About the University

Missouri State University was founded on April 17, 1905, when the Missouri General Assembly authorized the establishment of Missouri State Normal School, Fourth District. The first classes were held in June 1906 in off-campus facilities. Tuition averaged $6 per term for the more than 500 students enrolled. Forty acres at the corner of Grand Street and National Avenue were donated by the citizens of Springfield for the new campus. When the first building, Academic Hall (now Carrington Hall), was completed in 1908, the campus moved to its current location. In 1919, Fourth District Normal School changed its name to Southwest Missouri State Teachers College. In 1945, the institution’s name changed for a second time to Southwest Missouri State College, displaying the school’s expansion beyond teacher education to liberal arts and sciences. A residence center was established in West Plains, Missouri, in 1963 for students taking first- or second-year classes. This grew into another campus of the University. In 1972, Southwest Missouri State College changed its name to Southwest Missouri State University in recognition of the diversity of programs at the undergraduate level and development of graduate programs. In 2005, Southwest Missouri State University changed its name to Missouri State University.

In just over 105 years, Missouri State University has grown from a single building at the corner of Cherry and Pickwick to a campus of 163 acres with 40 buildings. Additionally, Missouri State University has Darr Agricultural Center and Jordan Valley Innovation Centers in Springfield; the State Fruit Experimentation Station in Mountain Grove; the Baker Observatory in Webster County; Bull Shoals Field Station; a campus in West Plains; a graduate center in Joplin at Missouri Southern State University; a branch campus in Dalian, China; and a virtual campus that offers educational programs via distance learning technology.

Missouri State University Gains National Recognition

Missouri State University’s commitment has been recognized by its inclusion in the John Templeton Foundation’s Honor Roll for Character-Building Colleges. The Honor Roll recognizes universities that foster a positive attitude, promote community-building values, and encourage their students to explore an individual and moral reasoning process. Missouri State University is among the 6% of the nation’s 2,208 four-year universities and colleges selected for the Honor Roll. The University also is recognized for its community engagement by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, as a Military Friendly School by G.I. Jobs magazine, and as recipient of the 2014 Higher Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) Award. MSU has been recognized by Forbes magazine as one of America’s Top Colleges and received “Best in the Midwest” distinction from the Princeton Review.

Missouri State University Mission Statement

Missouri State University is a public, comprehensive metropolitan system with a statewide mission in public affairs, whose purpose is to develop educated persons. The University’s
identity is distinguished by its public affairs mission, which entails a campus-wide commitment to foster expertise and responsibility in ethical leadership, cultural competence, and community engagement.

The academic experience is grounded in a general education curriculum which draws heavily from the liberal arts and sciences. This foundation provides the basis for mastery of disciplinary and professional studies. It also provides essential forums in which students develop the capacity to make well-informed, independent critical judgments about the cultures, values, and institutions in society.

The Missouri State University campuses are structured to address the special needs of the urban and rural populations they serve.

- Missouri State University-Springfield is a selective admission, graduate level teaching, and research institution.
- Missouri State University-West Plains is a separately accredited open admissions campus primarily serving seven counties in south central Missouri and offering two-year associate degrees.
- Missouri State University-Mountain Grove serves Missouri’s fruit industry through operation of the State Fruit Experiment Station.
- Missouri State Outreach provides anytime, anyplace learning opportunities through telecourses, Internet-based instruction, iTunes U and through its interactive video network.
- The University also operates various other special facilities, such as the Darr Agricultural Center in southwest Springfield, the Journagan Ranch in Douglas County, the Jordan Valley Innovation Center in downtown Springfield, the Bull Shoals Field Station near Forsyth, Baker's Acres and Observatory near Marshfield, the Missouri State University Graduate Center in Joplin and a branch campus at Liaoning Normal University (LNU) in Dalian, China.

About the School of Nursing

Beginning in 1952, the University provided courses for nursing students at St. John’s School of Nursing. In 1963, the University offered a Bachelor of Science degree with a major in nursing to prepare faculty for local schools of nursing. The BS degree was available until the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree was established in 1977.

In the early 1970s, the Administration and the Department of Life Sciences Faculty at Missouri State University assessed the need for an additional nursing program for the Missouri area. Early in the study, the University decided that a BSN-completion program would complement existing nursing programs and best serve the needs of the Southwest Missouri region. Graduates of these programs provided most of the nurses working in the area. Although the American Nurses Association recommended that by 1975 the mix of nurses in the area should
be 60% diploma or associate degree nurses, 28% BSN, and 12% master’s, less than 9% of the nurses in Southwest Missouri had baccalaureate degrees in 1977.

**Development of the BSN-Completion Program**

Based on the identified need for a completion program, the University took steps to assess the resources available to develop a program, including faculty, facilities, and finances. Collaboration with various agency boards, commissions, and health care providers occurred in the early planning phases. In 1976, the BSN-completion program was approved by the University Faculty Senate, and in 1977, by the Coordinating Board of Higher Education.

In 1977, the first majors were accepted into the BSN-completion program (BSN-C). Since its inception, over 500 students have graduated from the program. On December 6, 1982, the National League for Nursing (NLN) Council of Baccalaureate and Higher Degree Programs approved accreditation of the BSN-C program for eight years. Since its initial accreditation, the BSN-C program has maintained continuous accreditation from national accrediting agencies.

The Department of Nursing also moved physically. Initially, the program was offered in a two-story white house at 1030 East Grand (now the site of a parking area). This house contained the departmental office, classroom(s), and faculty offices. The neighboring house provided physical assessment laboratory space. In 1985, the department moved to the fourth floor of the Professional Building (609 East Cherry), and later, in 1989, to the third floor. In the fall of 1997, the department relocated to its current location on the third floor of the renovated Professional Building. With each move, the department gained additional space for faculty, students, and classrooms.

The vision of the department also expanded during the preceding years. In April 1986, the Theta Lambda chapter of Sigma Theta Tau, the International Nursing Honor Society, was established at Missouri State University. Ninety-two RNs were inducted as charter members. Today, the Theta Lambda Chapter includes over 125 members. To meet the educational needs of RNs in outlying areas, courses were offered off campus. The Department of Nursing initiated onsite distance learning programs in West Plains in 1988. In 1995, distance learning sites via interactive video were opened in Nevada, West Plains, Lebanon, and Neosho, Missouri, and Harrison, Arkansas. In 2005, the BSNC program became a totally online program. In 1989, a Health Care Management minor was implemented for both nursing and non-nursing majors.

**Development of the MSN, BSN, and DNP Programs**

The department began planning a 4-year BSN program in 1977. Efforts to initiate the program at Missouri State University were successful in 2001, with the first class admitted in the summer of 2003. The program was approved by Missouri State University and received initial approval by the Missouri State Board of Nursing. In October 2004, all of the nursing programs, to include the new 4-year BSN program, received full approval through the Commission on Collegiate
Nurse Education (CCNE) and remains so today. The BSN also has full approval of the Missouri State Board of Nursing.

In 1990, the department began planning a master’s degree program and admitted the first graduate students in 1996. Students were prepared at the master’s level as Family Nurse Practitioners and Nurse Educators. In the spring of 1998, the first class of master’s degree students graduated. The Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) program received initial NLNAC accreditation in the fall of 1999 and is currently accredited by CCNE.

In 2004, the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN), the professional organization of schools of baccalaureate and higher degree programs in nursing, recommended that all advanced practice nurses be graduates of a doctoral program by 2015, with the DNP as the terminal clinical degree in nursing. This recommendation was ratified by AACN member schools.

The Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) was approved by the University, CBHE, and the Higher Learning Commission. This DNP added the third doctorate offered by the University. Missouri State added the DNP and two curricular pathways to achieve that degree – one for baccalaureate nurses and one for nurses who already have a master’s degree in an advanced practice area. The online DNP post master's DNP program was implemented in the summer of 2012, and the BSN to DNP began in the summer of 2013. The final class of the MSN-FNP graduated in May 2014. CCNE accreditation review is pending for the DNP. The Nurse Educator specialization remains at the master’s level.

In planning for the future of the nursing programs at MSU, the generic BSN faculty began investigating the feasibility of establishing a Simulation Center in 2007. The College of Health and Human Services received a Caring for Missouri Grant in 2009 to establish the Simulation Center on the 4th floor of the Professional Building. A full-time coordinator for the Simulation Center was hired in 2009. The Simulation Center grew steadily to include six (6) high-fidelity manikins and seven (7) mid-fidelity manikins. Simulation is an essential part of BSN education and has been integrated throughout the BSN curriculum.

The O’Reilly Clinical Health Science Center opened in the fall of 2015, providing dedicated nursing classrooms, skills labs, and a simulation center. The skills lab more than doubled the space previously available with individual patient areas containing hospital beds or clinical tables. In addition, the skills lab contains a student learning space with computer and projection capabilities. The simulation center offers an acute care unit atmosphere with six patient rooms and high-fidelity manikins. Each patient room has a separate control station that allows simultaneous learning opportunities to occur. Simulations are recorded for student review and improvement planning. A debriefing room has projection capabilities that allow all students to observe the live simulation and is used during the post-conference for quality improvement.
In 2016 the Department of Nursing was officially changed to the School of Nursing. The School of Nursing has been a leader in simulation experience by working with other programs within the College of Health and Human Services (CHHS). Use of the simulation center by other health-related programs has grown significantly. In 2017 the School of Nursing led the first Interprofessional Collaborative Educational simulation with five programs from the College of Health and Human Services.

The students and graduates remain the strength of the nursing program. Coming from a variety of nursing programs throughout the nation and several foreign countries, students have demonstrated strong academic and nursing abilities. Many of the graduates pursue doctoral education and certification in their areas of specialization. Input from students through committee participation, ongoing feedback (and surveys), and from graduates (through alumni surveys) has helped strengthen the educational process and provide a quality educational program for RNs.

With the expansion and growth of the nursing programs at Missouri State University, the number of full-time faculty quadrupled from a core of 3 to a core of 19, in addition to part-time faculty and graduate assistants. Today, students have the opportunity to learn from faculty prepared with master’s degrees in nursing and doctoral degrees from various universities across the country. Faculty members are actively involved in nursing research, hold leadership roles in professional organizations, maintain clinical skills through nursing practice and continuing education, and are involved in community service.