



Widener University

Dean, School of Nursing

During a time of significant growth and momentum, Widener University seeks a new Dean of the School of Nursing to serve as a visionary leader for the future of nursing education as well as a passionate champion of the School's talented faculty, staff, and students. The Dean will be a collaborative, creative, and strategic leader who is energized by the opportunity to develop new programs and modes of delivery that will serve even more fully the needs of the University, the profession, and society as a whole. In building these new initiatives, the Dean will be pleased to find Widener to be a remarkably collegial environment, with supportive and collaborative colleagues found across all divisions and levels of the School and the University.

Recognized as a Center for Excellence by the National League for Nursing for the second time in 2017, Widener's School of Nursing offers a full range of programs, from Bachelor's to Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.). Widener's location twenty minutes outside the City of Philadelphia allows students and faculty to engage readily with a wide range of nearby institutions for clinical and research partnerships, as well as practice their profession in the service of the local community. Given its breadth of programs, academic quality, and urban location, Widener is poised for even greater future success at the forefront of nursing education.

The University

Since its founding in 1821, Widener has undergone multiple transformations to become a selective, nationally ranked, doctoral university. Today, Widener offers bachelor's, master's and doctoral programs, as well as certificate programs, to 3,591 undergraduates and 2,811 graduate students across three campuses and online.

Widener's distinctive collection of programs reflects its foundational belief that the liberal arts and sciences and professional/pre-professional programs are mutually reinforcing. The University is proud to embrace the following seven schools and colleges:

- College of Arts and Sciences
- School of Business Administration
- School of Engineering
- School of Human Service Professions
- School of Nursing
- Delaware Law School (in Wilmington, DE)
- Commonwealth Law School (in Harrisburg, PA)

In addition, Widener has developed innovative interdisciplinary offerings, including a pioneering graduate program in Human Sexuality and innovative programming offered by the Oskin Leadership Institute.

Widener University's main campus in the City of Chester is located just off I-95 and is only twenty minutes from Philadelphia, the nation's sixth largest city and home to world-class art, culture, sports, entertainment, and history. The main campus sits on 110 acres and has benefited from \$220 million in new construction and renovations over the past decade.

The University also offers programs on its two other campuses, which are located in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania and Wilmington, Delaware. The Harrisburg campus serves students from the School of Nursing as well as students enrolled in Widener's Commonwealth Law School. Nursing students on the Harrisburg campus may currently pursue the Family Nurse Practitioner program, and future offerings on that campus may include additional undergraduate and graduate nursing programs. The Wilmington campus is home to Widener's Delaware Law School.

Mission and Values

A Commitment to Academic Rigor and Student Success

At the heart of a Widener education is the transformation of its students into scholars, leaders, and globally engaged citizens. Its faculty, supported by staff and administrators, meet this goal in several ways. A 12:1 student/faculty ratio allows for close interactions between faculty and students and facilitates experiential learning. Newly constructed buildings, such as Founders Hall and Freedom Hall, provide state-of-the-art facilities for a number of academic programs.

The richness of the student experience goes much further than a broad array of academic programs, up-to-date facilities, and small class sizes. Widener places the University's values – experiential learning, community engagement, and career preparation – at the center of every program offered. A solid liberal arts and sciences core is the foundation for all undergraduate programs. These values are complemented by leadership programs that help students develop competency, character, and courage. At the graduate and professional levels, challenging and engaging classroom work is combined with real-world experience offered in a multitude of clinics and cooperative ventures sponsored by the University. Throughout their studies, undergraduate and graduate students have opportunities to collaborate with faculty in cutting-edge research projects. A robust, donor funded summer undergraduate research program continues to grow each year.

The University is committed to the highest levels of academic rigor. Widener's Social Work program was ranked as the top online social work graduate program. Commonwealth Law School has been named as one of the nation's top 20 schools for government law and top 5 for bar exam preparation. The graduate physical therapy program was ranked among the nation's top 40. The School of Business Administration rates among the top 75 schools for financial planning and the School of Engineering ranks as a top 100 engineering program in the country among universities with undergraduate and master's engineering programs. And since 2013, the School of Nursing has been designated as a Center of Excellence for Advancing the Science of Nursing Education by the National League for Nursing.

