

# THE TORCH

The Official Newsletter from the Virginia Nursing Students Association  
Editor: Janice Guinn



## **The Evolution of Nursing Overtime:**

### **Nursing Uniforms and their Ingrained Influence**

**by Natalie Bailey**

The first nursing uniforms, which came about during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, legitimized the profession while at the same time solidified the stereotypes held against women. Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the nursing uniform symbolized and reinforced society's expectations that women were inferior to men and must conform to the class expectations they were born into... Continued (p 3)

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## Upcoming VNSA EVENTS

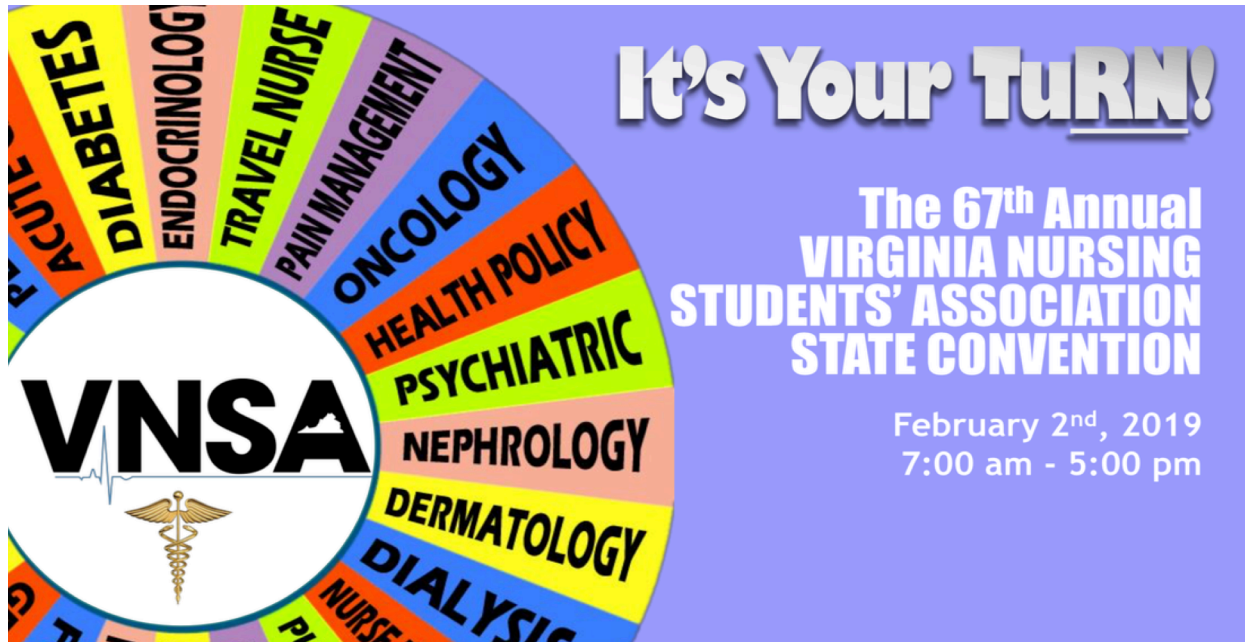
### Council of Student Leadership Summit October 27<sup>th</sup> at Liberty University



This is open to all students who wish to learn more about how to become an emerging leader in their nursing career. Nursing leadership is important regardless of the specialty and type of nursing degree you have. We **ALL** must be leaders and advocates for our patients. This convention will include speakers as well as numerous opportunities to grow in your knowledge and experience of leadership.

## Other Upcoming VNSA EVENTS

The 67th **VNSA Annual State Convention** will be held on **February 2, 2019** at James Madison University.



THIS YEAR'S THEME IS: ***IT'S YOUR TURN***

KEYNOTE SPEAKER:  
**ELIZABETH NESS, MS, BSN, RN**

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Director of the Office of Education and Compliance at the Center for Cancer Research (CCR), part of the intramural research program (IRP), at the National Cancer Institute in Bethesda, MD.

