

History of School of Nursing at Seattle Pacific

By

Ruby Englund, M.N., R.N.

Associate Professor

Beginnings of the Program – 1930s

In 1936 the Seattle Pacific College bulletin described a course called Biology 71, the History of Nursing. The SPC bulletin that year described a leaflet published by the American Nurses Association, encouraging young women to go to college and get a college degree as well as a nurses diploma. At that time students could go to SPC for three years and then go to a hospital school whose course was approved by Seattle Pacific College. Upon completion of both the work at SPC and the hospital program, a Bachelor of Science degree would be granted by Seattle Pacific.

Curriculum in the hospital portion of the program included such things as :Diseases of the Eye, Ear, Nose and Throat; Modern Social and Health Movements, Physical Therapeutics, Materia Medica, first Aid and Emergency Nursing, Elements of Pathology, Mental Nursing, Obstetrical Nursing, Pediatrics, and Nursing Practice.

In the 1937 College bulletin the prenursing course had a definite articulation with several hospitals, allowing students to take their prerequisite courses at SPC, then enroll in one of the Swedish Hospital or Seattle General Hospital program. Students would enroll at the hospital at the same time they enrolled at SPC.

University of Washington Connection

The 1938 SPC Bulletin listed the title of the department for the first time, the School of Nursing Education, offering curricular for nurses. Also this year SPC changed to a quarter system, rather than a semester system. The curriculum leading to a degree was arranged on a sixteen quarter basis. The first six quarters were taken in nursing instruction and practical training in cooperation with the University of Washington School of Nursing in one of the local hospitals.

Curricula at that time included two quarters of Chemistry, two quarters of Physiology, two quarters of Anatomy and Nutrition among other requirements such as liberal arts courses and biblical studies. Also this year the nursing courses added to their titles, “Principles of Obstetrics” indicating a change in focus from procedures to principles.

Early Nursing Leaders

M. Grace Watson, R.N. was listed in the 1938 bulletin as an assistant, the first time a nurse was mentioned in the description of the nursing curricula. She was not identified as a faculty member and her role is not described. This was the first year that course under the heading Nursing Education was listed. It was History of Nursing, “a survey of nursing history and education from the earliest times to the present. An effort is made to

inculcate the highest and best traditions of nursing as a profession. Open to women. Required for nursing students.”

Lucille Secord Warren A.B., R.N. was Instructor in Nutrition and History of Nursing in 1939-40. Sometimes nursing students would enter clinical nursing after completing another degree. One such student was Effie Snyder Gillespie who entered Seattle Pacific in 1937 as a transfer student. She then entered clinical nursing courses at Swedish Hospital with fellow SPC classmates Ruth Grout and Hattie Zobrist. While at SPC during that time, Effie remembers taking Psychology from Dr. Phillip Ashton, Comparative Religion from Dr. Frank Warren, Chemistry from Jacob Moyer, Anatomy and Physiology and Microbiology from Dr. Harvey McMillan. Dr. McMillan had a special interest in nursing students and served as advisor for the Nursing Club.

Swedish Hospital Clinical Work

While at Swedish Hospital students were assigned to clinical units and worked under the supervision of graduate nurses. There were one or two faculty members. Herina Eklind was Superintendent of Swedish Hospital for many years during that era and Catherine Gustafson Svelander was Director of Nursing Education.

Students lived in the dormitory adjacent to Swedish Hospital. When working night duty students were expected to get up to attend classes in the afternoon after sleeping for only a few hours. In the evening they slept another few hours before returning to duty at 11 pm.

The nurses also had a choir that practiced each week and sang for special events at Christmas and at Pinning and Capping ceremonies. These events were often held at Seattle First Covenant Church which is located several blocks from Swedish Hospital.

