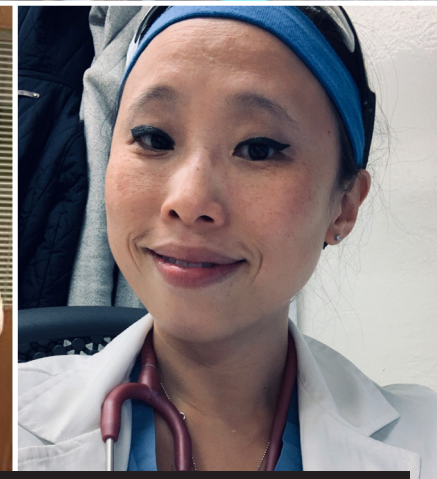


ON THE  
FRONT LINES



## A Message from the Dean

Dear alumni and friends of the College of Nursing,

I write this letter to you in the midst of our society and our College of Nursing grappling with COVID-19 and the disproportionate impact that this is having on our racial and ethnic minority groups. In addition, we are confronted by the tragic events that surround the killings of African Americans through targeted violence by others, including the police force. These events have required all of us to consider how the health of our citizens are impacted by social and economic injustices, as well as violent actions. Faculty, staff and students in the College of Nursing have called for us as a community to carefully examine our actions to see how we contribute to these injustices, as well as how we counteract to eliminate disparities. We will be developing actions to promote changes within ourselves, our College of Nursing, and our community to improve the health and well-being of all citizens, but particularly those who are historically marginalized.

Julie Zerwic



## Rakel to Receive Faculty Excellence Award

Professor Barbara Rakel has been selected to receive a 2019-2020 Regents Award for Faculty Excellence. This accolade is one of the University of Iowa's highest honors for faculty achievement.

"Your selection is a testament not only to your outstanding accomplishments in teaching, scholarship, professional commitment, and service to the university, but also to your colleagues' high regard for your contribution to our academic community," explained Provost Montserrat Fuentes in Dr. Rakel's notification letter.

Presented by the Iowa Board of Regents, the award honors faculty members for work representing a significant contribution to excellence in public education.

"Just being nominated for this award by my colleagues at the College of Nursing is an extreme honor ... but to actually be receiving it is amazing! The true credit goes to my mentors over the years, including Drs. Rita Frantz and Keela Herr, for their superb guidance and role modeling," said Dr. Rakel.

Typically, this award is presented at the Board of Regents meeting that is held at the University of Iowa. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, that meeting was held virtually.



## Anesthesia Nursing Students Providing Crucial Ventilator Training in Iowa

Student Registered Nurse Anesthetists (SRNAs) play a significant role in our nation's health care system, particularly in rural settings where they work alongside Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNAs) and often serve as the community's only option for administering anesthesia during medical procedures. In Iowa, for example, CRNAs are the sole provider of all anesthesia services in 88 of 117 community hospitals in the state.

Current University of Iowa SRNAs Rachel Westernnik and Sarah Rohde are working on a clinical rotation at Spencer Hospital in Spencer, Iowa, where, in addition to their regular workload, they are actively preparing for any COVID-19 cases that may enter their facility. The two were recently given the daunting task of teaching ICU nurses and respiratory therapists how to convert and utilize anesthesia devices for ICU ventilation.

“Dale Kroll (CRNA), a clinical coordinator in Spencer, asked us to put together a presentation to teach nursing and respiratory staff how to use our anesthesia machine as a ventilator. This education is necessary for a rural setting like Spencer due to the impending threat of COVID-19 and the many patients who could require mechanical ventilation due to the spectrum of acute lung injury specific to the virus,” explained Westernnik. “Rural hospitals have a limited number of ventilators available and a limited amount of staff who can run them. The use of anesthesia machines to fulfill this need is a viable option in an emergency situation.”

This proactive development serves as a crucial part of contingency planning that can be used to prepare and educate providers early on. Working with the manufacturer's recommendations, Westernnik and Rohde formalized proper procedures and prepared a presentation that has not only been utilized in Spencer but across the nation in other clinical practices.

The SRNAs also taught two classes focusing on the safety and limitations when using an anesthesia machine as an intensive care ventilator. Training included changing ventilation modes and settings, preventing carbon dioxide build-up in the machine, recognizing if the patient is in distress due to the ventilator, and more.

“These students provide anesthesia for emergencies, OB deliveries, etc. in rural Iowa clinics, such as the one in Spencer. In addition to that workload, Sarah and Rachel were able to provide this vital training,” said Dr. Cormac O'Sullivan, CRNA, director of the anesthesia nursing program at Iowa. “I'm very proud of our students. They came up with this on the fly at the request of the rotation coordinator and really rose to the occasion.”

