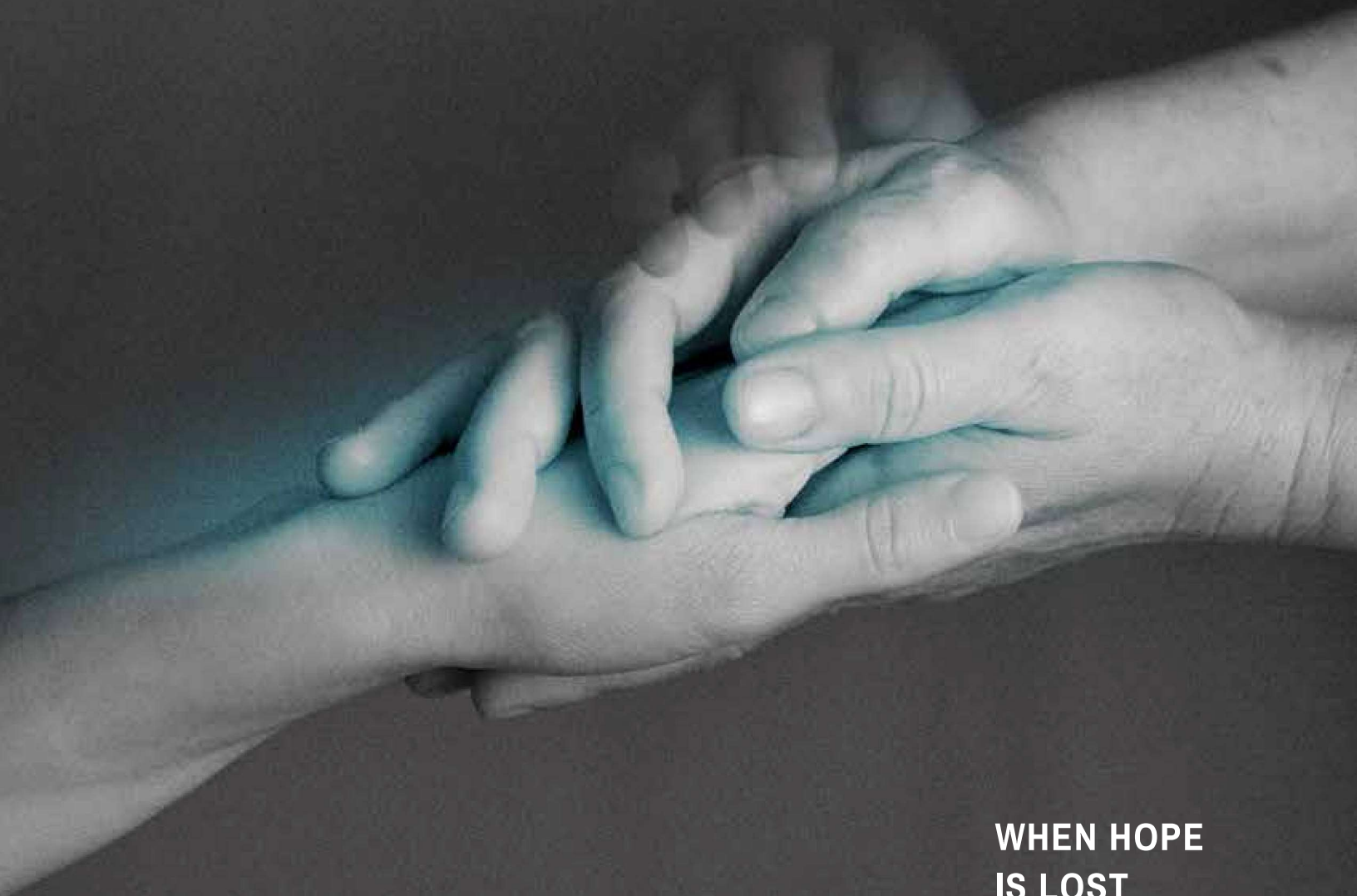


cura personalis

SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY Trudy Busch Valentine School of Nursing

Fall 2022



**WHEN HOPE
IS LOST**

FROM THE DEAN

As we continue to navigate the COVID pandemic and hopefully begin to emerge from it, faculty, staff, students, alumni and donors have shown their steadfast commitment to excellence, as well as their resilience and tenacity, that the Trudy Busch Valentine School of Nursing is known for.

I have long held the belief that nursing needs to be grounded in its own disciplinary goals and science, while collaborating with others. To that end, I am pleased to share this issue of *Cura Personalis*. The stories in this issue reflect the innovative, dynamic, creative and compassionate ways the Valentine School community fosters our rigorous scholarly environment while conducting a robust research program and supportive environment for our students.

Our cover story features the standard-setting research of Irene Riddle Endowed Chair and Professor Verma Hendricks-Ferguson, who studies approaches to care of families coping with end-of-life care for their children battling life-threatening cancer. You also will find the second in a series of stories about Hemak Professor Denise Côté-Arsenault, a Fulbright scholar, who spent last summer, as well as the summer of 2021, in Scotland conducting her vital research in the care for couples who have lost their babies.

Another story shares the innovative approach Associate Professor Devita Stallings is using to help underserved patients, particularly those of color. Her research centers on the creation of a cell phone application that could bring medical care to underserved patients, particularly those of color, so that they can have access to health professionals at the touch of a button.

Dr. Stallings' research points to an inescapable truth: Our educational endeavors must focus on diversifying the nursing workforce to mirror the population we serve. This issue features the initiatives Dean Emerita and Professor Teri Murray, the Valentine School's chief diversity and inclusion officer, and her team have created as a part of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Scholars Program established for minoritized students at the Valentine School.

I am delighted we are featuring Alumna Patricia Hemak and her husband, James, in a story about their generous contribution that has funded the establishment of a maternal-neonatal simulation lab. The lab opened last spring and will be dedicated as the Patricia A. and James Hemak Maternal & Neonatal Suite during Homecoming weekend. It provides a safe space for students to engage in real-world experiences in controlled settings. I hope you can join us for the official celebration.

We also introduce new staff and faculty who have joined the School of Nursing and learn of those who have made notable strides and achievements in these pages. As I read each story, I am struck by how each individual brings Cura Personalis to our collective Jesuit education. As this issue reflects, the Valentine School is a very special community, indeed—one I am proud to be a member of. I hope you enjoy reading about it.

Sincerely,



Danny G. Willis, D.M.S., RN, PMHNS-BC, CNE, FAAN
Joan Hrubitz, Endowed Dean and Professor
Trudy Busch, Valentine School of Nursing

Cura Personalis is published annually by the Saint Louis University Trudy Busch Valentine School of Nursing and is mailed to alumni and friends.

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SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY Valentine School of Nursing

Fall 2022

Valentine School
Welcomes New Faculty and Staff

WHEN HOPE IS LOST
Irene Riddle Endowed Chair
Verma L. Hendricks-Ferguson,
Ph.D., RN, FPCN, FAAN, conducts
innovative research addressing the
needs and issues of families facing the
loss of a child to cancer. (PAGE 10)

Scholar Navigator Program
fosters inclusion

Heart health at the tap of an App
Devita Stallings, Ph.D., RN

Fulbright Findings: Stressed Midwives, Rainbow Babies
and the value of perinatal palliative care
Denise Côté-Arsenault, Ph.D., RN, CPLC, FNAP, FAAN



21

In May at commencement, graduates gather to celebrate their accomplishments as they become the Valentine School's latest alumnae.

News and Notes 2
Alumni News 20

Valentine School Holds No. 2 Spot in Missouri

Saint Louis University's Trudy Busch Valentine School of Nursing ranked No. 2 by Zippia as one of the best programs for nursing majors in the state of Missouri.

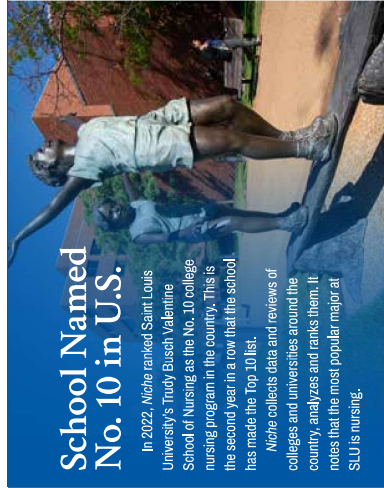
Zippia ranked the programs based on data from the institutions to determine which ones offer the best career opportunities for nursing majors. Schools were last ranked in 2019. Specifically, the website's rankings were based on:

- Career Results, including mean earnings six and 10 years after graduation;
- Nursing Emphasis;
- School Performance, including the admissions rate, graduation rate, average cost of attendance and median amount of debt.

Benz Named Educator of the Year by March of Dimes

Assistant Professor **Margaret Benz**, MSN(R), APRN, ANP-BC, FAANP, was awarded Educator of the Year at the March of Dimes Missouri Heroes in Action Awards Ceremony in November of 2021.

The first nurse in the state to be appointed to the Missouri HealthNet Oversight Committee, Benz has received many honors, including receiving a commendation award for volunteerism from former President Obama for her service to the community. She is a recipient of *St. Louis Magazine's* Excellence in Nursing Award in 2013, the 2014 AANP State Excellence Award and the 2014 March of Dimes Nurse Educator of the Year Award.