During the first three months of the nursing program students were known as “probies” and wore their uniform dress and white apron. Upon completion of the probationary time, the student could wear a cap and white bib with the apron. Until 1940 nursing students wore high topped black shoes at which time the regulation was changed to regular black shoes with a medium heel. Upon graduation nurses wore white shoes and stockings and a white uniform. When students completed the program at Swedish they were invited to a picnic at the summer home of Mr. Nordstrom, a Swedish Hospital board member.

During the early 1940s two options were available to nursing students. They could attend a prenursing course at SPC for one year, and then go to Swedish Hospital for the remainder of their work. The other option was described earlier where students attended SPC for six quarters and then entered the the quarter program in association with the University of Washington.

Lillian Watkins Bilderback, A.B., R.N. was Director of Nursing Education and Instructor in Home Economics from 1940-43. The enrollment in the program was almost 40.

During the last two quarters that the students spent on campus at SPC, they would go to Harborview King County Hospital for one or two classes each quarter. It was felt that by doing so the transition to the hospital would be easier. Students officially registered with the University but there was no tuition charge. The hospital provided room and board, where single rooms with running water were provided. Students did pay a total charge of \$100. for uniforms and textbooks. During their first two quarters at Harborview, students spent approximately 14 hours per week in study, class and work, and 30 hours in the hospital.

The students who chose the Swedish Hospital curriculum paid the hospital \$45 on admission. After the fourth month of preliminary term, each student was given an allowance of \$5 per month during the remainder of the course. During the preliminary period at the hospital the student worked 20 hours per week, but later spent 40 hours per week in the hospital. Students had eight hours of class work and were expected to spend 10 hours a week in study. Each student had one day off each week.

In 1943 Eva Sherwood A.B., M.A., R.N. became the director and served until 1948. She was the first nurse with a Master's degree to be the Director. She also worked part time as a nurse at Swedish Hospital. It was during these years that the US Cadet Nurse Corps program was instituted. Because of the need for nurses during World War II, the United States government developed a program to financially assist students. The SPC bulletin said "As this catalog goes to press serious consideration is being given to the possibility of shortening the course for nurses. The national demand for more nurses makes such a move almost imperative." Students took classes at Seattle Pacific for nine months, then went to Swedish Hospital for twenty one months. The government paid for tuition, maintenance, and books.

The US Cadet Nurse Program

The Cadet program continued in 1945-46. Students attended SPC for six months, then went to Swedish Hospital for thirty months. Students were paid \$15 a month and all fees were paid. These students did not earn a degree from Seattle Pacific, but qualified for the US Cadet Nurse program.

In 1947-48 the bulletin emphasized that the emphasis would be on the degree course, although the relationship with the hospital programs would continue. Both Harborview and Swedish were divisions of the University of Washington. Students could choose which of the two facilities they wished to attend.

In 1948-50 Gladys Hamilton B.S., R.N. was Assistant Professor and Director of Nursing Education.

In 1950-52 Laura Bell Smith B.S., R.N. was Assistant Professor and Director of Nursing Education. She went on to serve as a missionary in Japan for many years with her husband Ernie Christianson.

Lydia Green Becomes Director

Lydia Green became director in 1952. The program for the prenursing affiliation with a hospital program was dropped but the affiliation with the University of Washington continued.

Under the influence of Lydia Green, former missionary to China, the philosophy continued to emphasize the need for nurses to serve on the mission field. The bulletin states “the mission fields of the world need competent nurses to care for the physical needs of the natives and to organize nursing education center.” Lydia Green had worked in China to set up educational centers for nurses while she and her physician husband John were missionaries there.

Some registered nurses attended Seattle Pacific to earn a degree in another field, such as missions. Groups on campus such as Nurses Christian Fellowship and the foreign Missions Fellowship fostered these plans.

Nurses Alumni Association Established

In the early 1960's the Nurses Alumni Association of Seattle Pacific was formed. Their goals were to encourage missionary nurses through prayer support and the purchase of subscriptions to nursing journals, which were sent to the nurses serving as missionaries abroad. As the Nurses Alumni Association continued, an additional goal of a scholarship program for current students began. This program of scholarship support continues today. Fellowship and professional encouragement are also a significant segment of the Nursing Alumni program.

