

MS Program in Nursing Alumni Newsletter



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Welcome to the Third Alumni Newsletter of the Master's Program in Nursing

Welcome to our third annual alumni newsletter! We, at the Department of Nursing, are happy to share with you news about our faculty, alumni, and programs. The 2008-2009 academic year is passing quickly and we are all excited to be interviewing and accepting students into our new post-MS DNP program to begin fall 2009. It has been wonderful talking to alumni about the program and seeing the incredible accomplishments that the graduates of our MS program have shared with us in their applications to the DNP Program. We are all looking forward to what the first cohort of post-MS students will add to our program at UML and feel excitement about beginning this new initiative in our Dept. We hope to see more of you in the future returning for advanced graduate study in our PhD or DNP programs. We are continuing to interview for fall admissions and still have a few openings in the 2009 class. We have been pleased at seeing the interest in the DNP program from our own alumni as well as from nurse practitioners throughout New England. Despite the uncertainty and stresses related to the current economic situation in the state and nation, we are pleased to announce that the UML Dept of Nursing has been increasing enrollments and expanding programs. We continue to have a faculty opening to teach in the MS and DNP programs and a Director of the PhD program is still being recruited. Any referrals from alumni to fill these positions would be most welcome.

If you ever are in the Lowell area, please stop by to visit our new beautiful offices on O'Leary Library 5th floor. What an improvement from our previous office space! We also now have a technologically equipped classroom/conference room adjacent to our offices. Many of you have had contact with the Department Staff Assistant, Pauline Beaulieu, who was instrumental, along with Teaching Assistant Aidan Kolbe, in producing this newsletter. Please keep Pauline updated with changes in email addresses or news you would like us to include in the next newsletter. Keeping your email address updated is essential for us to keep in contact with you. Best wishes to you all and I hope you enjoy this newsletter!

Susan Crocker Houde, Director
MS and DNP Programs in Nursing



The Department of Nursing at the University of Massachusetts Lowell
is pleased to announce the

Post-MS DNP Program for Nurse Practitioners

accepting applications for Fall 2009

Alumni Updates

Janette Walsh (Class of 1984) moved to Alpharetta, Georgia in 2002 and has been practicing as a nurse practitioner in Dermatology for the past four years and loving it! She misses family and friends in Massachusetts, but otherwise really enjoys the warmer weather. They have an 8 year old boy, Jack, and a 13 year old girl, Cadie, that keep Janette and her husband very busy. She hopes everyone is doing well and asks for other alumni to drop her a line if you get a chance @ Janettewalsh@aol.com.

Since graduation **Linda Skandier Sickorez** has been working at Lahey Clinic. Her practice has been quite different from the typical family NP grad in that her specialty has been surgical. She has taken her experience as a registered nurse working in the PACU and combined it with advanced health assessment skills attained in graduate school. Her first five years were spent in neurosurgery, seeing patients in the clinic, managing floor and SICU patients and providing 1st assist in the operating room. After five years she transferred into orthopaedic surgery specializing in sports medicine. She now continues to first assist and see patients in the clinic.

Since graduating from UML's FNP program in 2006, **Tricia Murray** has been enjoying her new career to the fullest. Initially having worked as a FNP providing primary care and pulmonary care services in a busy doctor's office, she looked for a more flexible schedule and landed a job working for an emergency medicine physician's group. In addition to that, she has also been able to secure a flexible summer position running the health center at a residential girls' camp in New Hampshire. She works with 4-5 nurses and 1-2 student nurses each summer, and loves being able to be a resource for them and for the camp as a whole. Beginning this summer, she will also be teaching nursing clinical for undergraduates at a local college, and is very much looking forward to this. A long term goal of Tricia's is to secure a full time nursing faculty position, and teaching clinical is the beginning of that journey.

Her extended long term plan is to finish her Certificate in Nursing Education at UML, and eventually work her way to either a DNP or a PhD in Nursing. She says she is so glad that she was able to attend UML. "It has opened up so many possibilities that I would not otherwise have imagined."