A Commitment to Civic Engagement

Widener's civic engagement is known, valued, promoted, and lived by senior administrators, faculty, staff, and undergraduate and graduate students alike. Through its leadership and conviction to work *with* and *in* the local community, Widener has created an environment of service and a willingness

to engage in partnership. This environment is enhanced by and reinforces the academic rigor and focus on student transformation that is at the heart of the Widener mission.

The Widener Partnership Charter School (WPCS), the state's first university-sponsored charter school, offers a holistic curriculum for grades K to 8; it has proven pivotal to increasing students' academic achievement within the local district. The University supports the charter school by providing management support, access to university facilities, and administrative assistance for fundraising. The management support includes both strategic and day-to-day technology support. In turn, WPCS provides learning opportunities for Widener students in Education, Social Work, Clinical Psychology, Physical Therapy, and Nursing. Graduates from WPCS who meet criteria for admission to Widener University are guaranteed a generous financial aid package.

Widener has received national recognition for its achievements in civic engagement and service learning. The University has been placed on the President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll for six consecutive years, including as a President's Award finalist in 2013. In addition, The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Learning selected the University for its "Community Engagement" classification, a distinction it earned through its sincere and extensive commitment to service within the local and global community.

A Commitment to Leadership Development

With leadership development as a strategic goal, Widener established the Oskin Leadership Institute in 2011. The Institute aims to inspire students to be strategic leaders and responsible citizens who possess the character, competencies, and courage to affect positive change throughout the world. The Institute offers a certificate program and minor for undergraduates, special classes for selected high school students from the area, campus-wide lectures from distinguished scholars and corporate leaders, support for faculty and graduate student research on leadership issues, and leadership training for corporate executives.

Other leadership development initiatives include Organizational Development Services, a program supported by faculty and students in the joint Psy.D. and M.B.A. programs who provide executive coaching to campus administrators, student leaders and regional corporate executives.

University Leadership

For over 25 years, Dr. Julie E. Wollman has been a passionate, fearless and effective advocate for higher education. She is the 10th President of Widener University, a role she assumed in January of 2016. Guided by a relentless pursuit of excellence, she has articulated a clear vision and distinct goals for the University that are focused on providing an unparalleled student experience.

Dr. Wollman leads with enthusiasm, authenticity, and a respect for others that draws people together. Since her arrival at Widener, Dr. Wollman has introduced a community-wide listening initiative and established transparent and regular communication through traditional and social media. In an effort to maximize the potential of the university's programs and people, Dr. Wollman also engaged in a review of all initiatives for financial sustainability and mission-relatedness, in order to enhance their effectiveness.

Prior to joining Widener University, Dr. Wollman served as president of Edinboro University of Pennsylvania where she focused on academic excellence, faculty and staff development, and high-impact learning practices for all undergraduate students. Dr. Wollman significantly increased Edinboro's enrollment, retention, and student body diversity. She also established Porreco College, a highly successful partnership between the University and business community to improve workforce development and workforce readiness. During her tenure, Dr. Wollman increased private fundraising by 40%.

Dr. Wollman has held academic leadership positions at Wheelock College, Worcester State University and Rhode Island College. Dr. Wollman earned her undergraduate degree from Harvard University, her master of science in education from the University of Pennsylvania, and a doctor of philosophy in education from New York University.

On May 9, 2017, Dr. Wollman announced the appointment of Dr. Dale Scalise-Smith as provost of the university. Since taking over as the University's chief academic officer in August, Scalise-Smith has set out to lead Widener to achieve the highest levels of academic success with Widener's students as her top priority. In the months and years to come, she will be a central figure in implementing the University's strategic plan and will play a key role in Widener's continued evolution as a vibrant, thriving university that delivers high-quality academic programs across a diverse range of fields and platforms.

