



NEW JERSEY

Association of State Colleges and Universities

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**QuickTakes!**

## **William Paterson University Celebrates 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Its Nursing Program**

March 20, 2017

William Paterson University in Wayne, New Jersey, which offered its first baccalaureate degree in nursing in 1966 and has grown to be a leader in nursing education in New Jersey, is celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its nursing program.

“We are proud of our long history and the outstanding reputation of our program,” said Kathleen Waldron, president of William Paterson University. “More than 3,600 health professionals have graduated from William Paterson’s nursing program. Our highly-trained faculty, building on their own clinical experience, are demanding of their students and have helped them obtain some of the top nursing positions in the region.” William Paterson alumni are employed at nearly every major hospital and medical center in New Jersey and beyond.

A celebration for nursing alumni on Thursday, March 30, 2017 featured a lecture by Kathleen Connolly, former acting dean of William Paterson’s School of Nursing and Allied Health in 1977 and retired faculty member of 35 years. She spoke on the topic, “Nursing Today: A Perspective on Nursing’s Role in Today’s Health Care Reality.”

In 1970, the first nursing class with a baccalaureate degree graduated from William Paterson College. Today the program includes a master of science (MSN) with concentrations in the areas of adult gerontology, family practice, administration, adult nurse practitioner, education, and family nurse practitioner. In 2010, the university established its first doctoral degree program, the doctor of nursing practice (DNP), to provide the advanced practice nurse with preparation for leadership roles in health care.

“We take great pride in our program and have come full circle in that we now have two faculty members who are graduates of our DNP program,” said Nadine Aktan, chair and professor of nursing at William Paterson. “Our own graduates are sharing their wealth of knowledge in clinical nursing and education with future nurse leaders.”

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Today, enrollment in William Paterson's nursing program is at 500 students and nearly 15 percent of current students are male. More than 335 are undergraduates; 140 are in the master's program and 22 students are earning their doctorate. There are more than 50 nursing faculty. The program is affiliated with more than 50 cooperating agencies in the surrounding North Jersey region, including major hospital and medical centers, public health agencies, clinics, and nursing homes.

In January 2016, the University's Department of Nursing moved into the newly constructed University Hall, funded in part by the state's "Building Our Future" Bond Act. A teaching and research facility, University Hall houses 16 general-use classrooms serving a minimum of 4,000 students per semester. Among the nursing program's specialized classrooms and clinical spaces are six patient simulation laboratories, including the relocated Nel Bolger, RN laboratories, with control and debriefing rooms to provide enhanced clinical training. Adjacent to these impressive labs are three, state-of-the-art nursing basic skills labs.

As the nursing profession and health industry continue to experience growth and change, President Waldron envisions more master's degrees will be pursued and more qualified, diverse applications and nurse practitioners will be the norm. "There is such a demand for our student nurses and our academic standards are high," she said. "William Paterson is prepared for the future."