

INFUSE!

SUMMER 2019

Nova Southeastern University
Ron and Kathy Assaf
College of Nursing



**NURSING
INFORMATICS...**
Transforming
the Profession



EXECUTIVE Exchange

MARCELLA M. RUTHERFORD, Ph.D., M.B.A., M.S.N., R.N.
Dean, Ron and Kathy Assaf College of Nursing

NURSING INFORMATICS TRANSFORMS HEALTH CARE LANDSCAPE

The Ron and Kathy Assaf College of Nursing (ACON) is infusing its unique nursing knowledge, skills, and approach into transforming the health care landscape. This issue of *INFUSE!* shares information about one of the college's newer program options—the high-demand field of nursing informatics.

Informatics and data technology are essential for success in today's complex health system, and will become even more critical in the future. Using informatics, tomorrow's providers will be able to unite with data to solve high-impact problems.

In the ACON's nursing informatics concentration, master's-level students examine the role of nurses in informatics, the competencies expected, and the standards that exist in this field. Nursing students develop the skills needed to implement new information technology used for

knowledge management and quality improvement. The program also explores the key legal, regulatory, and ethical issues that arise in the use of health information technology.

Most importantly, the students apply the utilization of health information technology as they move into leadership roles in the health care system. Uniquely, the ACON concentration of nursing informatics is offered in an interprofessional format, with nursing students learning beside other HPD students in an interprofessional, online setting. By doing so, the health care providers can fit learning into their daily schedules, learn about how the various roles need and use technology, and understand how to enhance the use of informatics to meet the needs of health care delivery.

Health information guides will shape how care is delivered in the future and is essential

to assure seamless patient care. Not only is technology utilized in the acute hospital while caring for patients, but informatics also has blossomed as a field that benefits patients and expands the arms of providers to guide care and to maintain health.

Health care today is focusing on returning or keeping the patient at home. Information sharing across settings and between providers is essential to organize and communicate the patient's health status. Telehealth, innovative health apps, and consumer-based diagnostic testing devices have the potential to keep patients out of the hospital, while allowing providers to keep an eye on their patients' condition.

Data utilization also is helping providers to understand populations and community members' collective health status and allowing them to tailor delivery to high-risk individuals. Preventative

services can then be identified proactively and delivered.

Nurses are vital guides for patients as they transition across settings and toward access, assuring follow-up care occurs in a timely manner. They also validate that complete health information is available and educate and answer questions both directly and over various telephone/telehealth systems. As health care is transforming, information systems are growing as a crucial means of assuring gaps in care are avoided, and all areas of care remain connected around the patient's health needs.

This issue of *INFUSE!* will also introduce readers to the ACON Advisory Board members. The board was formed last summer, and this issue will introduce you to the members, who offer an array of expertise that helps to guide and shape the college's future.

Infuse! Volume 3, Number 1

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Nursing Informatics



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Learning Down Under



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MEET THE DEAN'S ADVISORY BOARD



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The Dean's Advisory Board supports the Ron and Kathy Assaf College of Nursing (ACON) and provides mission-based leadership and strategic guidance. The board's goal is to cultivate a team of supporters who advance the ACON mission in multiple ways that benefit the community the college serves.

The selected board members have achieved leadership stature aligned with the nursing community in health care, related business, government, philanthropy, or with other nonprofit stakeholders. While the college's dean leads day-to-day operations, the board-dean relationship is a partnership, and the appropriate involvement of the board is both critical and offers support and advocacy for the college. The advisory board is available and offers meaningful feedback and guidance to the dean.

KATHLEEN ASSAF, B.S., is trustee emerita for the Saint Andrew's School Board of Trustees, chair of the Diocese of Palm Beach Diocesan Finance Committee, and a member of the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land Board of Directors.

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SHARON SULLIVAN, M.S., is the CEO of Renewal by Anderson of Greater Charlotte in North Carolina.

