Dean’s Message

With one-third of the nursing workforce projected to retire by 2025, nursing shortages are reaching a critical juncture both in Louisiana and around the country. That’s why the LSU School of Nursing is committed to being a national leader in educating the next generation of nurses. Through academic-practice partnerships we are working toward a common shared vision where every individual and community can reach their highest potential for health.

This year, we welcomed Dr. Rick Zimmerman as Associate Dean for Nursing Research, Scholarship and Science, who is helping to further our nursing research enterprise. This will give our nursing students and alumni even more unique opportunities to gain broad academic knowledge and clinical experience in research, education, service and patient care - areas where we already excel as the only nursing school in the state that operates within a health sciences center environment.

We have added new Nurse Practitioner concentrations in pediatrics, adult-gerontology and, most recently, psychiatric mental health. Our continuing nursing education programs have been expanded with more hands-on workshops, and we have increased the use of simulations throughout our academic programs. In fact, we are one of the only nursing schools in the region that has achieved full accreditation for simulation in teaching and education from the Society for Simulation in Healthcare.

We are also continuing to expand our impact into the community through more recruitment efforts and service activities, with a focus on meeting rural and underserved health care needs. A $1.3 million grant we received from the Health Resources and Services Administration’s Advanced Nursing Education Workforce (ANEW) Program is helping us train more nursing students and place them in underserved health care settings.

The National Student Nurses’ Association has recognized us as a Stellar School for our second five-year term – an award given to nursing schools that exhibit a strong commitment to shared governance and professional development of their nursing students and faculty. We also recently received a Working Well in Louisiana Worksite Recognition of Excellence award from the Louisiana Business Group on Health.

This year, we celebrate our 85th anniversary. We are actively conducting a self-study for continued nursing accreditation by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) concluding October 2018. We look forward to maintaining our standards of excellence as we continue to grow and expand to meet the health care needs of the communities we serve.

Demetrious J. Porche, DNS, PhD, AEVENT, FACHE, FAAN, FAAN
Dean and Helen A. & James B. Dunn Professor
Louisiana State University Health – New Orleans School of Nursing

Holistic Care, Healthier Community

A patient arrives for an appointment at the LSU Health New Orleans School of Nursing’s nurse-managed Dental and Medical Primary Care Clinic (DMPPC) complaining of a dry mouth and bleeding gums. A dentist – aided by hygienists and shadowed by dental and nursing students – examines him, noting red, swollen and reeding gums. The students ask the patient about his overall health, and he says he’s frequently tired and thirsty and has experienced headaches with blurred vision. After a brief discussion, the dentist and students refer him to the nurse practitioner for a blood glucose test. His reading is over 200 mg/dL. He is given a preliminary diagnosis of type 2 diabetes, and is referred to the clinic’s nurse practitioner for further tests and follow-up care.

This type of interdisciplinary health care is provided to patients in an underserved area of New Orleans each day through the DMPPC, an integrated primary and dental care clinic launched in 2016 as a collaboration between the LSU Health New Orleans Schools of Nursing and Dentistry.

“You can tell a lot about someone’s health by looking into the mouth, and the clinic shows both nursing and dental students that systemic health connection and offers patients a more holistic health care experience,” says Deborah Garbee, PhD, APRN, ACNS-BC, Associate Dean for Professional Practice, Community Service and Advanced Nursing Practice. “When patients come to the clinic, they’re triaged based on whether their chief complaint is medical or dental. The nurse practitioner and dentist perform a brief joint exam, huddle along with students to discuss what issues need to be addressed, and then decide with the patient what services he or she prefers to have that day.”

This patient-centered approach allows patients to be active participants in their care. It also offers a “one-stop shop” where a person can be examined by and discuss health issues with dental and medical professionals, undergo lab tests, access preventive care and wellness resources, and get referrals to specialists, as needed.

Practice-based, Collaborative Learning Benefits Students and Patients

Nursing and dental students ask patients questions at intake, administer screening questionnaires, sit in on many examinations and are involved in patient education based on the nurse practitioner’s or dentist’s advice.

“Because they’re also meeting with students, patients feel like they get more attention and interaction, someone to listen to their concerns and give them options to address those concerns. They don’t feel hurried or like they’re not being heard, which is a common problem in busy medical settings,” says Dr. Garbee. “And, our students are getting these important interprofessional experiences that show them how important collaboration will be in their practice.”

Nursing and dental students learn to work on a team, communicate with other care providers and ensure that the care they provide is collaboratively focused on the patient’s best possible outcome.

“They gain confidence, knowing that they can speak up and be respected and valued contributors to the care team,” Dr. Garbee explains. “They get hands-on experience working beside experienced nurse practitioners and dentists. And they learn to interact effectively with patients.”

Patients, practitioners and students have expressed a high level of satisfaction with this fully integrated model of care. Down the road, Dr. Garbee says it would be wonderful to add a behavioral health component to the clinic, addressing another community need.
Filling Critical Shortages in Mental Health Care

LSU School of Nursing Introduces Psychiatric Mental Health DNP Program

The shortage of mental health professionals is a huge issue throughout the nation. Far too many children who need assessments go undiagnosed, and the demand for substance abuse and mental health treatment for adults is great as well. In many places, those who need care can often wait months for mental health services.

Public Affairs Research Council of Louisiana identified a major deficit in mental and behavioral health services. LSU Health New Orleans School of Nursing made sure to address this pressing need by adding a Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner concentration to the BSN to Doctor of Nursing Practice program in an effort to provide vital services that many communities are currently without.

A Top-Tier Program in a Unique Health Setting

The DNP program, which was recently approved by the Louisiana State Board of Nursing, is shaping up to be one of the best in the region, offering a range of clinical experiences across the lifespan. From pediatric primary care and school-based clinics to long-term care facilities for the elderly, nurses in the program will put in more than 900 hours in a psychiatric clinical setting - nearly double the national standard of 500 hours. In the classroom setting, coursework that includes neuroanatomy, neurophysiology and neuropharmacology creates the theoretical foundation for these nurses to excel in their practice.

