A LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR OF MS/DNP PROGRAMS

On behalf of the Department of Nursing at UMass Lowell, I am very pleased to send along these updates relative to our Graduate Programs. It has been an exciting year for the Graduate Program! Noteworthy changes are that the Gerontological Nursing specialty has transitioned successfully into an Adult/Gerontology specialty, and 11 students were accepted into this specialty in Fall, 2010. We have launched a new online multidisciplinary Post-MS Certificate in Sleep and Sleep Disorders in Health and Disease (12 credits) that is coordinated by Dr. Geoffry Phillips McEnany. We also now welcome post-MS students into our Graduate Certificate in Nursing Education. Our programs have grown! Currently there are 17 students enrolled in our PhD Program, 18 in our DNP Program, 89 in the MS program, and 39 in our certificate programs.

Our Post-MS DNP Program, launched in 2009, has been progressing nicely. The UMass Lowell program is unique in that it is interdisciplinary reflecting a collaboration between the Department of Nursing and the Department of Community Health and Sustainability’s Informatics and Management Program. Courses are offered in the evenings, and most are hybrid seminars/online.

Another exciting piece of news is that the Department of Nursing will be moving to a new building on campus in 2013! Ground breaking on the $40 million Health and Social Sciences building is scheduled for April 21, 2011, and the building is slated to be ready for the 2012-13 academic year. Dr. Jacqueline Dowling has represented our Department in the design of the nursing conference, office and laboratory space for the building.

Finally, last July, Dr. Susan Houde, previous Graduate Coordinator and Director of the MS, DNP and Certificate Programs, moved over to Weed Hall to begin a new position as Associate Dean in the School of Health and Environment (SHE). Her role as Associate Dean includes facilitating the development of research initiatives within SHE, faculty development in relation to research, and assisting with the development of new academic programs. I became Interim Director in July, and Dr. Barbara Mawn now serves as Graduate Coordinator in Nursing. Although we in the Department of Nursing miss Susan, we realize the important contributions she is currently making to the school in her new position.

I send along my best and hope that you will remain in touch with us. If you have not already, consider continuing your education through one of our courses, one of our certificates, or better yet through one of our doctoral programs!

Susan Reece
Director of the MS, DNP, and Certificate Programs
We are delighted to announce that Alice Bonner, a Graduate of UMass Lowell’s Gerontological Nursing Program, has made news at both the state (MA) and Federal levels. For the past year and one half or so she had been working for the Bureau of Health Care Safety and Quality at the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. This past winter, however, she was recruited by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to work with that organization examining workforce policies and standards of care. One of her first responsibilities will be to examine policies related to workforce training required in nursing homes. Dr. Bonner will use her combined expertise in nursing and policymaking to expand and improve care in nursing homes and services such as outpatient visits, adult day health programs and home and community-based outreach. As such, on a macro level, Dr. Bonner will be promoting the health and well-being of elderly people across the United States. She credits Drs. Karen Devereaux Melillo, Chair, and May Futrell, Professor Emerita for the inspiration for using her clinical background in nursing to make a difference in health care at the policy level. Kudos to Alice for making such a difference in health care!

Mary Aruda Ph.D., MSN, BSN, UMass Lowell PhD Program (2001) PhD currently teaches at UMass Boston in the family nurse practitioner and doctorate in nursing practice (DNP) programs. She will be inducted as a fellow in the American Academy of NP meeting in Las Vegas in June. Her dissertation research was published and she has also had a chance to collaborate on a project with Mary Kelly (PhD, 2010).