Scalise-Smith came to Widener from Northern Kentucky University where she served as Dean of the College of Health Professions. Prior to that, she spent nearly 20 years at Utica College in central New York, where she started as chair of the Department of Physical Therapy. She moved up to serve as Dean of the School of Health Professions and Education, followed by Vice President of External Programs and Partnerships, and finally Vice President of the School for Online & Extended Studies and External Partnerships. She began her academic career at Temple University in 1992 after spending 11 years working in physical therapy. Scalise-Smith holds a bachelor's degree from Northeastern University, a master's degree and Ph.D. from the University of North Carolina and a Doctor of Physical Therapy degree from Utica College.

Strategic Plan

After an inclusive, collaborative, and transparent planning process, the University's Board of Trustees approved the Vision 2021 strategic plan in May 2014. Vision 2021 outlines the University's goals through Widener's bicentennial. The arrival of President Wollman in January 2016 has inspired a fresh look at Vision 2021. She anticipates that the Provost and deans will work collaboratively to bring the strategic plan to fruition.

As the strategic plan reads, by 2021 Widener University will be a leader among metropolitan universities in promoting student transformation and success through:

- Rigorous academic expectations and high-impact educational practices that support intended learning outcomes.
- A dynamic campus environment that immerses students in meaningful curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular experiences.

- A culture of leadership that inspires students, faculty, and staff to have a positive influence on their workplaces, professions, communities, and the world.
- A diverse university community that champions a culture of respect, civility, and inclusivity.
- Scholarship by faculty and students that enriches learning and advances knowledge within and across disciplines.
- Civic engagement that furthers the university's national and global leadership in educating engaged citizens and in contributing to the vitality and well-being of the communities we serve.
- Institutional agility and Innovation that make the university attractive, accessible, and sustainable.

About the School of Nursing

As a School dedicated to excellence in both the clinical and scholarly aspects of nursing education, Widener is particularly proud to have been re-designated by the National League for Nursing (NLN) as a Center of Excellence in Nursing Education for 2017-2021. Widener is one of only a handful of Center of Excellence designees with a focus on Advancing the Science of Nursing Education, a particularly meaningful distinction given the School's mission. This award recognizes the School's sustained excellence in faculty development, nursing education research, student learning, and professional development.

Academic Programs

The School of Nursing currently enrolls 1,040 students, with 776 at the undergraduate level and 212 enrolled at the graduate level. Thirty full-time faculty offer six distinctive degree programs, an impressive breadth and depth of program options:

- Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN);
- RN-to-BSN or RN-to-MSN;
- Master of Science in Nursing degree with specialization as a Family (Individual Across the Lifespan) CRNP, as an Adult-Gerontology Clinical Nurse Specialist, or degrees in Nursing Education or Executive Nurse Leadership;
- Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP); and,
- Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

Widener offers these programs in a variety of formats and modes of delivery. The full-time, accelerated BSN program offers evening and weekend classes, labs, and clinical experiences for transfer students who have completed the general education and prerequisite courses. With the exception of the traditional BSN programs, Widener allows part-time study in all nursing degree offerings. The RN-to-BSN is completely online, allowing working students to access classes at a time most convenient for them through use of Internet-based learning technologies. Many of the master's courses and all of the DNP courses are offered in a hybrid format, blending on-campus meetings on the Harrisburg or Chester campuses with Internet-based technologies.

All of the School's programs earned reaccreditation with the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education in 2016-2017, and are not scheduled for another review until 2026-2027.

Scholarship

A particular point of pride within the School and the University, the [Widener Leadership Center for Nursing Education Research](#) builds on Widener's longstanding commitment to excellence in nursing education research and the preparation of academic nurse educators through its nursing education-focused MSN and Ph.D. in nursing programs. Developing the science of nursing education (i.e., the evidence base and methods of inquiry used in nursing education research) is of prime importance to nursing students, nursing faculty, and ultimately, to the health of individuals, families, and communities. The Center seeks to advance the science of nursing education by conducting rigorous educational and educational-clinical research, providing expert research consulting services to constituents within the nursing and nursing education community, and offering faculty development programs for aspiring, new, and mid-career nursing education researchers.

