

Care that Leads:
Celebrating 75 Years of Nursing Excellence



Academic Year 2024-25
Annual Report

75

Letter from the Dean

As we celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Florida State University College of Nursing, we are reminded of how far we've come and how bright our future remains. From our first School of Nursing class of 25 pioneering women in 1950 to today's thriving community of more than 500 diverse students, our legacy of care has only deepened and expanded.

Over the past year alone, our growth has been remarkable. We launched the nation's first Master of Science in Nursing program with a concentration in AI Applications in Health Care, opened the doors to a new state-of-the-art simulation and learning lab, and celebrated a historic \$10 million gift that will transform nursing education in Northwest Florida. These milestones—and the many others highlighted in this report—reflect our bold commitment to advancing education, research and practice.

Yet through every era of innovation, one thing has remained constant: our dedication to compassionately delivered, patient-centered care. It is this human connection that defines the heart of nursing and the enduring spirit of the Nole Nurse.

As you explore this annual report, I hope you'll feel inspired by the incredible achievements of our faculty, students and alumni—and excited for the next 75 years of shaping the future of health care, together.



Jing Wang, PhD, MPH, RN, FAAN
Dean and Professor
Florida State University College of Nursing

Milestones to
Momentum:
Highlights from
Our 75th Year

No. 1

In the nation among
public schools for
NIH funding

Nation's 1st
MSN in AI Applications
in Health Care

\$10M

Historic gift to revolutionize
nursing education in
Northwest Florida

Nation's 1st
college-based, NP-led
lifestyle medicine clinic

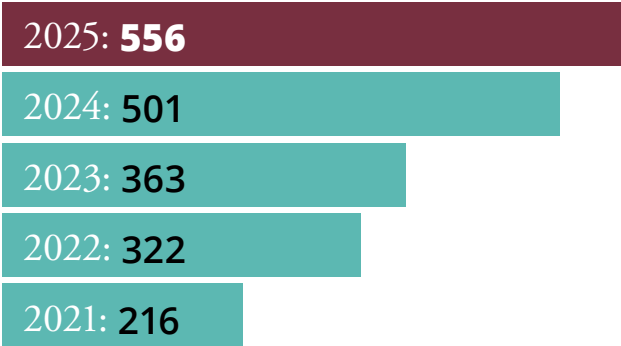
No. 1

DNP program
in Florida



75

Undergraduate Enrollment



Clinical Placements

193 Clinical Placement Sites
313 Preceptors

Simulation

3,045 Simulation Hours
1,262 Standardized Patient Hours

High-Fidelity Manikins: 10
Medium-Fidelity Manikins: 11
Low-Fidelity Manikins: 23
Birthing Simulators: 2
Newborn Simulators: 2
Pediatric Simulators: 2

157% Enrollment Growth
2021-2025

Student Spotlight: Rylee Digges

Rylee Digges, a first-generation student from Freeport, Florida, graduated this spring with a Bachelor of Science in nursing. Throughout high school, Digges considered pursuing a pre-medical track, but after being accepted to Florida State, nursing quickly emerged as a more fitting calling.

