The Nursing Department was honored to receive a grant from the Arnold P. Gold Foundation and the American Association of Colleges of Nursing to host our first annual White Coat Ceremony in the fall of 2016. The ceremony, which is usually performed as the students begin working with patients, is meant to symbolize the compassion and dedication it takes to be in a health care profession. Although the name of the ceremony is the white coat ceremony, many schools have moved away from presenting a white coat and instead have chosen other symbols to represent the significance of entry into the profession. Sophomore nursing students from CSB/SJU were presented with a stethoscope and a “keeping healthcare human” pin. Students were welcomed into the nursing profession during this ceremony and professed their commitment to providing patient-centered care. This ceremony was a special event for students, families and faculty of the nursing department.
Why did you choose the Dominican Republic?
I have always wanted to travel the world since befriending many foreign exchange students while I was in high school. I especially wanted to study in a place where I could practice speaking Spanish. When I discovered the nursing program offered a study abroad experience in a Spanish-speaking nation, I immediately knew the Dominican Republic was where I wanted to go.

What was the highlight of your experience?
The highlight of this experience was when we provided massages for a group of elderly Dominican people at a local church. Being able to see the transformative power of healing touch from the time each person walked in to when he or she left was remarkable. We all left the church feeling fulfilled.

What was your most significant learning experience?
In the United States, we rely heavily on so many amenities that bring us comfort. We often avoid situations that require us to be vulnerable with others because it makes us feel uncomfortable. In the Dominican Republic, we had to step out of our comfort zone. As a result, we had a much more profound learning experience, one we would have never had if we decided to remain comfortable.

How did you make a difference for the local population?
During our visit, we provided over 600 students and local residents with the knowledge and tools to prevent illness. We educated the students on hand washing and brushing their teeth. We also performed vision and blood pressure screenings, intervening as needed. We brought over 12 suitcases full of books and school supplies to enhance the students’ educational experiences. Finally, we built a new student playground for a school that didn’t have one previously.

How will you use the knowledge you gained during this experience in your future nursing career?
I will never forget my experience in the Dominican Republic. In my nursing career, I will embrace vulnerability and view it as an opportunity to learn something new. I will also continue to remain open-minded to different cultures and perspectives.

“In the United States, we rely heavily on so many amenities that bring us comfort. . . In the Dominican Republic, we had to step out of our comfort zone.”
Why did you choose to do a local immersion?

CSB has built quite a community. There are many programs to get involved in, but a lot of the programs stay on campus. Being able to get off campus and see what is within just 30 minutes on St. Joseph offers a greater sense of community, and I thought it would guide me in what I can do to be more a part of this community. In addition, Minnesota has a large number of migrants, whether it is moving from one region of the U.S. to Minnesota, immigrants seeking to relocate in Minnesota for a more fruitful life, or refugees seeking protection/refuge in Minnesota. As a nursing student at CSB, we have not yet had a chance to work with many migrants or cultures very different from our own. The local immersion experience gave me an opportunity to get to know my Somali neighbors.

What was the highlight of your experience?

I am a daughter of refugees, and being able to work with local Somali immigrants has given me a glimpse of what my parents had to go through. One of the highlights of this experience was attending a class taught by students in the Hands Across the World organization in St. Cloud. The students in the program were adults who moved from all parts of the world to St. Cloud and have now come together to learn English. The students presented on their home country. As an audience member, I could see the light in their eyes when they spoke about their home and what they loved about it. I learned about Somalia, Burkina Faso, Vietnam and more from the students who had grown up in those places.

What was your most significant learning experience?

This program was so unique. We were able to work with Somali residents who arrived to the U.S. anywhere from 2 days to many years ago. We worked with a St. Joseph family, the Islamic Center of St. Cloud, Lutheran Social Services, and Hands Across the World. Tutoring at the Islamic Center of St. Cloud offered the most one-on-one learning. I worked with girls in kindergarten and up, and learned something every day. These girls were so excited to read to me and share what they wanted to be when they grew up. They shared about life at home and some phrases in Somali. They offered me snacks every day and wanted to make sure I was comfortable. I’m convinced I worked with the smartest girls in St. Cloud and would not be surprised if they change the world.

