

January 17, 2017

Harold Alfond Foundation Gives \$1.5 Million Challenge Grant For Saint Joseph's College's Center For Nursing Excellence



Saint Joseph's College has received a \$1.5 million challenge grant from the Harold Alfond Foundation to support the creation of a new [Center for Nursing Excellence](#) on its Sebago Lake campus in Standish in order to address current, critical shortages in Maine's nursing workforce. As of 2017, the number of Maine nurses who are retiring or about to retire will rise greatly; research shows that 43% of the aging nurse workforce will retire, while 74% of nursing faculty have already reached a retirement cliff. In partnership with the lead investment from the Alfond Foundation, the Saint Joseph's College Center for Nursing Excellence responds directly to these needs. The Alfond Foundation challenge grant provides the keystone element of SJC's planned Center—state-of-the-art SIM Laboratory nursing facilities.

“The Harold Alfond Foundation is delighted to provide this \$1.5 million challenge grant to launch the new Center for Nursing Excellence at Saint Joseph’s College. We are confident that the outstanding faculty, staff and leadership of Saint Joseph’s College will use our grant to further strengthen Maine’s workforce of nurses, who are so critical to quality healthcare,” said Greg Powell, Chairman of the Harold Alfond Foundation and President and CEO of Dexter Enterprises, Inc.

About the five components of the Saint Joseph’s College Center for Nursing Excellence:

- Expansion of the College’s longstanding on-campus and online nursing education program from BSN and MSN degrees to include Doctor of Nursing Practice and Acute Care Nurse Practitioner programs;
- Expansion to five cutting-edge SIM laboratories (hospital and home-care settings);
- Renovation and enhancement of Anatomy & Physiology, and Microbiology labs, used by nursing majors;
- Expansion of nursing scholarship opportunities for Maine students;
- Creation of a Nursing Advising And Collaborative Learning Center, an entire floor dedicated to students needs—includes advising offices, a conference room, and a collaborative learning space.

During the announcement event, with over 600 students, faculty, and staff in attendance, Greg Powell elaborated, "The winning qualities we seek in charities are strong leadership, entrepreneurial spirit, and high returns on our dollar. We see these qualities on full display here at Saint Joseph’s College. The leadership is outstanding, the vision for the future of the College is bold and promising, and the faculty and staff are outstanding. This is a college in good hands. In light of challenges facing higher education, Saint Joseph’s College is not standing still. You have rolled up your sleeves, taken your future in hand, and gotten to work with a vision both strategic and inspiring. While we have long known that grants to Saint Joseph’s College are good investments, what we have recently identified is that Saint Joseph’s is poised to expand key academic programs that are critical to our economy and to our healthcare economy, in particular.”

Reactions to the Announcement



Photo L to R: Joanne Bean, SJC Vice President & Chief Advancement Officer, Jim Dlugos, Saint Joseph's College President, Greg Powell, Chairman, The Harold Alford Foundation, President and CEO, Dexter Enterprises, Inc., Jeanne Arnold, SJC Board of Trustees and Chair of the Alford Challenge, and Travis Cummings, Executive Vice President at Dexter Enterprises, Inc.

“Without the ‘place’ and the ‘programs’ to deliver and enhance nursing education, dedicated nurses—both those who are still students, and those who are already practicing but need further education—are limited in their potential. That is why the Alford Foundation grant is so incredibly important. Saint Joseph’s College has the dedicated faculty. It has students who have committed their lives to the nursing profession. It has a wonderful educational foundation to build upon—but now, for the sake of these nursing students, for the sake of nursing, and for the sake of healthcare in Maine and nationally—much more is needed. Thank you to the Alford Foundation for launching the momentum through your challenge grant. Your grant gives us the most wonderful surge forward as we seek to raise \$3.5 million to match it,” said [Dr. Jeanne Arnold](#), a nursing alum, member of the SJC Board of Trustees and Chair of the Alford Challenge for The Center for Nursing Excellence at SJC.

Jeanne S. Paquette, Commissioner of the Maine Department of Labor said, “With Maine’s aging population, the need to provide healthcare services for our seniors will

continue to grow. It is critical that we support in-state programs such as the Center for Nursing Excellence at Saint Joseph's College to ensure that we have a strong, growing, well-trained workforce to meet these needs."

