

2016

Nicole Wertheim College of Nursing & Health Sciences Annual Report 2015-2016

Nicole Wertheim College of Nursing & Health Sciences, Florida International University

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NICOLE WERTHEIM COLLEGE OF NURSING & HEALTH SCIENCES

ANNUAL REPORT | 2015-2016



OUR MISSION

Prepare diverse health care professionals who are providers and leaders in the delivery of high-quality, accessible, culturally competent and compassionate care within a highly technological and global environment.

Teach, conduct research and practice in service to the community through interprofessional collaboration.

Create, promote, expand and validate scientific knowledge and evidence-based practice through interdisciplinary research.

OUR VISION

To be globally recognized as a higher education destination organization that is innovative, inquiry-driven and technologically advanced; drawing diverse top-class faculty, students, staff and others for positive transformation of society with a focus on the health care needs of underserved populations.

OUR VALUES

Truth, Freedom, Respect, Responsibility, Excellence, Compassion, Caring, Innovation, Integrity, Cultural Competence, Collaboration

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Dear Alumni, Friends and Colleagues,

Welcome to the 2015-2016 Annual Report for the Nicole Wertheim College of Nursing & Health Sciences (NWCNHS) at Florida International University. It is my honor and pleasure to share with you some extraordinary professional and personal achievements as well as remarkable community partnerships, all with a common thread of breaking through barriers in a quest to advance the College's mission.



An Inspired Nurse-Managed Teaching Clinic

In January, the opening of the John H. Peavy Health Center at Miami Northwestern Senior High School broke barriers to primary care access in Miami's underserved Liberty City neighborhood. This high school-based clinic, which is managed and staffed by College faculty and students across its disciplines, embodies a new model of community-based health care, serving as a primary care "hub" for students and all community residents. Fueled by a \$1.45 million grant to FIU from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, the clinic is the culmination of an ambitious partnership between our College, Jessie Trice Community Health Center, Miami-Dade County Public Schools, Health Foundation of South Florida, and The Children's Trust to promote quality health care in underserved areas.

Lifting Barriers to Veteran-Centric Care

Our continuing partnership with the Miami Veterans Affairs Health-care System (Miami VA) marks a first for Miami and for our College, as we do our part to implement a federal education initiative that addresses military health concerns. Together, we are leveraging academic and clinical resources for a specialized nursing program focused on health problems impacting military veterans, active service members and their families. This includes the Veterans Affairs Office of Academic Affiliation (OAA) Post-Baccalaureate Nurse Residency Program, which was initiated in fall 2015 and made possible by \$8.2 million in funding received from the OAA.

Building Physical Therapy Connections

It was an honor to serve as host to over 500 of the state's physical therapy students and graduates during the Florida Physical Therapy Association Student Conclave in January 2016. The presidents of the American Physical Therapy Association and Florida Physical Therapy Association were keynote speakers. Students in our Doctor of Physical Therapy degree program were eager to network and share experiences with their peers from across the state. It was also a wonderful opportunity for us to showcase our exceptional faculty, campus and teaching facilities, including our Center for Advanced Rehabilitation/Research and Education (CARE).

Building Athletic Excellence Across the Campus

Panther Pride is everywhere at FIU, and students in our Master of Science in Athletic Training degree program are doing their part to support intramural sports across the campus. Two athletic training faculty, in collaboration with FIU Student Affairs, provide athletic training services to intramural student athletes on the field and follow up with sports rehabilitation when needed. Students are safer and less prone to injury under the watchful eye of our athletic trainers.

When I think of this year's triumphs, coupled with the extraordinary progress of our College in recent years—nationally recognized faculty and student achievements, ascension up the national rankings, and major philanthropic gifts, to name a few—I couldn't be more proud. We extend our grateful appreciation to our donors, partners and other supporters for making these, and many other, breakthroughs possible.

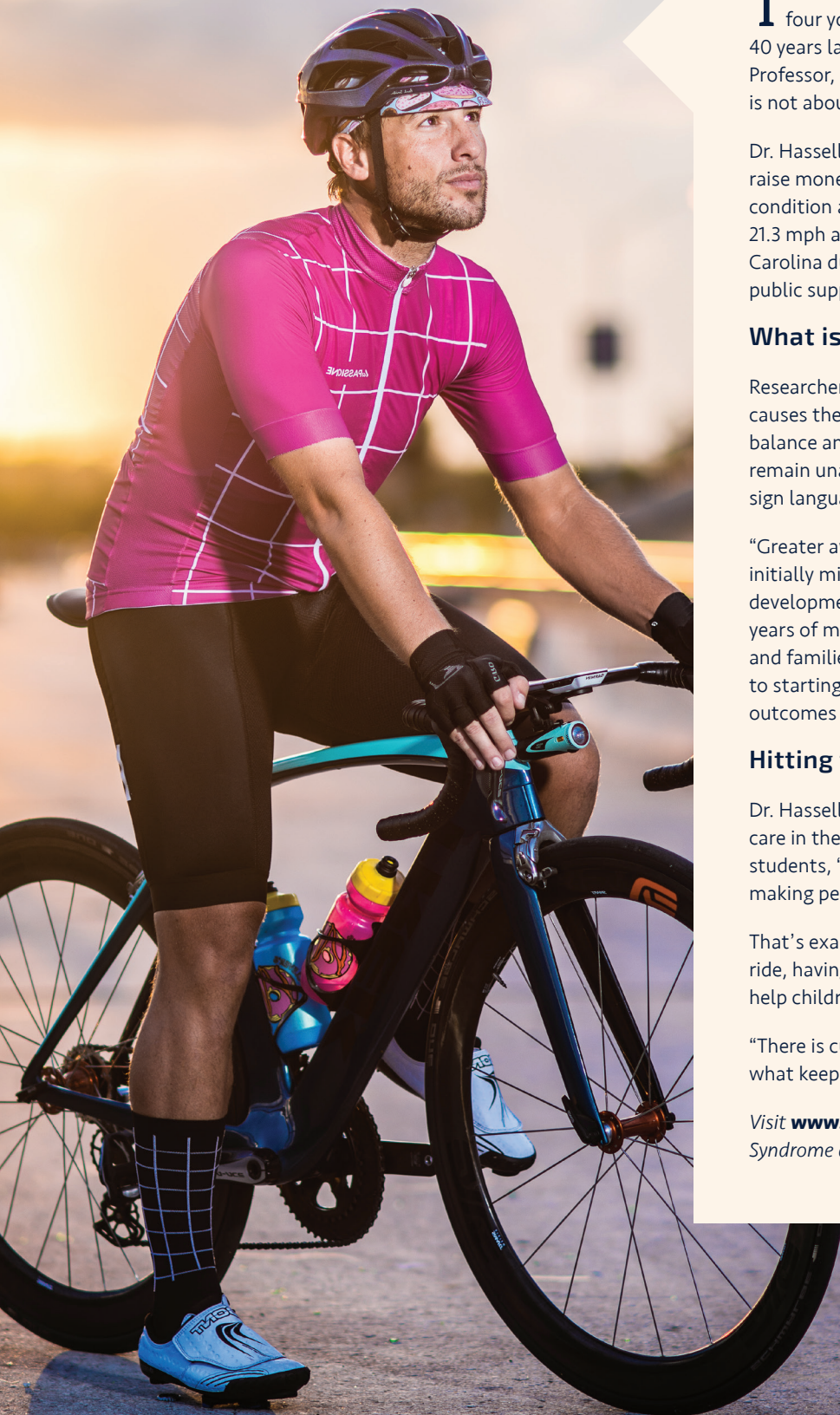
With sincere regards,

Ora Lea Strickland, PhD, RN, FAAN

Dean, Nicole Wertheim College of Nursing & Health Sciences

Pushing the Limits (and the Pedals) For a Cure

Kellen Hassell, EdD



The 1979 movie “Breaking Away” told the coming of age story of four young Indiana men through their passion for cycling. Nearly 40 years later, Health Services Administration Clinical Assistant Professor, Dr. Kellen Hassell, has a story and passion for cycling that is not about breaking away, but of finding a breakthrough cure.