The inaugural class for the Psychiatric Mental Health DNP program includes six students, with another 10 students expected to join next year.

Nurses Who Are Motivated to Make a Difference

“Half the students who are seeking enrollment in the program are already certified Family Nurse Practitioners,” says Leanne Fowler, DNP, AG/ACNP-BC, CCRN, CNE, Director of Nurse Practitioner Programs. “And every one of them has told me how important it is that we’re offering this program.” According to Fowler, many nurses report having few local providers to whom they can refer patients who need mental health services, or wait times to see specialists that are far too long. This has led some nurses to take it upon themselves to get the degree they need to provide these services to their communities.

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Reducing Stress and Boosting Prenatal and Postnatal Resilience

Studies have shown that high levels of psychological stress and inadequate support can affect the health of pregnant and new mothers, fetal development and infant birth outcomes. Gloria Giarratano, APRN, CNS, PhD, Professor of Nursing, is studying interventions to promote positive mental health and resilience among women during pregnancy and after childbirth.

“Such interventions are especially applicable during times of disaster recovery but could be useful for all women experiencing high stress or anxiety during the childbearing year,” explains Dr. Giarratano. “A colleague and I are piloting the CALM pregnancy support group as an intervention designed for use in post-disaster communities to build mental health resilience, strengthen psychosocial support systems and integrate future disaster preparation. It’s also appropriate for any women who want to learn more about mental health self-care to promote healthy pregnancies.”

After Hurricane Katrina, Dr. Giarratano and colleagues conducted three studies to capture experiences of women who’d been pregnant during and after the disaster. Through this research, she exposed the nursing challenges of working after widespread urban devastation and revealed the need for extensive psychosocial support and mental health care within prenatal care systems as well as improved disaster preparation for women returning to live in disaster-prone communities.

Currently conducting community-based participatory research with Healthy Start New Orleans to learn what community interventions are most needed, Dr. Giarratano says that her goal is positive mental health for all pregnant women.

“It is achievable through psychoeducational interventions – being aware of myths of motherhood and sources of stress; strategies such as mindfulness breathing, meditation, exercise and nutrition; and using available resources – like family, friends and health professionals – for support.”

Promoting Patient-Centered Care Leadership and Men’s Health

Emotional intelligence – the ability to identify and manage one’s own emotions and the emotions of others – is essential for effective practice and patient-centered care. That’s why Demetrius J. Porche, DNS, PhD, ANEF, FACHE, FAANP, FAAN, Professor and Dean of LSU Health New Orleans School of Nursing, is working to integrate emotional intelligence into the school’s culture.

Under his guidance, faculty and staff have completed emotional intelligence (EI) assessments, which the school is using to develop more effective teams. With Denise Danna, RN, DNS, NEA, BC, CNE, FACHE, Chief Nursing Officer at University Medical Center New Orleans, Dean Porche also developed an Emergent Nurse Leader leadership program based on the principles of EI. During the program, students engage in leadership discussions, complete a battery of EI and related assessments and work on a leadership change project within their institution.

Beyond EI, Dean Porche has long helped develop men’s health as a specialty area in health care. He has guided men’s health course development on a national level, serves as chief editor of the American Journal of Men’s Health, and provides expert consultation as needed to the national nonprofit organization Men’s Health Network.

Currently, Dean Porche is also working to develop a system-level nurse research role with academic partner LCMC Health as well as collaborating in scholarly studies of hierarchical leadership with Jamie Wiggins, MS, RN, Chief Nursing Officer at Children’s Hospital New Orleans and adjunct instructor in the School of Nursing.

Like his work with EI, these initiatives promote a more patient-centered nursing practice through self-reflection, regular assessment and improvement, as well as developing strategies for expanding care to underserved populations and overlooked health issues.

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Gloria Giarratano, APRN, CNS, PhD
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Honors & Awards

Ellen O. Beyer, DNP, RN, MN, MBA, PHCN5-BC, APRN, Instructor of Clinical Nursing, has been published in the International Archives of Nursing and Health Care with an article, “Improving Practitioners’ Knowledge and Confidence to Identify High-Risk Medications with Older Adults: A Quality Improvement Intervention.”

James Foley, RN, MSN-HCSM, Instructor of Nursing, has been awarded the Nurse Recognition Award by the Northshore District Nurses Association.

Deborah Garbee, PhD, APRN, ACNS-BC, was one of seven co-investigators whose paper, “Moving On Up: Team Improvement Intervention,” was awarded to the Northshore District Nurses Association.

Deborah St. Germain, DNP, RN, CNE, Assistant Professor of Nursing, was inducted as a member and a Fellow of the American Academy of Nursing.

Khaleelah Hasan, MN, RN, APHN-BC, CNE, Instructor of Nursing, has been published in the Journal of Interprofessional Education & Practice with an article, “Improvement in Cultural Competency During the Disaster Cycle Program that was funded by a LIFT Fund grant in 2016–2017.

Gloria Giarratano, PhD, APRN, CNS, Professor of Nursing, has been selected as a member of the Journal of Hospice & Palliative Nursing Advisory Committee.

Stephanie Pierce, PhD, MN, RN, CNE, Program Director for Baccalaureate Articulation, CARN, and Nurse Educator MSN programs, has received a number of recognitions:

- She was recognized by the LSU Health Sciences Center as a 2017 Innovator for her work to enhance the marketability of the Cornerstone of Cultural Competency During the Disaster Cycle Program that was funded by a LIFT Fund grant in 2016–2017.
- She was selected as a member of the Journal of Nursing Education review panel.
- She did a podium presentation on the Cornerstone of Cultural Competency During the Disaster Cycle Program at the Southern Regional Education Board Council on Collegiate Education for Nursing in November. She will make the same presentation at the following conferences in 2018: the American Association of Colleges of Nursing Master’s Program Director for the Nurse Anesthesia Program, was awarded $56,973 in stipend support for her work to enhance the marketability of the Cornerstone of Cultural Competency During the Disaster Cycle Program.

