

From classroom to front line

Faculty members pull double duty as instructors, healthcare workers during pandemic

By Irvin B. Harrell

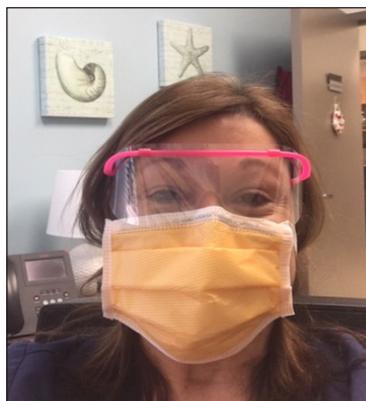
Every semester, faculty members at Old Dominion University's College of Health Sciences pour their hearts into preparing the next healthcare provider. Many are young, innocent souls who still have so much to learn about selflessly dedicating their lives to save others and inevitably will devote themselves "to the welfare of those committed to their care," in the words of Florence Nightingale, the founder of modern nursing.

At the same time, these instructors work double-time in the field, fulfilling the same pledge. Many of these professionals now find themselves on the front lines of a pandemic that is wreaking havoc on our global population with no real end in sight. COVID-19 has changed our education at ODU, and it has transformed the lives of many of our instructors, who have been called into action and flinch not in the face of adversity and possible infection.

Lynn Wiles, Beth Tremblay, and Donna Rose – ODU faculty members – are but three of these healthcare professionals. Their stories offer a passionate prism through which to view their efforts to support their students, help others, battle an unseen enemy, prepare for the unknown, and find balance and some sense of normalcy in their own lives.

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Clockwise from top left: Donna Rose, Sentara Leigh Hospital in Norfolk; Beth Tremblay, Sentara Williamsburg Regional Medical Center; Lynn Wiles, Sentara Virginia Beach General Hospital.



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Wiles, a staff nurse at Sentara Virginia Beach General Hospital's emergency department (ED), has been working in the ED longer than she has been teaching. She had chosen to stay in that front-line setting not only for her love for bedside nursing, but also because of the ways it informs her classroom instruction.

"I think it's critical to remain current with clinical practice given that I teach didactic and clinical courses that are acute care and patient-focused," she said. "I also love being a resource for the staff and students and enjoy working with my clinical team members to develop evidence-based practice projects and staff education."

While COVID-19 has produced its unique set of problems and fears of exposure, EDs are environments where exposure to diseases are a constant concern. Working in the ED can mean susceptibility to a host of pathogens, including HIV, hepatitis, and influenza, Wiles says. That's why personal protection equipment (PPE) has become increasingly important.

"I started patient care before the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines for standard precautions and routine glove use," she said. "Am I worried about becoming one of the positive? Absolutely! ... I'll protect



A makeshift respiratory tent built at Sentara Virginia Beach General Hospital.

myself as best as I can – but I do worry."

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, Wiles' life has transformed into a dizzying juggling act. Balancing her work between ODU, the ED, and the home has been challenging. She no longer leaves the house (other than walks or bike rides) except to go to the hospital on Thursdays. Her family does the grocery shopping because of her higher risk to exposing others. She hasn't seen her mother in weeks.

"I've turned my master bedroom into my quarantine spot if needed, including a working area," she said. "Right now, I still hang out with my family, but definitely at a great distance. We are using lots of Facetime and Zoom to communicate."

Wiles' ODU schedule is "Zoom-packed," consisting of 8-to-

5 most days, she says. Her husband Chris works the same hours from his home work space as an IT systems analyst for Operation Smile, and her daughter Courtney, a sophomore at James Madison University has her own study space as well at their home in Virginia Beach.

A beeping smart watch reminds Wiles when she hasn't been active enough while she is hunkered down in front of her computer. She responds by taking a break and going for a short walk. Come 5:30 p.m., her family finishes up work and takes walks or goes biking as a distancing unit.

While her emergency room hasn't been overrun with patients, Wiles says she and her co-workers stay prepared in case of an onslaught of COVID-19 cases. But emotional stress has taken a toll.