Danielle Mahoney graduated in 2005 under her maiden name Danielle Carroll and since then has worked for the Skin and Laser Surgery Center of New England in Nashua, NH. She works full time as a Dermatology Nurse Practitioner treating an array of dermatological conditions. She has also worked closely with a practicing physician on cosmetic laser technology and procedures. She has recently started participating in some research studies using different lasers in the cosmetic industry. She is looking forward to precepting UMass Lowell MS in Nursing students in the very near future. In her personal life, she got married in the summer of 2006. Danielle and her husband bought a house in Chelmsford in October 2006. They also welcomed their daughter Molly into the world on April 1, 2008.

Susan (Tannuzzo) Gordon, a graduate of both the BS and MS programs in Nursing, is a nursing director of a general medical unit at Massachusetts General Hospital. She is creating an innovative program designed to enhance the care of older adults. The initiative is part of an 18-month Geriatric Nursing Leadership Academy offered by the Honor Society of Nursing, Sigma Theta Tau International.

In July of 2008, **Judy Pentedemos**, RN, FNP, CDE from the Diabetes and Endocrine Center at Nashoba Valley Medical Center, Ayer, MA was invited by John Auerbach, Commissioner of the Department of Public Health for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, to be a member of the Healthy Mass Disease Management and Wellness Task Force. This task force is one of five developed to carry out the missions of the Patrick Administration's 2007 Healthy Massachusetts Compact. The Compact is to ensure access to care, advance health care quality, contain healthcare costs, promote individual wellness, and promote healthy communities. Under the governor's ambitious plan, five Task Forces were formed; Serious Reportable Events, Payment

System Reform, Performance Measurement Alignment, Administrative Simplification, and the Disease Management and Wellness: Focus on Diabetes to accomplish the goals of the Compact. The Disease Management and Wellness Task Force: Focus on Diabetes has a very ambitious agenda; namely, the development of an action-oriented framework for preventing and managing chronic diseases in Massachusetts. The focus on diabetes was determined to be the first disease management initiative due to the rapid increase in the incidence of this disease, the glaring gaps in the necessary prevention and treatment arenas of this disease, and that the disease results in extraordinary costs of care. To achieve the goals, the Task Force has been charged with identifying key policy and programmatic steps that can be taken to reduce incidence, to expand screening and to insure appropriate care of diabetes, with the intention of seeing measurable changes within a relatively short period. To achieve these broad goals, the Task Force has been divided into subcommittees with Judith being chosen as a member of the Physicians Guidelines and Best Practice Workgroup. The other Workgroups include Workforce and Reimbursement, Public Education, and Workplace Initiatives. The Task Force, which is an all-volunteer force, has been meeting monthly. Much progress is being made and we are certain to achieve the ambitious objectives set forth by an administration that believes that a Healthy Massachusetts can be achieved.

Lisa Brown alumni of the MS Program had an article in The Eagle Tribune in July, "Pelham woman's placemats designed to bring families together".

Svetlana Schwartz graduated from UMASS/Lowell with a MS in psychiatric nursing in 2006. She is currently working at Malden Outpatient Clinic (Arbour Counseling Services) with patients who have mental illness and/or substance abuse issues. She is also working as a clinical instructor in psychiatric nursing for Salem State College at Baldpate Hospital in Georgetown. She is really enjoying both of her jobs and reports she is so grateful to all the professors at UMASS/Lowell who prepared her for this great career.

Amy Ranieri McCarron, who graduated from the family health MS program in 2005, is currently working at Rheumatology and Internal Medicine Associates in Wilmington, MA. She got married in August 2007 and is currently living in Andover, MA. She attended the American College of Rheumatology conference and found it very informative.

Liz Moore reports that after she graduated from the program in 2001 she took a year off to be with her newborn, Grace, who is about to turn 8! She completed the Harvard Vanguard fellowship in 2003. During that time she worked at Tufts University as the Alcohol/Drug counselor and per diem at Marlborough Hospital. She took over a Christian counseling practice in 2003 which she thoroughly enjoyed for 3 years but she found that keeping up a private practice was difficult. She worked as an outpatient clinician at Advocates in Framingham, Waltham & Marlborough. All this time she continued as per diem staff at Marlborough Hospital. She took on a part time position at Marlborough in 2007 & now she works there between 32-40 hrs/wk on the Psychiatric Unit because she needed to simplify her life after another addition to her family, Alexis, who has Down Syndrome and just turned 3, and who is the love of her life!! She reports staying pretty busy between work, family, church, & trying to maintain her sanity. She was also married & divorced since she graduated and her oldest son, Nathan, made her a grandmother this past June! She misses her classmates & would love to know what they're up to these days.



