

compassion • integrity • excellence • inclusivity • collaboration • creativity

# SCHOOL OF NURSING

Dean's Report 2021



SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY  
**EDWARDSVILLE**  
SCHOOL OF NURSING



## Message from the Dean

As I reflect on 2020, I am amazed but not surprised at the resiliency and fortitude of our faculty, staff and students. Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, the mission and vision of the School of Nursing has been safeguarded despite the need to alter our routine operations. Remote learning, virtual simulation, social distancing and online student support services were implemented to ensure the high-quality nursing education our students expect and deserve.

With gradual distribution of COVID-19 vaccines, along with decreasing positivity rates and hospitalizations, the hint of a return to some semblance of normalcy provides encouragement and hope. And when our “new normal” occurs, the School will once again embrace the **changes** needed to help students achieve academic excellence.

This past year also highlighted the biases and inequities that have created injustice and racism in our society. **Change**, immediate and sustained, needs to occur in order to ensure justice and equality. As nurses, we need to be leaders in eradicating the marginalization of people we serve and work alongside. **Change** must happen.

The School of Nursing is implementing a holistic admissions process for undergraduate and graduate programs, revising curriculum to include social justice and healthcare disparities, and developing intentional and inclusive recruitment and retention strategies to promote a more diverse student body and faculty.

Looking back over the nearly 60 years that the SIUE School of Nursing has been in existence, I marvel at the amazing growth and change it has experienced and the impactful footprint on the surrounding region. Even since I first started teaching here in 1987, the progress has been astounding. And today, I am in awe. For me personally, my tenure here as faculty, department chair, associate dean, and now dean has been the most memorable and rewarding time in my career. And for that reason, making the decision to retire on May 31 of this year has been a difficult one. The School has been my second family for more than 32 years, and leaving will be hard. I am ready for **change**, too, and ready to enjoy family, friends, travel, renewing old hobbies and starting new ones.

The administrators and faculty will carry on the exciting momentum of the School. I am confident you and I will be reading far into the future of the continued progress and triumphs the School will achieve. That is the nature of our School, and that will NEVER **change**.

Thank you for your support of the School and of me, and join me in watching what is next for the School. I know it will be great!

Sincerely,

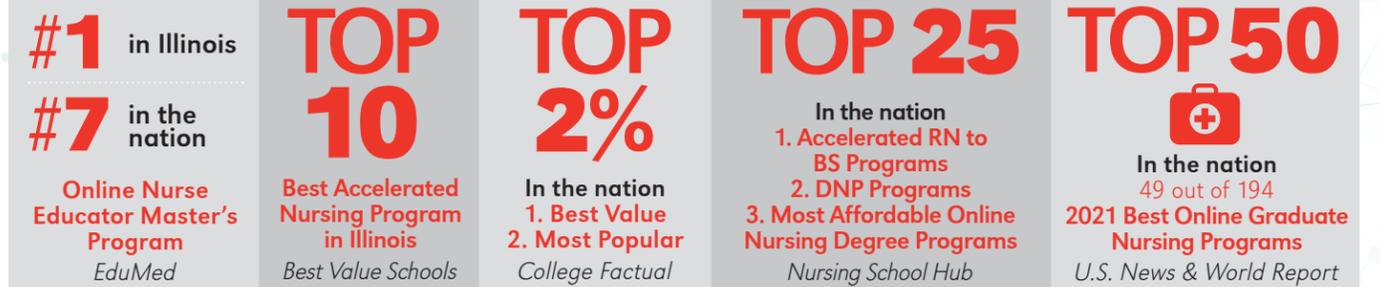
*Laura W. Bernaix*

Laura W. Bernaix, PhD, RN  
Dean

## Points of Pride

Despite the challenges due to COVID-19, this has been another tremendous year as the SIUE School of Nursing continues to see dramatic growth in enrollment and program development, and national recognition for our high-quality programs and exceptional value. We are grateful for the generous support of our donors for partnering with us to advance nursing education, research and service in the regions we serve.

### RECENT TOP NATIONAL RANKINGS



### SUCCESS BY THE NUMBERS



### Great News

Our School continues expanding healthcare for an underserved population that is disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. The WE CARE Clinic, located on the East St. Louis Higher Education Campus, received a \$78,751 grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration to expand telehealth services and community education. Patients now have increased access to routine care while limiting the virus's spread.