U.S. Senator Angus S. King, Jr. said, "As one of Maine's largest educational providers for first-time and practicing nurses, you have consistently provided quality education and created opportunity in our state. This well-deserved grant is a welcome step towards increasing the number of caregivers and resources to address the health issues facing Maine."



Saint Joseph's College President Dr. James Dlugos said, "Every college can look over its years of existence and point to a small number of times when a momentous event literally changed its life forever, and after which nothing would ever be the same again. I am happy to say that today is one of those special watershed moments for Saint Joseph's College. Receiving a grant from Maine's largest and most prominent foundation is a mark of distinction because it demonstrates the Alford Trustees' faith in the College's leadership, strategic direction, and value not only to Maine students, but as a vital part of Maine's identity and economic well-being. This Alford donation pertains to far more than the nursing program; this gift will have a major impact on the entire campus as the Center for Nursing Excellence entails renovation of Mercy Hall, one of the cornerstones of our campus and academic community."

[Dr. Anthony McGuire](#), a Nurse Practitioner and Professor and Chair of the Nursing Department at Saint Joseph's College said, "We are very excited about the new Center for Nursing Excellence that this grant is going to help us create. It is exactly what Saint

Joseph's needs—and what Maine needs. The care aspect of nursing goes hand-in-hand with how Saint Joseph's is service-oriented and faith-based with core values of community, compassion, and social justice. We are one of the largest nursing programs in the state, one which has a proud track record of producing nurses who are complimented by their employers for the quality of their clinical practice with patients. Our goal is to become a premiere program in the state that helps meet the growing need for healthcare professionals, specifically filling the critical need for acute care nurse practitioners that the State needs."

In one of the most humorous moments of the ceremony, Greg Powell recalled the story of how, in 1997, when Mr. Alfond was deciding on his first investment in the college (what became a gift to build the Alfond Center), "...it was not just the beauty, promise, and quality of Saint Joseph's College that helped make up his mind, it was the College's secret weapon: Sister Joyce Mahany and her apple pie." Powell related how Sister Joyce, RSM, (Hon. '09) overheard that Harold Alfond loved apple pie; she baked pie after pie, and with everyone, "it made Mr. Alfond love Saint Joseph's even more." Sister Joyce Mahany sat in the front row of the 600-person celebratory event this week and, once again, presented the Harold Alfond Foundation with one of her famous homemade apple pies.

About Saint Joseph's College

Founded in 1912 by the Sisters of Mercy in Portland, Maine, Saint Joseph's College is Maine's only Catholic liberal arts college, providing a supportive, personalized and career-focused education for more than 100 years. Saint Joseph's College moved to Standish in 1954, eventually occupying a 474-acre campus with 2,123 feet of Sebago Lake shoreline. From the shore of Sebago Lake, the College offers more than 40 undergraduate programs and a Division III athletic program to a population of approximately 1,000 on-campus students. Saint Joseph's College Online provides certificates, undergraduate and advanced degrees for thousands more working adults worldwide through an online learning program. In 2015 the College was selected by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching to receive its Community Engagement Classification, highlighting the College's focus on community service throughout its mission and daily interactions on campus and within the local, regional, and global communities.

Saint Joseph's College is one of the largest educational providers for Maine's nursing workforce. There are currently 294 [BSN majors](#) in Saint Joseph's on-campus program and 60% of these are from Maine. Overall, the College's nursing program currently enrolls 1,226 students--on-campus and [online](#) combined-- and maintains 652

partnerships with nonprofit and corporate entities nationally, including 46 health care organizations in Maine. Saint Joseph's College educates large numbers of both first-time nurses and practicing nurses who need further credentials. In 1972 Saint Joseph's was among the first distance education providers, introducing the BS in Professional Arts to regional nurses needing a bachelor's credential. In 1974 the on-campus BSN was approved, followed by the BSN distance option in 1985. Saint Joseph's College serves large numbers of Maine students (Maine students comprise 62% and 26% of on-campus and online enrollments, respectively), 50% of whom have family incomes below \$50,000. Last year Saint Joseph's students from Maine received \$17.3 million in financial aid, including \$10.4 million to nursing students.

For more information, visit [Saint Joseph's nursing program](#).
[View more photos](#) | [Watch the video of the announcement](#)

- See more at: <https://www.sjcme.edu/about-us/news-and-events/news-listing/harold-alfond-foundation-gives-1.5-million-challenge-grant-for-saint-josephs-colleges-center-for-nursing-excellence/#sthash.GGrERKnV.dpuf>