How will you use the knowledge you gained during this experience in your future nursing career?

One of our projects was to offer education on health promotion through Lutheran Social Services’ cultural orientation program. Our audience was newly arrived Somalis with little English background. It was a great experience to give a presentation with a translator – something that I had never done before. It was not easy. It was important to add lots of photos and make the information relatable. Also, from this experience, I have become more empowered and confident in my ability to help make a difference in my own “backyard.” I will continue to look for similar opportunities in the future as a professional nurse.
Nursing Club 2016-2017

Nursing Club has had a very successful and productive year filled with many service projects in both our CSB/SJU community as well as our extended community in St. Cloud! Earlier this year, Nursing Club partnered with the Be The Match organization to put on a Be The Match drive on campus. It was a very successful event; we had over 150 people sign-up to be a part of the bone marrow donation registry! We also volunteered at Bel Clare Clubhouse, an afterschool program for children in the St. Cloud area, and made tie blankets with the kids. It was a very rewarding project for both the kids and the student volunteers!

Again this year, the Nursing Club sponsored a Nursing Mentorship Program. The Mentorship Program pairs first and second year nursing students with junior nursing students who will be their mentor for the year. The mentors and mentees find times to meet and get to know one another; this serves as an outlet for first and second year nursing students to ask questions, seek advice and any guidance that the mentor can offer. First and second year students asked questions related to classes, applying to the nursing program and about the nursing program in general. Getting answers to these questions helped ease any concerns or nerves for the mentees! Many Nursing Club events were held throughout the semester that allowed all mentors and mentees to come and get to know others. Overall, it was a very great year for the Nursing Club. To make comments or provide suggestions to change or add events, please contact the Nursing Club at nursingclub@csbsju.edu.

DES Inductions

Delta Epsilon Sigma (DES) is a national Catholic Honor Society that recognizes women for outstanding academic achievement and service to others. Students inducted into this society must maintain a GPA of 3.9 or higher and be involved in the community through volunteer work and extracurricular activities. Three nursing students were inducted into DES this spring. We would like to congratulate Mary Costello, Molly O’Neill and Alexandria Khoury on this huge accomplishment!

Health Fairs

The Nursing Department and sophomore students from the Nursing 201 course were involved in planning and implementing the Wellness Fest and Aging in Place Health Fairs. The Wellness Fest was a campus-wide event serving all students at CSB/SJU. The Aging in Place event, held at the Whitney Senior Center, allowed students to interact with older adults in the St. Cloud community. Nursing students collaborated with students and faculty from other disciplines on campus such as Exercise Science and Sport Studies, Integrative Health Science, Nutrition, and the Health Advocates in order to promote health and wellness in the CSB/SJU and greater St. Cloud communities.

This was the second year of the Wellness Fest and third year of the Aging in Place event. The goals of these health fairs support the goals of Healthy People 2020, which focuses on primary prevention as a means to keep people healthy. The health fairs also provided an inter-professional education opportunity for students and faculty to develop interdisciplinary skills such as communication and collaboration. Faculty and students involved in this collaborative process are working on a research study to evaluate the outcomes of this unique opportunity. Students have commented on the increased ability to communicate and work with other disciplines following this experience.
Theresa Reichert

I am a CSB graduate from the nursing class of 2005. After graduating, I volunteered in Calcutta, India for almost 6 months doing public health and working in a school. Upon my return, I worked at Minneapolis Children’s Hospital in the emergency room. While there, I became friends with a doctor who had worked in Haiti. This friendship led me to more volunteer work abroad including Haiti, after the earthquake, as well as Liberia.

I eventually made my way back to St. Cloud and worked in the Emergency Room as well as the Endoscopy Department. Working in a variety of settings in the past has allowed me a lot of flexibility and diversity within my courses at CSB/SJU. This year I taught in the public health course, Nursing 303, as well as 302, 301 and 201.