Demetrius Porche, DNP, PhD, ANEF, FACHE, was selected as a member of the National League for Nursing’s Academy of Nursing Education. She will make the presentation at the following conferences in 2018: the American Association of Colleges of Nursing Master’s Program Director for the Nurse Anesthesia Program, was awarded $1.3 million in funding from the Advanced Nursing Education Workforce. The funds will be used to create academic practice partnerships for the Family Nurse Practitioner and Adult-Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner programs, enhancement of simulation experiences for these programs, and scholarship support for students enrolled in these programs. Team members include Erin Bauer, DNP, CRNA; Jean Cecalu, PhD, APRN, AGNP-C, CRNP; Jessica Landry, DNP, FNP-BC; Susan Lee, FNP, and Michele Lowery.

Congratulations are in order for the following faculty members and their recent grant funding:

Marsha Bennett, DNS, APRN, ACRN, CNE, Professor of Nursing, was awarded $36,423 from the Louisiana Board of Regents Proof of Concept Funding to create mobile applications for the Cornerstone of Cultural Competency During the Disaster Cycle Program. Co-principal investigators are Denise Danna, RN, DNS, NEA, BC, CNE, FACHE, and Stephanie Pierce, PhD, MN, RN, CNE.

Laura Bonanno, DNP, CRNA, Program Director of the Nurse Anesthesia Program, was awarded $56,973 in stipend support for her work to enhance the marketability of the Cornerstone of Cultural Competency During the Disaster Cycle Program.

Latanja Divens, DNP, APRN, FNP-BC, Instructor of Nursing, was awarded $1.3 million in funding from the Advanced Nursing Education Workforce. The funds will be used to create academic practice partnerships for the Family Nurse Practitioner and Adult-Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner programs, enhancement of simulation experiences for these programs, and scholarship support for students enrolled in these programs. Team members include Erin Bauer, DNP, CRNA; Jean Cecalu, PhD, APRN, AGNP-C, CRNP; Jessica Landry, DNP, FNP-BC; Susan Lee, FNP, and Michele Lowery.

New to Our School

Please welcome our new faculty and staff:

Stephanie Bush, DNS, APRN, CCRN, CPNP-AC, Instructor-Adjunct

Adele Harrell, MSN, RN, Instructor-Full-time

Joelle Harris, DNS, RN, Instructor-Part-time

Mariah H. Jackson, FNP-C, Instructor

Nanette A. LeBlanc-Morales, DNP, FNP-BC, Instructor

Linda M. Ledet, DNS, APRN, PMHCNS-BC, Assistant Professor

Mickey Pigg, MA, Academic Success Coordinator

Shondra C. Sears, Administrative Coordinator 3, in the Nurse Anesthesia Program

Lori Spradley, School of Nursing Designated Librarian

Jamie L. Wiggins, RN, MS, CCRN-K, NEA-BC, FACHE, Instructor-Adjunct

Rick Zimmerman, PhD, Associate Dean for Nursing Research, Scholarship and Science
When it comes to health and well-being, the LSU Health New Orleans School of Nursing leads by example. Our Tiger Tracks to Wellness workplace wellness initiative that launched in May has been awarded the Working Well in Louisiana Worksite Wellness Recognition of Excellence 2017 award, as an outstanding employer in the small employer category. The recognition comes from the Louisiana Business Group on Health.

The Tiger Tracks to Wellness program encourages health, wellness and life balance for faculty and staff by providing a variety of initiatives to help participants be more physically active, more emotionally strong and more nutritionally minded. The goal for each participant is to develop daily healthy habits, like walking 10,000 steps, practicing 10 minutes of mindfulness and drinking 64 ounces of water.

"Participants meet together monthly and we have speakers to help encourage us in our goals," says Dr. Martin. "There are a number of walking groups that meet and walk every day and we all track our goals weekly via our Tiger Tracks to Wellness website."

The program is set to include students next year, and then to roll out campuswide in year three. Aside from Dr. Martin, additional staff instrumental in the program’s implementation include: Jennifer Badeaux, CRNA, DNP; Jessica Landry, DNP, FNP-BC; Todd Tartavoulle, DNS, APRN, CNS-IBC; and Alison Davis, PhD, RN, CHSE.

The Tiger Tracks to Wellness program encourages health, wellness and life balance for faculty and staff by providing a variety of initiatives to help participants be more physically active, more emotionally strong and more nutritionally minded.

When several faculty from other schools within the Health Sciences Center attended the event, they brought the idea to the Faculty Senate. "The entire Health Sciences Center has now instituted a campuswide Coffee for a Cause each month, which is helping to foster relationships across the entire Health Sciences Center and the community.

"We came up with the idea for our Coffee for a Cause program after reading a book on organizational culture," says Jennifer B. Martin, DNP, CRNA, chairperson of the Faculty and Staff Life committee. "It was an activity suggested in the book to enhance engagement and organizational citizenship. We launched the program last summer as a casual and fun way for faculty and staff who do not get to see each other during the work week to come together and just chat."

With a dozen or more people in attendance each week, conversation flows, ideas are exchanged and donations are received for community support projects.

"We ask for a $1 donation, but attendees usually donate more," says Dr. Martin. Last year the initiative raised $1,500 to replace textbooks, supplies and uniforms for nursing students affected by the devastating floods in the Baton Rouge area. This year donations are on track to reach $2,000, and will be used to rebuild one of the community playgrounds in Baton Rouge that was destroyed by flooding.