CONGRATULATIONS to all UML MS Program Alumni who are making such a difference in so many peoples' lives! We are so very proud of our alumni!



Updates from The Department of Nursing

Eta Omega has been awarded a regional excellence award for the development of the website for the chapter. **Pauline Beaulieu**, Staff Assistant, was instrumental in working with Dr. Kelly Fisher, Immediate Past President, Eta Omega, in making this achievement possible.

Dr. Karen Devereaux Melillo has agreed to serve as a member of the Core Competency Work group for a John A. Hartford Foundation project entitled, "Geropsychiatric Nursing Collaborative". She has also been selected for a NP Expert Panel for the national project, *Transitioning to Adult-Gerontology APRN Education: Ensuring the APRN Workforce is Prepared to Care for Older Adults*, funded by the John A. Hartford Foundation to AACN and Hartford Institute for Geriatric Nursing at New York University, 2008-2010.

Dr. Ruth Remington associate professor in the Department of Nursing has joined more than 100 other professors and graduate students from universities throughout the U.S. and Canada to participate in the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Dietary Supplements (ODS) course, "Dietary Supplement Research Practicum 2008." The Practicum was held on the NIH campus in Bethesda, Maryland, June 9-13, 2008.



Dr. Miki Patterson
Visiting Professor

Congratulations to **Michael O'Connor** a graduate student in UML's Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing Program who was awarded the *The Janssen Scholarship Award*.

U.S. Bureau of Health Professions, Division of Nursing, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), Nursing Workforce Diversity grant award in the amount of \$894,085 over 3 years has been officially funded; **Melillo, K.D.(PI), Dowling, J. (Co-PI), Abdallah, L., and Knight, M., with Dr. Mary Findeisen**, Consultant.

Dr. Katherine Rosa was appointed Faculty Nurse Scientist at the Yvonne L. Munn Center for Nursing Research at Massachusetts General Hospital.

Dr. Geoff Phillips McEnany received the **Grayce Sills Distinguished Service Award** from APNA - New England. The service that merited the award was the international sleep and chronobiology online course. The Grayce M. Sills Distinguished Service Award is intended as an award for commitment, initiative, loyalty, integrity, exceptional and meritorious service to the New England Chapter of the American Psychiatric Nurses Association.

Dr. Betty Morgan – was awarded the Association of Nurses' In AIDS Care 2008 Richard L. Sowell Award for Outstanding JANAC Article for the article "Difficult to Manage HIV/AIDS Clients with Psychiatric Illness and Substance Abuse."

Dr. Annette McDonough was appointed external faculty nurse scientist by Dorothy Jones PhD, RN FAAN, director of the Yvonne L. Munn Center for Research and Guardia Banister PhD, RN, executive director, The Institute for Patient Care Nursing.

Pauline Beaulieu, staff assistant has been appointed by the Chairman of the Lowell General Hospital Auxiliary to join the Board.

Meet Dr. Miki Patterson

Dr. Miki Patterson began fall 2008 as a visiting professor at the University of Massachusetts at Lowell. She brings to campus and the classroom a diverse background of experiences.

She returned to academia due to her love of education and working with colleagues who inspire one another toward research and innovation. She has found that UMASS Lowell is a great location for both of these reasons. Prior to arriving at UMASS Lowell, Dr. Patterson was working as an orthopedic nurse practitioner and has been very involved with orthopedic care of patients for many years. She continues to be actively involved with the National Association for Orthopedic Nurses (NAON), having served as the President. Dr. Patterson graduated from Fitchburg State College and then pursued her Master's degree at Boston College. Her doctorate was completed at the University of Massachusetts Worcester. In spite of her extensive education, she believes that she is constantly learning and has been enjoying the new learning challenges of academia. As in any new area of practice, there are significant learning curves and she has found the same to be true in her transition back to university education. Teaching was a large part of Dr. Patterson's prior role as an orthopedic nurse practitioner, but she states that it is different to be teaching all semester in the classroom. She has enjoyed working with the undergraduate students in both the fall and spring semesters. She has had the privilege of working with the undergraduate students in teaching both medical surgical and pediatric nursing. She motivates her students through an interactive teaching style to become a competent and safe caregiver and the best nurse that they can be. So, if you haven't been up to the 5th floor of O'Leary lately, come meet Dr. Patterson, another dynamic member of the University of Massachusetts Nursing Department.

Meet Pauline Beaulieu, Staff Assistant for the Department of Nursing

It is the perception of many that Pauline Beaulieu could well be considered the "Google" of the Nursing Department at the University of Massachusetts Lowell. She is a tremendous source of information and guidance for nursing faculty and for all nursing students. If you have a question regarding the nursing department or any of the programs, there is a very good chance that Pauline knows the answer or can direct you to the right person.



Pauline Beaulieu
Staff Assistant
Dept. of Nursing

Pauline wears many hats in the Nursing Department. She is the staff assistant for the Chair of the Nursing Department, Dr. Karen Melillo, and provides administrative support to the Director of the Graduate Nursing Program, Dr. Houde; the Director of the Undergraduate Nursing Program, Dr. Dowling and the Interim Director of the PhD program, Dr. Mawn. She has been working for UML for over three years and it is obvious that she enjoys her work.

She is responsible for maintaining the website for the Nursing Program. Pauline is creative and likes to incorporate photographs of faculty and student activities in addition to concise written summaries of programs and current events in the Department of Nursing. She enjoys the challenge of making the nursing web page come alive and interesting to view.

When asked about the favorite part of her job Pauline is quick to say that what she really enjoys the most is working with the faculty. Prior to her current position, she worked at St. Michael's College in Vermont and discovered that her skills are well suited to assisting the faculty in an academic setting. In working at UML, Pauline really likes to deal with the administrative details so the faculty can focus on their teaching and research responsibilities.

Pauline also very much enjoys her interaction with students. She understands the needs of a diverse student body and derives great satisfaction from helping them to meet their objectives. She finds it rewarding to watch the students' progress through the various nursing programs and achieve their academic goals.

Pauline has been married for 36 years and has a son, daughter and young grandson. She has a welcoming smile, a positive attitude and is always there to help. So, if you are at the University of Massachusetts Lowell and have a question about the nursing department be sure to visit Pauline Beaulieu. Like Google, you're sure to find the answer that you need.

Dr. Betty Morgan has been chosen to write a chapter in the *Textbook of Palliative Nursing* and **Dr. Ruth Remington** has been elected to the Research Committee of the Hospice and Palliative Nurses Association.

Dr. Karen Melillo and **Dr. Susan Houde** are working on the 2nd edition of the text *Geropsychiatric and Mental Health Nursing* to be published in 2010.

Sim-Baby, Human Simulation Technology Integration grant, \$48,000, from Mass. Dept of Higher Education has been awarded to **Dr. Jacqueline Dowling**.

Faculty Publications

Abdallah, L., Remington, R., Houde, S., Zhan, L., & Melillo, K.D. (2009). Dehydration reduction in community-dwelling older adults: Perspectives of community health care providers. *Research in Gerontological Nursing*, 2(1), 49-57.

This cross-sectional descriptive study explored dehydration among community dwelling older adults. The study examined the perception of dehydration through a survey provided to community nursing leaders. The survey also elicited proposed strategies for dehydration prevention. This study illuminates the community concerns and identified four themes associated with dehydration in this population.

Chan, A., Paskavitz, J., **Remington, R.**, Rasmussen, S., & Shea, T. B. (2009). Efficacy of a vitamin/nutriceutical formulation for early-stage Alzheimer's disease: A one-year, open-label pilot study with a 16-month caregiver extension. *American Journal of Alzheimer's Disease & Other Dementias*, 23, 571-585.

This article investigated the use of a vitamin/neutriceutical supplement in patients with early stage Alzheimer's. This vitamin/neutriceutical was a special formulation containing folate, vitamin B-6, alphatocopherol, S-adenosyl methionine, N-acetyl cysteine, and acetyl-L-cartinine. Patients were enrolled for 12 months of the original study and evaluated based on the dementia rating scale and clock-drawing tests. Their improvement was also evaluated by their caregivers. Patients showed improvement based on all areas of assessment.

Futrell, M., Melillo, K.D., & Remington, R. (2008). *Wandering: Evidence-based practice guideline*. University of Iowa College of Nursing Gerontological Nursing Interventions Research Center (GNIRC) Research Translation and Dissemination Core (RTDC). Iowa City, Iowa: University of Iowa.