### OTHER HIGHLIGHTS:

NCLEX PREP

Leadership workshops

Lectures nurses from a variety of specialties

Opportunity to run for State Board of Directors

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# Nursing Uniforms and their Ingrained Image

Natalie Bailey  
University of Virginia

The first nursing uniforms, which came about during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, legitimized the profession while at the same time solidified the stereotypes held against women. Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the nursing uniform symbolized and reinforced society's expectations that women were inferior to men and must conform to the class expectations they were born into. As time moved forward, the course of the nursing uniform hit major turning points, such as World War II and the 1960's second-wave feminist movement. The uniforms during World War II were no longer influenced by class and gendered duties, but rather by government policies such as rationing. The uniform change in the 1960's was a reflection of women trying to assert themselves and stand up against the gender roles previously imposed on them. Today, the nursing uniform is a unisex scrub ensemble that is worn, not only to promote gender equality, but for identification and sanitation purposes. Nursing uniforms have transformed as major national events, that have nothing to do with the profession, have altered the social perception of nursing. Due to these changes, nursing uniforms today have much different driving factors than the original nursing uniforms did. The uniforms first created by Florence Nightingale were influenced by gender roles, class, and religion. Now, scrubs are used as nursing uniforms for their practicality, comfort, and scientific merit.

## 19<sup>th</sup> Century Uniforms

The origins of nursing as a profession, and the uniforms that followed, began in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, a time where Victorian Era ideals dominated the perception of women. Prior to the Victorian Era, women were seen as a pair of helping hands, and would often work alongside their husbands or brothers in shops while still tending to their "domestic duties" (Hughes, 2014) at home. However, as the Victorian Era approached, men and women "now inhabited what Victorians thought of as 'separate spheres'" (Hughes, 2014). The women were considered to be "physically weaker" and "morally superior" to men (Hughes, 2014). These assumptions and stereotypes were used to justify the domestic sphere" (Hughes, newspaper, upheld this notion by specifically mentioning that the churchwoman" as well as a "good (Fisher, 1866). Nurses carried out laundering linens, and tending to These parallel with the tasks concordance with the strict Victorian Era. Nursing as a expectations of women.

*"Uniforms solidified the assumption that nursing was a career more closely associated with home-making than medicine."*

the idea that women "were best suited to 2014). *The Chelmsford Chronicle*, a British publishing a help wanted ad for a nurse and woman must be a "good needlewoman, children's dress maker" in order to apply tasks such as repairing soldier's uniforms, any needs the physicians may have had. allotted to women within the home in adherence to gender roles during the profession was founded on the gendered Therefore, their uniforms reflected that same tone of domesticity. Nurses' uniforms and womanly behaviors were actually considered to be "synonymous" (Brooks & Rafferty, 2007). During the 19<sup>th</sup> century and even now, it is common for a cook or maid to wear an "apron and a head cap" (Poplin, 1994). It is not a coincidence that these features of the uniform looked strikingly similar to the ones nurses wore. This seemed to be yet another tangible connection between traditional women's work and nursing. Not only were the nurses given tasks rooted in their domestic skills, but now their uniforms solidified the assumption that nursing was a career more closely associated with home-making than medicine. In addition to gender roles, social status had an explicit impact on how nurses were allowed to dress. In the early nineteenth century, nursing was a profession filled with many low-class women and anybody with a higher social standing, for example, Florence Nightingale, was deterred from entering the profession because it was looked down upon by so many. Nurses from this time period wore dowdy dresses made from wool or cotton fabrics because "velvet and silk" could only be worn by the "aristocrats" (Poplin,

1994). Nursing uniforms could not make the woman look “too refined” (Poplin, 1994) because nurses were not to distract the patients or physicians in any way with their appearances. Florence Nightingale was a well-known nurse administrator, recruited during the Crimean War, who clothed her nurses in “black, loose fitting” (Poplin, 1994) dresses to deemphasize their body contours. In addition to the voluminous dress, the uniform included a “large black bonnet” which served to shield the women from “intrusive gazing by men” that could possibly lead to “temptations” (Poplin, 1994). Although the uniforms were very conservative, and the nurses were expected to look modest, they were still told to “take pride in their outward appearance” (Brooks & Rafferty, 2007) to maintain the dignity of nursing. Nightingale dressed her nurses to her satisfaction because she was concerned with how they would be perceived by the world. Dortha Dix, a nurse recruited to help during the Civil War, is another good example of how nurse administrators used uniforms as a vehicle to suppress the nurses’ feminine characteristics. Dix only hired “plain looking” (Desrochers, 2012) women over 30 years of age because she wanted to make sure her nurses were taken seriously in the workplace and upheld the level of morality that society expected them to have. The nurses’ uniforms held a “certain respectability” but were not elegant or vibrant enough to “encourage social climbing,” as that would have been extremely disrespectful (Poplin, 1994). Because of these external societal influences, the original nursing uniform surfaced as “simple robes of grey and brown” (“Chat of the Gossips”, 1883). The uniforms during the 19<sup>th</sup> century were created solely in regard to how the nurse presented herself to the world and had nothing to do with the work she was actually doing.

