To be an effective leader, one must be able to understand the group of people they are leading and be able to adapt to whatever best fits their needs.

A leader...calls attention to the success of their peers.

Team leadership requires interpersonal skills and compassion, an understanding of team dynamics, the ability to collaborate and consult as appropriate, and the capacity for self-awareness and self-evaluation.

The best leaders lead with humility and compassion.

Leadership means reaching out through collaborations across borders and oceans.

One who walks with, and works for, others in a true collaboration.

Leadership is a concept and process that is capable, through interactional phenomena, of influencing a group through goal achievement.
FROM THE DEAN

In this issue, we feature some of the outstanding leaders within our Valentine School of Nursing here at Saint Louis University. When we began discussing this issue, I was reminded of a statue near DuBourg Hall. Named “The Pilgrim,” it is a life-size bronze of St. Ignatius, and yes, it is featured on the cover of this magazine. As you can see, the statue depicts St. Ignatius, Bible in one hand, shepherd’s staff in the other. He is frozen mid-stride, a man on a mission.

What is somewhat elusive is his elevated back foot, which so elegantly, quietly and poignantly reflects his views and values. It references St. Ignatius’ depiction of a Jesuit as someone who lives and leads with one foot raised. To me, it alludes to the servant leader, one who walks with and works for others in a true collaboration, with an abundance of faith and a strong sense of purpose and vision. I feel blessed to work among so many significant leaders who live these Catholic values and share our Jesuit mission.

Our main story relates news of a special partnership we are forming with SSM Cardinal Glennon Children’s Hospital and the establishment of a steering committee for an academic and practice partnership. In August of 2022, we matched a few SLU students with Cardinal Glennon preceptors to provide real-world lessons of healing and meaningful opportunities for mentorship and growth.

We also feature Associate Professor Bobbi Shatto, Ph.D., RN, CNL, whose groundbreaking leadership is working to alleviate the nursing shortage by addressing the need for more nursing educators. Then there is the leadership of Professor Karen Moore, D.N.P., APRN, ANP-BC, FNP-C, FAAN, FAAN. We bring you the story of her service in the American Academy of Nursing and in Ireland as a Fulbright Specialist Award recipient, and in so many other leadership posts, a global reach and meaningful opportunities for mentorship and growth.

Along with faculty, Valentine School students are stepping up in each program and preparing to lead as nurses out in the world. As our scholars embark on their careers, Alumna Mary Kay Knight-Macheca, ANP ('84), was recognized for her leadership when SLU presented her with the Alumni Merit Award in 2022, a leadership and management in nursing. In August of 2022, we matched a few SLU students with Cardinal Glennon preceptors to provide real-world lessons of healing and meaningful opportunities for mentorship and growth.

For more information about the magazine or to submit story suggestions, please contact:
314-977-8809
CPS, P.O. Box 141
3125 Caroline Mall, Suite 225
Saint Louis, MO 63104-1099


In a recent Distinction in Nursing Awards ceremony, the Valentine School honored Saint Louis University Associate Professor Karen Guentert, Ph.D., RN, CNE, CNL, as the award recipient in the educator category. "Mama Karen Cuvar, as she is known to her students, is the Valentine School’s level one coordinator for the Traditional BSN program, and she teaches fundamentals of nursing and health assessment courses.

Cuvar has shown herself to be a leader among educators, and she has long held the respect and adoration of her students. In 2020, her students nominated her to receive the DAISY Foundation’s DAISY Award for Extraordinary Nurses.

Cuvar is the 10th SLU faculty member to win the educator category in the last 12 years, reflecting the Valentine School’s impact on its students and its standing as a leader in nursing education in the region.

Of more than 200 nurse and educator nominees in 18 categories, 50 were selected by five judges from the St. Louis metropolitan region. The award recipients were featured in the May issue of St. Louis Magazine.

Associate Professor Bobbi Shallo, Ph.D., RN, CNL, was named as a finalist in the educator category. She serves as the coordinator for the MSN-CNL program and, in 2022, led an effort that secured nearly $1 million in grant funds to help enhance nursing education programs and develop solutions to alleviate staffing shortages nationwide. (She is featured on pp. 12-13 in this issue.)

Assistant Professor Heather Wade, D.N.P., FNP-C, RN, was honored as an award recipient for her work during the pandemic when she restructured her duties to help the St. Louis community. She established and ran the SLU COVID-19 vaccine clinic and testing center, and she taught nursing students to administer vaccines to thousands in open events, nursing homes and University-wide clinics.

Associate Professor Karen Moore, D.N.P., APRN, ANP-BC, FNP-C, FAANP, FAAN, was named as an award recipient in the Research category. The recent recipient of a Fulbright Specialist Award, Moore studies global health and international exchange. In addition to serving as faculty coordinator for the Adults-Gerontology Primary Care NP Program, Moore helped design and coordinate a simulation center before joining the Valentine School. As a Fulbright Specialist, she spent six weeks in Ireland as part of an ongoing international nursing relationship at Dublin City University and work on establishing a simulation center and curriculum at the University there. (See her story on pp. 16-17 of this issue.)

In the Orthopedics category, Associate Professor Christopher Hemmer, D.N.P., ANP-BC, RN, FAANP, was honored as an award recipient. He prepares future nurse practitioners in the graduate program. His teaching focuses on primary care as well as specialized nursing. In addition to his teaching, Hemmer’s research focuses on adult populations dealing with fractures and osteoporosis.

Willis becomes inaugural Joan Hrubetz Dean

Through a bequest from Gertrude Buech and funding efforts by the Valentine School, the Joan Hrubetz Endowed Deanship was created in part to honor the former dean. In 2022, Provost Fred Pestello, Ph.D., RN, ANP-C, FAANP, FAANP, RN, was named as the inaugural holder of the deanship.

The Valentine School was also well represented with award recipients in the categories of Community Care, Research and Orthopedics.

