

# NHS Supports Academic Growth at All Levels

Rich Learning, Research Environment Fosters Advancement

By Bill Cessato

**Colleen Norton** still remembers the urgent phone call from Paris.

Eight years ago—soon after 9/11—a young woman, who had been teaching English as a second language in the French capital, reached out to Norton, an associate professor of nursing.

After the horrific attack, the ESL teacher decided to change the course of her life by entering the nursing profession.

The student contacted Norton about Georgetown's accelerated "second-degree" nursing program, which allows college graduates who have a bachelor's degree or higher in another field to earn a bachelor's degree in nursing in 16 months.

"I read all of the admissions essays for the second-degree students," Norton said. "Various factors cause students to reassess their direction. Sometimes it's a life-altering event. In this student's case, the significance of 9/11 prompted the change."

Norton noted that the student graduated *summa cum laude* and then completed a master's degree in the school's family nurse practitioner program.

"Talk about growth," Norton said. "That's a perfect example."

Across NHS, faculty members engage students at various points along the educational spectrum—from high school youths to post-doctoral research fellows—to inspire personal and professional growth.

"Health care tops the national agenda," said NHS Dean **Bette Jacobs**. "Our educational programs and research centers underscore its importance for individuals at all levels of educational development. We give students and those individuals who are just beginning their careers the tools they need to lead the profession in its many dimensions."



Pathways to Success encourages high school students to flourish in the health sciences. Here, the 2009 group gathered in front of Healy Hall.

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**—J.P. Hyatt**

**Sparking an Early Interest**

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 Each year, NHS collaborates with a variety of pipeline programs to encourage high school students to enter the health professions, including the National Native American Youth Initiative and the Ventures Scholars Program.

An annual flagship program is Pathways to Success.

Since 2002, the Department of Human Science has hosted the three-week, on-campus program for high school students from rural and underserved areas of the country.

Program faculty and staff aim to cultivate within those students an interest in health, science, and tech-

nology, as well as guide them through the complex world of higher education, including applications and financial aid.

Since its inception, the program has blossomed. After several years of underwriting from The Goldman Sachs Foundation, Pathways recently secured a more than \$1 million grant from the federal Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA).

A number of Pathways graduates have earned Gates Millennium and Quest-Bridge scholarships to use toward their college pursuits. Overall, the program has worked with about 125 high school students and faculty mentors.

“Pathways students take college-level courses for Georgetown University credit that they can use at the university they ultimately choose to attend,” said J.P. Hyatt, assistant professor of human science who is principal investigator on the HRSA grant. “Having this experience helps the students to convince colleges that they can handle college-level work and helps them remain competitive with peers who have had access to Advanced Placement coursework.”

With the new HRSA grant, Hyatt said the effort can continue growing in innovative ways.

Ideas include formalizing a mentorship initiative among current and



High school students from the National Native American Youth Initiative visited NHS in June 2009 to learn more about careers in health, medicine, and science. They met with NHS Dean Bette Jacobs, a member of the Cherokee nation, and her husband Joseph Jacobs, a member of the Kanawake Mohawk tribe who is associate medical director at Abbott Laboratories.

## The Undergraduate Experience

former Pathways students; using social networking Web sites such as Facebook to stay in touch with the students when they are back home; developing a programmatic evaluation tool; and examining “intergenerational closure,” a concept that looks at educational outcomes through the lens of the relationship parents have with their child’s friends’ parents.

“HRSA has traditionally had an interest in rural areas of the country,” Hyatt said. “Pathways to Success is a perfect fit.”

### The Undergraduate Experience

NHS houses four academic departments that prepare students to become leaders in the diverse facets of the health care industry. The departments are Health Systems Administration, Human Science, International Health, and Nursing.

In the past decade, admission to NHS has grown increasingly competitive. Quality indicators mirror the other schools at Georgetown. Students are ready to grow as Hoyas.

This year, for example, the NHS undergraduate selectivity rate was 21 percent, the average class rank was in

the top 4 percent, and the SAT range of admitted students was 640-730 in critical reading and 660-740 in math.

Once enrolled, undergraduates have access to a range of dynamic learning opportunities that help them grow throughout their four years on the Hilltop—everything

### NHS Bachelor’s Degree Programs

NHS has an undergraduate selectivity rate of 21 percent, which mirrors the selectivity of the other schools at Georgetown. The SAT range of admitted students is 640-730 in critical reading and 660-740 in math. The average class rank is in the top 4 percent. Majors include:

- Health Care Management & Policy
- Human Science
- International Health
- Nursing

from faculty-student research collaboration and innovative international experiences, to internships and service activities.

