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**Contact:**

Annette Flanders, director, WCC Nursing Program  
360.383.3550 / [aflanders@whatcom.ctc.edu](mailto:aflanders@whatcom.ctc.edu)

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**STUDENT NURSES OF WHATCOM WIN STATE AWARD FOR  
ADVOCATING MENTORSHIP AS A CURE FOR STRESS REDUCTION**

**Bellingham, WA, April 19, 2012** – A student group at Whatcom Community College has a prescription for stress reduction among first-year nursing students: Connect with a mentor. The Student Nurses of Whatcom (SNOW) won the Image of Nursing Award at the Nursing Students of Washington State 2012 Convention for their research and advocacy of mentors within the nursing profession.

Having a supportive second-year student who serves as a mentor can make a difference for first-year nursing students, SNOW members report in a professional paper they wrote about this project. The paper, titled “Reducing Stress Through Mentorship,” includes references from evidence-based nursing literature and research data gathered from observations of first-year nursing students. The data tracks stress levels among students as they progress through the nursing program. The project emphasizes the importance and effectiveness of mentorship in nursing, both in school and in the professional environment.

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"Mentoring is a huge theme in nursing," says Justin Gill, a WCC nursing student, president of SNOW and vice president of the Nursing Students of Washington State. "Many students found it helpful to have a senior student help them with study strategies, specific assignments and test success. These mentorships are one of the reasons Whatcom's nursing program is so well-regarded; they are an important contributor to student success."

WCC's nursing program has a high student retention rate. An impressive 96 percent of spring 2011 graduates of Whatcom's nursing program passed the National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses (NCLEX-RN) and are now licensed registered nurses in Washington. The next class graduates in June.

The Image of Nursing Award is recognition of projects that improve, enhance, and promote the nursing profession in the public domain. It recognizes positive attributes of the profession. Mentorship plays an increasingly important role in the image of the nursing profession. "In today's nursing environment, there seems to be a common perception that many seasoned nurses can be tough on students and beginning nurses," Gill adds. "This project hopes to change that image and promote mentorship in the profession." The project was supported by a Carl D. Perkins grant.

Whatcom Community College is an accredited, comprehensive two-year college with a committed, accomplished faculty and staff who serve more than 7,600 students quarterly. On its beautiful 71-acre campus in Bellingham, WA, and through on-line courses, Whatcom offers transfer degrees, professional and technical training programs, as well as basic education, job skills and Community Education classes. For more information about WCC, please call the Public Information Office at 360.383.3310 or visit [www.whatcom.ctc.edu](http://www.whatcom.ctc.edu).