The National Guidelines Clearinghouse examined the current literature and evidence involved in the concept of wandering. Wandering was considered in association with diagnoses including Alzheimer's disease, dementia and depression. The guideline includes current recommendations for evaluation, management and ongoing assessment.

Abdallah, L.M., Remington, R., Melillo, K.D., & Flanagan, J. (2008). Using antipsychotic drugs safely in older patients. *Nursing* 2008, 38(10), 28-31.

This article outlines the indications for use of antipsychotics in the older adult and also discusses their safe use in this population. Special consideration is given to the unique pharmacotherapeutics of antipsychotics helping the nurse reader to consider appropriate use, assessment and ongoing monitoring in older adults.

Morgan, B. & Kochan, K. (2008). "I'll Always Want More: Complex Issues in HIV palliative care." *Journal of Hospice and Palliative Care Nursing*, 10(5), 265-271.

This article tells the story of a woman with HIV who suffered from a substance abuse disorder and psychiatric issues. It reveals her journey of making peace with her family and readying herself for death. This patient's rendering of her end of life story displays her transition as she prepared to die, including the experiences of her providers.

Knight, M. and Houseman, E. Andrés.(2008). A collaborative model for the treatment of depression in homebound elders. *Issues in Mental Health Nursing*, 29(9), 974 - 991

This study investigated a collaborative treatment approach for homebound elders with depression. Collaboration occurred between an advanced practice psychiatric nurse and a primary care physician.

Patients were included in the study based on depression screening and treatment involved pharmacological and psychosocial intervention. Interventions resulted in a statistically significant decrease in depression.

Chan, A., **Remington, R.**, & Shea, T. (2008). The Clock-Drawing Test: Time for a Change? *American Journal of Alzheimer's Disease & Other Dementias*, 23(4), 377-381.

The clock-drawing test is routinely used in the assessment of cognitive function, notably in the assessment of dementia. This study was conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of this screening tool among certain aged populations. An increasingly digital world makes this investigation particularly relevant with fewer homes having an analog clock. This study found that patients older than 70 performed the exercise better with the standard analog based prompt (draw the clock that says a quarter to 2), whereas patients younger than 60 did equally well with an analog or a digital prompt (draw a clock that reads 12:45).

Remington, R., Chan, A., Shea, T. B. (2009). Efficacy of a vitamin/neutriceutical formulation for moderate to late Alzheimer's disease: A placebo-controlled pilot study. *American Journal of Alzheimer's Disease & Other Dementias*. doi 10.1177/1533317508325094

Research was conducted among a population of patients with moderate to late stage Alzheimer's. This research investigated the efficacy of a vitamin/neutriceutical supplement and its effects on progression of dementia in these patients. The formulation includes folate, vitamin B-6, alphatocopherol, S-adenosyl methionine, N-acetyl cysteine, and acetyl-L-carnitine. Effect was measured with the Dementia Rating Scale, the clock drawing test, and caregiver evaluation. This study revealed that this formulation may be a promising intervention in delaying declines among Alzheimer's patients.



Koren, A Fisher, K. (2008). Integrating PDA's in nursing clinical practice: Changing the Teaching Paradigm. *The international Journal of Technology Knowledge and Society*, 4(3), 57-64 [online] <http://ijt.cgpublisher.com/product/pub.42/prod.470>

This study explored the use of personal digital assistants (PDA's) in the clinical setting. The study utilized professors teaching undergraduate students in the junior and senior years. The PDA's were used by students and faculty in the clinical setting. This qualitative study used structured interviews to explore faculty perceptions in the process of integrating this new technology into teaching and practice. Overall, the integration of PDA's was perceived as valuable and this study lends more information to the understanding of their integration into education.

Melillo, K.D. (2008). Spotlight May Futrell, PhD, FAAN, FGSA: Gerontological nursing and gerontology leader and mentor. *Journal of Gerontological Nursing*, 34(5), 7-9

May Futrell has been a pivotal nursing leader and motivator in the specialty of gerontological nursing. During her tenure at UMASS Lowell she recognized the growing importance of gerontological nursing as a unique area of study. She is responsible for the development of the first master's level program for gerontological nursing. This article outlines her life work and contributions to the profession.

