



CREIGHTON COLLEGE OF NURSING

# **The Center for Faculty Innovation, Research and Education (FIRE)**







## Fueling the FIRE

The Center for FIRE was sparked by a simple observation: Our faculty and students have great ideas, and we must do everything we can to nurture them. To kindle the flames.

My visionary predecessor, former College of Nursing Dean Catherine Todero, PhD, RN, BSN'72, launched FIRE to address the evergreen obstacle of keeping our talented educators at Creighton. Our field is a competitive market, and it can be challenging to recruit faculty away from the bedside and keep them in the classroom. We must always ask ourselves: *What makes them come here? What makes them stay?*

With the College of Nursing continually seeing the largest freshman classes in its history, these questions are more vital than ever. Because nothing leads to student retention like *faculty* retention. FIRE is a pivotal part of this, a way to support our incredible nursing and paramedicine faculty in all facets of their development, teaching and research as they pass the torch to a new generation.

Through FIRE funding and donor-supported opportunities, our faculty and students are fully engaged in cutting-edge research across multiple fields: palliative care, population health, health equity, behavioral health, precision health, leadership, clinical performance and such education innovations as distance simulation, AI and more.

Creighton's College of Nursing is the perfect home for an effort like FIRE because our faculty, students and alumni are, more than any community I have encountered, motivated by doing good for others. Doing *more*. That's why they come here. That's why they stay.

We must give our nurses and paramedics—the educators and the educated alike—the means to forge new paths, make new discoveries. FIRE lights the way forward.

In the following pages, you will see both what the Center for FIRE has made possible and what you can do to further fuel its growth. With your support, you will make one of the most exciting initiatives at Creighton burn brighter than ever.



Thank you,

Jessica Clark, DNP, RN  
College of Nursing, Dean





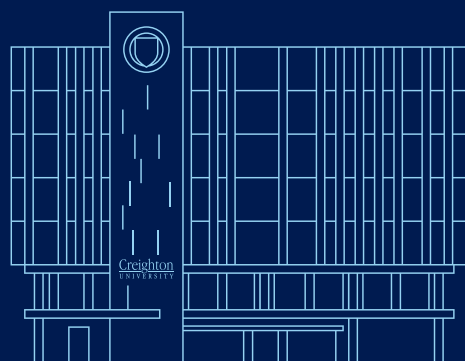
## The Center for Faculty Innovation, Research and Education (FIRE)

Since its founding in 2020, the Center for FIRE has blazed a brilliant new trail for our nursing and paramedicine faculty and students, creating a caliber of opportunities that didn't previously exist. FIRE has forever changed the College of Nursing, igniting a culture of research and innovation that now fuels every aspect of the excellent education for which Creighton is known.

### The donor-supported center was established to:

- Support research time and secure seed funding for faculty researchers.
- Focus the expertise of Creighton faculty, regional and national experts and healthcare community representatives on critical issues in the nursing field.
- Foster groundbreaking research studies and educational innovations.
- Infuse the curriculum with research results.
- Develop nursing leaders skilled in research inquiry, interprofessional collaboration and global service.

The end result is a more engaged faculty, greater recruitment and retention of excellent educators and students, advanced teaching techniques, national prominence for the College of Nursing and, most importantly, a steady and perpetual series of discoveries with the potential to benefit nurses and patients *everywhere*.





# The Center for FIRE: Investment opportunities

*Several ways to fuel the FIRE.*

## Endowed Center for Faculty Innovation, Research and Education

✦ **\$9.5 MILLION**

FIRE support currently relies on donors and College of Nursing funds. A gift that endows the center will fund FIRE in perpetuity, providing annual costs for staffing, faculty research awards, visiting scholars, summer programs and stipends for student research and travel.

With your gift, your name would be forever connected to the Center for FIRE and tied to one of Creighton's most innovative endeavors.

## Endowed Faculty Research and Innovation Awards

✦ **\$3.5 MILLION**

These annual awards would provide tens of thousands of dollars each year to support the research of multiple faculty members.



