

William Paterson University Announces School of Nursing Chairperson

By Renee F. Pevour MS, RN



William Paterson University announces Jill Nocella, PhD, APRN-BC, as the new School of Nursing Chairperson. Dr. Nocella brings more

than fourteen years of leadership experience at William Paterson University. She has served in many university-wide roles that reflect her commitment to nursing education, student success and community health.

Dr. Nocella served as the Director of the WP Nursing Honors Track for eleven years. In this program, students are provided with an in-depth experience in nursing research. Five nursing honors research courses are taken concurrently

with the core nursing courses. Each BSN student completes an original research project. Under Dr. Nocella's guidance, these students have presented at state, regional, and national research conferences. This opportunity launched them into professional careers that understand the value of research in the nursing profession.

In addition, Dr. Nocella served as Chairperson of the Nursing Academic Standards Committee. This committee reviews all nursing students' course grades, from freshman to doctoral students. This offered valuable insight as to where students are most often stumbling. Therefore, she gained practical knowledge and can suggest changes in the curriculum to promote student success.

Dr. Nocella has also been a leader at William Paterson University, beyond nursing, serving as chairperson of three university-wide committees. These include: Chairperson of WP Academic Standards Council, Chairperson of WP Budget and Planning Council, and Chairperson of the WP Safety and Advisory Committee.

Dr. Nocella's has maintained a personal and professional mission to communities. "I began my nursing career after seeing the good and compassionate care that was given to my grandmother." This led to enrolling in the College of NJ for a BS in nursing. It was during her last semester, the course in Community Nursing, that created a spark. She was inspired by the autonomy seen in the visiting nurses. Their assessments and communications with the physicians shaped the outcome of the patient's recovery. Seeing her interest in community, one of the faculty members encouraged her to pursue graduate study in public health.

Dr. Nocella went to Penn State University and graduated with an MS in Community Health Nursing. "Evaluating the needs of a community, identifying gaps, forming community partnerships that affected positive health outcomes, on a population level, really became an interest." She became certified as a Clinical Nurse Specialist in Community Health.

One of the PhD requirements at NYU, was teaching residency hours. Her preceptor was teaching nursing research at a university. This opened an interest in teaching and included nursing research. The natural next step was to become a faculty member. And so a full circle was created. What started as an interest to assess and promote healthy communities in the general public developed into a desire to assess and promote success in the academic communities of student nurses.

The experience of coalition building and creating partnerships in the community is a valuable platform to meet the current academic challenges. "I am excited to be in nursing education during a time of so much change. Advances in technology and the emergence of Artificial Intelligence create opportunities to enhance the nursing curriculum. This will be accomplished through partnerships and coalition building in a variety of other disciplines. And I look forward to working with these partners to enhance the community of student nurses." ■

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