

Fall 2022

Preparing Nurses for Continued Kingdom Impact

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PREPARING NURSES FOR CONTINUED KINGDOM IMPACT

As I reflect on 40 years of nursing at Cedarville University, I am extremely appreciative to Chancellor Paul Dixon and founding Chair Irene Alyn for their foresight, vision, and trailblazing efforts. Our founding faculty's guiding philosophy was to build a professional nursing program grounded in biblical truth. I never grow weary of listening to their stories, as from the very beginning the School of Nursing (SON) was clearly established to glorify God. The SON's existence and continued growth in both the undergraduate and graduate programs demonstrates God's providence. I can hardly believe I have the privilege of serving in succession to Irene Alyn and Janet Conway.

From its inception, the SON's guiding mission has been to equip excellent nurses who will use nursing as their ministry for Christ. Most nursing programs prepare educationally sound nurses, but Cedarville's program takes it a step further, as we intentionally integrate faith into everything we do, which directly impacts the nursing discipline. Intentionality is guided by 2 Peter 1:5-7 in undergraduate courses and Micah 6:8 in graduate courses. Nearly 3,000 SON alumni are serving around the globe, and I can only imagine the numerous lives who have been impacted.

But as healthcare continues to become more complex, we want to do more. We need to be in line with the direction healthcare is heading. As healthcare evolves, we want to continue to ensure we are offering the highest level of education possible.

Nursing practice is dynamic as it strives to meet complex healthcare

needs. Thus, nursing education must be rigorous to prepare for the complexity. Our clinical partners are paramount in helping us prepare and meet educational demands. As we prepare to launch a Doctor of Nursing Practice (D.N.P.), pending external approvals, we want to continue to offer excellent education. Pursuing advanced degrees equips nurses with critical thinking skills that allow them to offer a higher level of medical care to their patients. We see this as a direct correlation to Kingdom impact.

D.N.P.-prepared nurses possess a larger and more diverse skill set, specifically in the areas of leadership, evidence-based practice, and critical thinking. D.N.P. education also gives nurses a greater understanding of the business side of nursing.

As Dean, I am surrounded by a very dedicated and robust team of faculty and staff who strive to glorify God. I am grateful God has brought them to Cedarville and admire their selfless service. I am also grateful for the nursing students who choose Cedarville; their heart for serving is contagious and inspirational. As I ponder the future concerning nursing at Cedarville University, the answer is simple, yet vital: We must remain steadfast in providing excellent nursing education, grounded in biblical truth! We should never deviate from our mission: educating with excellence, preparing nurses who will provide Kingdom Impact, using nursing as their ministry.

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Cedarville Magazine

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