

## Committed to Teaching Excellence

As health care advances, the college's Teaching Academy and other efforts ensure that new and seasoned educators move forward with it.

BY DELIA O'HARA, JOUR '70

**H**ealth care is evolving rapidly, incorporating an explosion of evidence-based knowledge, new technology and a shift toward emphasizing improved outcomes for patients. Likewise, nursing education is equally dynamic, and for the College of Nursing, maintaining excellence in teaching is a priority.

"What we teach and how we teach are both evolving," says Dr. Kristina Thomas Dreifuers, associate professor and director of the Ph.D. program in the College of Nursing.

One key to keeping pace is that the educators never stop learning themselves, under the auspices of the Teaching Academy, a faculty development program within the college. The Teaching Academy offers a number of different types of learning opportunities for nursing faculty, including conferences, talks and workshops, says Dr. Shelly Malin, Grad '83, associate dean for academic affairs, who led the development of the program. It's an invaluable resource for new teachers, but veteran faculty members can also learn how to adapt to a rapidly digitizing environment and meet the needs of the

latest generation of students — a diverse, tech-savvy group that is accustomed to active and collaborative learning experiences.

"The Teaching Academy is our umbrella for the ways that we're going to pay attention to and invest in faculty development," Malin says.

One workshop teaches best practices for guiding exercises in Marquette's clinical simulation center; another is a deep dive into Debriefing for Meaningful Learning®, which Dreifuers, who is also a researcher, developed to foster critical reasoning in students following clinical experiences like simulation.

Another program shows instructors how to teach effectively online. It's possible to forge strong relationships with students and present a "really excellent" educational experience in an online class, Malin says.

Instructors in the college programs are a mix of clinicians, researchers and other academics. "We've learned that a good clinician is not automatically going to be a good educator," Dreifuers says. "We're focusing on best practices in teaching that will help them share that knowledge with learners."

Working effectively with students of different backgrounds, learning

styles and capabilities; conveying the science and skills of nursing using evidence-based learning theory; collaborating with other members of the academic team — these are some of the skills that seasoned clinicians may need to learn to become good teachers.

Dr. Kelly Calkins, an assistant professor, is part of an unusually large cohort of 13 new teachers who joined the College of Nursing this fall. She has been a nurse for 18 years, mostly in critical care, and continues to work in post-anesthesia care at Ascension Mercy Hospital in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. Calkins, who is also a researcher, values the support and "feelings of connectedness" she gets from attending regular classes in the Teaching Excellence Program, launched this year to help new full- and part-time faculty members effectively translate their expertise into a classroom setting. The classes meet every other week in the fall semester, and monthly in the spring.

"The classroom is a different environment from the hospital," which she views as her "second home," Calkins says. "You want to get the lay of the land, and to learn what the expectations are."

"Our faculty and staff are amazing, and so committed to helping each other," says Dr. Janet Wessel Krejci, dean and professor. "We take our teaching very seriously."

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DR. SHELLY MALIN

*Dr. Shelly Malin is a President's Society member.*