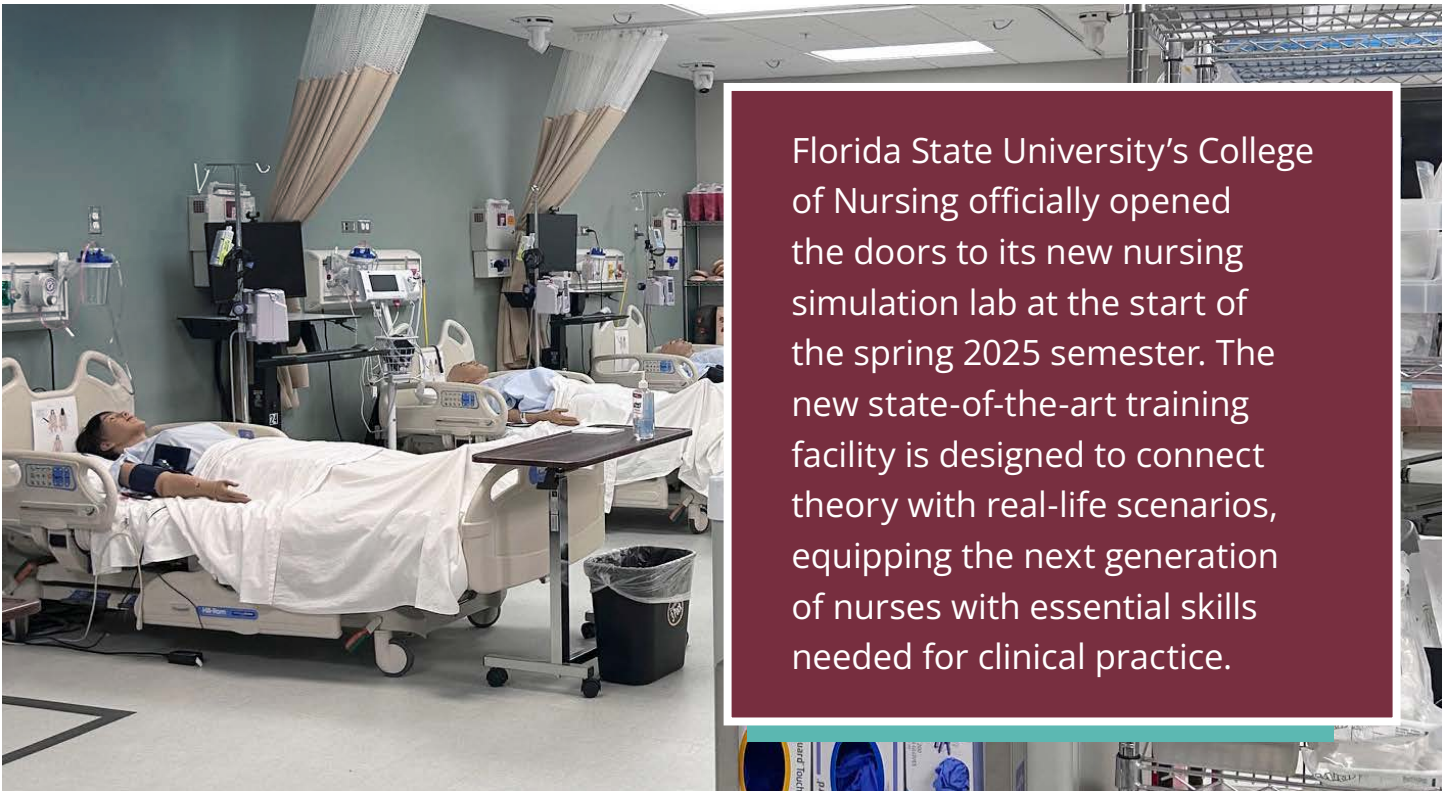
“The relationship between a nurse and a patient has a lot more depth to me,” she said. “I wanted to have a deeper connection with my patients.”

During her time at FSU, Digges has been involved in various extracurricular activities. As vice president of Seminole Nursing, she planned the senior banquet for the college, an event that reflects the hard work and dedication required to succeed in the rigorous program.

Digges also completed her preceptorship in labor and delivery, solidifying her decision to specialize in women’s health. Looking ahead, Digges aims to return to a rural area similar to her hometown to provide accessible women’s health care.



“A lot of people miss out on important things like pap smears and mammograms because it’s not convenient to drive an hour or more away.”



The 5,000-square-foot facility, located in the lower level of the Rogers Building, represents a major step forward in health care education at FSU. Equipped with cutting-edge technology and realistic medical rooms, the lab allows nursing students to practice essential skills, build clinical confidence and respond to high-stakes scenarios in a controlled and supportive space. The lab includes one-way instructor control rooms and multi-student debrief rooms with video playback capabilities that allow instructors to coach students through real-time medical scenarios, receive immediate feedback and grow their skills.

