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Jefferson College Celebrates Past, Looks To The Future

 Posted by [stephen](#) on Oct 14th, 2010 and filed under [News](#). You can follow any responses to this entry through the [RSS 2.0](#). You can leave a response or [trackback](#) to this entry

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N.L. Bishop is the president of Jefferson College of Health Sciences.

Jefferson College of Health Sciences recently held a reunion for alumni that have graduated from the downtown school with degrees in nursing or allied fields. A lot has changed recently for Jefferson College, including a shift towards four-year

bachelor's degrees and away from two-year degrees, and a move to the Carilion Roanoke Community Hospital building from its former home just down the block on Jefferson.

"The only thing left there is our practical nursing program," said President N.L. Bishop, himself another newcomer – he's been in that position for about six months. That program will soon move to another location across the street, and then Carilion, which operates the school, will decide what it wants to do with the former home of the college.

Carilion Community still operates a physical therapy inpatient wing and an acute care center at the former full service hospital location (all other departments have moved over to Carilion Roanoke Memorial), which means students at Jefferson College have more opportunities for hands on learning.

"We now occupy the vast majority of the Community [Hospital] building," said Bishop, who was a vice president for Carilion Clinic before taking on his new role. There are dorms on the 8th floor, with laboratory and classrooms below that and faculty/administration offices above that.

The move to Community has been in the works for about six years; space on the 5th and 6th floors was "totally demolished" and re-made into learning spaces, according to Bishop. About 1000 are enrolled this year at the school. At the last convocation, when 400 were awarded diplomas.

Several Master's programs are now offered as well in what Bishop calls "the evolution in the life of the college." At one point Lewis Gale and Carilion were jointly involved with the school, but that hasn't been the case for almost a decade now.

"There's a need for having four year degrees," said Bishop about the shift from a focus on two year programs; "nursing is continuing to grow and the expectations [for] registered nurses. It made sense to move in that direction."

Students can perform clinicals at Carilion Roanoke Memorial and Jefferson College attendees will have the opportunity to work with fellow students at the Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine, "rather than waiting [until] their professions to start dealing with each other," said Bishop. "It's all to improve the outcome for patients."

Under a tent at the reunion, former students swapped stories, ate food and listened to live music. Sue Campbell, a physician's assistant who graduated in 2000, heads up the alumni program. "It was basically a new avenue in my life, my second career," said Campbell, who now works for Carilion. "The program gave me a good academic base. It prepared me for a really demanding job – which I love."

A Maryland native, Campbell liked Roanoke so much that she decided to stay here after graduation. "There's a lot of different aspects of my life that [Jefferson College] affected, personally and professionally."

*By Gene Marrano
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