

EMORY Health Sciences News

Nell Hodgson Woodruff School of Nursing
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Emory Addresses Nursing Faculty Shortage with Summer Teaching Institute

ATLANTA – A shortage of nursing faculty is compounding the nation's severe nursing shortage. In six years, the country will be short more than one million nurses, according to the U.S. Department of Labor. Even though enrollment at nursing schools increased by a rate of 13 percent in 2005, qualified nursing students are being turned away in record numbers because there are not enough faculty to teach them. Last year 32,000 students were turned away from the nation's nursing schools, while in Georgia almost 50 percent of qualified students were turned away.

To combat the faculty shortage, Emory University's Nell Hodgson Woodruff School of Nursing created the innovative Emory Summer Nursing Teaching Institute, a post-master's certificate program, three years ago. The fast-track course offers masters-prepared clinicians an efficient program to become skilled educators. The teaching practicum builds on the clinical knowledge of nurses and ensures that participants learn the techniques to deliver educational materials in a skilled and effective manner.

Since its inception in 2003, the Summer Teaching Institute has graduated 19 nurses who are now teaching at nursing schools and on clinical rotations throughout metro Atlanta and even as far as the Bahamas.

Debra Griffin Stevens, RN, MSN, department director for the mother-baby suites at Emory Crawford Long Hospital, is a graduate of the institute and now teaches the professional development course in management for Emory's Nell Hodgson Woodruff School of Nursing.

"The most compelling reason to become a nurse educator is to work with the next generation of nurses. It is my heartfelt desire to take the nursing profession to the next dimension of excellence," says Stevens. "The teaching institute exceeded my expectations. I was taught principles of teaching and teaching theory, instructed on emerging trends, and learned how to stay current with educational reforms and changes in the nursing profession."

Professor Emeritus Helen O'Shea, RN, PhD, who created and directs the program, says, "Faculty in nursing programs are a special breed of nurse. They have two distinct sets of skills. First they are expert clinicians able to master clinical situations, and in addition, they are skilled educators who are adept at the design of courses, utilizing various teaching and learning strategies and selecting appropriate ways to evaluate learning and skills acquisition. Our fast-track program is designed to help these expert clinicians develop the essential skills needed to become skilled educators."

"Every time I lead my class in spirited debate, or reward a student who has worked hard to achieve greatness, I thank Dr. O'Shea and the Summer Teaching Institute for helping me release

my creativity in teaching and learning. Today and forever, I am a dedicated nurse educator,” adds Stevens.

Emory’s nursing school is now accepting applications for this year’s program, which begins in June. Upon completion of the program, participants will earn 12 graduate level academic credits (nine semester hours in the summer and three semester hours in the fall). This year’s program is limited to 25 participants.

Classes will be held in workshop format at Emory from June 12-23, followed by online activities and assignments until August 1. The program participants will conclude with a preceptorship at their employing agency or institution from September to December. During their preceptorships, they will participate in both classroom and clinical instruction under the direction of a faculty preceptor, who will provide guidance, critique and support.

Funding for the Emory Summer Nursing Teaching Institute will be provided by the Georgia Student Loan Repayment Commission for qualified students, the Nell Hodgson Woodruff School of Nursing, and the schools and employing institutions of the participants.

To be eligible, participants must have a master’s degree in nursing with clinical specialization. Preference is given to those affiliated with a nursing education program in Georgia. For additional information on the Emory Summer Nursing Teaching Institute, contact the Office of Admissions at the Nell Hodgson Woodruff School of Nursing at 404-727-7980 or via email at admit@nurse.emory.edu. Scholarship information is available through the Georgia Student Loan Commission.

The Nell Hodgson Woodruff School of Nursing at Emory University, ranked sixth among U.S. private schools of nursing, is recognized as a leader in the preparation of students for beginning and advanced practice nursing. Graduates of the school’s programs are at the forefront in leadership, serving as role models for excellence in nursing practice throughout the world. The School of Nursing is committed to improving care and nursing leadership through its key values of scholarship, leadership and social responsibility. To learn more, visit www.nursing.emory.edu or call 404-727-7980.

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