Assistant Professor Patricia Hink, D.N.P., FNP-BC, RN, was honored as an award recipient for her work during the pandemic when she restructured her duties to help the St. Louis community. She established and ran the SLU COVID-19 vaccine clinic and testing center, and she taught nursing students to administer vaccines to thousands in open events, nursing homes and University-wide clinics.

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Heroes in Action

In November 2022, the March of Dimes Heroes in Action honored six Valentine School faculty in five categories for their work and dedication to making a difference in the lives of moms and babies in the St. Louis region.

Valentine School Assistant Professor Kelly Lovan-Gold, MSN, RN, BC-OB, was the recipient of the award in the specialty of Women’s Health. In the area of Healthcare Technology, the organization honored Associate Professor Cynthia Rabbileh, MEd, MNSR, RN, CHOS, CCE, e-Technology Coordinator, for her work. Rabbileh also was named as a finalist in the Education category.

In addition, Associate Professor Karen Moore, D.N.P., APRN, ANP-BC, FNP-C, FAANP, FAAN, was named as a finalist in five categories for their work in the area of Healthcare Technology, the organization honored Associate Professor Cynthia Rabbileh, MEd, MNSR, RN, CHOS, CCE, e-Technology Coordinator, for her work. Rabbileh also was named as a finalist in the Education category.

Moore, along with Associate Professor Christopher Hemmer, D.N.P., ANP-BC, RN, FAANP, was honored as an award recipient in the Research category. The recent recipient of a Fulbright Specialist Award, Moore studies global health and international exchange. In addition to serving as faculty coordinator for the Adults-Gerontology Primary Care NP Program, Moore helped design and coordinate a simulation center before joining the Valentine School. As a Fulbright Specialist, she spent six weeks in Ireland as part of an ongoing international nursing relationship at Dublin City University and work on establishing a simulation center and curriculum at the University there. (See her story on pp. 16-17 of this issue.)

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Watson conducts caring workshop

In October, the Valentine School hosted world-renowned nurse scholar and theorist Joan Watson, Ph.D., RN, ANH-BC, FAAN, L.L. (AAN), founder of Watson Care Science Institute in Colorado and Dean and Professor Emerita, University of Colorado Denver Anschutz Medical Center College of Nursing.

“Watson’s Caring Science is a trans-disciplinary approach that incorporates the art and science of nursing and includes concepts from the fields of philosophy, ethics, ecology and mind-body-spirit medicine,” according to the Watson Institute’s website.

Watson School faculty welcomed Watson at an evening reception on Oct. 5, 2022. Over the following two days of Oct. 6 and 7, Watson conducted a workshop focused on fostering and cul-
New faculty, staff

Over the past year, the Valentine School of Nursing has continued to recruit and hire new faculty and staff to further the community and its research, learning and leadership.

“Everyone has a hand in helping our school truly be a destination, serving as women and men for and with others,” said Joan Hrubetz Dean and Professor Danny G. Willis, D.N.S., R.N., P.A.C.N.-B, CNE, FAAN. “Together, we make our campus and surrounding community more compassionate and care focused.”

So, who are these new Billikens? Let’s meet them …

Seth Bland

Bland teaches master’s level students on their capstone projects as part of their training to become clinical nurse leaders (CNL). He also devotes his teaching to clinical hours in emergency and critical care nursing.

Emily Francis

For student recruitment, Emily Francis, she move to the Valentine School only required a change of campus location. She was already well acquainted with Saint Louis University, as her first job at SLU began a little more than two years ago when she became an academic advisor for the Parks College of Engineering, Aviation and Technology.

Krislin Keller

Krislin Keller Assistant Professor Kristin Keller, Ph.D., M.S., AOCHS, ACEN, joined the faculty at the Valentine School in August of 2012. Dedicated to the study, leadership and teaching of oncology nursing, Keller graduated from SLU in 2001 and joined the faculty initially as an adjunct professor.

Sarah Oerther

Since 2016, Assistant Professor Sarah Oerther, Ph.D., M.Ed., RN, ANEF, has been affiliated with the Valentine School, first as a research assistant, then from 2017 to 2019, she became an adjunct Nursing Instructor, then in 2022, she got the post she holds now. Over the course of her career, Oerther has numerous publications, commentaries, editorial, invited articles and a policy brief published in addition to the non-data-based articles and blogs she has written, and the scholarly presentations she has made.

Danielle Moore

An instructor at the Valentine School, Danielle Moore, M.N., APN, focuses on adult gastroenterology and the School’s partnership with Christian Franks’ of New Americans monthly health and wellness clinic, which began in 2021. Moore plans to maintain a role in the partnership, working with Billiken nursing students who provide clinical care to the newest members of the St. Louis community. She has been an adjunct faculty member of the Valentine School since 2020.

Kristin Raacoosin

In October 2022, Kristin Raacoosin joined the Valentine School nursing advising team. This is her first post at Saint Louis University.

Victoria Schratz

In March, Victoria Schratz joined the Valentine School as a recruitment specialist who develops and implements strategic plans and programs to market all of the Valentine School student programs. In addition to coordinating with the dean, faculty and staff members, handling general inquiries and processing applications, she serves as a liaison to the University, working with campus partners and marketing the School’s website and social media channels.

Elizabeth Verslues

At the beginning of the year, Elizabeth Verslues became a student services associate with the Valentine School. She brings a unique set of skills and a range of experiences that will prove an advantage in her new role with the University.

Before coming to SLU, Schratz was already an experienced talent acquisition coordinator for Heartlands Conservatory and director of public relations and marketing for Susan G. Komen Missouri and director of communications for the Missouri Valley Conference. Stilling earned her bachelor’s degree in political science and her master’s degree in Kinesiology and Recreation—Sports Management from Illinois State University.

