Dear Alumni, colleagues and friends,

This has been a great year for the Nursing Department! In 2018, the CSB/SJU nursing program was ranked 67 out of 513 nationwide, and ranked 3 out of 14 in the state of Minnesota by College Factual. Our program continues with innovative and dedicated students and faculty. Fifteen of the 21 nursing faculty are full time, and, as you will see later in the newsletter, they have many great accomplishments from achieving tenure, to acceptance for publication, to awards and presentations.

As part of the department’s commitment to teaching excellence, the faculty applied for and received a grant to enhance our application of simulation in the classroom. In May, faculty attended a full day seminar on simulation debriefing presented by Kris Dreifuerst, Marquette University. As a result, faculty have adopted a new evidence-based debriefing model to enhance student learning in simulation, classroom and clinical environments.

I hope you enjoy reading about the students, faculty, alumni, events and accomplishments detailed in the rest of the newsletter.

Warmest wishes,

Rachelle Larsen, PhD, RN
Chair and Professor,
College of St. Benedict/St. John’s University
Pinning Ceremony

Each year, since 1973, the nursing department honors the graduating senior nursing class during a pinning ceremony. This spring, 51 senior nursing students were officially welcomed into the profession during the ceremony. As part of the ceremony, the students also participate in the Blessing of the Hands. This blessing reaffirms the power of the student’s compassion and healing touch in providing holistic nursing care. Students receive the CSB/SJU nursing pin during this ceremony. The shield, torch, crosses and banner in the pin design signify the school's Benedictine and Christian heritage.

Disaster Training

Submitted by: Dr. LuAnn Reif

2017 was an expensive, deadly year for natural disasters. Wildfires relentlessly scorched dry land from California to Portugal. Super-strength hurricanes and tropical storms slammed homes from the Caribbean to Ireland. Famine continued in Somalia and Yemen, while avalanches killed more than a hundred people in Afghanistan. People around the world recorded record-breaking devastation, much of it caused by higher-than-usual temperatures on land and at sea. Climate experts say that in a warming world, these fatal events will continue to worsen. A November 2017 report released by the Trump Administration cautioned that "extreme climate events" like heavy rainfall, extreme heatwaves, wildfires, and sea-level rise will all get more severe around the globe, and that some of these events could result in abrupt, irreversible changes to the climate as we know it. (Retrieved February 13, 2018, from http://www.businessinsider.com/worst-natural-disasters-hurricane-flood-wildfire-2017-12).

The Department of Nursing, recognizing the serious potential for a disaster and the demands placed on health care providers in responding to a disaster, has included an American Red Cross (ARC) program, “Disaster Health and Sheltering Course” as part of their nursing curriculum. This program provides the students with insights to the health and social issues of disaster victims. They also complete a curriculum online and in a simulation with an ARC instructor on the issues and demands presented in setting up a shelter following the disaster. This results in the students receiving a certification from the ARC that enables them to become Disaster Action Team volunteers in their communities. In addition, the students participate in a disaster simulation where they are involved in the immediate assessment and triaging of victims of a tornado. The combination of these learning experiences helps prepare students to respond effectively following a disaster.
Kirsten Skillings, APRN CNS
Director of Inpatient Cardiology at the Saint Cloud Hospital—CentraCare Heart and Vascular Center
College of Saint Benedict Class of 1995

Skillings began her career at the Saint Cloud Hospital in 1990 as a Patient Care Assistant in the float pool, and learned how to work as a Health Unit Coordinator within her first couple of years. Eventually, Skillings learned how to be an OB technician, and worked at the Family Birthing Center as a PCA and OB technician. During that time, she was also finishing her degree as an undergraduate nurse through CSB/SJU. She obtained a summer internship in 1994 and worked in the CCU. After her graduation from CSB/SJU in May of 1995, Saint Cloud Hospital hired Skillings as an RN in the ICU. She worked for a few years as a nurse and then became core charge nurse which included the role of Education Facilitator. During this time, Skillings returned to graduate school with a strong desire to become an Advanced Practice Nurse (APRN), and set her mind on becoming a Clinical Nurse Specialist in the ICU. She completed her Master of Arts in Nursing through the College of Saint Scholastica in 2004. From 2004 to 2013, Skillings worked as a CNS in the ICU. After nearly 20 years in the ICU, another door opened and Skillings accepted the position of Graduate Nurse/Student Coordinator for St. Cloud Hospital. During her relatively short time spent in this position, Skillings worked to restructure the New Graduate Residency Program, and supported screening, interviewing, and hiring all new graduate RNs and summer nurse interns. In early 2015, Skillings was encouraged to apply for the open position of Director within the Saint Cloud Hospital. She eventually applied and the rest is history; she is now three years into her role as the Director of Inpatient Cardiology.