School Named No. 10 in U.S.

In 2022, *Niche* ranked Saint Louis University's Trudy Busch Valentine School of Nursing as the No. 10 college nursing program in the country. This is the second year in a row that the school has made the Top 10 list.

Niche collects data and reviews of colleges and universities around the country, analyzes and ranks them. It notes that the most popular major at SLU is nursing.

Three Faculty Honored by Midwest Nursing Research Society

Three Trudy Busch Valentine School of Nursing researchers were honored for their work at the annual Midwest Nursing Research Society's (MNRS) 46th Annual Conference that was held March 31–April 2 in Schaumburg, Illinois.

Denise Côté-Arsenault, Ph.D., RN, CPCLC, FNAAP, FAAN, the Patricia and James R. Hemak Endowed Professor in Maternal Child Nursing and a Fulbright Scholar, was named the 2022 recipient of the Midwest Nursing Research Society (MNRS) Palliative and End-of-Life Research Distinguished Career Award.

Côté-Arsenault, whose Fulbright experience is featured on pages 16 and 17, was honored in the spring for her outstanding career and achievements. As a Fulbright Scholar, she traveled to Scotland and the United Kingdom in the summer of 2021 to study the culture, customs and care for bereaved parents who have suffered the perinatal loss of a child.

All three awards are particularly fitting, given that the theme of this year's conference was titled: *Innovative Solutions Re-Imagining Nursing Research and Scholarship*.

Faculty publications

Professor **Joanne C. Langan**, Ph.D., RN, CNE, who specializes in disaster preparedness, as well as other aspects of nursing, has a new book out this year. Its title is *Preparing Nurses for Disaster Management: A Global Perspective*.



Drawing on her international recognition and expertise, Langan's book provides detailed explanations of preparation, as well as responses, to emerging disasters to help not only nurses, but communities better address imminent and potentially horrendous situations.

Associate Dean and Associate Professor **Kristine L'Ecuyer**, Ph.D., RN, CNL, and Assistant Professor **Elaine Young**, D.N.P., ACNS-BC, CV-BC, have published a new book, titled *Cardiac Nurse Certification Review: The book provides a comprehensive review for cardiac nurses to prepare for the CVRN Certification exam*.

Following the exam's format and structure, the book delivers a current and comprehensive review guide.



Murray named Reinert Fellow

Professor and Dean Emerita **Teri A. Murray**, Ph.D., PHNA-BC, RN, FAAN, was selected as a Reinert Center Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Teaching Fellow 2020-2021.

Murray, who has more than a quarter century of experience in a variety of roles, became the Trudy Busch Valentine School of Nursing's Chief Officer of Diversity and Inclusion after stepping down as dean of the School at the end of 2019. Murray and her colleagues have been awarded more than \$5.4 million in a series of Nursing Workforce Diversity Grants from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resource and Service Administration to be used over a 15-year period beginning in 2010.

Her research has focused on the social determinants of health, population health, and the interplay between social environment and health outcomes to achieve individual and community-level health equity.

(Murray, her program, her colleagues and students are featured on pages 6-9.)

Nursing Faculty Named as National Accreditation Reviewers

Associate Professor **Margaret Bultas**, Ph.D., RN, CNE, CNL, CPNP-PC, has been selected to serve as a reviewer for the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). An independent corporation founded in 1895, the HLC is one of six regional institutional accreditors in the United States.

Associate Professor **Kristine L'Ecuyer**, Ph.D., RN, CNL, has been selected to serve as a reviewer for the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE). The CCNE, founded in 1988, is an autonomous accrediting agency of baccalaureate, graduate and residency/fellowship programs in nursing.

St. Louis Magazine honors SLU nurses among its 2022 Excellence Award Finalists

Vice president of Delta Lambda Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International, **Devita Stallings**, Ph.D., RN, and **Verna L. Hendricks-Ferguson**, Ph.D., RN, FCCN, FAAN, of the Trudy Busch Valentine School of Nursing faculty were recognized as two of the region's top nurses in April during the *St. Louis Magazine's* 13th Annual Excellence in Nursing Virtual Awards Ceremony.

Stallings, associate professor and coordinator of the Valentine School's RN to BSN program, was honored with the 2022 Emerging Leader Award. Her research involves self-management of cardiovascular diseases in African Americans.

Stallings is a past *St. Louis Magazine* Excellence in Nursing Award honoree in the Educator category. She is a recognized leader in cardiovascular diseases and serves on several of the American Heart Association's committees, including board member for the St. Louis area and invited member of the Emergency Cardiovascular Care's Science sub-committee.

Her research has focused on the social determinants of health, population health, and the interplay between social environment and health outcomes to achieve individual and community-level health equity. (Murray, her program, her colleagues and students are featured on pages 6-9.)

In addition, several Valentine School faculty were recognized as finalists, including:

Vicki Moran, Ph.D., MSNMPH, RN, CNE, TNC, APHN-BC, assistant professor of nursing at SLU and trauma research coordinator for SSM Health SLU Hospital, was nominated in the Research category. Moran has taught at the University since 2009 and has been affiliated with the hospital for 40 years. Her certifications include Certified Nurse Educator, Certified Diabetes Educator, Advanced Public Health Nursing and Trauma Nurse Specialist. Moran received the March of Dimes 2019 Nurse Educator of the Year Award.

Kathleen Armstrong, Ph.D., RN, assistant professor of nursing at SLU, was nominated in the Educator category. Armstrong has worked at the University for over 33 years and has taught for SLU's School of Nursing for 15 years. Armstrong is active in the community. She is a recipient of the inaugural Deborah S. Manne Oncology Nursing Research Society, Oncology Nursing Society and Delta Lambda Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International.

Amanda Fitzpatrick, RN, adjunct faculty of Nursing at SLU, was nominated in the Medical-Surgical Nursing category. Fitzpatrick also serves as nursing manager in charge of SLU Hospitals Acute Care for the Elderly Unit. Colleagues report that she is passionate about nursing, from educating and leading the next generation to her work as an RN at the bedside when needed.

VALENTINE SCHOOL welcomes new faculty and staff

At a time when nursing became a focus of the world as the coronavirus pandemic surged, the Tudy Busch Valentine School continued to thrive as a beacon of hope and renewal within Saint Louis University and the St. Louis region.

During that time, new faculty members and staff joined the Valentine School, most notably Jean Hrubetz-Dean and Professor Danny G. Willis, D.N.S., RN, PMHONS-BC, CNE, FAAN, who in July 2020 took the helm at the School of Nursing. When he did, he took up the charge of recruiting new faculty and staff to enhance and grow the Tudy Busch Valentine School.

"It is an exciting time for everyone at the Valentine School, as we have so many new dedicated and driven educators and staff members who are enhancing our teaching, our research and our daily activities here." Willis said. "Everyone has a hand in helping our school truly be a Jesuit institution, serving as women and men for and with others, and making our campus and surrounding community more compassionate and care focused."

SO WHO'S NEW?

Brianna Cole, MSN, RN

Instructor Brianna Cole joined SLU in the Fall of 2020 as a faculty member, teaching Nursing Care of the Older Adult. Prior to coming to SLU, she worked at Barnes-Jewish Hospital and Missouri Baptist Hospital, both in the St. Louis region.

In 2011, Cole earned her baccalaureate degree in nursing at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, and in 2019, she completed her master's degree in nursing at Webster University. Her interests are focused on teaching strategies, specifically methods for building community in the classroom, establishing an effective teaching style using the flipped classroom model, interactive learning and storytelling, as well as holistic nursing. She coaches students through nursing skills and techniques and covers principles learned from a didactic portion of nursing to assist them with applying that knowledge to a clinical setting.



COLE

A member of the American Nurses Association and the Illinois Nurses Association, she has been involved in community service at Paul's Helping Hands Homeless Drive, Angel Tree Christmas, an outreach program for prisoners and their families, and the St. Louis Urban League providing blood pressure and glucose screenings.

Alison Kuhn, D.N.P., APRN, FNP-BC, CEN

Assistant Professor Alison Kuhn became a faculty member at the Valentine School in the fall of 2021, after completing her doctorate the previous May. Kuhn has taught courses in the Family Nurse Practitioner Program and the Doctor of Nursing Practice Program. After completing her bachelor's degree in human development and family studies at Colorado State University, she earned her BSN at the University of Texas at Arlington.

Kuhn then finished her MSN, studying to be a family nurse practitioner, rural nursing, at the University of Central Missouri. She went on to complete a fellowship in Integrative Medicine at the Arizona Center for Integrative Medicine at the University of Arizona. She then earned a D.N.P. at Missouri State University. Kuhn's research interests include women's integrative health, integrative health and wellness, social aspects of health, telemedicine in rural health and wellness, mindfulness approaches, therapeutic relationships and environmental health influences. Kuhn belongs to the following professional organizations and associations: Saint Louis Nurses in Advanced Practice, the Academic Consortium for Integrative Medicine and Health and the National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties.