I have really enjoyed teaching at CSB/SJU because the students have been so enthusiastic and fun. I particularly enjoy seeing their growth semester to semester. I feel the Benedictine Values add a special touch to the care that we envision and teach to our students because these values allow us to see the true humanity and vulnerability in all of us. They call us to be more aware of ourselves and others and I am proud to be a part of a community that places so much value in those things. I also enjoy learning from the unique strengths of each of the faculty teaching in the nursing department and at CSB/SJU.

My free time is quite rare now that I have 3 kids (soon to be 4 kids in June!). My husband and kids are the true joys of my life and the moments with them, big or small, are the ones I cherish most, no matter what we are doing. In the summers, I spend a lot of time outdoors with the kids checking on the garden, the big berry patch, or going to my parents’ farm. I also love to take pictures, travel, cook, entertain guests, and learn new things.

Vicky Grove

I have taught clinical in Nursing 201 since 2012 and what I have enjoyed the most is seeing in the students’ eyes the realization that, “Yes, I am where I am supposed to be.” This year is the first year I have been a full-time faculty member, and I added Nursing 303 to my teaching list. It has been amazing to see the growth of the students from sophomore to senior year, and their excitement for the future is palpable. I really enjoyed the different clinical sites I was able to collaborate with and the Somali immersion experience.

The most rewarding part of my job is helping others and watching them grow. It is why I became a nurse, and even after almost 23 years of being a nurse, it is still the most rewarding part of my job. Teaching students to be the best at who they are is so rewarding. I love nursing and I have had experience in a variety of settings. I have enjoyed all of my experiences but my passion is OB. I have also loved working in home health, telemetry, and the float pool. I continue to work on the Family Birthing Center unit at the St. Cloud Hospital in a casual position. I love teaching patients, especially new parents, how to care for their new bundle of joy.

I am married and have three boys who have grown too fast. In the summer, I enjoy watching my boys play baseball, riding my bike on the Wobegon Trail, and spending time with family and friends.
Blended Learning

Carie Braun recently revised Nursing 240 Core Concepts I: Primary Prevention to a blended learning format. The blended learning format integrated online preparation and in-class problem-solving activities to maximize student learning. The course was designed using the video game concept of “leveling up.” Students needed to complete a “challenge” at each level, which corresponded to the course outcomes, in order to progress. The blended design was implemented to address issues of student satisfaction and engagement in this course. Although all student satisfaction indicators improved, the most significant changes were noted in the following indicators from 2016 (lecture/group discussion) to 2017 (blended learning; 1-5 Likert scale with 5 being “excellent”):

“The learning activities and environments were conducive to my learning” improved from 3.73 to 4.29;
“The learning objectives for this course were very clear” improved from 3.82 to 4.59; and
“Overall in this course I learned an exceptional amount” improved from 3.45 to 3.91.

Student anecdotal comments were also positive. Themes from the previous format included:

“Overall, I feel this is not a necessary course to take; a lot of the material covered was not essential to know.”
“Learning objectives were very unclear, making it difficult to engage fully in the course.”
“I wish the course would have offered more engaging activities rather than looking at PowerPoints.”

The blended format produced the following comments:

“This was a fun and engaging class that got me even more excited about becoming a nurse.”
“I thought this course was a fantastic start to the nursing program for new nursing students.”
“I learned a lot and still have some things that I need to work on, which is really exciting to me.”
“I thought the class was extremely helpful and fun, and it made me excited for my future nursing classes.”
“This course is somewhat slow by nature. It is a lot of reading and learning the concepts. The structure of this course helped it go by faster and each student was allowed to progress according to their own speed/level.”

Overall, the blended format promoted student independence, accountability, and self-discipline. The course was fun to teach and to see the students successfully achieve the end of the “game.”