Dr. Hassell organized the inspiring “Wheeling for Wings” bike ride to raise money and awareness for Angelman Syndrome—a rare genetic condition afflicting his son, Luc, since birth. He biked an average 21.3 mph and pedaled 1,000 miles from Miami to Chapel Hill, North Carolina during the summer of 2016, garnering media attention and public support along the way to shine light on the disorder.

What is Angelman Syndrome?

Researchers know that a single gene defect on chromosome 15 causes the syndrome, which can lead to developmental delays, balance and walking challenges, and even seizures. Most people also remain unable to speak clearly but learn to communicate through sign language or by using an iPad.

“Greater awareness is needed because the condition often gets initially misdiagnosed as autism, cerebral palsy or another developmental disorder,” says Dr. Hassell. It’s those months or years of misdiagnosis that often frustrate and confuse parents and families. “Getting an early and accurate diagnosis is critical to starting treatment that can make a difference in long-term outcomes for these children.”

Hitting the Road for Research

Dr. Hassell teaches a course on global issues and trends in health care in the Health Services Administration program. He tells his students, “when it comes down to problem-solving, it’s all about making people care.”

That’s exactly what he accomplished with his “Wheeling for Wings” ride, having raised more than \$18,500. He donated all proceeds to help children and their families dealing with Angelman Syndrome.

“There is currently no cure, but there is always hope. And that’s what keeps me going.”

Visit www.angelman.org for more information on Angelman Syndrome and how you too can make a difference.

A New Strategy in Veterans Care

Post-Baccalaureate Nurse Residency



With nearly 20 million military veterans in the United States, improving access and quality of health care for this patient population is a national endeavor, one that the Nicole Wertheim College of Nursing & Health Sciences is championing.

This past academic year, the College launched a Post-Baccalaureate Nurse Residency (PBNR) program funded by the Veterans Affairs (VA) Office of Academic Affiliation (OAA) and administered by the Miami VA Healthcare System (Miami VA). The PBNR, which is the first nurse residency program for both the College and the Miami VA, is one of only a handful in the country to integrate veteran-centric subject matter and experiences into a 12-month curriculum with dedicated preceptors in the VA clinical setting. The Miami VA serves approximately 57,000 veterans across South Florida.

“The PBNR is breaking down a barrier to veteran-centric care by supporting nurses in the transition between their academic program and this distinctive health care setting serving veterans, active service members and their families,” says Dean Ora Strickland. Candidacy for the PBNR is open to any RN with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree.

The PBNR is an offshoot of the 2014 Veterans Affairs Nursing Academic Partnership (VANAP) between the College and the Miami VA. The first phase involved creating a baccalaureate nursing curriculum addressing military-specific health concerns, such as post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, chemical exposure, limb loss and rehabilitation, suicide and other mental health and physical issues commonly seen in military veterans.

The PBNR and VANAP are the latest examples of veteran-focused initiatives at the College. In 2013, FIU became one of nine universities nationwide to receive federal funding for the Veterans BSN Medic-to-Nurse program. Designed to help medically trained military veterans rejoin the civilian workforce as nurses, it also bolsters the number of nursing professionals with a more robust understanding of the unique veteran patient population.

“Nurses are poised to play an even stronger role in the care of veterans, given the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs’ intentions to expand the scope of work for nurse practitioners as primary care providers,” adds Dean Strickland. “With these FIU nursing initiatives, we are proud to be leading this charge for our country, training a specialized workforce to elevate the quality of care for U.S. veterans everywhere.”

Robotic Reconditioning

College's New InMotion Robot Marks a First for Florida Universities

Strokes are the leading cause of long-term disability in the United States. With nearly 800,000 people affected annually, technology can play a crucial role by helping patients with strokes break through daily challenges and regain their independence. The *InMotion* robot is the newest addition to the technological arsenal for instruction and research at the Center for Advanced Rehabilitation/Research and Education (CARE) that is propelling the College to the forefront of occupational and physical therapy education, research and practice.

The *InMotion* robot is a revolutionary, rehabilitation apparatus designed to improve motor recovery of the upper extremities for patients up to eight years after suffering a stroke or a traumatic brain injury. FIU is the first university in Florida, and one of only three in the nation, to own an *InMotion* robot, which was acquired through a university technology grant.

The interactive, adaptive robotic therapy equipment displays a video pattern on a screen, prompting patients to perform a specific movement using a computer-activated joystick. If a patient cannot initiate the proper movement without assistance after a certain amount of time, the robot will guide the movement. Patients who are physically able to perform the motion use the robot to help develop motion control and flexibility.

Repetition is key in restoring function, as it is what retrains the brain to reestablish connection with the muscles. This robot-led therapy can tirelessly perform specific motions hundreds of times in a 45-minute session.

The *InMotion* robot is used as a training tool by the College's occupational and physical therapy students to help them better assess a patient's progress to determine the most effective course of treatment and rehabilitative care.

It is also being used in research by Occupational Therapy Assistant Professor Pey-Shan Wen, PhD, OTR/L. Dr. Wen is employing the *InMotion* robot in combination with wearable technology to rehabilitate individuals with chronic stroke. This project will combine the concept of telehealth and virtual reality gaming systems to develop therapy programs for stroke patients in their long-term recovery phase.



Community Care Goes Back to School...and on Field Trips

The John H. Peavy Health Center



Removing obstacles for underserved populations to get access to primary care is a major objective of health reform in the U.S. It's also the inspiration for the 2016 launch of the John H. Peavy Health Center inside Miami Northwestern Senior High School in Liberty City, Florida. This nurse-managed primary care clinic is the result of an extraordinary partnership between the College, Jessie Trice Community Health Center, The Children's Trust, and Miami-Dade County Public Schools.

The school-based clinic in Miami's at-risk Liberty City neighborhood provides team-based health, wellness and prevention services to school children during the day, and to the public after school hours and on Saturdays. Establishing the clinic as a beacon of health that welcomes students and residents alike cements the high school's long-held worth as a cornerstone of this proud community. It also represents a new model and standard for health professions education and interprofessional practice. NWCNHS students from across all disciplines will work there under the guidance of our faculty to apply their training in direct service to patients.