### School of Nursing Vision and Values

The vision of the SIUE School of Nursing is to educate and develop nurses as care providers, scholars and leaders able to meet the health challenges of a diverse and complex world. The School values compassion, integrity, excellence, inclusivity, collaboration and creativity.

Learn more @ [siue.edu/nursing](https://siue.edu/nursing)



## Health Sciences Building Project Progressing

The Illinois Capital Development Board (CDB) has selected HOK-St. Louis as the preferred architectural design firm for preliminary design of the Health Science Building (HSB) on the SIUE campus. Plans for the HSB include modern classrooms, teaching and research laboratories, faculty offices, administrative spaces, and student resource and study spaces.

The HSB will increase the School of Nursing's student capacity and the size of its simulation laboratory. In addition to nursing, the HSB will house pharmacy and related health science areas.

"The HSB will provide much-needed space and resources for learning and collaboration with multiple disciplines," said Amy E. Reed, MSN, RN, coordinator of simulated learning. "Realistic spaces help simulate clinical and community environments where students can learn, practice and demonstrate concepts that improve health and save lives throughout the region and beyond."

The new HSB will foster a collaborative and creative educational environment with open and flexible classrooms containing the latest technology, spaces for small group collaboration, and spaces designed specifically for interprofessional activities. Together this will enhance student confidence and prepare them for hands-on patient care.

The CDB released \$10,537,000 in planning funds in January 2020 to create preliminary designs for the HSB. The complex will include approximately 221,000 square feet. The project's total cost is roughly \$105 million. It would be the largest building on the SIUE campus.

## U.S. News Ranks Online Graduate Program Among Top 50

U.S. News & World Report ranked the School of Nursing among the top 50 in its 2021 Best Online Graduate Nursing Programs list. The School is ranked in the top 25% nationally and among the top four in Illinois.

The School's online graduate degree programs include:

- Family Nurse Practitioner Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP)
- Post-Master's DNP
- Master's in Healthcare Nursing Administration (HCNA)
- Master's in Nurse Educator (NE)

Dean Laura Bernaix, PhD, said the U.S. News rankings reflect the School's continued commitment to providing excellent academic experiences that prepare a nursing workforce for today's ever-evolving healthcare field.

"It is an honor to be nationally recognized and truly rewarding to see our programs continue to move up in the rankings each year," Bernaix said.

The School saw record enrollment for the second consecutive year in fall 2020 with a 5% increase (1,877 students) from fall 2019. With the new Health Sciences Building on the horizon, the foundation is in place for continued growth.

**"Our faculty and administrators work hard to provide students with a high-quality education through small class sizes, strong faculty mentoring and support, and program content that is both contemporary and robust."**

Laura Bernaix, PhD, RN, Dean



**"By far my proudest moments are when former students contact me well after graduation. To know there is still a strong connection is sometimes overwhelming. That truly is when I feel the most satisfaction and pride."**

Roberta Harrison, PhD, RN, Associate Dean for Academic Programs and Community/Global Partnerships

## Visionary Leader Set to Retire

In the past 15 years, Associate Dean Roberta Harrison, PhD, RN, initiated the online accelerated RN to BS program, developed multiple corporate and community college partnerships, and brought attention to meeting the needs of non-traditional students in the nursing workforce. Above all, she has remained student focused.

"Dr. Harrison's genuine compassion and love for students was evident in every role she has undertaken," said Dean Laura Bernaix, PhD, RN. "If you would ask students what they valued most about her, at the top of their list would be her wisdom, guidance and sincere interest in their abilities to succeed. She has a keen skill for motivating students to achieve their goals, helping them to problem-solve and counseling them through difficult life events."

Harrison has served as instructor, assistant professor, assistant dean for undergraduate programs and associate dean. Praised by her colleagues in the School for being a creative visionary and true leader, Harrison retired on May 31.

"She has always challenged us to look ahead at 'what's next' for our School," said Becky Luebbert, PhD, RN, associate professor and chair in the Department of Primary Care and Health Systems. "She has served as a role model, not only to me but for many others, as well. She will be incredibly missed."

Harrison looks forward to more time for family and new hobbies, including quilting and sewing.