Carolyn Layloff, MSN, RN

Saint Louis University Alumna Carolyn Layloff (BSN '04, MSN '09) returned to SLU in the fall of 2020 as a faculty member of the Valentine School. Layloff serves as clinical resources coordinator. Cum Laude, earned a Critical Care Certificate and was a member of the SLU Pep Band as an undergraduate. When she was matriculating for her master's degree, she focused her studies on becoming a perinatal critical nurse specialist/educator.



LAYLOFF

Working in both critical care and labor and delivery, Layloff has shifted her attention to developing the preceptor program at SLU. In that role, she secures clinical sites and preceptors for students in the undergraduate and graduate programs.

She is a certified lactation counselor and belongs to Sigma Theta Tau International, Delta Lambda Chapter; the Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses; and the American Nurses Association.

Diana Llamas, MSN, RN, CNL

Alumna Diana Llamas (BSN '09, MSN '19) has been affiliated with SLU for both her education and her career.

Before she completed her BSN, Llamas earned her first bachelor's degree in biology in 2008 at SLU. She then went to



LLAMAS

work as an RN team leader at Casa de Salud from 2010 to 2011.

In 2012, Llamas moved to Spain, where she became the nursing simulation lab coordinator at SLU Madrid. The following year, she became a nursing instructor at SLU Madrid.

Llamas earned her master's degree in nursing in 2019; her Capstone Project was titled "Reducing Anxiety in Nursing Students Studying Abroad." In the fall of 2021, Llamas returned to the Valentine School's St. Louis campus to work as an instructor and simulation operations manager, teaching TBSN Foundations, Health Assessment, Health Promotion, Health Assessment Labs.

Llamas has begun working on her doctorate. Her research focuses on promoting the health and well-being of Hispanic women, addressing management of chronic conditions, such as diabetes and hypertension, as well as exploring behaviors for mammography screening adherence.

Joy Stark, RN, MSN, CPNP-PC

After working for roughly two years as an adjunct faculty member at the Valentine School, Alumna Joy Stark (BSN '00, MSN '10) became a full-time instructor in the fall of 2021.



STARK

Stark has taught ABSN Child Health Nursing, TBSN and ABSN Complex Care Practicum, TBSN Foundations and Health Assessment. In her teaching, she educates undergraduate students to develop clinical skills and bridge theory to patient care.

"It is an exciting time for everyone at the Valentine School as we have so many new dedicated and driven educators and staff members, who are enhancing our teaching, our research and our daily activities here."

DANNY G. WILLIS, JOAN HRUBETZ-DEAN AND PROFESSOR

the opportunity to work in the Ohio Valley, Pittsburgh and the Omaha/Lincoln districts.

After TWA, Albers went into educational support, working as a teacher's aide at an elementary school in Illinois.

Becky Farley

Becky Farley joined the Valentine School staff as a student services associate in the fall of 2021.



FARLEY

Prior to coming to Saint Louis University, Farley worked as a relationship banker at Bank of America, where she was selected to be part of the opening team of the new facility in Clayton. Before that she worked at Bank of America in Ohio.

Her education, business acumen and people skills have served as valuable assets for her new post here at the Valentine School.

In 2017, Farley earned her bachelor's degree in business administration with an emphasis in management from the University of Alaska Southeast.

Two years later, she went on to complete a master's degree in business administration from the University of Alaska Fairbanks.

Cottina Taylor

Alumna Cottina Taylor ('07) joined the Valentine School in the fall of 2021 as a retention specialist working with minoritized students in the Navigator Scholars and the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion programs, run by

Dean Emerita and Professor Teri A. Murray.

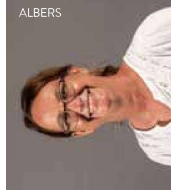
Taylor earned her bachelor's degree in organizational studies and minor in communications before going to work at SLU. Then in 2019, she began her master's degree in leadership and organizational development.

Since completing her bachelor's degree, Taylor has worked at SLU focusing on student success in a variety of posts. With nine years of experience in academic advising and student support services, all at SLU, Taylor brings so much to the post. She has worked as a student support services academic counselor, academic advisor and peer mentor program coordinator. She also fulfilled the responsibilities of director of the Billiken Bridge to Success Program (BBSB).



TAYLOR

BBSB provided intensive math and English coursework to first-year students whose academic background did not adequately prepare them for SLU's rigor. Based on her research, Taylor proposed revamping the program with the Billiken Success Program (BSP), which continues to support the admission and retention goals of the University. (The Student Navigator program is featured beginning on page 6.)



ALBERS

Maribeen Albers

With diverse work experiences that provide a solid foundation to handle virtually any issue, Maribeen Albers joined the Valentine School as the Executive Assistant II to the Dean in the fall of 2021.

Prior to coming to the Valentine School, Albers worked as a financial analyst at a private company of financial advisors. In that role, she managed sensitive financial information, prepared applications, collected and analyzed information and assisted on special projects, among other duties.

Earlier in her career, Albers developed managerial expertise while working as a project manager at TWA. In that role, she provided support to account managers and managers of Passenger Sales. That post also gave her

Dean Emerita and Professor Teri A. Murray speaks to DEI scholars and leaders at the end-of-year gathering last spring.



Scholar Navigator Program fosters Inclusion

Challenges abound in college. Students struggle with issues of financial obligations, academic pressures, developing self-enforced study habits and even finding friends. For minority students, it can be even more challenging.

Challenges abound in college. Students struggle with issues of financial obligations, academic pressures, developing self-enforced study habits and even finding friends. For minority students, it can be even more complicated.

Critical care nurse Adam Seger (22), who is biracial Latino, knows all too well how difficult it can be to break through barriers of race and ethnicity as a minority.

"Going to a University can be a tough transition," Seger said, "especially if you aren't connected with people who share similar lived experiences of those from diverse backgrounds."

Seger was happy to be awarded a scholarship and become a member of the second cohort in a program established to help minoritized students be successful at the Trudy Busch Valentine School of Nursing.

More recently, he and other members of that second cohort have become Scholar Navigators, taking their involvement in the program to a new level, as mentors of fellow minoritized students in the same program.

"We collaborate regarding NCLEX preparation, interviews for jobs, moving elsewhere after graduation, class work, tips for studying and more," he said. "We all have amazing advice to share to each other, not just me to them, and I love that we can always depend on each other to lift each other up."

MURRAY CREATES THE PROGRAM

Established by Dean Emerita and Professor Teri A. Murray, who is the Valentine School's chief diversity and inclusion officer, the program provides financial, academic and emotional support to help them achieve success in school and beyond.

"It's so important in any educational environment to have faculty, staff and student mentors, who look like the students and can relate to their specific experiences," Murray said. "It gives students the power to envision themselves in the role and to think, 'I, too, can become a nurse.' Without seeing someone who looks like them, students struggle with envisioning how they can successfully become a nurse. Representation matters!"

Last year, Murray secured a \$2.067 million Nursing Workforce Diversity Grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resource and Service Administration. The funding is the third in a series of grants that has provided a total of more than \$5.4 million that was first awarded in 2010 and will extend until 2025 with this latest grant.

Along with Seger, medical oncology nurse Amanda Bahierres (22), pediatric nurse Alexa Santamarina (22), Jasmine Sahagun, senior who plans to be a neonatal/NICU nurse, and Lauren Ramirez, senior who is Hispanic and plans to become an emergency room nurse and eventually a family nurse practitioner, round out the second cohort of Scholar Navigators.

"The DEI Scholar Navigators help students navigate their educational process," Murray said. "Mentoring is inspirational, it gives the student the opportunity to imagine the possibilities of their success!"

THE VALUE OF MENTORSHIP

She pointed out the importance of "having professors talk about the program and just grow the program so there is more diversity at SLU."

"I hope what this program can do for SLU is get exposure on multiple fronts," Bahierres said. "A lot of people have never heard of this program."

Bahierres, who is white Hispanic, said she sees tremendous value and potential in the program.

"I have made some of my closest friends through my cohort, and having each other as a support system has been helpful," she said. "It helps because we can talk about something we are struggling with and also how we can be better nurses."

Murray concurs.

"Mentoring is one way to invest into the next generation of nurses, it's paying it forward. And when you help students, you are in essence, touching the lives of every patient the student touches in their future practice."

As a part of their program and training, the cohort was mentored by Assistant Professor Krista Simmons, who served as the project coordinator for the Nursing Workforce Diversity Program. In this role, Simmons was responsible for the day-to-day management of the program.



Follow cohort members (LEFT) Amanda Bahierres (22), (MIDDLE) Magdalena Ariza (22) and Adam Seger (22) share a moment at the event.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Statement for the Trudy Busch Valentine School of Nursing

The Trudy Busch Valentine School of Nursing is committed to fostering a community where all faculty, staff and students are respected, accepted and valued. We strive to constantly

advance diversity, equity and inclusion and support efforts to

embrace the unique attributes of every person. We are

determined to provide

excellence through recruiting and retaining a diverse

workforce and student body

by creating a climate that is

respectful and supportive of

everyone's success.

Our School of Nursing is

committed to opportunities

that promote equity in our

community, and in our

educational and research

practices. We strive to reduce

health disparities and deliver

high-quality health care. We

acknowledge the imbalances of

power, access, opportunity

and resources in our society

that result in health disparities

(e.g. quantitative differences

in health status or quality of

care) and health inequities

(e.g. power imbalances between

groups of people).