The Center is also a home base of sorts, attracting local partners and serving as headquarters for other health initiatives that mobilize out to the community to further break down barriers.

For example, the College launched the *Linkage to Primary Health Care: Community Outreach and Rally for Engaged Aggregates in Health Care Initiative*, a.k.a. CO-REACH, in response to the federal Healthy People 2020 initiative to bridge health disparity gaps and improve health outcomes of marginalized citizens.

The Health Foundation of South Florida provided the grant funding to activate the CO-REACH pilot program in Liberty City. Residents are recruited as Peer Navigators to identify individuals with specific health concerns and encourage them to seek treatment. Registered nurses serve as Health Care Navigators to connect patients with appropriate health care providers, specialists and services.

This summer, the Center's Interprofessional Collaborative Practice Team provided much needed back-to-school health physicals to young girls in the Honey Shine, Inc. mentoring program. The Honey Shine mission is to encourage the balance of mind, body and soul in girls and young women by providing nurturing experiences that enlighten their paths and empower their future.

Dean Ora Strickland says of the clinic, "The John H. Peavy Health Center is a fine example of collaboration between civic, health and education leaders to push the physical boundaries of what community-based care should be."

A Global Honor for Research Achievements

Dean Ora Strickland Inducted into International Nurse Researcher Hall of Fame



Set against the backdrop of a city that boldly ushered in societal transformation by breaking barriers of racial segregation, Dean Ora Strickland found herself in Cape Town, South Africa, in July to be recognized for exceptional achievements in nursing research. Dean Strickland was inducted into Sigma Theta Tau International's 2016 class of the International Nurse Researcher Hall of Fame, where she joins an esteemed group of fewer than 100 nurses worldwide to receive this prestigious honor.

Dean Strickland's passion for nursing research was encouraged early on during her days as a bedside nurse, witnessing how nurses processed a patient's health problems holistically and implemented treatment. "Nursing research can have, and has had, a tremendous impact on developing knowledge in health care, particularly in looking at the patient and the family as a treatment unit," said Dean Strickland.

While a professor at the University of Maryland, she caught the nation's attention as the first researcher ever to track and document the symptoms of expectant fathers correlating to their wives' pregnancies. She followed that by joining Emory University as the inaugural recipient of the Independence Research Chair and serving as the site co-principal investigator for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Women's Health Initiative. This landmark, nine-year, 40-site study evaluated major health issues causing morbidity and mortality in post-menopausal women.

For Dean Strickland, nursing research is also about encouraging future generations of nurse researchers. She and a fellow nurse researcher, Carolyn Waltz, PhD, RN, FAAN, spearheaded the federal Nursing Outcomes Measurement Project, which involved mentoring more than 200 nurse researchers to develop and test in excess of 250 nursing clinical and educational outcome measures and instruments.

Other accolades over a prolific 30-year career include helping establish the NIH's National Institute for Nursing Research; a two-decade tenure as the founding and senior editor of the *Journal of Nursing Measurement*, the nursing profession's first measurement journal; consulting for several African nations on maternal and child health issues; and serving as a health policy intern with the U.S. Congress.

Helen Cornely, EdD, DPT, the College's Associate Dean of Administration, reflected on her colleague's latest distinction. "Dean Strickland's greatest accomplishment has been merging her energies as researcher, educator and clinician to be the consummate nursing professional and ultimate example of helping and healing. Her unmatched drive to push boundaries of nursing and health care has transformed the lives of many all over the world, and it's why our College embraces the motto she epitomizes—to be driven by intellect, and fueled by innovation and caring."



NICOLE WERTHEIM
COLLEGE OF NURSING AND HEALTH SCIENCES

About the College

The Nicole Wertheim College of Nursing & Health Sciences is a young, vibrant and forward-thinking institution of higher learning acclaimed for embracing diversity, curricular innovations, technology and research to prepare health care leaders. Across its disciplines, the students, faculty and alumni of this College exude a fervor for culturally competent and compassionate care, interprofessional collaboration and evidence-based practice, which in combination, will help shape the delivery and model of care for this century.

The College was created in 2006 with the joining of the School of Nursing and School of Health Sciences, each bringing with it more than 30 years of academic distinction. Today, the College has nearly 13,000 alumni in the fields of nursing, athletic training, health services administration, occupational therapy, physical therapy and speech-language pathology.

INSIDE THE COLLEGE

Disciplines:

- Nursing
- Athletic Training
- Health Services Administration
- Occupational Therapy
- Physical Therapy
- Speech-Language Pathology

Student Enrollment

(in and out of state): 2,459

Doctorally Prepared Faculty: 86%

Degrees Awarded: 921

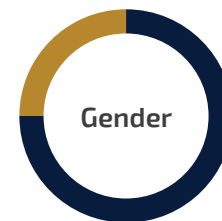
Campus Locations:

Modesto Maidique Campus
11200 SW 8th Street | AHC 3 Building
Miami, FL 33199

Biscayne Bay Campus
3000 NE 151st Street | ACII Building
Miami, FL 33181

Full-Time Faculty: 77

Student Body Diversity:



ABOUT FIU

Florida International University is Miami's first and only public research university, offering nearly 200 bachelor's, master's and doctoral programs. Designated as a top-tier research institution, FIU emphasizes research as a major component in the university's mission, and is worlds ahead in its service to the academic and local community.

- **54,000** — students enrolled in Spring 2016
- **R1 Carnegie classification** for Highest Research Activity
- **#1 in nation** in awarding bachelor's and master's degrees to Hispanic students
- **137,000 alumni** who live and work in South Florida
- **#10** — on list of largest public universities by enrollment

Undergraduate Nursing

Karen L. Levin, Class of 1995

“Being a Nurse Means You Can Become Anything”

It turned out to be inspiration as well as education. For Karen L. Levin, RN, CCRN, MPH, MCHES, her time as a student in FIU’s undergraduate nursing program not only spurred a successful career, but it also drove her to look beyond traditional roles and make a difference across a variety of professional disciplines.

Hers is a story of confidence, leadership and living the words of NWCNHS Dean Ora L. Strickland—that “being a nurse means you can become anything.” Levin credits her FIU nursing education—and the leadership perspectives of her teachers and mentors for her subsequent success in public health, disaster preparedness and crisis response.

“The message [from FIU] was about taking the nursing competencies and discipline and putting them to use in non-traditional roles for nurses,” Levin says. “That resonated with me, so that’s exactly what I did.”

Levin expanded across barriers into epidemiology, disaster planning and preparation, health education, and into her current role as Adjunct Associate Professor at Columbia University School of International and Public Affairs. At many points along this trajectory, she was the only nurse, and the only woman, at the table.

Levin credits the FIU nursing curriculum, experience and especially the faculty for turning her Bachelor of Science (BSN) degree into her professional passport. “We had really good professors who made sure we not only understood the curriculum, which was exceptional, but who also advocated to take nursing into other domains. That was exciting for me and instilled me with the confidence to not be held captive by the barriers of expectations.”