## Endowed Director of Faculty Innovation, Research and Education

✦ **\$2 MILLION**

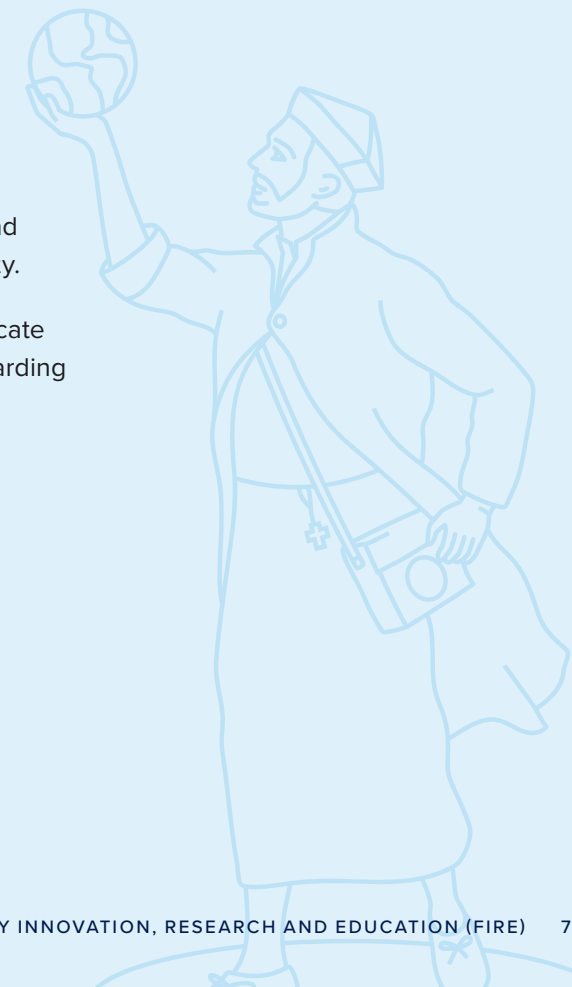
With this endowed position, an exemplary faculty researcher will lead the Center for FIRE, with your name attached to the role in perpetuity.

The annual funds of the endowment will allow the professor to dedicate more time and resources to research, student mentorship and stewarding the many ingenious research projects leading to real outcomes that benefit real patients.

## Endowed Student Research Stipend Fund

✦ **\$1.25 MILLION**

This fund will inspire student participation by supporting the affiliated costs of student research led by nursing faculty. A gift of \$250,000 would support this fund for five years.





# FIRE Investment Opportunities

*continued*

## Endowed SPARK Program

✦ **\$650,000**

In 2023, the College of Nursing launched the SPARK (Students as Professionals Acquiring Research and Knowledge) program to allow students to conduct a research project with a faculty mentor. SPARK, which partners with the donor-supported CURAS (Creighton Undergraduate Research and Scholarship) program, invites nursing and paramedicine students to submit applications for summer research fellowships, with two students accepted each year.

One of the first SPARK scholars, Olivia Manning, and her faculty mentor, Tamara Oliver, PhD, BSN'09, were selected to conduct research on improving the processes for auditing health-acquired pressure injuries at a trauma center in Omaha. The work builds upon the pioneering research of the late Barb Braden, PhD, SJN'66, BSN'73, who created the "Braden Scale" and improved the lives of millions.

With your support, we will grow annual SPARK enrollment to 10 scholars and ensure that this excellent opportunity ignites scientific inquiry for our students in perpetuity. A gift of \$135,000 would support 10 students per year for five years.



## Endowed Student Research Travel Fund

✦ **\$375,000**

This fund would support the travel costs for student researchers. A gift of \$75,000 would support this fund for five years.

## Simulation Innovation

✦ **\$200,000**

Your gift to purchase 100 Oculus virtual reality headsets and the accompanying software will allow more students and faculty to simulate various healthcare environments and scenarios. The headsets will also allow the College of Nursing to further integrate VR into its curriculum and research initiatives.

## More opportunities

✦ **\$1,000 to \$10,000**

The Center for FIRE's activities and scholarship are far-reaching and diverse, as are the opportunities for our donors to invest in these efforts.

A gift of a few thousand dollars could help a faculty researcher purchase the equipment they need to complete a project. A gift of the same size could help a student attend an international conference to present their findings.

Gift by gift, your contributions will raise the College of Nursing's profile, advance the quality of education and experiences we provide our students, and retain some of the finest nursing and paramedicine faculty in the nation.