“The expansion of a new simulation lab answers a critical need in our region and across the nation for well-prepared, practice-ready nurses,” said Jing Wang, dean of the college. “With the growing demand for nurses in the workforce, the College of Nursing has taken bold steps to address the shortage by increasing student enrollment. The growth created a need for additional clinical simulation space.”

At the heart of the simulation lab is a focus on student-centered learning. High-fidelity simulator patients called “manikins” replicate everything from pediatric asthma exacerbations to complex birthing scenarios. Students engage in small-group exercises that mirror real-life patient care, from administering IV medications to escalating care in emergency situations like respiratory failure or sepsis.



The lab supports a wide range of nursing instruction, including pediatric, medical-surgical and foundational skills. Technology is deeply integrated into each step of the training process. Instructors monitor student performance from centralized control rooms using voice and video feeds from eight exam rooms to provide immediate feedback. Simulations often include standardized patients and artificial intelligence-driven systems, which offer predictive learning models and adaptive feedback in real time.

AI tools are helping to eliminate barriers between classroom and real-life learning experiences, said Director of Simulation Carla Dorneus.

“AI is transforming health care training in our simulation lab by creating immersive, data-driven scenarios that bridge the gap between theory and practice,” she said.

Key equipment includes hospital-grade tools like IV pumps, crash carts, ventilators and electronic health record stations. They contribute to an experience nearly indistinguishable from professional clinical environments. Faculty use structured assessment tools and debriefing sessions to help students reflect on their performance and refine their clinical judgment.

AI tools are helping to eliminate barriers between classroom and real-life learning experiences, said Director of Simulation Carla Dorneus.

The lab is also designed to accommodate high-risk, low-frequency scenarios that students might not experience during traditional clinical rotations. For example, in a multi-part pediatric asthma simulation, students must assess, intervene, educate families and respond to a rapidly deteriorating child's respiratory function while coordinating care and performing critical handoffs.

The new lab has proven especially beneficial for the College of Nursing faculty.

“The simulation lab provides a realistic, risk-free environment where students can develop clinical skills, practice critical thinking and build confidence through hands-on learning and high-fidelity simulations,” said Donna Johnson-Byrd, associate teaching professor of Pediatrics. “As an instructor, seeing students grow in confidence and competence right before my eyes is incredibly rewarding. The simulation lab has transformed the way I teach. It allows me to create realistic, supportive learning environments where students can make mistakes, ask questions and truly learn. It’s not just about skill-building. It’s about shaping future nurses who are ready to lead with both knowledge and compassion.”



“The simulation lab provides a realistic, risk-free environment where students can develop clinical skills, practice critical thinking and build confidence through hands-on learning and high-fidelity simulations.”

Donna Johnson-Byrd,
Associate Teaching Professor of Pediatrics

Rylan Douthett, clinical assistant professor and interim assistant dean for Undergraduate Programs, highlighted the lab's significance, saying, “The College of Nursing is boldly rising to address the nursing shortage across the state of Florida and beyond. The expansion of our simulation lab aligns with our significant increase in undergraduate enrollment. The use of high-fidelity simulation serves to expose our students to complex scenarios that bridge the gap between academia and clinical practice.”