This attitude came to the forefront during the 9-11 terrorist attacks in 2001 when Levin, who by then had a master’s degree in epidemiology,

led a surveillance team from the NYC Department of Health, a few blocks from the World Trade Center. “We all had our careers changed on that day, particularly for those working in health care.” Levin’s communicable disease career shifted to disaster preparedness and response.

Federal grants mandated core competencies and integrated response. She conducted trainings to public health nurses and advance practice nurses for their roles and functions within the Incident Command System—the nationwide management structure to coordinate effective communications and response.

She then traveled across the country to join the California Department of Public Health as a nurse epidemiologist within the Bioterrorism Epidemiology Section/Infectious Disease Branch. Her career journey then took her to Ethiopia, where she served as a team educator field epidemiologist with international health specialists for a polio eradication program organized by the World Health Organization, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and Rotary International.

Professor Levin is now mentoring graduate public policy education students at Columbia University, much like her FIU Nursing professors did for her years ago.

“Throughout my career, I’ve recalled their mandate to advance the nursing framework to non-traditional roles. That has encouraged me to push beyond ‘mental borders’ and to dive head first into challenges and leadership roles not historically associated with nurses. The FIU faculty were then and remain today, visionaries.”

INSIDE UNDERGRADUATE NURSING

Chair: Maria Olenick, PhD, FNP, RN

Vice Chair: Tatayana Maltseva, MSN, ARNP, PMHNP-BC

Program(s):

- Generic Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN)
- RN-to-BSN Online
- Foreign-Educated Physician to BSN/MSN
- Veteran Bachelor of Science in Nursing (VBSN)
- Accelerated Option (AO) BSN

Student Enrollment (in and out of state): 682

Number of Graduates: 307

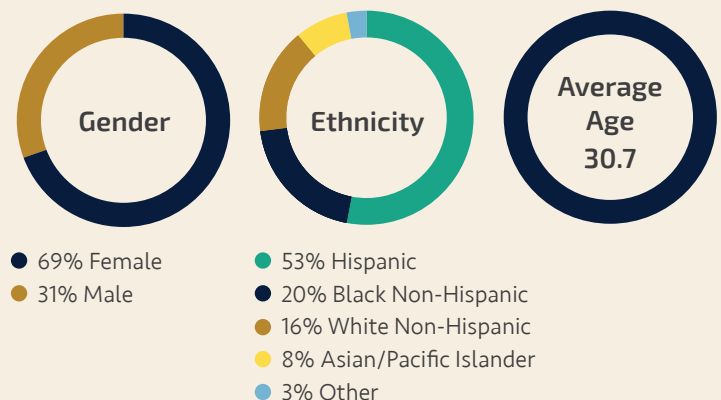
Graduation Rate: 97%

First-Time NCLEX (RN Licensure) Pass Rate: 91%

Full-Time Faculty: 20

Accreditation(s): Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE); Florida State Board of Nursing

Student Body Diversity:





Graduate Nursing

A Ten-Year Milestone for the Nation's Only Foreign-Educated Physician to Nurse Program

An Academic Innovation Born of Circumstance and Opportunity

It was ten years ago that the College's award-winning, first-in-the-nation Foreign-Educated Physician to Nurse (FEP) program became a permanent offering at FIU. The transformative curriculum was the brainchild of then FIU School of Nursing dean, Divina Grossman. It was created to transition non-practicing physicians into nurse professionals and continues to be a breakthrough in nursing education, a solution to the professional workforce shortage, and a revitalizing force in the personal lives of students and graduates.

Then...

It was during a hospital site visit in 2000 that Dean Grossman recognized many physicians trained outside the U.S. were underemployed, working as transporters, cafeteria workers or in low-level positions in hospitals and other health care facilities. She saw an untapped pool of candidates equipped with medical knowledge and expertise, who, with proper preparation and understanding of holistic nursing care practices, could ultimately be reintroduced into the health care system. FIU Nursing designed the innovative curriculum to fast-track them toward a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree in only five semesters.

The program launched in 2001 with the backing of three local hospitals and a candidate list of 350 applicants from word-of-mouth alone.

Its success prompted Florida and the nation to take special notice. In 2006, the U.S. Department of Labor awarded the FEP with a Recognition of Excellence Honorable Mention Distinction as a 21st century workforce solution, and the state approved

the program's permanent status as a course offering at FIU.

...And Now

In 2010, the FEP was elevated to a BSN/MSN (Master of Science in Nursing) track to better align with career paths for these students, who often continue their studies toward advanced nursing practice.

The program has also injected more diversity and cultural competence training in the nursing profession to keep up with the ever-changing demographics of the U.S. population. Approximately half of the program's graduates are men and all students are at least bilingual, hailing from countries all over the world (see sidebar).

More than 1,000 FEP graduates have gone on to work as nurses and nurse practitioners in hospitals, clinics, school systems, wound care centers and other medical settings. These FIU graduates are coveted by health care employers for being able to provide patients with a unique "best of both worlds" care approach that comes from marrying their medical diagnostic perspective with holistic, hands-on nursing diagnosis and practice.

The program has also made an indelible impact on the graduates themselves, providing a second chance for fulfilling careers in health care. Some have gone on to become nursing professors themselves.

FIU's Foreign-Educated Physician to Nurse program has helped lift barriers for an intrepid group of caregivers to once again answer the call to help others in need, now as nursing professionals.



A Truly Global Student Body

One hallmark of the Foreign-Educated Physician to Nurse program is the diversity of the student body. Although hailing from different nations, the students and graduates of the program share the common bond of starting their lives over again in a new country and with a new health care profession that fuels their desire to provide care to others.

Bahamas	Dominica
Bangladesh	Dominican Republic
Cameroon	Ecuador
Colombia	Egypt
Costa Rica	England
Cuba	Ethiopia
Czech Republic	Ghana
China	



INSIDE GRADUATE NURSING

Chair: ARNP and DNP Programs:

Yhovana Gordon, EdD, DNP, MSN, ARNP, FNP-BC

Chair: Nurse Anesthesia Program: Jeffrey Groom, PhD, RN, CRNA
Program(s):

- Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP)
- BSN-to-DNP
- Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) Degrees and Post-Master's Certificate Programs:
Advanced Adult/Gerontology NP; Advanced Child NP; Advanced Family NP; Advanced Psychiatric & Mental Health NP
- MSN: Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist (CRNA)
- Post-Master's Nurse Educator Certificate
- Dual MSN Degree | Nurse Educator Certificate

Student Enrollment (in and out of state): 358

Number of Graduates: 147

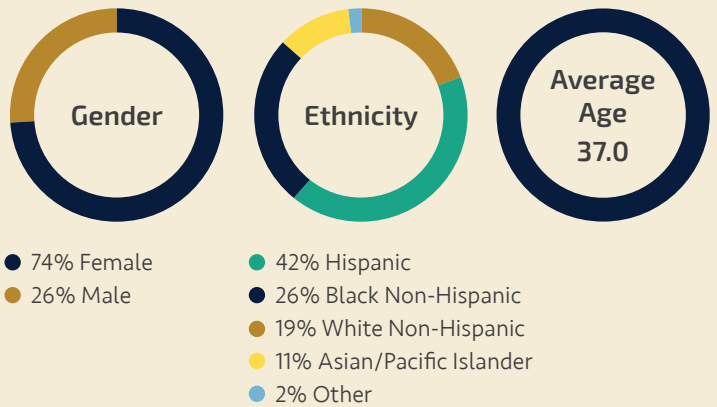
Graduation Rate: 94%

Annual Board Certification Pass Rate: 95%

Full-Time Faculty: 21

Accreditation(s): Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE); Council on Accreditation of Nurse Anesthesia Educational Programs; Florida State Board of Nursing; Southern Association of Colleges of Nursing (SACS)