The Nurses club had been active at Seattle Pacific since the early 40's. The groups sponsored speakers such as nursing faculty from the University of Washington who would come to speak to the nursing students at Seattle Pacific. Doris Carnevali and Virginia Alcott, nationally famous nurses who taught at the University of Washington, spoke on different occasions. The Nurses Club also helped organize orientation to the hospital facilities where students would be going later for their clinical experience.

Nurses Christian Fellowship

Nurses Christian Fellowship is a branch of InterVarsity Fellowship that has been active at Seattle Pacific. NCF sponsors bible studies, prayer and fellowship times that support nursing students as they work with patients, feeling that nurses have unique needs in their profession that benefit from nurturance by other Christian nurses.

In 1959-60 there was a significant change in the prenursing program. It became a three quarter sequence at SPC, followed by three academic years and one summer at the University of Washington.

Building Green Hall

Another change in the early 60's was in the building facilities on the campus at Seattle Pacific. A large portable building housed the Student Union Building and the Health Services building on the corner of 3rd Av W. and Bertona. In 1960 a loan from the federal government enabled SPC to build a new student union building as well as another building know for many years as the Health Center. (Lydia Green Hall). It was designed by Lydia Green and used as an outpatient health care facility as well as an inpatient care facility for 17 students. In patient care continued for over ten years, from 1960 until the early 70's, after which time ill students were admitted to Ballard Community Hospital . Outpatient care continued in Green Hall until 1990 when the entire Green Hall building was given over to house the School of Health Sciences, and outpatient care was moved to Watson Hall.

SPC's Nursing Program

During C. Dorr Demaray's tenure as President, SPC developed its own independent nursing program. The founding Dean Lydia Green surveyed graduates of the SPC-UW program as part of her master's thesis research to determine feeling of the graduates of that program about SPC having their own nursing program. At the same time president Demaray, Lydia Green and Dean Tschudin of the University of Washington School of Nursing met to discuss the feasibility of Seattle Pacific developing their own independent nursing program. Upon the encouragement of President Demaray and Dean Tschudin, and action of the Board of Trustees of SPC, Seattle Pacific launched its own nursing program in 1964-65 and graduated its first class of six in 1967.

The first curricula was developed by Lydia Green, Shirley Smith Kurz, and Cathy Sample. Tomina Tjelta, then on faculty at the University of Washington, served as curriculum consultant.

Until 1976 two affiliations during the senior year continued to be taken at the university of Washington, community health and psychiatric nursing.

Accreditation by the NLN

National League for Nursing accreditation was achieved in 1968 which was the earliest date possible for accreditation of a new program.

David L. McKenna was president of Seattle Pacific College at that time. Continuing accreditation was granted by the NLN in 1976. In 1978 Seattle Pacific became a University.

Della Tiede served as Director of the school of Nursing from 1972-1980. She was a graduate of the SPC-UW program and had been a faculty member before becoming Director. During her tenure as Director the School became The School of Health

Sciences. Faculty determined that a broader range of courses might be offered in addition to nursing courses by making this change.

The RNB Program

A pathway for registered nurses to earn a bachelor's degree was instituted in 1973. Students enrolled in bridge courses during their first year on campus and then blended into the senior level courses the next year, earning a bachelor of science degree.

Transcultural Nursing

Transcultural nursing courses have been a part of the nursing curricula since 1977. The program was developed by Ruth Erickson Gollings and implemented by Maxine Haynes. Chris Larson was the instructor for several years. Vicki McClurg (SPU 1970) taught the course for nearly 20 years. Following the junior year, students go to Costa Rica where they live with Costa Rican families, work with missionaries in health care facilities, and participate in language study.