Flanagan, J., **Melillo, K.**, **Abdallah, L.**, & **Remington, R.** (2007). Interpreting lab values in the rehab setting. *Rehabilitation Nursing*, 32(2), 77-84.

In part, due to the increasing comorbidities of rehabilitation patients, the multifaceted nature of their care involves more complex nursing knowledge and care. This article discusses the importance of correct lab value interpretation in this unique setting and reviews important concepts in lab interpretation. Potential lab value deviations are discussed in the context of the patient's clinical presentation with discussion of possible causative factors.

Remington, R., Abdallah, L., Melillo, K., & Flanagan, J. (2006). Managing problem behaviors associated with dementia. *Rehabilitation Nursing, 31*(5), 186-192.

Problem behaviors in the older adult with dementia are outlined including discussion of problem origins, understanding the problem behavior and its components. Therapeutic interventions are discussed to prevent and cope with problem behaviors. A thorough discussion of interventions provides the nurse with many options to alleviate or prevent these behaviors in older adults.

PRESENTATIONS

Melillo, K. Dowling, J. Abdallah, L. Findeisen, M., Knight, M. Poster Presentation: Bring Diversity to Nursing. Nurse Faculty Nurse Executive Summit, Scottsdale, Arizona. (December 4-6, 2008).

Knight, M. New England Chapter American Psychiatric Nurses Association; Fall Conference. *Beyond Behavior: creating Understanding* (September 9, 2008)

Patterson, M. - Orthopedic Nursing certification review course, Flagstaff AZ (October 6, 2008)

Phillips McEnany, G. - Day-long pre-conference on cognitive behavioral therapy for insomnia at the annual meeting of the American Psychiatric Nurses Association in Minneapolis, MN (October 15, 2008)

Koren, A., Fisher, K., Meedzan, N. Technology in Nursing Education. Presented at the 2nd Annual Educator Symposium, North Eastern Organization of Nurse Educators. Burlington MA (April 2008)

Rosa, K. Healing Changes Model. The Combined 12th International Philosophy of Nursing Conference and 15th New England Nursing Knowledge Conference, Boston Massachusetts. (September 24th-26th, 2008)

RESEARCH

Shea, T., **Remington, R.**, & Kotyla, E. "The SmartPill: An over-the-counter, nutraceutical formulation that provides antioxidant protection and prevents cognitive decline in aging: A clinical trial." Funded by the Alzheimer's Association

Koren, A. "Male Family Planning Research Cooperative" Grant with collaboration of Pro Health Montachusett Opportunity Council in Fitchburg funded by Office of Public Health and Science, Office of Population Affairs, Office of Family Planning.

Bring Diversity to Nursing Initiative

What would you do if you were awarded over a million dollars? At the University of Massachusetts Lowell, nursing faculty are using it to bring diversity into nursing. The Bring Diversity to Nursing (BDN) project is funded through grants from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (Reducing Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities, 2007-2010) and the US Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Nursing, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA, 2008-2011). The project's principal investigators are Dr. Karen Devereaux Melillo and Dr. Jacqueline Dowling. Other members of the team include co-investigators Dr. Lisa Abdallah, Dr. Mary Findeisen, Dr. Margaret Knight, and Minority Nurse Recruiters, Ramona Nunez and Vannary Chhay (both UMass Lowell Nursing Alumnae), Project Administrators Lori Piacenza (MDPH) and Stephanie Lane (HRSA), a Coordinator of Diversity Support Services, Pat Walker, MS, APRN-BC, a consultant psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner, Maribel Ortiz, MS, APRN-BC, and two graduate nursing student research assistants Renee Creeden and Christine Harker. The goal of the BDN program is two-fold, to recruit minority students to the study of nursing, and to provide a framework of support for the minority students accepted into the UMASS Lowell undergraduate nursing program.

Recruitment is focused in the community surrounding the university including the cities of Lowell and Lawrence, with specific emphasis on the Southeast Asian and Hispanic populations represented in these cities. It begins with the promotion of the profession of nursing in the local community.

This has been occurring through workshops in eight middle schools and two high schools in Lowell and Lawrence. Starting soon the promotion of nursing will move into local elementary schools. The elementary school program is utilizing a book entitled *Nurses*, authored by Cecilia Minden and Linda M. Armantrout. This book portrays the diversity in the nursing profession and presents nursing as an attainable and desirable career. This book is being read to local elementary students in the hopes of spreading excitement about nursing careers.