Student Body Diversity:



INSIDE PHD IN NURSING

Director: Amy Paul-Ward, PhD

Program(s) offered:

- PhD in Nursing
- BSN-to-PhD

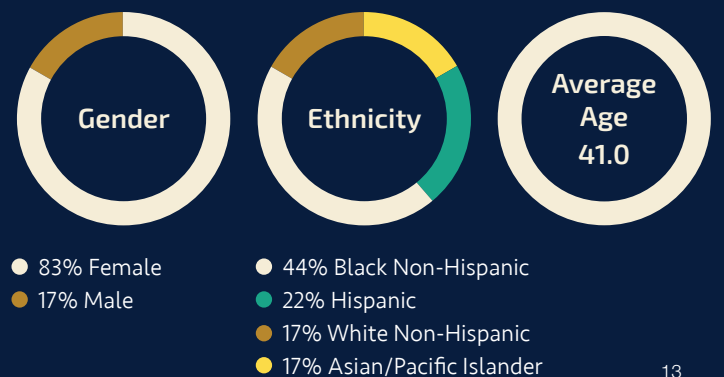
Student Enrollment (in and out of state): 23

Number of Graduates: 2

Faculty/Dissertation Adviser Status: 11

Accreditation(s): Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS)

Student Body Diversity:



Grand Cayman	Lithuania	Panama	Syria
Haiti	Mexico	Peru	Turkey
Honduras	Morocco	Philippines	Ukraine
India	Nepal	Puerto Rico	Uzbekistan
Iran	Nicaragua	Romania	Venezuela
Jamaica	Nigeria	Russia	Vietnam
Kuwait	Pakistan	Saudi Arabia	West Indies
	Palestine	St. Lucia	

Athletic Training

Tiffany Morton, Class of 2013

From FIU to the NFL: Blazing a Path for a New Generation of Athletic Trainers

FIU Athletic Training graduate Tiffany Morton made some history and headlines in May when she became the first woman athletic trainer (AT) ever hired by the National Football League's (NFL) Kansas City Chiefs. She is one of only five women working as full-time athletic trainers in the NFL today. Yet in her eyes, that's not the big deal. "The real breakthroughs are not the ones through the glass ceiling, but the ones on the playing field," says Tiffany. "Today's ATs integrate evidence-based practice and research to help athletes reach peak performance."

Still, it's worth noting that women now make up more than 53% of the membership of the National Athletic Trainers Association, pointing to the likelihood that more women ATs will be working in both men's and women's professional sports.

Her path to the playing field came via a career personality test she took while taking pre-med courses at Auburn University. It was a pivotal time, because Tiffany realized she didn't want to be a doctor. "I was nearing the end of my senior year with my future at a crossroads, and that test pointed me toward a career that ultimately was perfect for me," Tiffany recalls.

She enrolled in FIU's Master of Science in Athletic Training program in 2011 and soon became a student athletic trainer for FIU's football program, which ignited her passion for the gridiron. While a student, she had a foretelling encounter with respected NFL athletic trainer and president of the Professional Football Athletic Trainers Society, Rick Burkholder. He was speaking at a symposium on concussion management, and her pointed questions made a lasting impression on him.

Tiffany graduated in 2013 and went to work for Miami Southridge Senior High School as the only AT for the entire sports program. Two years later, she landed a summer internship with the Minnesota Vikings NFL franchise under head trainer Eric Sugerma. While with the Vikings, Tiffany was recommended to Kansas City Chiefs head trainer—again Rick Burkholder—to fill a seasonal intern vacancy. Rick called up his good friend Eric to arrange for Tiffany to join the Chiefs upon completing her summer internship, and she's been with the Chiefs ever since.

Tiffany prefers the spotlight shine on the players and the game, rather than herself. Yet many in the Chiefs organization are quick to point out her professionalism and commitment to athletic training are critical to the team's success.

Tiffany recognizes she's opening the door for more women ATs to one day work with men's professional sports teams. But she also sees herself as a pioneer for an emerging generation of athletic trainers—a new class of recruits who monitor and embrace the latest evidence-based medical breakthroughs, develop new treatments, and who are ready to become leaders themselves to help the profession evolve.

"The FIU AT program and faculty really instilled in me that 'Worlds Ahead' philosophy that pushes you to be better, go beyond what's expected, and take the initiative to change things for the better," says Tiffany. That go-getter attitude will no doubt help Tiffany as she works toward her ultimate goal—to become an NFL Head Athletic Trainer.



INSIDE ATHLETIC TRAINING

Chair: Jennifer Doherty-Restrepo, PhD, LAT, ATC

Program(s): Master of Science in Athletic Training (MS-AT)

Student Enrollment (in and out of state): 49

Number of Graduates: 26

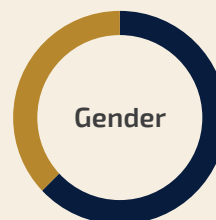
Graduation Rate: 100%

First-Time Licensure Pass Rate: 100%

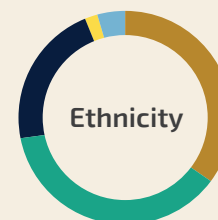
Full-Time Faculty: 5

Accreditation(s): Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education (CAATE)

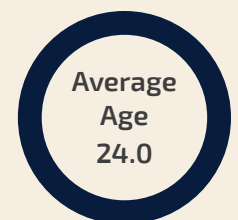
Student Body Diversity:



● 63% Female
● 37% Male



● 37% Hispanic
● 35% White Non-Hispanic
● 22% Black Non-Hispanic
● 4% Other
● 2% Asian/Pacific Islander





Communication Sciences & Disorders

**Alliete R. Alfano, PhD, CCC-SLP, LSLs Cert. AVT,
Visiting Assistant Professor**

Speaking up for Bilingual Children with Hearing Loss

It sounds intuitive. Children from bilingual homes should be encouraged to communicate in both languages. What's not as intuitive is that it should be no different for children with hearing loss, says professor and Speech-Language Pathologist, Dr. Alliete Alfano. She's conducting research she hopes will set the profession "on its ear" by proving the efficacy of integrating bilingualism into therapy protocols for children with hearing loss living in a bilingual environment.


Dr. Alfano cites studies that the more conversation and greater variety of words children are exposed to from a very young age, the better they tend to fare academically, developmentally and socially. "It stands to reason that communicating in two languages doubles the merits of this correlation," she says. Yet, for children with hearing loss, many child development professionals including pediatricians, speech-language pathologists and teachers, still rely on monolingual therapy (a.k.a. English-only) to avoid perceived language confusion that hinders language development. This is where Dr. Alfano diverges from many of her peers.