Educating Nurses for Advanced Roles

By STEPHANIE LA MANNA, Ph.D., M.P.H., A.P.R.N., FNP-C, AGACNP-BC

Patients benefit from the high-quality, comprehensive, patient-centered health care services provided by the more than 28,000 advanced practice registered nurses (A.P.R.N.s) working in Florida (Florida Center for Nursing, 2018) and the estimated 270,000 licensed to practice in the United States. This number, which jumped from an estimated 248,000 A.P.R.N.s in March 2018, is substantially higher than the estimated 120,000 A.P.R.N.s reported in 2007 (American Association of Nurse Practitioners, 2019) and is expected to grow as the demand for A.P.R.N.s is expected to continue to increase.

A.P.R.N.s fill a critical need for health care practitioners and offer focused, holistic care to meet the patient's health and personal goals. A.P.R.N.s are attuned to the needs of the individual patient and the health care system at large and are known for their full patient assessment, which seeks to individualize care for the patient. A.P.R.N.s fulfill an important economic need in the community. Reimbursement options for A.P.R.N. services include Medicare, Medicaid, commercial insurance indemnity, and managed care.

Originally envisioned as primary care providers for underserved, rural communities, A.P.R.N.s are now effective providers for families,

adults, children, neonates, women's health/gender-related disorders, and psychiatric mental health problems in both primary and acute care settings. As the A.P.R.N. role continues to evolve, so does the preparation for A.P.R.N. practice. Entry to A.P.R.N. practice currently requires a minimum of a Master of Science (M.S.N.) in Nursing. NSU's Ron and Kathy Assaf College of Nursing (ACON) offers M.S.N. preparation for the family/individual across the lifespan, adult-gerontology acute care, and psychiatric-mental health nurse practitioner.

Nurses may also pursue doctoral-level education. The ACON offers doctoral education degrees, such as Doctor of Nursing Practice (D.N.P.) and Ph.D. in Nursing with a focus on nursing education. Each of these doctoral degrees are considered terminal degrees in the field. The D.N.P. degree prepares graduates at the highest professional level of nursing practice to advance the application of nursing knowledge, with the intention of improving health care for diverse populations.

D.N.P. students identify a practice problem, search and evaluate professional literature for evidence-based interventions for the problem, implement the intervention, and evaluate the results of a quality improvement project. Ph.D. in

Nursing graduates are nurse scientists prepared to conduct research in both academia and health care settings.

In 2018, the National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties started work to move all A.P.R.N. education to the D.N.P. degree as the educational entry point by 2025. This change will provide role standardization similar to other health care practitioner professions and create partnerships with Ph.D.-prepared nurses to engage in meaningful, evidence-based nursing research.

Both practice and research doctoral-prepared nurses will improve health care delivery and position nursing leaders for the frontline of care. The ACON graduate programs are on the forefront to incorporate students' educational goals that are consistent with the educational plan of the profession of moving nursing toward the unique value roles that will evolve over the next decade.

American Association of Nurse Practitioners. (2019, January). "More practitioner role grows to more than 270,000." Retrieved from [/news-feed/nurse-practitioner-role-continues-to-grow-to-meet-primary-care-provider-shortages-and-patient-demands](#).

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Stephanie La Manna is the program director of the Ph.D./D.N.P./AGACNP programs.

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Curriculum Addresses Health Care Changes

By **BLONDEL MARTIN**, Ph.D., M.S.N./Ed., R.N.

The year 2020 is fast approaching, and the rapid changes in health care require colleges and universities to review and revise their curriculum to meet these demands. Health care costs, reimbursements to hospitals, waiting time in an emergency room, and emphasis on patients' satisfaction when hospitalized have become changes that affect the hospital experience.

Patient-centered care through interprofessional collaboration is also central to a successful hospital experience. Graduating nursing students entering the workforce are

expected to have some knowledge about this aspect of health care, not just bedside nursing. The Ron and Kathy Assaf College of Nursing has risen to this challenge. Courses in the Bachelor of Science in Nursing curriculum are reviewed to ensure we are addressing the changes in health care to prepare our next generation of nurses.

