2020 West Virginia University School of Nursing Communication survey: Student Survey Results

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BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

The WVU School of Nursing is committed to providing the highest level of undergraduate professional nursing education, while expanding opportunities for graduate education. It has approximately 1,000 undergraduate students and XXX graduate students who study on one of four campuses:

- Health Sciences Morgantown Campus
- Charleston, Health Sciences Center
- WVU Beckley Campus/WVU Tech
- WVU Keyser Campus/WVU Potomac State College

About four years ago, the focus of communication at the School changed. In an effort to get feedback about current communications, an online survey was developed and emailed to students on all four campuses.

Q. Where is "home" for you? (i.e. What state or country - if outside the U.S. - are you from)
Q. What class are you in?

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
The School of Nursing does a very good communicating with its students and does so at the desired frequency. There are a large number of resources students can use to get news about the School, but the overwhelming majority rely on SOLE. Faculty and friends/word-of-mouth also top of the list of resources typically used. The School’s eNewsletter, the Pulse, is also fairly popular.

Email is the most preferred method for students to get news. Faculty (in-person) is a distant second. Social media and text messaging rank a very distant third. However, a significant number of students use group chats in social media and texting to communicate with each other. That said, the majority of those students would like to see the School incorporate the same. This would have to be further investigated.

Regarding the information they receive from the School, most find it relevant and useful. Research related news or that which features student or faculty alumni stories is not as appreciated as other types of new. In fact, students are more interested in learning more about careers and events.

Aside from providing additional information on these topics, there is no real consensus among students as to how the School can improve its communication with them. However, a few students did agree that the level of communication during COVID-19 needs to be stepped up – whether that information comes from the School or faculty. Also, with the increased number of emails students receive, it would be helpful if more urgent information were somehow noted.
Thinking specifically about the SON’s website, it’s a valuable resource for prospective students evaluating colleges. Information on the nursing program itself, as well as WVU Nursing campuses and the SON’s faculty/staff are of particular interest. Students suggested the website can be made more valuable to prospective students if a separate information tab was dedicated to prospects and included more detailed information regarding classes and clinicals. One student also noted that it’s important for prospective students to understand the difference between a pre-nursing student and a direct-admit student, echoing concerns voiced in other studies.
Q. What class are you in?

DETAIL FINDINGS
OVERALL SATISFACTION

About three-fourths (73%) of students rated the SON efforts’ in keeping them well-informed as excellent or very good. Nearly two in ten (15%) rate those efforts as “good.” Just 12% believe communications are fair or poor.

The vast majority (81%) feel the SON communicates with them at just the right frequency. Another 13% would like to hear from the School more often; 6% would prefer to hear from SON less often.
CURRENT NEWS SOURCES
Just over eight in ten (84%) nursing students rely on SOLE to get news about the SON. Faculty (73%) and friends/mouth-of-mouth (66%) are also popular sources for students to learn about what’s happening at the School. About six in ten (58%) students rely on the Pulse.
PREFERRED NEWS SOURCES
All but 11% of students prefer to get news about the School via email. A distant second choice is through their faculty (60%). Another 38% would prefer to receive text messaging and/or get their news via social media sites (37%).
SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

Instagram (76%) is the social platform students use most often, followed up Snapchat (64%) and Facebook (61%). Just over one-third use TikTok (38%) or Twitter (35%).

Q. Which social platform(s) do you use most often?
Q. Besides word-of-mouth, how else do you communicate with other nursing students. Please be specific.
Q. Besides word-of-mouth, how else do you communicate with other nursing students. Please be specific.

STUDENT – TO – STUDENT COMMUNICATIONS
Here are some verbatims regarding how students communicate with each other.

“We generally communicate via text, Snapchat, or Facebook Messenger. We occasionally have study groups using the Collaborate feature on SOLE.” - Junior

“We utilize group messaging in order to facilitate easier communication in a smaller group, such as asking for clarification on dates and other information.” - Sophomore

“Through group chats, mostly! It's a beneficial way for us, especially us within the same clinical group, to keep in touch, send each other useful study material/tips, and remind each other of upcoming assignments.” - Sophomore

“Through Snapchat group chats and text message.” – Sophomore

“Texting, Snapchat, Social Media... through technology.” – Sophomore

“Large portions of my classmates and I are part of 1-2 snapchat group chats. I also have several smaller group chats with closer groups.” - Sophomore
COMMUNICATIONS OF INTEREST

About three-fourths (74%) of students are interested in having the SON communicate with students the same way they communicate with each other. Those students suggest that the School utilize the following tools:

Mentions by the number are:

- Texting: 48
- Social (Instagram, Snapchat): 28
- Emails: 26

Q. Would you be interested in having the School of Nursing communicate with students in any of these ways as well? Q. Which of these ways would you also like to see the School of Nursing communicate with its students?
NEW COMMUNICATION VEHICLES
Specific suggestions for other vehicles the SOM can use to communicate with its students (that reflect the previous page) include…