“Mentoring is one way to invest into the next generation of nurses, it’s paying it forward. And when you help students, you are in essence, touching the lives of every patient the student touches in their future practice.”

TERI A. MURRAY, DEAN EMERITA AND PROFESSOR

“The Nursing Workforce Diversity Award Program objective is to assist underrepresented nursing students in successfully matriculating through the nursing program,” Simmons said. “The program addresses key retention strategies including academic support, mentorship and financial support.”

“I have found it rewarding to watch the DEI Scholar Navigators develop confidence in themselves and their ability to mentor others,” Simmons said. “It is heartwarming to hear them share academic and personal success strategies with their mentees. The NWD Team is extremely grateful that the DEI Scholar Navigators were willing to share their time and wisdom with their mentees.”

They also met regularly with University Retention Specialist Cortina Taylor, who designed the training program for the DEI Navigator Scholars, and also participated in panel discussions and group meetings with Murray.

“Cortina Taylor is an amazing resource for students at the School of Nursing,” Sahagan said. “I have had a great experience in this program. It has taught me a lot about managing my time, and most importantly, it has given me ample resources.” Navigator Scholars also expressed appreciation and gratitude to Assistant Professor Krista Simmons, MSN, ANP-C, CNL, CNE, and former Retention Specialist Emily Boyd, and their fellow cohort members, all of whom have impacted their nursing experiences.

“It was always great to spend time with my fellow cohort members and know that I wouldn’t be judged, but actually be met with someone who has gone through the same thing,” Seger said. “We became so close, and that made it much easier for us to lean on each other and on the program resources during tough times.”

Santamaria, a Spanish-Mexican American, said she appreciates that the Valerine School is making efforts to ensure student success and also for helping to send more minority nurses into the workforce. “Teachers put that attention on us and help us to be prepared, but right now, nursing does not have diversity in the workplace,” she said. “That’s a problem because minorities are coming to the hospital. But who do they see the most in the hospital taking care of them? Not people who look like them or speak the same language.”

Sahagan said that is something that makes the issue of diversity and inclusion not only important to the students and the Valerine School, but also the field of nursing and patients everywhere.



Myra Rabold (‘22) and Laura Marulanda (‘22) share a funny moment with a fellow DEI member.

“What makes this program important for the University, as well as the SON, is that it recognizes that while minorities make up almost half of the U.S. population, we only account for 19 percent of the nursing workforce,” she said. “Through this program, we encourage and support minority nursing students throughout their education in hopes of increasing this percentage.”

Upping that percentage is important, Murray said, but not for the sake of increasing diversity alone or even supporting more minoritized scholars so they become nurses. It is a matter of what those diverse and minoritized nurses bring to their patients.

“For me,” Murray said, “advancing diversity in nursing education and the nursing workforce is my way of helping others achieve their dream while adding greater diversity in the nursing workforce with the ultimate purpose of improving the health of minoritized and disadvantaged populations by providing healthcare workers that communities trust and understand their cultural contexts.”

an article in January about their efforts to address the challenges of expanding the number of minority students matriculating at the Valerine School and fostering a more inclusive community.

In the article, titled “Evidence-based strategies to advance BSN student diversity,” Murray and her colleagues acknowledged from the start that there is a need to address the lack of minority presence, in both students and faculty, in nursing school programs nationwide.

At the onset of the article, Murray and her colleagues address issues of racialized health disparities and the relationship of those disparities to the lack of a diverse nursing workforce, and ways to counter the underrepresentation of minorities among RNs in this country, including the issues and health risks that lack representation.

They note that “to have more representation, it must be understood the pipeline for diversity begins with the admission of diverse students into baccalaureate nursing education programs.”

STEPS TO CHANGE

In an effort to address this disparity, Murray and her colleagues obtained more than \$5.4 million in a series of Nursing Workforce Diversity Grants from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resource and Service Administration that was first awarded in 2010 and will extend until 2025.

The funding covers an initiative Murray and her team established to increase enrollment of students from underrepresented backgrounds. The program, known as the Nursing Workforce Diversity Program, has identified and admitted 42 minority students to the baccalaureate nursing program, and implemented a series of strategies for creating “a culturally responsive academic environment and enabled diverse students to succeed.”

Those strategies encompass: ■ Holistic admissions, which takes into account leadership, volunteerism, experience, work experience and other training along with academics, and focuses less on ACT scores and grade point averages.

- Academic support, including tutoring.
- Financial support, tuition assistance and additional funds to cover costs of incidentals students require.
- Mentoring support, which provides counseling, and assists in social and emotional growth.
- Collaborative community partnerships that help students with pre-entry preparation, as well as developing study skills, time management, stress relief methods and more. The students will have the opportunity to learn more about federally qualified health centers, as well as have two opportunities for immersion programs—one during the school year and one in the summer that allows them shadowing experiences in a hospital setting.

THE RESULTS

Murray said the results are not only quantitative, they are qualitative. Of the 42 students admitted to the Valerine School through the program, six have graduated and another “30 are on track to graduate in their respective years,” according to the article. That reflects “a retention rate of 86 percent,” the article reported.

That percentage remains accurate. Since the article was published, those who were expected to graduate in May, did so, and the others, who are currently matriculating, continue to thrive within the program.

“Through the use of the five-prong, evidence-based strategies, the School was able to establish the infrastructure to support the academic advancement and achievement of students from diverse backgrounds,” according to the abstract of the journal article. “The impact is yet to be determined, but more diverse individuals will graduate, suggestive of a more diverse workforce which will hopefully advance the nation toward health equity.”

Still, the impact is the goal, as Murray said. “I just want to use my agency, voice, privilege and influence to advance diversity in nursing education.”

Murray and her team focus on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Support

Dean Emerita and Professor Teri A. Murray, PhD., PhDN-BC, RN, FAAN, of the Trudy Busch Valerine School of Nursing has dedicated her efforts as a leader, researcher and educator to increasing diversity in academic nursing programs and in the health care community.

With several contributors and Murray writing most of the chapters based on experiences, research, strategies, program implementation and leadership, the book offers a range of perspectives and insight into history, issues, methods and outcomes for addressing the shortage of minority nurses in the workforce, as well as its necessity.

As Murray notes, the book ■ “Describes the implementation of community-engaged research strategies.” ■ Discusses “strategies to develop sustainable community partnerships, offers a holistic framework of the structural and social processes that influence health.” ■ Helps “students understand that multisector engagement, outside of the traditional health care arena, is critical to remedy the root causes of ill health in marginalized populations.”

■ Promotes the notion that health disparities seen in marginalized populations are connected to the allocation of resources and that differences in health are unjust and preventable. ■ And “discusses how the health status of marginalized populations... is rooted in the processes and policies promulgated by society.”

Because the book was still in review at the time of our publishing, we suggest that you keep an eye out for information from the Valerine School about when it will be available.

THE GENUINE ARTICLE

In the meantime, there is an opportunity to learn more about the work Murray and her colleagues are doing. *The Journal of Professional Nursing* published

WRITING THE BOOK

In addition, Murray is putting the final touches on her book, *The Social and Structural Determinants of Health: Educating Nurses to Advance Health Equity*, which is an exploration of the factors that have led to and contributed to a lack of diversity, its impact on health care and our society.

“This book provides context for the health disparities seen at the population level, both the structural and social determinants,” Murray writes in her introduction. “It describes how the disparities seen in marginalized and minoritized populations can be attributed to structural determinants such as the distribution of wealth, power, social and cultural norms, and economic and political factors. It further describes the social determinants of health (SDOH), the environmental conditions where people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship and age, and how these conditions lead to systemic disadvantage in health and all aspects of life.”

BELOW Front row members of the 2021 cohort gather with their mentors. FRONT ROW, FROM LEFT: Myrnam Sakis-Castano, Sara Estrada, Morgan Tomassell. BACK ROW, FROM LEFT: Krista Simmons (program coordinator), Yasmine Ceballos, Teri Murray (project director), Julie Avalos, Kayla McCoy, Jayda McCoy, Stefania Comen-Wilder, Cortina Taylor (retention specialist), Shearon Holmes (AHEC partner).



ABOVE Some DEI Scholars, mentors and leaders gathered for a group photo at the end-of-year celebration at the Trudy Busch Valerine School of Nursing. FRONT ROW, FROM LEFT: Myrnam Sakis-Castano, Sara Estrada, Morgan Tomassell, Krista Simmons, Yasmine Ceballos, Teri Murray, Jayda McCoy, Stefania Comen-Wilder, Cortina Taylor, Shearon Holmes. BACK ROW, FROM LEFT: Dawn Emerita, Teri A. Murray, former Retention Specialist Emily Boyd, DEI Students, Sara Estrada, Julia Avalos, Elena Escobedo, Assistant Professor Krista Simmons, Shearon L. Holmes of SSM Health.

When Hope is Lost:

Communication provides compassionate care for parents of children with terminal cancer.

Verna L. Hendricks-Ferguson, Ph.D., RN, FPCN, FAAN, the Irene Riddle Endowed Chair at the Trudy Busch Valentine School of Nursing, leads with compassion.