"Non-English speaking parents have been discouraged from communicating in their native tongue. This restriction to speak in only one language—a non-dominant one at that—can be detrimental," declares Dr. Alfano. "Parents may refrain from communicating with the child altogether or they give the child a poor language model because they don't speak English well. Either way, the child's communication development suffers, as does the parent-child relationship."

Dr. Alfano's mission grew from a troubling experience as a clinician several years ago providing therapy to deaf middle and high school students who only communicated through American Sign Language. "Many times, the Spanish-speaking parents dropping them off would ask me to relay information to their child because they literally could not. I was their only means of speaking with their child, one day a week, a week at a time. That was heartbreaking to me," she recalls. "So for my PhD, I needed to see how these families were communicating at home to figure out how we could help break down this communication barrier between parents and their children with hearing loss."

Dr. Alfano began her research with cochlear implant patients in her private therapy clinic, The Alfano Center, as she observed children in their bilingual homes to determine the norms of speech-language development. "I believe that a bilingual therapy plan can improve outcomes for these children because it allows for their non-English speaking parents to become active participants in the therapy process." She has applied for a research grant from the American-Speech-Language-Hearing Foundation to launch a more formal study to compare outcomes among three groups: hearing Spanish bilingual children; hearing English monolingual children; and children with hearing loss who are Spanish bilingual.

In the meantime, she is moving forward, fueled in part by the culture and resources of the College's Communication Sciences & Disorders Department. She'll be working with four graduate students and a Listening Environment Analysis (LENA) program purchased by the College. LENA devices, which children will wear to record spoken and digital stimuli throughout the day, will be employed in the coming year to standardize the research. "Once we understand the developmental trajectory of a bilingual therapy protocol, we'll be in a better position as clinicians to devise and manage treatment plans to reach these expected outcomes and improve communication for these children."



"I believe that a bilingual therapy plan can improve outcomes for these children..."

— Dr. Alliete R. Alfano



INSIDE COMMUNICATION SCIENCES & DISORDERS

Chair: Monica Hough, PhD, CCC-SLP

Program(s):

- Master of Science in Speech-Language Pathology (MS-SLP)
- Graduate Certificate in Communication Sciences & Disorders

Student Enrollment (in and out of state): 95 (degree program); 60 (graduate certificate program)

Number of Graduates: 44

Graduation Rate: 100%

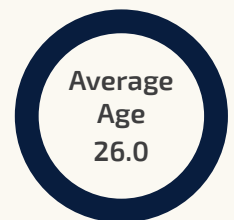
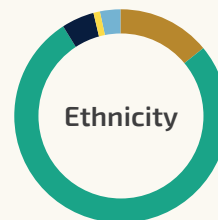
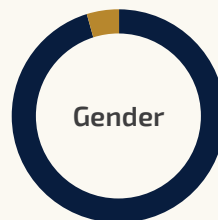
First-Time Board Certification Pass Rate: 91%

Overall Annual Pass Rate: 100%

Full-Time Faculty: 7

Accreditation(s): Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology (CAA) of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA)

Student Body Diversity:



- 95% Female
- 5% Male

- 77% Hispanic
- 14% White Non-Hispanic
- 5% Black Non-Hispanic
- 3% Other
- 1% Asian/Pacific Islander

Health Services Administration

Anthon Samuels, Class of 2016

An Against-the-Odds Success Story

Recent graduate Anthon Samuels grew up in Miami's tough Opa-Locka neighborhood where he witnessed his father gunned down and killed outside his home, just a few days before his eighth birthday.

His life could have easily deteriorated down a path that too many of his peers follow after such a life-altering tragedy. But, inspired by the strength and resolve of his grandmother and mother, and the need to set an example for his six siblings, Anthon instead chose to better himself for his family and his community.

He saw an opportunity to rise above the odds through education and football. Anthon applied himself and performed well as an undergraduate in the College's Bachelor of Health Sciences Administration program while gaining praise on the field as a running back for the FIU Panthers football team.

Although his football career was almost derailed by concussions, he persevered and fulfilled the true definition of a student athlete, becoming a leading rusher, maintaining above a 3.0 GPA and twice making the Conference USA Commissioner's Honor Roll.

While many FIU students exhibit drive and determination, Anthon took his a step further,

taking to heart personally the College's mission to engage his strength, spirit and talents to give back to communities in need.

A father of a 4-year-old son himself, the heartbreaking circumstances of his father's violent death compelled Anthon to caution the youth of his community to avoid the same fate. While at FIU, he spoke regularly to Opa-Locka elementary students about the importance of education as a path to overcome adversity, and did his part to help raise gun violence awareness through a series of mini-films he created.

Anthon's resilience and achievements in the classroom, on the field and out in the community culminated in May 2016 when he was recognized as a Worlds Ahead graduate for being an inspiration to those around him.

Anthon plans to attend graduate school and may even decide on an educational path to enroll in a nurse practitioner program. Given his perseverance, odds are that Anthon will continue following his heart to help others in need.

He saw an opportunity to rise above the odds through education and football.



INSIDE HEALTH SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

Interim Chair: Salvatore A. Barbera, MS, FACHE

Program(s):

- Bachelor of Health Services Administration
- Minor in Health Services Administration

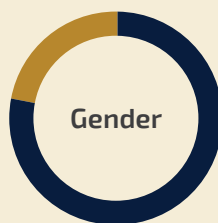
Student Enrollment (in and out of state): 871

Number of Graduates: 270

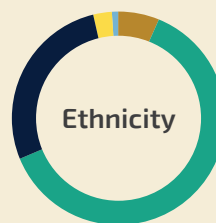
Full-Time Faculty: 5

Accreditation(s): Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS)

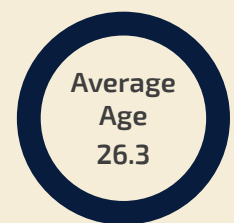
Student Body Diversity:



- 78% Female
- 22% Male



- 63% Hispanic
- 27% Black Non-Hispanic
- 6% White Non-Hispanic
- 3% Asian/Pacific Islander
- 1% Other



Occupational Therapy

Ileana Herrin, Master of Science in Occupational Therapy Student

Becoming the OT She Knows She Can Be

No one would fault FIU Occupational Therapy graduate student Ileana Herrin for focusing on her own challenges. She was pursuing a career in theater when her mother suffered a spinal cord injury. With that dream on pause, she was introduced to the discipline of occupational therapy. “Every day an OT [occupational therapist] came to the house. I liked the fact that he helped my mom get back to her regular activities like cooking, using a computer and other things.”

She realized then that she wanted to do more than perform. She wanted to help.

But the path wasn't easy. “When my mother passed away in 2009, I took it a lot harder than I thought I would,” says Ileana. “I did not make the best choices. One day I realized I could either continue going down a rocky road, or become the OT I wanted to be.”

In 2014, Ileana enrolled in FIU's Master of Science in Occupational Therapy program. She still had to overcome fears that she would not remain emotionally steady enough to help others. “My professors showed me how to take that experience with my mom and use it in a healthy way—to look outside myself and empathize more with other people.”