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Many co-workers have sent their children elsewhere because of the exposure risks.

“Remember, ER nurses tend to hook up with other first responders such as EMS, fire, police, all of which have horrible exposure risks and crazy schedules,” she said. “Several also are juggling spouse deployment.”

Through it all, the spirit of community has been the positive glue holding everyone together and easing many anxieties, Wiles says.

“Healthcare workers are banding together and stepping up for extra shifts. We are trying to protect each other,” she said. “We are acknowledging everyone – not just those of us who provide care but the people not on the front lines who are cleaning, cooking, delivering supplies, etc. We are a team. And on the home front, families are taking time to be together. That’s huge.”

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When Beth Tremblay isn’t lecturing at the School of Nursing, the Williamsburg resident works as a registered nurse in the intensive care unit (ICU) at Sentara Williamsburg Regional Medical Center. She has spent 25 years as a nurse, and has been in the ICU for about 13 years.

“What I quickly discovered is that I love the education and advocacy aspects of nursing,” she



Sentara Williamsburg Regional Medical Center

said. “Those motivators have not changed for me and have guided my career. I was interested in the ICU because of the intensity and variety of cases, but also for the opportunity to work with patients and families at a time when they are most vulnerable.”

Observing proper protocols for PPE and hygiene are key during viral outbreaks, Tremblay says, emphasizing that her concerns are more for her family and patients. She says she has “always had a ritual of sorts” for not “tracking in” unknown infectious agents at home.

Tremblay says her life has encountered some disruptions during this pandemic, but they have been far from catastrophic. She counts herself fortunate to work at ODU given its quick conversion to online courses that have allowed her to work from her home in Williams-

burg. She goes to the hospital as needed to support regular staffing. And since all elective surgeries have been canceled, it has freed up staff to help with other hospital units.

As for her students, Tremblay says, she has had to boost her support for them, especially those struggling with illness in the family or having difficulty managing because they have children at home full time or increased work hours. She has to account for her own school work as well. She is currently working on a dissertation on vaping use, and the crisis has interrupted her data collection.

Working 12- to 13-hour shifts can be grueling, so Tremblay “typically takes a late start each day to give herself time to decompress and process.”

“Decompression for me looks

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like getting outside for a walk with my dogs, working in my vegetable garden, or my home yoga practice,” she said.

Tremblay’s experiences during this crisis have been filled with positive moments, she says. Her hospital has been proactive in thinking ahead for innovative staffing solutions that will best care for the community. Her crew at the ICU have stayed positive and caring, with open and honest communication. Family and friends have chipped in to provide PPE to help lessen any shortages. And community cooperation, too, has been heart-warming.

“The community at large has been incredibly kind and grateful. We have rainbows drawn by children put up in our windows with words of gratitude,” she said. “The efforts from everyone to stay home so that we at the hospital don’t become overrun with more patients that we can treat has been touching. Nurses are always here for the community. It has been beautiful to see the community be here for us.”

Tremblay notes one noticeable negative impact of COVID-19 to her experience in the ICU: the absence of family members at the bedside. Providing care for patients and helping them to connect the loved ones has taken on “an added dimension now,” she says.

“Calling a husband or wife



Sentara Leigh Hospital in Norfolk

of my patient after an emergent intubation, ... I know that they cannot come to the bedside for me to show them firsthand how I am caring for their spouse,” she said. “What’s more, I know that in most cases the patient is isolated. So, I really have to be cognizant to check in with them more often and also to help them develop a support plan for themselves. Even if they are physically alone, they need to have family and friends who will, figuratively speaking, walk through the storm with them.”

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Donna Rose, a clinical assistant professor in the School of Nursing, also serves as an employee health registered nurse at Sentara Leigh Hospital in Norfolk. Rose touts the fact she and her two daughters, Brittney and Ashley

are ODU graduates.