“Creating their own app with updates regularly, information on classes, assignments, and things happening in the school of nursing.” - Senior

“Texting might be convenient. You can set up a number through the remind app and have students text that number to be added to the subscription of messages/updates.” - Junior

“Utilize making visuals through pictures or videos on Facebook, Instagram, or sole. It would be beneficial to have a class on sole for all nursing students but for ONLY the MOST important information needed to know (i.e. SentryMD due dates, COVID testing, etc.).” – Graduate Student

“Use social media as a way to do news instead of promote itself. Have the faculty make announcements because we do listen to them and it makes it an easy way for a whole class to know of an announcement.” - Junior

“More social media. I check it a lot so it would be easier to have it in my feed when I'm looking through everything else.” - Sophomore

“Instagram would be a good platform, also text messages would be helpful! Much harder for those to slip through the cracks.” - Sophomore

“I think emails are probably still going to be the best. I get a lot of emails everyday, and it’s overwhelming in itself, so I wouldn’t want other forms of communication added to it.” - Senior

Q. Would you be interested in having the School of Nursing communicate with students in any of these ways as well? Q. Which of these ways would you also like to see the School of Nursing communicate with its students?
IRRELEVANT INFORMATION
Less than one-fifth of the students indicated they receive information they deem irrelevant or not useful. Some indicated that they get repetitive news:

“Between uNews and Heath Sciences Weekly, a lot of the emails we get are repeat information.” - Junior

“A lot of the COVID stuff is repeat from the emails we get from overall WVU. If there is new information, I like to keep informed, or the prevalence of it for us. Otherwise it’s just a waste of an email.” - Sophomore

Others can do with student and alumni stories and research news. (8 mentions)

“Even though research is a big part of our career, while I'm in school, I feel like I have a million things to do. Getting emails about student or alumni stories and research, is just another email I have to delete.” - Senior

Still other students feel they get information that does not pertain to them.

“Virtual events - there are too many to keep track of and they're not always specific to nursing students” – Graduate Student

“I get emails from SNA all the time and I am not in SNA.” – Senior (3 mentions).

“I don’t know specific information that I receive that is irrelevant to me, but I feel like I get flooded with emails. I try to keep up with them, but most don’t impact me much. It could just be my own preference, but I like searching out info I want instead of receiving a bunch I don’t care about. I like seeing reminders of groups to join and fun activities to attend on social media. However, I prefer only important information and deadlines be sent to my email. Otherwise I lose my class’s emails in the flood of random emails.” – Freshman

Q. Which topics, if any, do you currently receive information on but deem not relevant or useful?
ADDITIONAL TOPICS OF INTEREST

Students are most interested in learning more about career opportunities (77%) and events (76%). Far fewer are interested in faculty and staff stories (34%) research (34%) or student and alumni stories (29%).

Q. What topics are you interested in learning more about? (check all that apply)
Q. Lastly, please share any other suggestions you have for how School of Nursing can enhance its overall communications with you. If you don't have any suggestions, please type "NA" in the textbox.

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVED COMMUNICATION

When asked how the SON can enhance its overall communication with students, students offered plenty of suggestions.

• “I think it would be nice to have either a Sole page somehow linked to a newsletter, or a text message system.” Sophomore
• “Please have communication regarding clinical placement be more clear. Students go weeks without an update of whether the coordinator has even been in contact with potential placements.” – Graduate Student
• “Maybe doing a student spotlight on the website monthly or bimonthly. This would promote students to do good, help previous professors keep up with their past student, as well as interest onlooking perspective students.” – Junior
• “As someone who did NOT attend WVU initially, there are not many ways to get involved or know more about HSC. Maps to find places in the building(s) would be very helpful for those doing ADN to BSN, or doing grad school and are local but are unfamiliar with the actual campus. Also - ways for those of us who are newer to the campus itself to be more welcomed to functions. Again, a big help would be to ensure we knew where things were located.” – Graduate Student
• “Huge issues with clinical placements not being communicated, students are not updated on this process and it is very stressful.” – Graduate Student
• “Make sure incoming nursing students, or lower classmen students know how to get their volunteer hours, if they will need to get an internship or externship through the program, etc.” – Freshman
• “Keep students updated on COVID-19. Staff should be consistent in feedback.” – Junior
• “Professors need to be more vigilant about communicating with their students.” – Senior
• “Be more transparent with the students. We are always in the dark about what is happening in the program and what we are suppose to be doing. Also if the university sends out an email stating Dr. Gee is closing the university, have the school of nursing emails ready. Do not have it say we are currently discussing this and will get back to you later. We all know the school has discussed it and we would like to know what the plan is or it is so far at least.” – Junior
• “The school needs to be proactive and inform students via face to face interactions what's going on. The internet is not reliable and it is unprofessional of the administration to pass any vital information through any source other than face to face.” – Sophomore
SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVED COMMUNICATION

