

CIRCLE CONVERSATIONS

July 2026

T

hanks to help from our RBJ Women's Health Fund and the Nightengale Fund, the Pittsburg State University School of Nursing has created and maintains a world-class simulation hospital. Most nursing departments have simulation labs, which consist of stations with simulation "patients," for students to practice on. Pitt State, on the other hand, has a whole hospital setting so that student nurses learn how patient care should be conducted from the time they open the patient's door. This is similar to what is offered by facilities at very large teaching hospitals nationwide.

As part of the original outfitting of the simulation hospital, which opened in 2023 under the leadership of Cheryl Giefer, the Rita Bicknell fund helped the school purchase a whole human patient simulator that can be programmed to react in ways similar to real patients. The simulator answers questions and physical reactions in response to actions on the part of the student nurses.

The Nightengale Fund was established by the RBJ Women's Health Fund to support to long-term sustainable projects. This year, Amy Hite, the current chair of the School of Nursing, requested backing from this fund for the first time. The request had two parts.

The first was for an Auscultation Mannequin, which consists of a robotic "torso". The advantage of this equipment is that it runs silently, unlike the full-size simulator, whose motor sometimes interferes with students' ability to hear sounds with their stethoscope.

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Grants In Action

PSU nursing students interact with a simulated patient during class.

Coming Up

- **September: Coffee and Conversations for Breast Cancer Awareness Month - Tuesday, Sept. 15 at Pitt Cafe (Ron's Supermarket) @ 8:00 am**
- **September Cont.: WHF Grant Applications Available + Annual Contributions Due**
- **October: Grant Review Meeting - October 20th**
- **November: Grant Celebration - Nov. 4 + Match Week - Nov. 9-13**

Also requested were 20 otoscope and ophthalmoscope sets for students to use. These are used to diagnose ear and eye problems, respectively. Previous versions allowed only one student at a time to view inside the ear, whereas the new ones show images on a screen that can be viewed by multiple people simultaneously, allowing the instructor to point out pertinent features.

The School of Nursing at Pittsburg State serves students from all over the nation and beyond. One hundred and sixty incoming Freshmen have declared nursing as their major for this fall, and well over one hundred graduated last May. These students experience a 100% placement rate, with many graduates having had multiple job offers. They are hired by all the local hospitals, and many are now employed by prestigious institutions like KU Med.

PSU offers multiple nursing-related degrees, both undergraduate and graduate, and is the only degree at the University that can boast a doctoral degree, which is required for those who wish to become nurse practitioners or focus in leadership. The doctoral degree is a practice degree, like medicine and the law, rather than the research degree that is pursued by those seeking a PhD.

-Maew Cummings



Spring 2026 Coffee and Conversations at TOAST in Pittsburg

The Fall 2026 WHF Coffee and Conversations event will be Tuesday, Sept. 15 at the Pitt Cafe in Ron's Supermarket at 8:00 am.

Registration will be sent out closer to the event.

The Fall 2026 WHF Grant Review will be Tuesday, October 20th starting at 9 am.

Click Here to Join
(or renew)

or scan with your smartphone:



"Being a member of the Rita J Bicknell Giving Circle is an opportunity to impact women's healthcare and the lives of others in our region. When women pool their resources and knowledge to help others, everyone wins." - Kathy Stuckey



The Rita J. Bicknell Women's Health Fund is a part of the
Community Foundation of Southeast Kansas

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