School of Nursing Installs State-of-the-Art Birthing Simulator

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From left are nursing faculty members Shery Watson, Eileen Yost, Pennie Sessler-Branden, School of Nursing Director Mary Alice Donius, Nursing Simulation & Clinical Laboratories Director Beth Boyd and nursing students Christina Sepe and Meaghan Gallagher with "Victoria."

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In its ongoing effort to provide a state-of-the-art education, the Sacred Heart University School of Nursing has acquired a birthing simulator. The mannequin will provide a lifelike point-of-care learning experience for the school's undergraduate and graduate nursing students. Sacred Heart is the first school in Connecticut to use this innovative technology.

Nicknamed "Victoria," the tetherless and wireless unit is part of a family of NOELLE maternal and neonatal care simulators designed and manufactured by Miami-based Gaumard Scientific. Housed in SHU's Nursing Simulation & Clinical Skills laboratories, Victoria has an articulating endoskeleton and smooth elastomeric skin and offers an authentic delivery and birthing mechanism with sophisticated monitoring capabilities. The system includes comprehensive clinical scenarios, including shoulder dystocia and postpartum hemorrhage.

“The laboratories provide students the opportunity to learn and practice in a realistic and risk-free environment. These experiences provide invaluable opportunities to enrich and enhance learning as well as to increase student confidence, and Victoria will be an important component in that mission,” says Beth Boyd, director of Nursing Simulation & Clinical Skills at SHU. “Victoria has the capability of providing innovative and realistic experiences. We are eager to incorporate this latest technology into our School of Nursing curriculum and to provide interactive strategies and engaged learning for our students.”

One of the first students trained with Victoria was Theresa Bertolino, a junior nursing major from Hyde Park, Mass. “Sacred Heart’s goal is to make us as prepared as possible before we’re in a live setting with live patients, with real moms and real babies,” Bertolino says. “To have a mannequin that is realistic is a great resource, a great learning opportunity. I’ve worked on other simulators that weren’t as lifelike, but with Victoria you can do things like hold her hand and make more genuine contact—it gives a lot more opportunities for realistic scenarios.”

John Eggert, Gaumard’s executive vice president, says he is impressed with the depth at which the SHU School of Nursing has embraced the use of simulation in its programs. “We are pleased with the selection of Victoria as a showcase technology in what is a tech-savvy learning environment,” he adds. “While there are other birthing simulators on the market, Victoria has raised the bar to a new standard that reflects our commitment to designing products with input from those who use them.”
SHU’s Nursing Simulation & Clinical Skills laboratories help ensure that new graduates have extensive first-hand experience to quickly, safely and effectively respond to patients in hospitals or other health-care settings. It includes five nursing laboratories with 20 beds and six ambulatory care exam tables and a host of technologies and advanced computerized training systems.