### **Jumping forward to the Mid 20<sup>th</sup> Century**

The 1960’s and 1970’s were a time filled with movements that encouraged the autonomy and civil rights of nurses and Americans as a whole. Specifically, the women’s movement, which was known as “second-wave feminism” peaked in the 60’s and 70’s. This movement “touched on every area of women’s experience- including family, sexuality, and work” (Burkett, 2018). After World War II, the perception of what was considered to be “women’s work” shifted and consequently altered the attitudes towards nursing. Second-wave feminism provided the “language, rationale, and strategy” for nursing to end its “historic ties to feminine deference and subordination” (Vuic, 2009). Since the nursing uniform was such a strong symbolic reminder of nursing’s past, it needed to be updated to fit the current perception of nurses, women, and nursing as a profession. This strive for equality was symbolized by the addition of a pantsuit option rather than the traditional flowy dress. Pants had been previously reserved for those nurses who were serving in the war or men who were medical professionals, but in the midst of a feminist revolution, pantsuits became widely popular both within and outside of the nursing profession. The two-piece pant uniform was liked by many, not only because of the outfit’s style, but also because the “wash n’ wear qualities” (Pedry, 1971) were appealing to many women who were still pressured to be doing the household laundry. This was the first major change to the uniform that was not exclusively influenced by social standards, but also based on scientific merit. The transition from dresses to skirts to pants was not the only change that occurred following this surge of feminism. Stark white being the preferential color of nursing uniforms was shut down after feminists deemed that the color white symbolized “the angelic, demure, dependent woman” and “diminished power” (Tobin, 2006). However, this idea, that nursing uniforms should or should not be white, has been part of an ongoing debate. The contradiction to the feminists’ impression of white, is that the white uniform “reflects a level of respect and recognition” (Tobin, 2006) that should be given to all nurses. Just as the designers of nursing uniforms began to pay more attention to evidence based practice, the socialized, gendered preferences still permeated their way into the opinions of others.

### **Present Day**

Today’s nursing uniforms have been influenced by new knowledge of infection control, comfort, and



with the appearance of their nurses. With this change in priority comes the crises of “personal comfort vs. professional credibility”, “individuality versus regimentation” and “style versus substance” (Tobin, 2006). There does not have to be a preference in any of these dichotomies if the nurse presents herself in a professional and assertive way while still wearing comfortable clothing on the job. As science has advanced and we have been enlightened by information like Germ Theory, nursing uniforms have adapted and evolved to best meet the needs of patients and those wearing them. Scrubs allow nurses to be recognized for “what they do and think” (Bates, 2012, p. 156) rather than being judged by others solely on what they choose to wear to work. However, it’s important to remember that these changes have been fairly recent and although nurses have made tremendous strides, the profession continues to be slightly influenced by gendered social norms. Nursing has taken tremendous leaps from distancing itself from its gendered roots, but these subtle influences will not be completely eradicated until there are an equal distribution of men and women in the profession. Nursing uniforms have changed drastically throughout the years, but ultimately the influences of comfort, safety, and practicality have overpowered the earlier influences of gender roles and class status.

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# Journaling for Healthy Mind

Rachel Tinsley  
University of Virginia

As nursing students, many of us barely have the time to complete our schoolwork in between classes, clinicals, and work, let alone find the time to think about and bolster our mental health. There are many options for self-care, but these can often be expensive or time-consuming. Consider journaling. Many nursing schools have now implemented the use of reflective journaling as part of clinical curriculum, but journaling does not have to be merely a school assignment. Journaling can be a personal tool for us nursing students to maintain mental health throughout our busy schedules. According to the University of Rochester Medical Center's health encyclopedia, "[J]ournaling helps control...symptoms and improve[s]...mood by: helping you prioritize problems, fears, and concerns; tracking any symptoms day-to-day so that you can recognize triggers and learn ways to better control them; [and] providing an opportunity for positive self-talk and identifying negative thoughts and behaviors," (Ballas & Fraser, 2018). In this way, nursing students can use journaling to not only identify school or job-related stressors, but also personal stressors that may uniquely affect them in day-to-day life. Blake suggests that one should explore themselves by beginning to "journal on their opinions and dreams, how their family and upbringing have affected them, what personal characteristics they value, and what makes them happy and what brings them down—all part of their journey in self-discovery," (2017). That is not to say that you cannot journal effectively without a prompt in mind. Whatever you are feeling at the moment or at any other time is absolutely an acceptable topic for journaling. Journaling is all about you: whatever you want to write, whenever or wherever you want to write—it's up to you. It is both an inexpensive and time-saving self-care method that is all about you and your needs! I encourage all nursing students to take part in self-care for healthy minds and bodies, whether through journaling or not, because to take care of patients we must take care of ourselves first!

