

September 15, 1989

NEW DEAN OF NURSING FORESEES ADJUSTMENT IN FACULTY

Penny Ericson has been appointed dean of nursing at the University of New Brunswick in Fredericton. Her five-year term began July

Prof. Ericson views her role as dean of nursing as a facilitator, "someone who will help the faculty and the students achieve the highest quality of professional education possible." To attain this level of education, she foresees adjustments in UNB's nursing program to accommodate changes occurring in today's society.

"Today, the emphasis in health care is shifting—people want information on how to stay healthy rather than information focused solely on how to get well," explained Prof. Ericson. "Nurses are an important source of education for this change in lifestyle."

Recognition of the increasing needs of patients

today has also prompted a change in the level of education nursing students will receive. The Nurses Association of New Brunswick recently voted that by the year 2000 the educational level for beginning practitioners will be a bachelor degree. Prof. Ericson will be responsible for modifications to UNB's nursing degree program to assist the nursing profession in meeting these requirements.

As dean of nursing, Prof. Ericson will also oversee the development of a master's program at UNB, which is currently in the planning stage. "Nurses who currently wish to obtain a master's degree must attend a university outside of New Brunswick. A program at UNB would mean minimal disruption to family, home, and professional

responsibilities."

Improvements to the current curriculum, which was introduced in 1975, are also being made. "As nursing education and techniques changed, new courses were added," explained Prof. Ericson. "No courses were correspondingly eliminated, however. We have a suitcase and pack more efficiently for the trip through the program."

Dean Ericson is hoping UNB's nursing students will be excited by the challenge of being part of the nursing profession today and upon graduation, feel confident and comfortable with their abilities to practise as nurses in a variety of settings. In addition to addressing student needs, Prof. Ericson would like to see the nursing faculty have a workload that



would allow more time for conducting research, being creative in their teaching, and taking opportunities to practise professionally.

"We have a very good faculty and student body. There are doors opening in nursing education and in the nursing profession, and I think that we have to be sensitive to the changes and make sure we stay ahead of them," Prof. Ericson emphasized.

Now that she has been appointed to an administrative position, Dean Ericson is interested in

taking the Management Development Program for Women at UNB. She is hopeful it will give her a broader view of the similarities of nursing with other professions. "In nursing, we don't talk about marketing our product, but we do talk about recruiting and retention. I'm trying to sell the skills and talents of nursing and what our profession can do to enhance the quality of life in our society. I think I can learn from other professions and apply their expertise to nursing."

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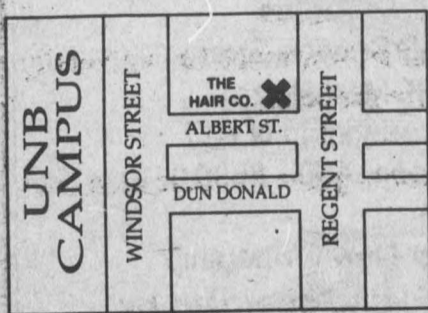
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