Three key courses incorporate assignments and class activities that require students to research components related to these aspects of health care: The Business of Health Care, Nursing in Today's

Health Care Environment, and The Nurse as a Leader and Manager.

Facilitated by course faculty members, students are actively engaged in reviewing journal articles, discussions, and presentations that address these issues. Guest speakers, such as administrative personnel from hospital organizations, are invited to share their perspectives on these topics as well. Through these initiatives, our goal is to expose and prepare our students to assimilate into any hospital organization as they enhance their nursing career.

WILSON FAMILY CONTINUES NSU NURSING TRADITION

Typically, parents are in the audience cheering as their child walks across the stage at commencement. Last year, the roles were reversed at the NSU commencement ceremony in Davie, Florida. Brett Wilson, R.N., beamed with pride as his parents, Lisa and Scott Wilson, received their advanced practice registered nurse (A.P.R.N.) master's degrees. All three Wilsons, who reside in Cape Coral, Florida, have prior nursing degrees from the university as well.

As befitting NSU's first family of nursing, Lisa and Scott Wilson will both go on to pursue their Doctorate of Nursing Practice (D.N.P.) degrees from the NSU Palm Beach Campus, aiming for an August 2020 graduation. At that time, Brett Wilson is hoping to finish his A.P.R.N. degree.

"You could say that nursing is just in our blood," Lisa Wilson said. "The nursing field offers job satisfaction and good employment opportunities, and the advanced degrees open up teaching and administrative opportunities."

She explained that once her career began, her husband and son became inspired to follow in her footsteps. "I enjoy teaching and look forward to possibly setting up my own practice one day," said Lisa Wilson, who works as a clinical supervisor at Lee Memorial Health Systems. Scott Wilson has been working full time on his degree, while Brett Wilson works as an emergency room nurse.

Scott Wilson attributes the family's success primarily to his wife. "Our family has gotten this far in our education because Lisa has encouraged us all the way," he proclaimed.



FROM LEFT
Marcella Rutherford, Ph.D., M.B.A., M.S.N., R.N.,
dean of the Ron and Kathy Assaf College of Nursing,
with Lisa and Scott Wilson



The Role of Informatics in Nursing

Informatics itself is essentially information science, though it can be quite complex with the dynamic nature of changing technology. Nursing informatics is defined as a specialty in nursing that integrates the areas of computer science, nursing science, and information science to both manage and convey data, information, wisdom, and knowledge in the practice of nursing (Finkelman, 2016).

Nurse informaticists participate in tasks that involve a focus on approaches and technologies of handling information in nursing. They are also advocates of the practicing nurse as representatives for all nurses in all areas of practice, such as education, research, and clinical areas of the profession (Finkelman, 2016). Informatics nurses help integrate technology in health care and the nursing profession due to their understanding of practice needs regarding information and computer skills. Additionally, they know how to utilize information technology in nursing, and they participate as leaders in the interprofessional team.

By **CLARISSA AFABLE**, B.A, R.N., and
ARIF M. RANA, Ph.D., Ed.S., M.S., M.P.H.

“ In our evolving health care model, nurse informaticists are in short supply, but in great demand. ”

Nursing informatics got its start around the 1960s with the emergence of International Business Machine computers. The role of the nurse informaticist came from the necessity of applying the latest technologies to advance health care. Subsequently, a formal definition of the informatics nurse's role emerged in literature around the 1980s and expanded in the 1990s with the proliferation of technological advances and use in the health care industry (Carriere, MacDonald, and Chan, 2016).

The pervasive availability and utilization of the Internet in the 1990s triggered a conceptual shift in information and communication distribution. At the time, the selection of registered nurses (R.N.s) in health care organizations who may have had better computer skills than other peers, and who have had years of experience in practice, continued for informatics nursing. These nurses felt they did not have the extensive knowledge required for the job and have often enrolled in informatics education training and certification.