Susan Kelly-Weeder, PhD, MS, FNP, Susan Kelly-Weeder, PhD, MS, FNP, MS and PhD graduate from UMass Lowell was promoted to associate Professor with tenure at Boston College. In 2010 she was also honored with the Distinguished Practitioner Award from the National Academies of Practice (NAP), an interdisciplinary group to improve health outcomes through education, conversation and lobbying lawmakers. Other recent awards are the Excellence in Nursing Education Award from the MA Assn. of Registered Nurses, and a Research award from Boston College. Her areas of research include: predictors of fertility impairment in African-American women, the psychosocial aspects of an infertility diagnosis, and risk-reduction strategies for women. Recent publications include:


Mary D. Kelly (PhD, 2010) presented her dissertation research on a poster with Dr. Mawn entitled: “The Factors that Influence the Utilization of Primary Care for Children with Special Health Care Needs” at the 23rd Annual ENRS conference.
Cassandra Cavanaugh (Pagach) MS graduate Program (2002) is graduating in May 2011, from UMass Amherst DNP program. She is employed at a small private dermatology practice in Nashua, NH, Dermatology Associates of Southern NH.

Ellen Stokinger, RN, MSN, recently attended an Ambassador Summit Meeting held by the American Association of Critical Care Nurses (AACN) in Chapel Hill, NC on March 11-13, 2011. It involved 90 nurses from the eastern seacoast who act as Ambassadors for AACN to bring information from the national organization to local hospitals and chapters. As a group, we brainstormed to form ideas for AACN to focus on during the next year.

Amy Ranieri McCarron, FNP, MS graduate Program (2005) has been practicing at Rheumatology and Internal Medicine Associates in Wilmington, MA. She is completing her DNP degree at Simmons College in May 2011.

Alumni Notes: Let us know what you have been up to by writing your news and returning it to the address below. We will use the information in the next edition of the newsletter. Or if you know someone has moved, please notify us.

- Present Name: ______________________________
- Name at Graduation: __________________________
- Year of Graduation: __________________________
- BS _____ MS _____ DNP _____ PhD _____
- Current Email: ______________________________
- Suggestions for future activities:
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- My Story:
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Return to Pauline Beaulieu, Staff Assistant, Department of Nursing, UMass Lowell, 3 Solomont Way, Suite 2, Lowell, MA 01854. or respond via email to pauline_beaulieu@uml.edu

Precepting

Our graduates make the best preceptors! Our need for excellent preceptors is acute with our growing number of Master's students in practica experiences. Please consider precepting for this next year. To do so, contact Arline_ElAshkar@uml.edu and she or a faculty member will contact you with the details. Precepting hours can be counted toward recertification by the ANCC, and a tuition voucher may be awarded for those of you interested in continuing your education. Thank you.
**Students: Awards and News**

Djwan Scott, is a 2nd year MS student in the Adult Gerontology Program. We are pleased to report that she was the recipient two major awards this year. The first, in January, was the Excellence in Teaching/Excellence in Nursing Award from the Tufts Health Plan in conjunction with the MA Hospital Research and Education Association, and the second was through the New England Regional Black Nurses Association, Inc. She was only one of seven to receive the Tufts award and was celebrated on February 11, 2011 at the Nursing Excellence Awards Ceremony and Dinner in Boston. Djwan was nominated for the latter because of the substantive contributions she has made to the “Bring Diversity to Nursing” Program at the University.

Djwan studied biology at Howard University prior to becoming a nurse. Her future plans including transitioning to the DNP Program after receiving her MS with a plan to decrease health disparities through policy changes and cultural competence. When she was asked on interview what advice she would give to nurses thinking of pursuing a graduate degree, she exclaimed, “Go for it to make a difference and give back in order to make changes for quality health care!” Congratulations, Djwan!

Aileen Moore, an MS student due to graduate, has also been working on the “Bring Diversity to Nursing” program. She is mentoring high school students in Lawrence and was just announced that one of her students will be attending UMass Lowell in the fall.