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- Ballas, P., & Fraser, M. (2018). Journaling for Mental Health - Health Encyclopedia - University of Rochester Medical Center.
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## FAQs VNSA

### Mission Statement:

*The Virginia Nursing Students' Association is a student managed organization representing future nurses from over 75 nursing education programs throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia. We foster the professional and personal development of student nurses by providing educational resources, leadership opportunities, and career guidance.*

### Important Dates:

1) The 67th VNSA Annual State Convention will be held on **February 2, 2019** at James Madison University

### Did you know you can attend BOD meetings?

Locations will be added as meeting days approach at the bottom of our home page and under the VNSA events tab. For more information on meetings/conference calls please contact Savanna Miller, VNSA Secretary at [vnsasecretary@gmail.com](mailto:vnsasecretary@gmail.com)

### How to get involved:

- 1) Join the local chapter at your university
- 2) Attend the State Convention
- 3) Contact Board members to see how you can be involved in their work (BOD emails can be found on the VNSA website) <http://www.vnsa.us/>

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## VNSA Chapter's Fall Highlights



Students volunteer for NICU reunion event at UVA Medical Center





## Available Scholarships/Awards



The flyer is titled "Virginia Nursing Students' Association Scholarships" in red and black text. It features the VNSA logo, which includes the acronym "VNSA" in large black letters with a blue heartbeat line through the "V", and "Virginia Nursing Students' Association" in smaller black text below it. The flyer is set against a green background with a subtle geometric pattern. It lists the scholarship details, eligibility criteria, and contact information for Julie Roberts.

**Virginia Nursing Students' Association Scholarships**

The VNSA is offering 4 \$500 CASH Scholarships to qualified Virginia nursing students.

**WHO QUALIFIES?**

- Any current Virginia Nursing student
- Being a current VNSA Member
- Attending annual State Convention On February 2<sup>nd</sup> at JMU

**Available Scholarships**

- Traditional Student
- Single Parent
- Second Degree Student
- Community College Student

For more information contact

Julie Roberts  
vnsaelections@gmail.com  
OR  
Visit our website  
www.vnsa.us

## Awards

VNSA Awards are presented at our annual convention to deserving students, faculty, and constituencies whose efforts have been recognized. Nominate your peers and faculty members! **All awards applications must be submitted to vnsaelections@gmail.com by 11:59 pm on January 18, 2019!** To learn more information about these awards, please go to the VNSA website or email Julie Roberts at [contactvnsa@gmail.com](mailto:contactvnsa@gmail.com).

### List of Awards:

Excellence in Breakthrough to Nursing  
Nursing Student of the Year  
Most Active Constituency Award  
VNSA Scrapbook Contest  
Excellence in Nursing Instruction Award  
Most Outstanding Community Service Award  
Most Supportive Faculty Member

# Description of Awards

## NURSING STUDENT OF THE YEAR

Nominee must be an active member of the VNSA. One faculty member and one student must fill out the nomination form. A total of two forms are required. Self-nomination is acceptable. VNSA/NSNA Board of Directors are ineligible.

## MOST SUPPORTIVE FACULTY MEMBER

This award is given to the faculty member who has been nominated to be the most supportive of VNSA activities. Complete the application form and describe the manner in which the support has been given.

## MOST ACTIVE CONSTITUENCY AWARD (MAC)

This award is given to the VNSA Chapter that has shown the greatest amount of activity during the past year. Written documentation must be submitted according to the criteria. Awards will be given for first place and two runners up. MAC books must be submitted to the awards table by 10:00 am on the day of the Annual Convention.