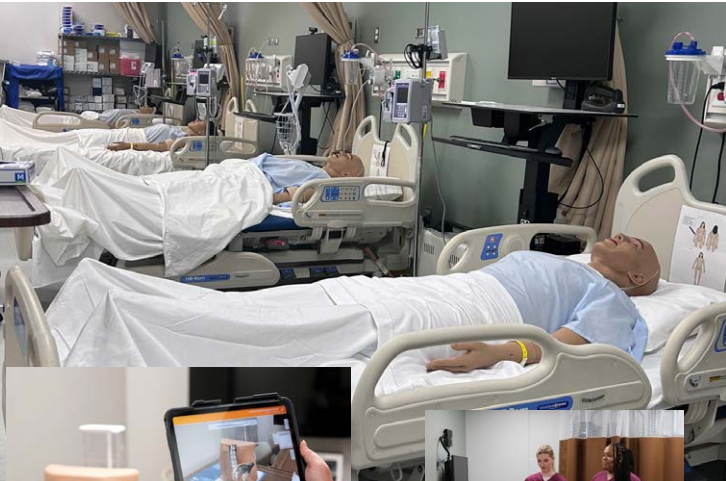
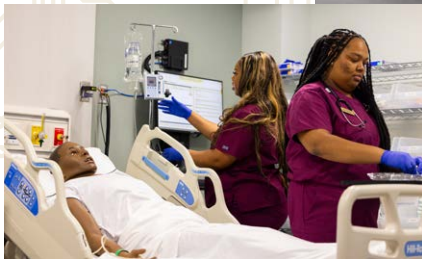
Architects Lewis + Whitlock (ALW) collaborated closely with the College of Nursing to reimagine the underutilized space as a high-performing clinical teaching environment. Navigating challenges such as low floor-to-floor heights and existing infrastructure, which made it harder to perform electrical and HVAC adjustments, the design team maximized functionality while introducing finishes and lighting that evoke a calm, healing atmosphere — sea green accents, parchment-colored walls and contemporary fixtures nod to the aesthetics of modern health care spaces.

While the benefits to nursing education are numerous, the physical transformation itself is a

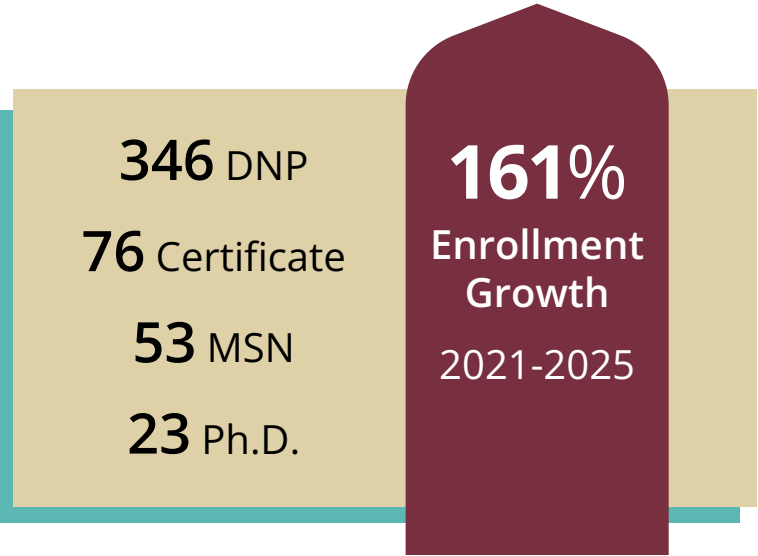
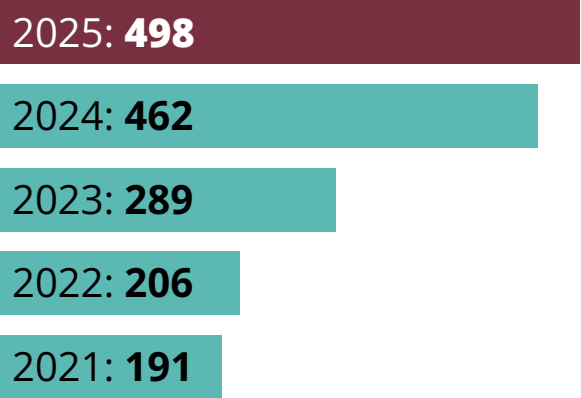
notable achievement. The basement of the building, which once housed elements of the Department of Earth, Ocean and Atmospheric Science, underwent a complete renovation in partnership with Southern Standard Construction and ALW. Mechanical and electrical systems were brought up to current code, accessibility issues were resolved, and the new simulation labs were outfitted with durable rubber health care flooring, acoustical paneling and crash rails to accommodate mobile hospital beds, creating a realistic and adaptable setting for training the next generation of health care professionals.