We want to work with you on the things that set *your* heart on fire.





# Research and Development

Some of the awards granted and research conducted through the Center for FIRE so far.

## DONOR-FUNDED RESEARCH PROJECTS



**Meghan Potthoff**, PhD, APRN-NP, BSN'01 | Professor  
Potthoff, the Keough Family Endowed Chair in Nursing, focuses her research on parents of children with long-term illnesses. She honed her doctoral work into developing a card game called *Pediatric GoWish Together*, an accessible tool that gives parents a way to think and talk about what's most important to them and their child. The game is now widely available to parents and providers.

Potthoff said she views palliative research as an extension of her nursing career. Both have a foundation centered on identifying needs and providing individualized care.

*"I feel blessed by the number of opportunities that donors provide to Creighton researchers seeking new ideas and solutions to better serve our patients," Potthoff said.*



**Misty Schwartz**, PhD, RN, BSN'92 | Assistant professor  
Schwartz led an interdisciplinary team that included an advanced practice pediatric nurse practitioner, dietitian and neonatologist to determine the connections between the nutrition and growth of infants born before full term. The team intends to use their findings to inform parents and providers about ways to prevent childhood obesity.

*"Without donor support, we would be so limited in the type and amount of research we do," Schwartz said.*



**Lucas Manning**, DNP, RN | Assistant professor  
Manning explored the use of simulation as a teaching tool across undergraduate and graduate nursing and paramedicine programs, specifically in caring for patients living in poverty and addressing barriers to health equity. His work focuses on expanding this simulation experience for Creighton students in Omaha and Phoenix.

## OTHER FACULTY RESEARCH PROJECTS:

- Assessing for and treating depression in women with low income.
- Identifying and intervening for human trafficking victims.
- Promoting well-being and reducing burnout for nurse leaders.
- Exploring transitions of care for older adults from a community perspective.
- Managing diabetes in rural populations.
- Promoting validated and reliable competency-based assessment tools.
- Increasing competence in genetic counseling.
- Rural workforce preparation and psychiatric mental health.

## FACULTY RESEARCH AWARDS AND CHAIRS IN THE COLLEGE OF NURSING:

### The Faculty Innovation, Research, and Education (FIRE) Seed Fund

Started by Mary Gloeb Govier, BSN'87.

### The Lenke Endowed Research Fund

Started by Elizabeth Lenke, BSN'86, and Lawrence G. Lenke, MD.

### The Brooks Scholar Research Fund

Started by Ella Stradinger Brooks, PhD, BSN'81.

### Joan M. Lappe, MS'85, PhD, Excellence in Scholarship Award

Started by Dean Jessica Clark to honor Dr. Lappe's legacy.

