



St. Kate's **revamps nursing curriculum** to stay ahead of healthcare innovation.

Life of Libraries

When I got my library card, that's when my life began," author and feminist Rita Mae Brown once said. The life of libraries themselves, however, also is changing.

We asked Carol Johnson, the recently retired director of libraries, media services and archives, and associate professor of library and information science, to reflect on her profession in a digital age:

- "Twenty years ago, we bought all our books and magazines in print. We could afford to buy about 1,500. Today, we have about 60,000 electronic publications — and 99 percent of our journals are online."
- "Librarians don't sit behind a desk anymore. They have active relationships with departments and work closely

Change Agents

Employers have long sought out Katie nurses. Now they will have even

more reason to do so.

By Nancy Crotti

The nursing department at St. Catherine University has revised the curriculum for students seeking a Bachelor of Science degree in nursing to keep up with the rapid changes in healthcare. Margaret Dexheimer Pharris, Ph.D., R.N., C.N.E., FAAN (inset photo), professor and associate dean of nursing, explains how and why.

How has the curriculum changed?

We are taking a more developmental approach to the study of nursing. Our previous program of study had 40 credits in two years. Now there are 50 credits in three years, to allow more time for reflection and depth of learning.

Nursing students are taking a research course to make sure they can judge the best evidence for patient care. They need clinical reasoning as well as relational expertise, cultural sensitivity, developmental stages, and family theory. The complexity and fragmentation of the healthcare system has many patients and families befuddled. They need a nurse to help them coordinate care and understand the care that they're receiving.

Will students' clinical experiences be affected?

We've increased our nursing students' clinical hours from 350 to 798. We have several rooms with high-fidelity mannequins where we can simulate critical patient situations, such as a birth with a mom who might be hemorrhaging and with an interpreter from Spanish or American Sign Language. From a control room, we can change the strength of the contractions, the frequency of the baby's heart rate and cause a hemorrhage. We can teach within the context of an interprofessional team, have other students watch through video streaming and then have an in-depth debriefing.

Also, our clinical partners have asked for our students to be with them for a whole year, which usually encourages applications when the students graduate.

How has healthcare reform affected the nurse's role?

Nurses are increasingly involved in providing patient-centered care to individuals and families in the community. They also need to coordinate care and promote health among the overall population. At St. Kate's, we focus on optimizing and activating the health of

with faculty on building resources for students."

- Universities are increasingly serving as publishers by having a digital database of student theses and doctoral projects/dissertations. (St. Kate's has done this since 2010.)

"We used to worry about copyright issues," Johnson says. "Now, we're concerned about the rights of students as authors. A lot of privacy issues have cropped up because of digital media."

- "Both students and faculty are collaborating in groups more, and we need space for them to work together."

"It's an exciting time to be a librarian," Johnson concludes. "So much has changed, and so much more is possible." —
Pauline Oo

individuals, families and populations in a way that honors and respects cultural differences.

Our graduates who work in hospitals will be providing much more complex care to sicker patients. They need to be able to use electronic information technology to improve patient outcomes.

It's no longer enough to achieve holistic care of the individual. We also have to address the healthcare system and social structures that impact health. We start sophomores off with health promotion, aging, and the principles of primary prevention of illness, and we talk about health policy all the way through. In their last course, they learn about healthcare policy and the regulations and laws that affect patient care within this country and others.

What other factors contributed to the curriculum overhaul?

Several bodies of healthcare education released the Core Competencies for Interprofessional Collaborative Practice in 2011. In the Henrietta Schmoll School of Health, we have a rich opportunity to collaborate with other disciplines to educate our students.

Students take two interprofessional courses before they come into nursing. Our students learn to work effectively in teams and draw on the expertise and knowledge of other professions.

It's a big change, and it's consistent with our tradition of providing a high-quality nursing education that's rooted in the mission of the University. That's what makes a St. Kate's nurse stand out.

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