The simulation lab isn't the final step in FSU's vision for pioneering nursing education. Plans are already underway to expand simulation capacity even further, with efforts focused on creating additional space and resources to support advanced, hands-on learning opportunities for students.

As demand for well-trained nurses continues to rise, the FSU College of Nursing's investment in experiential education ensures its students are not just ready to graduate — they're ready to lead in nursing and health care.



Graduate Enrollment



DNP Tracks

- 141** Family Nurse Practitioner
- 44** Adult Gerontology Acute Care
- 39** Lifestyle Medicine
- 70** Executive Health Systems Leadership
- 52** Psychiatric Mental Health

MSN Tracks

- 28** AI Applications in Health Care
- 25** Nursing Education

Clinical Placements

- 381** Clinical Placement Sites
- 494** Preceptors

Certificate Program Tracks

- 57** Psychiatric Mental Health
- 8** Lifestyle Medicine
- 5** Adult Gerontology Acute Care
- 5** Family Nurse Practitioner



Artificial Intelligence and Health Care

Florida State University's College of Nursing has launched the nation's first master's degree combining artificial intelligence and health care with a curriculum that will expand digital health initiatives into clinical benefits for patients through more advanced, efficient and personalized care.

The first-of-its-kind Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) with a concentration in artificial intelligence is one of two concentrations debuting with the new MSN program, which opened for applications earlier this month.

Recognizing the need to equip future nursing leaders with a thorough understanding of emerging technologies, the program will also tackle the implementation of such technology in a safe and ethical manner.

"AI is rapidly expanding into every facet of our lives, and health care is no exception," said Jing Wang, dean of the college. "We are seeing hospitals and clinics begin to implement artificial intelligence, and our master's program will create a new generation of nursing professionals ready to navigate and leverage these innovative skills and knowledge."

The launch of the MSN program is part of the College of Nursing's Boldly Rising Strategic Plan. It joins the college's Ph.D. program, which recently debuted. Both programs are offered online, allowing for a global cohort of FSU nursing leaders.

Dean Wang expects this achievement will shine an even greater spotlight on the college's faculty and accomplishments.

"We are leading in the state of Florida and nationally in digital health and health care innovation," she said. "Our faculty are nationally renowned fellows and award recipients and have brought in millions in research funding. I look forward to the future collaborations this unprecedented MSN program brings us."



\$21,587,092

TOTAL
SPONSORED
RESEARCH
FUNDING

No. 1 in NIH
funding among
public schools

Blue Ridge Institute for Medical Research Rankings

\$20,662,126
Total NIH Funding

Research Spotlight:
A Landmark Year for
Dr. Eugenia Flores Millender

Eugenia Flores Millender, PhD, RN, PMHNP-BC, FAAN, is a driving force in advancing nursing science and community-engaged research at the FSU College of Nursing. As the Marie Cowart Endowed Professor, Assistant Dean for Research, and Co-Founder and Co-Director of the Center of Population Sciences for Health Empowerment, she brings a rare blend of scholarly excellence, innovation and deep community commitment to every facet of her work.



This year marked several significant milestones in Dr. Millender's career. She was named to TIME Magazine's 2025 list of "The Closers," a national recognition honoring leaders whose work is strengthening access to behavioral health resources and improving care delivery for communities that often face the greatest challenges. Highlighted for her culturally informed approach and her dedication to expanding support systems for individuals across diverse backgrounds, the honor underscores the wide-reaching impact of her research and advocacy.

Dr. Millender was also appointed the prestigious Marie Cowart Endowed Professor in recognition of her exceptional leadership in research, education and community-engaged scholarship.