Each Friday morning, before classes start and the business of nursing education gets underway, faculty and staff gather in the Dean’s conference room for a casual 30-minute meet-and-greet, supportive fellowship opportunity. But what started as a way to build relationships and communication within the School of Nursing has positively impacted both the Health Sciences Center and the community.

"We were inspired by the idea of a library that facilitated relationships and the business of nursing education," says Jennifer B. Martin, DNP, CRNA, chairperson of the Faculty and Staff Life committee. "It was an activity suggested in the book to enhance engagement and organizational citizenship. We launched the program last summer as a casual and fun way for faculty and staff who do not get to see each other during the work week to come together and just chat."

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Practical Experiences, Personal Connections

Nurses practicing in New Orleans regularly care for patients facing an array of health and socioeconomic issues. The city’s population has a high rate of chronic health problems like hypertension and diabetes, and Louisiana as a whole ranks fourth in the nation for stroke deaths. Like many other cities, its population also includes people who are uninsured or underserved, veterans and individuals struggling with homelessness – all of whom present unique care challenges.

How can a new nurse practitioner, right out of college, be adequately prepared to care for these diverse populations and their complex conditions? A $1.3 million grant recently awarded to the LSU Health New Orleans School of Nursing’s Primary Care Nurse Practitioner program offers unique training opportunities for primary care advanced practice nursing students, through which they learn skills for working with underserved and challenging populations.

The grant from the Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA) Bureau of Health Workforce’s Advanced Nursing Education Workforce (ANEW) Program provides student recipients with partial tuition. It also funds simulation equipment so they can learn to care for disadvantaged and medically complex populations, as well as develop skills for working with stroke patients and people with communication disorders.

“These are eye-opening experiences that prepare nursing students for what they will face upon graduation and give them opportunities to develop skills for communicating with and meeting the care needs of these patients,” says Latanja Divens, DNP, APRN, FNP-BC, Instructor of Nursing and principal investigator for the ANEW grant.

Partnerships Give Nursing Students New Perspectives

To offer nursing students experience working with underserved populations, the School of Nursing has partnered with University Medical Center New Orleans’ ambulatory care clinics.

“Our practice partner serves underprivileged populations throughout the New Orleans region,” says Dr. Divens. “Students funded by the ANEW grant spend half or more of their time at these clinics, learning tactics and techniques for caring for medically underserved patients. In some cases, when working with uninsured or even homeless patients, you don’t know if you’ll ever see them again, so you have to learn how to cover as many issues as possible in a single visit and try to ensure they leave in a positive state of health.”

These experiences open student eyes to new patient perspectives, the magnitude of the effects their care can have on these patients and the complexities of their health care needs.

The School of Nursing has also partnered with the School of Allied Health Professions’ Occupational Therapy Neurology/Stroke Clinic and Department of Communication Disorders to give prospective nurse practitioners practical experience with medically complex patients.

“In the Neurology/Stroke Clinic, they learn the value of collaborative practice as they work with physical therapy and occupational health students and other providers to help patients facing significant disability,” explains Dr. Divens. “They begin to understand the role of each member of the care team and learn more about what happens after patients they may have seen in the hospital progress to rehabilitative and follow-up care.”

Partnering with the Department of Communication Disorders helps nursing students understand what services are available for their patients with conditions that affect hearing, communication, language and speech; and how they can better communicate with and promote a better quality of life for these patients. Participation in this clinic further supports interprofessional education and collaboration, essential elements of a nurse practitioner’s practice and effectiveness in caring for vulnerable populations.

Grant recipients, 24 of whom are studying to become primary care family nurse practitioners and one who is specializing in adult gerontology primary care, spend time training in all of these areas. Each recipient expressed a desire to work in a medically underserved area or with underserved patients during their interview process.

“This program increases our students’ abilities to care for the diverse populations they will encounter after graduation,” says Dr. Divens. “Each experience opens their eyes to what people in their communities really face and gives them the confidence and insight to do what they can to improve those patients’ lives.”

Latanja Divens, DNP, APRN, FNP-BC
Instructor of Nursing and principal investigator for the ANEW grant

“...these are eye-opening experiences that prepare nursing students for what they will face upon graduation and give them opportunities to develop skills for communicating with and meeting the care needs of these patients.”

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Latanja Divens, DNP, APRN, FNP-BC
Instructor of Nursing and principal investigator for the ANEW grant
Small Gestures Can Make a Big Impact
Why One LSU School of Nursing Alum Gives Back

It’s difficult to imagine that $300 could change the course of someone’s life — allowing that person to begin a career that would change the lives of countless other people. But that’s just what happened to August J. Rantz III.

Upon returning home from serving in the Vietnam War, Rantz enrolled in the LSU Health New Orleans School of Nursing with dreams of becoming a nurse anesthetist. But he soon found it difficult to support his wife and children while attending nursing school full-time. He knew what he had to do. So, he headed to the office of former Dean Helen Dunn to tell her he was dropping out.

Recognizing both Rantz’s potential and his dedication to his family, Dean Dunn said she’d try to find a way to help. She gave him a $300 check, which helped relieve some of the short-term financial pressure he felt. Little did she know that it would help Rantz find a multimillion-dollar company.

Rantz graduated from the LSU School of Nursing, and he eventually went on to earn a specialty degree and become Director of Anesthesia at an eye surgery center in Phoenix. He partnered with an anesthesiologist there to build outpatient surgical centers and a pain management company before moving on to co-found AMG Integrated Healthcare Management.

By the time he stepped down as chairman of AMG in 2016, Rantz had grown the company to include 14 long-term, acute-care hospitals and two acute rehabilitation hospitals that employ thousands of people who care for critically ill patients across the country.

August J. Rantz III recently donated $25,000 in support of the James and Helen Dunn Endowed Professorship at the School of Nursing, to help support more students as they pursue their dreams and make an impact in their world, just as Dean Dunn did for him.