The ground-breaking researcher has conducted and published studies that are changing the nursing standard of care when addressing the needs and issues experienced by parents of children dying of cancer.

Still, it is the full body of her research that has led to prestigious and plentiful recognition and funding for Hendricks-Ferguson. In April, *St. Louis Magazine* named her the top nursing researcher for 2022. Around the same time, the Midwest Nursing Research Society honored her as a senior scientist at its annual meeting.

Another example of the accolades she has received came in November of 2019 when the March of Dimes named Hendricks-Ferguson, "Nurse Legend of the Year." Prior to that recognition, Hendricks-Ferguson received the Leadership Award in Palliative Nursing from the national organizations: Hospice/Palliative Nurses Foundation and Project Death in America, and in 2018, she was received as the Inaugural Distinguished Nurse Scientist by the Midwest Nursing Research Society, Palliative and End-of-Life Care Research Group.

These awards and accolades acknowledge the profound impact Hendricks-Ferguson's research has made in the care of parents of dying children and in the study of palliative and end-of-life (PC/EOL) communication practices by pediatric oncology providers with those parents of children with poor-prognosis cancer.

To say that her work is significant is an understatement. Hendricks-Ferguson has pioneered research in this area. It was a void in care she recognized and found difficult to treat as business as usual, and even more difficult to ignore.

"It actually was when I was working as a clinical instructor at a pediatric hospital that I discovered that parents were not receiving information about palliative and end-of-life care early and even when it was clear that their child's diagnosis had exhausted all known medical treatment and there simply was nothing more modern science could offer to save the life of the child," she said. "Ethically, it bothered me for years."

FILLING A VOID

In 2005-2008, as a NIH/NINR-T32-funded postdoctoral fellow, Hendricks-Ferguson began looking into the literature and found little had been explored, so she began her own research.

"In my clinical observations, I was troubled that the majority of parents learned very little, and very late, information about palliative and hospice care support to make an early informed decision about their child's cancer care due to a poor prognosis

and diagnosis," she said. "I started doing literature searches and found it was documented that little training on palliative care communication was included in the entry-level education for all health care providers (nurses and physicians), and of the papers I did find, the communication piece is what was often missed or neglected."

Hendricks-Ferguson decided to do something about it, and so she set out on a path of inquiry and discovery that would reshape nursing in terms of palliative care. It has led her to nearly 20 years of federally funded research totaling almost \$192.5 million.

"In my first study, I interviewed parents in the St. Louis area who had a child who had received hospice care during the last week of the child's life in the family's home," she said. "We asked parents when they would like to have received information related to palliative and end-of-life (EOL) care."

What she learned ignited a passion to make a difference.

"We ask if they would be receptive and consider receiving information about the purpose and benefits of palliative and end-of-life supportive care," she said. "The majority said they would, or would have liked, to have those opportunities, and they wanted to have it even when their child was first diagnosed or at least when the child's cancer treatments had failed to cure their child or improve their child's prognosis."

Hendricks-Ferguson recognized the unbearable truth that parents of a dying child would learn when they discovered the limits of modern medicine and the harsh reality that medical treatments and protocols cannot save every patient. The idea was to help these parents cope with this most tragic diagnosis.

"This troubled me, and I wanted to make a difference," she said. "I wanted to try to help parents, to inform them and help before their child is dying."

At the time, Hendricks-Ferguson was completing her doctorate and noted that there was a hesitancy about engaging in discussions of potential negative outcomes with parents. She decided to try to find out why and to learn more about how to bridge the gap between what parents need and what they were being offered.

When she began her research, Hendricks-Ferguson said she found that her work would have to be done "in baby steps."

"Nobody had ever done this before because it is really hard for physicians to engage in discussions about stopping cancer treatments and transferring to hospice care," she said. "The literature has shown approximately 50 percent of physicians do not believe it is a good idea to introduce early palliative and end-of-life care because it may take parents' hope away."

There are several reasons for this. "It might have been their training, their mentor, their religious belief, their lack of training or their clinical experience with a family," she said. "There are multiple factors that stop physicians from engaging in early discussions about the benefits of early palliative care and end-of-life care."

Even when physicians decide to do this, she said, they face the matter of when to open up a discussion.

To fill that void, Hendricks-Ferguson has conducted three preliminary studies in an effort to create protocols that study and foster communication between medical teams and parents of children dying of cancer.

OFFERING COMPLETE CARE

In the most recent preliminary study, published in *Cancer Nursing* in 2019, Hendricks-Ferguson along with Joan E. Haase, Ph.D., RN, FAAN, of Indiana University explored and described "parental perspectives about receiving an early palliative care and end-of-life (PC/EOL) communication intervention." The communication plan they established was titled "Communication Plan: Early through End of Life Intervention" (COMPLETE), and it was offered by "an interprofessional team of physician and registered nurse providers."

As part of the study, 10 parents were interviewed about their experience participating in the COMPLETE communication plan. In a summary of her findings, Hendricks-Ferguson and Haase wrote that "COMPLETE nurtures realistic hope and meaningful dialogue by parents connecting with health care providers as a dyad, and... benefits of COMPLETE helps parents to make informed decisions. As part of the study, parent participants offered suggestions to improve the COMPLETE communication plan and protocols.

"In my clinical observations, I was troubled that the majority of parents learned very little and very late information about palliative and hospice care support to make an early informed decision about their child's cancer care due to a poor prognosis and diagnosis." VERNA HENDRICKS-FERGUSON

In the COMPLETE communication plan, Hendricks-Ferguson and Haase developed protocols for teams composed of a nurse and a doctor to speak with parents over a three-session protocol that allows them to determine where the parents are in their emotional journey and what they need to help them through the loss of their child.

"Over three sessions, the doctor and nurse meet with the parents," Hendricks-Ferguson said. "Very gently, they assess where the parents are to forge a therapeutic alliance."

To do this, the team asks parents what they would like to know about all care options (i.e., cancer treatment options and palliative care support) for their child and when they would prefer to receive

DETAILS OF 2018 STUDY:

BACKGROUND: Parents of children diagnosed with cancer may experience decision regret about cancer treatment decisions and dissatisfaction with the perceived clarity in information received from their child's providers.

OBJECTIVE: The aim of this study was to describe parental perspectives about receiving an early palliative care and end-of-life (PC/EOL) communication intervention titled "Communication Plan: Early through End of Life Intervention" (COMPLETE) from an interprofessional team of physician and registered nurse providers.

METHODS: Ten parents participated in semi-structured interviews after receiving the COMPLETE intervention. The COMPLETE intervention included 3 sessions delivered shortly after diagnosis and at the next 2 cancer treatment evaluations. Sessions of COMPLETE focused on early PC/EOL care discussions at diagnosis and after tumor response evaluations with their child's providers.

RESULTS: Results included 2 theme categories: (1) COMPLETE nurtures realistic hope and meaningful dialogue by parents connecting with healthcare providers as a dyad, and (2) benefits of COMPLETE helped parents to make informed decisions. In addition, there were offered suggestions to improve COMPLETE.

CONCLUSION: The COMPLETE intervention provided a unique mechanism to foster early discussions about PC/EOL options between parents and an interprofessional team during the first 6 months of the child's cancer treatment. Future study is needed using a randomized clinical control-group design to evaluate COMPLETE with a large sample of parents.

IMPLICATIONS FOR

PRACTICE: Findings provide promising evidence of parents' preference and receptivity to receive early information about PC/EOL care options for a child with a brain tumor with a poor prognosis. The COMPLETE intervention provided a mechanism to help encourage parental consideration of realistic hoped-for goals for their child's condition and care.

In that study, Hendricks-Ferguson and Haase noted that further study would be necessary to provide more data by broadening the program to a much larger and wider range of parents whose children have a terminal cancer diagnosis. That is the research Hendricks-Ferguson and her colleagues are working on now.

ONGOING RESEARCH

Hendricks-Ferguson's current study, funded by the National Institutes of Health and National Cancer Institute, was approved in August of 2019, but it was placed on pause during 2020 because of the onset of COVID-19 in the United States. Due to COVID, this study will not be completed until 2025 or 2026. For that, she is working with clinical teams from around the country who are interviewing parents and collecting qualitative data.

"We have about 25 parents now enrolled," Hendricks-Ferguson said, "and we are working on teams in six states."

Along with Missouri, there is a team in Wisconsin, Colorado, Texas, Delaware and two in Georgia. There was an additional team in Seattle, Washington, but they pulled out to conduct their own competing research project.

Hendricks-Ferguson is pleased that her intervention is so well received by parents. Moreover, her preliminary findings show that early caring conversations about PC/EOL support are helping parents cope and make informed decisions early during emotionally catastrophic circumstances for their child and family.

In the proposal for her latest study, Hendricks-Ferguson refers back to her previous studies' findings:

"At their child's end of life, parents often suffer from emotional distress, uncertainty about available options, false hope that focuses on cure rather than palliation, decisional regret and dissatisfaction with communication with health care providers."

At the same time the proposal reports, "Health care providers confirm difficulties in communicating with these parents."

To overcome those difficulties and strengthen support of parents who are suffering in these situations, Hendricks-Ferguson's latest study aims to improve pediatric patient and parent outcomes by incorporating a standardized PC/EOL communication intervention into the standard of care."