Her leadership was further elevated through a landmark \$2.3 million award from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. This three-year project aims to modernize decentralized, at-home clinical trials by identifying barriers to participation, integrating digital tools and designing community-centered strategies that broaden representation and strengthen confidence in clinical research.

Through her vision, scholarship and collaborative spirit, Dr. Millender is expanding the college's national research footprint and strengthening its mission to advance health for all. Her work continues to inspire students, elevate faculty partnerships and shape the future of nursing research at Florida State University.

63 Faculty
52 Staff
9 Post-Doc
Fellows



2025: 63
2024: 58
2023: 58
2022: 45
2021: 39

25
Faculty holding
distinguished
awards or
fellowships

Faculty Spotlight: Dr. Ying (Mai) Kung, Fulbright U.S. Scholar

In a remarkable achievement for the College of Nursing, Dr. Ying (Mai) Kung has been named a 2025-26 Fulbright U.S. Scholar—one of only four faculty members across the entire university to receive the prestigious award.



With more than 35 years of experience as a family nurse practitioner and educator, Dr. Kung has devoted her career to advancing nursing education and improving access to care for underserved populations. Her Fulbright award will take her to Chang Gung University in Taoyuan City, Taiwan, where she will teach, mentor faculty and collaborate on the development of a Family Nurse Practitioner curriculum. Dr. Kung's work comes at a critical time as Taiwan trains its first cohort of nurse practitioners to meet growing national health care needs.

"This is a pivotal time for Family Nurse Practitioner education in Taiwan," Dr. Kung shared. "I am eager to contribute to the creation and refinement of a curriculum that can serve as a model for other universities."

During her tenure abroad, Dr. Kung will also collaborate on a research project focused on improving self-care and health outcomes among agricultural and aquaculture workers with cardiometabolic disease. Her work exemplifies the college's global vision of bridging clinical expertise, education and compassion to strengthen health systems worldwide.

"This experience will broaden my perspective and deepen my understanding of how to improve access to quality health care while advancing the nursing profession globally," she said.

Dr. Kung's selection as a Fulbright Scholar highlights the College of Nursing's growing leadership on the world stage and its commitment to Boldly Rising—shaping nurse leaders who deliver care, innovation and impact that transcend borders.



Introducing the Nole Nurse Giving Society

The FSU College of Nursing Nole Nurse Giving Society is a special community created to recognize and thank our most loyal and dedicated supporters. Through their generosity, these donors play a vital role in shaping the future of the college and strengthening our ability to educate the next generation of nurses—compassionate caregivers who will enhance the quality of life for every patient they serve.

The society features multiple giving levels, each making a meaningful impact on our students, faculty and programs. We extend our deepest gratitude to all members of the Nole Nurse Giving Society for their commitment to excellence in nursing education.

The **Nole Nurse Giving Society** honorees are recognized at five prestigious levels:

- Dean's Circle:** \$1 million and above
- Gold:** \$250,000–\$999,999
- Silver:** \$100,000–\$249,999
- Bronze:** \$25,000–\$99,999
- Copper:** \$10,000–\$24,999

Academic Year 2024-25 Total Giving

\$2,455,004
RAISED

- 470 Gifts
- 376 Donors
- \$6,910,691 Total Endowment
- 174 Scholarship Recipients
- 326 Scholarships Awarded
- \$507,125 Total Awarded



FSU Secures Historic \$10 Million Gift To Revolutionize Nursing Education in Northwest Florida



Florida State University is set to advance nursing education and health care innovation in Northwest Florida with the support of a \$10 million gift from The Fairholme Foundation.

This landmark philanthropic gift—the largest-ever to the College of Nursing—will help FSU expand nursing innovation and its undergraduate nursing program to the university's Panama City campus with the goal of elevating the quality of health care in Northwest Florida, while addressing a critical nursing shortage in the region.