In order to be an informatics nurse in today's world, an active R.N. is the minimum prerequisite.

Along with technological advances and continued integration of electronic health records (EHRs) and other technologies in health care, competition for jobs in the nursing informatics field has caused R.N.s to seek advanced education in the specialty with a master's, and even doctorate, degrees in nursing informatics.

Current trends in nursing informatics comprise standardized terminologies; mobile health, such as with wearable technologies; clinical decision support, especially through integration with the EHR; and big data research (Peltonen, 2016). Furthermore, with technological advances being continuously integrated in health care, such as with the future trend of automation, the issue of a lack of personal contact with patients is a valid concern as nursing moves forward in informatics adoption.

There is no replacement for a fellow human caring for another, as the idea of caring is imbued in all humans. Although existentialist or dystopian views of automation exist, caring through and with technology has not been of particular worry amongst nursing informatics proponents, because it has been the assumption that caring can and does take place

(Booth, 2016). To combat the issue of a decrease in contact with patients and automation, methods of utilizing technology with the patient as the central focus, such as with the patient-centered care model and the interprofessional team—as well as the caring role of nursing in the forefront—must be implemented.

In our evolving health care model, nurse informaticists are in short supply, but in great demand. The Master of Science in Nursing degree program at the Ron and Kathy Assaf College of Nursing allows students to pursue a track in nursing informatics through NSU's Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine. The program is interprofessional, and faculty members at both colleges have worked diligently to create a skills-based curriculum.

Students in the nursing informatics track learn fundamental concepts of health informatics, project management, Lean Six Sigma (process improvement), database systems (SQL and PHP coding), and clinical decision support systems. Given proper clinical and informatics training, motivated individuals have tremendous opportunities in improving patient safety and health outcomes.



The Role of Informatics in Nursing

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2018-2019 Faculty and Staff Annual Giving Campaign

Thanks to the commitment of our faculty and staff members, the college exceeded its annual giving goal this year. Each gift made through this campaign helps ensure another future nurse has the opportunity to achieve academic success. This funding initiative has helped 68 students since its inception.

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LEARNING DOWN UNDER

M.S.N. Student Enjoys Enriching Educational Experience in Australia

By Scott Colton, B.A., APR

In May 2019, Master of Science in Nursing (M.S.N.) student Rachele Ethier embarked on the educational experience of a lifetime when she traveled to Australia to participate in the International Scholar Laureate Program (ISLP)—a short-term, career-focused, study-abroad program for high-achieving university students from around the world.

Ethier, who will be graduating with her M.S.N. degree later this year, was chosen based on her meeting the criteria of being an academically strong student who is a member of one of four honor societies. She is a member of the Golden Key Honor Society, Phi Theta Kappa, and the Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing.

During her time in Australia, Ethier participated in a range of learning activities with other selected scholars. These included

- a comprehensive look at Australia's health care system
- aboriginal health and medicine
- challenges of nursing shortages
- current affairs of indigenous health
- local hospital visits to compare facilities and care
- overcoming cultural barriers to deliver care
- principles of universal health care
- providing medical care in nontraditional settings
- the art and science of nontraditional healing
- the role of Australia's nurses