The faculty also challenged her. “We're going to teach you,” they said. “It's up to you to do the learning and really expand upon that.” So she did. After seeing “Adults with Autism: We Get You” posters around campus, she got involved. FIU's Disability Resource Center already had a discussion group for autistic students. She expanded the program with social activities—events, parties, even karaoke—to help students “break out of their social shells.”

“One individual [with autism] would script his responses ahead of time, never really speaking up. Near the end of my time there, he was starting conversations,” remembers Ileana. “As OTs, we have a lot to



offer. We can help them with sensory issues, studying, coping skills, money management and more.”

Ileana continued answering the College's charge to identify underserved communities and act to implement solutions. Funded by an FIU Mini Grant, Ileana developed a program to improve the health literacy of community-dwelling elderly so they could communicate better with their doctors and nurses. She also contributed to research evaluating the effects of yoga on sleep, pain and executive function in adults with chronic traumatic brain injuries. Her current fieldwork with veterans in Central Texas may ultimately lead her to work with that population, but she's considering all options.

“I knew I would be allowed opportunities [at FIU] not available at other places,” Ileana reflects. “FIU OT has given me the drive to excel and the ability to push past the boundaries of a classroom and explore what is out there.”



INSIDE OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

Chair: Lynne Richard, PhD, OT/L

Program(s): Master of Science in Occupational Therapy (MSOT)

Student Enrollment (in and out of state): 153

Number of Graduates: 50

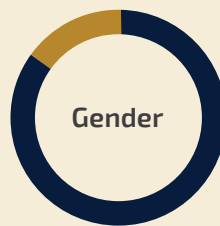
Graduation Rate: 92%

Annual Licensure Pass Rate: 96%

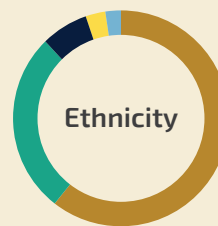
Full-Time Faculty: 8

Accreditation(s): Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE)

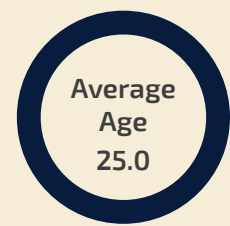
Student Body Diversity:



● 85% Female
● 15% Male



● 59% White Non-Hispanic
● 27% Hispanic
● 7% Black Non-Hispanic
● 3% Asian/Pacific Islander
● 4% Other



Physical Therapy

Laura Miller McPherson, PT, DPT, PhD, Assistant Professor

Bringing Fields Together to Elevate the Profession

What do you get when you combine expertise in biomedical engineering, neuroscience and physical therapy? You get Dr. Laura McPherson.

In her second year as an FIU Physical Therapy (PT) faculty member, Dr. McPherson is determined to break through the boundaries separating these disciplines in her research and the classroom. She draws upon her proficiencies in all three fields as part of her ongoing effort to teach FIU Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) students the basic physiology underlying common and cutting-edge interventions.

“My training prepared me to speak with colleagues in all three fields about shared goals and the unique contributions each field brings to the table. I find it exciting to bring people together and create synergies,” says Dr. McPherson. She was drawn to FIU because of

the way it encourages interdisciplinary collaboration across the College and the campus.

Dr. McPherson’s desire to take the scientific and translate it to clinical significance started after she earned a biomedical engineering degree with a minor in neuroscience from Vanderbilt University, and enrolled at Northwestern University in simultaneous pursuit of a DPT and a PhD in biomedical engineering.

“I initially enrolled in a DPT program to add a clinical perspective to my research, but becoming a clinician was a transformative experience for me personally,” remarks Dr. McPherson. “As a physical therapist, I enjoy providing care to patients and having an immediate effect on their lives. As an engineer and researcher, I enjoy the detailed scientific discovery process that will hopefully improve



INSIDE PHYSICAL THERAPY

Interim Chair: Mark D. Rossi, PhD, PT, CSCS

Program(s): Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT)

Student Enrollment (in and out of state): 159

Number of Graduates: 55

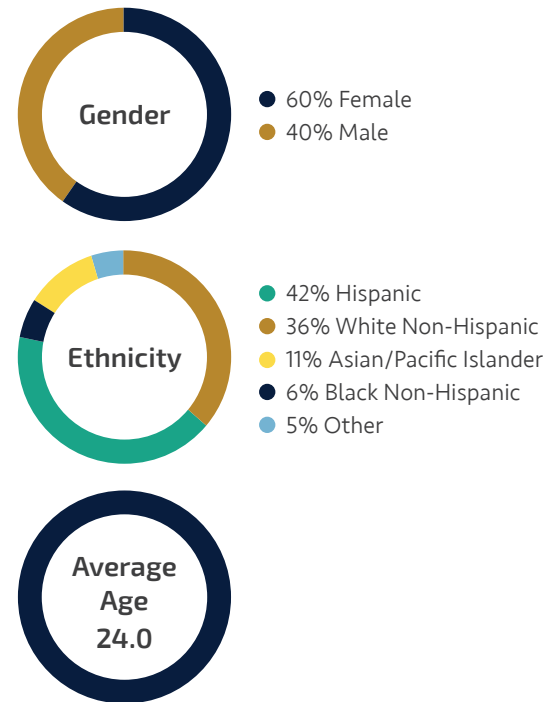
Graduation Rate: 98%

Annual Licensure Pass Rate: 94%

Full-Time Faculty: 9

Accreditation(s): Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE)

Student Body Diversity:



patients' lives in the long term. This combination of roles is what made me fall in love with the profession."

She's tying together her scientific and clinical know-how to eventually improve therapy interventions and outcomes for people recovering from a stroke or those managing multiple sclerosis.

Dr. McPherson is continuing research from a previous institution with new initiatives at FIU. She plans to evaluate precise differences in central nervous system control of muscles between patients and healthy volunteers, for example, using the College's state-of-the-art Human Performance Lab (see sidebar).

FIU's PT Department also fosters student research, another appealing aspect for Dr. McPherson. "I am very passionate about educating future DPTs so they can learn how basic sciences relate to clinical practice," adds Dr. McPherson. "At physical therapy conferences, colleagues are talking about regenerative medicine, genomics and rehabilitation robotics. I want to bring new advances to students, so that when they graduate they are in tune with future directions and can really advance the profession."

Rehabilitation Research with a Lot of Muscle

Dr. Laura Miller McPherson's research program employs a new, cutting-edge technology that reveals precisely how the central nervous system orchestrates movement in healthy individuals and those with neurological damage. Using a novel tool called high-density surface electromyography (EMG), she can non-invasively measure the electrical firing of muscle cells as they contract. These firing patterns encode information about how the central nervous system controls muscles to produce movement. Dr. McPherson's previous work in healthy individuals demonstrated how the nervous system controls shoulder muscles (which provide stability) differently from finger muscles (which provide dexterity).

Dr. McPherson also uses high-density surface EMG to reveal how the nervous system reorganizes following neurological injury. The healthy nervous system has an inherent ability to learn and adapt

through a process called neuroplasticity. Neuroplasticity can aid motor recovery after damage to the nervous system, but at times, the process is maladaptive, which can hinder recovery of motor function and lead to disability. In this case, currently available rehabilitation approaches may be subpar.