## Demand for Psych Mental Health Program Growing

The School of Nursing's psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner (PMHNP) program provides students with the required clinical competencies and theoretical foundation to deliver quality psychiatric mental healthcare. Courses are offered primarily online, supported by four on-campus immersion experiences scheduled throughout the program. Students can complete the PMHNP in three ways: BSN to DNP, post-master's DNP and through a post-master's certificate.

Since beginning in spring 2020, the program has garnered 34 students and processed an additional 145 inquiries from prospective students.



**"I am thankful for the online format and affordability of this program, and the faculty have been wonderful in guiding a new program through a pandemic. I feel like I am ready to tackle boards and my new practice upon program completion!"**

Phyllis Wear, PMHNP student

## New Initiative to Provide Telehealth for School Children

Collinsville School District #10 and the School of Nursing are collaborating to develop a school-based health clinic. Collinsville Unit #10 offers Pre-K through 12th grade education to more than 6,300 children. Families in the district have reported difficulties in accessing healthcare for their children, thereby negatively impacting their educational experience. Two groups of DNP students are developing protocols and reviewing potential grant opportunities to fund the new initiative.

## School of Nursing Joins National COVID-19 Community Engagement Pledge

In February, the School of Nursing pledged to safely engage in COVID-19 vaccine administration, a commitment made by more than 220 schools of nursing nationwide and led by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN).

“We are proud to join this national commitment to keep our communities safe,” said Dean Laura Bernaix, PhD, RN. “This initiative underscores the critical role schools of nursing play in immunization efforts.”

Nursing faculty and students participated in immunization clinics hosted by the Madison County Health Department and the East Side Health District, a preventative healthcare organization based in East St. Louis. Students have now vaccinated more than 1,000 individuals in long-term care residences, skilled nursing facilities, assisted living facilities and residential treatment centers; dentists; morticians; school nurses; EMS workers and first responders; grocery store workers; and persons over 65.

“Our nursing students saw firsthand the difficult logistical challenges that vaccinating thousands of people can entail,” said Amanda Ross, RN, instructor in the Department of Family Health and Community Health Nursing.

**“I am nothing but grateful to have had this opportunity to vaccinate the people of Madison County.”**

*Kylie Clemens, Senior, Rochester, Ill.*

Ross and Cheryl Jackson, RN, also an instructor in the Department of Family Health and Community Health Nursing, led students throughout the community health clinical. Jackson noted that students had the opportunity to work with diverse populations of individuals from Cahokia, Fairmont City, Washington Park, Smithton, East St. Louis and other nearby Illinois communities.

“Having SIUE nursing students participate in the vaccination clinics enables the public to get their vaccines in a timely manner,” Jackson said. “For example, a group of 8-10 students can safely provide more than 60 vaccines per hour.

“Nursing is an intense field that requires focus, intelligence and grit, combined with selflessness, compassion and courage,” shared Kylie Clemens, a senior nursing major from Rochester, Ill. “Nurses are there in the best times and in the most challenging times. COVID-19 has posed many challenges for people around the world, and providing a vaccine has given those people hope for the first time in over a year.”



## WE CARE Clinic Secures \$78K HRSA Grant to Expand Telehealth and Community Education

Last November, the School of Nursing’s WE CARE Clinic secured a \$78,751 Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) grant entitled “Nurse, Education, Practice, Quality and Retention – Registered Nurses in Primary Care COVID.”

The WE CARE Clinic is located on the East St. Louis Higher Education Campus and provides care for an underserved population that is disproportionately impacted by COVID-19.

Grant funding has allowed the clinic to expand its telehealth services and community education initiatives supporting the prevention, preparation and response to the coronavirus. Additionally, the grant has supported the purchase of necessary equipment and the establishment of workflows to incorporate new technologies.

“Expanded telehealth services will allow the clinic to provide access to healthcare, while maintaining distance between patients and providers,” said WE CARE Clinic Director Jerrica Ampadu, PhD, RN. “We will be able to provide safe, routine care to patients with chronic conditions and patients who are at higher risk of contracting COVID-19.”

To prepare healthcare professionals and students to implement and utilize expanded telehealth services, the WE CARE Clinic is collaborating with the School of Education, Health and Human Behavior’s Department of

Teaching and Learning to offer experiential virtual learning labs for students and staff.

“These learning labs include training in telehealth, including motivational interviewing and chronic care coaching,” Ampadu said. “Students will complete a virtual lab as part of their clinical immersion. The skills acquired through the lab will assist students in providing chronic care to patients in a virtual setting. Providers at the clinic will receive telehealth education based on their specialties, such as social work and nursing.”