Lutheran School after serving as an admissions/communications coordinator for Heartlands Conservatory and director of public relations and marketing for Susan G. Komen Missouri and director of communications for the Missouri Valley Conference. Stilling earned her bachelor’s degree in political science and her master’s degree in Kinesiology and Recreation—Sports Management from Illinois State University.
What you are about to read is, at its core, a work in progress. It is a story that has no conclusion, and that is by design. This is a story of twos: Two leaders, two institutions, a student nurse and her preceptor, a mother and her child. But we will get back to the players in a moment. We are getting ahead of ourselves.

We must begin with the first act of this power-filled play. We must begin at the story’s origin:

MEET GRACE TAYLOR
AGE: 24
OCCUPATION: Nursing Student
SCHOOL: Valentine School of Nursing
HOMETOWN: Edina, Minnesota
HIGHER EDUCATION: Miami of Ohio University, BS
Saint Louis University nursing student (MSN ‘23)
FAVORITE STAR WARS CHARACTER: Chewbacca
LEADERSHIP ROLE MODEL: “My mom! She’s a full-time mom and the head of a non-profit organization. Both my parents always showed me how to not bring work home with you and how to be your best self in both entities even when life is tough!”
BEST PART OF THE PROGRAM: “The faculty members were amazing! They truly made me feel like more than just a number and cared about my well-being during the program.”
HARDEST PART OF THE PROGRAM: “Time management! The second year of the program is highly clinically based, so learning how to find time to study, work, have a life outside of the program and take time for self-care was difficult!”

MEET SAM SLAUGHTER
AGE: 23
OCCUPATION: Pediatric Nurse
PLACE OF WORK: SSM Health Cardinal Glennon Children’s Hospital
HOMETOWN: Calwood, Missouri
HIGHER EDUCATION: Maryville University, BSN
FAVORITE STAR WARS CHARACTER: Obi-Wan Kenobi
LEADERSHIP ROLE MODEL: “My Dad. He gave me a lot of inspiration throughout my education and in sports. He is a manager with Ameren, and I always go to him for professional advice and financial advice!”
BEST PART OF THE PROGRAM: “Working with amazing students! I love seeing the progress of those I help teach and working with Gracie was awesome.”
HARDEST PART OF THE PROGRAM: “Always trying to find new things to teach them and constantly evolving teaching processes. Keeping people engaged and involved is an important part of education.”

We must begin with the first act of this power-filled play. We must begin at the story’s origin:
It began some 500 miles from here.

The idea came to newly appointed Juan Hrubetz Enowed Dean Danny Willis, D.N.S., RN, PMHCNS-BC, CNL, FAAN, even before he arrived at the Valentine School of Nursing. It was born of experience and a vision of a partnership. “When I had first started at SLU I knew the value of developing a practice/academic partnership into a formal program that enhances the practice and the education of nursing,” he said. “I had experienced its benefits at the University of Wisconsin Madison School of Nursing and UW Health, where I worked to enhance and foster the connections and pathways to strengthen an existing practice/academic partnership.”

When he took the helm of the Valentine School, Willis noticed that a partnership had not been developed here. Enter Michelle Romano, (Valentine School alumna, BSN '02, MSN, RN, NEA-BC, and newly appointed chief operating officer and chief nursing officer at SSM Health Cardinal Glennon Children’s Hospital.)

The two leaders began to hold meetings to discuss a variety of issues relating to both of their institutions and the leadership roles they each had. It was at one of those meetings that Willis introduced the idea to Romano. That’s when the idea moved from thought to discussion.

“Dr. Willis brought the partnership to my attention during one of our regularly scheduled meetings,” she said. “I was brand new, and he was new in his role as dean. He suggested that we figure out how we could partner together.”

Willis and Romano both saw benefits to establishing this sort of partnership and a steering committee. For Willis, the development of the program could address a variety of issues and needs on various levels. “This program really helps in the transition from student to nurse and the skills they need: the adoption of self-awareness, of the need for self-care, of the importance of team-building, skill development, accountability,” he said. “The other important thing it does is create a pipeline of nurses who are very much connected with the clinical institution.”

Romano said that “Willis speaks not just from a position of leadership but from a deep understanding based on experience. “In his previous role, Dr. Willis had been a part of an academic/practice partnership committee, and he had proposed it,” Romano said. “We thought the partnership would help further both sides: academic, as well as the clinical side. It has the potential to answer the question: How can we use the best resources from each area to improve the profession?”

THE COMMITMENTS:

- 144 shifts of collaboration for student nurses and preceptors
- 12 hours per shift
- 588 hours total on the floors for student nurses and preceptors
- Additional coursework for the degree program outside of the preceptor student clinical

THE STEERING COMMITTEE:

- Michelle Romano, MSN, RN, NEA-BC, Chief Operating Officer and Chief Nursing Officer
- Dr. Danny Willis, O.H., S.N., RN, PMHCNS-BC, CNL, FAAN
- Kristine L’Ecuyer, Ph.D., RN, CNL, Associate Dean for Graduate Education, Associate Professor
- Joanne Thanavaro, (VSN '78, '82), D.N.P., AFRN, Associate Dean for Undergraduate and Pre-Licensure Education, Associate Professor
- Michelle Carr, O.H., S.N., RN, CNL, Assistant Professor
- Margaret Busby, Ph.D., RN, B.S., CNL, CPNP-PC, Professor

As with any large endeavor that involves collaborations of institutions and other large entities, a steering committee, known as the Academic Practice Partnership, was established.

“The first step in developing this special partnership with SSM Cardinal Glennon Children’s Hospital has been the establishment of a steering committee,” Willis said.