Once a student is accepted into the UMass Lowell nursing program, he/she is invited to apply to the BDN project. For those who are interviewed and accepted into the BDN program, the focus is on fostering the success of that student. This academic support is spearheaded by Pat Walker, a Master's prepared Family Nurse Practitioner and the Coordinator of Diversity Support Services for the HRSA grant, who meets regularly with students on an individual basis, coordinates tutoring, and conducts student self-evaluations. Students are given the option of educational technology access through loan of a laptop and a PDA in order to enhance their learning and success. In the freshmen and sophomore year, students are eligible for stipends and junior and senior nursing students can apply for scholarships. These allow students to focus more on their studies and decrease outside work and therefore less need worry about financing their goals.

To find out more about the BDN program visit: <http://www.uml.edu/NursingDiversity>.

Geropsychiatric Nursing Core Competencies:

Karen Devereaux Melillo was selected to participate in the Geropsychiatric Nursing Core Competency Workgroup sponsored by the American Academy of Nursing (AAN) and The Hartford Institute for Geriatric Nursing (HIGN)-funded study. Principal investigators involved with this study include Drs. Kathleen Buckwalter, Lois Evans and Cornelia Beck. Dr. Melillo states that she is "thrilled to be working with these other individuals who bring so much experience and knowledge to the table."

Selection to this Expert Panel likely reflects the appreciation the AAN/HIGN Co-Investigators had for the textbook, *Geropsychiatric and Mental Health Nursing* (2005), co-edited by Drs. Susan Houde and Karen Devereaux Melillo, as being the only such textbook of its kind since 1995, when Mildred Hogstel wrote the book, *Geropsychiatric Nursing*. When the UMass Lowell Nursing Program began the Geropsychiatric and Mental Health Nursing graduate certificate, it became clear that no current textbook existed. Drs. Melillo and Houde edited this textbook to meet the learning needs of their students and students and practicing nurses across the country. Revision of this book is expected to be completed by 2010.

The Geropsychiatric Nursing Core Competency Workgroup is focusing on several goals, including the integration of geropsychiatric nursing subject matter into academic content at all levels of education. This includes modification of undergraduate level content and the integration of geropsychiatric nursing into all advanced practice role preparation, as well as both the geriatric and psychiatric nurse practitioner programs. The goal is to heighten the awareness of the importance of education specific to geropsychiatric nursing care. The ultimate goal is the inclusion of geropsychiatric competencies in subsequent revisions of competencies for both graduate and undergraduate nursing students. This will move the profession toward diminishing the stigma and age-related bias of mental illness allowing patients to receive the assessment and care that they need from their direct care providers.

The University of Massachusetts Lowell has graduate nurse practitioner programs where students can focus their studies in gerontological or psychiatric mental health nursing. They also integrate this content through the graduate geropsychiatric certificate program. To find out more about these programs visit: <http://uml.edu/college/SHE/Nursing/Programs.html>

Sim Man - Patient Simulator



He breathes, he coughs, and he pulsates.
And, at times, he gags.

Named Lowell G. Sims, a portable and advanced patient simulator has recently arrived in the new nursing simulation laboratory. SimMan has realistic anatomy and clinical functionality to challenge and test nursing students' clinical, communication and decision-making skills during realistic patient care scenarios. According to Jacqueline Dowling, PhD, RN, Associate Professor and principal investigator, "simulation-based nursing education is a powerful teaching strategy to improve the competence and retention of our nursing students."

Nursing faculty are currently developing real-life scenarios, such as an adult patient with asthma, care of a new mother and baby, and a cardiopulmonary arrest that simulate patient symptoms and reactions to student interventions.

Partnering with Lowell General Hospital, the Nursing Department received a \$48,000 grant from the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education's Nursing Initiative to fund the Laerdal patient simulator. The technology will be integrated into Lowell General's new graduate nurse orientation and residency programs, and will be used during critical care orientation and mock code sessions.

Dr. Dowling also recently was awarded a second grant for SimBaby, a baby simulator that will teach students the unique way to care for infants.

