

Interviewer: What was the impetus from Westfield State College to start this program?

Professor: To start the program..., the President of the college decided he wanted a nursing program. It was something that was on his radar for a long time, you know, in terms of engendering community and the need in Western Massachusetts for another Baccalaureate level program and he thought it was something that...and he could best articulate why he thought it was something he needed to start but he said, you know, we really need to have that for the people in the community who have been asking for it. It turns out that has been right on the money. Now I say we have 20-something students that are starting the program. We have seen hundreds...a couple hundred applications but we ended up with about 22 or 23.

Interviewer: People have asked me, why would you start another program when we do not have places for the students to have clinical? There are some ideas out there

Professor: Well I can tell you, initially he[*College President*] hired a consultant. The consultant is a nurse. It was a former provost at another college and she actually went out ...they went out and they did a needs assessment and also met with all the other colleges in the area to see whether or not there would be a problem. ...the fact that there was a nursing shortage or there is a nursing shortage in different places in the area and the fact that many people would like to be nurses but there is nowhere for them to go for the educational piece, really warranted another program because if you are getting...if you are turning away 100 or 200 applicants of qualified people because you don't have the space to accommodate them nor the faculty, somebody else has to take part of that and so that is part of what went into the formula for this particular college.

Interviewer: I am wondering about the other issues that I have heard such as we don't have faculty, you can't get faculty, it goes on and on.

Professor: And I have heard that. I have heard that too but I can tell you we haven't advertised for faculty yet. I have a minimum of 15 applications of people interested in teaching in this area. You would be surprised, you know, you have people from Connecticut, the surrounding areas, you have people who would like

to teach but they don't want to commute very far and not everybody is as crazy as me that commuted some hour and a half to get to work . But I mean it's...it is what it is and you can't justify turning away all these people that want to be nurses because you don't have space so this is another space that has been created. Noble Hospital has dedicated space for us to be able to do clinical...um...it's a suite and it's quite nice and they also have much of the simulation equipment that we also hope to have simultaneously on the campus. They are doing a lot now in terms of looking at being able to set up an on-campus a skills laboratory, but we do have for now, Noble. They are in partnership all the way with this. I have been over, I have seen everything, it's a good fit and...

Interviewer: This is with the new CEO?

Professor: Well yea there is not a problem with that. With the former CEO everything was fine and when we found out that the new CEO was coming, our provost and our president has met to make sure that everything is status quo, so we still have that dedicated space. At the same time, I am looking to build a nursing skills laboratory here. We will be able to transport students there but for me, there needs to be another piece so that when students want to practice their skills its right here. We need something right here...

Interviewer: To get that clinical...

Professor: To get that clinical piece, yes. They will be able to practice somewhere...but we have to staff it for someone to be there so that students can practice on Saturday if they feel like it. Whenever they want to practice, we want that kind of dedicated space.

Interviewer: Like a computer lab.

Professor: Yes. It is going to be a skills lab, you know, equipped with the latest simulation...

Interviewer: Have you seen the ones over at STCC?

Professor: No but I have heard about it. I have heard about it. It is probably comparable to what they have...I have seen a couple of those setups in Maryland and I am going to go over there with the guy...oh what's his position...that actually works on space and he is doing all that stuff and he just mentioned to me last week. He says, you know we are going to go over soon. I said okay, good, as long as you are planning space for us here so that we can have some of those...you need it, you absolutely need it. I was seeing some of that simulation equipment and I'm telling you, it's just amazing, you know, pupils dilating on this...I mean give me a break here, you know, it's wonderful.

Interviewer: Because I'm sure you must be familiar with Benner's book on transformational...

Professor: Oh please...yes. Patricia Benner? I sat with her last year at a conference...

Interviewer: No I didn't mean to...

Professor: No, no, I'm only teasing you. Yeah, yeah...no, I know...

Interviewer: But the whole paradigm shift is...what I'm also hearing...again I will talk a little bit later but that's why I'm asking some of these questions...um...how are you articulating with the community as far as the nursing and getting that community...

