

SC hires endowed nursing chair made possible by Whitney Benefits endowment

FROM STAFF REPORTS

SHERIDAN — Sheridan College has hired Marlene Ethier, a leader in nursing and nursing education with more than 25 years of experience, to take the reins as the Endowed Nursing Chair.

The nursing chair position was made possible by an endowment from Whitney Benefits in 2008.

The creation of the position strengthened the partnership with the University of Wyoming, allowing SC nursing students to earn their bachelor's degree without leaving Sheridan.

"I'm elated to join Sheridan College's nursing program in this unique position," Ethier said. "The partnership between Sheridan College and the University of Wyoming is serving as a model for the other community colleges around the state."

As chair, Ethier will serve as the liaison to UW, advising, mentoring and facilitating opportunities to enhance the educational experience of students and level of health care in Wyoming.

"Having Marlene on campus is the ideal complement to Sheridan College's comprehensive nursing program," said Trudy Munsick, dean of health sciences. "This position has proven to be a catalyst in helping students achieve bachelor's degrees and significantly impact the delivery of health care in the local workforce."

A 2011 study from the Institute of Medicine suggests the

portion of nurses with four-year degrees be increased to 80 percent by 2020, up from 37 percent in 2008.

"At Sheridan College, we are at the forefront of that challenge, teaming with the University of Wyoming to provide higher education to nursing students and continuing education opportunities to practicing nurses," Ethier said. "The community and region can be proud of our nursing graduates and the level of preparation they have received. We will uphold that track record of excellence, as our nursing graduates continue to make a difference."

Ethier earned her bachelor's degree from the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, before earning her master's degree from the University of Wyoming in 1993.

She began her career in nursing education in 1989 at Western Wyoming

Community College in Rock Springs and later took over as director from 1999-2013.

Under her leadership, the WWCC nursing program grew from 48 students to 80.

In May, Ethier was named the 2014 Distinguished Alumna for the Fay W. Whitney School of Nursing at UW. She was honored at the school's convocation this spring.

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