

## The NPP Takes Off!

**Elena Yoshovska**

Lake Forest College  
Lake Forest, Illinois 60045

The Nursing Pathway Program is a recently launched academic program for any LFC student interested in exploring nursing as a future career. With this program, students may focus on their chosen liberal arts majors while also gaining experience, coursework, and guidance from nurses and other health care professionals. This program works in tandem with the Health Professionals Program (HPP) to prepare students for careers in healthcare-related fields. Some experiences include: visiting hospitals to gain first-hand experience in patient care, attending seminars and networking events, and taking specifically curated courses in preparation for nursing careers.

Programs such as these are important for the development and improvement of the healthcare system. An interview with Dr. Lisa Hopp, Dean of the College of Nursing at Rosalind Franklin University, sheds light on this subject. "The big benefit is you get such a solid education, education with a capital E, from a liberal arts program. You get a well-rounded education that really teaches you how to think and to analyze. Those are a couple of the two really fundamental skills that you need in nursing and many other healthcare fields, all other healthcare fields," Hopp states.

Nursing and the healthcare field as a whole require more than healthcare professionals with stellar scientific knowledge and performance. Both Hopp and Dr. Ann Maine, Director of the NPP, agree that real-world skills and bedside manners are the most important lessons to be gained from programs like the NPP. The program prides itself on the balance it requires from students between knowing the science behind healthcare and the humanistic parts that go along with it. Allowing students to question the system as well as take an interest in real-life experiences from nurses and healthcare professionals through networking events, as well as seminars. While students are encouraged to ask questions about scientific/technical topics they don't understand, the real emphasis is on asking questions and being curious about the scarier part of the job: caring for other human beings. Caring for a life is a heavy burden, and the NPP does well to teach its students how to carry it with grace. Upon asking both Hopp and Maine about their thoughts on the future of nursing, particularly their hopes for the upcoming nursing students, they replied:

"We hope them to be top-notch problem solvers. You have to be able to work your way all around a problem and not [only] see through a single lens. That's just critical and will remain so important across any healthcare field. Patients are complex, but it isn't just their health issues that make them complex; it's the rest of their lives," Hopp explains.

Maine adds, "Having a health care provider who engenders that confidence and has those listening skills, you're going to get that [well-rounded nurse], and you need those other liberal arts courses to understand people, to develop those skills. Yes, you need to know your chemistry and your biology. You could get A's in those, but if you don't have those other skills, you're not going to be able to be the provider that your patients need."

Programs like these are not for everyone; however, they are always available to anyone who wishes to use/join them. According to reports from Maine, the NPP has not only many accomplishments to be proud of but also much to look forward to. There have been improvements not only in the number of interested students (around 45!), but also in the ever-expanding curriculum.

"Well, we did develop a new course," Maine starts. "Last year it was called Math for Healthcare Professionals, not just for the nursing, but

it kind of came out of that. [...] So I thought, well, why don't we have a math class? All the problems are related to, hey, you've got, you know, the patient. You know, you go to the doctor, and they say, well, you're 5'2, and weigh 128 pounds, but all the drugs are calculated per kilogram, right? So you need to do conversions. You need to do all of these different things. So I was really excited when I thought about that, and that the CPC Committee approved it. That's being taught for the first time."

The NPP not only teaches students through courses but also through experience. Gaining experience and graduating prepared are strengths that Lake Forest College excels at. It strives to bolster and motivate its students as they prepare for real-life experiences, especially in the fields they are entering. A value that rings true to our motto: "*Et veritas liberabit vos.*" Or in other words: "The truth shall set you free."

Maine details: "We've got an internship that we finally got worked out at Lake Forest Hospital. [...] Another student came back from doing an internship that another pre-nursing student had done, and she's like, Oh, my gosh, I love this. I felt so affirmed that I want to go into nursing, that I could work with sick people, and that I could do a 12-hour shift. So I think the more experiences that we can get for students to experience and go, wow, this is what I want to do, [the better]."

Liberal arts colleges like LFC are crucial for the development of confident, well-rounded students. Especially in healthcare, doctors/nurses/healthcare professionals with patience, understanding, and a wide range of interests are needed. At the end of the day, the job is all about people and their care. Programs like NPP foster development and nurture students into well-rounded nurses and healthcare professionals. They provide community and support for students entering a field that can seem daunting when faced alone. Centering healthcare education on values centered on patient/human care will foster not only a sense of community within the field but also greater confidence between patients and healthcare providers. The NPP is only beginning its long and exciting life of bringing new generations of nurses into the healthcare field. What an honor to be a part of it and/or watch it grow!



A student intern part of the Nursing Pathways Program shadowing at Lake Forest Hospital.

*Note: Eukaryon is published by students at Lake Forest College, who are solely responsible for its content. This views expressed in Eukaryon do not necessarily reflect those of the College. Articles published within Eukaryon should not be cited in bibliographies. Material contained herein should be treated as personal communication and should be cited as such only within the consent of the author.*