The committee began sorting out the details to transform ‘Willis’ idea into a plan: one of strategy and action. Enter Bobbi Shatto, Ph.D., RN, CNS, SLU associate professor, Kristine L’Ecuyer, Ph.D., RN, CNS, SLU associate dean of Undergraduate and Pre-Licensure Education; Alicia Smith, BSN, RN, CPN, nurse manager at Cardinal Glennon; and Heather Jelley, MBA, BSN, RN, NEA-BC, administrative director of Nursing Operations of Cardinal Glennon; and others from both the hospital and the School.

Discussions began around specific realistic needs: The School representatives spoke of their need for more preceptors to mentor and guide nursing students in real-life hospital settings, and the hospital representatives talked about their need for a steady flow of nurses into the hospital to fulfill vacancies.

“The partnership seemed to be a solid solution for both institutions.”

“Creating a formalized practice partnership meant determining how we would work together for the hospital, the nurses, the student nurses and the School of Nursing,” Shatto said. “It was a collaborative effort that we continue to work on.”

They established a faculty manager at the hospital and created four positions for student nurses to work with one of two preceptors. It was L’Ecuyer who formalized the preceptor program, taught and prepared the preceptors and arranged for the faculty manager, Shatto said.

The program was designed specifically for students who planned to stay in St. Louis and potentially work at Cardinal Glennon. In August of 2012, the first students were matched with Cardinal Glennon preceptors with the aim of providing authentic lessons in nursing care, as well as support and guidance to ensure each student’s success, Willis said.

The plan was for students to become integrated into the hospital nursing community as they learned from October to May. By completing the program right as they are graduating, these nursing students would then transition to full-time nurses as a part of the unit, where they trained in the hospital.

“We started out with two students and added four more students,” Shatto said. “I really think it makes a difference to get integrated into the environment,” Shatto said. “Nurses leave because they do not have a community. Going through a program like this allows them to become a part of the community with a more compact and solid orientation, which leads to a smooth transition.”

So what was it actually like for those in the program? Enter Preceptor Sam Slaughter, BSN, RN, and Grace Taylor, BSN, MSN-CNL, ’23, then Valentine School nursing student, one of their young patients and her mother.

The halls are clean and quiet on 3South at Cardinal Glennon. It is midmorning on a clear March day.
Taylor pushes a heavy door and holds it open for Slaughter as the two enter a room just beyond the nurse's station at the end of the hall. Dressed in scrubs, Taylor's face brightens when she sees nine-year-old Alexis Rodriguez of Lebanon, Illinois, sitting up in her hospital bed studying the position of red and black checkers on a small portable metal game board. Taylor explains that not only have they come in to check on her, but they have brought a photographer and writer along to see what they do. She asks Rodriguez if she is excited about being in a magazine article. Rodriguez peeks around them to see her mother's reaction to the company. When her mother nods, the childだけど a bit at first but then settles as the routine of the check-in begins.

Slaughter is right at hand, but it is Taylor who takes the lead throughout our time in the room. She chats easily with both patient and parent as she smoothly confers with Slaughter. She admits that having the photographer over her shoulder seems a bit unusual for her. Rodriguez nods in agreement. For a moment, the two, caregiver and patient, commiserate as Taylor leans over to take Rodriguez's pulse and then repeats her movements for the camera. Rodriguez giggles nervously but settles into the moment for her close-up.

Meanwhile, Slaughter observes comments on her obvi-ous love of all things Baby Yoda, and the child becomes animated and happy to talk about her favorite character. Taylor joins in and they both take a moment to appreciate Rodriguez's Baby Yoda hoodie covering. Several minutes later Slaughter and Taylor are back in the hall, confering at the nurse's station and then checking the med cart. Today these moments are photo ops, but the easy hunter and in-sync stride demonstrates the sort of collegial connection the two have.

Between the snappy comments and comebacks, Taylor and Slaughter reflect on their roles in this training play. "Sam is always there to help and encourage me, but he also will tell me that it's time for me to try to do something," Taylor said. "He'll say 'let's go, your turn. You're going to do this. He pushes me to be better.'"

"I have been working with Grace since the fall, and there is a point when it's time to push her to do something," Slaughter said. "I know I am push- ing her out of her comfort zone but that is what a preceptor should require. If you don't push and allow them to do things, then they are not going to get anything out of the experience. It can be something like turning a patient for the first time or something more involved. But in each of those situations, as I push, I also am letting her know I am there to answer questions and lend support." Taylor recognizes how far she has come. She recalls her first days as a nurse.

"So at the beginning you build up, and you are scared," she said. "One of the first things we did is help wake someone up to take their vitals. As a baby nurse, I could say there definitely were times when preceptors model how to do it. Sam did it to show me how, and then he turned to me and said, 'Okay, now it's your turn.'" Preceptors demonstrate and guide, monitor and mentor, all in the hopes that their student nurse will blossom into a confident professional nurse. For Taylor, that aspect of the program has really helped her come into her own as a nurse. "If there were no clinicals like this, I would know a fraction of what I know now," she said. "I would have all of this book knowledge, and I would sink. I know that the only way to truly make sense of it all is to be present in the room." Taylor points to protocols like doing a blood transfusion, saying the guidance and support are vital to her success.

"Without a preceptor and this experience, I don't know if I would be able to do it, to make sense of it all." she said. "Without preceptors, I would not be able to do it, personally. I needed to learn how before just doing it." Both Taylor and Slaughter acknowledge the apprehension and the reason for it. At the same time, they also see how well Taylor has done in the program and how far she has come. For Slaughter, Taylor's presence translated into personal understanding, something he had not anticipated. "Having Grace allowed me to ask more ques-tions," he said. "If you are by yourself, you just go with the flow. Sometimes I realize there are things that I really should figure out or provide a better answer. Her presence makes me a better nurse."

Last May, Taylor graduated from the MSN-CNLI program and in June, she and Slaughter became colleagues on 3South. One ongoing ques-tion with the program lingers: What's next?