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Rantz’s story is one of a life and career shaped by personal dedication, perseverance and the strength and support of the School of Nursing family. “Dean Dunn told me that things always have a way of working out and not to give up on my dreams,” remembers Rantz. “She believed in me and really helped change my life. I want to offer someone else that same opportunity.”

From Struggling Scholar to Successful Entrepreneur
Rantz hopes he can help inspire others to pursue their dreams and make an impact in their world, just as Dean Dunn did for him.

Giving Back to the LSU Community
Rantz hopes he can help inspire others to pursue their dreams and make an impact in their world, just as Dean Dunn did for him.

Congratulations, Alumni!
Sandra Brown (MN ’85; PhD ’94) has been inducted as a Fellow in the American Academy of Nursing.

Danny G. Willis (MN ’94; DNS ’04) has been named Associate Dean for Academic Affairs at the University of Wisconsin–Madison School of Nursing. Previously, he was the department chair at Boston College’s Connell School of Nursing.

Lander Escocaratt (BSN ’11; DNP ’18) won third place for a poster presentation, “Implementation of Clinical Guidelines for Depression Screening in Adult Patients with Type II Diabetes in a Rural Outpatient Family Practice Clinic: A Quality Improvement Project.” The poster was presented at the 9th Annual Evidence-Based Practice/Research Conference this fall.

Julie Stanford (DNS ’02) has been inducted as a Fellow in the American Academy of Nursing. Dr. Stanford is director of the School of Nursing at James Madison University.

Decked Out in Derby Dress
Alumni walked, danced and discoed their way around the beautiful Peristyle in City Park this spring for the third annual Mudbug March to Stomp Out Pulmonary Hypertension (PH). The event helped boost awareness of this incurable disease, educated people about good self-care and helped raise almost $12,000 to improve patient care, expand medical research and increase education about PH.

Stomping Out Pulmonary Hypertension
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Stay Connected
Stay in touch with your classmates. Learn all about upcoming events and activities. Uphold our school’s traditions like the white coat ceremony, pinning ceremony and graduation, and support nursing excellence.

Activate your Alumni Association membership today. And if you have already activated your membership, go online to learn about upcoming events and other news.

Activate your membership now: give.lsuhealthfoundation.org/sonalumni
Simulations Spell Success for Students

Michelle Wydra never imagined she’d be able to do the kind of research she’s currently pursuing as an undergraduate nursing student. Her study examines whether experiencing interventions in restricted mobility suits — which simulate changes that come with aging — will improve sophomore nursing students’ attitudes toward and care of older adult and geriatric patients. Wydra’s access to the technology and staff at the Simulation Center of the Nursing Skills and Technology Center at LSU Health New Orleans School of Nursing made her project possible.

“I had the idea, but I didn’t know what, if any, materials the nursing school had to help me do this,” explains Wydra, a BSN candidate set to graduate in May. “I met with Dr. [Alison] Davis, who opened up the Simulation Center to me for my research and guided me to three simulation suits the Center had acquired, but had not had an opportunity to use until now. This is thousands of dollars of equipment I could not have procured otherwise.

Dr. Davis, along with my mentor Dr. [Jean] Celano and Health Assessment course director Dr. [Marie] Adorno, helped me focus my research question and tighten up my research design. This helped me immensely both in designing the study and getting through the Institutional Review Board process.”

Student experiences like Wydra’s show why the Simulation Center is such a critical contributor to the School of Nursing’s mission. Its high-tech simulation equipment and dedicated staff help prepare nurses to function as generalists, advanced practitioners, educators, scholars and researchers who shape the delivery of nursing practice and education.

The Center offers training for both undergraduate and graduate students that complements courses associated with the simulation experience. Simulation is a safe learning environment that mimics reality to prepare students at all levels to care for patients of any age with various health conditions.

A Safe Place to Build Practical Skills and Confidence

The Society evaluated the Center against seven core standards: mission and governance, program management, resource management, human resources, program improvement, integrity and expanding the field. The Simulation Center was commended in all areas as well as for four teaching and education standards: learning activities, educational activity design, qualified educators and evaluation and improvement.

“For the School of Nursing, accreditation through the Society for Simulation in Healthcare recognizes that our Center is utilizing the best practices of simulation,” says Alison Davis, PhD, RN, CHSE, Director of the Nursing Skills and Technology Center. “Accreditation opens more doors for grant funding opportunities, allows for expansion of programs for undergraduate and graduate nursing students and allows the Center to support additional research opportunities and additional simulation technologies. We’ve been recognized for both high-quality simulation activities and educators.”

“The Center offers training for both undergraduate and graduate students that complements courses associated with the simulation experience. Simulation is a safe learning environment that mimics reality to prepare students at all levels to care for patients of any age with various health conditions.

Dr. Davis and other staff have heard from students that participating in simulations helps them feel more comfortable and prepared for clinical experiences. They note that they can relate simulation experiences to similar situations in the hospital setting and benefit from opportunities to practice critical skills in a safe space before applying them to difficult or stressful situations in the real world.

“High-fidelity simulation helps increase students’ confidence with nursing skills, such as medication administration, and their ability to provide safe, effective nursing care,” says Dr. Davis.

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Alison Davis, PhD, RN, CHSE
Director of the Nursing Skills and Technology Center
DAISY Day Stand-Outs

Taking extra time to explain a procedure to a frightened patient. Holding the hand of a frail senior at the bedside. Calming a parent whose child is ill. These are all the little things that nurses do on a daily basis, and which mean so much to the people they serve.

“One of the most important parts about being a nurse is demonstrating compassion,” explains Helen Neil, RN, MSN, HCSM, CLNC, Instructor of Nursing. “Yet compassion is something that is rarely rewarded.”

To recognize faculty and nursing students who go above and beyond in demonstrating compassionate care, LSU Health New Orleans School of Nursing celebrates DAISY Day in the spring and fall. The Spring 2017 event, which was attended by more than 150 people, recognized six outstanding students with DAISY in Training Awards and six faculty members with the DAISY Faculty Award.

