

## School of Nursing

# Annual Report from the Dean

August 2020 – March 2020

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## 1 Preface

In this annual report the details of some accomplishments of the Radford University School of Nursing are detailed during my tenure as Dean that began in August 2020. The activities and outcomes detailed in this report are above and beyond the normal expectations of a Dean. The accomplishments presented here represent the work of numerous colleagues in the School of Nursing with whom it is my pleasure to work. Like my distinguished and colleague Deans across Radford University, my primary role in these achievements was facilitator and sponsor.

Foremost, I must extend my thanks and appreciation to the School of Nursing Leadership Team as well as the entire faculty and staff, who demonstrated remarkable resilience as well as unmatched innovation and creativity during one of the most trying years in modern history. I, of course, am referencing the COVID-19 pandemic that challenged every norm in nursing, higher education, healthcare, and personal life. Every nursing faculty and staff in the School of Nursing contributed to the Herculean task of delivering didactic and clinical content and experiences by employing every face to face, hybrid, and online pedagogical approach available; maximizing clinical simulation experiences; creating new approaches to clinical experiences; and continuing to engage, retain, and graduate most of our nursing students on time in the undergraduate and graduate programs.

Further, I offer my gratitude to Dr. Iris Mullins, School of Nursing Interim Director and Provost Carolyn R. Lepre for support, guidance, and mentoring as I work with colleagues within the Waldron College and the School of Nursing and across the university. Additionally, the entire Academic Affairs Leadership Team and Dean's Council continually provide encouragement and wise counsel as I work toward forging the Dean's role and forming the School of Nursing leadership team to function effectively and efficiently.

## 2 Goals and Initiatives

### 2.1 To increase admissions and enrollment across the School of Nursing Academic programs

#### 2.1.1 Initiative 1. Grow the Online RN to BSN and Master of Science in Nursing Administration programs through Academic Partnerships (AP) agreement

Dr. Katie Katz, Associate Professor and RN to BSN Coordinator began working directly with the AP team and Radford's AP Project Management team to plan and implement the Online RN to BSN program's "Relaunch"

- Online RN to BSN program "Relaunch" consists of course delivery in 7-week sessions
- Offers 6 admission entry points during the program
- Online RN to BSN curriculum revised to incorporate REAL general education model
- Reduced required program curriculum credits from 33 to 30 to streamline course "carousel" delivery model and allow for program completion in one academic year

Dr. Patty Vari, Associate Professor and Master of Science in Nursing Administration Coordinator began working directly with AP team and Radford's AP Project Management team to plan and implement the Online Master of Science in Nursing Administration program's "Relaunch"

- Online Master of Science in Nursing Administration program "Relaunch" consists of course delivery in 7-week sessions
- Offers 6 admission entry points during the program
- Streamlined admission requirements
- Course "Carousel" delivery model to allow for program completion in one year

#### 2.1.2 Initiative 2. Collaborate with clinical partners to increase and enhance clinical placements

Undergraduate program coordinators worked closely with Carilion Clinic's Visiting Student Affairs and other clinical agencies to ensure COVID-19 clinical requirements were met for students and faculty.

- Intensive tracking of the following by Drs. Sharla Cooper, Tara Chitwood, and Deidra Pennington with assistance from lead clinical faculty members:
  1. Students and faculty who required different levels of quarantine
  2. Coordinating student and faculty testing related to clinical requirements
  3. Students and faculty who became COVID-19 exposed or infected
  4. Student and faculty follow-up testing
  5. Student and faculty re-entry to clinical after COVID-19 exposure or infection

New and renewal contracts established and maintained with clinical agencies for clinical placements for undergraduate and graduate programs

#### 2.1.3 Initiative 3. Create alternative clinical experiences for students outside of hospital to augment clinical education

In addition to the need for increasing enrollment and overall pre-licensure graduates due to the looming nursing shortage across the state and region, the COVID-19 pandemic severely impacted nursing education through the limited the hospital experiences available for pre-licensure and graduate nursing students.

- Faculty created innovative community and geriatric clinical experiences

- Undergraduate nursing students administered COVID-19 vaccines
- Faculty worked collaboratively with Simulation Center staff to maximize the number of clinical simulations and direct clinical hours allowed by the Virginia Board of Nursing
- Drs. Sarah Gilbert and Darleen Hoffert re-invented geriatric clinical experiences through “Porch Projects” where students participated in recurrent visits across the semester with elderly family members or community members to explore age related health changes while visiting on the patients’ porches, patios, and anywhere outdoors where social distancing requirements could be adhered.