"The future of nursing education calls for more schools of nursing to join forces with institutions of care to nurture and protect the future of nurs-ing and fulfill the vital role of nurses," Willis said. "That is the goal: It is an intentional relationship that is based on mutual goals, respect and the sharing of knowledge. That's truly exciting."

FUTURE ENGAGEMENTS:

Beyond the preceptor-student program, the Valentine School and Cardinal Glennon are looking into opportunities for research and scholarly projects. These endeavors would be collaborations involving faculty nurses, nurse scientists, as well as graduate and undergraduate students. In these contexts, individuals from both sides of Grand Avenue will come together to explore opportunities for more research-based collaborations.

"The nurse scientist for Cardinal Glennon is working with Helen W. Lach, Ph.D., RN, CNL, FGSA, FAAN, the Valentine School's associate dean for research, to support endeavors that could include joint evidence-based research projects or a sponsored research day," said Dean Danny Willis. "We have gotten started, we are on the road, so I feel good about that.”
Novel approach to nursing shortage: Train more teachers

The coordinator of both the School’s accelerated and traditional MSN Clinical Nurse Leader programs, Shatto recognizes the signals of increasing nursing turnover and vacancies, an aging nursing faculty population, the backlash brainstorm from the Covid-19 pandemic and the issues these realities create.

“Right now, nursing turnover is high, which means we do not have enough nurses to fill the positions that are open,” she said. “As a result, vacancies are being staffed with traveling nurses, which means you may have a few on a floor who know the hospital, the routine, etc. No matter which nurse you are in this scenario, it is difficult.”

She’s not surprised by what the National Council of States Board of Nursing reported in April of this year:

“The data reveals that 100,000 nurses left the workforce during the pandemic and by 2027, almost 900,000, or almost one-fifth of 4.5 million total registered nurses work in the U.S., said Shatto. The state of Missouri, a clinical faculty can have eight to 10 students under their care and each one will be responsible for their own patient.”

There are nurses interested in becoming teachers, even with the responsibility and workload, she said. “In truth, everyone knows that nurses are up to the challenge of hard work.”

While workload may not be keeping nurses from taking up teaching, another major issue facing potential nurse educators does, and it is something all educators face: salary disparities.

“There are nurses who would like to become nurse educators,” she said, “but then factor in the reality that nurses working in the clinical arena make more than nurse educators.”

Still, Shatto seized an opportunity to develop a partial solution to the lack of nursing faculty issue: Revamp an existing program to create an educator track.

In September of 2022, Shatto and her team—Joanne Thanavaro, D.N.P., R.N., AGACNP-BC, DCC, FAANP; Kristine L’Ecuyer, Ph.D., R.N., CNL; and Eric Armbrrecht, Ph.D., M.S. secured a $100,000 grant from the state of Missouri to formalize an educator path through the Valentine School’s Clinical Nurse Leader graduate program.

“Teaching is also hard work. In the state of Missouri, a clinical faculty can have eight to 10 students under their care and each one will be responsible for their own patient.”

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Missouri established the grant program to address the nursing shortage. A total of 11 institutions received funding to “help enhance nursing education programs and develop solutions to help alleviate staffing shortages felt nationwide,” according to Missouri Gov. Mike Parson’s website.

“My administration has prioritized workforce development, especially for our high-demand fields such as nursing,” Parson said. “It is vitally important that we continue to invest in Missouri’s health care workforce. These grant funds will assist with expanding clinical partnerships and nursing resources to better provide students with a valuable education, as well as increase enrollment capacity in the future.”

Under the revised program, nurses who have their BSN can complete a 32-credit MSN-CNL program. To be eligible to receive the scholarship, they agree to teach in the state of Missouri for three years post-graduation. The grant provides scholarship assistance, means to develop a mentoring program, and funding to create a pipeline to the market and recruit SLU’s MSN-CNL program to potential nursing student candidates.

They began enrolling students for the revised program in January of 2023. So far, the Valentine School has recruited 15 students for the MS-CNL nurse educator track, nine of which are scholarship recipients.

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Missouri established the grant program to address the nursing shortage. A total of 11 institutions received funding to “help enhance nursing education programs and develop solutions to help alleviate staffing shortages felt nationwide,” according to Missouri Gov. Mike Parson’s website.

“My administration has prioritized workforce development, especially for our high-demand fields such as nursing,” Parson said. “It is vitally important that we continue to invest in Missouri’s health care workforce. These grant funds will assist with expanding clinical partnerships and nursing resources to better provide students with a valuable education, as well as increase enrollment capacity in the future.”

Under the revised program, nurses who have their BSN can complete a 32-credit MSN-CNL program. To be eligible to receive the scholarship, they agree to teach in the state of Missouri for three years post-graduation. The grant provides scholarship assistance, means to develop a mentoring program, and funding to create a pipeline to the market and recruit SLU’s MSN-CNL program to potential nursing student candidates.

They began enrolling students for the revised program in January of 2023. So far, the Valentine School has recruited 15 students for the MS-CNL nurse educator track, nine of which are scholarship recipients.

“My entire team is very excited to see such a positive response to our MSN-CNL program and the nurse educator track,” she said. “It’s exciting to see how many nurses are interested in becoming nurse educators.”

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‘Hands Across the Waters’

When the Covid-19 pandemic jumped from Asia to Europe, then spread “from sea to shining sea” and ultimately overtook every hospital around the corner, it alerted the rest of us to something long recognized by Professor Karen S. Moore, D.N.P., APRN-BC, F.N.P.-C, FAANP, FAAN: HEALTHCARE IS A GLOBAL ENDEAVOR.

I always have known it is not what you take but what you give, what you have to offer and what you can do to help,” she said. “I have always felt this need to understand other cultures, to be engaged and most people where they are. I was raised with the awareness that ‘there by the grace of God go I.’ We weren’t rich. My dad was an electrician, and my mom was a nurse, but I was always aware that we still had more than a lot of people.

