

Marquette University: Nursing faculty members honored by the American Association of Nurse Anesthesiology at annual conference

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MILWAUKEE — [Dr. Lisa Thiemann](#), clinical associate professor and director of the Nurse Anesthesia Educational Program in Marquette University's College of Nursing, was named the 2023 Program Director of the Year, and [Dr. Jay Tumulak](#), clinical assistant professor and associate director of the Nurse Anesthesia Educational Program, was inducted as a Fellow of the American Association of Nurse Anesthesiology, at the organization's annual meeting, Aug. 18-22, in Seattle.

The Program Director of the Year Award was established in 1991 to recognize a certified registered nurse anesthetist who has made a significant contribution as a program director to the educational process of student registered nurse anesthetists. The award recognizes the individual's commitment to the profession of nurse anesthesiology and to the advancement of educational standards that further the art and science of anesthesiology and result in high-quality patient care.

Fellowship in the AANA indicates a dedicated commitment to the growth and advancement of the profession of nurse anesthesia. Fellows are leading the way for the future of nurse anesthesia with a responsibility to contribute to the AANA, their state association, and to engage with other health care leaders to advance and transform the profession and the health care environment.

"Dr. Thiemann and Dr. Tumulak have consistently elevated our nurse anesthesiology program with their focus on student success and high professional standards," said Dr. Jill Guttormson, dean of the College of Nursing. "We strive to

make a positive difference in the nurse anesthesia field by educating courageous, caring nurse anesthetists, and their leadership has been a catalyst in making that happen.”

Thiemann joined Marquette in 2017 as the first-ever nurse anesthesia program director, and Tumalak came to the university a year later as the program had just admitted its first cohort. This August, the program graduated its third class. Under their leadership, the number of clinical sites for anesthesia students has grown from six to 21.

Thiemann was inducted as an AANA Fellow in 2022 and has served as both the senior director of professional practice and chief practice officer for AANA, as well as chief credentialing officer for the organization’s national certification board, the NBCRNA. This is the first time the Program Director of the Year award has been given to a program based in Wisconsin.

Tumalak previously served as region director and director of education for the Illinois Association of Nurse Anesthetists. He currently serves as chair reviewer for the Council on Accreditation and as an AANA Education Committee member.

The American Association of Nurse Anesthesia is the professional association of nurse anesthetists in the United States. The organization states that it has a membership of more than 59,000, including Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists and student members. Originally known as the National Association of Nurse Anesthetists, AANA has a remarkable history of supporting CRNAs, helping to improve patient care, and advancing the nurse anesthesia profession overall. Milwaukee has a unique connection to the AANA in that the city had the honor of holding the first annual meeting of the AANA (then NANA).