### Keough Family Endowed Chair in Nursing

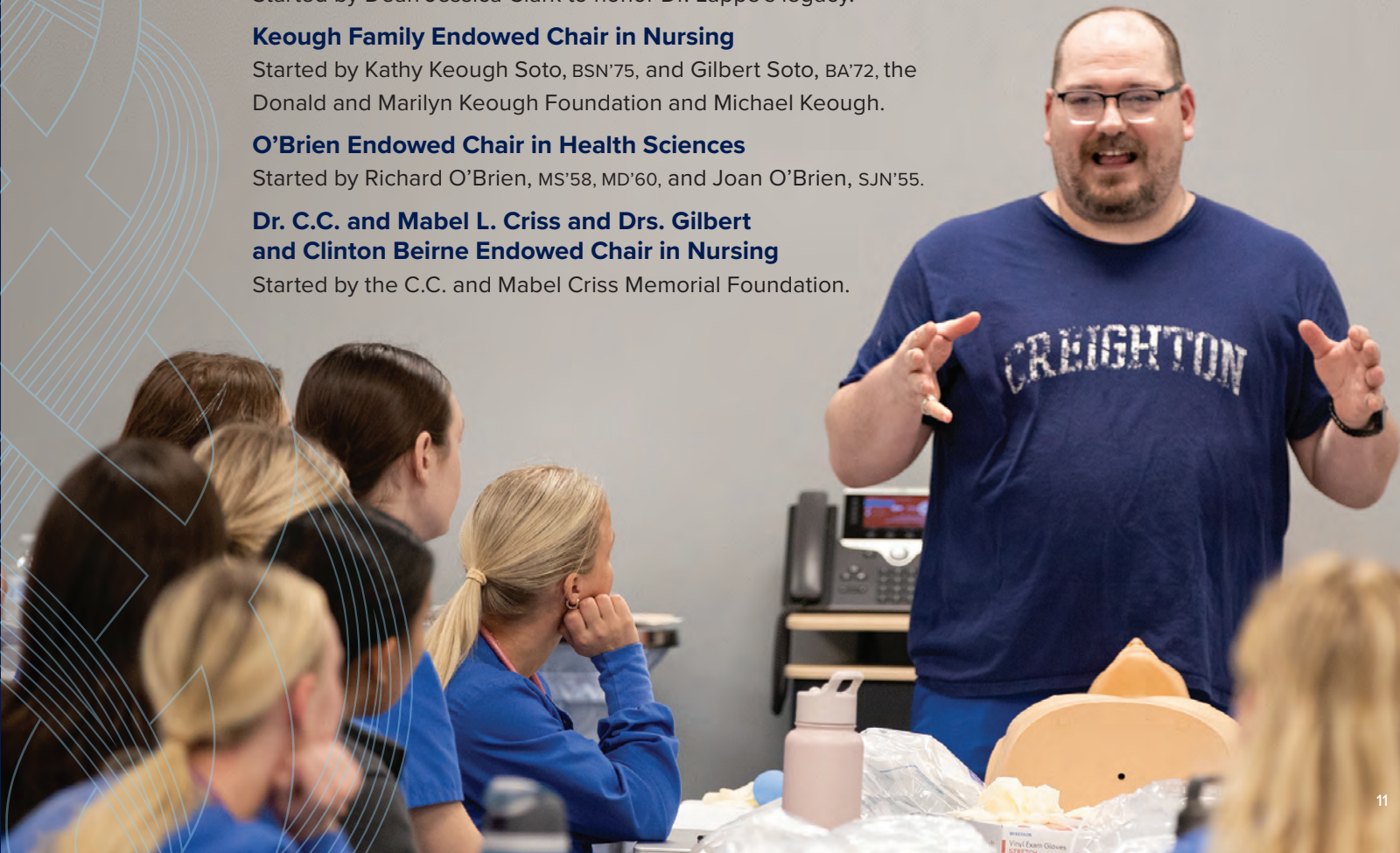
Started by Kathy Keough Soto, BSN'75, and Gilbert Soto, BA'72, the Donald and Marilyn Keough Foundation and Michael Keough.

### O'Brien Endowed Chair in Health Sciences

Started by Richard O'Brien, MS'58, MD'60, and Joan O'Brien, SJN'55.

### Dr. C.C. and Mabel L. Criss and Drs. Gilbert and Clinton Beirne Endowed Chair in Nursing

Started by the C.C. and Mabel Criss Memorial Foundation.





# Going the *distance*

*Giving our faculty the time and space to bridge space and time.*

Amanda Kirkpatrick, PhD, BSN'05, an endowed professor and the College of Nursing's associate dean for research and innovation, is a national leader in distance-based simulation methods. In the early days of the pandemic, distance learning had to advance 10 years in just a few weeks, and Kirkpatrick was sought for her expertise by educators racing to upgrade their teaching models.

Kirkpatrick became an expert out of necessity *before* the pandemic. She wanted to incorporate more distance learners into simulations with standardized patients. She needed not only to bridge the space between students but also schedule the simulations at an hour when all could participate, usually in the evenings. She employed Zoom and other platforms to do so.

In one simulation, the students played a palliative care team to help a standardized

patient with a serious heart condition make a series of difficult decisions. In another, students acted as a hospice care team providing support for a family whose mother was dying. Both scenarios involved learners from Creighton nursing, medicine, physician assistant, dentistry, pharmacy, OT, PT and chaplaincy residents from CommonSpirit Health.

Receiving the aid of FIRE and the Josiah Macy Jr. Foundation, Kirkpatrick took her exploration of distance learning to a new level. These awards gave her the time and resources to develop new scenarios, validate them with experts and pilot them within Creighton's palliative care curriculum.

