

A photograph of the Rush University building, a modern multi-story structure with a curved facade and large glass windows. The word "RUSH" is visible on the upper part of the building. The sky is blue with some clouds.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

RUSH UNIVERSITY

ABOUT RUSH UNIVERSITY

Rush University College of Nursing (RUCON) has a long history of education excellence based on the solid foundation of the Rush Model of Nursing created by its first Dean, the legendary Dr. Luther Christman. Since 1972, more than 7,000 baccalaureate, master's and doctoral students have graduated from RUCON. The first bachelor's and master's degrees were awarded in 1975, the first doctor of nursing science degree was awarded in 1980 and the first practice doctorate was awarded in 1990. Current nursing programs are offered from the master's through the doctoral (DNP and PhD) levels. The generalist entry master's (GEM) is the prelicensure program for entry into RN practice.

The US News and World Report consistently ranks RUCON programs among the top "America's Best Graduate Schools". The most recent report for 2021 ranks the Adult-Gerontology Nurse Practitioner (Acute Care) and the Adult-Gerontology Nurse Practitioner (Primary Care) second among the nation's graduate programs. Such rankings could not be accomplished without the dedication of faculty who combine their advanced clinical practice experience with innovative teaching strategies to educate the next generation of gerontological nurse practitioners. Three of these faculty, Drs. Inventor, Lamb and Miller, were recognized in 2018 by the Hartford National Center of Gerontological Nursing Excellence as Distinguished Educators in a Gerontological Nursing Program.

Since 2010 the Rush Nursing Center for Aging and Health (RNCAH) housed within the College of Nursing (CON) has been comprised of faculty from the CON and other disciplines from the Rush University Medical Center who have expertise in aging.

RNCAH faculty currently care for older adults in their homes, community settings, hospitals, and long-term care settings including hospice services. They also provide educational support, consultation and resources to professionals who provide care for older adults. Two RNCAH faculty are currently conducting NIH-funded clinical trials. Dr. Paun and her team are testing the effects of an online-delivered chronic grief management intervention with dementia family caregivers whose family members reside in long-term care. Dr. Holloway and her team are testing the effects of a physical activity intervention on older women's cognition.

In 2017, aligned with the CON's Strategic Plan, we created the Gerontology Nurse Scholar program tailored for pre-licensure nursing students with a passion for working with older adults and an interest in pursuing a career in gerontological nursing. The program's purpose is to inspire, mentor and ultimately develop a cadre of generalist gerontological nurse scholars. The scholars are matched with faculty who provide tailored mentorship in the areas of gerontological nursing practice, research and education over the students' final year in the program. Students and gerontological nursing faculty meet as a group every other month and more frequently on an individual basis. Each scholar is expected to select a topic related to the care of older adults for their capstone projects. In addition, scholars' participation at gerontological-focused conferences is encouraged and financially supported.

To date, ten Rush CON graduates successfully completed the program and six are currently enrolled and working with their faculty mentors. Several of these scholars were hired as research assistants on the ongoing clinical trials to gain hands-on experience in data collection.