#### 2.1.4 Initiative 4. Incorporate Course Sharing across the MSN and DNP programs to increase course delivery efficiency and reduce duplicative content delivery

At the Dean’s request, Graduate Curriculum Committee members examined the MSN and DNP programs for course content duplication and overlap and began developing course revisions that would allow like and duplicative content to be delivered across the MSN and DNP programs in one course.

- Duplicate content is being revised to be delivered at the doctoral level allowing no fewer than 9 credit hours of MSN content to count toward the DNP degree. This is believed to encourage MSN students to continue studies at Radford toward the DNP degree.
- Drs. Milena Staykova and Wendy Downey will deliver the MSN/DNP research course this summer in a combined class and will evaluate the effectiveness of the chance, follow-up accordingly., and advise the Graduate Curriculum Committee and graduate faculty on implementation of other courses amenable to this process.

### 2.2 Goal 2. Re-organize the School of Nursing to improve efficiencies and promote unity across RU and RUC

Collaborated with Provost Lepre, and Drs. George Santopietro and Kenneth Cox to propose reorganization of the School of Nursing as a separate academic unit from Waldron College of Health and Human Sciences. Proposal is being finalized to move forward to SCHEV and our Board of Visitors.

### 2.3 Goal 3. Enhance philanthropic giving to the School of Nursing

- 2.3.1 Initiative 1. Beginning conversations with the Radford University Advancement representatives Wendy Lowry and Tom Lillard for a Director of Advancement to serve the School of Nursing
- 2.3.2 Initiative 2. Worked with Tom Lillard and University Advancement to secure initial funding from anonymous donor for \$15,000 with additional planned estate gift
- 2.3.3 Initiative 3. Met with Tom Lillard and other potential donors for School of Nursing and simulation center tours
- 2.3.4 Initiative 4. Established Dr. Iris Mullins Nursing Scholarship in honor of Dr. Mullins’ service as interim director through the RU and Jefferson merger. Continuing to fund raise to reach endowment level.

## 2.4 Goal 4. Investments in programs and activities to improve student success

- 2.4.1 Initiative 1. Advising Center—Continue to work with Dr. Corey Cassidy and faculty representatives to develop efficient and effective ways and processes to advise Pre-Nursing and Nursing students across the spectrum to improve retention and overall student success
- 2.4.2 Initiative 2. RU Nursing Skills Lab Renovations and New Furniture—working with Facilities team to renovate RU Nursing Skills Lab including replacing storage room cabinets with open shelves, replacing vanity type sinks with surgical/medical grade sinks, and increasing seating capacity and improving workspace options with updated tables and chairs that can be easily stored and placed in multiple configurations.
- 2.4.3 Initiative 3. Cook and RHEC Simulation Center Searches
  - 2.4.3.1 *Director—Worked with SON Search Committee to hire Ms. Christina Keller as Cook and RHEC Simulation Center Director*
  - 2.4.3.2 *Simulation Faculty Searches—in last phase of hiring for one Faculty Simulation Position at Cook and one Faculty Simulation Position at RHEC*
- 2.4.4 Initiative 4. External Funding
  - 2.4.4.1 *BHWET Grant— (Focus on Behavioral Health) HRSA funded –awarded a large carry forward of unused funds from Year 3 to Year 4 to increase the number of students admitted, with a focus on OT. We are slated to pay out another \$15,000 this summer to Counselor Ed students. PMHNP DNP or certificate, social work, counselor ed, or OT students must commit to two semesters to be eligible for this grant and are placed at either NRVCS or Mt Rogers. Grant ends August 31st, but we plan to file a no cost extension for one year this summer*
  - 2.4.4.2 *ANEW Grant—HRSA Funded, \$83,595 remains for student stipends for NP students through June 30th after the 3rd No Cost Extension*

## 2.5 Goal 5. Meetings and Activities related to School of Nursing Faculty and Staff

- Held bi-weekly meetings with the School of Nursing Leadership Team
- Held monthly SON full faculty meetings
- Completed approximately 35 of 65 faculty/staff one on one meetings since August 2020
- Supported Dr. Patty Vari to facilitate Dr. Sharon Jones to working with our faculty for Diversity and Inclusion awareness and training. This supports the RU and American Association of Colleges of Nursing diversity, inclusion, and equity initiatives. Further training is under consideration
- Currently deploying leadership development assessment and training for SON Leadership team with LIVMORE, LLC to foster unity and trust across the RU and RUC faculty
- Fostered and facilitated increased collaboration and improved communication of School of Nursing by working with SON committee chairs from RU and RUC to combine instructional site meetings into SON committee meetings. This resulted in substantial communication and collaboration improvements across committees and

instructional sites. This has been a significant help in preparing for the RUSON Board of Nursing Accreditation visit scheduled for June 2020.