For **Joan Burggraf Riley** (NHS'76, G'97), assistant professor of nursing and human science, the uniqueness of Georgetown is that it meets students "where they are" in life and helps them discover and develop their special talents.

"At Georgetown, we create many opportunities that examine elements of what makes students grow," Riley said. "NHS faculty is particularly gifted at helping students find their niche, their passion."

Riley is one of the campus faculty leaders on the Bringing Theory to Practice Project, which incorporates mental health and wellness topics into university-wide coursework. Through this national educational project and her own teaching, she strives to help students recognize their particular strengths and then use that understanding for their personal growth.

"Students are more than ID numbers at Georgetown," Riley said. "They are valued as individuals with unique goals and gifts. Our faculty is committed to helping students culti-



NHS Professor Jennifer Huang, Bernhard Liese, chair of the Department of International Health, and NHS Professor William McGreevey attended a meeting at the Bureau of Health in Shanghai during the new four-week academic program they ran for undergraduate students, some of whom are seated in the background.

vate those. We create the conversation about the many opportunities before them as undergraduates and allow them to set informed goals."

**Jennifer Huang**, associate professor of international health, uses her extensive research portfolio on HIV/AIDS in China to promote public health, as well as her students' learning opportunities.

This past summer, Huang,

**William McGreevey**, associate professor of international health, and **Bernhard Liese**, chair of the Department of International Health, conducted a new four-week, six-credit program at Fudan University in China.

The three offered two courses, "Political Economy of Health and Development" and "Changing Disease Patterns in China: An Applied Epidemiology Perspective." Students from NHS, Georgetown College, and the School of Foreign Service participated.

Huang also regularly includes undergraduates in her research.

"We want to involve undergraduate students in our research," she said. "They receive a unique perspective by watching the entire process of a research project—from literature reviews and planning, to field research, to writing manuscripts and publishing. We need help on all of these steps."

The school, including Huang's

## NHS Master's Degree Programs

Several graduate programs at NHS are nationally ranked by *U.S. News & World Report*. All graduate programs include:

- Acute Care Nurse Practitioner
- Acute and Critical Care Clinical Nurse Specialist
- Family Nurse Practitioner
- Health Systems Administration
- Nurse Anesthesia
- Nurse Midwifery/Women's Health Nurse Practitioner
- Nursing Education



Each year, NHS Professor Pablo Irusta (left) leads a dynamic translational health science internship in Argentina for Georgetown undergraduates who wish to develop further their skills in laboratory and clinical research.

**“We want our students to leave here with the ability to run a health care organization, to think critically, and to act ethically.” —Bernard Horak**

department, offers epidemiology courses geared specifically toward undergraduates. That helps the students navigate their many research opportunities.

“Researching along with faculty gives the undergraduates a touch of reality,” she said. “Not everything we do will be as we planned in the proposal. The students learn how to handle the unexpected. They witness the real process. This will be invaluable to them as they embark on their studies and research projects.”

### Graduate-Level Growth

At a different point in their educational journeys, individuals decide to advance their careers and pursue graduate studies at NHS.

Both the graduate nursing and health systems administration programs are ranked nationally by *U.S. News & World Report*.

The nurse anesthesia program is ranked sixth, the nurse midwifery program is 21st, the overall nursing program is 32nd, and the health systems administration program is 30th.

**Kathryn Ellis**, who directs the family nurse practitioner program, credits a variety of factors with the growing interest in her program. The total enrollment for the program has increased considerably over the past years.

First, with the declining number of primary care physicians in the United States and the national focus on health care reform, nurse practitioners are poised to play a larger role in the country’s health care system, she said.

Second, the program features a low student-to-faculty ratio, an excellent pass rate on the certification boards, an innovative use of simulation technology and standardized

patients, and a wide variety of clinical experiences that include working with underserved populations in the Washington, D.C., region.

“Our students are professional and well-prepared to step into the important role of nurse practitioner,” Ellis said. “They approach health care from a holistic viewpoint—caring for the whole person. They are trained to take care of patients across the lifespan—from infancy to geriatric patients.”

Ellis said that the program supports students to grow into the responsibilities associated with advanced practice.

“FNP students move into the role of primary health care provider and are responsible for the diagnosis and management of acute and chronic conditions, prescribing medications, and referring patients to specialists,” Ellis said.



