

2020

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Recommended Citation

Quinn, Willie and Reynolds, Audree, ""Roots" of the UTEP School of Nursing" (2020). *Additional Items*. 6. https://scholarworks.utep.edu/utep_add_items/6

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"Roots" of the UTEP School of Nursing

The University of Texas at El Paso School of Nursing has its functional "Roots" extending back to 1970, with its historical "Roots" extending back to 1898.

The Hotel Dieu Hospital School of Nursing, which had been in existence since 1898 under the ownership and operation of the Daughters of Charity of Saint Vincent de Paul. The School of Nursing had been located in the Hotel Dieu Hospital until 1917 when it was moved to the old Gallagher Home at Arizona and Stanton Streets. In 1926, the Daughters of Charity opened their School of Nursing in a new building designed for them by Trost & Trost Architects located at 1101 N. Kansas Street, which was razed in 1971. Then in 1967, they built a pink, three-story building with classrooms and dormitories on the city block they had purchased in 1961. This building was and is still located at 1101 N. Campbell in the City of El Paso.

A Baccalaureate Nursing Program in El Paso was established in 1970 under the administration The University of Texas System School of Nursing. In October, 1971, The University of Texas System Board of Regents purchased the physical facilities Hotel Dieu Hospital School of Nursing at which time the administration of Hotel Dieu announced the termination of the diploma program, effective 1973. Many of Hotel Dieu's faculty and personnel became a part of the new baccalaureate program.

The new El Paso School of Nursing then became the sixth component of The University of Texas System School of Nursing. Students were first admitted to The University of Texas School of Nursing in September 1972. At the time, Christine Bonds was named dean of the El Paso Campus and Sister Aloysius became director of continuing education. Hotel Dieu graduated its final class in 1973 and the first class from the new school graduated with a baccalaureate degree in nursing in May 1974.

In 1974, all the UTEP "Schools" were redesignated as "Colleges" except for the Graduate School; therefore, the School of Nursing became the College of Nursing.

On March 26, 1976, the UT System Board of Regents moved to dissolve The University of Texas System School of Nursing.

On September 1, 1976, The College of Nursing became an integral part of The University of Texas at El Paso and was redesignated The University of Texas at El Paso College of Nursing. Dr. Eileen Jacobi was appointed as its first dean. Dr. Lynne Welch assumed the deanship in September 1986 when Dean Jacobi retired. Professor Dorothy Corona was Interim Dean from 1989-1990. Dr. Patricia Castiglia was Dean from 1991-2001. The college received more than 12 million dollars in external funding during this period through her outstanding leadership.

Then Dr. Carolyn Adams was named Dean from June 2001-Jan. 2002), followed by Dr. Audree Reynolds as the Interim Dean from 2002-2004. From 2004-2006 Dr. Robert Anders served as Director of the School of Nursing (under the College of Health Sciences, see below). Then in 2006 Dr. Robert T. Anders was named Dean of the School of Nursing after the School became its own independent unit on September 1, 2006, and continued as Dean from 2006-2009 (also see below). The current Dean of the School of Nursing is Dr. Ellis Provencio-Vasquez serving from 2009 to the present.

In January 1979, the Allied Health Program was transferred from the College of Science to the College of Nursing.

On February 19, 1981, during the "Four Centuries '81 Convocation" the Official Banners of all the UTEP Colleges (including the College of Nursing) had their inaugural presentation. All of these College Banners had been funded, designed, and made under the auspices of the UTEP Heritage Commission.

In April 1981, the name of the College of Nursing was changed to the College of Nursing and Allied Health, which was rather ironic since this change was made only 2 months after the official inauguration of the College of Nursing Banner (see above).

In 1989 the College of Nursing and Allied Health added a new RN-to-BSN program, which facilitated Registered Nurses to earn their Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree.

The 1993-1995 Class Catalog indicated that the name of the College of Nursing and Allied Health was again changed to the College of Nursing, with Dean Patricia T. Castiglia continuing in that role, with five (5) separate programs: Nursing, Allied Health, Medical Technology, Speech-Language Pathology, and Kinesiology and Sports Studies.

The 1996-2000 Class Catalogs indicated that the name of the College of Nursing was again changed, this time to the College of Nursing and Health Sciences, with Dean Patricia T. Castiglia continuing in that role. There were two (2) separate programs one for Nursing and another for Health Sciences. The Program Chairpersons for Nursing were Helen M. Castillo (1996-1998) and Leticia S. M. Lantican (1998-2000).

In February 1999, the College of Nursing and Health Sciences was renamed the College of Health Sciences with two (2) separate schools: the School of Nursing and the School of Allied Health.

The 2000-2002 Class Catalog indicated that Dr. Patricia T. Castiglia continued in the role as Dean of the College of Health Sciences. The Director for the School of Nursing was Leticia S. M. Lantican.

The 2002-2004 Class Catalog indicated that Dr. John B. Conway was Dean of the College of Health Sciences. The Interim Director of the School of Nursing was Dr. Audree Reynolds.

The 2004-2006 Class Catalog indicated that Dr. Leslie O. Schultz was Dean of the College of Health Sciences. The Director of the School of Nursing was Dr. Robert T. Anders.

In 2004 the College of Health Sciences reorganizes its administrative structure, eliminates the School of Allied Health and creates the departments of Health Promotion, Kinesiology and Rehabilitation Sciences (to include Occupational Therapy), Physical Therapy, and Speech-Language.

Also in 2004 the College of Health Sciences began a Doctoral Program in Interdisciplinary Health Sciences, admitting 7 students to it first class.

On September 1, 2006, the School of Nursing again became an independent academic unit. Dr. Robert T. Anders was named Dean. The School had increased its external funding from \$1.7 million to nearly \$ 18 million, from 2003 to 2006.

On April 4, 2007, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board approved at the staff level the request from the University of Texas at El Paso to elevate the School of Nursing to a stand-alone administrative unit.

As a major Hispanic-serving institution located on the U.S.-Mexico border, the UTEP School of Nursing continues to increase both undergraduate and graduate enrollment to help meet the need for more nurses. The School has emerged as a premier academic setting with achievements in education, research, practice, and community service. Today, The School of Nursing takes pride in having four (probably the largest in the nation) doctorly prepared Mexican American faculty members renowned in research endeavors: Dr. Maria Amaya, Dr. Nelda Martinez, Dr. Gloria Mckee, and Dr. Josefina "Josie" Lujan.

The School of Nursing offers an undergraduate nursing program leading to the Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree as well as the Master of Science in Nursing program at the graduate level. The nursing programs are fully accredited by the CCNE and are approved by the Texas State Board of Nurse Examiners.

Nursing instructor Julieta Castañeda, who graduated from the Hotel Dieu School of Nursing in 1965 and later earned her master's degree at UTEP, says the school's next big step is to obtain a doctoral program in nursing practice. "Having a doctoral program would be wonderful, because some people are homebodies, like me," Castañeda says. "If there was a doctoral program here, I would apply, because I want to stay and serve El Paso."

On December 7, 2009, Dr. Elias Provencio-Vasquez, Ph.D. was named dean of the School of Nursing and started in this position on February 1, 2010, as the first Hispanic male to earn a doctoral degree in nursing and to assume the position of dean in a nursing school. Dr. Provencio-Vasquez is a native El Pasoan who earned his doctorate in nursing from the University of Arizona in 1997. Dr. Elias Provencio-Vasquez, abruptly departed UTEP on Aug. 31, 2018. Dr. Leslie Robbins served as Acting Dean between September 1, 2018 and October 14, 2018 (along with her Director/Coordinator for Graduate Nursing Programs responsibilities. Dr. Patricia Castiglia's first day as Interim Dean was October 15, 2018 and she continued in that role until January 31, 2020.

On February 1, 2020, Dr. Leslie K. Robbins, Ph.D., was named dean of the School of Nursing. As sdean, she holds the Charles H. and Shirley T. Leavell Endowed Chair.

The University's School of Nursing has been recognized nationally. In the June 6, 2011, issue of *The Hispanic Outlook in Higher Education* magazine, UTEP was named as the top nursing school for awarding bachelor's degrees to Hispanics in the United States.

The School of Nursing is now located in the new \$60 million Health Sciences and Nursing Building, which was opened on September 29, 2011 on the UTEP campus at Wiggins Road, Sun Bowl Drive, and Schuster Avenue. Some of the nursing functions and administrative offices remain in the old building at 1101 North Campbell (near downtown), which at one time was unofficially known as "Campbell Hall," but officially named the "Campbell Building."

It has been said, "The Daughters of Charity of Saint Vincent de Paul had a vision of creating a school to nurture and grow. If those sisters are looking down on us now, they would be proud to see all that we've accomplished.

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Latest Rev.: 02/20/20