Moore’s research interests range from occupational and environmental health topics, focusing on international travelers’ health and infectious disease, to orthopedics and pain management, which involve evidence-based practice, and address the needs of low-resource communities and work toward health promotion. All of this takes her far beyond the Valentine School’s campus.

Her travels, virtual and actual, have taken her to Rome, where she presented at the HIV Nursing Conference, to Singapore, where she attended the International Council of Nurses Congress, and most recently to Ireland, not once but twice, presenting at the International Council of Nurses New Nurse Practitioner Network Conference in Dublin, and then as a Fulbright Specialist. Award recipient helping to develop the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) role within the country, as well as strengthen the international nursing exchange at Dublin City University.

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Moore stands with Lorna Schumann, her mentor, after the Core Steering Group Meeting in 2022.

Moore instructs international students from Germany and Ireland in a simulation laboratory in Dublin in 2023.

Toward the U.S.-Advanced Practice Nursing has been around for a while now, but it still does not exist in a lot of other countries,” she said. “I cannot go to Sri Lanka or Tanzania and implement this program, but I can help SRJini or Joseph, who know these communities, to create something that works for their country.”

When she steps into a community for the first time, Moore is keenly alert to her lack of local custom and culture. Health care programs, she points out, do not come in a one-size-fits-all system. She cannot copy and paste what works in the U.S. in another country’s health system.

“I don’t want to stomp in with big feet and trample over all they have done before I got there,” she said. “Rather, I step softly, to ask and learn what I need to know. I choose a more subtle approach that leads with a question like: How can I help? I come from a place of cultural humility.”

Moore’s work in global public health issues over the years spans health and recognition, which in turn offered even more opportunities to be involved in international efforts to improve the quality of nursing care.

In 2019, Moore’s leadership led to her induction as a fellow into the American Academy of Nursing, one of only a few thousand, compared to the now 4.2 million registered nurses in this country. At the ceremony, the program described Moore this way: “Woven throughout Dr. Moore’s career is a continuous through-the-emphasis mentoring leadership, diversity, cultural humility, health equity, service and social justice.”

LEFT Moore in a selfie taken by Sriyani at the International Council of Nurses Congress, where more than 5,300 delegates met to explore new access to health by providing health care, and addressing the social determinants of health, including education, gender equality, poverty and more.

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WHAT IS YOUR PHILOSOPHY/APPROACH TO LEADERSHIP?

I believe the best leaders are the ones who make the effort to understand each group member as an individual. These leaders capitalize on individual strengths and actively work to improve weaknesses. They are also flexible and know it is a team effort to meet the objectives.

WHAT FACULTY SAY ABOUT MAAS: “Madison Maas spearheaded Stop the Bleed, a quality improvement project. She took the reins on it. She was always positive, always making sure everything is done correctly, always thinking ahead for problems — things like that. She has shown her leadership skills in every aspect of this project.” — Associate Professor Bibb Statto, Ph.D., RN, CNL, Coordinator of the Accelerated Master’s of Science in Nursing Program (AMNS) and the Master’s of Science in Nursing, Clinical Nurse Leader (MSN-CNLI)

WHAT IS YOUR PHILOSOPHY/APPROACH TO LEADERSHIP?

“Dr. Thanavaro has been an outstanding source of information, encouragement and overall mentoring for me. I tend to get distracted and discouraged in my research, and she has always been supportive and has ideas and suggestions for getting me back on track.”

WHAT IS YOUR PHILOSOPHY/APPROACH TO LEADERSHIP?

“I am a huge believer in servant leadership. Both in my time in the military and now working in a civilian hospital, I firmly believe that my main objective is to make sure what I work with the tools and knowledge they need to succeed. This applies to my co-workers, support staff and patients. When everyone is empowered to do their best, everyone succeeds.”

WHAT FACULTY SAY ABOUT SANFORD: “April provides compassionate and evidence-based care to patients living in remote areas of Alaska who have limited access to healthcare. Her focus on uncontrolled hypertension, a significant health care issue for this population, reflects her commitment to providing care that will have a major impact on health and quality of life for her patients. April embodies the attributes we expect in our Doctor of Nursing Practice students, including being proactive in promoting healthy lifestyles and developing and implementing patient-centered strategies to decrease risk.” — Associate Dean, Dr. and Professor Joanne Thanavaro, D.N.P., RN, AGNP-BC, ACNP-BC, DNP, FNP-BC, FAANP, Fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives.

WHAT IS YOUR PHILOSOPHY/APPROACH TO LEADERSHIP?

“My approach to leadership is being confident in knowledge and nursing skills, while at the same time always seeking to learn more. I appreciate leaders who are approachable and always willing to engage in dialogue about a topic. I aspire to be that type of leader.”

WHAT FACULTY SAY ABOUT COX: “Mona Cox is an outstanding student in the RN-BSN Program. Mona’s persistence is admirable, as she has returned to school while raising a large family (several kids and four grandchildren), and she has recently returned to bedside nursing at Mercy Hospital. Mona’s performance in her classes is praised by faculty, as she is a team player who consistently submits top-quality class assignments and shows leadership skills with group and class assignments. Mona’s passion for nursing is demonstrated in and out of the classroom.” — Associate Professor Devita T. Stallings, Ph.D., RN, program coordinator of the RN to BSN Program.
Lead by example. If you are not willing to do exactly what you are asking others to do, that is not good leadership. You do not have to be the most vocal or outgoing person in the room. Doing is more impactful than just speaking. — Libby Van Den Brink

Katie LaVigne
MSN-CNL PROGRAM
HOMETOWN: St. Louis, Missouri (Kirkwood area), but currently resides in Chicago, Illinois.

PLANS AFTER GRADUATION IN MAY 2023: “Work in Pediatric Allergy and Immunology as a clinician RN, but also supporting our Nursing Professional Development Practitioner with quality assurance related tasks for ambulatory staff. I am hoping to be a travel nurse for a little bit to explore the country! My goal is to come back to St. Louis to do some type of teaching or education. I would love to come back to SLU and teach someday.”

