

*Bender
of
Twigs*



John Sandlin

It is both an honor and a privilege to recognize John Sandlin, who has dedicated 25 years of unwavering support and guidance to WSU students. Throughout his time at WSU, John has embodied the spirit of mentorship, offering not only academic advice but also fostering personal and professional growth in countless students.

John's journey at WSU began in 1997 as the Coordinator of Greek Affairs, shortly after earning his Master of Science in Counseling and Student Personnel. In this early role, he advised and supported a diverse group of students, helping them develop leadership skills. He then transitioned to Housing and Residence Life, ultimately serving as the Associate Director for Facilities. In 2014, John shifted to academic advising, joining the School of Nursing as the RN to BSN Academic Advisor. Since then, his role has expanded to Online Academic Advisor for the College of Health Professions.

John's unwavering commitment to student success has left an immeasurable impact, providing timely guidance through academic challenges and offering the encouragement and resources necessary to help students achieve their goals. A recent example of this dedication involved an RN to BSN student facing unexpected financial hardship early this fall semester. The student, desperate to remain enrolled, sought financial assistance. Within 24 hours, John secured \$6,000 in scholarship funding, allowing the student to stay on track to graduate as planned. This is just one example of John's continuous focus on supporting online students in the College of Health Professions.

Beyond academic advising, John is actively involved in student recruitment. His extensive travels across Kansas and the region ensure that associate degree nursing students are aware of WSU's RN to BSN program as a premier option for their baccalaureate education. From detours revealing new parts of Kansas to braving dust storms and severe thunderstorms, John is undeterred in his efforts.

John has also been a steadfast advocate in the evolving landscape of online education, staying attuned to the unique needs of online learners. His vision has driven several key updates to the RN to BSN program, helping keep it competitive and at the forefront of fully online programs through student-friendly policies and processes.

The Bender of Twigs Award is a fitting recognition for someone who has shaped the futures of so many students, instilling the values of compassion, excellence, and resilience. As we celebrate this milestone of 25 years, we acknowledge the countless hours, energy, knowledge, and heart John has invested in making the university and its students thrive.

Thank you, John, for your extraordinary service, your passion for education, and your legacy of student success. You truly exemplify the essence of Bender of Twigs.

Rhonda Williams

Teaching Professor, School of Nursing
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