Westernnik and Rohde, both from Iowa City, feel their educational experience in UI's Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) in Anesthesia Nursing program gives them a distinct edge when it comes to preparing for scenarios like what they encountered in Spencer.



## Blending the Art and Science of Nursing

By Emily Nelson | UI Office of Strategic Communication



As a child, Isabella Penniston would tell people she wanted to be a scientist when she grew up.

And in high school, the Bellevue, Iowa, native discovered a love of nursing too. But it was during her second year at the University of Iowa that she discovered she could merge her early desire to be a scientist with her passion for helping patients. Several undergraduate research experiences over the past few years have changed how she thinks of her profession.

“I never really thought about nursing in a research context,” says Penniston,

who will graduate this spring with a BS in Nursing. “I don’t think a lot of people do because it’s not something we think of nurses doing. I didn’t know that people built careers off nursing research. Being able to put research within the context of a career I love so much already is amazing. It opened up a whole lot of new doors to me.”

A medical terminology class in high school got Penniston thinking about a career in health care—she originally was leaning toward studying musical performance. While shadowing a doctor in Davenport, Iowa, Penniston was drawn to the relationships the nurses had with their patients and patients’ families.

“I realized that I not only liked the science part, but I also really liked the social aspect,” Penniston says. “I think as a nurse you form deeper relationships with patients than other health professionals get to do. So I set my sights on nursing and ran with it.”

A health sciences-specific tour of Iowa’s campus cemented her desire to be a Hawkeye. She applied to the College of Nursing as an early admission nursing student.

“Because the College of Nursing is so small, I could tell it would be a super personal experience,” Penniston says. “I also liked how downtown and campus were so merged together. It was a perfect balance of a small town, which I was used to, and a bigger city. It was comfortable but also new enough that it was exciting.”

Penniston took part in the India Winterim during her sophomore year, and it was there she was first exposed to research. The group created a resource that was translated into two languages for people with limited resources to help family members prevent bed sores.

“That trip was one of the best things I did during college,” Penniston says. “I still use things I learned there today when taking care of patients in the hospital.”

## Donor Spotlight: Mary Kosobucki

When Mary Kosobucki (MA '95, MBA '13) came to the University of Iowa in 1993 to pursue a master's degree in communication studies, she believed it would be a short-lived experience here in Iowa City.

“My dad was in the Air Force, so I was used to moving around as a kid,” says Kosobucki, who completed her undergraduate degree at the University of Michigan and spent the following six years in the Air Force. “We lived primarily in Japan, Florida, and Maryland so, when I came to Iowa, my plan was to get my degree and move on.”

While it was a challenge for Kosobucki to transition from college and the military to life as a graduate student, something unexpected happened. “I fell in love with Iowa,” she says. “I fell in love so much that I've been here for the past 27 years.”

Kosobucki went on to work for two decades in marketing, human resources, test development, and training at ACT in Iowa City while teaching a human relations management course for Kirkwood Community College. A few years after finishing her MBA degree at the UI Henry B. Tippie College of Business in 2013, Kosobucki went to work for the UI College of Nursing—most recently for the college's PhD program.

Whether it's her master's degree from the Department of Communication Studies, her MBA from the Tippie College of Business, or her professional experience with the College of Nursing, Kosobucki has been incredibly grateful for every opportunity. She believes that she's lucky to have received so much support along the way.

While Kosobucki had to pay out-of-state tuition at Michigan for two years, she received a fellowship during her master's degree studies at Iowa to cover tuition and books. Her employer also paid for a large portion of her MBA courses.

“I've been so fortunate, which is why I've wanted to pay it forward,” says Kosobucki, who has established the Mary Kosobucki Scholarship Fund through a bequest in her estate plans. This fund will support students in three areas at Iowa—the Tippie College of Business, the Department of Communication Studies, and the College of Nursing.

Kosobucki credits these three areas with having a big influence on her life. She enjoys providing help, and she strongly believes the College of Nursing plays a critical role in helping people.

“I've always loved learning and, for me, education is so important,” says Kosobucki. “To not be able to go to school because you do not have the money—it just shouldn't be that way. If I can help in any way, I'm happy to do my part.”

*Learn how you can make a difference by going to our planned giving website or by contacting Dayna Ballantyne, director of development, at [dayna.ballantyne@foriowa.org](mailto:dayna.ballantyne@foriowa.org) or 319-467-3727.*



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