NHS Professor Kathryn Ellis directs the family nurse practitioner program at Georgetown. She extended her clinical expertise by providing primary care during a service trip to Honduras.

“Sensitive and skilled mentors such as Professor Ellis make such growth possible,” said Jacobs, the NHS dean.

Training leaders within the health care system is the fundamental goal of the master’s degree program within the Department of Health Systems Administration.

The program focuses on the economic, policy, social, and technical forces that shape health care and is built around three key themes: understanding the hospital and its complexities, quality of care, and leadership development.

**Bernard Horak** serves as director of the department’s graduate program. He said the program features a strong executive mentoring program, extensive professional development opportunities, an ongoing analysis of current events—such as health care reform—that tie to the students’ academic study, and a requirement for community service and involvement in a professional association.

“I believe we have the best mentoring program in the country,” Horak said. “We partner incoming students with a health care executive mentor as soon as they enter the

program. From the very beginning, our students work with these senior leaders who open doors for them at the highest organizational levels.”

Horak said that the program builds upon the profession’s code of ethics, as well as Georgetown’s Catholic, Jesuit identity to create a values-based approach to health care. **The Rev. Philip L. Boroughs, S.J.,**

the university’s vice president for mission and ministry, offers the graduate students their very first lecture in the program. His topic: Jesuit values and health care.

“We want our students to leave here with the ability to run a health care organization, to think critically, and to act ethically,” Horak said.

### The O’Neill Fellows

A new crop of young minds has joined NHS thanks to the Center for Disease Prevention and Health Outcomes—the school’s center within the O’Neill Institute for National and Global Health Law.

Since joining NHS in February 2008 as the center director, **Jeff Collmann** has built bridges with faculty across the university’s campuses to tackle wide-ranging health issues.

Collmann and Jacobs, the NHS dean, have recruited several new research fellows and junior faculty who recently completed doctoral programs and are growing in their

### NHS Research Centers and Initiatives

- **The Center on Health and Education** supports health equity and educational excellence worldwide. **Craig Ramey** and **Sharon Ramey**, center directors, are distinguished international researchers in the field of child development.
- **The Linda and Timothy O’Neill Institute for National and Global Health Law**, which NHS jointly founded with Georgetown University Law Center, brings together health and law scholars to address diverse international health problems using the instrument of the law. **Jeff Collmann** directs the **Center for Disease Prevention and Health Outcomes**, the NHS center within the institute.
- **Values Based Health Care** efforts are led by **Laura Anderko**, who serves as the Robert and Kathleen Scanlon Chair in Values Based Health Care. Anderko, who is a public health expert, specializes in environmental health nursing.



From left to right: Jeff Collmann, director of the O'Neill Institute's Center for Disease Prevention and Health Outcomes, along with new O'Neill fellows and faculty LeManuel Lee Bitsoi, Mohammad M. Obaidat, and Tamar Klaiman



From left to right: Benn McGrady (L'09) and Bernhard Liese, chair of the Department of International Health, met as part of their collaboration to address global health governance through the O'Neill Institute.

academic careers through their work on the institute's innovative projects. They include:

- A member of the Navajo nation, **LeManuel Lee Bitsoi** was recruited from Harvard and is affiliated with the Department of Human Science. His recruitment strengthens the O'Neill Institute to examine a unique aspect of genomic science education with indigenous populations.
- **Mohammad M. Obaidat**, also

aligned with the Department of Human Science, brings his expertise as a veterinarian and food microbiologist to the ongoing issue of food safety.

- **Tamar Klaiman**, who holds her doctorate in public health from Temple University, has joined the Department of Health Systems Administration and is among a group of faculty and staff who are working on emergency preparedness, including a research collaboration with Harvard.
- And Australian **Benn McGrady (L'09)**, whose doctorate examined the relationship between the law of the World Trade Organization and the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, is working within the NHS Department of International Health on global health governance.

The team also includes **Amanda Liddle**, assistant professor of nursing who is working on health care workforce issues, and research assistants **Jason Roffenbender** and **Mikhaila A. Richards**.

"The O'Neill Institute presents these young scholars with an opportunity to work with the very finest legal and scientific minds in Washington, D.C., where health policy and law are made," Collmann said.

## NHS Funding Sources

The research portfolio at NHS is funded by several sources, including:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Health Resources and Services Administration
- National Institutes of Health
- U.S. Department of Education
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs