The School of Nursing has had an unsurpassed reputation of excellence for more than one hundred years. It has been a national leader in the advancement of nursing knowledge and the promotion of new trends in health care. The School’s baccalaureate programs include a four-year B.S.N. Program, a Second Career Nursing Program, and an R.N.-B.S.N. Completion Program. At the master’s level, the School of Nursing, through the University’s Rackham School of Graduate Studies, offers advanced study in clinical specialist, nurse practitioner, and management roles. The School’s prestigious Ph.D. and Postdoctoral Programs prepare nurse scientists to develop the knowledge necessary to support and advance nursing practice.
There is no reference to nurses in the official records of the first University Hospital of 1869. When the Hospital was enlarged in 1876, a recommendation was made that two nurses be employed, one male and one female.

In 1891 the University of Michigan Training School for Nurses was organized. This program was established by the Medical School so that qualified nurses could be found to staff the new University Hospital. At its founding the Training School was limited to a student body of eight. The original curriculum consisted of a two-year, non-degree program. In 1902 the Regents extended the basic curriculum to three years. Entrance requirements established by the turn of the century specified that students must be women, between the ages of 22 and 32, of superior education and refinement.

The connection between the hospital and the nursing program was strengthened in 1912 when the Training School for Nurses was reorganized and placed under the direct control of the University Hospital. In 1912 there were about 100 students. In 1915 a first full-time instructor was hired, and the admissions requirement was a high school diploma. In 1919 a second five-year program leading to the conferring of a university degree was established.

Professional nursing education began in the United States in 1873. By 1900 there were 432 schools of nursing operating nationwide.
The Pemberton-Welsh Nurses' Residence opened in 1921 and provided rooms for seventy-five nurses.

“There's a new look among the University's student nurses this fall. Results of the intensive search by a student committee for a new uniform that would best combine charm and convenience are modeled above.” (Michigan Alumnus, 1950-51)
By 1924, 190 nurses were in training. The administrative nursing staff included, in addition to a matron and a dietician, a principal of the training school, a superintendent and an assistant superintendent, a director of the Hospital education department, and two instructors. When the new hospital opened in 1925 the program in the Training School for Nurses was reorganized. The instruction in basic sciences was given by regularly appointed members of the faculties, the instruction in practical medical work by the professors in the Medical School, and the instruction in therapy and practical nursing by the nursing staff. A reorganization five years later provided for one semester’s work on the University campus.

In 1923, U. S. Senator James Couzens gave $600,000 for a building to house student and graduate nurses. The residence was felt to be an indispensable part of the new Hospital. Completed in August of 1925, it provided 250 rooms, mostly singles, accommodating about 260 women. The basement had facilities for instruction, an amphitheater, faculty offices, laboratories, classrooms, an assembly hall, and a game room.

James Couzens 1871-1936, U.S. Senator, industrialist, and philanthropist. Couzens was born in Ontario, Canada and moved to Detroit in 1887. He entered into partnership with Henry Ford in 1903 and served as vice president and general manager of the Ford Motor Company. In 1919 he sold his interest to the Fords for $35 million. As mayor of Detroit from 1919-1922, he installed municipal street railways. He served in the U.S. Senate from 1922-1936. He acted with the Progressive Republicans, advocating high, graduated income taxes and public ownership of utilities. He established the Children’s Fund of Michigan with $10 million, gave $1 million for relief in Detroit, and began a loan fund for the physically handicapped. His support of the New Deal cost him the senatorial renomination in 1936.

In 1926 nursing students met the same admission criteria as students entering the College of Literature, Science and the Arts, although they received their basic science instruction through the Medical School. In 1928 the program’s official title was belatedly changed to the University Hospital School of Nursing of the University of Michigan.

In 1940 there were 177 students in the University Hospital School of Nursing and 198 graduate nurses on the Hospital staff. There were also 146 students enrolled in the courses in public health nursing. In 1941 the Regents established the nursing program as an independent university teaching unit, the School of Nursing. Although recognized as independent, the school’s senior administrative officer was not given the title of dean until 1955. In 1944 it was agreed that the combined course in the liberal arts and nursing should be phased out in favor of a new program leading to a bachelor of science in nursing degree.

In 1952 the curriculum was radically revised. The three-year program was discontinued and replaced by a four-year program leading to a BSN degree. In 1961 the curriculum was expanded to include the school’s first master’s degree in psychiatric nursing. The next year, 1962, a master’s degree program in medical-surgical nursing was begun. In 1967 the school once again extensively revised its curriculum, and the reforms were placed into effect in 1968. In 1967 the school also launched a major continuing education program for practicing nurses, funded through the Michigan Association for Regional Medical Programs. In the early 1970s the school expanded its degree programs by offering for the first time a research-based Ph.D. in Nursing.
The school’s capabilities dramatically increased in 1958 with the opening of a separate building for the School of Nursing, constructed as a part of the Medical Science I complex. By 1970 the school had approximately 1,000 students, one of the largest enrollments in the nation.

