



Mercy Awarded \$3.2 Million Grant *to Support Nursing Students with Financial Need*

In the fall of 2020 Mercy College was awarded a prestigious \$3.2 million grant to support nursing students with financial need through a Scholarships for Disadvantaged Students (SDS) program. The grant was awarded by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) — which is part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services — to 86 colleges and universities nationwide, only three of which are in New York State.

The goal of the SDS Program is to support students with financial need in graduating with a B.S. in nursing and then working in medically underserved communities — which are defined as areas or populations that have too few primary care providers, high infant mortality, high poverty or a high percentage of elderly people. Ultimately, the SDS grants aim to increase the diversity of health care professionals and improve health care in communities of need.

“This program may be the difference between some students being able to successfully earn their degrees and having to leave Mercy because they don’t have the financial resources,” explained Susan Moscou, Ph.D., the director of Mercy’s SDS Program and associate professor of nursing.

The grant enables Mercy to provide partial scholarships to cover tuition, fees and textbooks in order to support approximately 50 students in Mercy’s traditional nursing baccalaureate program per year for the next five years. Moscou and the nursing faculty will also identify and secure additional services if needed, such as tutoring, advising, coaching and access to mental health services. In return, students in the program will conduct their clinical rotations in medically underserved communities or in facilities that serve patients from medically underserved communities. The hope is that at least 75% of these students choose to continue remain in these communities after graduation.

“Many of our students come from medically underserved communities, so they have already seen firsthand the disparity in the level of health care services and resources,” said Moscou. “This program gives us the opportunity to educate them about the need for nurses to go back to the communities they came from. The data shows that patients want to see providers who look like them and that health outcomes do improve when this is the case.”

Furthering that point, HRSA stated that one factor for issuing the grant for the SDS program is due to many groups continuing to be underrepresented across the health professions and that this lack of diversity is considered detrimental to patient care.

“This program may be the difference between some students being able to successfully earn their degrees and having to leave Mercy...”