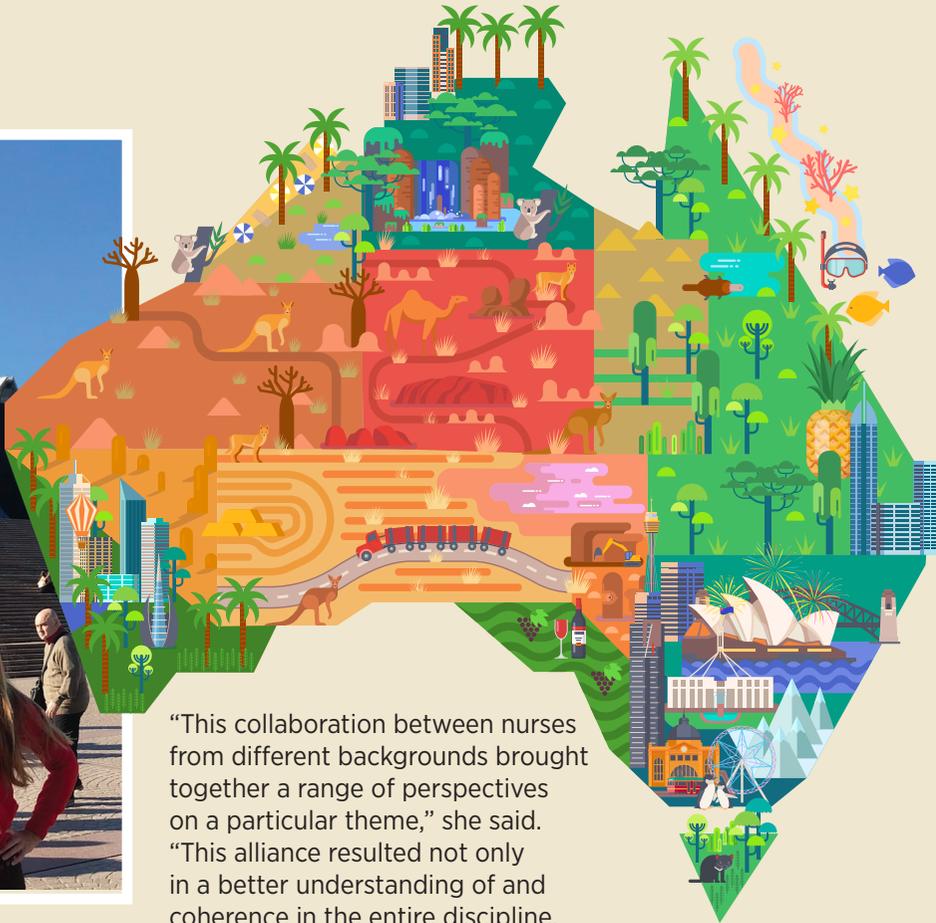
“ The ISLP experience allowed me to increase cultural intelligence, as well as network with other nursing professionals from around the world. ”

-RACHELLE ETHIER

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LEARNING DOWN UNDER

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“This collaboration between nurses from different backgrounds brought together a range of perspectives on a particular theme,” she said. “This alliance resulted not only in a better understanding of and coherence in the entire discipline, but also in an understanding of how knowledge from one field of nursing complements and extends learning in another.”

Ethier’s goal was to observe the role of nurses in the research being done on emerging diseases and learn how Australians are overcoming barriers to deliver health care to diversifying communities. “The ISLP experience allowed me to increase cultural intelligence, as well as network with other nursing professionals from around the world,” she said. “It also allowed me to venture out of my ecosystem and gain a global perspective on nursing and health.”

During her international exploration, Ethier expanded her view of health and health promotion, as well as her commitment to improving the overall health of the public.

Ethier credits the broad-based education she received at NSU’s Ron and Kathy Assaf College of Nursing for helping her earn the opportunity to travel Down Under and participate in the International Scholar Laureate Program. “The M.S.N. program at NSU has taught me the importance of integrating culturally appropriate concepts in the planning, delivery, management, and evaluation of evidence-based prevention, as well as population care and services to



INTERNATIONAL SCHOLAR LAUREATE PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The International Scholar Laureate Program (ISLP) is a product of an educator-led initiative founded more than 25 years ago to give top scholars the lifelong advantage of an international career perspective. The ISLP mission is to educate, motivate, and inspire accomplished college students through interactive, experiential, and engaging programs that encourage high achievers to reach higher and achieve more in their lives and careers.

