Meet the Dean: Joan Shaver

University Relations - Communications
January 2016

They’re experts in their fields and essential campus leaders, but how well do you know deans across the University?

This regular Lo Que Pasa series introduces deans across campus and provides insight into their motivations, challenges and reasons for choosing to work at the UA.

This week, meet a dean who has dual citizenship and loves to expand her worldview by looking at other cultures.

Name: Joan Shaver
College: College of Nursing
Number of years as dean: 6 1/2
Fun fact: Every year, I write a "State of the College" address in rhyme using "'Twas the night before?" for recitation at our December Holiday Luncheon for faculty and staff.

What do you enjoy most about serving as dean of the College of Nursing?

I love working with our passionate faculty and enthusiastic staff. They step up to all kinds of capacity building challenges such as new degree programs, creative pedagogy, innovative investigations, pathfinding health-care delivery models and meaningful community engagement. This is all in support of engaging our students ? whether they are entering the profession of nursing or advancing their careers within nursing ? in contemporary and future-pointing learning experiences.

What are some of the challenges and rewards of serving as dean?

In nursing and health care we are fortunate to have unrelenting opportunities to invent new solutions ? within education and health care. The challenge is always doing more with less and finding the resources ? time, talent and treasure ? to match opportunities. Continual change keeps us on the edge, although being really innovative sometimes feels like one is on the "bleeding edge" ? but as nurses, we know how to treat bleeding! The reward comes when we can see the results of what is sometimes a lengthy but gratifying process ? designing new ways, which takes creativity; seeking matching resources, which takes persuasion, often with co-creator or co-funding partners; and building new programs or models, which takes practical translation. Even better is when our college is recognized by others, including our potential and current students and alumni, as a leader in advancing nursing and health care.

What's one thing happening in your college right now that people should know about?
It is hard to choose one, as we have many plans in progress. As one example, we are designing and building an online nursing faculty practice whereby you can have a clinic visit virtually on webcam with a top-notch Wildcat faculty nurse practitioner, or NP—an advanced practice nurse faculty member specially trained to treat most conditions and who can prescribe common medications—all in the convenience of your own home. This creates extra convenience when you can't get a quick appointment with a provider or don't feel up to the effort it takes to get to a clinic. Over time, plans are to expand this to behavioral health counseling and link to a brick and mortar NP practice. Our NP students will have opportunities to learn within this "living laboratory." Stay tuned.

**What does the future hold for the College of Nursing?**

Boundless opportunities to evolve more and different programming. At graduation, I remind our candidates that we practice everywhere and everywhere is expanding—health systems, in and outpatient sites, skilled nursing homes, community health centers, retail clinics like CVS, urgent care centers, home care, hospice, health insurers, government, schools, collaborative and independent practices and telehealth. With more health care moving out of hospitals and into communities, nursing positions for registered nurses are expanding at a rapid speed. The nurse practitioner movement, started 50 years ago, has accelerated of late, as the crucial need is recognized for the kind and volume of primary care that will more effectively reserve very expensive hospital care for those who require it most. Expansion of venues for health care means growing needs to coordinate care and prevent what has become serious "falling through the cracks" for some people. Nurses are well-equipped to be the glue to help seal such cracks. The fundamental core of nursing is helping people attain optimal health and be self-reliant in preventing or managing disease and illness, personalized for individual vulnerability and resilience and environmental risks or resources. We don't treat disease; we treat people in the context of disease actual or threatened.

**What is something most people do not know about you?**

How much I value my eclectic, interprofessional and multicultural experiences. As a student, I was steeped in the "party line" from two disciplines—physiology and biophysics in a stellar School of Medicine and advanced nursing in a top-ranked School of Nursing. This totally expanded my worldview and I created for myself a blended framework for how I see human health. I am a Canadian-American, dual citizen in two cultures that are not hugely far apart but also not completely comparable either, so I have bifocal lenses that shape various views. I was a World Health Organization consultant for nursing education development in Indonesia at the start of a nursing reformation. This experience was life-changing and catapulted my appreciation for harnessing multicultural insights wherever we can.

Source URL: https://uaatwork.arizona.edu/lqp/meet-dean-joan-shaver