STUDENTS “REACH HIGHER” WITH APPS DESIGNED TO PUT THEM ON A CAREER PATH

HIGH-TECH SIMULATION LABS BREATHE NEW LIFE INTO WILLIAM PATERSON NURSING PROGRAM

IMPORTANT CENSUS BUREAU REPORT UPDATE

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WHY IT MATTERS TO ALL OF US
Attending a vocational high school started Keyli Panduro’s passion for the medical profession. While in college, she became an EMT. Then she declared her major—nursing. “I wanted to deal more with patient care and have more connection with my patients as opposed to just curing them as a doctor would,” Panduro said.

With her EMT training, she chose to transfer to William Paterson University in New Jersey because the nursing program had diversity, a good reputation and technology.

“There’s a lot of technology already in the health care field,” Panduro said. “We have to stay on top of it.” As an EMT, she explained, there are cameras in the ambulance. A doctor can see patients’ faces and can treat them virtually. “With technology, if we treat patients faster, they can live longer.”

The 22-year-old Panduro couldn’t have timed her transfer to William Paterson more perfectly. Hands-on labs and state-of-the-art technology were about to enhance the already-reputable nursing program at a whole new level.

The program already had a strong foundation. About to celebrate its 50th anniversary in March, enrollment is at 500 students; more than 300 are undergraduates, 140 are in the master’s program and 22 students are earning their doctorate. More than 50 make up the nursing faculty.
In January 2016, the grand opening of the 80,000 square foot University Hall breathed new life to the nursing program. University Hall, a two-story, glass-filled building, complete with an atrium, and a Speech and Hearing Clinic for diagnostic and therapeutic services for the community, also relocated the Nel Bolger, RN Nursing Laboratory. It added two updated patient simulation laboratories and a control room to provide enhanced clinical training, three nursing basic skills labs and four additional nursing simulation labs.

“They’re very sophisticated,” said Kathleen Waldron, president of William Paterson University. “You would think you’re in a hospital room. Students would have to take turns learning how to handle patients. Now they get more lab time. They get more time before stepping into hospitals.”

Waldron explained that funding for the state-of-the-art building came from the New Jersey “Building Our Future” Bond Act. The university chipped in $10 million to the $30 million from the state. Not since 1988 had there been such a bold move for construction. The first priority had to go toward a science and health focus since that would also benefit those related professions in the state. It was a win-win for the university and the community at large. It seemed everyone was on board to make the project a reality.

“It took eighteen months to build, we finished on budget and six months ahead of schedule,” Waldron said. Even in the coldest of winters the construction crew worked to make this happen, so doors could open for the spring semester, she said.

More than 300 state and local officials attended the event. Lieutenant Governor Kim Guadagno addressed the crowd, saying, “We all know in New Jersey health care is going to be the top provider of jobs. What will happen in the building is not only going to serve the community through its clinics, but it’s going
to help people all over this state in a way you can’t put a dollar value on.”

Dedicated to the health and sciences, such communication disorders and public health, as well as the nursing program, approximately 5,000 students use University Hall. The addition of all the state-of-the-art facilities has enhanced the caliber of learning, resources for teaching, quality of hands-on labs and academic standards.

Putting the Practical to Use: Simulation Labs

For 27 years, Vicki Coyle has taught in the nursing department at William Paterson. For years, she was a labor and delivery nurse and teaches critical thinking courses that test practical hands-on skills. “In a lab with a patient critical thinking is not a linear process. You can’t make assumptions. You take a problem, and with your nursing information ask, ‘What am I going to do about it? Is it relevant or is it irrelevant?’”

Students get theory classes, but in the labs, they put critical thinking and clinical judgment class concepts to the test as they go through guided simulations. In the simulation labs, Coyle said, they are split into small groups of seven to 10 students and will get to do a head-to-toe assessment of a mannequin laid out on the table.

Each student does rotations covering medication, documentation, vitals, pain, skills evaluation and more each time they come in. The mannequins, Coyle explained, can speak back with reactions as simple and quick as “Ouch” or a patient suffering complications or severe reactions to a procedure. Students can then adjust whatever they are doing to the “patient.”

“We are exposing them to cases they are going to see in hospital rooms and helping them develop critical thinking skills they’re going to need on a case-by-case basis.”

Panduro learns more every time she is in the lab. “The simulation labs help depict real life scenarios. We have mannequins and can insert IVs, take blood pressure, assess wounds,
breathing, vital signs. They can answer our questions. Better to make our mistakes in the lab than in real life.”

**From Simulation Labs to Future Success**

With the high-tech training facilities and quality of professors at William Paterson’s nursing program, in five to 10 years, WP President Kathleen Waldron envisions more master’s degrees will be pursued and more qualified, diverse applicants and nurse practitioners will be the norm.

“There is such a demand on our student nurses, but our academic standards are high. I think we’re well prepared for the future.”

In addition, awareness of the trending student population can tap into future population needs.

“We have more male students, and more Hispanic male nursing students, which reflects the 26 percent Latino undergraduate population,” Waldron said.

Then student success will come down to a calling. Now in her last semester, Panduro seems committed to her chosen field. “It’s definitely been a grueling program but worth the sacrifice.” She feels more than prepared. And she sees well past being the first in her family to graduate from college.

Her long term goal is to become a flight trauma nurse—and now that will likely be a reality. “I’m leaving with an undergraduate degree and a career. I got the best of both worlds with my experience here.” •