The School of Nursing was located for many years in Medical School buildings, but with the increasing focus on graduate education and research, new facilities were needed. In the 1990s a major renovation of space in the North Ingalls complex (the former St. Joseph’s Mercy Hospital) provided adequate facilities.
The University’s first professor of hygiene was appointed in 1887; the first degree in hygiene was granted in 1897; and the School of Public Health became an independent unit in 1941. Doctor of Philosophy programs, established in 1947, now include concentrations in biostatistics, environmental health, epidemiology, health behavior and health education, and health organization and policy. The School of Public Health emphasizes epidemiology and population-based studies of health and illness through multi-disciplinary approaches to community-based health problems and health care delivery while adhering to the basic mission of helping to maintain and improve the health of all people by disseminating knowledge, training health professionals and providing advisory and other services to agencies and individuals. Since the 1980s the school has focused on AIDS/HIV, substance abuse, smoking, air pollution, and health gerontology.
Although the School of Public Health officially dates from 1941, the university had been a pioneer in public health education since the 19th century. In 1887 the State Board of Health suggested that the university establish a professorship of hygiene. Professors Victor Vaughan, Albert Prescott, and John Langley devised a plan for the creation of a Department of Hygiene. Victor Vaughan headed the new Department of Hygiene and Physiologic Chemistry.

The Hygienic Laboratory was established in 1889 and was the first laboratory of its kind in the country. It contained “all the apparatus employed by Koch” and positioned the University of Michigan at the forefront of American bacteriological research. The laboratory was used for instruction in bacteriology, for research into the etiology of disease, and as a test site for food and drink suspected of contamination. The laboratory was housed in the Physics Building.

The first degree in Hygiene was awarded in 1897. From 1897 to 1916 the master’s degree in public health was offered through the Medical School. In 1911 the Regents established the degree of Master of Science in Public Health and approved the curriculum and degree of Doctor of Public Health that same year. In 1916 the program was transferred to the Graduate School.

An effort to coordinate all health sciences work on campus led to the creation of the Division of Hygiene and Public Health in 1921. Professor John Sundwall led this division from 1921 until 1941. In addition to the public health program, the division at various times included the University Health Service, the physical education program, and a number of courses taught in other schools and departments.

John Sundwall received his B.S. (1903) and Ph.D. (1906) from the University of Chicago and an M.D. (1912) from Johns Hopkins. His teaching career started at the University of Chicago. He then went to the University of Utah where he served as professor of anatomy and dean of the Medical School. He spent several years as hygienic expert and assistant surgeon in the U.S. Public Health Service. From 1912 to 1918 he served at the University of Kansas, then went to the University of Minnesota where he accepted a similar post as Professor and Director of Hygiene and Public Health, establishing the first comprehensive student health service in the country.

In 1934 Michigan became the first university to offer an organized program in the field of preventive medicine. In 1939 the Board of Regents approved the creation of a School of Public Health and Preventive Medicine with the stipulation that “no addition to the budget of the Division of Hygiene and Public Health as adopted in 1939 would result from this action.” The school was organized in three departments: Public Health Practice, Epidemiology, and Environmental Health. The Department of Public Health Practice included the fields of public health administration, economics, education, nursing, dentistry, physiological chemistry, mental health, and nutrition. The Department of Epidemiology encompassed public health laboratory practice, immunology, and health statistics. The Department of Environmental Health covered public health engineering and industrial health. The school offered programs leading to master’s and doctoral degrees in public health and to a bachelor’s degree in public health nursing. Later programs included the Departments of Tropical Diseases, Biostatistics, Population Planning, Community Health, Hospital Administration, and Medical Care Organization.
From its inception, the School of Public Health has supported an active program of research. In 1950 a grant from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation permitted the creation of an undergraduate degree program in public health aimed at meeting the increasing demand for personnel to serve as administrators and technicians in government public health agencies. The School sponsored frequent institutes and in-service programs for health workers, administrators, and public officials. As in the nineteenth century, the School of Public Health proved responsive in fulfilling its service obligation to Michigan. Thomas Francis, Jr., head of the Epidemiology Department, served as chairman of the Armed Forces Influenza Commission and directed the research at the school’s Virus Laboratories that developed an influenza vaccine during World War II.