The ISLP provides scholars the opportunity to further their career development, strengthen their leadership skills, and engage in a culturally enriching experience in Australia, China, New Zealand, or South Africa. Opportunities are available to scholars in the fields of business and entrepreneurship, engineering and technology, international relations and diplomacy, medicine and science, and nursing and health care.

diverse populations. I've learned that today's health care environment is ever evolving and influenced by technological, economic, political, and sociocultural factors locally and globally," she explained.

"Most importantly, the M.S.N. program provided me with a thirst for knowledge in research, policy, and advocacy. It has also motivated me to be at the forefront of knowledge generation and help lead the change to improve health care," she added. "The M.S.N. courses, such as Evidence and Practice, Health Care Policy and Leadership, Health Promotion, and Disease Prevention, all had resonating themes of cultural competencies and collaborative practice."

With graduation looming, Ethier is grateful for the enriching NSU education she has received, as well as the numerous opportunities she has had to become a well-rounded professional during her years at NSU. "My postgraduate education has led me to an aspiring career trajectory of becoming a nurse educator, a researcher, and a policy advocacy agent to help shape the health delivery system and advance values like social justice," she explained. "Thanks to my involvement with the ISLP, I gained insight on how to incorporate broad psychosocial, economic, and cultural factors to influence the determinants of health and decrease health disparities."



Scott Colton is the director of medical communications and public relations for the NSU Health Professions Division.



Catching Up

with 2015 Alumna
TAMMY VANT HUL

By SCOTT COLTON, B.A., APR

“I am a true example of a nursing career pathway success story—from ADN to Ph.D. If I can do it, anyone can. ☺☺

Since graduating from the Ron and Kathy Assaf College of Nursing with her Ph.D. in Nursing Education in July 2015, Tammy Vant Hul, Ph.D., M.S.N., R.N., ACNP, CNE, has used the skills she learned at NSU to augment her professional skills. In her current role as department chair and assistant director of the Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN) program at Riverside City College in Riverside, California, Vant Hul said she feels “honored every day to be able to give back and raise up students who have similar life stories to my own.”

During an admittedly difficult period in her life, Vant Hul was “a struggling single mother who worked very hard to provide a better life for myself and my two young girls. If it had not been for my initial associate degree nursing education pathway, I would have never been able to change the trajectory of my life and the lives of my daughters,” admitted Vant Hul, who earned her ADN degree from Riverside City College in 1996.

“I feel as if I serve as an example to my students of what can be

achieved in nursing,” added Vant Hul, whose daughters are now college graduates. “I am a true example of a nursing career pathway success story—from ADN to Ph.D. If I can do it, anyone can.”

Although she went on to earn her Master of Science in Nursing degree, Vant Hul felt there was more she could offer her college—and her students—by pursuing a Ph.D. in Nursing Education from NSU. “I was certainly academically and experientially qualified to teach in an associate degree nursing program. However, my clinically focused master’s program education did not equip me with a skill set in educational theory and practice,” she said.

Fortunately, Vant Hul’s NSU education added the final piece in her academic puzzle, allowing her to enhance her professional capabilities. “The knowledge, skills, and expertise I acquired through my experiences at NSU prepared me to educate nursing students using practices steeped in evidence and grounded in

research. As a result, NSU prepared me to be a nursing education leader,” she explained.

“Through my experiences at NSU, I have been able to take the lead on some significant changes that have occurred in our nursing department. I have also been able to share my nursing education expertise with other faculty members and directors throughout California. I now have a more global view of the skills and expertise required for educating students to assume their role in contemporary nursing practice,” added Vant Hul, who has worked at Riverside City College since 2002.

“The NSU faculty members I encountered were the best part of the program. They were always encouraging and supportive, even when I was going through some difficult personal times as I was finishing the program,” she said. “I try to model my own teaching practices after the examples they set for us. My NSU fin is always held high; I’m a proud Shark!”

Scott Colton is the director of medical communications and public relations for the NSU Health Professions Division.

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