Out of Africa

Valerie King MS, FNP-BC

Most nursing students and faculty spend their semester break catching up on sleep, reading good books or traveling to warm tropical beaches. I am a Visiting Professor at UMass Lowell, and I accompanied 11 senior nursing students and one nurse alumna on a medical trip to Ghana. This trip was organized by the newly formed **Nursing Students Without Borders** (NSWB) club at UMass Lowell. The students wanted to experience nursing care in a completely different environment while enhancing their understanding of global health. The 17 day trip was organized and financed by the students who in addition to using their own funds also utilized creative fundraising and received financial and supply donations from faculty, friends and clinical institutions. We delivered 20 large boxes filled to capacity with medical supplies and medications. These supplies were distributed amongst multiple outpatient clinics and orphanages in the Volta Region. We lived in host homes in Kpando and had daily excursions to various health care clinics such as maternity, public health and outpatient. The students organized and ran their own clinics in certain communities. One outreach was to a poverty stricken fishing village. Their reliance on the polluted lake for their sustenance and livelihood is threatening their health. *Belharzia* is a water born parasite that causes diarrhea and other illnesses and is a constant threat to the residents due to the fact that they eat, drink, fish and defecate all in the same water. The UML students taught them about water purification and the need for hygiene and proper human waste disposal. The students purchased supplies and set up a water purification station that the residents could duplicate at the villages. There was much need for our nursing skills but lack of clean water is a great threat. The students quickly learned that education is the most important service we can provide. I organized hypertension clinics at some of the outlying clinics and found that there is an incredibly high rate of stage 2 hypertension that is uncontrolled and often undiagnosed. Medication compliance remains a problem due to lack of medication, accessibility to health care providers and lack of knowledge.

Accurate blood pressure cuffs and stethoscopes are in short supply. In one day I checked over 200 people. The line snaked for hours as they patiently awaited their turn to see the nurse. I saw other diseases that I had no treatment for. River blindness transmitted by the black simulian fly is rampant in one of the communities I worked in. Malaria is as common to the Africans as the common cold is for Americans. Parasitic infections with guinea worm are also prevalent and due to ingesting contaminated water. HIV is another prominent disease. People infected with HIV are ostracized from the community and often live in separate communities similar to the historic Leper colonies. The UML students and I ran a specialty clinic just for a group of 40 HIV infected individuals. We had vitamins, iron, antibiotics and some antifungal treatments for them. One of our goals was to teach them how to stay healthy but also to instill in them hope and acceptance. We were able to communicate to them how HIV has become a chronic disease in the US and that good medications are available and necessary for survival and that they can have a normal quality of life. Hygiene, nutrition and modes of transmission were reviewed.

Six of the students organized a special educational program for teens in Nkonya. The goal was to teach them about HIV so that they would become health educators for their peers. Myths about the disease were shattered and the Ghanaian teens learned much from the American student nurses. Again, the UML students learned the value of educating people about disease prevention and health promotion.

Lastly the students and I had the opportunity to visit and give donations to 2 orphanages. There is much need in these orphanages. One orphanage is home to HIV infected children or children orphaned by HIV. The UML students became attached to these children but also had the chance to evaluate the health and safety of the environment. The standards of cleanliness and safety were much inferior to our expectations. The students developed and presented recommendations to the director for consideration. These recommendations were met with resistance and it was with much regret that we left those children living in substandard conditions. It was heartbreaking for the UML students.

The trip incorporated some sightseeing of the region such as a monkey sanctuary, Wii waterfalls and Elmina and Cape Coast castle. These castles were the origin of the slave trade in Western Africa and quite painful to visit. We endured very high temperatures, dehydration, dry and acrid smoky air, lack of running water, unfamiliar food and pervasive poverty. We also experienced the beauty and generosity of the African people. Despite their unusual illnesses, poverty and lack of the abundant resources that we Americans are used to, they survive. We were welcomed with open arms and treated like beloved friends. It was a memorable trip and there is hope that we will return to the region next year.



Valerie King & orphans



UML students with Nurses from the Kpando Health District

Precepting

Please consider precepting one of our MS level students. You may contact [Eileen Riley@uml.edu](mailto:Eileen.Riley@uml.edu) if you are interested and either she or a faculty member will contact you with the details. We are always interested in having UML graduates serve as preceptors and with our growing numbers of students in practicum experiences, our need for additional preceptors is acute. Precepting hours can be counted toward recertification and a tuition voucher is awarded for those of you interested in taking further courses!