- Preparation underway for RUSON strategic planning for Fall 2021
- Facilitated increased faculty involvement in the National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties (NONPF) by supporting several faculty members' attendance at all NONPF virtual conferences.
- Facilitated full faculty participation in American Association of Colleges of Nursing "National Faculty Meeting" to inform the development and final draft of the New AACN Essentials for Nursing Education.

## 2.6 Goal 6. School of Nursing Budget Management

Oversight and management of approximately \$7M School of Nursing budget.

Worked with Provost Lepre to restore necessary faculty and staff lines during the AY20-21 and for upcoming AY21-22.

## 3 Other Activities Undertaken by the Dean

### 3.1 Service Activities

- I served on the following committees/groups in 2020-2021
  - Academic Affairs Leadership Team
  - Dean's Council
  - Radford University Leadership Council
  - Academic Program Review Committee (Co-reviewer with Dr. Rodrigo Hernandez, Davos College of Business)
  - RUC Operations Committee
  - RU Experiential Learning Task Force
  - Virginia Tech at Carilion Experiential Learning Committee
  - Chaired School of Nursing Leadership Team
- I serve in the following capacities for the Mississippi Nurses' Association, American Association of Nurse Practitioners (AANP) and Fellows of the American Association of Nurse Practitioners (FAANP)
  - Mississippi Nurses' Association Board Secretary (term ended October 2020)
  - Mississippi State Representative for AANP
  - FAANP Mentorship Program Committee
  - Current Candidate for FAANP Chair-Elect
- Represented Radford University School of Nursing at American Association of Colleges of Nursing Annual Dean's Meeting.
- Represented Radford University School of Nursing at Virginia Association of Colleges of Nursing meetings and currently serve on Bylaws Committee.
- Worked directly with Carilion Clinic Chief Nursing Officer to develop a Nurse Extern Transition Program for nursing students to provide nurse assistant and skills in which students achieved competency in the first semester of nursing school

- Nurse Externs are offered flexible scheduling, abbreviated shifts, and competitive pay
- Project to be analyzed for reduction of nurse burnout during COVID and improved transition of nurse externs to practice and ongoing retention of nurses
- Facilitated collaborative arrangement with VDH and local pharmacies for students to give COVID vaccines
- Facilitated increased clinical placements in VA and HCA hospitals

### 3.2 Scholarship Activities

Wijewardane, J. S. (2021). Dementia and Depression: Addressing Tough Issues with Patients and Caregivers. AANP Annual Conference 60-minute podium, June 23, 2021, Anaheim, CA. (Accepted Conference, presentation pending).

Wijewardane, J. S. (2020). Preserving e-Professionalism and Amplifying your NP Career. Mississippi Nurses Association Annual Convention 60-minute podium, October 2020, Recorded Virtual Conference.

Wijewardane, J. S. (2020). Preserving e-Professionalism and Amplifying your NP Career. AANP Annual Conference 60-minute podium, June 26, 2020, New Orleans, LA. (Accepted Conference Cancelled Due to COVID-19).

### 3.3 Professional Development

I attended the following professional development meetings and conferences:

- AACN 2021 Annual Dean's Meeting and Pre-Conference (Virtual) March 19-23, 2021
- AANP Region 11 Leadership Meeting (Virtual) February 20, 2021
- FAANP Winter Meeting (Virtual) January 9, 2021
- AANP National Conference (Virtual) October 2020
- AANP Annual Membership Meeting July 25, 2020

Maintain memberships in the following selected professional organizations:

- Virginia Nurses Association
- American Nurses Association
- Virginia Council of Nurse Practitioners
- Virginia Association of Colleges of Nursing
- American Association of Nurse Practitioners
- Fellows of the American Association of Nurse Practitioners
- American Organization of Nurse Leaders
- Sigma Theta Tau International Nursing Honor Society
- Council on the Advancement of Nursing Science
- Southern Nursing Research Society
- National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties