SEATTLE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF NURSING AND HEALTH SCIENCES

ANNUAL REPORT 2024-2025

SEATTLE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF NURSING AND HEALTH SCIENCES

2024-2025 ACADEMIC YEAR IN GIVING

$6,264,033
DOLLARS RAISED

5
ENDOWED DEAN AND PROFESSORSHIPS

$692,113
AMOUNT AWARDED FOR RESEARCH GRANTS AND AWARDS

$239,144
SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS AWARDED

39
SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED

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A publication of Seattle University College of Nursing and Health Sciences

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seattleu.edu/nursing-health-sciences

On the Cover:
Graduate Commencement 2025

LETTER FROM THE DEAN

Greetings,

As the college moves into an exciting period of growth and expansion, I find myself reflecting on where we've been and spotlighting where we're going.

In 1935, the Department of Nursing was introduced within what was then Seattle College. In the 90 years since—graduating its first class with a Bachelor of Science degree in 1937 to today with more than 8,000 graduates spanning a diversity of backgrounds and upbringings—we have distinctly defined and established a unique reputation for what it means to be a graduate of our academic programs. Grounded in Jesuit values and imbued with the Pacific Northwest ethos, we build up students' confidence in the knowledge and skills necessary for successful professional careers, while deepening their purpose for justice and enriching character so they are inspired to care compassionately and readied to become leaders in action.

This report provides a glimpse into some of the impactful accomplishments of the past year that are emblematic of the amazing things we endeavor to achieve. Importantly, these accomplishments prompt us to imagine what more we can do. In alignment with Seattle University's Reigniting Strategic Directions, we are repositioning the college for growth. In July 2025, our college officially became the College of Nursing and Health Sciences, assisted by a transformational gift from Charles M. Pigott that created an endowed deanship for an expanded college. We are energized by the opportunities and possibilities before us to broaden what we do in service to the health and well-being of society.

Looking back on our incredible history while envisioning our aspirational future, I recognize that we cannot do this work alone. The generosity of our partners and supporters makes it all possible, but moreover, recognizes the belief in our commitment to prepare stellar graduates and support exceptional faculty and staff.

In the years to come, I am enthused to lead the College of Nursing and Health Sciences as it takes flight and allows us to soar to new heights.

Butch de Castro, PhD, MSN/MPH, RN, FAAN
Charles M. Pigott Endowed Dean

"WE ARE ENERGIZED BY THE OPPORTUNITIES AND POSSIBILITIES BEFORE US TO BROADEN WHAT WE DO IN SERVICE TO THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF SOCIETY."

EXPANDING IMPACT IN NURSING AND HEALTH SCIENCES

The fall 2025 issue of *Seattle University Magazine* highlights the College of Nursing and Health Sciences (CNHS) and its expanding role in preparing future health care leaders. From the vision for the college to stories of new programs and collaborations, the issue showcases CNHS's commitment to compassionate and interprofessional care of the whole person. Below are condensed versions of three articles from the issue.

DIAGNOSTIC ULTRASOUND PROGRAM AT THE FOREFRONT OF RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

For nearly five decades, Seattle University's Diagnostic Ultrasound program has been preparing the next generation of sonographers to care for patients in an ever-changing health care landscape.

The success of the program is a full circle moment for its director, Mirette Aziz, who graduated from the program in 2010.

"Being part of the expanded college is a recognition that ultrasound as a vital part of health sciences and has opened doors to deeper collaboration with other health programs, broadening learning opportunities," says Aziz.

In 2024, SU was selected as one of only three universities nationwide to pilot a study on virtual reality (VR) ultrasound training in partnership with Inteleos and Vantari VR, for what could become a new standard in ensuring competence and quality in patient care.

This collaboration, led by Inteleos CEO and double SU alum Dale Cyr, '81, '98, positions SU at the forefront of advancing VR approaches to sonography education.

"We conducted an ambitious research initiative to explore whether advanced virtual and augmented reality experiences can reliably certify and validate the practical, patient-care skills essential to health care delivery," says Cyr. "Seattle University's involvement in this study not only reflected its leadership in clinical education but also exemplified its commitment to advancing health care excellence through innovation."

Beginning this fall, SU was named an official Inteleos/Vantari VR Beta Site—one of only a handful worldwide—giving students and faculty early access to new VR modules and the opportunity to directly shape future training approaches.

KINESIOLOGY PROGRAM'S SHIFT TO THE COLLEGE OF NURSING AND HEALTH SCIENCES OPENS DOORS TO HANDS-ON CLINICAL WORK AND RESEARCH

Seattle University's Kinesiology program, now part of the College of Nursing and Health Sciences (CNHS), opens up strategic opportunities for interdisciplinarity.

The department's Acting Associate Chair and Assistant

Professor Dr. Brittany Heintz Walters teaches neuromechanics and motor control—how the nervous system controls movement in the body. However, she notes that kinesiology encompasses a wide spectrum—from working with patient populations in rehabilitation, such as stroke survivors relearning how to walk, to optimizing athletic performance.

"When a patient or client comes to a clinician or a practitioner, the most effective solutions are often multifaceted," says Dr. Heintz Walters. "Being part of CNHS allows kinesiology students to learn alongside future nurses, ultrasound technologists and other health professionals so they graduate ready to contribute as part of a collaborative team."

To provide students with experience and to be accessible to the community, the kinesiology department runs a mobile lab that brings equipment from the laboratory to participants for outreach, service or data collection. Led by Dr. Kyle DeRosia, assistant teaching professor, students in the mobile lab provide performance and health assessments at local events and have even traveled for research studying Olympic kayakers.

Interim Chair Dr. Julius Moss says the move positions kinesiology to broaden its scope and prepare graduates for an evolving industry. "We're adapting our approach to develop graduates who will be prepared for changes in the industry, and we believe that CNHS is the perfect fit for us to achieve our goals."

WOMEN'S HEALTH NURSE PRACTITIONER PROGRAM EXPANDS ACCESS AND EMPATHETIC CARE

The College of Nursing and Health Sciences (CNHS) launched its Women's Health Nurse Practitioner (WHNP) Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) program this summer.

This new program offers comprehensive education for nurse practitioners who will provide patient-centered primary and specialized care from puberty through adulthood for women and individuals from across the gender spectrum.

"We strive to improve the health and well-being of women and gender-diverse individuals by providing care that is holistic, culturally responsive, cost effective and evidence-based," says Lisa Abel, DNP, MSN, ARNP, WHNP-BC, associate clinical professor, who directs the WHNP program.

The program is open to both BSN-prepared nurses and college graduates from any field who wish to transition into nursing, with a clear path toward WHNP certification. Seattle University also offers a Certified Nurse-Midwifery DNP program, further expanding opportunities in this field.

Scan the QR code to read the full stories by Tina Potterf and Kiyomi Kishaba in the *Seattle University Magazine*.

CLASS OF 2025 SPOTLIGHT

AMBER BRYANT

Written by Andrew Binion

Amber Bryant noticed something peculiar on the ultrasound of the patient she was scanning, but it wasn't easy getting to the point that she would even be in this position.

Raising three kids, living in University Place, nearly 40 miles from Seattle University, and working full-time, the diagnostic ultrasound major fought long and hard to finish her bachelor's degree. She had moments when she wanted to give up but a College of Nursing and Health Sciences academic advisor wouldn't let her.

And now, during a clinical scan as part of her coursework, Bryant noticed something wrong with the person's aorta.

In some people, pressure can build within the aorta, the largest artery in the body, and its walls can start to stretch and rupture, causing a deadly chain of events. Meanwhile, a person might not even recognize the dire nature of their situation as it's not something that is typically checked.

Thanks to Bryant's perseverance, never giving up on her education—and Seattle University never gave up on her—she spotted this life-threatening heart condition. The person can begin taking blood pressure medication and connect with a cardiologist to monitor their aorta in case surgery is needed to repair the vital blood passageway.

Bryant might have saved that person's life and all before she even took her board exam.

"So, I really felt important," says Bryant, recalling the discovery. "Like, 'oh my gosh, this job is important.'"

Bryant was first intrigued by a career in ultrasound when she was pregnant with her kids and went to the doctor's office for sonograms. She was further interested in how the technology can help people when her aunt suffered congestive heart failure and had a stroke.

But it was her mother's breast cancer diagnosis that lit the fire to go to college.

"It made me realize that life is pretty short," she says, adding that her mother recovered. "Before anything happened, I wanted her to see me do something good. I wanted her to be proud of me."

She chose Seattle University because the Jesuit values resonated with her.

"They teach the person as a whole, not just giving you an education on what to do," she says. "They're actually giving you life skills to be a better person."

That said, Bryant's path to graduation and a job offer from

Continued on page 6

CLASS OF 2025 SPOTLIGHT

ANNELIESE COWLES

Written by Andrew Binion

When Anneliese Cowles was learning how to rappel from Army helicopters and parachute from airplanes while lugging half her body weight in a rifle, ammunition and gear, she received her fair share of ribbing.

"Why does a nurse need to know that?" they said, recalls Cowles. "You're just going to be treating patients."

It's true that Cowles is a nurse. When the former battalion commander for Seattle University's Brady Battalion ROTC graduated with a nursing degree and commissions as a second lieutenant she will work for two years as a nurse in an Army hospital setting.

But after her first two years of service are complete, with the extensive and grueling advanced combat training she received during summer breaks, she will be qualified to be a nurse in what the Army calls "force command," placing her near the frontlines to treat soldiers critically injured on the battlefield.

"Which is pretty unique because there are not tons of nurses who have gone and jumped out of planes," she says. "It's definitely a faster paced job compared to just doing 12-hour shifts because you go out to the field and you're out in the field for a few weeks and you are not going home at night."

Cowles isn't ruling out spending 20 years in the Army, but when she eventually leaves active-duty status, she plans to switch out combat zones for natural disaster zones, working for emergency response agencies or the Red Cross in logistics or as an advisor.

"Nursing in difficult situations really interests me," she says. "Going into an area where there's been a natural disaster or something and figuring out how to get those people the care they need as quickly as possible."

Cowles planned on being a nurse from a young age but as a high school senior, her mother, Catherine, asked if that was really what she wanted to do.

"You like the idea of nursing, but you actually like nursing?" Cowles recalls her mother asking.

Catherine is a veterinarian in their hometown of Sacramento, Calif., and Cowles has many memories of neighbors bringing their injured and sick animals to the house for her mother to treat, inspiring her to become a servant to her community.

"It was really cool to be the household that everyone came to when they needed help," she says. "That influenced me a lot to want to be that person in my community."

Continued on page 6

AMBER BRYANT

the MultiCare Pulse Heart Institute—even before she had her degree in hand—was long and hard. There were times raising her three kids–sons Royce, 14, Rory, 7, and daughter Riyann, 5–and working full time at Kaiser Permanente with its consulting nurse service was too much. She came up short on rent, her car broke down and the time and effort required made her feel like she was neglecting her kids.

She had transferred from Tacoma Community College, but didn't have enough credits for SU's College of Nursing and Health Sciences, so she had to take four classes each quarter, along with summer school.

At one point she took a break from her studies, doing a hardship withdrawal, but there was somebody there, encouraging her, helping her overcome the challenges: Undergraduate Academic Advisor Ronda Mitchell.

"She helped me realize this is important," Bryant says. "She just advocated for me so much. I just felt her love."

For many students their favorite memory from SU is meeting friends or a professor, a class or a student group. For Bryant, it was the encouragement she received from Mitchell.

"That's my greatest memory," says Bryant. "She is my greatest memory."

ANNELIESE COWLES

Accepting her mother's challenge, Cowles earned a nurse's assistant certificate her senior year in high school and gained firsthand experience during the COVID-19 pandemic working in that role in nursing homes.

"That really solidified my wanting to go into nursing as a profession," Cowles says. "As exhausting as it was to do school and be a nurse's assistant at the same time, it was really rewarding at the end of every shift to feel like you made someone's day a little better."

The decision to join the Army as an officer came a little later. Her family has a history of military service, with her grandfather serving as a surgeon during the Vietnam War and her older sister, Mckenna, attending the Coast Guard Academy. But it wasn't something that dawned on Cowles until she zeroed in on Seattle University.

Drawn to SU because of its smaller class sizes and proximity to her family in Northern California, what sealed her commitment is the nursing program and its Jesuit values.

"Not only from the biology and skills standpoint," Cowles says, "but also equity and inclusion, looking at social determinants of health and how important it is as a nurse to treat a whole person rather than an injury and then you're out the door, good luck with life. It's really important to look at a person and how you can actually help them fully heal rather than just doing the bare minimum and getting them out the door."

Cowles then reached out to a nursing student in the ROTC program to learn a little more and that's how she found her path in life. She was hooked.

"It sounded like the coolest thing in the world," Cowles says. "I was like, 'I want to go be an Army nurse.'"

She adds: "It's the best spur of the moment decision I've ever made."

THE COLLEGE OF NURSING AND HEALTH SCIENCES

EDUCATING AND INSPIRING LEADERS TO TRANSFORM HEALTH CARE FOR A JUST AND HUMANE WORLD.

EMPOWERING INCLUSIVE LEADERS IN HEALTH CARE

The Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) Diversity Ambassador Program at Seattle University's College of Nursing and Health Sciences reflects our deep commitment to inclusivity and belonging in health care education.

Launched in 2020 by Oz Sener, Senior Graduate Student Recruitment and Admissions Specialist, the initiative was inspired by the increasing diversity of our applicant pools and the need to find more ways to foster student success. The initiative's goal is to ensure that every prospective student, regardless of background, sees themselves reflected in the profession and has a relatable source of support as they progress through their academic program.

The impact was immediate and meaningful. Within the first year:

- Applicants from underrepresented backgrounds increased from 30% to 43% among the entire applicant pool.
- Admitted students from those backgrounds rose to 52%.

The program engages current DNP students as leaders in outreach and support—helping to recruit underrepresented, first-generation and low-income applicants. Under Sener's mentorship, ambassadors share their experiences, promote culturally responsive peer support, and model the Jesuit value of serving others with compassion and respect.

The student reflections below speak powerfully to this impact.

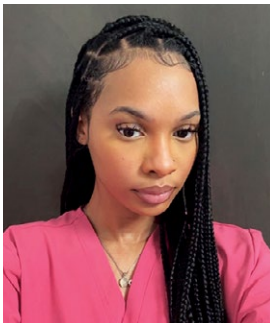
STUDENT REFLECTIONS

PATRICK J. CUNANAN, '27

Adult-Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner

"Having served as a DNP Diversity Ambassador for 2 years now, I can say that it has been nothing short of an amazing and fulfilling experience. I have been given the opportunity to foster connections within the community of students in the College of Nursing and Health Sciences while at the same time being able to extend that bridge to prospective students. I believe it is so crucial to foster a space for continued education for students of multiple different backgrounds and communities."

Born to Filipino immigrants and raised in Los Angeles, Cunanan is driven by a commitment to equity and compassion in health care. His experience as an ambassador continues to strengthen his advocacy for representation, mentorship and culturally responsive care.

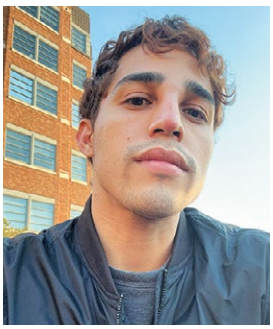


MYLA JACKSON, '28

Certified Nurse-Midwifery

"Being a part of the diversity programs has been an amazing and truly rewarding experience. Oftentimes, when applicants are preparing for prestigious doctoral programs, they experience constant emotions and questions such as: Did my interview go well? Is this program the right fit for me? What is the culture like? Will I be successful? I believe that having current students like me and my colleagues available to connect with prospective students helps bridge that gap and build their confidence."

A first-generation college graduate from Chicago's South Side, Jackson brings her lived understanding of systemic barriers to her pursuit of equitable maternal health. She is dedicated to reducing preventable maternal deaths and expanding access to quality perinatal care.



MARCEL D. LEIJA, '28

Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner

"As a Psych DNP student, I've really appreciated being able to ease the anxieties of prospective students—especially since I was in their shoes just a year and some change ago. It's been such a pleasant experience meeting future health care teammates and leaders, sharing my own journey and helping them think through such a major life decision."

A lifelong Washingtonian, Leija combines a background in biology, psychology and health care leadership with a passion for mental health advocacy. Through the ambassador role, he promotes inclusion, mentorship and community empowerment within and beyond the college.

HONORING THE MOST INSPIRATIONAL NURSING FACULTY OF 2025

Each year, students in the Bachelor of Science in Nursing program recognize faculty whose teaching and mentorship have made a lasting impact through the Most Inspirational Faculty Award. The award honors faculty who profoundly influence and motivate students, fostering not only academic success but also personal growth, curiosity and purpose. The 2025 honorees were:

Class officers presenting award to Dr. Sprague. L to R: Noah Bernabe, Kiley Hogan, Margot Sprague, Cindy Tsan, Eleanore McNeal and Karina Nguyen

MARGOT SPRAGUE, DNP, MSN, RN

Assistant Teaching Professor

"Margot Sprague is a faculty member who inspired our cohort to be the best future nurses we can be. She was with us in our classes from Health Assessment all the way through Senior Synthesis. She is also someone who continues to advocate for and show up for her students." *- Karina Nguyen, '25, BSN Traditional Cohort President*

Jonathan Willson and Therry Eparwa.

THERRY EPARWA, DNP, MSN, RN, FNP-BC

Assistant Clinical Professor

"Dr. Therry Eparwa has inspired our cohort through her deep knowledge and unwavering belief in our capacity to rise to meet the moment. She taught us to think upstream—addressing the root causes of health challenges—while also extending tangible support, from assisting international students in securing work to offering research opportunities that expand our reach beyond the classroom. She weaves clinical expertise with humanity and humor, mentoring projects that connect academic rigor to real-world impact."

- Jonathan Wilson, '25, BSN Transfer Cohort International Mentorship Officer

Together, Sprague and Eparwa exemplify the Jesuit value of educating the whole person by guiding students to succeed academically while finding purpose in serving others.

DRS. LUTH M. AND NARCISO P. TENORIO ENDOWED SCHOLAR AND LECTURESHIP

The 2025 Tenorio Endowed Lectureship welcomed Elizabeth Schenk, PhD, RN, FAAN, Chief Environmental Stewardship Officer at Providence, for a timely discussion on the environmental challenges facing health care through a planetary health lens. In her lecture, "Planetary Health: Solutions for Health Care," Dr. Schenk highlighted the sector's role in global greenhouse gas emissions and shared innovative strategies for building more sustainable, just and resilient health systems.

Established through the generosity of Luth M. Tenorio, Dean Emerita, this lectureship fosters dialogue among health care leaders, students and the broader community on issues shaping the future of health care. The endowment ensures that national and international experts will continue to engage with the Seattle University community and inspire meaningful reflection for years to come.

SCHOLARSHIPS & ENDOWMENTS

ENDOWED DEAN AND PROFESSORSHIPS

Charles M. Pigott Endowed Deanship

N. Jean Bushman Endowed Chair in Nursing

Dr. Lester and Mary Ann Sauvage Endowed Professorship in Nursing

Premera Endowed Professor of Nursing in Health Promotion and Care Innovation

Robert J. and Mary H. Bertch Endowed Professorship

ENDOWED AND ANNUAL SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS

Alice L. Fisher Endowed Scholarship Fund

American Association of Colleges of Nursing Jonas Scholarship Program FY15

Bourdon Family College of Nursing Endowed Scholarship

Brian Dougherty Nursing Endowed Scholarship

Col. Marilyn J. Sylvester, Retired, Endowed Scholarship

College of Nursing Annual Scholarship Fund

College of Nursing Endowed Scholarship Fund

College of Nursing Global Engagement Fund

Dorothy Walsh Nursing Scholarship

Dr. Eileen Ridgway Endowed Nursing Scholarship Fund

Elaine C. Smith Endowed Nursing Scholarship

Emily Kulik Smith Endowed Scholarship Fund

Harrison Medical Center/Keith and Kathleen Hallman Endowed Scholarship

Hearst II Graduate Nursing Endowed Scholarship Fund

Jeanne Anne Sherrick Scholarship

Joan Razore Endowed Nursing Scholarship

Joan S. Emerson Long Endowed Scholarship Fund

Jonas Nurse Leaders Scholar Match Fund

Kathleen Kristine "Tot" Corr Endowed Scholarship

Kristi Jean DeLaurenti Bridges Endowed Scholarship

Lars Worminghaus Endowed Scholarship Fund

Lizzie Jester Global Nursing Scholarship

Margaret M. Sellers Scholarship Fund

Marilyn and Frank Clement Endowed Graduate Scholarship in Nursing

Mary Buike Memorial Scholarship Endowment

McLellan Nursing Scholarship

Norah Muldoon Ward Scholarship Fund

Patrick Goggin Memorial Endowed Nursing Scholarship

Ret. Col. Patricia Radle Endowed Nursing Scholarship

Robert and Jean Reid Family Foundation Endowed Scholarship

Ruth M. Porter Endowed Scholarship

Sarah M. Hughes Endowed Scholarship in Pediatric Oncology Nursing

Sr. Mary Ruth Nursing Scholarship

Terrance C. Kabanuck Scholarship Endowment for International Study - College of Nursing

The Edward and Benneth Franett Scholarship

The Nancy and Lorraine Scholarship in Nursing

The Sauvage Nursing Scholarship

Veronica Nooney Bilder Endowed Scholarship Fund

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