WHAT COURSE/EDUCATOR/EXPERIENCE AT THE VALENTINE SCHOOL HAD THE GREATEST IMPACT ON YOU AND WHY?
“Practical in Clinical Leadership and Advanced Clinical Studies were our last two clinical courses led by Bobbie Weber. The immersion into the leadership roles in the hospital for our clinical hours was valuable for my learning and growth as a nurse. Bobbie was an excellent mentor who was always available to support us along the way.”

WHAT IS YOUR PHILOSOPHY/APPROACH TO LEADERSHIP?
“I try to exemplify the age-old saying ‘lead by example.’ I gravitate towards leaders who are calm and confident, and that is the type of leader I strive to be, as well. My goal is always to create an environment where people feel comfortable asking questions, making mistakes or being honest that they don’t know the answer — because those are essential parts of a learning process. If I contribute to the team, maintain a positive attitude and provide support to my coworkers, it creates an environment where others are encouraged to do the same.”

WHAT FACULTY SAY ABOUT LAVIGNE: “Katie is a dedicated, diligent, fully committed and resilient personal and professional life designer, who has reasonably and realistically dealt with various unexpected, and/or anticipated, life challenges along the way to ultimately regain and preserve her high academic and personal wellbeing and thereby will complete this FMPHN program successfully in December 2023 and become a SLU TVB SON FMPHN ALL STAR in my book.” — Assistant Professor Rita Tadych, Ph.D., RN, APBN-BC, Family Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing Graduate Specialty

Andrea Cassimatis
MSN-NP PROGRAM
HOMETOWN: Born and raised in St. Louis, Missouri! Currently living in Columbus, Ohio, “But I am eager to someday move back to my hometown.”

PLANS AFTER GRADUATION IN DECEMBER 2023: “To pass Board! Beyond that, my future is uncertain. My husband will finish his residency next Spring, and we will live our life in a new city; I will seek for a job in Pediatrics, Primary Care whenever we end up! Through my clinicals and my current job as an RN, I found that I really enjoy working with families that come from varying cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds. I particularly love working with immigrant and refugee families, so a clinic that includes those patient populations would be my goal.”

WHAT COURSE/EDUCATOR/EXPERIENCE AT THE VALENTINE SCHOOL HAD THE GREATEST IMPACT ON YOU AND WHY?
“This past Spring semester I thoroughly enjoyed because I felt like all of the information we have been taught was finally started to click in a clinical setting. We spent a year and a half learning how to obtain a history, how to educate, common diseases, and it was satisfying to be able to take that knowledge and feel comfortable applying it in real-life situations. Dr. Papachrisanthou has been an incredible mentor and resource throughout this academic journey. I had some hesitancy with an online program, but she creates a true learning environment where she is pushing us to think critically, even via online discussion boards. She is quick to respond to questions, and her passion for education and the nursing profession was very obvious when we had our in-person residency this past April!”

WHAT IS YOUR PHILOSOPHY/APPROACH TO LEADERSHIP?
“I am a huge believer in servant leadership. Both in my time in the military and now in a civilian hospital, I firmly believe that my main objective is to make sure those I work with have the tools and knowledge they need to succeed. This applies to my co-workers, support staff and patients. When everyone is empowered to do their best, everyone succeeds.”

April Dunlevy

Victoria Klaetsch
MSN-FNP
HOMETOWN: North Little Rock, Arkansas
PLANS AFTER GRADUATION IN DECEMBER 2023: “Reconnect with family and friends. My education has been a major focus over the past few years, so I am looking forward to having more time to spend with my loved ones. Professionally, I am interested in working for a family or specialty clinic and hope to become part of an energized and uplifting team.”

WHAT COURSE/EDUCATOR/EXPERIENCE AT THE VALENTINE SCHOOL HAD THE GREATEST IMPACT ON YOU AND WHY?
“FNP Residency at SLU was a great experience. I enjoyed getting to know the other FNP students and meeting with the instructors in a traditional graduate school environment. It also put a point in the program when a lot of work had already been completed, but a lot of work was still left to be done. It gave me the incentive I needed to make it through the final stages of the program.”

WHAT FACULTY SAY ABOUT KLAETSCH: “Victoria is a very strong student. She is married to a military man and has had to take leave of absences from the FNP program on off during deployments. She never gave up and always returned to school to complete her goal. She is passionate about patient care and is a great example of professionalism.” — Assistant Professor Shellie Hill, D.N.P., RN, FNP-BC, faculty coordinator of the current Nurse Practitioner program

Shelley Schekkal
FPMPHN PROGRAM
HOMETOWN: Wichita, Kansas
PLANS AFTER GRADUATION IN DECEMBER 2023: “I’m hoping that I will be able to use my graduate degree to work with most age groups, but more specifically, children and families. I’m considering moving forward with my doctoral plan at Saint Louis University.”

WHAT COURSE/EDUCATOR/EXPERIENCE AT THE VALENTINE SCHOOL HAD THE GREATEST IMPACT ON YOU AND WHY?
“Dr. Rita Tadych encouraged me to continue moving toward my goals and dreams of providing care for this population. Whenever we reached out to Dr. Tadych, she would always make sure she got back to us. She was always there for us. She’s a very good soul.”

WHAT IS YOUR PHILOSOPHY/APPROACH TO LEADERSHIP?
“Leadership is essential in our profession, whether at the bedside, in politics, education or administration. Robert K. Greenleaf introduced servant leadership in the 1970s. The philosophy of leadership is to serve others. Leadership should be clearly stated and believed to empower team members to reach their full potential. The best leaders lead with humility and compassion over personal gain. My reflections are to be transparent, and show respect and integrity toward others.”