The School of Public Health has long been ranked as one of the leading programs in the nation, perhaps best known for its work on poliomyelitis. Under the direction of Dr. Thomas Francis, the school was the largest recipient of grant funds from the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis (later known as the March of Dimes). Francis conducted numerous epidemiological studies, and Jonas Salk began the work which led to the development of a polio vaccine. The field test of Salk’s vaccine was directed by Francis, in what was the largest mass experiment in medicine ever undertaken.

The Thomas Francis, Jr. Public Health Building was named in honor of the renowned epidemiologist, who had served on the faculty from 1941 to 1968. The $7 million project was financed with two federal grants, and a gift of $2.5 million from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation. The seven-story building was connected to the original building by a walkway at the third level. The new facility consolidated the activities of the School, previously scattered in 13 different locations.

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The program in Social Work began in 1921 and was granted the status of a School in 1951. At the master’s level, the School prepares professional practitioners to work with individuals, children and their families, organizations, and communities, in such fields as substance abuse, aging, mental health, education, child and public welfare, and public policy. The unique Joint Doctorial Program in Social Work and Social Sciences prepares students for academic careers. Graduates of both programs are found in leadership positions around the world. The School of Social Work consistently ranks as the leading school in the nation.
In May of 1921 a curriculum in social work was expressly designed to meet the growing demand for trained professionals in the various fields of public and private philanthropy. Under the direction of Professor A. E. Wood, staff members in sociology developed a curriculum in social work which included background courses in the social sciences, specialized professional courses, and field work.

The successful development of a program in social work was recognized in 1925, when the University was granted membership into the Association of Schools of Professional Social Work. This Association encouraged the maintenance of the high standards of the School's undergraduate program and the initiation of a graduate-level curriculum. In 1927 the Regents authorized a certificate in social work to be awarded to students who completed a year's work experience in addition to their undergraduate degree requirements.

In response to the thinking of social work educators at the time and the recommendations of a committee of Detroit citizens, the University moved to reorganize its program in social work. With financial support from the Horace H. and Mary A. Rackham Fund and the McGregor Fund, the Institute of Health and Social Sciences was established. It was later renamed the Institute of Public and Social Administration. The new Institute, housed in the Horace H. Rackham Education Memorial Building in Detroit, accepted its first students in the fall semester of 1935, offering a two-year program leading to the Master of Social Work degree.

The enrollment of the Institute's program in social work from 1935-45 averaged 1000 students. During the early years of the program many students were employed part time to finance their education, and therefore most graduates required from four to six years to complete their degrees. Others were forced to discontinue their studies with the advent of World War II. In addition to the program in Detroit, the Institute ran a statewide extension program that reached over 500 students.

By 1945 the Institute of Social Work was formed, and the social work curriculum was redefined. The Institute remained in Detroit and set as its goals the design of a curriculum to enlarge the technical side of training for work in the general field of social and public welfare and to relate it to the broader aspects of political and social life. The curriculum included courses in the major divisions of social work: social case work, group work, community organization, public welfare, research and statistics, administration, and field work.

In July of 1951 the University of Michigan established the School of Social Work to replace the Institute of Social Work. The University transferred the operation of the School from Detroit to Ann Arbor. President Alexander G. Ruthven noted that the School would concentrate its attention on the educational needs of other communities throughout the state and would place special emphasis on the field of public welfare and its administration.
Fedele Fauri was named Dean of the School of Social Work and Professor of Public Welfare Administration in 1951. Faculty review of the curriculum resulted in the addition of courses to reflect a focus on public welfare services and social administration. There was renewed emphasis on statewide services through consultations, development of field placements, extension courses, summer institutes, and workshops. These activities represented a supplementary but vital function of the School in assisting social agencies in communities throughout the State to improve their social work services.

From the house on Washington Street, where it had its modest beginning the School relocated to new quarters in the Frieze Building in the late 1950s. As enrollments increased, Dean Fauri saw the need for a separate divisional library for social work to meet the educational requirements of students and faculty. A Social Work Library was established in April of 1958 in the Frieze Building.

Enrollment increased throughout the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, made possible by an increase in full-time faculty funded by the University and by federal training grants and year-round operation of the University, whereby students could enter the School in January and complete four continuous terms and receive the master of social work degree after one year and four months, as opposed to the normal two academic years of study. For many years the School of Social Work, ranked as the nation’s leading school, was housed in inadequate space in the Frieze building. Although efforts were made to raise funds for a new facility, this proved difficult for a School with modestly paid social workers as alumni. Finally in the 1990s the University allocated $30 million to build a new School of Social Work Building on the Central Campus.