

# **Caldwell Awarded Illinois Board of Higher Education Nurse Educator Fellowship Award**

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GODFREY – Denise Caldwell, assistant professor of nursing at Lewis and Clark Community College, recently received the 2015 Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) Nurse Educator Fellowship Award.

Caldwell, of Granite City, said she is very honored to receive the fellowship, and it is one of the highlights of her career.

She is one of only 22 select faculty members in the state to receive the award.

Fellowship funds are salary supplements that, at the discretion of the fellow, may be used for expenses related to professional development and continuing education.

Caldwell said she believes in the importance of life-long learning and plans to enroll in additional coursework to pursue becoming a certified nurse educator.

She said she remembers her mentors with great fondness, so she decided early in her nursing career she wanted to be like them.

“I enjoy being a nurse and the versatility of the profession. Yet, even as a student I was interested in teaching,” Caldwell said. “There were professors who stood out and genuinely cared about their students. I wanted to be a teacher that made a difference in the lives of her students.”

“Denise is an exceptional faculty member who has a passion to encourage and support her students in both the clinical and classroom settings,” said Donna Meyer, L&C dean of Health Sciences. “She exemplifies the qualities of an outstanding nursing educator. She began her own journey as an associate degree graduate, and understands the challenges nursing students face as they reach their goals.”

Caldwell received her associate degree in nursing from Jewish Hospital College of Nursing and Allied Health, her Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, and her Master of Science in Nursing from McKendree University.

She started at Lewis and Clark as adjunct nursing faculty in 2009 and became a full-time instructor in 2011. Before coming to Lewis and Clark, she was an instructor at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville and a Registered Nurse for BJC Healthcare.

Caldwell said she enjoys teaching at Lewis and Clark because it has a warm, family feel.

“I enjoy the community college atmosphere and the personal attention we are able to give our students,” Caldwell said. “Lewis and Clark has a rigorous nursing program. We are preparing students for the real world of nursing, so I think it is important for me to set the bar high and I do. Yet, it is so rewarding to have a job where your students express their gratitude and become like family—establishing relationships that last long after graduation.”