"We are so grateful for this gift from Bruce and Tracey Berkowitz and the Fairholme Foundation," said FSU President Richard McCullough. "This transformative gift represents an extraordinary commitment to the future of health care in Panama City and Northwest Florida. By supporting the education and innovation of the next generation of nurses, this investment will strengthen our local communities, improve access to care, and ensure that residents receive the highest quality of health services for years to come."

The gift will directly address health care workforce challenges in the Panama City area by creating undergraduate scholarship opportunities for nursing students from Bay, Walton, and Gulf counties in Florida, who are interested in working in these counties upon graduation. Additionally, this level of philanthropic investment will fund cutting-

edge technologies and faculty research that looks to advance health care for aging populations in Northwest Florida.

With Florida expected to face a shortage of 60,000 nurses by 2035, expanding FSU's nursing program to Panama City aims to reduce the shortage, specifically in Northwest Florida. Nearly 53% of new registered nurses work within 40 miles of their high school, while 76.8% of bachelor's-prepared nurses practice in the same state as their high school, according to a recent study by the RN Work Project.

"At the FSU College of Nursing, we are boldly rising to lead the future of health care — from pioneering digital health and smart home innovations to expanding access to high-quality nursing education across Florida," said Jing Wang, dean of the FSU College of Nursing. "This historic gift empowers us to bring that vision to Northwest Florida, preparing exceptional nurses while advancing innovative care models that will shape the health of our communities for generations to come. With the Berkowitz family's extraordinary generosity, we can provide the care needed today while positioning Florida State as a national and global leader in transforming health care through nursing."

Bruce Berkowitz is the founder and chief investment officer of Fairholme Capital Management, and president and a director of Fairholme Funds, Inc.

Bruce and his wife, Tracey, co-chair The Fairholme Foundation, an organization recognized for its philanthropic gifts to projects in the areas of arts, sciences, medicine, entrepreneurship, and education.

In addition to the Berkowitz gift, FSU plans to invest its own resources to renovate space, secure equipment, and hire faculty and staff for the nursing program to establish a presence in Panama City.

The program will be operated in cooperation with FSU Panama City, a comprehensive regional campus of Florida State University that makes pursuing a degree from a preeminent institution more accessible to students in Northwest Florida.

“This extraordinary gift is a true investment in the future of Panama City,” said Randy Hanna, dean of FSU Panama City. “It opens doors for our students, empowering them to pursue nursing careers right here at home and equipping them with the skills and support to serve and strengthen health care in our community.”

Northwest Florida is experiencing incredible momentum in health care from the creation of the FSU Health medical campus in Panama City Beach to this transformative investment in nursing education, said Jorge Gonzalez, president and CEO of The St. Joe Company and member of the FSU Board of Trustees.

“This gift builds on that progress by ensuring that talented students from our region can train, stay and serve right here at home, expanding access to care and strengthening the health of our communities for generations to come,” he said.

The college recently announced a pioneering Smart Health Home Initiative, headquartered at Latitude Margaritaville Watersound, which focuses on researching innovative technologies to establish a home-based ecosystem designed to enhance the well-being and independence of active adults.

Earlier this year, FSU announced plans to build an acute care hospital in Panama City Beach under the FSU Health name. The project is the next phase in FSU’s longstanding commitment to improving health care in North Florida.

Florida is expecting a **shortage of 60,000 nurses** by 2035, expanding FSU’s nursing program to Panama City aims to reduce the shortage, in Northwest Florida.



At the FSU College of Nursing, we believe care extends beyond the classroom. Through our councils, partnerships and initiatives, Nole Nurses are deeply woven into the fabric of our community—advancing innovation, health and connection across Florida and beyond.

Join us in building a healthier, more compassionate future for all.

Nole Nurse Alumni Council

Working alongside faculty and staff, our Nole Nurse Alumni Council members provide opportunities for student engagement and mentorship to current nursing students. This engagement and mentorship equip students to enter the nursing field as future leaders, with the support they need to thrive.