Working in employee health services has been a stark change from her 34 years as a bedside nurse, she says. Now her “patients” are her employees. The purpose of her job is to make sure that employees are fit and safe to do their jobs. She assesses and evaluates. She facilitates annual health screenings, evaluates injuries and exposures, provides fit testing for N 95 masks, and determines whether employees are safe to return to work after absences for a variety of reasons.

“Ensuring that employees are up to date on vaccinations is a large part of the job also,” she said. “I had no idea there would be so much to learn.”

In Rose’s current hospital

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position, exposure issues are not as high as those of healthcare professionals on the front line. However, there is some risk and she does wear PPE as a safety precaution.

As for her full-time role at ODU, she works from home. She typically spends one day a week at the employee health office, but as of late, things have been busier and she has responded with picking up additional on-call shifts.

“When I get home, my family makes sure I remove my scrubs and go straight to the shower before I touch or sit on anything,” she said.

Rose, like Wiles and Tremblay, teleworks at ODU. Her husband works at Norfolk Naval Shipyard, and her oldest daughter Brittney just completed her PhD at ODU and is at home waiting to move to South Carolina to start a new job.

Having a good team that works hard and still takes time to share occasional laughs has had a big impact on keeping up spirits at the hospital, Rose says.

“As you can imagine, our

department has been very busy during this global health crisis,” she said. “We have received so much support from our managers, from first-line team coordinators all the way up. They are constantly keeping us up to date, encouraging us and thanking us.”

When asked about taking breaks or decompressing, Rose admits that she may not have the best habits given her profession.

“Unfortunately, nurses – as well as most health care providers – do not care for themselves like they should. We become so accustomed ... to just doing what needs to be done and caring for patients, so I’m not exactly sure what a break looks like,” she said. “With the travel restrictions and social distancing guidelines, I have tried to have more down time, when not working at one of the two jobs. I am doing more reading, walking and bike riding. And OK, maybe some Netflix bingeing and eating.”

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Wiles, Tremblay, and Rose are a few of the many cogs in the nation’s healthcare system. Their roles in the current crisis are important to their communities, who

at a moment’s notice could find themselves embroiled in an upsurge in COVID-19 cases. Equally important to these healthcare professionals are the students that they equip for the future through the education they provide, their adherence to best practices, and their inspiration. The three leave these parting words for students who feel the calling to one day put themselves on the front lines of a health crisis:

“Protect yourself,” Wiles says. “Your passion to help is amazing, but we are not invincible!”

“Anyone who wants to be a part of this amazing ‘club’ will need to develop the ability to think through complex situations, emotional resilience, and deep compassion,” Tremblay says. “If you are up for the task, we welcome you with open arms.”

“Although it may seem exciting at times like this, you must keep yourself as safe as you can while providing care to the patients,” Rose says. “I would also say that we need you! If nursing is your calling then don’t let this stop you.”

Levitins boost their endowed scholarship amount

Donors Jordan and Carol Levitin have added to their endowed scholarship in nursing, bringing it to a \$50,000 endowment level.

The Jordan and Carol Levitin Endowed Scholarship was established December 2014 to support gradu-

ate nursing students.

Jordan credits their giving to the late Thomas L. Oliver, a Norfolk native who not only introduced him to the School of Nursing, but also set up the TOWN Foundation, which also supports nursing education.

Konikoffs reinvest in dental hygiene clinic

By Irvin B. Harrell

David and Sofia Konikoff's support for Old Dominion University's College of Health Sciences dental hygiene clinic spans more than a decade. Their ties to ODU run deep.

When the clinic needed funds in 2007, the couple came to the rescue. Their \$250,000 contribution made it possible for the clinic to purchase state-of-the-art instrumentation. In gratitude, the clinic was named the Sofia and David Konikoff Dental Hygiene Care Facility.

In September of last year, Sofia passed away during a trip to Jerusalem. But her continued dedication to the clinic will live on in yet another generous donation from the Konikoffs.

This year, the Konikoffs have made another major gift to the clinic which will fund a dental hygiene clinical care facility director. In recognition of this gift, the dental hygiene clinic will continue to bear the Konikoff name and honor their legacy and commitment to the Dental Hygiene program. The clinic will be housed in the new College of Health Sciences building and groundbreaking is expected later this year.

"Sofia was my blessing and this is my way of honoring her," Dr. Konikoff said. "She was an amazing bright light."

Sofia earned her bachelor's degree in dental hygiene at ODU



Sofia and David Konikoff

in 1984. David earned a bachelor's degree in psychology at ODU before going on to receive his DDS from the Medical College of Virginia School of Dentistry.

After receiving his license in dentistry in 1979, Dr. Konikoff opened his first office in Virginia Beach in 1981. It was a dream come true for the Norfolk native, who had aspired to be a dentist since third grade. Dr. Konikoff would go on to establish 11 more offices in the region. Sofia Konikoff was his right hand. He met Sofia at his office when she applied for a job there. The two were married in March 1995. They have seven children, two of whom are pursuing careers in dentistry.

With Sofia's influence, David's practice developed a stronger focus on dental hygiene.

"She was the most talented dental hygienist that I have ever come across – and I have come across many," Dr. Konikoff said. "She was a powerhouse, beautiful, with a heart bigger than anything you could ever imagine."

Sofia Konikoff once said that "Hygienists truly make a difference in the dental community," and the Konikoff practice has fed off those words by reflecting the wonderful connections to patients that dentists and dental hygienists can create and maintain.

"Early on we realized that we were practicing relationships," Dr. Konikoff said. "We just happened to be doing dentistry, but it was based on kindness and care."

Dr. Konikoff says he has seen the early schematics of the new College of Health Sciences building as well as its new clinic and he is excited about the clinic's potential. He believes the expansion would have made Sofia proud.

"The Konikoff gift will be instrumental for increasing the services which the School of Dental Hygiene will be able to offer for the community," said Dean Bonnie Van Lunen. "The appointment of a full-time clinic director will allow us to examine delivery models which will benefit not only patients in the community, but will also attend to the needs of our students who will be able to increase their patient exposures and experiences."

Faculty, CLT collaborate on virtual simulation

By Irvin B. Harrell

One of the educational hurdles during the COVID-19 crisis has been its impact on clinicals for certain healthcare programs. For instance, nursing programs across the country have had to discontinue experiential learning exercises for its students.

When there is no in-class teaching, there are no hands-on opportunities. But as the adage goes, “necessity is the mother of invention.”

Seeing that nurse educators need resources for their classes and desired learning outcomes online, Old Dominion University’s School of Nursing teamed up with ODU’s Center for Learning and Teaching to develop a virtual learning environment. The Medication Administration Safety Simulation program allows students to use gaming to practice the steps of safe medication administration.

On April 13, the program was converted to a format that could be shared with other nurse educators across the country during the pandemic. It was posted on two nurse educator resource listserves.

“In less than a week, more than 380 nurse faculty from across the country as well as Liberia and South Africa downloaded the software program,” said Janice Hawkins, a clinical associate professor at the School of Nursing who

Safe Medication Administration Virtual Learning Environment



worked on the program. “We asked how many students they plan to use it with and the total so far is more than 35,000.”

Joining Hawkins in the development of this simulation program were David Figgs, the school’s nursing simulation technician; Dan Greenwood, an instructional technology specialist manager; Deborah Norris, an instructional designer; Brian Williamson, a multimedia designer; and School of Nursing instructors Beth Thompson, Beth Tremblay and Lynn Wiles.

Hawkins provided an analogy of how the simulation works.

“For Basic Life Support (BLS), students used to come to class and learn CPR and then take the skills test. Now they learn and practice online and then take a face-to-face skills test which reduces the time

needed in class,” she said. “This kind of works like that. This could be used in place of classroom/lab instruction that normally prepares students for clinicals.”

Wiles, the undergraduate program director at the School of Nursing, cautions that while the simulation provides an avenue to continue instruction of clinical skills while teaching remotely, it won’t take the place of in person clinicals.

“We will still need to get back into the hospitals soon to get our clinical hours but this does help keep students engaged and allows us to prep for clinicals when we can’t get to our labs,” she said.

Still, the simulation continues to gather momentum. After its first

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week, 425 educators had completed the survey to access the learning tool.

“We were also using this before COVID-19 to prepare for clinicals, but it’s even more useful now,” said Tremblay, a lecturer at the school.

The project was truly a product of collaboration and complexity. Figuring out how to orchestrate the simulation in a virtual world posed challenges for designers Williamson and Greenwood.

Williamson worked on the 3D animations and graphical elements for the project. Greenwood handled all the interactivity and produced the animations and graphics using an open source 3D animation program called Blender.

“The nursing faculty did a run-through using ODU’s simulation patient rooms. They recorded video using their phones,” Williamson said. “This was invaluable for me to see the procedures step by step. I used that video walkthrough to plan the animation.”

To see the demo for the simulation visit: <https://youtu.be/hPd2L9M6-P0>

Among the universities downloading the program are University of Michigan, University of Arizona, Auburn University, Florida A&M University, and Loyola University Chicago.

Hawkins says the simulation, from inception to implementation has been a path paved in “wins.”

“There’s a need, it’s free, it’s a fun demo to share, and it was a product of intraprofessional collaboration,” she said.

Students unlock lessons in clinical escape room

By Irvin B. Harrell

Working in the healthcare industry is often a race against the clock, where lives hang in the balance and mere seconds can make a difference in health outcomes for patients.

In response to this sense of urgency, Old Dominion University’s School of Nursing over the past two years developed a teaching technique that literally and figuratively involves thinking outside the box – a “clinical escape room.”

The school’s simulation laboratories, at the Virginia Beach Higher Education Center, are state of the art. Here, students get hands-on experience working with patients throughout the lifespan with a talented team of instructors. Three of these instructors – Janice



Clinical Assistant Professor Christine Sump monitors students participating in the clinical escape room.

Hawkins, Beth Tremblay, and Lynn Wiles – developed a method for teaching students safe medication administration using a popular and innovative entertainment concept.

The escape room was part of a Faculty Innovator Grant with ODU’s Center for Learning and Teaching (CLT).

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“We piloted the escape room in 2018 with our seniors,” said Lynn Wiles, the undergraduate program director for the School of Nursing. “This was not mandatory for them but intended to test the design. This was a very good idea as it helped us work out a lot of kinks.”

Like conventional escape rooms, which have grown in popularity, the school’s version is complete with hidden clues, combinations, locks, and of course a timer.

After the pilot, the school ran the escape room in January and March of 2019 with 62 students and again in January and March of 2020 with 78 students. They also have made their template available to other educators nationally.

Here’s how it works.

- * Teams of three to four students are put in a simulation lab that is monitored by a faculty member. They are presented with a scenario involving the university mascot, who has been admitted to the hospital with heart problems brought on by an exciting football rivalry game.

- * The students then are tasked with giving the mascot the proper medications and must collaborate to demonstrate medication calculation and safe medication administration principles.



From left, BSN students Jessica Buricholder, Kimmy Wood, Jessica Scherer, and Jaron Martinez navigate the nursing “escape room.”

- * The escape room requires the students to communicate and work cooperatively to unlock several clues, administer the correct medications and, inevitably, escape. During the exercise, the students are allowed 25 minutes and

can ask for as many as two clues to progress through the simulation.

- * Once the simulation is completed, the students participate in a facilitated debriefing where they critique their individual and team

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performance and group dynamics. Faculty and students explore whether the team collaborated to safely administer medications or whether forward progress was hindered by safety violations.

Student evaluation occurs through multiple methods. First, groups are evaluated on “escape” time and number of hints given. Second, the group is scored using the safety and communications subsections of the Creighton Competency Evaluation Instrument (CCEI). This nationally recognized evaluation tool has subsections that measure safety and medication competency.

While the escape room gaming scenario is a novel way to learn new concepts, faculty members recognize that safe medication administration is not a game and students must master these skills for use in the real world.

“Additionally, students provide feedback evaluating the efficacy of the gaming module and escape room as they relate to learning, collaboration, communication, teamwork and competency,” said Hawkins, a clinical associate professor at the School of Nursing.

Wiles, Tremblay, and Hawkins presented their work at Sigma Theta Tau International in mid-November last year.

“We were so jazzed by our reception and from the energy of the audience when we presented,” Haw-



kins said. “Not only were we accepted for our original presentation but we were also invited to present for a second time to share more about the behind the scenes planning and how to run one. We ran it as a workshop eight times to an overflow audience each session.”

The escape room team consisted of Tremblay (lecturer), Wiles and Hawkins, from the School of Nursing; David Figgs, school simulation technician; Beth Thompson, a former school faculty member; and the CLT’s Dan Greenwood, an instructional technology specialist; Deborah Norris, an instructional designer; and Brian Williamson, a multimedia designer.

Gray receives post as state representative for AANP

Faculty member Deborah Gray was recently elected as the Virginia State Representative to the American Association of Nurse Practitioners (AANP). In this position, she will represent more than 8,000 nurse practitioners in Virginia.

The AANP is the largest professional membership organization for nurse practitioners of all specialties. It represents the interests of the more than 234,000 licensed nurse

practitioners in the U.S. AANP provides legislative leadership at the local, state and national levels, advancing health policy; promoting excellence in practice, education and research; and establishing standards that best serve NP patients and other health care consumers.

Gray is the associate graduate program director and a clinical associate professor in the Master of Science and Doctoral programs at the School of Nursing.



Deborah Gray

Sechrist, the heartbeat of NMT program, retires

By Irvin B. Harrell

When it comes to ODU, Scott Sechrist has seen a thing or two.

He was at Foreman Field jamming to Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young in 1975. At the same field he watched the Monarchs pull off a huge upset against the Virginia Tech Hokies in 2018. And he has seen so much more in between.

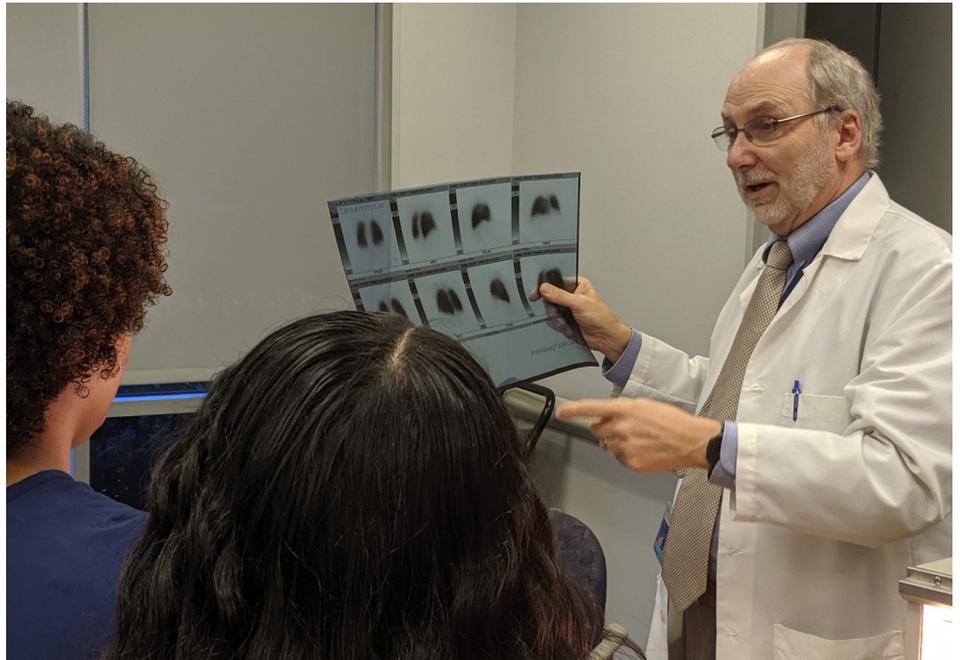
One could say that Associate Professor Sechrist is part of the fabric of Old Dominion University. But after 33 years of teaching, he has decided to pack up his books and memorabilia and work on his next chapter: retirement.

Sechrist made his debut on ODU's campus in the early '70s. He earned his Bachelor of Science in Physical Science in 1975. When he was an undergraduate in 1971, he watched the Batten Arts & Letters building rise up from a spot where a commuter parking lot once was.

"It was actually mostly a dirt field, so it wasn't much of a loss," he said.

The campus lacked the diversity it does now, he says, but the atmosphere was a collegial one. The student body has grown nearly every year he has been at ODU, and has become far more diverse.

"I've taught students from all over the country and the world," the Chesapeake resident said. "That's one of the joys of academia."



Associate Professor Scott Sechrist in his element.

One of Scott's former students, Angelique Ragland, established the Dr. Scott Sechrist Nuclear Medicine Technology Scholarship Endowment this year to honor Scott and all he has done for his students throughout the years. This is only the second endowed scholarship for the Nuclear Medicine Technology Program.

"Scott is a superhero – a cross between Spiderman and Ironman, so basically a rock star," she said. "He has touched so many lives whether he realizes it or not. He is definitely one in a million and it is truly my honor to be able to help protect his legacy and the Nuclear Medicine Technology Program."

Harold Riethman, the chair of the School of Medical Diagnostic & Translational Sciences, says

Sechrist has definitely left his mark at ODU.

"Scott is already a legend in this School, a force of nature who inspires with his knowledge, wit, and humor," he said. "He established and nurtured Nuclear Medicine Technology at ODU over the past three decades, graduating talented students who now populate nuclear medicine labs and key administrative positions in healthcare facilities throughout the Tidewater region."

After graduating from ODU, Sechrist worked in Code 105.3 (Radiological Control) for the U.S. Navy at Norfolk Naval Shipyard, a radiation-protection job. He was tasked with ensuring the safety of personnel and the environment as

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nuclear ships and submarines were overhauled and repaired.

During that time, Sechrist longed to work in the healthcare field. He found out about nuclear medicine technology (NMT), a specialty that blended math, science, technology, and patient care. It would be the perfect fit.

In 1978, Sechrist was accepted into nuclear medicine technology programs at the University of Virginia and the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill. He chose UNC. It was back to Norfolk after earning his degree in 1979, where he worked as a nuclear medicine technologist at Norfolk General Hospital in 1980. From there he became the chief technologist at Leigh Memorial Hospital in Virginia Beach. In 1983, Sechrist moved to Lexington, Ky., to take a job as program director of the associate degree in NMT for four years.

“It was there that I learned how to run a program and how to teach at a college level,” he said. Sechrist returned ODU in late summer 1987 after following up on an ODU alumni magazine that said the university was setting up an NMT program. He was hired to be program director and the primary instructor, which meant designing the curriculum, setting up courses, and developing clinical affiliations at local hospitals.

“The program has evolved from the initial two students in

“There is nothing better than reading your students’ names in front of their family and friends.”

-- *Scott Sechrist*

1987 to 10-12 graduates a year for the past decade,” he said. “It has grown from four clinical affiliates to 11, with a new site coming on board in 2021.”

While running the program, Sechrist went back to school. He earned a master’s in community health education at ODU in 1989 and his doctorate in higher education administration from the College of William & Mary in 2000.

Sechrist’s latest challenge has been adapting from in-class teaching to virtual classes. It was a bit bumpy at first, he says,

“The first few weeks were a blur,” he said. “I had never taught online before – but I had always used BlackBoard as a repository for my course materials, web links, and grades – so that was easy to build up and launch the rest of the semester. I did my remaining lectures as either voice over PowerPoints or made lectures using Zoom.”

Some of his usual classroom touches had to be modified, Sechrist says, but he was pleasantly surprised by the outcomes.

“When the time came for students to choose their clinical sites – a process normally done by random selection out of a KFC bucket – the entire process was

done virtually,” he said. “Instead students joined a Zoom session and I drew the sites for them. A good time was had by all. Just like on campus.”

Sechrist says he’ll miss his colleagues, the students, and committee work, which allowed him to connect with people all over campus. Topping his list, he’ll miss teaching because of “the lead up and anticipation of the first day of classes.” Sechrist has been a staple over the past decade at College of Health Sciences commencement activities, where he has served as one of the readers.

“There’s nothing better than reading your students names in front of their families and friends,” he said.

As for his next adventure, Sechrist planning to get back into running, which he has done for years. He and his wife, Joan, also plan to put some mileage on a Senior/Annual Pass to National Parks that they purchased in 2017. The two have been married for almost 39 years and have two sons (Matthew and Mark) and two grandsons (Joel and Miles). He officially retires June 1.

“So it’s time to see America, but we’re also looking at Ireland,” he said. “And of course hanging out with the grandkids.”

If you would like to support the Dr. Scott Sechrist Nuclear Medicine Technology Scholarship Endowment, please contact Manisha Sharma, Major Gift Officer, at m1sharma@odu.edu.

SCHOOL OF MEDICAL DIAGNOSTIC & TRANSLATIONAL SCIENCES



Virtual 5K runners

The week of April 19 was National Medical Laboratory Professionals Week. Both medical laboratory science students and instructors participated in the 5th Annual Lab Week Run 2020, a virtual event where 5K runners could practice social distancing. The event was organized by the American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science, with proceeds from the event going to “grants and scholarships that help Ascending and Developing Professionals attend ASCLS meetings.” Clockwise from top left are student Esra Cetin and faculty members Angela Wilson, Barbara Kraj, and Louise Midland.



SCHOOL OF REHABILITATION SCIENCES

Locke to take on new role at Kean University in N.J.

After 26 years, Elizabeth Locke, director of clinical education for the School of Rehabilitation Sciences, has resigned.

She has been appointed to the position of Executive Director III in the Division of Academic Affairs and Associate Professor of Physical Therapy in the Nathan Weiss Graduate College at Kean University in Union, N.J.

She will begin her new role as academic and administrative lead in the School of Physical Therapy on July 6.

In a parting word to her colleagues at the College of Health Sciences, she said: “Thank you for so many wonderful years and the great influence you have had on my life! I hope our paths will cross again.”



Locke

Preparing Your Preferred Health Professional

Funny how time flies ... so true indeed

A little more than five years ago, I wrote an editorial to our newsletter faithful expressing my humility to have landed such a wonderful role at the College of Health Sciences.

I spoke about the consummate professionals. I spoke about the students, the collaboration, and the care carried out by this community each day.

One of my missions, I said then, was to tell the story of the College of Health Sciences. I was only a few chapters in at the time, but I noted that “there had never been a dull moment.” And there never was.

Fast forward five years, and it seems like time has flown. There is stockpile of stories telling the bigger story of the College of Health Sciences. I am proud to have written most of them. It has been some run. Working at the college also has inspired me to go back and get my master’s here.

But as in life, change is often inevitable. My career now takes me on to another great opportunity and a chance to return to South Florida, the place I will forever call home.

It’s a bittersweet departure, but I leave the college in a good place with a bright future. I intend to stay connected to all of my colleagues here, because many of them have made Hampton Roads my home away from home over the past years.

College of Health Sciences, thanks for the memories!



Big Blue gave me a warm Old Dominion University welcome when I arrived on campus.

COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES

Benjamin retires after more than three decades at ODU



Benjamin

Associate Dean Richardean Benjamin, who has been with the College of Health Sciences since 1989, is retiring this year.

Benjamin began her career at Old Dominion University working as an assistant professor in nursing. The School of Nursing at the time had not had a faculty member of color in seven years.

Benjamin received tenure in 1995 and

later became graduate program director for the School of Nursing. She served as chair of the school for seven years beginning in 2002 before becoming associate dean of the College of Health Sciences. She also served as interim dean at the college for 18 months.

Benjamin’s career has been a testimony to helping others, whether from the urban homeless to the rural poor.



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