The NIH funding and the efforts of researchers making strides in improving standardized care offers help when medical science cannot.

"I do think there is hope now for more increasing providers' receptivity to engage in early palliative and end-of-life care discussions with parents," she said.

"Over the next 10 to 20 years—I believe care is really going to improve for parents and children—that we will see real change."



this information. Hendricks-Ferguson said parents' responses range quite a bit when it comes to these sorts of questions.

Some parents prefer to know every possible outcome for their child to help them make informed decisions from the initial period of receiving news about their child's poor-prognosis diagnosis, she said. These are the parents on the internet always looking at options. Then there are some parents who want to know once the prognosis is certain and the death of the child from cancer is certain.

In both scenarios, Hendricks-Ferguson said that there are a range of therapies the team can offer parents and families.

"The sessions are three months apart, and they are done very gently," she said. "Without fostering false hope, we offer them support of palliative care that can include psychological and social support, music and art therapy, massage therapy and whatever the parents may view as helpful."

There are also families that need additional support because the dying child is often not the only child in their family. Learning how to share the diagnosis and to come to terms with the prognosis can be challenging for parents to accept, and the struggle to deal with this outcome and share it with other children in the family can be wrenching.

Upon completion of the study, Hendricks-Ferguson and Haase concluded: "The COMPLETE intervention provided a unique mechanism to foster early discussions about PC/EOL options between parents and an interprofessional team during the first 6 months of the children with a poor-prognosis brain tumor cancer treatments."

The study's findings reported that the research offers "promising evidence of parents' preference and receptivity to receive early information about PC/EOL care options for a child with a brain tumor with a poor prognosis. The COMPLETE intervention provided a mechanism to help encourage parental consideration of realistic hoped-for goals for their child's condition and care."

\$192,498,814 IN NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH-FUNDED RESEARCH GRANTS:

\$3,288,790 & \$600,000 Grants, MPI, 2019-2024

\$408,750 Grant, Co-I, 2020-2022

\$291,000 Grant, PI, 2009-2012

\$142,284 Grant Training Award, Postdoctoral Fellow, 2005-2008

\$1,857,880, Grant Consultant, PCIEOL Consultant, 2014-2018

\$2.3 Million & \$300,000 Grants, PI, 2005-2010

ACCOLADES & AWARDS

Senior Scientist, Midwest Nursing Research Society, 2022

Excellence in Nursing Award (Research), St. Louis Magazine, 2022

"Nurse Legend of the Year," The March of Dimes, 2019

Nurse Leadership Award in Palliative Nursing, the Hospice/Palliative Nurses Foundation and the Project Death in America, 2019

"Inaugural Distinguished Nurse Scientist," The Midwest Nursing Research Society, Palliative and End-of-Life Care Research Group, 2018

Trudy Busch Valentine Nursing Excellence Award (Research), 2021

Research Writing Award, Association of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology Nurses (APHON) for the article titled: "Pilot evaluation of a palliative and end-of-life communication intervention for parents of children with a brain tumor," 2017

Manly Rubin Research Award, Delta Lambda Chapter, Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing, 2017

Laurie Sparks Research Award, Tau Iota Chapter, Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing, 2017

Certified Pediatric Palliative Care Nurse of the Year Award, Hospice and Palliative Nursing Association, 2017

Research Writing Award, for article: "Novice nurses' experiences with palliative and end-of-life communication," Association of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology Nurses (APHON), 2016

Research Scientist Award, Indiana University, School of Nursing, 2016

Fellow in the American Academy of Nursing American Academy of Nursing, 2015

Nurse Leadership Award in Palliative Care, the Hospice/Palliative Nursing Foundation and the Project Death in America, 2014

Best Research Manuscript Award, Midwest Nursing Research: Palliative and End-of-Life Care Research Interest Group, 2014

St. Louis Nurse Educator of the Year, St. Louis Magazine, 2013

Home and Palliative Care Nurse of the Year Award, Missouri March of Dimes, 2013

Peal Moore Making a Difference: Emerging Leadership Award, Oncology Nursing Society, 2013



Heart health at the tap of an App

Devita Stallings, Ph.D., RN
RN to BSN Option Coordinator;
Associate Professor

Associate Professor Devita Stallings, Ph.D., RN, knows from personal experience that managing health conditions can be a challenge for patients, particularly patients in underserved areas and those who lack access to health care professionals, facilities and medications.

"My grandmother died of a stroke," Stallings said. "We believe that she wasn't taking her blood pressure medication as a sacrifice to care for everyone else."

Stallings knows her grandmother's story represents a larger issue of access to health care and hard choices, something that spurs her to action.

"Now," she said, "I am trying to make a difference for other people."

Specifically, Stallings has dedicated her research and her innovative thinking to developing a mobile health application that will help African Americans self-manage their blood pressure.

Stallings' efforts stem from her research, community service and more than 11 years working in the emergency department. From this work, she became passionate about the health and ability of under-

served populations, particularly African Americans, to self-manage their medical needs.

Stallings points out that people, like her grandmother, may not understand the health consequences of uncontrolled blood pressure. In other cases, access to health may be an issue. Specifically, difficulty finding health care providers who understand their culture can lead to even more health challenges, negative complications and even death.

FINDING SOLUTIONS

Stallings recently received a \$50,000 grant from the Institute of Clinical and Translational Sciences (ICTS) at Washington University in St. Louis to conduct a pilot study focused on engaging African American communities in the development of a hypertension self-management mobile health app. The app could create a much-needed bridge linking underserved populations to medical support and improved self-management of hypertension.

"I have worked within the community a lot and looked at what's available to monitor and support hypertension self-management," she said. "Several apps for hypertension self-management exist, but components needed for these apps to be incorporated into health care were missing."

Specifically, Stallings recognized that these apps lack privacy protections and that they were not theoretically based. Existing apps missed opportunities to include a variety of health care team members. Stallings and her team will design and develop an app specifically for African Americans.

"With the app, patients will be able to track their blood pressure at home and engage in self-management behaviors of their choice that are individualized and culturally tailored," she said. "They will also be able to share information with their health care providers and receive support."

POSSIBLE GAME-CHANGER

So how did Stallings come up with the idea of the app?

"The idea came out of previous research studies exploring perceptions of hypertension in African Americans and self-management behaviors.

"As health care providers, we need to be able to reach people where they are," she said. "Mobile phones offer a way to provide timely and convenient health interventions."

Stallings intends to use the results of the pilot study to plan and conduct a larger intervention study with African Americans.

"I want to conduct a larger study to see how the mobile health app improves blood pressure, self-management behaviors and overall health," she said. "I would love to provide a means for patients to conveniently manage their health and reduce the hypertension disparities that exist in African Americans."

Stallings believes that this app could be a game-changer for African Americans suffering with hypertension.

"In the long-term, my goal is to reduce hypertension disparities in African Americans," she said. "Hypertension is a disease that can be controlled, and if controlled, we can reduce other cardiovascular diseases, as well."

FROM TRAGEDY TO EPIPHANY

Sometimes it is the negative and even tragic moments that offer the epiphany. The COVID-19 pandemic provided plenty of challenges, she said, but it also taught her many important lessons.

"We saw a lot of deaths and people dying alone," she said. "It has made me focus on self-care even more. We only get one life, and I plan to live mine to the fullest."

For Stallings, a full life means focusing on health and choosing healthy habits.

"I think it taught me the importance of slowing down. We get so busy with life, and we need to always remember to be proactive when it comes to our health," she said. "During the pandemic, we refocused our attention to a healthy immune system, exercise, sleep, vitamins and doing what we can to prevent illness. If we practice this all of the time, we won't have to get ready. We will be ready."

"I would love to provide a means for patients to conveniently manage their health and reduce the hypertension disparities that exist in African Americans." DEVITA STALLINGS, PH.D., RN

Beyond the physical, spiritual and emotional health is also important, she said. Stallings turns to her faith for strength and guidance.

"For me, I think it is my faith. I do have my sad moments, but I have to keep moving," she said. "I do trust God, and it was my faith and meditation that got me through. I allow myself to feel and find purpose in those moments."

Stallings said she finds strength in faith and the power of prayer, and she appreciates being a member of a faith-based community at work.

"At SLU, we pray before meetings," she said. "We don't have to ask to pray because that's who we are."

Beyond the spiritual, the pandemic has brought to light many opportunities to improve care. From virtual doctor appointments to monitoring devices, Stallings and her SLU educators, researchers and health care providers have found ways to improve patient-provider communication, health care access and health equity for all.

"All of us play a role in ensuring that patients receive equitable and quality health care," she said. "I am just doing my part."

SOURCE OF SUPPORT:

ULTR02345 Clinical and Translational Research Funding Program. The project is funded through the Pilot, Translational and Clinical Studies Function of the WU/ICTS.

Stressed Midwives, Rainbow Babies and the value of perinatal palliative care

by ELIZABETH KRASNOFF HOLZER

The following story offers the second instalment in a two-part series featuring the research and experiences of Saint Louis University Professor Denise Côté-Arsenault, PhD, RN, CPCL, FNP, FAAN, the Valentine School's Patricia and James R. Henak Endowed professor in maternal-child nursing, who as a Fulbright scholar, traveled to Scotland and the United Kingdom last summer to study the culture, as well as the customs and practices of care for bereaved parents who have suffered the perinatal loss of a child.

