

Nursing

CHAPTER XIX

At the close of World War II there was much interest in broadening the source for nursing education in the United States. The war had proved that we did not have the necessary supply of nurses to serve the needs of this country. This was just as true in time of peace. One of the solutions suggested by the many nursing associations was a junior college professional course. This was also a source suggested by the the United States Navy for solution of its needs; Lt. Cmdr. Howard O. Johnson pushed this program in the early 1950's.

At this time, President Chaffee was entering the national field as a junior college educator and in 1950 was elected President of the American Association of Junior Colleges. By 1951 he had been selected to represent junior colleges in the north-west on the National Commission of Accrediting. This commission had asked him to act as the chairman of an ad hoc committee to study the inclusion of junior colleges in the total nursing program of the nation. He met with officers of the national nursing and accrediting groups, urging these professional organizations to enter an all inclusive college accrediting commission.

Probably the greatest incentive to developing nursing education came from Columbia University in New York City, working with the National League of Nursing. The University, under the leadership of Dr. Ruth Montag, had worked out a two-year nursing education program for junior colleges. About the same time that it established this program, Mr. J. F. Marvin Buechel, President of Everett Junior College in Washington, left that institution for Columbia to get his doctorate. He was encouraged to make his study a continuation of what Dr. Montag had done; in fact, by the time he finished his graduate study from Columbia, he was asked to head the program for junior colleges in that institution and to be the consultant for the National League for Nursing.

Buechel had been a personal friend of President Chaffee for almost a decade when he left Everett to go to Columbia and the two had worked closely together in both the Northwest and American Associations to upgrade junior colleges.

Another important factor in the nursing program at Boise Junior College was that a member of the College Board of Trustees, Don Daly, was also a prominent member of St. Luke's Hospital Board in Boise. That organization had a special study made by James A. Hamilton Associates, hospital consultants from Minnesota. Mr. Daly told the College Board of Trustees of the findings regarding the hospital's nursing program. In their study the consultants had stated, ". . . if the present rate of deficit is continued at St. Luke's, the deficit for 1954 in nursing education alone will exceed \$35,000,"¹ and they recommended ". . . that the school be transferred to Boise Junior College and that the College assume the burden of expense. The hospital would then become affiliated with the College and would provide the clinical experience. Hospitals that are so affiliated have found that this reduces the loss but does not completely eliminate it . . ."²

The report also indicated that nursing training was gradually going from private hospital sponsorship to public tax sup-

port. All of these factors finally led to the consideration of this by the College Board of Trustees. It adopted a resolution on August 24, 1954 that a study be made regarding the possibilities of the College initiating a new program in lieu of the one now being closed at St. Luke's.

The trend all over the country was the closing of a great majority of private nursing education institutions connected with hospitals. In Idaho at that time, four of the seven training institutions had closed and there was a question of where the state would get the nurses to staff its hospital units.

On December 14, 1954, the Board of Trustees directed President Chaffee and Dean Conan E. Mathews to prepare a report containing a proposed course of study and cost for same, of a three-year training school for nurses. On February 18, 1955, Don Daly and Dean Mathews were appointed to bring definite recommendations to the board concerning the nurses' training program. This they did on March 13, 1955, reporting to the Board and President Chaffee on that date.

In the meantime, Chaffee had met with nursing associations and the Ada County and Boise City Medical Association and had been urged to go ahead with the nursing program due to the critical state of nursing education in Idaho. As a result of these activities, the College Board approved a three-year program on March 21, 1955 and on June 30, hired Miss Florence Miles as Supervisor of the Nursing Education Program at Boise Junior College.

The College was indeed fortunate in its selection of Miss Miles since she not only had an R.N. certificate from St. Luke's Hospital, but had also received her Bachelor of Science degree in nursing education and her master's degree in the same subject from the University of Washington. She acquired an excellent reputation in nursing education and her services were requested in many areas of the West where new departments of nursing were being established. She knew how to work with students and what was even more important, to understand the attitudes

of other nurses who had the same basic nursing education that she had, but lacked the special degrees in this field.

During this period of time, Emma Bowen, who had her Bachelor's degree in nursing, was teaching in the Life Science Department of the College and was asked to evaluate this proposed program. Just prior to the selection of Miss Miles, Mrs. Bowen had been selected as Executive Secretary of the State Board of Nurses Registration and Nursing Education. At the present time she is Director of Nursing at St. Luke's and has given her complete support to the College program in nursing. This was absolutely necessary since the hospital was the only available laboratory for the College's nurses training.

The recommendations from the study made by Columbia University on nursing education were that the program should be limited to two years rather than the three-year type hospital program that St. Luke's had had and that if the various non-educational duties required of nursing cadets were eliminated, more actual instruction could be given in the two-year period than was usually given in the three-year hospital courses in many sections of the United States.

The program was slow in maturing because of opposition from some nurses and doctors to any change in the method of educating nurses and both tact and patience were required to establish the new two-year program in most sections of the United States. In most of the three-year programs in the Northwest in the first half of this century, nursing education was merged with the use of the student nurses to furnish a labor supply for the hospitals. As a result, many young women would drop out of the program because they resented the drudgery and the domination they had to accept. Miss Florence Miles understood this background and adjusted the program at Boise Junior College accordingly. She had the patience and sympathy necessary to bring about the complete program.

There has never been a standardized educational process for the nursing profession. There are, for instance, one-year,

two-year, and three-year programs in nursing and of course, degree programs such as are given at universities. Within each of these classifications there have been widely different methods and much individualism in the nursing education process. This has shown up too in the organizations over the nation. Just a few years ago, there were seven different national nursing associations; each one trying to speak for the nursing profession. Fortunately, these have been narrowed down to one.

This variation has been less pronounced at Boise College due to the fact that it has had one director of nursing education during its 15 years of existence. There has always been the problem of securing adequate instructors; this is true not only at Boise, but all over the nation. Two of the instructors besides the director, have each been with the College for over ten years.

The College has been fortunate in the evaluations that have taken place here, not only through the National League of Nursing and the Sealantic Projects, but also through visits by outstanding critics of nursing education usually from the nursing profession.

Clinical facilities for the nursing program have increased a great deal in the last few years. Until 1965, St. Luke's Hospital furnished most of the clinical space, assisted in the summer by State Hospital South. In recent years, this has been expanded to include St. Alphonsus' Hospital, the Veteran's Administration Center, the Elk's Rehabilitation Center, and State Hospital South, as well as some nursing homes in Boise and the City-County Health Unit.

The number of freshmen students admitted to the nursing program has varied over the 15 years from 17 to 74. The greatest single increase came in 1965 when it increased some 40 percent and it has increased since that time at a gradual rate. More than 120 young people are currently enrolled in this program, 90 of these are freshmen, some ten of whom are young men.

¹Report on St. Luke's Hospital nursing program by James A. Hamilton Associates. August, 1954.

²Ibid.