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## History of Nursing Biola 1945 - 2017 Presentation

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## 50th Anniversary History of Biola's Nursing Department

Leonie V. Soubirou wanted to be a missionary to China. The story is told that she was actually at the dock in San Francisco with her bicycle when she got the news that due to war time conditions and because her French catholic family disapproved of her going, she would not be allowed to sail.

But, God has a way of using our disappointments to his glory. Instead of working in China, she worked for a time as a public health nurse in the state of Washington and she obtained a master's degree. Her two passions: a passion for missions and a passion for nursing, were the perfect background for starting a one-year post-graduate program for individuals who were planning to be missionaries.

About this time, Dr. Sam Sutherland, president of Biola was concerned about individuals going to the mission field without knowledge of medicine and being called upon to give medical help. He contacted Miss Soubirou to talk about the need. As a result, in 1945, the School of Missionary Medicine was founded and classes were held on the 10<sup>th</sup> floor of the Biola Campus in downtown Los Angeles.

The purpose was to help missionaries maintain their own health and meet emergencies where no professional help was available. Medical care was also seen as an opportunity to reach individuals with the gospel. They would come to the missionary for medicine when they would not necessarily come to just to hear about the Christ. However, caring and concern could draw them to Christ.

The program focused on 3 areas: dentistry, tropical medicine and midwifery/nursing and the course was a year in length. Students spent approx. 17 hours in the clinical area each week in

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addition to the theory classes. Tuition in the 1960's was \$60/semester, dorm rooms were \$25/mo.  
and meals were \$2/day.

The students who completed the 3 semesters of nursing training were eligible to take the LVN (licensed vocational nurse) board exam. Today, LVN's work mostly in long-term care under the supervision of RN's, but in that time on the mission field, they knew more about health care than anyone else in the area.

The graduates had a global impact as they travelled around the world as missionaries. One graduate, Leon Dillinger and his wife went to New Guinea. He was chosen to be on the cover of Time Magazine in 1982 when this secular magazine focused on the impact of missions world-wide.

Miss Soubirou was forward thinking. In fact, we could say she was an evidence-based nurse! In the 1960's she took a survey of mission boards and from the evidence, she found that they wanted nurses who were more educated. They wanted professionals. Most foreign countries had schools whose programs were similar to LVN training, so they wanted people with college degrees who could be educators and leaders.

The initial RN program was developed in conjunction with LA County General Hospital. Students had their first year at Biola and then went to Nursing School at LA County to complete requirements for the RN. They returned to Biola to earn the BS degree in biological science. There were only 2 cohorts of students, beginning in 1964 and 1965. These ladies all heeded Miss Kilander's admonition: "*Ladies, your shoe laces can be washed!*"

In 1966, the BSN program (Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree) was approved by the California Board of Nursing Education and Nurse Registration with 162 units. There were 3 faculty members at the beginning: Miss Leonie Soubirou, Miss Leta Kilander and Miss Ruth

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Fuller. Completing the 5-year program, 21 women graduated in 1971. Rancho Los Amigos, LA County General Hospital, Shriner's Children's Hospital and the Metropolitan State Hospital were among the clinical locations.

In the early years of the BSN program, the uniform was pink blouses with white pinafores. The skills lab continued to be at the Church of the Open Door facilities in downtown LA until sufficient facilities were available for a skills lab on campus. For a well-supplied Nursing Arts Laboratory, manikins were required for practice.

The manikins from the School of Missionary Medicine were transported via car to their new beds in Science 109 which was a re-designed chemistry lab room. Early faculty remember placing chairs strategically so that no one would trip over the exposed pipes. The manikins, all named Mrs. Chase (since they were made by the Chase Company), were well cared-for. When Dr. Chase became the president of Biola, the name was changed, but the manikins continued to serve.

The story is told that one night Miss Soubirou was too tired to go back home, so she decided to sleep in the skills lab. In the middle of the night, a student janitor came in and was orienting a new person. As he turned on the lights, he said to his fellow-worker, "Don't worry, this room is just filled with dummies!" Waking up, Miss Soubirou sat up and said: "Yes, and this one talks."