**The Spring GSO Luncheon**

The GSO luncheon held on March 10 was well-attended by students representing the PhD, DNP, and MS programs. Dr. Barbara Mawn, Director of the PhD Program, described specifics of the UMass Lowell PhD and how it prepares students for faculty and research roles. PhD students, Traci Alberti, Sumi Dolben (both UML MS graduates) and Deborah Benes spoke about their experiences in the program and fielded student questions. Dr. Angela Nannini, Coordinator of the DNP Program, provided an overview of the DNP Program. Valerie King another UML MS graduate, Clinical Faculty member, and DNP student, described her experiences and plans during her doctoral education. The speakers clarified differences between these two doctoral programs for the attendees. Thanks to Dr. Betty Morgan, Associate Professor and GSO Advisor, and Gail Gregg, Graduating MS student and President of the Nursing GSO, for organizing this productive luncheon.
News from the PhD Program in Nursing

Program Director: Barbara Mawn, PhD, 978-934-4485
Barbara_Mawn@uml.edu

The purpose of PhD Program in nursing at UMass Lowell is to prepare nurse scholars in the field of health promotion. Graduates function as researchers, clinicians and educators who demonstrate leadership in health promotion, professional, political and social arenas. This program is offered in collaboration with the University of Massachusetts Boston, PhD Program

PhD Program News Fall, 2010

Sally Crotty successfully defended her dissertation, “Risk and Protective Factors Influencing binge Drinking and Health-Risk Consequences in a National Sample of College Students,” on December 15, 2010. She will graduate in May.

PhD Program News Spring, 2011

Five nursing doctoral students attended 23rd Annual Scientific sessions of the Eastern Nursing Research Society: Informing Health Policy through Science in Philadelphia: Traci Alberti, Sally Crotty, Linda Foley, Shari Goldberg and Susan Hamilton. Sally Crotty presented a poster on her dissertation research with Dr. Mawn: “Risk and Protective Factors Influencing Binge Drinking and Health-Risk Consequences in a National Sample of College Students.” Susan Hamilton presented a poster on her dissertation research with Dr. Mawn: “Predictors of Readiness for HIV Testing among Midlife Women.”
The purpose of the DNP program is to educate nurse practitioners who not only provide quality primary care to patients, but who assume leadership roles in the health care system, and have the knowledge and skills necessary to propose solutions to improve patient care and health care outcomes. This can be achieved by nurses who have strong patient care knowledge and skills obtained at the MS level, and also knowledge and skills in evaluation research, health policy, organizational leadership and financing, evidence-based practice and health care informatics. The DNP is expected to have a positive impact on the sustainability of the health care system by having advanced education in areas necessary to improve health care delivery using an evidence-based approach.

The curriculum in the Post-Masters DNP program is two academic years full-time in length, adding 41 credits of post-masters education. Part-time study is available. In addition to classroom and on-line experiences, students will complete 512 hours in health care settings as part of practicum experiences where they apply course content in practice settings. A scholarly project developed by the student includes an evidence-based intervention to improve practice or patient outcomes and an evaluation of the evidence-based intervention.

Program Objective

The objective of the DNP program at the University of Massachusetts Lowell is to prepare nurse leaders who propose, implement and evaluate positive evidence-based changes in health care.

DNP’s Caring for the Underserved-Enhancing your Graduate Studies at UMass Lowell

If you have attended a First Wednesdays event, then you have seen the early benefits that the Department of Nursing’s DNP’s Caring for the Underserved after MA Health Care Reform grant (a 3-year HRSA Advanced Education in Nursing-funded project) has to offer Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) students as well as Master’s students and faculty. Objectives of this project are to: recruit and retain DNP students, prepare a DNP workforce to provide culturally competent evidence-based care, and to enhance skills of DNPs to assume leadership, advocacy and nurse educator roles. The First Wednesdays series is the start of many undertakings to provide more information on caring for the underserved and providing culturally competent care. Additional initiatives include: the creation of online modules which will house information on these and other topics, and the hiring of a diversity scholar for spring 2012. We would also like to highlight the upcoming visit of G. Rumay Alexander, EdD, RN, a nationally renowned expert on diversity. Dr. Alexander will meet with DNP students and their advisors regarding the scholarly project (required for completion of the DNP program). Students will benefit from the information and tips from an expert on how to bring diversity into the scholarly work.

