the topic of a backup plan such as a less competitive nursing program, LPN, other medical careers and/or major change may be needed if the student continues to struggle academically.

- **The three "C's" of finding a nursing program.** Students often seem overwhelmed when I ask what BSN they are looking at or if they have a backup plan for our program. I truly encourage a plan A, B and C for nursing students, so it is important to look at other programs besides ours. I tell them the main factors are the Three C's which are **competitiveness**, **cost** and **commute**. The questions to ask for each one are:

Competitiveness – am I a competitive applicant for this program? - (GPA, testing) A minimum GPA is NOT usually what it takes to get in but sometimes you can get in with the minimum. They can ask advisors at the BSN programs what the "successful" application has who gains admission and sometimes info is on their website about this issue.

Cost – can I afford it? - many private options are out there but they are expensive, AAS is cheaper than BSN, etc. Talking through the costs of some programs is helpful to get them thinking about what is feasible for them. Some mention private programs like Belmont, Cumberland, South College, and more so I try to at least give them a head's up to look at the costs and have a state school backup.

Commute – Can I get there from where I live now, or will I have to move? – Many students have kids or own a home or know they want to live at home with parents while in nursing school. This immediately helps narrow their options of prospective schools.

- **Feel free to contact** full time Math and Science Division advisors **Josie Larson** (josie.larson@volstate.edu) Ext 3503 if you need assistance with a Pre-Nursing A.S. scenario whether it be for a B.S.N. transfer or Nursing A.A.S. hopeful student.