Kirkpatrick has since created a toolkit for developing such scenarios and conducting them online, which she has shared with her Creighton colleagues and health sciences faculty around the world. **FIRE, she says, made it possible.**



## What, in your own words, is the Center for FIRE?

**Kirkpatrick:** It's an initiative that secures and distributes funds for faculty innovation. FIRE highlights the College of Nursing's superstars. We have such incredible talent, and FIRE gives our faculty the chance to leverage their talent and skills.

## How has the Center for FIRE changed the culture of research in the College of Nursing so far?

I started at the College of Nursing in 2013, and faculty were doing research then, but not at the level of what's happening now. There's more of it now, and it's celebrated to a greater degree, both internally and externally, which generates a lot of excitement for our students and faculty.

Beyond supporting students and faculty, FIRE inspires them to seek further opportunities, such as donor-funded fellowships at Creighton or external opportunities, either of which can help launch them onto the national stage in recognition of their work. This is a universal change to how research is supported and embraced in the College of Nursing, achieved in just a few years.

With further support, we can be doing even more. More faculty conducting more important research that engages more future nurses in

real-world opportunities that prepare them to offer even better care to their patients. FIRE has already achieved so much, yet in some ways, we're just getting started.

## Why is something like FIRE essential to faculty retention and, in turn, the quality of education we can provide our students?

FIRE addresses our mission of innovation, of being leaders, of caring for the whole person. We don't want to see these amazing faculty members leave and continue their great work at another university. We need to show them that the College of Nursing is invested in them and has the resources to back it up. FIRE is one of our biggest, perhaps *the* biggest, faculty retention tools we have.

It's going to be more important than ever. The College of Nursing is growing, and we need to grow our faculty and show them how dedicated we are to keeping them here.

## You recently became the College of Nursing's associate dean for research and innovation. You serve as the co-chair of the nationally renowned Healthcare Distance Simulation Collaborative. You were inducted as a fellow in the American Academy of Nursing, something fewer than 1% of U.S. nurses achieve. You have received multiple donor-funded awards for your research. Is all of this possible without FIRE?

I could not have done this without it and the donors who support our research.

## Do you consider yourself retained by the College of Nursing?

I am *absolutely* retained.





# THE FUTURE OF NURSING

Creighton's College of Nursing continues to grow and evolve in many directions. But however much it changes, our foundations of Jesuit values, empathy and caring for the whole person remain stronger than ever. With your support, we will discover new ways to embrace our greatest strengths and keep at the cutting edge of education.

## MISSION AND VISION

**Our mission** is to educate compassionate leaders who transform healthcare through excellence in practice, scholarship and service. We cultivate lifelong learners in nursing and paramedicine who are dedicated to a healthier world, grounded in Jesuit values and committed to social justice.

**Our vision** is a future where compassionate care, innovative education and scholarly excellence converge to transform healthcare locally and globally. We strive to empower visionary leaders who advance healthcare practice, improve health outcomes, promote health equity and cultivate belonging for all.

## STRATEGIC GOALS

1. To foster a culture of research and scholarship.

2. To create a vibrant learning community with forward-thinking curriculum and teaching.

3. To empower students, faculty and staff to foster inclusivity, discovery and collaboration and promote a positive culture.
4. To leave a lasting footprint in nursing and paramedicine education by recognizing our past, acknowledging our present and guiding our future.

5. To partner with donors to maximize resources that enhance our education, research and relationships with the community.

## BY THE NUMBERS



**13:1**  
**student-to-faculty ratio**



**Nearly 100%**  
of College of Nursing alumni are employed or in a graduate program within six months of graduation.



**8,800+**  
College of Nursing BSN alumni live and work in 22 different states.



**26th**  
**best undergraduate nursing program**  
in the nation (U.S. News & World Report)



## Thank you for reigniting the FIRE.

Because of you, research and innovation will continue to flourish in the College of Nursing. I'm deeply grateful for your investment in our faculty, our students and the future of patient care.

Thank you for keeping the flame alive and thriving.

*Jessica Clark*



# FORWARDBLUE

A Bold Future for Creighton University

Creighton  
UNIVERSITY

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College of Nursing

*Sallie Peters, Senior Director of Development,  
School of Pharmacy & Health Professions, College of Nursing*

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