Professor: I'm not sure I understand what you mean?

Interviewer: In the program...it's a NLN approved program...

Professor: Well actually it's going to be a CCNE approved program...

Interviewer: Tell me the difference.

Professor: Well CCNE is the accrediting arm of AAC which is the American Association of Colleges of Nursing and so they have their own accrediting body as NLN does but CCNE accredits Baccalaureate and higher degree programs. NLN accredits

Associate Degree programs and they don't accredit the Baccalaureate and higher. CCNE does not accredit Associate Degree programs because the aspiration is for the Baccalaureate level...

Interviewer: When I was talking about community, I'm talking about the public health, the community nursing... your program I presume will have a component where you will be working with public health and looking at the needs of the community...

Professor: Well I think...I think...well let me just tell you one piece of what...because of the assessment of the community that was done prior to me getting here. One of the things that we have done with our curriculum has included...we have included gerontological nursing as a focus based on the needs of the community and especially in this area...what is it, Pioneer Valley is one area. I don't know anything about the area.

Interviewer: I can tell you about the area and I can tell you about the community.. there are so many areas in this particular community for students to get actually fantastic experience.

Professor: [the] consultant, did quite a bit of that visiting and I don't know specifically which places she has visited but that is a good point. That is something that was considered.

Interviewer: That is how I'm understanding these programs are going is not to stay just hospital...um...

Professor: Oh no, no, we have no intention of that. No. No... Gerontology. We'll just say Gerontology.

Interviewer: And so that's why I was asking those questions. So how does it feel to you at this point? Where do you feel as a human being, as you have entered this particular commitment, how are you feeling about this? What are your thoughts?

Professor: I feel good about this. Let me tell you what was...it wasn't a turning point 'cause I have always believed in what I saw that was written in terms of the need for

here... love students and I hope never to forget what it was like to be a student and I interviewed about half of the students. Some students came from afar and during our period of interviews, some of the high school students couldn't get in 'cause they were still in school and still attending classes and some of them were from far away. It didn't make sense and we had a very short time to do this, but when they came in and they sat where you are sitting right now and I asked them...you know I asked them a couple of questions and tell me about a time, tell me a story, one you will never forget because it reminds you of why you want to be a nurse. Well... it was all I could do to stop crying but I didn't cry then, you know. And a couple of the students, you know, actually...you could feel the love for what they were about to embark upon and so I'm feeling really good because I have met my students, you know, the first group of students. I will also teach the very first course which is Introduction to Professional Nursing and I wouldn't have that any other way because I want to go back to some of the old school about how you are with people and, you know, and your name is not Annie, your name is Mrs. Smith until they tell you otherwise. I mean there is a lot of that that has kind of gone by the wayside.

Interviewer: It's called caring.

Professor: It's called caring...it's called respect, you know, I mean someone who is...this person's hearing is bad, 86 years old, she doesn't know you, she knows...she has got family, she is not just an old lady. She is a person and you respect her with dignity and you walk in there and you say, hello Mrs. whatever her name is. If she wants you to call her Annie, that's fine, but until she says that...

Interviewer: Just don't call her dear.

Professor: Don't call her that. Don't call her dear, don't call her honey, how are you? I mean it's like all those things but I mean that's just the way...I mean some of the stuff is just manners and so I really want to be there at the entry level to talk about what is nursing and I think...

Interviewer: Are you going to have a little history in there too?

Professor: Oh yeah, absolutely. Absolutely. Yeah I have it already written out, some of the history and I mean history was really something I appreciated because my second advisor at Yale was Eleanor Hermann and she is quite a historian. At one point she collected...she was responsible for collecting all the nursing caps in Connecticut. But she is a historian...she is also a historian and Nancy Noel was the other historian that I had. Of course I took the class and it was an elective at Adelphi University and so I have a good appreciation for history and whose the person that says if you don't know your past, you are bound to repeat its mistakes. I want to go in there and I really want to talk about professional nursing which is the course, which is the rudiment to your profession.

Professor: A good...yes, yes and then people can decide whether they want to do this or not...in their first class. Let's not wait until you're a senior and you say well no, this is not really what I wanted to go into or what I want to do the rest of my life. So that's what brings us to today and there is still a lot of work to be done because we are...obviously if students...the first year they are taking that one course, Introduction to Professional Nursing, as they take their prerequisites and the second year they take one nursing course which is a Health Assessment course, so the clinical component to the curriculum doesn't happen until the junior year and so that's when we start hiring faculty...we will start in the Fall hiring faculty for 2011, you know, having everyone in place and they know what they are teaching and go about looking at what we have set up as...um...you know the skeleton for a syllabi and...um...you know, so and then two years after that and then...and two the following year so we will have a total of seven faculty unless we increase our enrollment. We are set up to take no more than 32 students to begin with which is pretty good. You figure if you get 32 graduates a year for 10 years, you got 320 nurses somewhere. Given you are going to have attrition, you know, and so...yeah well prepared nurses so I'm feeling pretty excited about it currently. It has been a challenge because it's new to the college, so we have to figure out how do we do this? Because your prerequisites are different...um...we have people who are...who want to transfer in. We actually have had students who thought they would take their prerequisites here and then transfer out for a nursing program. We have about five or those such students, you know. I met earlier this morning with a student who is about to

complete her degree in psychology...always wanted to be a nurse, knowing that she still wouldn't graduate until 2014 if she started in the Fall. She still wants to do it. That's somebody that wants to do it. I had a couple of high school students that came in with their parents. One student had to decide between here and Russell Sage and I was just elated. I got an email from the father that said she decided to come here and a lot had to do with the interview and responding to her questions and we hadn't received our initial approval at that time and I told him, I said we are supposed to go meet before the board, the Provost and I are going to Boston for the 12th of May and I don't see any reason why we won't get it. Our proposal was about that thick...and...um...we had a unanimous decision and so...and that happened after but they believed in it enough to make that decision and it was just...it was really...is it Russell Sage? Is it in...

Interviewer: Troy, New York.

Professor: Okay. And she called me to say, I wanted you to know that I filled out the application and I sent in the fee. I would like to be there. So it's...right now the challenge is only in terms of logistics. How do you do it? We had to create a new form, the application form, that type of thing. But there are certain deadlines you have to meet. National deadlines require that students from a college be notified by May 1st or something or the response date is May 15th. We didn't get our approval so we couldn't take it. You see that was...that was a problem.

Interviewer: That makes it hard being new. You are breaking ground here. Getting a chance to set it up the way I understand you would like...

Professor: To mold...yeah.

Interviewer: And to create a nurse that you would like to care for you if you got older. That is my philosophy.

Professor: You know what? I used to tell my students at various colleges. I said you know what? When you come in...I was always a stickler on shoes and that's not because of my military background and having to spit shine my shoes...white

shoes need to be white. I said you know...I used the example...I said, if I'm in the hospital and I'm there sick and I'm just looking down, when you enter the room and I see those dirty shoes, I get very...I think about that. I mean that speaks to you as a professional.

Interviewer: We used to take our shoes off when we left the units and we put on other shoes because...and we carried in a bag because it had to be clean...

Professor: That's right.

Interviewer: It's dirty enough where you are anyway, nowadays nobody cares.

Professor: Exactly, and it's really...it's funny and see those things I like to talk to them about. You never know what people see. My daughter...I didn't know she was going to be a nurse. I mean I found out she was going to be a nurse after she had gone year at Fairfield University. She says, I really want to do this. Today...I mean she was worked on the medical floor for 13 or 14 years or so...today, when she gets home from the hospital, everything comes off, she gets in the shower. I mean every time and the clothes get tossed in the bin. I mean it's engrained.

Interviewer: Well it's just your pride but it's also sanitary.

Professor: Well you know what's in there. You got MRSA floating around everywhere. I mean give me a break here, you know, all these things that are going on and you have to be careful so it's...we will see how it works out.

End