FULBRIGHT SCHOLAR

Since returning from her summer in Scotland, Côté-Arsenault has spent the past several months pouring over interviews, data and research encounters with those at the center of perinatal loss of a child.

"My project in Scotland was a broad study looking at the nature of perinatal bereavement support," she said.

While based at Edinburgh Napier University in Edinburgh, Scotland, Côté-Arsenault focused on how pregnancy and infant death were addressed in Scottish culture, specifically looking at it through the eyes of bereaved parents, midwives (the primary care providers for pregnant women within the National Health Service) and those who provide bereavement care.

The Fulbright scholar conducted substantive research through interviews with several midwives and parents, including two couples and several single moms. In addition, she observed three bereavement support groups on Zoom, viewed media

coverage, explored a variety of websites and visited a very special clinic for perinatal bereavement support and care.

Côté-Arsenault and her husband Peter Arsenault, an architect, also served as Fulbright ambassadors, meeting people, visiting landmarks, exploring culture and traveling throughout the country, exchanging ideas. While much of the interactions were informal, Côté-Arsenault did give an academic talk, as well.

THE RAINBOW CLINIC

The invitation for a speaking engagement came from the Rainbow Clinic, which is a part of an academic hospital at the University of Manchester in the United Kingdom. The clinic was established to provide additional support to parents pregnant again after the perinatal death of a child.

It was one of the highlights of Côté-Arsenault's Fulbright scholar experiences because the clinic was established in large

measure based on her research, along with the recognition that the country's National Health Service could do more to help pregnant parents who are anxious and worried due to a prior perinatal death. The clinic derived its name from the term "rainbow baby." A rainbow baby is moniker used for a child born to parents who have previously suffered the loss of a baby through miscarriage, stillbirth or neonatal death. The term references a rainbow appearing after a thunderstorm.

Côté-Arsenault gave a formal talk to the faculty and health care workers at the Rainbow Clinic about her latest research and her work as a Fulbright scholar. She said it was gratifying to visit, something she has been wanting to do since she learned about the clinic in 2019.

Her time at the Rainbow Clinic allowed her a close-up view of the U.K.'s National Health Service and its provisions for the parents she studies.



The Arsenaults enjoy exploring and visiting landmarks in Scotland, including the Valentine School in Old Town, above the central city of Edinburgh.



ABOVE: Peter Arsenault and Denise Côté-Arsenault, related opportunities created through her research and ambassador work, as a 2021 Fulbright scholar in Scotland, as well as visiting and giving a talk at the University of Manchester's Rainbow Clinic in the United Kingdom.

done so many interviews with bereaved parents—it was striking. We met an American Catholic couple who shared that it is a pretty agnostic culture."

RAINBOW BABIES

Prominent figures, Instagram and national news also provided insights into the culture for Côté-Arsenault's study. Toward the end of her stay, the Fulbright scholar watched in real time the unfolding of a rather prominent story of perinatal loss.

"Last August, Carrie Johnson, United Kingdom's Prime Minister Boris Johnson's current wife, announced they were expecting a rainbow baby," she said. "Johnson really felt that if John Legend and his wife Chrissy Teigen and Prince Harry and Meghan Markle could share their stories of loss, she should share hers."

The story was covered throughout the U.K. In fact, *The London Times* reported the story quoting Carrie Johnson who described herself as "heartbroken" over the loss of her baby through miscarriage earlier that year. *The Times* wrote: "Carrie Johnson made the announcement on Instagram with a photograph of a Christmas bauble shaped like a prism with the caption: 'Hoping for our rainbow baby this Christmas.'" Johnson's Instagram revelation resonated with Côté-Arsenault's 20 years of research focusing on parent experiences of pregnancy after a perinatal loss. Over her career of studying parents like the Johnsons, she has found that parents do suffer the loss of their child, as well as the loss of their spirituality. Her research

showed that parents can do pretty well, she said, "and with poor care, they are more heavily burdened."

In Scotland, particularly at the Rainbow Clinic, Côté-Arsenault said she found that parents in those settings were getting the support they needed. She returned in July 2022 to continue her work there, and so her work continues as she further explores the practices and realities of care across the pond in Scotland and the U.K.

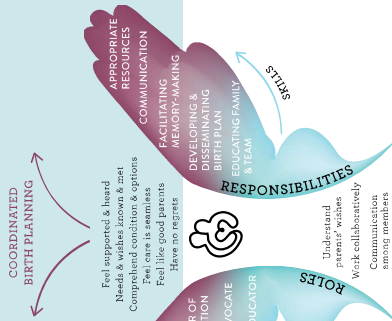
who choose to become pregnant again, often find themselves riding the emotional rollercoaster that comes after that initial loss, which Carrie Johnson expressed on Instagram, writing: "At the beginning of the year, I had a miscarriage, which left me heartbroken. I feel incredibly blessed to be pregnant again, but I've also felt like a bag of nerves." In December after her return, Côté-Arsenault learned that the Johnsons had welcomed a healthy baby girl, Rompy Iris Charlotte, as Carrie Johnson, again took to Instagram, this time to explain the child's name: "Rompy after my aunt, Rosemary, Iris from the Greek, meaning rainbow. Charlotte [after] Boris' late mum whom we miss so much."

THE VALUE OF PERINATAL PALLIATIVE CARE

Overall, Côté-Arsenault's time in Scotland as a Fulbright scholar reinforced much of her previous research, which documented the reality that bereavement support is vital and helpful to parents who find themselves in these situations. "With good support, they can do pretty well," she said, "and with poor care, they are more heavily burdened."

In Scotland, particularly at the Rainbow Clinic, Côté-Arsenault said she found that parents in those settings were getting the support they needed. She returned in July 2022 to continue her work there, and so her work continues as she further explores the practices and realities of care across the pond in Scotland and the U.K.

There are a lot of wonderful nurses and physicians providing supportive care. Those who are there with those families, they inject hope into families: hope for today, and hope for the moment. — CÔTÉ-ARSENAULT



The illustration above reflects the roles and responsibilities, and the skills and knowledge that the perinatal palliative care coordinator approach bring to the care of parents who have experienced the loss of a baby. Illustration by Graphic Designer Renée Stevens.

Generosity and Gratitude

Since hanging up her scrubs, retired alumna **Patricia Hemak (BSN '64)** has dedicated her efforts to leaving a legacy of generosity and gratitude.

Her latest endeavor supports the creation of a simulation birthing suite for students at the Trudy Busch Valentine School of Nursing. It will be dedicated during Homecoming weekend.

When it opens, The Patricia A. and James Hemak Maternal & Newborn Suite will provide opportunities for students to learn maternal medical care that

Hemak knew her family simply could not afford to send her to college, so she had planned to become a nurse through a three-year program. She said she was thrilled and excited about attending the University and the program exceeded her expectations.

"Many of my fellow nursing students became enchanted with pediatrics, but my SLU education lit my passion for maternal nursing. I found so many wonderful mentors," she said. "Sister Caritas, in particular, was inspiring and really encouraged me. She and Marguerite Roby, a maternity teacher, possibly one of the first African American instructors at the School of Nursing, taught

me so much not only in class but by example."
I watched these nurses who were both practicing and educating at the same time," she continued. "I wanted to do what they did. They were very committed to those clients and to teaching us. They were dedicated to making us as prepared as possible. I learned so much from them."

Hemak earned her master's degree and became a nursing educator herself. She moved around the country because of her husband, Jim's career with Junior Achievement; and was licensed as a nurse in seven states: Missouri, Hawaii, California, Illinois, Washington, Colorado and Minnesota. Still, her love for SLU and the Valentine School has been constant—so much so that this is not her first gift to the University and the School.

In 2015, she and Jim made an investiture that established the Hemak Endowed Professorship of Maternal Child Nursing.

"This endowed professorship represents the expansion of this passion for nursing practice, education and research," she said at the time, noting that it "has the potential to transform health care in the area of maternal-child health."



INSPIRED GIVING Patricia Hemak (center) and her husband James Hemak (right) stand with her mentor Sr. Mary Teresa Noth at an event at the Trudy Busch Valentine School of Nursing several years ago. Noth passed away in 2016.

"We are blessed to have the generosity of Patricia and James Hemak to advance and upgrade our nursing learning space." —DEAN WILLIS

will extend beyond birthing to include the entire family's care within a safe environment.

"I want to give back to SLU and the Valentine School," she said. "My SLU education transformed my life. At the School of Nursing, I found role models and mentors who truly inspired me."

Hemak said she had wanted to become a nurse since the age of 12 but had not initially thought of attending SLU.

"I want to give back to SLU and the Valentine School. My SLU education transformed my life. At the School of Nursing, I found role models and mentors who truly inspired me."

PATRICIA HEMAK (BSN '64), MSN

This new project will continue her efforts to expand educational opportunities for students and faculty.

Hemak's gift expands the simulation settings available for nursing students' training, which is very exciting, said Joan Hrabetz, Dean and Professor Danny G. Willis, D.N.S., RN, PMHCNS-BC, CNE, FAAN. The Hemaks' support of the expansion is truly an investment in SLU's students and the future of maternal medical care, he noted.