MAC books must be organized in order of categories and must be pre-scored by NSA President or Faculty Advisor. **If MAC books are not pre-scored, they will be immediately disqualified.**

## MOST OUTSTANDING STATE COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECT

This award is given to the chapter whose community service project demonstrated an appropriate community needs assessment, significant scope of the problem addressed, creativity and originality of the intervention and participation in the project by a respectable number of chapter members. Documentation may be through minutes, flyers, photos, etc. Awards will be given for first place and runner up.

## SCRAPBOOK CONTEST AWARDS

Scrapbooks may include pictures and memorabilia. Outstanding covers will be recognized in the judging. Scrapbooks must be submitted to the awards table by 10:00 am on the day of the Annual Convention. Awards will be given for first place and runner up. Once scrapbooks have been deposited with the Board of Directors, they will not be for public viewing until the judging has been completed.

## EXCELLENCE IN BREAKTHROUGH TO NURSING AWARD

Excellence in Break Through to Nursing Award to one chapter who strives for excellence in BTN on a national, state, and/or local level. The project will be judged on creativity, effectiveness (number of people reached), and quality. Chapters applying for this award should submit a paper (maximum one page) describing the project and application form. The chapter must also submit a flyer/pamphlet with brief overview and visual proof of the project.

## EXCELLENCE IN NURSING INSTRUCTION AWARD

Each year the VNSA Board of Directors will select one Instructor or Professor who has received a nomination from a student (or students) attending a constituent institution of the VNSA, for recognition of Excellence in Nursing Instruction. Those nominated will have demonstrated excellence as a teacher, a mentor, and will have made a consistent and truly positive contribution to the future of nursing in the Commonwealth of Virginia. This award is presented during ceremonies at the Virginia Nursing Students' Association Annual Convention.



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## Share your Stories with the Torch Writing Contest!

This award is given to a first and second place winner who have submitted a maximum 1,000-word article pertaining to the theme of the annual convention (see updated application for yearly themes). Articles may be serious, funny, creative, or poetic. Articles previously used for class-related assignments may not be used. First place will win \$50, free admission to the annual convention, and will be published in the spring Torch Newsletter. Second place will also be published in the Torch. For more questions contact:

Theme IT's your TuRN

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## Want to have your article published in the Torch?

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Is there is a new advancement in  
nursing or a policy issue that  
your are passionate about?

Email

Janice at [vnsaeditor@gmail.com](mailto:vnsaeditor@gmail.com)

For more information!

## Bohemian Pharmacy Parody

By Janice Guinn and Ashley Monday

Is this my real life  
My doctor says it is fantasy  
Caught in between psychotic landslides  
Must escape the FGAs ordered by pharmacy  
Blurry eyes  
Cannot look up into the skies and see  
I'm just a crazy boy, I need no sympathy  
ACH ADRS easy come, easy go  
Little dopamine, little control  
Any way the drug goes doesn't really matter to me, to me  
Doctor, can these drugs kill a man  
Having muscle spasms in my head  
Couldn't a laryngeal spasm smack me dead  
Doctor, these weird movements have just begun  
So now I've gone and thrown the pills away  
Doctor, ooh (any way drug wind goes)  
Give me a SGA instead or i'll cry  
If my muscle tone isn't back again this time tomorrow  
Shuffle on, shuffle on as if nothing really matter  
Gotta leave the drug behind and find what works  
Doctor, ooh (anyway the drug goes)  
I don't wanna die,  
Sometimes wish I'd never taken the FGA at all  
I'm hearing voicessssss of a little man  
Physician... physician... SGAs will this be better for me?



Gynecomastia and sexual dysfunction, Very, very frightening me  
I see the number it's getting bigger  
On the scale  
On the scale  
Suspiciousness  
Paranoiaaaa  
I'm just a crazy boy, nobody understands me  
He's just a crazy boy from a psychotic family  
Spare him his life from his idiocracy  
Little dopamine, little control, where did the dopamine go?  
Paranoia! No, little man let me go (let him go!)  
Paranoia! No, little man let me go (let him go!)  
Paranoia! No, little man let me go (let him go!)  
Will not let you go (let him go!)  
Never, never let you go  
Never let me go, oh  
No, no, no, no, no, no, no  
Oh, doctor plz, doctor plz, (little man, let me go)  
Aripiprazole killed the little man inside me, for me, for me  
So you think you can drug me and try to calm me? (Yeah!)  
So you think you can change me and the man inside?  
Oh, doc, can't do this to me, doc  
Just gotta get out, just gotta get right outta here  
Nothing really matters  
Anyone can see  
Nothing really matters  
Nothing really matters to me  
Any way the drug goes