Within her role as Director, Skillings is responsible for the day-to-day functions and employees on the Cardiac Care Unit (CCU), the Cardiovascular Thoracic Unit (CVTU) and the Telemetry Units. For Skillings, the most rewarding part of her job is, “having exemplary and very dedicated staff in all of my units. Working with them in all aspects: through good times, challenging times and throughout many changes has been rewarding in ways that are difficult to describe. I look forward to every chance I get to network or see my staff on the units.”

Skillings attributes the foundation of her nursing career to her education at CSB/SJU. “[CSB/SJU] globally prepared me to enter the workforce as an RN in countless ways,” says Skillings. “CSB/SJU provided classes, guidance, and leadership development which made entry level nursing a true success for me. I know what I initially learned through CSB/SJU continued to foster future growth, development, and career advancement. I will forever be grateful to CSB/SJU.”

For the future of nursing, Skillings believes there are many unique and rewarding opportunities that we have yet to define. “Patients no longer have one or two comorbidities or complications on admission, but are now admitted with a potential list of many, creating complexity for all involved in their care... with the advancement in technology and the electronic medical records, nursing is going to remain fast-paced, exciting, and challenging.”

“I am grateful to be a CSB/SJU alum and will forever be grateful of the life-long learning provided to me.”

Kirsten was the recipient of the 2018 Overall Award for Excellence in Nursing Research from the Saint Cloud Hospital. Congratulations Kirsten!
Student Athlete and Nursing Student: It’s Possible.

David Franta: Nursing student, Johnnie Football linebacker, three-time Academic All-MIAC, four-time Dean’s List honoree, and now, a 2018 graduate of Saint John’s University. For Franta, his experiences both in the Nursing Department and as a part of the Saint John’s Football Team, have allowed him to “build great friendships, gain both knowledge and life skills, and have the opportunity to become a part of two well-recognized and well-respected programs.” These experiences, as well as his hard work ethic and a strong academic foundation, have proved Franta to be a high-achieving student, while managing both his rigorous course load and football schedule. In 2017, Franta was named a semi-finalist for the William V. Campbell Trophy, an award that recognizes the best scholar-athletes in the nation. Up to 16 candidates nationwide are chosen to receive this prestigious award each year. “I certainly did not expect to be a semi-finalist, and to me, it was an honor to be recognized in this group of college athletes,” said Franta. In the spring of 2018, Franta was awarded the Stein-Fallon Scholar Athlete Award, an award that is given to one senior football student-athlete from Minnesota who “demonstrates outstanding academic achievement, football leadership, and community citizenship,” and presented by the Minnesota Vikings at U.S. Bank Stadium.

While Franta excelled both in the classroom and on the field, he also involved himself in volunteering when there was extra time in his busy schedule. His volunteer work included packaging meals for Kids Fighting Hunger, as well as raising money for Saint Jude Children’s Hospital, as a part of the football team. In addition to volunteering, he also involved himself in the nursing society, Sigma Theta Tau International.

Like most nursing graduates, Franta is now in the process of applying for positions as an RN in multiple locations in Minnesota. He completed both a summer internship and his senior capstone at Mayo Clinic Health Systems in Mankato, Minnesota in the Progressive Care Unit, and hopes to secure a job working in Mankato.

For future nursing students trying to balance athletics and the rigor of nursing classes, Franta says, “Be willing to put in the time and effort every day, but also make time to have fun. Sometimes, it may seem like work piles up and becomes overwhelming, but it is important to remember that the hard work will pay off.”
In the spur of the moment, CSB Class of 2016 graduate Hannah Gurbada turned down a nursing job in Hawaii to spend a year travelling Africa, Asia and Europe, as a caregiver for Saint John’s professor of Accounting and Finance, Dr. Bob Bell. With her was Piper Murray ’16, an additional caregiver for Bell. Through the year of travelling, the three deepened their understanding of the Benedictine values, gained valuable insight on the lives of others, and taught others many lessons, as well.

“We expanded people’s knowledge of disabilities and showed them how capable a person with a spinal cord injury can be,” said Gurbada.