“We had 16 student nominees this year, which came from patients, preceptors and faculty. We had a hard time choosing the six award recipients, but were happy to celebrate all of our students,” says Dr. Neil.

The spring 2017 DAISY in Training Award recipients were: Noah Cohen, Kelsey Molina, Emily Morris, Brittany Richard, Britanni Sanchez and Josh Sticker.

The DAISY in Training Award is designed to remind students, even on the hardest days in nursing school, why they have chosen nursing as a profession. “By recognizing nursing students for the above and beyond care and compassion shown to patients and their families, we celebrate what it truly means to be a nurse and honor the important nurse-patient connection that makes a difference,” says Dr. Neil.

In addition to the student awardees, the six faculty who received the DAISY Faculty Award for their commitment and inspirational influence on School of Nursing students were: Katherine Carter, DNP, PHCNS-BC, Instructor of Nursing; Robert Cork, Associate Professor of Cell Biology and Anatomy; Latanja Divers, DNP, APRN, FNP-BC, Instructor of Nursing; Shelly Dolan, MSN, RN, Instructor of Nursing; Jenna Martin, DNP, CRNA, Instructor of Nursing; and Dr. Neil.

Representing at the LASN Annual Convention

It’s called “Convention” and it happens to be a yearly highlight for LSU Health New Orleans School of Nursing students who are members of the Student Nurse Association (SNA). This year’s Louisiana Association of Student Nurses (LASN) Annual Convention in Baton Rouge gave attendees an opportunity to lend their insight to association resolutions that will guide the organization in the coming year, learn about new patient care techniques and post-graduation opportunities, and have a little fun.

“Being an active member in the SNA helps our students develop important professional skills and to be ready to lead in the profession,” says Marirose Bernard, MN, APRN, NE-BC, Instructor of Nursing and SNA faculty advisor. “Attending Convention helps students network with other students and faculty from across the country to share experiences, seek advice and get energized about the wonderful profession of nursing.”

The three-day convention was attended by students from 20 other SNA chapters and included decision-making about policy that affects nursing students throughout Louisiana, local and national speakers sharing expertise about nursing practice, and opportunities to learn about employment opportunities, nurse residency programs and graduate programs of study.

“Attendees always come home with fresh ideas for our chapter, as well,” says Bernard.

LSU Health New Orleans School of Nursing SNA members who attended the convention included: Morgan Buras, Elizabeth Carter, Maria Colina, Kelly Derise, Banaz Hejazi, Nicole Koppi, Lena Nguyen and Jaymalisa Whatley. SNA Executive Board officers also attended: Andrew Giardina, Daniel Lacy, Lauryn Richard and Christina Russell.

Award-Winning Student Nurses

Congratulations to the following students who were recognized at the Louisiana Association of Student Nurses (LASN) Annual Convention in Baton Rouge:

• Nicole Koppi - Student Nurse of the State
• Katelyn (KK) Freyou – Recognized as an LASN Honorary Member, the most prestigious award given by the association
• Our SNA Chapter - Best Newsletter Article award, authored by Nicole Koppi, and Best Community Outreach award for our Delivering Hope NOLA service project

The following students were elected to serve on the LASN Executive Board for the 2017-2018 term:

• Daniel Lacy, CARE XVI, re-elected as IT director
• Lauryn Richard, CARE XVI, elected as vice president; previously served as Breakthrough to Nursing director
• Banaz Hejazi, CARE XVI, elected as Region IV director
Since Nurse Recruiter & Marketing Developer Jillian Gibbs joined the LSU Health New Orleans School of Nursing staff in 2016, she has been in a constant state of momentum that has helped her reach tens of thousands of prospective nursing students. Her travels have taken her throughout Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas, where her passion for education and nursing comes through as she speaks to people at more than 100 career fairs and other events, sharing the innumerable opportunities LSU Health New Orleans School of Nursing has to offer.

Reaching out to everyone from middle schoolers to health professionals looking to further their career, Gibbs explains the different career paths nursing offers. “Planting the seed early helps them consider a career path they might not have thought about otherwise,” she says.

Prioritizing Recruitment for Minorities and Underserved Populations

Recruiting and retaining a diverse and inclusive student body is one of the School of Nursing’s major strategic goals. This has led to a number of initiatives designed to increase the enrollment of minority students and students from underserved rural areas.

“It’s heartbreaking the number of individuals who are not considering a career in nursing because of financial, social or environmental obstacles,” says Gibbs. “I am proud to educate about the nursing profession, mentor people as they develop a plan, and encourage them to never give up on their dream of becoming a nurse.”

In addition to visiting health and career fairs, Gibbs has also set up tours for families and student groups, and put together a Minorities in Nursing event for high school students.

Prioritizing Recruitment for Minorities and Underserved Populations

Collaborating with the LSU Health New Orleans School of Medicine, the School of Nursing also offered a three-day immersive experience for those seriously considering a career in nursing. The experience, called Future Nurse Institute Camp, consisted of several lectures, question and answer sessions with different types of nurses, time in the Simulation Center, and more.

The impact Gibbs has had is already starting to be seen. Leila Rad, a student currently enrolled in the accelerated Career Alternative RN Education (CARE) program, says that Gibbs’ personal touch really made her decision easy. “I had been thinking about going into nursing for a while,” explains Leila, “but the career fair was really the first time I seriously considered it. Ms. Gibbs was so open and friendly. She answered all my questions and gave me her number. I called the next week and she walked me through the accelerated program and application process. She made it all so easy.”

Gibbs plans on returning to the schools and career fairs she has already visited, and she continues to add new events. She’s also had plenty of help from current nursing students, who are always willing to lend their support.

