

## **Meet the Prof: Suzanne Marnocha**

**by Faculty Advocacy Committee - Wednesday, September 16, 2009**

<http://www.uwosh.edu/today/2195/meet-the-prof-suzanne-marnocha/>

*The following faculty Q&A was submitted by the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh Faculty Advocacy Committee, a committee of the Faculty Senate. Rosemary Smith, dean of the College of Nursing, wrote the introduction.*

It is a pleasure to introduce an energetic and popular professor who appears able to do anything and everything: Dr. Suzanne Marnocha. A respected nurse researcher who regularly presents and publishes her work, Dr. Marnocha directs Wisconsin's largest Bachelor of Science degree program in nursing. She is also an advanced cardiac life support instructor who teaches classes for nurses and physicians in the clinical area. In addition, she maintains her authenticity with students by working a part-time clinical practice as a certified registered nurse in an intensive care unit. Dr. Marnocha is a valued role model at UW Oshkosh and a recognized leader in the nursing profession.

### **How did you find your way to UW Oshkosh?**

In my previous position I was a clinical nurse specialist in the Intensive Care Unit at St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Appleton. At that point in my career, I had a master's degree in nursing with certification as a critical care registered nurse and many years of acute care experience including teaching in the hospital. A UW Oshkosh College of Nursing faculty member spoke with me about a possible teaching position. I followed up on her suggestion, promised to pursue my doctoral degree and was hired full-time.

### **Why did you choose to go into your field?**

I was always inspired by nurses and teachers. From my mother, who taught in a one-room school house in Michigan, to my sister, who has been a junior high principal and a university professor, my family members are primarily educators. Also, my mother had been ill for many years, and I witnessed both excellent and terrible nursing care. At a very early age, I vowed to be "the one who made the difference." I made it my ultimate goal to teach nursing students how to be wonderful nurses.

### **What is your favorite thing about UW Oshkosh?**

First of all I love the collegial atmosphere and the opportunity to interact with other disciplines. Also, the campus grounds are beautiful, especially in spring and summer.

My favorite part about working in the College of Nursing is the student interaction. I can be a positive influence on the future of nursing by providing quality instruction.

### **What is the professional accomplishment of which you are most proud?**

Despite a difficult childhood, I followed my planned trajectory. My mother had been quite ill and

ultimately died when I was young. Foster families raised me. During this rough time, I dreamed of college, nursing school and a graduate education. Even with two children at home and a full-time teaching load in nursing at UW Oshkosh, I managed to complete the Ph.D. program at UW-Milwaukee.

### **What leadership or service activities are you involved in?**

As director of the undergraduate program in the College of Nursing, part of my duties include serving on eight college committees. I oversee several opportunities for eligible students to obtain a Bachelors of Science in nursing. Anyone can learn about the opportunities we offer on our college's newly updated nursing Web site. Additionally, I am involved in the Liberal Education Reform Team. This is a committee that is reviewing the required courses all UW Oshkosh students take. The emphasis is conferring a well-rounded education to our graduates.

Off campus I am engaged in our church (Fox Valley Unitarian Universalist Fellowship) and several professional nursing organizations, such as the Wisconsin Nurses Association and the Fox Valley District Nurses.

### **What is the most common misperception about what you do?**

Many people may believe Wisconsin faculty members are quite wealthy. The truth is UW System salaries vary from campus to campus and lag behind most universities. It is the opportunity to work with students and provide quality education for the next generation of nurses that keeps me motivated.

Another misperception people have is that educators no longer work in the "real world." In addition to my responsibilities in the College of Nursing, I continue to work bedside two shifts per month at Appleton Medical Center in the Intensive Care Unit. Due to the constant change in healthcare, maintaining clinical practice is extremely important to me. Working at Appleton Medical Center keeps my skills current and provides me authenticity with my students. In class I can say, "This is how I treated my patient on Saturday night."

### **What is the most exciting project you are working on right now?**

In spite of a busy schedule, I find time to conduct research that I love. I was able to present my results on military spouse stress on campus in spring at the Research to Reception event. My most recent presentation was in Vancouver, and it covered data on women's experience of menopause. In September I am going to speak on improving clinical communication between hospital staff and instructors. These presentations are based on several studies that I completed and hope will be published.

I am also involved with the McNair Mentor program. This program was founded by Congress in honor of Dr. Ronald Elvin McNair, who overcame poverty and segregation to achieve his dreams. Dr. McNair was aboard the Challenger when it exploded 73 seconds after takeoff on Jan. 28, 1986. The 100 percent federally funded program encourages women and minorities to pursue advanced degrees in fields where they are underrepresented. I have mentored several nursing students, and there are other mentors in other colleges on campus.

### **How does what you research help you to be an effective teacher?**

It is my hope that my research will inspire students and faculty. I really enjoy projects where many people can become engaged in the effort, whether brainstorming or gathering data.

While working bedside in the intensive care unit, my research is sometimes discussed with the staff. Many of them are curious, and some consider going back to school because it does not seem as intimidating as they previously thought.

**Describe some ways your department serves Northeastern Wisconsin.**

In 2008 there were 208 Bachelor of Science in Nursing degrees conferred from the UW Oshkosh College of Nursing. These graduates will work to address the current and future healthcare needs of the region. There were also seventeen Master of Science in Nursing degrees awarded. These included 16 family nurse practitioners, who will address the critical need for additional primary care providers in Wisconsin.

The College of Nursing works with the support of community agencies to operate the Living Healthy Community Clinic, which provided more than \$1 million in services for the uninsured citizens of Winnebago County last year alone.

**Tell us about your family.**

My husband, Mark, is wonderful. He has a Ph.D. in clinical psychology from Purdue University. He educates family practice physicians during their residency at UW Health in Appleton. This program is part of the UW-Madison Department of Family Medicine and Public Health. At home, he loves to cook for frequent family gatherings, plays piano at church and writes poetry.

My daughter, Ivy, is a nurse practitioner in De Pere. She has a bachelor's degree and a master's degree in nursing from UW Oshkosh. She is a consummate athlete and has completed many marathons, including the Boston Marathon in 2009. She also loves participating in triathlons. Her husband, Vince, is also a UW Oshkosh graduate. He works in the computer department for Dominion Power Plant in Kewaunee. They have two sons: Jacob, who is 12, and Benjamin, who is 8.

My son, Jesse, is a UW-Stevens Point graduate. He has an M.D. from the Medical College of Wisconsin with a specialization in anesthesia. Jesse is in his last year of residency. His wife, Courtney, has a bachelor's degree and works for Secura Insurance Company in Appleton. They have a daughter, Quinn, who is 4, and a son, Preston, who is 3.

My other son, Sean, is working at West Services in Appleton and is a student at UW Oshkosh. His significant other, Ashley, is an artist and works in Appleton. They have two wonderful cats, Odie and Frankie.

**What are your hobbies?**

My hobbies include playing with grandchildren; raising honeybees, horses and chickens; gardening; and riding motorcycles and horses.

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