Travelling the world was a life-changing experience. Gurbada’s favorite memories included hiking with Rwandan mountain gorillas, whitewater rafting in the Zambezi River, scuba diving in the Maldives, paragliding in Nepal, seeing the Taj Mahal and pyramids in Egypt (taking a selfie with a camel), visiting Jerusalem, and attending a mass celebrated by Pope Francis. At each stop along the way, the three were welcomed by Benedictine monasteries, where they stayed for the duration of their trip. “At each stop they welcomed us and shared their culture, traditions and lifestyles. It was a wonderful and special way to travel.”

Now, after a year of travelling with Bell and Murray, as well as taking a trip of her own to Australia and New Zealand, Gurbada has decided to start a career at Gillette Children’s Specialty Hospital in the Neuroscience unit, where she began working in March. In her blog, Gurbada highlighted her time volunteering in a Health Center in the convent community of Imiliwaha, where she worked alongside community doctor, Brother Stan. Throughout her experiences at the Health Center, Gurbada found that many of the illnesses the patients were suffering from were from environmental causes: infants suffering from malnourishment, diarrhea caused by contaminated water, and malaria. Having the opportunity to experience healthcare outside of the United States has made her very appreciative of the resources available in the U.S. “The U.S. healthcare system enables health care professionals to provide quality and safe care. We prevent diseases and illnesses that many countries throughout the world are unable to do because of inadequate resources. It was a positive culture shock returning to an American hospital.”

To read more on Hannah’s journey, visit her blog: http://globehoppingwithhannah.blogspot.com/
2017 was a year filled with internship opportunities for CSB/SJU students. Students travelled across Minnesota and North Dakota, interning at hospitals like Abbott Northwestern, University of Minnesota Masonic Children’s Hospital, Sanford Health in Fargo, North Dakota, and more. For Matthew Silbernick, he was able to experience 10 weeks of rewarding hands-on work at the Saint Cloud Hospital.

Over the summer of 2017, Silbernick was fortunate enough to obtain an internship position in the Telemetry unit at the Saint Cloud Hospital, a unit that works with patients that require special monitoring, including those recently released from intensive care. During his internship, Silbernick had the opportunity to view more than he had expected, witnessing various cardiac procedures such as Cardioversons, Pacemaker implants, and an Open Heart Bypass Surgery. While Silbernick experienced on the job procedures, he was also involved in an acute care/community health immersion course with the nursing internship program. Throughout the 40-hour course, students from Saint Cloud State University and CSB/SJU Nursing programs learned how a community-based curriculum, in addition to acute care populations, could build leaders within the nursing community.

Moving forward, Silbernick knows that the lessons he learned from his internship will have a lasting impact on his future career as a nurse. “I gained a great deal of confidence in my own skillset as a student nurse, and I am now ready to take the next steps as a nursing student and as a future nurse,” said Silbernick. For current and future nursing students, Silbernick highly recommends completing a summer internship. “Internships are great opportunities to gain additional hands-on experience in the hospital setting, expand your nursing knowledge, and enhance your ability to obtain future nursing positions.”

As a 2018 Graduate of Saint John’s University, Silbernick plans to work at the Saint Cloud Hospital in the acute care setting.

Internship Possibilities

Nursing at CSB/SJU: A Family Affair

For the students in the Nursing program at CSB/SJU, many words come to mind when describing their experiences in the Nursing program. Throughout the sophomore, junior, and senior cohorts, one word seemed to repeat itself: family.

To each student, the word family has a different impact; some students are drawn to the CSB/SJU community and it becomes like their family, and some have family that influence them to attend CSB/SJU. For sophomore Hannah Wohletz (left in picture), her decision to attend CSB/SJU was largely influenced by her sister, Catherine Wohletz ’16 (right in picture).

“I was enthralled by the opportunities available to [Catherine] and wanted to be a part of similar experiences. I was impressed by how welcoming the community at Saint Ben’s was, as well as by the success of the students,” said Hannah. During her years in the nursing program, Catherine had the opportunity to experience nursing outside of the United States, travelling to Belize and Guatemala as a part of her education. These additional opportunities inspired Hannah to attend CSB/SJU – Catherine’s positive experiences and the opportunities available to her were enough to win Hannah over.