“Reaching out regularly and having actual nurses share their experiences with the next generation is essential to the future of nursing,” says Gibbs. “It will help provide a long-term solution to the nursing shortages we face in our community.”

In addition to visiting health and career fairs, Gibbs has also set up tours for families and student groups, and put together a Minorities in Nursing event for high school students.
From devoting more than 600 hours of community service in the greater New Orleans area, to providing time and talent in leading campus organizations in collaborative initiatives, the students in the LSU Health New Orleans School of Nursing have proven to be a major influence in the Interprofessional Student Alliance (IPSA). IPSA supports the many exceptional LSU Health Sciences Center student-run community outreach projects that address health disparities in underserved communities in the greater New Orleans area.

"Nursing students make up over a quarter of all currently active students in interprofessional organizations on campus," explains senior Michelle Wydra. "For our students, participating in IPSA means taking their personal time to volunteer, so that shows a true commitment to interprofessional collaboration."

This past year, IPSA volunteers have been instrumental in a number of student-run projects that have supported adults, children and families throughout Louisiana. Some of the initiatives students have helped with include educating public school children about reproductive health, staffing health care clinics at local shelters, teaching cooking and nutrition education in partnership with Second Harvest Food Bank and partnering with the Louisiana Children’s Museum to host a special museum event for children with disabilities and their families.

In acknowledgment of their dedication, a total of 63 School of Nursing students earned the IPSA Award of Interprofessional Distinction this past spring and fall. Two additional School of Nursing students were awarded the inaugural IPSA Leadership Award: Nicole Koppi and Vanessa Shields.

"I beam with pride that 29 School of Nursing students were eligible for the IPSA award this past spring and I look forward to this becoming a trend in semesters to come," says Koppi, who started participating in IPSA during her freshman year and who now is the IPSA Head of Program Evaluation.

"I absolutely love the opportunity to be involved in community service that allows for direct patient care, and be of service to those in need in the New Orleans area."

"I beam with pride that 29 School of Nursing students were eligible for the IPSA award this past spring and I look forward to this becoming a trend in semesters to come."

Nicole Koppi
IPSA Head of Program Evaluation

IPSA Award of Interprofessional Distinction Winners:

- Courtney Alonzo
- Lauren Arigo
- Lauren Atkins
- Stacie Barbeaux
- Claire Battle
- Ashley Becnel
- Danaye Brignac
- Mary Code
- Martha Cassich
- Heather Duke
- Brie Dyess
- Elizabeth Edwards
- Mikael Estis
- Brittney Fontenot
- Katalyn Frayoux
- Margaret Gambel
- Stephanie Grace
- Thomas Gray
- Alexandra Harvey
- Jacob Holt
- Lauren Hudak
- Kayla Jacomine
- Taylor Jones
- Beesan Joudeh
- Sophie Junak
- Taylor LaFargue
- Paige Latimer
- Kelly Magill
- Jason Maradiaga
- Krystallynn Merrells
- Jillian Michel
- Cara Morgani
- Kristem Morvant
- Michael Muller
- Marc Musso
- Michele Mutter
- Grace Nabasabala
- Nikki Nguyen
- Chinyere Okogoe
- Raven Omoumu
- Shiviani Patel
- Brooke Pemberton
- Caroline Prather
- Jessica Prest
- Mary Rhorer
- Brittany Riley
- Megan Riviere
- Marissa Rizzotto
- Alyssa Rose
- Elena Santora
- Brandy Schwart
- Vanessa Shields
- Courtney Smith
- Lindsay Smith
- Shannon Smith
- Jennifer Staples
- Lily Tran
- Jordan Tucker
- Julie Vugener
- Brooke White
- Kailah Wicker
- Jennifer Weager
- Caitlin Zaffuto

Michelle Wydra, undergraduate nursing student, was on hand at the School of Nursing Family and Friends Day to talk about the difference IPSA makes to the community.
GRADUATION AWARDS

MAY 2017

Graduation Awards

Valedictorian
Samantha Oubre

Salutatorian
Lauren Arrigo

Highest Academic Honors
CARE Program
Corey Smith

Academic Recognition CARE Program
Mikael Estis

The Theresa Bittenbring Marque
and John Henry Marque Award –
Traditional BSN Graduates

• Lauren Arrigo
• Lauren Atkins
• Amy Guillot (Fall 2016)
• Samantha Oubre
• Jill Toepfer (Fall 2016)

The Theresa Bittenbring Marque
and John Henry Marque Award –
CARE BSN Graduates

• Jordan Braswell
• Mikael Estis
• Madison Malaschak
• Corey Smith
• Evelyne Zatta

Sigma Theta Tau Honor Society Award –
Undergraduate
Samantha Oubre

Sigma Theta Tau Honor Society Award –
Graduate
Paul Mallet

NODNA Leadership Award
Katelyn Freyvou

Student Nurses Association
Graduate Award
• Katelyn Freyvou
• Kiera Smith

Student Government
Association Award
McKay Jordan

Alumni Association Recognition of
Class Spirit Award – Undergraduate
Thomas Gray

Alumni Association Recognition of
Class Spirit Award – Graduate
Jada Metoyer-Foley

Faculty Recognition Award –
Undergraduate, sponsored by Elsevier
McKay Jordan

Faculty Recognition Award – Graduate, sponsored by Elsevier
Aimee Maestri

Writing Excellence Award sponsored
by F.A. Davis, Publisher
Luke Piro

Dolores Scheerle Entrepreneurial
Award – Undergraduate
William Sinclair

Dolores Scheerle Entrepreneurial
Award – Graduate
Robert Wharton

Jo Ellen Smith Memorial Award
Sophie Junak

Patricia Losee Memorial Award
Benjamin Dalferes

Outstanding Nursing Caring
Award – Undergraduate
Stephen Lewis

Outstanding Nursing Caring
Award – Graduate
Gladys Machuka

Reverend Dr. James A. Ertl
Clinical Excellence Award
Amanda Hill

Outstanding Doctor of Nursing Practice Award
Jessica Teachworth

Outstanding Family Nurse Practitioner Award
Shannon Manzella

Louisiana Association of Nurse Anesthetists
Outstanding Graduate Award
Adam Graham