Faculty

Widener's 30 full-time nursing faculty are student-focused educators who bring extensive experience as clinicians, educators, and scholars to the classroom. The School offers an 8-to-1 student-to-faculty ratio for undergraduate nursing laboratory and clinical experiences. The faculty have also developed a collaborative culture around research and provide each other with feedback and support through a formal scholarship support group. In August 2017, more than a dozen of Widener's nursing and physical therapy faculty presented papers at the [Sigma Theta Tau International Nursing Research Congress](#) in Dublin, Ireland. Widener's nursing faculty are open to partnering across disciplinary lines as well, and the School is at the forefront of Inter Professional Education (IPE). Faculty members from various health disciplines across the University collaborate around issues of student learning and preparation, research and grants, and clinical applications in the community.

Students

Enrollment in the School of Nursing has grown steadily over the past five years, and the Class of 2020 includes 192 first-year nursing students. Widener's National Council Licensing Exam (NCLEX) pass rate was 85.96% for the year of October 1, 2015 through September 30, 2016. Students can choose from a wide range of clinical experiences available at community agencies, including the school's own community-based clinic, as well as hospitals throughout the Greater Philadelphia region. Service learning, an important component in many undergraduate and graduate courses, provides students with the opportunity to collaborate with people in the community to meet their identified needs. In addition, leadership development is integrated throughout the undergraduate curriculum, with all students participating in a seminar with Widener's Oskin Leadership Institute during the first year and a core leadership-focused course in the senior year.

Facilities

The School of Nursing is located in a newly renovated building in the heart of the campus. Opened in 2011, Founders Hall is also home to the [Center for Simulation and Computerized Testing](#) which boasts nine state-of-the-art simulation rooms including a pediatric suite, maternity suite, two nurse practitioner rooms, a simulated apartment, trauma suite, health assessment lab, and hospital lab.

Role of the Dean, School of Nursing

The Dean will report to [Provost Dale Scalise-Smith](#) who joined Widener in July 2017 from her role as Dean of the College of Health Professions at Northern Kentucky University. The Provost's academic background in physical therapy and experience in developing health-oriented online and external programs both at Northern Kentucky University and Utica College make her a particularly valuable colleague for the new Dean. Together with Associate Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies and Extended Learning Kim O'Halloran and the other academic deans, the new Dean will work creatively and collaboratively to ensure that all programs offered by the School of Nursing continue to be of high academic quality, aligned with the needs of the profession and the world, and delivered in ways that are convenient and accessible to today's students.

In addition to leading the approximately 30 full-time faculty and 1,040 students within the School, the Dean also oversees the following direct reports:

- Associate Dean, Academics
- Associate Dean, Scholarship & Inquiry
- Director, Center for Simulation Lab
- Director, Community Relations & Clinical Placement
- Director, Community/Civil Engagement
- Director, DNP Program
- Director, FNP Option
- Director, MSN Program
- Director, PhD Program
- Coordinator, Clinical Nurse Specialist Option
- Coordinator, Executive Nurse Leadership
- Coordinator, Nurse Educator Option
- Coordinator, RN/BSN/MS Option
- Assistant Dean, Harrisburg Campus
- Assistant Dean, Undergraduate Student Services

The new Dean will be pleased to learn that the culture both within the School and across the University is markedly collegial and collaborative. The Widener community seeks a Dean who will continue to foster this positive and inclusive culture, in which faculty, students, and staff are mutually supported to perform at their best in the service of the University, the profession, and society as a whole.

