Statement on a Healthy Work Environment
for the University of Virginia School of Nursing

The School of Nursing Strategic Plan 2010-2015 pledges to foster well-being and collegial spirit in a healthy work environment. Key to success in creating a healthy work environment is a community-owned and practical description.

The following are expected behaviors that we will exhibit to promote a healthy work environment at the University of Virginia School of Nursing:

**Respect & Appreciation**

The School of Nursing welcomes and embraces differences in ethnicity, race, culture, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, occupation, socioeconomic status, and perspective (from the SON Mission Statement). Mutual respect and appreciation characterize all relationships within the community, regardless of role or any other descriptors.

- On a daily basis, we demonstrate appreciation and respect (i.e., basic manners) to all individuals at all levels.
- We recognize when our co-workers put forth extra effort and when they complete a job well done.
- We value the importance and contributions of everyone associated with the School of Nursing community, and we acknowledge everyone’s achievements.
- We are considerate and understanding of each other’s personal and professional lives.
- We actively and respectfully listen to each voice. While we may sometimes disagree, we remain respectful of differences in opinion and viewpoint.
- We acknowledge when someone is on the telephone or meeting with someone, and we do not interrupt unless absolutely necessary to do so.
- We are accountable and reliable, and we strive to earn the trust of colleagues by providing the best service possible.
- We are respectful of our colleagues and their rights to privacy. We avoid passing along gossip, and we maintain trust by keeping confidences.

**Communication**

We are committed to open, honest, positive, and constructive communication throughout the organization.

- We always conduct ourselves professionally, and we use proper language, tone, and non-verbal cues to express ourselves to others.
- We disseminate information (e.g., events, changes, new hires, new positions) to our colleagues in a timely manner.
- We appreciate knowing the rationale behind decisions that affect us.
• We are active listeners and respond thoughtfully to questions when in conversation with others.
• We give a courteous reply when we are asked a question.
• We are open and receptive to all ideas expressed when receiving constructive feedback.
• We are friendly, make an effort to greet people, and do so cordially.
• We are mindful that anything transmitted via email could become public knowledge.
• We communicate openly, truthfully, and directly with others, allowing for honest dialogue and feedback.
• We strive to incorporate face-to-face interaction as opposed to only telephone and e-mail communication.
• When there is conflict in the workplace, we remain calm and professional; and we make an effort to consciously address the issue in a constructive manner with openness, honesty, and directness.

**Workload**

In a healthy work environment, work responsibilities are engaging, manageable within the workday, transparent, and well-supported with resources. Employees are cross-trained (when appropriate) and support each other, providing flexibility in the workplace.

• We identify and address workload assignments periodically and are transparent about the process.
• We each know the expectation of our roles.
• We receive accurate workload unit credits (when appropriate) for all assignments.
• We acknowledge that everyone’s time is valuable. We are considerate of others’ obligations, truly factoring in everything an individual does, when assigning responsibilities; and we give advance notice of tasks whenever possible.
• We are mindful of our colleagues’ workloads, timelines, and responsibilities. We offer our assistance to one another when someone is in need.
• We are honest with ourselves and with others about deadlines, and we distinguish clearly between aspirations and formal deadlines.
• Supervisors encourage employees to develop skills that enhance performance.
• We engage in thoughtful, mentorship among staff and faculty for professional development and personal growth.
• We actively promote a work/life balance, by working five days per week and being respectful of contractual appointments (when applicable) at the School of Nursing.
• We consistently match employees’ strengths/expertise/passion with their responsibilities.

Creating and sustaining a healthy work environment will require the ongoing attention and effort of each member of the School of Nursing community and of the School at an organizational level. Cultivating this environment will help the School thrive as it meets its mission of educating future leaders, extending the boundaries of nursing and health care knowledge through research, and providing high quality and compassionate health care in service to the citizens of the Commonwealth of Virginia, the nation, and the world.

Approved by the University of Virginia School of Nursing Faculty Organization, March 19, 2013