College of Health and Human Services – 20 Year Anniversary

VFTH

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Growing needs in the health care industry prompted WKU to establish a separate college for health and human services twenty years ago.

Amy Bingham takes a look at the growth of CHHS in this week’s View from the Hill.

In 2002 WKU took a more targeted approach to best meet the demand for professionals in health related fields. Twenty years later, the founding dean and the current dean reflect on the College of Health and Human Services.

“I really think the college was just poised for success because it had the right recipe, had the right people in place.”

Founding Dean John Bonaguro spent thirteen years overseeing tremendous growth within the College of Health and Human Services.

“Expanding nursing, as I mentioned, was always important, the doctorate of nursing practice was a key need in the community and also starting the doctorate of physical therapy which took it’s first class in 2013.”

Also in 2013, the Health Sciences Complex opened which is where both programs are housed.

“The community support was so strong for us. You know Connie Smith over with the Medical Center, Tom Pennington with the Physical Therapy program. Those were some key people but many more too.”

Today CHHS is home to seven academic units, five departments and two schools, Nursing and Allied Health and Kinesiology, Recreation and Sport.

It’s also been WKU’s largest college since 2012.

“We continue, for the last decade, have been producing at least 1200 graduates every year so we’re somewhere between 25 and 30 percent of the graduating students every year.”

CHHS was one of the first colleges to offer a Living Learning Community and now has seven of them located in the First Year Village.

“We have three in Nursing and we have a CHHS Living Learning Community that’s for any majors as well as Exercise Science and Social work.”

Dean Basta says it’s a concept that’s already proven to increase retention.

Positioning CHHS to produce even more graduates in the future.

“All of these students are learning here in Bowling Green and most are staying here locally and filling the gaps that we have in health care.”

CHHS is hosting a twentieth anniversary dinner tonight at the Eva and Jim Martens Alumni Center where three graduates will be recognized as distinguished alumni.

With this week’s View from the Hill, I’m Amy Bingham.

This fall CHHS launched a Student Wellness Experience to address student needs post pandemic.

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