She posits that research using high-density surface EMG will lead to greater understanding about the maladaptive firing of muscle cells, and eventually, to improved interventions and patient outcomes. The ultimate goal is to use this information to design evidence-based physical therapy interventions and outcome measures, including those that are tailored to an individual patient's physiology.

Dr. McPherson has previously used this technology in people who have moderate-to-severe arm impairments after stroke. Her work examined why these people have a reduced ability to control their arm joints independently, as well as why different muscles are weaker than others. She is currently extending these methods to examine motor deficits in individuals with multiple sclerosis.

Supporting our Students and Our Community



Diane Ramy Faulconer '74

In 2014, Diane Ramy Faulconer established a planned gift which created the Prentiss Lee Faulconer, Jr. and Diane Ramy Faulconer Endowment Fund. Annual interest disbursements from this fund will be directed in perpetuity toward scholarships for graduate students in nursing, accounting and health informatics. Having secured a legacy to support future students, Diane is now helping graduate nursing students achieve academic success in her lifetime through philanthropic gifts to assist current students with unmet financial need. This latest investment is moving the College Worlds Ahead to attract and retain top performing nurse practitioner and doctoral students who will serve diverse patients and potentially become nursing faculty. A two-time FIU alumna, a Torch Award recipient, and a member of the College's Dean's Leadership Council, Diane's expanding philanthropic commitment to FIU will encourage scholarship recipients to share their nursing knowledge with others as a benefit to society through mentorship, research and community service.



Matthew Forbes Romer Foundation

The Matthew Forbes Romer Foundation emerged in 1998 from the work of a family inspired by the strength of their little boy who lost his battle with Tay-Sachs disease. Today, the Foundation leads the fight for education, quality assurance, and research of children's genetic diseases of the brain by promoting critical awareness, testing, counseling and research initiatives that hold promise for the prevention and eventual cure of such diseases. Almost \$2 million has been raised by the Foundation to support its mission, including working with South Florida nursing schools, led by FIU, with annual scholarships to assist students pursuing a career in pediatric nursing. The Foundation has also partnered with the College to pioneer specialty training for nurses providing pediatric intensive care in the home.

Health Foundation of South Florida

The College received a \$90,000 grant from Health Foundation of South Florida to help break down health care barriers in the at-risk Liberty City neighborhood. The pilot project, *Linkage to Primary Health Care: Community Outreach and Rally for Engaged Aggregates in Health Care Initiative*—a.k.a. CO-REACH—is a community-focused, multidisciplinary effort to introduce health care ambassadors into marginalized communities skeptical of or unfamiliar with the health care system. Project leaders aim to actively bridge health care gaps and improve health outcomes by engaging with residents who have limited or no access to health care, linking them with care services and specialists to treat their condition, and navigating them through the entire treatment process. The CO-REACH project is based out of the John H. Peavy Health Center at Miami Northwestern Senior High School, a unique school-based clinic supporting a collaborative practice environment to increase access to high quality primary care and enhance health outcomes for students and families in Liberty City.



The Miami Foundation

In keeping with its mission to serve the unmet needs of Miami residents, The Miami Foundation awarded the College a \$15,000 grant from its *Community Grants Program* to promote the Liberty City CO-REACH initiative at Miami Northwestern Senior High School. The grant supports health and peer navigators serving residents and area schools, providing health literacy and linking patients to care providers, specialists and services needed to manage health conditions. Additionally, navigators will support enrollment in the Affordable Care Act and link services, benefits, and subspecialty referrals. The Miami Foundation connects philanthropic donors with community organizations that share a common vision for a better Miami. Through this signature grant program, the Foundation annually invests more than \$1 million in support of initiatives aimed at improving the quality of life for all Greater Miamians.



Jonas Center for Nursing and Veterans Healthcare

The Jonas Center for Nursing and Veterans Healthcare provided a gift of \$70,000 to the College this past academic year to sponsor six named scholarships for PhD in Nursing and Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) students for 2016-2018. These scholarships include *Jonas Nurse Scholars*, *Jonas Veterans Healthcare Scholars* and a *Donald Jonas Legacy Scholar*. The gift, which doubles that of previous years, will be matched from additional funders including the Gertrude E. Skelly Charitable Foundation. The national Jonas Nurse Leaders Scholars Program was created in 2008 to support educational development of new nursing faculty and stimulate models for joint faculty appointments between schools of nursing and clinical affiliates. More than 1,000 scholars from 140 schools nationwide have benefited from the program since its inception. The Jonas Center was launched in 2006 to advance nursing scholarship, leadership and innovation.



Citrus Health Network

With a gift of \$154,000, the Citrus Health Network established the *Citrus Health Network Professorship* to support an FIU Nursing faculty member dedicated to teaching in the College's award-winning Foreign-Educated Physician to BSN/MSN program (FEP). The FEP, the nation's first nurse education program designed to transition foreign doctors not practicing medicine in this country into nurse professionals, is an innovative solution to the nursing shortage and the need for more diversity in the nursing workforce. Citrus Health Network was founded in 1979 as a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) community mental health center dedicated to serving mentally ill individuals and their families. In 2004, Citrus Health Network also became a Federally Qualified Health Center, and takes a total wellness approach with each client, addressing the whole person by integrating primary health care and behavioral health services, as needed, and coordinating care across a broad range of health services and community-based programs.

Dr. Luz Sobong Porter, PhD, ARNP, FAANP, FAAN

Dr. Luz Sobong Porter, Professor Emerita and retired NWCNHS faculty member, is leaving a legacy of support for graduate nursing students at FIU. Dr. Porter's lifetime passion of service to the nursing profession included bedside care, nationally recognized research, and a highly accomplished teaching career in academia spanning 52 years—24 of them at FIU. Her lasting contributions to the College include instituting the Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) and PhD in Nursing programs, for which she also served as their founding director, and establishing the *Dr. Luz Porter Endowed Graduate Nursing Fund*. Over her many years mentoring countless graduate and doctoral nursing students, Dr. Porter took steps to ensure that top academic performing students receive the support they deserve with help from the fund. Annual fund disbursements will supplement university stipends to provide full financial assistance for graduate nursing students to stay on track toward completing their degree, while enhancing their focus on nursing research and future careers in teaching.



Lettie Pate Whitehead Foundation

The Lettie Pate Whitehead Foundation has continued its generous philanthropic support to the College through a gift of \$141,000 to fund scholarships for students with outstanding academic achievement enrolled in the undergraduate nursing program. The Foundation is dedicated to supporting women's causes and devotes the majority of its resources to scholarship programs for deserving female students with unmet financial need in schools and colleges across nine Southeastern states.



We are Fueled by Intellect; Driven by Innovation and Caring





The faculty and staff of the Nicole Wertheim College of Nursing & Health Sciences have contributed greatly to the many important strides in program excellence this past academic year. Through their dedication we are able to provide students with high-quality academic health programs that address the culturally diverse health care needs of South Florida and the nation. These professionals embody the mission, vision and values of the College in everything they do and with every student they support.



**Nicole Wertheim
College of Nursing
& Health Sciences**

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