Nurse Anesthesia Outstanding Graduate Award
Matthew Bovia

Nurse Anesthesia Program
Clinical Excellence Award
Algin Adap

Nurse Anesthesia Program
Director’s Award
Julie Duke

Chancellor’s Award
Vanessa Shields
SPRING 2017
Dean’s List

Jordan Adams
Maria Amaya
Ryan Anderson
Haleigh Armstrong
Kyle Arocha
Lauren Arrojo
Kandace Atkins
Lauren Atkins
Brian Baase
Alyssa Rabin
Cayla Baker
Stephanie Baker
Flem Ballet, Jr.
Ann Bates
Claire Battle
Reagan Binning
Jessica Blackletter
Carlin Blaise
Alexis Blanch
Calle Bond
Brielle Bordes
Amanda Bourgeois
Sarah Bourgeois
Dyana Boyd
Kaela Brand
Jordan Braswell
Lindsey Breaux
Marjorie Breda
Lorenzo Bridgewater Jr.
Danaye Brignac
Alyssa Brubaker
Lauren Brumfield
Cory Bruner
Brooklyn Buras
Ryan Burdick
Taylor Burdick
Candace Burgard
Dennis Burke II
Morgan Bush

Julie Butts
Lisa Campbell
Lauren Capone
Michael Carpin III
Lisa Casper
Mary Claybrook
Amber Clement
Noah Cohen
Jordan Coleman
Amber Constant
Martha Cossich
Benjamin Dafferes
Kayla D’Angelo
James Davis III
Rachel de Jonge
Brittany Delanoueille
Lauren Dickson
Sam Dieu
Brittany Dyess
Natalie Edwards
Kathryn Ehle
Margaret Ellender
Logan Encar
Danielle Engolia
Mikael Estis
Carmel Fargason
Joshua Favaloro
Kelsey Federoff
Ashley Finster
Taylor Fisette
Anna Foltz
Margarita Fontana
Brittany Fontenot
Ellie Fourcroy
Nyeha Franklin
Blake Freeman
Madeline Gabo
Maura Goldfeder
Katherine Gonzales
Stephanie Grace
Thomas Gray Jr.

Ciara Green
Ashley Gregoire
Braiden Grych
Blaire Guidry
Taylor Guilory
Shelby Guinot
Emily Gundlach
Shelbie Swinn
Jill Handel
Maria Hanley
Jessica Hanzo
Taylor Hauser
Megan Hebert
Sara Heidingsfelder
Laura Holland
Jacob Holt
Lauren Howley
Lauren Hudak
Emily Ingrassia
Antoinette Irwin
Kayla Jacomine
Emily Jaunet
Carly Johnson
Kirsten Johnson
Raven Johnson
Monica Jones
Taylor Jones
McKay Jordan
Sophie Junak
Brooke Juneau
Carley Katzenstein
Amanda Keller
Meghan Kelly
Moriah Kissing
Christina Kline
Kelsey Kuithe
Katherine Labonte
Sarah LaChe
Morgan Landry
Anna Lanier
Paige Latimer
Austin Laurent

Taylor LeCompte
Christina Leggio
Robin Lem
Jenni Levine
Clare Levy
Laney Lewis
Mercedes Lewis
Stephen Lewis
Abbie Lutenbacher
Jessica Macaluso
Madison Malaschak
Madison Mallory
Mary Manning
Jason Maradyla
Georgina Martin
Christine McCool
Katelyn McDonald
Colleen McDuff
Kristolyn Menells
Olivia Metz
Megan Meyer
Jillian Michel
Raven Miller
Carly Milner
Jeston Mitchell
Kira Moreau
Rachel Morgan
Emily Morris
Brandi Movant
Michael Muller
Alexandra Musso
Michele Mutter
Grace Nabasabala
Katherine Nelson
Mary Nelson
Colt Neyrey
Linda Nguyen
Tien Nguyen
Taylor Odum
Jordan Olsien

Chiyere Okogbue
Jordyn Olson
Anthony O’Neal
Kacie Oro
Samantha Oubre
Lauren Owens
Shvaun Patel
Sarah Patterson
Brooke Pemberton
Branden Petkovich
Cristyina Pham
Sarah Pick
David Pickus
Jade Pizzo
Sarah Player
Hannah Pohorelsky
Marciano Raziano
Amelia Reeves
Mary Rhorer
Christina Ricks
Brittany Riley
Marissa Rizzotto
Bailey Miller
Cyndi Rodriguez
Rhet Rogers
Yvonne Rongey
Alyssa Rose
Amanda Salles
Natalie Schlossmann
Alexandra Schoennagel
Claire Schoennagel
Kathryn Schoennagel
Taylor Schwab
Madison Seay
Emily Serpas
Vanessa Shields
William Sinclair

Cory Smith
Courtney Smith
Kiara Smith
Lindsay Smith
Maile Smith
Tance Sonnier
Ashley Sorrells
Whitney Sprague
Jennifer Staples
Scott Stevens
Patrick Stewart
Joshua Sticker
Shae Stire
Victoria Stokes
Christian Stone
Courtney Stoufflet
Joey Swinson
Nicole Tassin
Kate Teague
Amy Thomas
Alexandra Timphony
Jessica Tran
Jody Trapani
Ashley Trocclair
Huang Truong
Jordan Tucker
Natasha Valente
Julie Viguere
Sara Weber
Bonnie West
Kailah Wicker
Katelyn Williams
Emily Winters
Michelle Wydra
Jennifer Yeager
Ann Yu
Caitlin Zaffuto
Evelynne Zatta
Yue Zhang

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