After graduation, Catherine secured a job at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota and began her career working in the Progressive Care Unit. She is now in the process of transitioning to the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit. For Hannah, she has an interest in working in Rochester, but plans to keep her options open. As sisters, Catherine and Hannah share many similarities and interests, “so it is quite possible that we may end up pursuing similar career paths.”
What’s the **BUZZ** in the Nursing Department?

What is one word that best describes nursing at CSB/SJU?

What is the most important attribute that you have developed while in the Nursing program at CSB/SJU?
In fall 2017, senior nursing students travelled to five different locations across the globe to gain valuable experience working with global populations. Within each location, students applied their knowledge of public health sciences to benefit the communities that they were working in, advocated for and improved the health care setting, and worked diligently to advocate for social justice and health in their communities. After their immersion experiences, students were asked to complete a media project and produce a video highlighting the most important aspects of their trip. CSB/SJU students collaborated with the CSB/SJU Media Department and received training on the skills needed to complete their videos. After the students’ immersion experiences, the Media Department reviewed their videos, and assisted in the creation of the final product. These videos highlight just a small portion of the learning gained while abroad.

Click on this link to view the video!
Nursing Cadets

Fighting Saints Battalion Cadets and 2018 graduates Becca Dykhoff (left) and Mary Esker (right) were named numbers 1 and 3 respectively, on the 2017 Order of Merit Listing (OML), which was released during the fall of 2017. These rankings were released after the two, as well as 225 other Cadets, attended ROTC Cadet Advanced Camp over the summer at Fort Knox.

How did the two achieve this ranking?

The rankings were a combination of several factors, including college GPA, scores from the physical training testing, leadership abilities, as well as several other smaller factors, including the completion of a study abroad trip or skills in another language. The majority of their ranking came from their attendance at the advanced camp.

Congratulations Becca and Mary!

DES Induction

In April, the Omega Chapter of Delta Epsilon Sigma (DES) inducted 17 CSB students. Students inducted into DES must maintain a 3.9 grade-point-average or higher on the 4.0 scale, and be involved in the community through volunteering and extracurricular activities. Two junior nursing students were inducted into DES in April 2018. Congratulations to Carly Siemers and Kristen Whitaker on this accomplishment!
Each year, a group of teaching assistants joins the nursing faculty with the goal of enhancing student learning of nursing skills. These teaching assistants not only help with the lab, they are responsible for preparing laboratory simulations, participating in the simulations as actors, and controlling patient mannequins. With the help of teaching assistants, nursing labs are able “to create a setting that is as similar to a real hospital scenario as possible,” says Lead TA Skyler Winning.

For TA’s, their duties extend further than just helping in labs. They are also responsible for monitoring open lab, which gives students the opportunity to fine-tune their nursing skills outside of classroom time, and senior TA’s pair with faculty to provide guidance and additional support to students in the clinical setting. The TA role is essential to enhancing the learning environment in both the lab and clinical setting.

While the work the TA’s complete each year is beneficial for both the students and faculty, TA’s also receive their own personal benefit. “My favorite part about being a teaching assistant is seeing students progress and grow in their nursing knowledge and confidence. Being able to assist in demonstrating skills and providing feedback to students also gives me an excellent opportunity to refine and master my own technical nursing skills,” says Winning.

There are many opportunities provided to students within the nursing department that allow them to build their nursing skills and practice within a real-life setting. The addition of teaching assistants in the labs allows for additional resources that benefit the educational experience for incoming nurses, and students looking to further their nursing education.

Nursing faculty agree that teaching assistants are valuable assets to the department. “The Nursing TA’s are mentors, leaders, and through their work, are able to build a stronger Benedictine community,” says nursing professor Julie Strelow. “Having teaching assistants within the lab allows me to focus on giving students a high-impact learning experience.”
Recent Publications:


Presentations:


Promotions:

Georgie Hogenson and Jodi Berndt received positive tenure review and were promoted to Associate Professor. The institution recognized their contributions in teaching, scholarship, service and advising. Congratulations Georgie and Jodi!

2018 Nursing Awards from the St. Cloud Hospital:

Jodi Berndt (pictured left in photo) was the recipient of the Evidence-Based Practice or Nursing Research Publication Award.

Rachelle Larsen was the recipient of the Outstanding Achievement in Nursing Research Education.
Congratulations to nursing faculty members who were recognized for years of service (L to R): Rachelle Larsen (20 years), Carrie Hoover (15 years), Janet Neuworth (30 years) and Carie Braun (20 years).

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