- “Crucial info could be posted on SOLE rather than just through email.” – Senior
- “I think sending emails out to everyone often would be helpful. Throughout COVID, I’ve felt confused because we were never directly given any info.” – Sophomore
- “Maybe imperative, important, “breaking news” type information could be sent out via text. This would be nice on a class basis. So say something in 312 is emergent or deviating for the schedule, we could opt to get it in text form”. – Junior
- “In this new time of online we are constantly getting bombarded with emails so I would say any particularly important points have them stand out or type something in the subject field to make it stand out. I know I have been receiving anywhere from probably 20-50 emails a day and sometimes we overlook something so just having an important email stand out would be nice.” – Junior
- “Add all students to a weekly email. something that informs us like MIX emails.” – Freshman
- “It’s tough because I have heard that a lot students just delete emails from the SON before even opening them, yet email seems to be the most professional and effective way to communicate. I don’t know if an app would be feasible but it would certainly get the attention from undergrads. Or if there was a communications SOLE site that would force notifications that students would have to open.” – Graduate Student
- “I will say that overall the school of nursing has a lot of communication. However, faculty have poor communication. Many classes have multiple faculty members responsible for them and often times they are not on the same page as each other. They also frequently do not have information that corresponds with the information in emails from the school of nursing and give contradictory info or do not know what we are talking about when we ask questions.” – Sophomore
- “I don’t know if it is just 211, but especially during zoom schooling, switching the teachers who teach us during small group from Monday to Wednesday, or from week to week gets confusing. There seems to be a lot of miscommunication and a difference in the amount the students get from one instructor to the next. I don’t mind if a teacher is out due to COVID. But keep us aware of that and fix it as need be. But there has been multiple times this semester I feel frustrated at the lack of communications with the students over planning and what is happening overall “ - Sophomore

Q. Lastly, please share any other suggestions you have for how School of Nursing can enhance its overall communications with you. If you don’t have any suggestions, please type "NA" in the textbox.
THE WEBSITE: PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS

About seven in ten (71%) recall referencing the SON website when they were applying to colleges that offer nursing.

Q. Now a few questions about the website. When you were applying to colleges that offer nursing, did you reference WVU’s School of Nursing website for information?
Q. What information on the School of Nursing's website was important for you to learn about when you were researching colleges that offer nursing? (check all that apply)

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<td>WVU Nursing campuses</td>
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<td>Faculty or staff information</td>
<td>46%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student stories/testimonials</td>
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<td>The School's Vision/Mission/Values</td>
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<td>Awards and Presentations</td>
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<td>Alumni stories</td>
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<td>Other</td>
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<td>News</td>
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THE WEBSITE: PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS
All but 3% of students who used the website when researching colleges looked at Program Information. Just over half (56%) looked at information about WVU’s Nursing campuses, and 46% viewed information on the faculty/staff. About four in ten (39%) read the student stories/testimonials. Other areas of the website were viewed by far fewer prospective students.
SUGGESTIONS FOR WEBSITE

When asked how the website could be enhanced for prospective students, just a few students provided suggestions.

• “I think that there should be a separate tab for individuals that are already in nursing school and one where new students can access their information easily. Like maybe have a list of teachers, a map of the health sciences campus, and their advisors all on the same page.” – Senior
• “There’s not much information about clinicals or classes.” – Freshman
• “More information about the Pre-Nursing Program and the route of a pre-nursing student in comparison to direct-admission student.” – Sophomore
• “I would make sure the nursing website is identical to the information on the admissions page. For example, I had to look back and forth on the SON site and the graduate admission page for program requirements. I found this to be tricky but I was able to manage since I was already a WVU alum. However, my friend applying for the graduate program (not a WVU alum) expressed confusion with finding the program personal statement requirements.” – Graduate Student
• “Make the website less complicated to navigate through.” – Freshman
• “Have the website say the acceptance rate into the school along with the requirements of you are a previewing or pre-health professional major trying to get in.” – Junior
• “I remember when I was looking at it some of the stuff was not up to date for the Beckley campus. I know even recently it was not as I was looking up something for a prospective student it still showed Crystal as the head. So I would just say more up to date info for the other campuses besides Morgantown.” – Junior
• “Maybe doing a student spotlight on the website monthly or bimonthly. This would promote students to do good, help previous professors keep up with their past students, as well as interest onlooking perspective students.” - Junior

Q. If you could change one thing about the website to make it more user-friendly for prospective nursing students, what would you suggest? If you don't have a suggestion, please type "NA" in the textbox.
DEMOGRAPHICS
Q. What class are you in?