"We are blessed to have the generosity of Patricia and James Hemak to advance and upgrade our nursing learning space," Willis said. "Students will be afforded the benefit of high technology while learning with expert faculty and each other. The Patricia A. and James Hemak Maternal & Newborn Suite will be showcased and celebrated at Homecoming 2022. This is truly a dream come true for us!"

Hemak said she is excited about the simulation lab and that she relishes embarking on this new project with the Valentine School and the University.

"I'm just one story among many," she said. "I am glad I had the career I did and that I married a man who supports the causes I love, and that is why we are helping the Valentine School create this new sim lab. It's exciting to see the impact you can make on the students and faculty and the University."



ABOVE Second-year AMSN student Madison Mars types in information about her "patient" in the newly established birthing simulation lab, a place where students can feel safe making attempts at providing appropriate care for their patients—old and young. **RIGHT** The Sim Suite's newborn "baby" cries out during the lab.

Birth of a Sim Lab

Simulation Suite delivers real-life learning in safe setting.

Students studying maternal-newborn nursing can learn clinical skills in a new birthing simulation lab at the Trudy Busch Valentine School of Nursing.

In the lab, students encounter three "adult patients" and two "babies" who present them with a range of symptoms and medical conditions. The new space, which upgrades and repurposes an existing simulation lab, will be dedicated during Homecoming weekend as the Patricia A. and James Hemak Maternal & Newborn Suite.



AT RIGHT Second-year accelerated MSN nursing student Hannah Ruge listens through a stethoscope to check the condition of the "mother" in labor and her "fetus" as Emily Galliani instructs Ruge and monitors the "patient's" vital signs.



Advanced Faculty Allison Yarnitz (CIS), MSN, BSN, RN, cradles the "newborn" head, as second-year accelerated MSN students (left to right) DeAnna Harper, Cierra Jackson and Hamidou Tchatchoua (right) focus their attention on the "mother." The new birthing simulation suite provides the space and opportunities for students to participate in procedures in a safe environment.

"Right now, our plans are to have one SimMom set up to simulate birth and delivery, one SimMom set up as a postpartum patient, a Nursing Anne manikin, which is moderate fidelity and can be used for fundamental simulations, skills, as an adult patient or an older adult patient," Rogers said. "We will also have a SimNewB and a static baby that students can administer IM injections and apply eye ointment—replicating medication administration in the hospital setting." The use of more manikins allows students to gain clinical experience in labor and as well as a range of medical conditions that nurses encounter in obstetrics and gynecology settings.

"Regarding technology, with the donations from the Hemak family and others, we are looking to purchase a state-of-the-art medication dispensing system for two of our lab rooms," Rogers said. "This is a big advancement in how students will be able to remove and administer medications in the lab."

The opportunity to create the birthing suite is something that was only possible because of the help of generous alumni, especially the Hemak family, Rogers said. "This generous donation," she said, "opens many opportunities for us to create new immersive simulation experiences."

"In the Simulation Lab, Room 126 has always had four bed spaces," said Assistant Professor Nikki Rogers, MSN, RN, who is the Clarke Simulation Learning Laboratory coordinator. "On any given day of simulations, we utilize two of the bed spaces. With the new configuration we are able to use all four bed spaces in a day."

"We are considering a Complex Care simulation using our new SimMom," Rogers said, "and we contemplate challenging senior nursing students to care for one patient at a time, so that is in stages of ongoing development."

By the time this story is in print, the details of the program and the lab configuration will be well established and in place. Contemplating these options are Rogers and her colleagues Ashley Schmuke, MSN, RNC-OB, associate professor and coordinator of the Maternal/Neonatal Nursing course, as well as adjunct OB faculty Katie Walker, MSN, RN, Henrietta Buckley, RN, adjunct faculty, and Diane Llamas, MSN, RN, CNL, the simulation operations manager.

IN MEMORIAM

PASSING IN 2005
Patricia Quinn Eggers (46)

PASSING IN 2017
Alicia Velle Christian (56)
Marie Swanson Schun (76)

PASSING IN 2018
Beatriz Tesoro Niederlander (81)
Romilda Walters (71)
Carmelle McClard Wolkien (57)

PASSING IN 2019
Mary Meyer Boska (50)
Alice Leahy Nouban (58)
Laura McRee (13)
Dorothy Darnell Smith (92)
Katherine Wegner (80)

PASSING IN 2020
Emogene Alexander (75)
Margaret Bekker (70)
Brother Hugh Deromme (71)
Jean Fowler (90)
Monica Madill Russell (47)

PASSING IN 2021
Major Paul Burns (77)
Elizabeth Soule Caley (57)
Margaret DeVulf-Evans (56)
Martina Dupernet (70)
Fay McDonnell Farrell (50)
Michalee Hellen (63)
Susan Carr-Hinton (71)
Mary Carr Kanard (82)
Dorothy Brontger Kass (48)
Mary Carney Kerme (55)
Maicon Iwambokus Resler (72)
Allene Sottnag, Welling (61)
Catherine Smith (61)
Trisha Wyant (39)

PASSING IN 2022
Carole Demars Carpenter (71)
Brenda MacMurdo Fisher (81)
Betty Helen Fitzgerald (58)
Mary Ann Daniels Pollack (77)
Catherine Huntley (55)
Sister Mary Jackson (88)
Catherine Johns (88)
Margaret Phillips (63)
Gerardine Plesch (45)
Dense Saka (88)
Virginia Allen Wick (58)

Preceptors benefit, just as their students do

Volunteering as a preceptor not only impacts the lives of students. It can also set preceptors themselves on a new trajectory.

as Joan Hrubetz Dean and Professor Danny G. Willis, D.N.S., RN, PMHCNS-BC, CNE, FAAN, can attest.

"The real-world, lived experience of collaboration that happens between a preceptor and student provides the icing on the cake in nursing education," Willis said.

Willis speaks from personal experience. He became a preceptor at Touro Hospital Department of Psychiatry in New Orleans, guiding BSN nursing students from Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center.

Each year, preceptors engage in providing guidance and mentorship. They draw on their own lived experiences and training to share wisdom—the sort that comes from years of experience, often in complex care settings.

Through these connections, undergraduate and graduate students go through the daily routines of clinical nursing within a hospital or community setting. For preceptors of graduate students, their mentorship provides invaluable opportunities to hone advanced skills within primary care offices, acute care settings and

nursing leadership roles. The guidance of a compassionate, knowledgeable preceptor can make a strong impact on a nursing student. Helping them effectively synthesize what has been learned in the classroom, applying procedural lessons and Jesuit teachings to real-world daily nursing practice offers lessons that can be taught no other way. Valentine School preceptors serve as role models of our Jesuit values. They play a vital role in further preparing and shaping our students to live as women and men for others here at SLU and well beyond their matriculating years.

“The real-world, lived experience of collaboration that happens between a preceptor and student provides the icing on the cake in nursing education!” – DANNY WILLIS, JOAN HRUBETZ DEAN AND PROFESSOR



ABOVE: Jubilation and joy were apparent throughout the precommencement ceremony in May at Chaifetz Arena. Graduates shared smiles, hugs and laughter as they gathered together to celebrate a milestone in each of their nursing careers.

Want to be a preceptor?

To learn more, contact: Carolyn Layloff, MSN, RN, Clinical Resources Coordinator, Valentine School of Nursing carolyn.layloff@slu.edu or 314.977.6653



Mary Kay Knight Machuca, (BSN '82, MSN/RN '80) APRN, ANP, BC, CDEES, along with 13 other alumni from across SLU's colleges and schools, received the University's Distinguished Alumni Award at a ceremony in May. Machuca and her fellow alumni were honored in recognition of outstanding achievement, dedication to their chosen field and commitment to the University's mission. Watch for a feature story about Machuca in the next issue of *Care Personal*.

mark your CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER 24-26: Homecoming 2022. Weekend The weekend will include the dedication of the Patricia A. and James Hemak Maternal & Neonatal Suite, a simulation lab made possible through the generous support of Hemak (BSN '64) and her husband.

APRIL 14, 2023: The Grace and William Potter Lecture Speaker: Pamela S. Hinds, Ph.D., RN, FAAN, holds the William and Joanne Conway Chair in nursing research; is executive director for nursing science, professional practice and quality outcomes and is a Pediatrics professor at George Washington University. Her research focuses on how patient-centered family conferences' can boost satisfaction with care provided to critically ill children.

MARCH 6, 2023: The Truly and Christina Valentine Lecture Series To ensure that our loyal alumni keep up with all happenings at the Valentine School, be sure to keep an eye on emails, letters and website postings.



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future for all.*

The Valentine School of Nursing counts on our generous alumni to partner with us in our efforts to create a future that serves a higher purpose and seeks the greater good through the power of a Jesuit education. With a gift to the Valentine School of Nursing, we can continue to shape and advance our students' experiences as we prepare them to be compassionate, ethical and contemporary practitioners in their various nursing careers. **To make a gift to the Valentine School of Nursing, contact Michelle Cohen, senior director of Development at michelle.cohen@slu.edu or 314-977-8723.**

giving.slu.edu/nursing