

INNOVATING FOR BETTER OUTCOMES

Michelle Marrone
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Photo above: Rivier nursing students in Senegal clinic with the University's Institute for Global Health. (Susan Feeney profile photo by Jill Whiteneck)

Engaged students and strong departmental support fuel Assistant Professor Susan Feeney's innovative spirit

Practitioner, preceptor, professor—Susan Feeney serves the field of nursing at every level. She joined Rivier's Family Nurse Practitioner program as a clinical preceptor, supervising students' hands-on clinical experiences in her busy family practice. Teaching in the field laid a path to the classroom. Rivier's high quality students and unparalleled faculty support made the opportunity to become a professor enticing. When a position became available, Feeney says, "I didn't need to think twice. I jumped at the chance."

Feeney's passion for her work, the University, and her students is visible in all that she does to foster a vibrant learning environment and strong student engagement both in the classroom and in the global community. "We have truly remarkable students here at Rivier," says Feeney. "The graduate students are all experienced RNs with a wealth of nursing knowledge and involvement."

Creativity in the classroom

Feeney credits her supportive dean and collegial nursing faculty as underwriters of her classroom success. Their collaboration and encouragement "allow me to focus my energy on innovative curricular and teaching strategies to fully engage the students to meet their required competencies. All ideas are welcome."

Feeney utilizes the "flipped classroom" technique to teach vital content online and focus class time on critical thinking and skills application in clinical cases. Students are able to watch lectures online prior to class and then apply the skills and concepts in classroom simulations. This teaching technique

deepens the students' understanding and skills development. Video feedback is provided to students so they can evaluate their skill levels and progress toward a goal.

Feeney tells her students "that they can never memorize every fact. Information changes rapidly. However, they must become competent in the process of clinical reasoning and knowing where and how to access the evidence they need to provide safe, quality patient care. They need to think critically when assessing patients and populations in order to meet their specific needs. They need to know how to evaluate the evidence and how best to apply it in clinical settings to maximize outcomes."

On a mission

Experiential learning extends far beyond the classroom for Rivier's graduate nursing students. In fulfillment of the University's mission, 'transforming hearts and minds to serve the world,' Feeney and colleague Assistant Professor Judi O'Hara founded the Rivier Nursing Wellness Connection. The Wellness Connection allows faculty to mentor students in clinical settings as well as provide preventative services to Rivier and local communities. Graduate students' participation in Wellness Connection events gives them additional hands-on opportunities to hone their skills. Feeney is proud of their accomplishments: "It is so gratifying and rewarding to see the students engage the community with genuine enthusiasm and exemplary professionalism."

Beyond our borders, Feeney and other Rivier nursing faculty, undergraduate and graduate students recently traveled to Dakar, Senegal for a 10-day clinical immersion trip in collaboration with the University's Institute for Global Health. The Institute facilitates academic, co-curricular, and campus-wide programs that promote international understanding, intercultural partnerships, and global immersion. Working closely with local healthcare staff in a rural hospital, these licensed RNs assisted in births, as well as mother and child aftercare. Senegal's high child mortality rate made this an especially eye-opening experience.

A love of learning

In addition to maintaining a clinical practice, Feeney is pursuing doctoral studies and is on schedule to complete her degree in May 2015. She says, "I maintain a clinical practice so I can relate current relevant experience to the learning environment. My practice informs my teaching, and what I garner in the process of teaching informs my practice. Seeing patients and maintaining a clinical practice keeps me fresh and in the real world of patient care."

Feeney's focus on lifelong learning and innovating for better student and patient outcomes makes her a superior educator. She believes effective teaching requires educators to be active listeners for all to benefit.

Feeney shares, "I love learning from my students. My students are all experienced RNs who come to the program with a wealth of experiential knowledge and perspectives. It is very gratifying to facilitate their transformation into the advanced practice role and share in their "Aha" moments!" ■

"As a student in the Family Nurse Practitioner program at Rivier University, I feel most fortunate to work with Professor Susan Feeney. Not only has she taught me a great deal about Health Policy in the classroom, but she realizes the value of hands-on experiences and real-life immersion opportunities. Professor Feeney is an amazing teacher and a wonderful mentor who encourages her students to be lifelong learners."

- Kellyn Freed, RN, Class of 2016

Bio: Adele Susan Feeney

Assistant Professor of Nursing

Director of Graduate Nursing Education

M.S., Nursing, University of New Hampshire

B.S., Nursing, Texas Woman's University

B.A., Psychology, McGill University

Specialties

- Family Health/Primary Care Nursing
- Family Nurse Practitioner
- Physical assessment
- High-risk labor/delivery/antenatal/postpartum/neonatal
- Maternal-child health

Classes Taught

- Advance Health Policy
- Advanced Family Nursing Theory I & II
- Family Nurse Practitioner II & III Seminar and Practicum

Honors & Awards

- 2012 Nurse Practitioner of the Year
- 2009 Campus Compact President's Good Steward Award (N.H.)

Academic Philosophy

“My philosophy reflects my belief that every learner is unique and multidimensional. Effective teaching requires that educators actively listen to their students, becoming aware of the experiences that shape and influence their lives.

Approaching students from a holistic perspective permits understanding of individual and diverse learning styles. As an educator, I see my role as helping students actualize their educational objectives by guiding them in their attainment of knowledge and skills.”



Joyful children in Affiniam, Senegal follow Rivier nursing students to welcome them to their village.