WHAT FACULTY SAY ABOUT SCHEKKAL: “Shelley is a dedicated, diligent, fully committed and resilient personal and professional life designer, life planner, and life implementer, who has reasonably and realistically dealt with various unexpected, and/or anticipated, life challenges along the way to ultimately regain and preserve her health and academic and professional wellbeing and thereby will complete this FPMPHN program successfully in December 2023 and become a SLU TVB SON FPMPHN ALL STAR in my book.” — Assistant Professor Rita Tadych, Ph.D., RN, APBN-BC, Family Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing Graduate Specialty
Mentor inspires alum to excellence

by ELIZABETH KRASNOFF HOLZER

When Alumna Mary Kay Knight-Macheca, MSN(RN), RN, APRN-ANP-BC, CDCEES (Nurs '82, '86) decided to seek a master’s degree in medical-surgical nursing as a clinical nurse specialist, she knew her education would be a challenge, particularly because she was working full time as a surgical nurse at Barnes-Jewish Hospital. Still nothing could have prepared her for the response she got on her first paper in a course taught by the legendary bedside-educator-researcher, Norma Metheny, PhD, RN, FAAN, who was the inaugural recipient of the Dorothy A. Metheny Endowment Chair in Nursing and the former associate dean of research.

“I will never forget the first paper I ever turned in to her,” Knight-Macheca said. “When I got it back, it had red marks all over it, and at the top she had written, ‘Do you really think this is graduate-level work?’ That woman pushed me to a level of expertise with an evidence-based approach that forced me to bring my best.’” Metheny accepted nothing less, and Knight-Macheca wanted nothing more. “I owe her the best things I have in nursing,” Knight-Macheca said of Metheny. “She was my mentor and my friend—I dedicated my thesis to her.”

When she completed her master’s degree in 1986, Metheny hooded Knight-Macheca in the ceremony, and Knight-Macheca presented Metheny with a special gift. “I gave her a box of red pencils and paper,” she said. “I told her that I knew she must have used an entire box correcting my papers.”

Don’t let the red pencils fool you. “When she graduated, Knight-Macheca was at the top of her class. In fact, she was one of the first two nursing students to graduate at Phi Beta Kappa.” That distinction led to offers of advancement.

“The thing was if you were an excellent staff nurse in those days,” she said, “they would start considering you for an assistant head nurse position.”

Instead of seeking that administrative post, Knight-Macheca chose to lead by example as a clinical nurse specialist in the care of patients with diabetes. It has been her passion and her focus for her career, so much so that she added to her credentials an Adult Nurse Practitioner Post-Masters Certification in 1996, with the goal of becoming even more instrumental in delivering care to patients with diabetes.

“I have always wanted the clinical track,” she said. “I have always wanted to be at the bedside—it is where I do my best work and where I find my greatest satisfaction.”

Now more than 60 years later, Knight-Macheca is an award-winning nurse practitioner and a certified diabetes educator who helps her patients deal with the chronic illness as a team member of the BJCC Medical Group in St. Peters. Knight-Macheca keeps an autographed copy of Leadership and Management in Nursing by former SLU professor Mary Ellen Grohar-Murray, PhD, RN, in her office.

“Leadership is a concept and a process that is capable, through interactional phenomena, of influencing a group toward goal achievement,” Knight-Macheca said. “This definition has guided the whole of my nursing career and the clinical work. It is a framework to achieve optimum clinical outcomes at the bedside, in the classroom or in a larger community-based platform.”

Earlier this year, she received a Five Star PNC Excellence Award for scoring in the top 10 percent nationally for Excellent Patient Responses on Overall Quality of Care.

Her patients are not the only ones who think highly of Knight-Macheca. Metheny speaks of Knight-Macheca in glowing terms. “Mary Kay exemplifies the very best in nursing,” she said. “Her warm and caring manner, coupled with her expertise in diabetes management, allow her to provide top-notch care to her patients.”

Although Knight-Macheca has spent the majority of her career working in the BJCC and Washington University Health Care systems, she has also practiced at SIHM St. Mary’s Hospital, as well as other clinics. She said the key to her success as a nurse comes from being present, compassionate and hypervigilant to patients’ verbal and nonverbal cues. Knight-Macheca believes it is important to ask questions and listen closely to her patients’ answers.

The questioning is a trademark of Metheny, who has high praise for her former student. “She followed her career over several decades and continue to be impressed with her many accomplishments and contributions to nursing practice,” Metheny said. “She is a perfect role model for all nurses.”

The University administrator agrees. Over the past nine years, Knight-Macheca has served on the Executive Advisory Board to the Dean, which she now chairs. In 2020, the University chose her to receive the Alumni Merit Award for the School of Nursing.

“The WHO declared 2020 as the year of the nurse, so I was particularly honored to be selected to receive the recognition from the University,” Knight-Macheca said. “It was such a tough time. We were in the throes of COVID-19 pandemic, and it was an especially challenging time for everyone working in health care.”

The celebration of the award was put on hold until May of 2022 when the University held a dinner and also honored Knight-Macheca, along with alumni from other schools and colleges, at commencement.

“I was very humbled,” she said. “It was the greatest honor of my career.”

Alumni NEWS

“The best part of being in nursing is the rewarding role that care providers have with patients in the hospital setting,” Knight-Macheca said. “Being a bedside nurse, you get to take care of patients, and you get to be a part of their recovery.”

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The Valentine School of Nursing counts on our generous alumni to partner with us in our efforts to create a future that serves a higher purpose and seeks the greater good through the power of a Jesuit education. With a gift to the Valentine School of Nursing, we can continue to shape and advance our students’ experiences as we prepare them to be compassionate, ethical and contemporary practitioners in their various nursing careers. To make a gift to the Valentine School of Nursing, contact Rob Curtin, Director of Development, at rob.curtin@slu.edu or 314-977-2637.

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