Opportunities and Challenges

As the University continues to grow and evolve, the new Dean will have the opportunity to address the following priorities within the School of Nursing:

- **Leading the development of an authentic and effective strategic vision for the School.** The Dean will bring a compelling understanding of the landscape and future direction of nursing education to the development of a clear strategic plan for the School. The Dean will do so by leading an inclusive, transparent, and informed strategic planning process that will unite the many strengths of the School into a holistic and actionable plan.

- **Assessing Widener's current academic programs and developing new ones to address the changing needs of the profession and the nation.** The Dean will be both imaginative and pragmatic, able to design and launch major initiatives on a quick timeline while assessing each one carefully for financial sustainability and mission fit. In keeping with the pace of change in healthcare and the nature of Widener, the next Dean must be nimble, creative, and willing to take measured risks in order to build innovative programs and experiment with new modes of delivery.
- **Serving as a passionate advocate, both internally and externally, for the School of Nursing.** The Dean will work to raise the profile of the School regionally and nationally and will champion the excellence of its faculty, staff, and students to a wide range of external constituencies. The Dean will also be able to share the strengths of the School in a compelling and persuasive way with potential friends and partners. Internally, the Dean will strike the appropriate balance between advocacy for the School with the need to collaborate with other Deans as well as many other programs and offices across campus as a collegial, team-oriented partner.
- **Maintaining and strengthening even further the School of Nursing's wonderfully diverse, inclusive, positive, and supportive climate.** The School of Nursing takes pride in its strong sense of community and its welcoming culture. The new Dean will be expected to embrace and embody these shared values both personally and professionally. The School's culture is mirrored at the University level as well, as Widener is among a select group of institutions nationwide to receive an *INSIGHT Into Diversity* magazine 2016 Higher Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) Award.
- **Continuing to support the development and success of faculty at all stages of their careers.** The School of Nursing is proud of its outstanding faculty members, who have strong records of accomplishment in teaching, scholarship, and citizenship in the community. The next Dean will serve as a champion and mentor to colleagues as they grow as teachers, scholars, and academic leaders at Widener and will develop processes to best support their advancement within the School and the field.
- **Managing the School's enrollment growth effectively, while maintaining its existing high standards for academic quality and student support.** The new Dean will work collaboratively with the enrollment office and fellow deans to continue recruiting and enrolling a strong, diverse class of students. At the same time, the Dean will continue to monitor the academic success of all nursing students, and examine ways in which the curriculum and student services can be even better aligned to support their success.

Desired Qualities and Characteristics

The Dean will have earned a Ph.D. in nursing or a closely related field and have a record of scholarship and service that merits appointment as a tenured full professor at Widener University. In addition to being an imaginative and collegial leader, strong candidates will also bring many of the following qualities, skills, and experiences to the role:

- An entrepreneurial and energetic approach to academic leadership, and an insightful sense of the current landscape and forces impacting the future of nursing education and the nursing profession;
- Experience working collaboratively with diverse constituencies to develop and implement a strategic vision;
- The creativity and passion to generate new programs and ideas coupled with the organizational and administrative skills to bring them to fruition;
- An understanding of how to evaluate and assess academic programs across a wide variety of programs and platforms, and familiarity with a variety of instructional models, ranging from in person to online to hybrid;
- An inclusive approach to leadership, coupled with the ability to make decisions respectfully, courageously, and with high levels of integrity;
- A willingness and natural inclination to connect with a wide range of external partners and audiences in order to further elevate the profile of the School regionally and nationally and to attract friends and resources in support of its mission;
- A demonstrated commitment to fostering and maintaining the School's positive, supportive, diverse and inclusive culture for all faculty, staff, and students;
- Excellent interpersonal and listening skills and high emotional intelligence;
- Demonstrated budgetary and personnel management skills and the ability to use data to make evidence-based decisions;
- A natural ability and desire to build trusting relationships with faculty and to facilitate shared governance; and,
- A personal leadership style that harmonizes with Widener's collegial and collaborative campus culture.

Contact

For best consideration, nominations, applications, and queries should be sent in confidence to:

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