“The WE CARE Clinic continues to serve as a valuable resource for the East St. Louis community,” added Roberta Harrison, PhD, RN, associate dean for academic programs and community/global partnerships. “The clinic provides patients multiple ways to connect with their providers, while helping educate undergraduate and graduate nursing students about the critical need for primary healthcare in underserved communities.”



**“Educating students and providers on telehealth enhances their readiness to respond to COVID-19.”**

*Jerrica Ampadu, PhD, RN, WE CARE Clinic Director*



## You Can Do It: Three-time Alumna Inspires Fellow Grads

Single parent. Doctoral graduate. Frontline healthcare worker. Caitlin Phelan is a multitasking difference maker. Phelan earned a doctor of nursing practice degree during SIUE's virtual commencement ceremonies in December and spoke on behalf of her fellow graduates during the Graduate School ceremony.

In her speech, Phelan encouraged individuals to hold tight to four simple words: "You can do it." No matter how difficult the times get or how many responsibilities there are to juggle, a firm belief in yourself will keep you on course to achieving your goals, she said.

Phelan was a journalist before realizing that healthcare was the career for her. She completed a bachelor's in nursing in 2006 and a master's in the family nurse practitioner specialization in 2011, both from SIUE. With her doctorate, she intends to expand her positive impact on veterans' care.

"It is truly living history to listen to veterans talk about everything they saw, their experiences and the places they've traveled," Phelan said. "Unfortunately, they are sometimes misunderstood by healthcare professionals who have not had exposure to military culture.

"Increasing awareness about the unique spiritual, mental and physical issues veterans face is important for improving clinical outcomes," she said. "I hope this degree will give me a platform to contribute to that process."

With her passion for working with underserved communities and an abundance of academic and clinical experience, it's clear Phelan is living true to her words. Whatever "it" is, she can do it.



**"There will inevitably be more challenges ahead of all of us. But, when we can find what sustains us and live with intention, we are better prepared for whatever life has in store. Whatever 'it' is, you can do it."**

Caitlin Phelan, BSN '06, MSN '11, DNP '20



## SIUE Mourns Loss of Nursing Student Moneer Damra

The School of Nursing is mourning the loss of junior Moneer Damra, of Chicago, who passed away January 27. The 27-year-old suffered injuries in a random act of gun violence off-campus two weeks earlier.

A member of the SIUE ROTC program, Damra's goal was to become an Army nurse. Friends and fellow students described him as a "beautiful soul, compassionate, a good motivator," and a friend they could "count on for encouragement and positivity."

"Moneer was intelligent and curious about nursing—and took advantage of every opportunity to ask questions and learn how to be a nurse," said Amy Kief, instructor in the Department of Family Health and Community Health Nursing, who taught his first professional nursing course. "I will always remember him as kind and compassionate toward everyone he interacted with."

Damra was awarded a posthumous Bachelor of Science in nursing degree in May. Upon accepting the degree on his behalf, Damra's family was given a digital kudoboard filled with thoughtful memories from the community and shown a plaque with his name on it, created to live in the School.

**"Those of us a little older and jaded sometimes embrace the falsehood that one person can't make a difference, but Moneer disproved that daily. All that matters is that you are dependable, show up and do your best. He did his best day-in, day-out and eventually was recognized as one of our best."**

Lieutenant Col. Timothy Clark, SIUE ROTC professor of military science

To honor Damra's legacy, the School created the Moneer Damra Memorial Nursing Scholarship to provide assistance to undergraduate nursing students who demonstrate the same outstanding personal qualities, educational success and career goals he held while pursuing his degree. The SIUE Student Nurses Association (SNA) helped raise funds for this endowment by hosting a silent auction and accepting donations during their virtual trivia night in April. With a goal of raising \$25,000, the scholarship will support students in perpetuity. Gifts can be made at [siue.edu/damra-memorial-scholarship](http://siue.edu/damra-memorial-scholarship).

Other events are currently being organized in continued support of Damra, including a roadside dedication and T-shirt sale to raise scholarship funds. To learn more, contact Patti McDonald, senior director of development, at 618-650-3906 or [pmcdona@siue.edu](mailto:pmcdona@siue.edu).

## Scholarships and Recipients

### Airman David Lee Jenkins Scholarship

Daniel McGee

### Ann Heiden Wharton Memorial Nursing Award

Sydney Merle

### Anthony Oliver & Felissa Lashley Award in Nursing

Sydney Merle

### C. Harold Goddard Scholarship

Billie Cockrum

### Cecil Howard Griffin, Florence Bowmaster Griffin &

### Dr. Anne Perry Scholarship

Leah Schumacher

Kailah Carter

### Dr. Gloria Perry Graduate Nursing Excellence Award

Rebecca Hunt

### Dr. Jacquelyn M. Clement Scholarship in Nursing

James Clancy

Adam Bruinius

Nhan Nguyen

### Honoring Past Empowering Future SON Scholarship

Crystal Rice

### James M. & D. Corinne Comrie Scholarship

Gracelyn Roozenboom

### Janet N. Rarick Scholarship for Nursing

Jarrett Morgan

### Janice M. Bloomfield Memorial Nursing Student Scholarship

Kevin Tavoc

### Lorraine D. Williams Memorial Scholarship

Ahnya Richardson

### Louise Corlew, BSN '75 Scholarship

Carrie Beiser

### Nursing Alumni Heritage Award Scholarship

Jordyn Boecklen

Laura Kish

### Nursing Gems of 2009 Award

Balam Bue

### Outstanding Student In Nursing Award

Kayla Herzing

Fareedah Abisoye Balogun

### Pearl Morgan Memorial Award in Pediatric Nursing

Emily Feagans

### Pre-Clinical Nursing Scholarship

Fareedah Abisoye Balogun

Ally Elzy

Mackenzie Schoeck

### Rita E. Boyd Scholarship in Nursing

Abigail Fischer

### Roberta Lee MacDonald Memorial Award

Jennifer Robards

### Sandra Jeanne Crome Memorial Award

Jennifer Robards

### Ron McBride Memorial Scholarship for Nursing

Bailey Stewart

### Scholarship for Excellence

Leah Jansen

Madalyn Crawford

Abigayle Orndorff

Hannah Sill

Jasmin Patino

### Shirley Strohmeyer Memorial Nursing Award

Lisa Schroeder

Billie Cockrum

### SIUE SON General Scholarship

Lydia Russell

Bailey Jarman

### SIUE School of Nursing Faculty Scholarship

Katrice Hill (Carbondale)

Kaylie Rhoades (Edwardsville)

### SIUE Student Nurses Association Scholarship

Kaylie Rhoades

Kamaryn Leab

Lillian Gretak

Kylee Myers

Claire Choi

Ashlee Caldwell

Paige Black

Kayla Herzing

### St. Clair County Medical Society Alliance Scholarship

Kayla Mueller

### Stacey Jo Probst Memorial Nursing Award

Annastin Ellis

Mercedes Tejkowski

### Stahlschmidt Family Legacy Scholarship

Allison Frost

Mackenzie Liebman

### The Winston Family Scholarship for Nursing (SNAP)

Tyla Wells

## Retirements

Laura W. Bernaix



Dean and Professor  
33 years of service

Roberta Harrison



Associate Dean for Academic  
Programs and Community/Global  
Partnerships  
15 years of service

Valerie Yancey



Associate Professor  
16 years of service

## Three Faculty Named March of Dimes Nurse of the Year Winners

The School of Nursing celebrated three faculty who were honored as March of Dimes (MOD) Nurse of the Year Award winners.

Of the School's seven deserving nominees, three came out on top during the MOD's 7th annual event held virtually in November. SIUE was the event's presenting sponsor.

MOD Nurse of the Year winners from the School were:

- **Advanced Practice:** Kevin Stein, DNAP, CRNA, MS, Nurse Anesthesia DNP Program Director, Assistant Professor, Primary Care and Health Systems (PCHS) Nursing
- **Pediatrics:** Annie Imboden, DNP, APN, CPNP, SIUE Regional Nursing Program Instructor
- **Case Management, Public Health and Occupational Health:** Jerrica Ampadu, PhD, RN, CCP, WE CARE Clinic Director, Student Nurse Achievement Program Coordinator, Assistant Professor, Department of Family Health and Community Health (FHCH) Nursing

Additional nominees from the School were:

- **Behavioral Health:** Tracy Cooley, DNP, RN, Assistant Professor, PCHS Nursing
- **Nursing Administration:** Sheri Compton-McBride, DNP, MSN, RN to BS Program Director, Director of Acquisition of Clinical Sites, and Contract Management Instructor in PCHS Nursing
- **Student Nurse:** Sydney Kesner, Senior, Highland
- **Women's Health and Obstetrics:** Nancy Kurilla, MSN, RN, RNC-MNN, IBCLC, CLC, RNC-LRN, FHCH Nursing Instructor

Dean Laura Bernaix, PhD, RN, co-chaired the 2020 Nurse of the Year committee. She was grateful that the Nurse of the Year Awards were able to be presented virtually, noting the event's significance as a platform to recognize extraordinary nurses who play vital roles in communities, especially as healthcare heroes who are navigating these uncertain times.

"As our nation and world are in the throes of a pandemic with far-reaching effects on both public health systems and the national economy, March of Dimes is concerned about all pregnant women and babies who may be at a greater risk than they were prior to this crisis," Bernaix said. "Moms and babies need us now more than ever, and our March of Dimes family has stepped up for those in our community."



## Boards

### Nurse Anesthesia Program Advisory Board

Muhidin Abukar, SRNA, SIUE School of Nursing  
Leah Baecht, Assistant Program Director and Assistant Professor, Anesthesia Specialization, SIUE School of Nursing  
Austin Cook, SRNA, SIUE School of Nursing  
Teresa Cornelius, CNO, HSHS St. Joseph's Hospital, Highland, Ill.  
Michelle Ertel, CRNA, Anesthesia Associates of Belleville, Belleville, Ill.  
Felicia Gallager, CRNA, OSF Saint Francis, Peoria, Ill.  
Chaya Gopalan, Associate Professor, Primary Care and Health Systems, SIUE School of Nursing  
Andrew Griffin, Assistant Dean for Graduate Programs and Associate Professor, SIUE School of Nursing  
Kaylie LaJeunesse, SRNA, SIUE School of Nursing  
Patricia McDonald, Senior Director of Development, SIUE  
Hannah Ruholl, SRNA, SIUE School of Nursing  
Kevin Stein, Program Director and Assistant Professor, Anesthesia Specialization, SIUE School of Nursing  
Albert Suguitan, CEO, AMS Consulting, Edwardsville  
Alexandra White, SRNA, SIUE School of Nursing  
Mary Zerlan, Instructor, Anesthesia Specialization, SIUE School of Nursing

### School of Nursing Alumni Advisory Board

**President:** Jerrica Ampadu, PhD, RN, Assistant Professor, Director of WE CARE Clinic, SIUE School of Nursing  
**Vice President:** Maria Ballard, DNP, MSN, RN-BC, Magnet Program Director, BJC Memorial Hospital, Belleville, Ill.  
**Secretary:** Dani Loftus, DNP, MSN, RN, CPN, VA-BC, Allergy Asthmas and Food Allergy Center, Swansea, Ill.  
Susan Dawson, EdD, RN, PMHCNS/SP, BC, Psych NP/Adjunct Professor, SIUE School of Nursing  
Kaelyn Cupil, BSN Student, Student Nurse Achievement Program Representative, SIUE School of Nursing  
Elise Harmon, DNP, RN, Instructor, Primary Care and Health Systems, SIUE School of Nursing  
Jennifer Hertel, DNP, RN, OCN, Nurse Manager, BJC Memorial Hospital, Belleville, Ill.  
Lindsey James, BSN Student, Student Nurse Association President, SIUE School of Nursing  
Cheryl Killion, PhD, RN, FAAN, Associate Professor, Frances Payne Bolton School of Nursing, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio  
Christine Reynolds, DNP, RN, PMHNP-BC, CPNP-PC, Provident Behavioral Health, St. Louis  
Mackenzie Schutt, BSN, ICU RN, Mercy Hospital, St. Louis  
Rita Srum, MS, RNS, RN, Clinic Manager, Primary Care Services, Veterans Health Administration, St. Louis



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## About the School of Nursing

The vision of the SIUE School of Nursing is to educate and develop nurses as care providers, scholars and leaders able to meet the health challenges of a diverse and complex world. The School values compassion, integrity, excellence, inclusivity, collaboration and creativity.



SIUE is proud to support responsible use of forest resources.