Today's nursing students still practice in a skills lab, but our manikins are more sophisticated. Our top-of-the-line computerized manikin of 2008 was named by the students "Will Livemore". His breathing and heart rate can be captured on the monitor along with his O2 sat and other vital statistics. Students can do a full physical assessment.

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He has been joined by Noelle, a manikin for the OB course whose FHT's can be monitored and her room is complete with baby warmer and the equipment needed for a newborn. Although we are still using him, Will is outdated and our latest manikin is wireless.

Soon we'll have even more modern equipment in our new Science, Technology and Health Building. We've come a long way from Mrs. Chase to computerized simulators and even to remote video feed for observation and enhanced learning.

After the retirement of Dr. Soubirou, Joyce Roberts was interim Chair of the nursing department for a year until the appointment of Dr. Pat Kissell. By the time of Dr. Kissell's appointment as Chair, 1976-1979, nursing was the largest major at Biola College. For her leadership and community involvement, Dr. Kissell received the award of Outstanding Professional and Business Woman of La Mirada, 1978. With the growth of the program, she also was active in the plans to renovate the Marshburn Annex into the current nursing building, Soubirou Hall.

The building was dedicated in 1981 after Becky Fleeger became Chair. Dr. Fleeger influenced the program for over 30 years. When interviewed, she felt her major contribution was to begin to help faculty work together to intentionally integrate faith and nursing practice. Under Dr. Soubirou students were required to take 30 units of Bible. Dr. Kissell expanded development of innovative interterm courses such as Spiritual Assessment and courses specifically for the missionary nurse.

Dr. Fleeger wanted more intentional integration of Christian faith and nursing practice for all nurses. Under her, faculty spent hours in discussion to develop a distinctively Christian philosophy of nursing. It explains how nurses do Christian caring for patients who are made in the image of God, men and women who are spiritual beings, and people who need to move

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toward wellness. The result was a conceptual framework for the curriculum which was utilized  
for many years.

Under Dr. Elliott who became the Director of the Nursing Dept. in 2008, this integrative  
thinking progressed. Consistent with "industry standards" our current mission, vision and values  
statement is incorporated throughout the curriculum. The 4 values are Christian caring, critical  
thinking/clinical reasoning, communication, and nursing process and skills.

Every nursing school has a pin. The Biola nursing pin originally came from the School  
of Missionary Medicine and had a caduceus in the center (a staff with wings and two serpents  
entwined.) Miss Leta Kilander, who had taught both in the School of Missionary Medicine and  
the BSN program, said that it always bothered her that the pin had snakes, based in mythology  
when this is a Christian program. She re-designed it so that the caduceus was replaced by the  
cross of Christ and an open Bible. This symbolically shows what Biola nursing is all about. Our  
graduates use the ministry of nursing to take the life-saving message of scripture to the world.

The nursing program has been affiliated with Nurses Christian Fellowship from early on.  
The Organization supports both students and faculty with Bible studies developed for nurses,  
literature, and study groups to support the integration of faith and practice. Biola has worked  
collaboratively with NCF for many years and has even offered joint continuing education  
classes.

Dr. Fleeger's concern for spiritual things was reflected by the students. Biola nursing  
members of CNSA (California Nursing Students Assn) wrote a resolution that spiritual care  
should be part of the curriculum of every nursing school. In 1978, Biola's Nancy Kramer  
collaborated with a student from UCSF to present the resolution nationally. It passed. The

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resolution was accepted by the National Student Nurses Assn and copies sent out to all member schools.

Not only has the Biola nursing program had an impact on the nation, but we have had international outreach. The emphasis on missions was re-energized in 1980 when Cindy Westcott initiated a summer missions team of 30 nursing students. They worked with Food for the Hungry in Thailand serving in refugee camps. Some carried out a nutritional survey done with the aid of rice scales and baskets, bamboo poles, and pieces of tape.

Many summer teams went out, each with its own activities and goals. There were two teams to the Dominican Republic, working with the Christian Medical and Dental Society on malarial research, doing a burn unit feasibility study, assessing nutritional needs, teaching health care to orphans and working in local clinics.

In India, Dr. Cindy Westcott and Dr. Cheryl Zukerberg exposed the students to a number of unusual health care experiences such as visiting a hospital for those with leprosy, and allowing them to minister to patients often considered outcasts of society.

In 1993 Drs. Westcott and Zukerberg initiated a community health nursing missions course based in inner city LA. To make it as missions-like as possible, both students and faculty members lived in a church basement. The Caring in Action Team was able to write a community assessment report on community health care activities in the Hollywood/Los Angeles Area in order to help establish a referral network.

1999 saw the beginning of a long-term relationship with a church in Cerro Azul, Mexico. Students were able to take part in this experience in all three years of the nursing program. They learned how to set up a community clinic under the supervision of Chery Zukerberg who was a nurse practitioner.

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Missions experiences during the semester is the current model. One of the longest ongoing relationships has been with Crossroad Medical Center in Alaska and Millie Ressler. Students have participated in health care in rural Alaska, working with ED and clinic patients as well as experiencing cultural events as dog sledding, ice fishing and even auctioneering to raise money in the community.

In conjunction with Saddleback Church and the PEACE project, Glenn Styffe has taken a number of clinical groups to Rwanda. In addition to hospital nursing, they have had projects in teaching physical assessment to Rwandan hospital staff members, immunization outreach, and AIDS and hypertension screening, especially working through churches.

Through the years, the program, faculty, and alumni have gained recognition in many areas. One national award was received by Dr. Zukerberg for her work: Infusing Geriatrics into the Nursing Curriculum. The "Ask a Nurse Clinic" received national recognition, and a practical project which was completed by Level 3 students more recently was working with the City to establish a crosswalk on a busy street near a facility focusing on care for disabled persons. The President of Rwanda even gave recognition for the work of the students there.

In the last few years, there has been an emphasis in the nursing department on faculty research, publication, and presentation. Professor Maria Dixon worked with Presbyterian Intercommunity Hospital Health to research a method to decrease bruising and hematomas after heparin injection. Professor Glenn Styffe was assisted by Dr. Akiko Kobayashi in research related to the role of the church in caring for individuals with hypertension and other health issues in the country of Rwanda. Professor Styffe and Professor Donell Campbell spoke at an international health conference in Jakarta, Indonesia. Professors Penny Bacon and Colleen Sanchez have made poster presentations for nursing conferences and Dr. Rachel Van Niekerk recently did a presentation on using Facebook for educational learning.



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Dr. Elliott spent hours working on the plans for the new Center for Science, Technology and Health. Her expertise with others as Shannon Gramatky and Robin Cox, helped to design spaces for student interaction, and classroom teaching, as well as skills and simulation learning in the new building. This will be appreciated for years to come.

Long-time faculty member, Dr. Anne Gewe filled the role of Director for two years after Dr. Elliott left. As a faculty member she mentored others for years; students, RN's, preceptors, course team members, students in their master's programs, and new faculty—to mention a few. As Director, she helped to build the foundation for the current leadership in the department, all of which was recognized by a Biola Career Leadership Award in 2017.

Under direction of Dr. Rachel Van Niekerk current Director of the Nursing Dept, the program has grown from 40 admissions to clinical nursing per year to 60. The California BRN has approved a decrease in the curriculum from 5 years to 4.5, decreasing cost and yet maintaining quality. Plans have been made toward development of an MSN in nursing education.

Time is too short to include the many alumni who have gone on to get advanced degrees and are teaching, missionaries, nurse practitioners, case managers, clinical nurse managers, parish nurses, school nurses, or working with International Programs. In recent years, the department chose two alumni to represent the quality of many.

Elizabeth Styffe was honored for her work with AIDS outreach and the Orphans Initiative of Saddleback Valley Church. She and Glenn (also a Biola nursing graduate) have adopted three children from Rwanda.

Sharon Soper represents missionary nursing, working in Bolivia for many years. She developed a culturally appropriate feeding program for children, utilized by World Vision. Soy

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and other grains were substituted for meat to create dishes which were both nutritional and low  
cost.

We don't know the future, but, as Christians, we believe that God calls us to be part of  
the wonderful ministry of nursing. Mother Teresa wrote to her brother who was a British army  
officer and thought she was throwing her life away in India—“*Well, I'm an officer too, but I  
serve the King of the whole world. Which of us is in a better position?*” Nursing is much more  
than just a job. It's a ministry of service in the Kingdom of God.