The Nursing Department Underwent Accreditation by Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education

In 2007, the Nursing Department received 10-year accreditation from the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE). The Nursing Department spent a majority of last year and all of this year preparing for re-accreditation from CCNE. Accreditation is key for nursing program graduates in finding jobs after graduation. Additionally, only graduates from accredited programs can sit for national certification exams. Accreditation by CCNE assures the program is meeting the highest standards for quality and integrity in nursing education. The department submitted a 208 page narrative self-study document in February to provide evidence for meeting the standards for accreditation. In March, a three-member accreditation team arrived on campus to review the program and talk with key stakeholders. These stakeholders included faculty teaching in supporting courses, academic support services, the Academic Dean and Provost, the Presidents of both institutions, Nursing Department faculty and students, employers, alumni and clinical partners. The initial findings from the accreditation visit were very positive; the Nursing Department met all of the standards and key elements in the standards! The department will receive final notice of the accreditation decision in October of 2017. A big thank you to all who participated in the accreditation process!
What is your current job description?
Although my certification allows for care of individuals throughout the lifespan, my current position focuses on primary care of geriatric patients residing in residential care facilities (assisted living facilities, memory care units/facilities, etc.).

What path did you follow to arrive at your current job?
During my first years of RN practice, I was recruited to assist with adjunct clinical teaching for a local St. Cloud LPN program. I really enjoyed teaching and knew I would have to go back to school to advance in nursing education. I completed my MSN with a specialization in nursing education three years after graduating from SJU. Although I thoroughly enjoyed educating future nurses, I found myself missing the amount of patient care I had in other roles. The Nurse Practitioner role always intrugued me, so I enrolled in a post-master’s FNP program with goals to continue advancing in my career while also maintaining patient care. After graduation, I was recruited by a physician I previously worked with and have been working in this position since January 2016.

What are the most satisfying/rewarding parts of your job?
I have always enjoyed caring for the geriatric population and have been blessed to utilize my experience as a nurse to change the typical model of medical care provided to this population. My focus during day-to-day practice is to help my patients (and their loved ones) age the way they choose. I find it very rewarding to assist individuals to age with dignity during a time when it is so fragile and often lost.

How did the CSB/SJU Nursing Program prepare you for your current and previous job positions?
Directly out of school I began working as a nurse in managerial positions and nursing education. The nursing program at CSB/SJU prepared me to be an independent and autonomous critical thinker and learner. Those building-block skills set the foundation for me to take on great challenges, open doors to higher education, and secure the ability to choose from the many career options available in the nursing profession.

What advice do you have for nursing students?
Allow yourself to make mistakes. Although I graduated from the CSB/SJU nursing program eight years ago, I am sure the academic challenges and busy schedules are still rigorous and competitive. If you don't get the grade you want, try to look at how lucky you are to have the opportunity and desire to achieve more. A lesson I certainly wish I would have learned sooner.
Jennifer Peterson

Dr. Jennifer Peterson graduated with a doctorate degree from Concordia University, Wisconsin. The purpose of Jennifer's Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) project was to develop and implement a faculty mentoring program for non-tenured faculty to promote support and role development. Tenured faculty were used to mentor non-tenured faculty over the course of seven months to determine if knowledge of role and job satisfaction were improved with mentoring. The use of mentoring for novice faculty did promote increased job satisfaction and increased knowledge of the role. The project demonstrated that mentoring could ease role transition through improved knowledge of the faculty role. Challenges remain for new faculty which is why the mentoring program has continued following the completion of this project to assist nurses transitioning into the role of academic nurse faculty members.

Bethany Tollefson

Dr. Bethany Tollefson graduated with a doctorate degree from Concordia University, Wisconsin. Bethany’s Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) project focused on the use of mindfulness to decrease perceived stress in sophomore nursing students in a baccalaureate program. She was able to incorporate mindfulness-based interventions in Nursing 201 to significantly decrease students perceived stress as measured by the perceived stress scale. This project has been discussed among nursing faculty at CSB/SJU as a modality to increase the use of self-care by nursing students.

Rachelle Larsen

Dr. Rachelle Larsen coauthored an article titled Evidence Into Practice: Hospital and Academic Partnership Demonstrating Exemplary Professional Practice in EBP for the Journal of PeriAnesthesia Nursing, 32(1), 68-71. The article describes best practices for incorporating evidence based practice into institutional culture. This publication was a collaborative effort between nursing administrators at the St. Cloud Hospital (Roberta Basol & Dr. Roxanne Wilson), and faculty at College of Saint Benedict/Saint John’s University (Dr. Rachelle Larsen) and St. Cloud State University (Dr. Joyce Simones).

