

## Misericordia University Makes Significant Nursing Program Investment

Misericordia University has a long history of academic excellence. Established by the Sisters of Mercy in 1924, College Misericordia was the first four-year college in Luzerne County. The name may have changed, but the school still offers a broad-based liberal arts education to students of all faiths. In 2005, Misericordia established the Center for Nursing History as a way to document and preserve the history of nursing in the region. Recently, the school made a significant investment in its nursing program by creating a suite of nursing classroom space and laboratories, giving students the opportunity to develop clinical skills before working hands-on with patients.

The Erwine Nursing Lab and Classroom looks similar to a hospital emergency room, with each station mimicking the appearance of a patient room. Students have access to blood pressure cuffs, oxygen, room air, IV pumps, and other equipment, allowing them to become familiar with how everything works. The suite also has labs equipped with high-tech simulation mannequins, which simulate the medical conditions and symptoms nurses must respond to in a patient care setting. Dr. Cynthia Mailloux, chair of the nursing department, says that the simulators allow students to practice their skills in a controlled environment. This makes it possible to gain experience without compromising the health and safety of real patients.

SimMan™ is a mannequin representing an adult male patient. This mannequin has a number of features that make it very similar to working with a real human being. It also provides feedback so that students can improve their skills. When students perform CPR, SimMan generates blood pressure wave forms and palpable pulses. The mannequin also provides feedback about compression rate, hands-off time, release, and depth. Using Instructor Mode, nursing instructors can program a variety of scenarios to help students learn how to quickly respond to medical emergencies. The mannequin can mimic the symptoms of a seizure or a bleeding wound; create pupillary responses to light, and adjust its vital signs based on blood loss.

SimBaby™ is an infant patient simulator used to allow nursing students to develop clinical skills without putting infant patients at risk. This mannequin has realistic anatomy and advanced functionality, giving nursing students the opportunity to adjust their care plans based on new symptoms. Signs and symptoms exhibited by this high-tech mannequin include tongue edema, gastric distention, and pharyngeal swelling. This learning tool is ideal for helping nursing students learn about cardiopulmonary function, as it produces lung sounds, pulses, and heart sounds. The mannequin also has interchangeable eyes so nursing instructors can simulate diseases and injuries involving constricted or dilated pupils.

Instructors provide feedback on failed interventions and give students the opportunity to repeat simulations until they are proficient. By the time a student enters his or her senior year, there have already been plenty of opportunities for practice in the laboratory. This makes students more confident as they enter local hospitals and start working with real patients. Watching each other perform these interventions also helps students perform better in a team environment, which benefits patients and healthcare employers. The nursing classroom also features eight computer stations to help students prepare for electronic charting responsibilities in a clinical setting. Open lab times give students the chance to practice a variety of interventions until they

are confident in their skills. The on-site Symposium allows instructors to deliver interactive content to groups of students.

With the oldest nursing department in Northeastern Pennsylvania, Misericordia University has a national reputation for delivering a superior education in the health sciences. The college offers several educational opportunities to serve nurses at different stages in their careers. The traditional undergraduate program is designed for recent high school graduates and adult students who want to attend classes during the day. The school also has an Expressway RN to BSN program for students with active nursing licenses who already have diplomas or associate's degrees. This program also has an RN to MSN option for those who wish to engage in graduate-level studies.

For students who already have a college degree or a significant number of college credits, the part-time accelerated evening program makes it possible to obtain a BSN degree with only two years and one semester of part-time study in the evenings. Nurses who wish to advance their careers have the opportunity to obtain a Family Nurse Practitioner master's degree. Misericordia's nurse practitioner program prepares students for advanced nursing responsibilities. The college has responded to the national nursing educator shortage by offering a post-master's certificate in nursing education.

Misericordia students have the opportunity to build professional contacts and enhance their careers by participating in student nursing organizations. All nursing students belong to the Misericordia University chapter of the Student Nurses' Association of Pennsylvania (SNAP). The school also offers the Graduate Nursing Student Organization (GNSO) to encourage graduate nursing students to develop a spirit of cooperation and unity. The organization also promotes collaboration and communication among graduate nursing students, staff members, and nursing faculty members.

For more information about the Misericordia University nursing program, contact Dr. Mailloux at (570) 674-6443 or by e-mail at [cmaillou@misericordia.edu](mailto:cmaillou@misericordia.edu). To find out more about Misericordia University, visit [www.misericordia.edu](http://www.misericordia.edu) or call (570) 674-6400. The college offers 37 degree programs in full-time and part-time formats.