A MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

A world in crisis has called, and Yale nurses have answered. Yale nurses were on the front lines of the COVID-19 (coronavirus disease) pandemic, living our mission to bring better health to all people. At Yale School of Nursing (YSN), you are joining an intellectual community that integrates science with practice with a commitment to health justice, necessary to address unacceptably long-standing health care disparities in the United States and beyond. We do this on a globe that is literally warming up, with plummeting biodiversity, and we recognize that better health is needed not just for the human species but for the planet itself.

In a prescient move, the World Health Organization declared 2020 the Year of the Nurse and the Midwife, and the corresponding report, State of the World’s Nursing 2020, highlighted the worldwide need for nurses and midwives, including from Yale. Nurses are the backbone of every health care system in the world (59 percent of all health professionals globally). Our critical functions have become more widely recognized and tested as never before during the worst pandemic in a century. As nurse scientists and expert clinicians, we can educate patients with authority and live up to the standards of the nation’s most trusted profession. But our work does not stop when the pandemic’s waves recede, and our advanced practice registered nurses (nurse practitioners and midwives) are well positioned to adapt to post-pandemic needs. As the world shifts from emergency response to primary care, health systems will return to the principles of Alma-Ata—health beyond the absence of disease, including mental health. This outlook ensures that our nurse leaders will incorporate lessons learned into future care of patients and pedagogy for students, science, and systems of health.

YSN operates under the themes of excellence, equity, and sustainability. A YSN education promotes advocacy for underserved populations and rigorous scientific research. Our outstanding faculty, expert staff, and incredible student community, combined with the excellence of our graduates, placed YSN in the top five of U.S. nursing schools this year. Our Graduate Entry Prespecialty in Nursing (GEPN) program combines preparation in basic nursing with advanced preparation in a clinical specialty, attracting students with rich life experience from diverse backgrounds. Several of our Master of Science in Nursing (M.S.N.) specialty tracks are among the most highly rated in the country, positioning graduates to improve care across the lifespan. Our Ph.D. program prepares expert nurse scientists to improve individual and population health. The Doctor of Nursing Practice (D.N.P.) programs enhance the credentials of experienced nurses across the country, giving those students the tools to shape policy, pursue expert clinical practice, and lead health systems using a pioneering degree format. The Clinical D.N.P. program will enhance students’ clinical leadership skills and develop a clinical area of expertise in the students’ practice areas, all of which will be shaped by COVID-19 for generations.

The YSN community aspires to make a difference in the world now, and we recognize that the system of racism and other structural marginalization is an enduring threat to our mission. We begin by recognizing, acknowledging, and combating the impact of racism as we endeavor to eradicate structural injustices from our school, the broader university, the profession, and national and global communities.

To address twenty-first century needs, our curriculum must of necessity be dynamic. Students benefit from our recently expanded clinical simulation facility, and our world-class faculty engage in high-impact research in areas that include self-management of chronic conditions, sleep science, symptom science, palliative care, genomics, maternal-child health, mental health, and global health, among other key areas. Our dedicated staff are highly committed to the school and to our mission. We aim to build a diverse nursing workforce educated in health justice, and we actively work to further inclusion in nursing academia and the health care sector. Students are key members of YSN’s Inclusion, Diversity, Equity Action Solutions (IDEAS) Council, among other forums. Finally, but not least, YSN is part of the singular Yale University ecosystem in which the tools of intellectual discourse, available to every student, can become instruments of powerful change in the world. We are one YSN and one Yale, committed, in the words of the University’s mission statement, “to improving the world today and for future generations.”

Thank you humbly for your engagement in YSN. Our faculty, staff, alumni, and I are thrilled to welcome you to Yale and to West Campus.

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