Kathy Ohman


Carie Braun

Dr. Carie Braun and Dr. Cindy Anderson (of Ohio State University) completed the 3rd edition of Applied Pathophysiology: A Conceptual Approach to the Mechanisms of Disease. The book was released in fall 2016.
LuAnn Reif
Dr. LuAnn Reif received the Commissioner’s Award for Distinguished Service in Community Health Services for her dedication to advancing the field of public health and the public health workforce. Dr. Reif is pictured to the right with Dr. Ed Ehlinger, Commissioner of Health for the state of Minnesota.

Jodi Berndt
Dr. Jodi Berndt received the Star of Excellence Award from Sigma Theta Tau, Kappa Phi Chapter-at-large. The award is given based on demonstrating superior professional leadership in any one or more of the following areas of nursing: education, research, practice, consultation, service, or administration.

Julie Strelow
Dr. Julie Strelow was awarded the 2017 Outstanding Achievement in Evidence-Based Practice Education from the St. Cloud Hospital. Dr. Strelow was recognized for her preparation of countless students in Nursing 201 theory and clinical to utilize and implement evidenced based practice (EBP) nursing interventions.

Carrie Hoover
Dr. Carrie Hoover was awarded the 2017 Evidence-Based Practice or Nursing Research Publication Award from the St. Cloud Hospital. This award is given to an individual who was accepted for publication in the previous year. Dr. Hoover was recognized for her recent publication in the Journal of Gerontological Nursing.

Congratulations to these faculty members!
Kappa Phi Induction

Sigma Theta Tau International (STTI), an international honor society for nurses, held their annual induction ceremony in October. Nineteen undergraduate students from the College of Saint Benedict/Saint John’s University were inducted during this ceremony into Kappa Phi-At-Large, the local STTI chapter.

Molly O’Neill ’17

Molly O’Neill, class of 2017, was awarded the 2017 Outstanding Nursing Student Award in Evidence-Based Practice from the St. Cloud Hospital. Molly was recognized for her outstanding contribution to a group project completed this spring titled Adapting to Change in Healthcare.

Alum Recognition

Katie Schulz ’06

Katie was awarded the People’s Choice Poster Award from the St. Cloud Hospital.

Jane Bagley ’93

Dr. Bagley received the Outstanding Achievement in Nursing Research Education Award from the St. Cloud Hospital. Jane will be the incoming chair for the St. Cloud State University Nursing Department.

Colleen Porwoll ’06

Colleen was recognized with an award for her Outstanding Achievement in Use of Evidence in Patient Education from the St. Cloud Hospital.

Notes about Our Graduates

Frequently, we receive feedback regarding our graduates. Here is a recent example: "Your graduate is very prepared to take on the role of a Registered Nurse, especially for being a new grad beginning her first nursing job. It is clear that the nursing school she attended has taught her to provide care that is holistic and has taught her to look past each patient’s physical illness. This is such a crucial part of nursing and more programs need to emphasize it in their curriculum."
Celebrating 30 Years of Service

Kathy Ohman
Congratulations to Dr. Kathy Ohman! Dr. Ohman was recently recognized for 30 years of service to the College of Saint Benedict/Saint John’s University. Kathy started teaching with the Nursing Department in the fall of 1987. During her time in the Department, Kathy has taught a variety of medical/surgical and leadership courses. She has also lead multiple study abroad trips both for the department and for the colleges. We are thankful for Kathy’s many contributions to the department and look forward to working with her for many more years!

A special thank you to Kelly Husmann, Nursing Department student employee, for designing and creating the newsletter!

CSB/SJU Nursing Faculty & Staff
Jodi Berndt Janet Neuwirth
Carie Braun Kathy Ohman
Vicky Grove Jennifer Peterson
Georgia Hogenson Theresa Reichert
Carrie Hoover LuAnn Reif
Nicole Lang Julie Strelow
Rachelle Larsen Bethany Tollefson
Nikki Laudenbach

Deb Baloun ~ Office Manager
Kelly Husmann ~ Student Employee
Mckenna Reny ~ Student Employee