Nole Nurse Advancement Council

Through philanthropy and advocacy, the Nole Nurse Advancement Council strengthens the College of Nursing’s foundation. Council members serve as ambassadors for our mission, fostering relationships and inspiring investment in scholarships, programs and innovations that empower Nole Nurses to lead with excellence and compassion.

Chief Nursing Advisory Council

The Chief Nursing Advisory Council serves as a strategic advisory body to the dean and comprises senior nursing executives from diverse health care organizations committed to helping further the college’s mission and goals. The council provides insight, expertise and industry perspective to inform the college’s academic, research and clinical initiatives, strengthening the college’s ability to prepare future nursing leaders, advance evidence-based practice and address workforce challenges. As strategic partners, they advocate for collaboration between the school, the broader nursing and health care industry and our community.



FSU Health Lifestyle Medicine Clinic

The FSU Health Lifestyle Medicine Clinic is the first nursing college-based, nurse practitioner-led lifestyle medicine clinic in the nation. Open to the public and operated exclusively by College of Nursing faculty nurse practitioners, the clinic provides comprehensive care in lifestyle medicine, psych-mental health, primary care and aesthetics. Focused on prevention and whole-person wellness, this innovative model bridges education, research and community service to improve health outcomes across the lifespan. Learn more at clinic.nursing.fsu.edu.



FSU Health Lifestyle Medicine Clinic.

Smart Home™ Health Initiative

The College of Nursing has established an innovative collaboration with Latitude Margaritaville Watersound, a joint venture of Minto Communities USA, Margaritaville Holdings and The St. Joe Company, to research technologies that can create a home-based ecosystem that empowers active adults to thrive and stay vibrant. Learn more at nursing.fsu.edu/innovation.



Nursing and AI Innovation Consortium

The Nursing and AI Innovation Consortium was established to address the gap in artificial intelligence and nursing collaborations. Through its work, the NAIIC will integrate academic research, industry innovation and nursing practice into a new initiative that will focus specially on nurse-centered AI tools, clinical workflow integration and patient care optimization. Learn more and join today at nursing.fsu.edu/innovation.



FSU Health
LIFESTYLE MEDICINE CLINIC

This past year, the College of Nursing reached a remarkable milestone with the opening of the FSU Health Lifestyle Medicine Clinic, the nation's first nursing college-based, nurse practitioner-led lifestyle medicine clinic. Open to the public, the clinic reflects the college's commitment to advancing health, prevention and whole-person care through the leadership of its expert faculty nurse practitioners.

Grounded in the principles of lifestyle medicine, the clinic offers patients personalized care plans that address the root causes of disease rather than just symptoms. Providers guide patients in adopting sustainable, evidence-based habits in nutrition, physical activity, sleep, stress management and more. Additionally, the clinic provides psychiatric mental health services, primary care and aesthetics care, creating a comprehensive model for well-being. This unique blend of services ensures patients have access to both preventive and restorative care in one convenient location.

Located in Tallahassee, the clinic serves as both a community resource and a living classroom, connecting patient care with nursing education and research. This hands-on model exemplifies the college's mission to translate innovation into practice, preparing future nurses to lead in a rapidly evolving health care landscape.

The FSU Health Lifestyle Medicine Clinic stands as a testament to the college's leadership and vision—pioneering a new model of community-based, nurse-led care that transforms both how we teach and how we heal.



The Lifestyle Medicine Clinic provides psychiatric mental health services, primary care and aesthetics care, creating a comprehensive model for well-being.

Learn more at clinic.nursing.fsu.edu



Seventy-five years later, our momentum has never been stronger. Join us in honoring the past and looking ahead to the future. Because at FSU Nursing, the legacy of excellence continues.



2025: The college launches the Nursing and AI Innovation Consortium and Smart Home™ Health Initiative



A LEGACY OF CARE



**FSU | COLLEGE OF
NURSING**

Florida State University College of Nursing
98 Varsity Way
Tallahassee, FL 32306
nursing.fsu.edu