A Family Health Practitioner pathway (FNP) was available to registered nurses during their senior year. These courses were developed under a federal grant from 1980-1983. Once the grant expired, it was determined that due to the expense, the University would not continue this program.

Doctoral Faculty

Margaret Stevenson was chosen Dean in the spring of 1981, the first doctorally prepared nursing faculty member. Dr. Stevenson was dean at Seattle Pacific University from 1982-1988.

A unique program in conjunction with Swedish Hospital Medical Center turned out to be a very successful association. The RNB program was offered to Swedish Medical Center employees on a part-time basis, primarily a late afternoon and evening format. SHMC offered financial support through reduced tuition and forgivable loans to nurses employed at Swedish. Similar programs followed, such as the one in conjunction with Group Health Cooperative of Puget Sound.

A spinoff from the SPU-SHMC link was the SCC-SHMC-SPU link. In that program students who were completing their two year associate degree program in nursing were employed by SHMC and applied to SPU's RNB pathway, thus facilitating student earning a bachelor's degree.

Another transcultural experience includes an intensive two week study tour by students, faculty and nurses from Gunma University in Japan. These participants stay at Seattle Pacific University, attend lectures by nursing faculty, alumni and other American nurses, tour health facilities in the Seattle area and spend one weekend with an American family.

In 1987 a transcultural nursing course began in Taiwan. Students worked in a large medical center in Taipei with English speaking nurses, and lived in a nearby apartment building. This program was developed by Annalee Oakes.

Barbara Innes served as acting Dean in 1988-89 and was appointed dean in 1989 and served until June 1994. She had served as a faculty member since 1976, returned to her faculty position and in 2000 she assumed the position of Director of the Registered Nurse program.

Master's Degree Established

A long range planning goal had identified that by 1990 Seattle Pacific University would have a Master of Nursing program. The first class of Master's students were enrolled in the fall of 1989. The program focused on leadership and was geared to fit the schedule of the nurse who was working full time. Classes were offered in the late afternoon-evening and on Saturdays. There were 15 students in the first group.

Nursing Camp

An innovative nursing recruitment program was initiated the summer of 1990. High school students spent a week on campus attending nursing lectures, visiting hospitals, observing nurses in clinical settings, and learning nursing skills. Nursing Camp continues each summer and includes 25 participants. Many of the high school "campers" have enrolled in the SPU nursing program. This program is directed by Ruby England

Dr. Annalee Oakes served as Interim Dean in 1994-1995 and was appointed Dean from 1995. She served until 1998. She had been on faculty since 1971.

Family Nurse Practitioner Program

A family nurse practitioner program began in 1994 for nurses who had already earned a master's degree. The graduates serve the community as primary health care providers and focus on health promotion and maintenance.

Dr. Lucille Kelley served as Interim Dean in 1998-1999. She was appointed Dean in 1999 and is the present Dean of the School of Health Sciences at SPU.

In Autumn 2000 nursing students will enter the program as junior students. They will complete 8 prerequisites and most of their general education classes during their freshmen and sophomore years. Having all of the natural and social science courses completed before beginning nursing will allow them to have a broader knowledge base to draw upon while studying nursing theory. The junior and senior year will be focused primarily on nursing course work and clinical experience.

Faith in The Future

Throughout its history, the central theme and philosophy of the nursing program have remained constant, serving the Lord Jesus Christ by serving others as Christ did when He was here on earth. The program has been developed over the years by many hours of fine tuning, labors of love, and constant prayer. Links with clinical agencies, nursing leaders, educational institutions, and support from leaders on campus, alumni and friends have brought Seattle Pacific University's nursing program to a position of high regard in the community. Students and graduates from Seattle Pacific are recognized as having a high level of knowledge, excellent skill level and hearts of service. The heritage of the past is rich and has bestowed many challenges and blessings on the school, alumni, faculty and friends. The school has recognized a high calling and will continue in prayer to meet the challenges of the days ahead.