Caring for the underserved and cultural competency are two major themes in the grant. There are also aspects of the grant which call for enhancements to student support. We are here to promote student success and facilitate a smooth transition back to the life of a student; our back-to-school module and mentor system strive to do just that! Valerie King has been working hard on the back-to-school module which will be available online and house information to: prepare new students entering the university, assist with academics, promote work/life balance and more. Our mentor system also seeks to facilitate support and academic success, and this is done by setting students up with a career mentor or a content area mentor depending on the student’s needs.

Stay tuned as we roll out additional programs in the upcoming months. Have ideas or suggestions for programs or events? We would love to hear – contact Maria Halepis at 978-934-4587 or via email at maria_halepis@uml.edu.
Faculty Accomplishments

Grants


Houde, S.C., (PI), Nannini, A. (Co-PI) & Melillo, K. (Co-Investigator), HRSA’s AEN Grant Program for the 3-year project, ”DNP’s Caring for the Underserved after Massachusetts Health Care Reform.” ($734,149).


Nannini, A. (PI), King, V. & Remington, R. (Co-Investigators), Equipment grant for Advanced Education in Nursing program. HRSA funded 9/1/10-8/31/11, ($84,751).

Morgan, B. (PI) Remington, R. Nursing Educational Needs for Caring for People with Serious Mental Illness (SMI) at End-of-Life. American Psychiatric Nursing Foundation ($5,000).

Remington, R., (Co-Principal Investigator) & Shea, T Memory XL: An over-the-counter, neutriceutical formulation that provides antioxidant protection and prevents cognitive decline in aging: A clinical trial. Alzheimer’s Association ($247,000).

Publications

Manuscripts


Books


Dr. Karen Devereaux Melillo, Chair of the Department of Nursing, and Dr. Susan C. Houde, Associate Dean of SHE co-authored and edited the 2nd edition of Geropsychiatric and Mental Health Nursing. A number of UMass Lowell nursing faculty and alumni have authored chapters on pertinent topics such as sleep disorders, family care giving, problem behaviors, and nursing interventions in dementia care.


In collaboration with Dr. Lee Ann Hoff, Dr. Betty Morgan PhD, PMH, CNS-BC Associate Professor of Nursing and Coordinator of the Masters and Post-masters Certificate Program in Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing published a new text, Psychiatric and Mental Health Essentials in Primary Care. This text is designed for primary care providers, including physicians, nurse practitioners and physician assistants in either graduate student or practice roles across a range of primary care settings. It is also useful for mental health professionals engaged as consultants by primary care practitioners regarding psychiatric issues among their clientele.

The book addresses key mental health concepts and strategies for time-pressured practitioners in various healthcare settings serving diverse populations and offers theoretically sound and succinct guidelines for compassionate, efficient, and effective service to people in emotional and physical pain and distress, capturing the essentials of mental healthcare delivered by primary care providers.


This comprehensive volume presents the latest scientific evidence on health promotion, prevention, and treatment for sleep and sleep disorders. This graduate textbook and reference guide provides strategies for promoting normal sleep, caring for disordered sleep, and supporting sleep in health care settings. Written by leading nursing experts, this book is an invaluable source for graduate educators and students, as well as practitioners and researchers caring for patients suffering from sleep disorders.
Post-MS Certificate Options

Post-MS Graduate Certificate in Nursing Education (12 Credits)

This certificate responds to the growing need for professional nurses who have specialty education in teaching methods and curriculum. It is intended for nurses who hold a masters degree, a doctoral degree, or are matriculated in a doctoral program. The courses emphasize teaching/learning principles, curriculum and instruction, and research evaluation in higher education.

Post-MS Adult Psychiatric/Mental Health Nursing Certificate (18 Credits)

This 18-credit post-Masters certificate in adult psychiatric and mental health nursing provides MS-prepared nurse practitioners and clinical nurse specialists with the knowledge and skills necessary to care for adults with psychiatric and mental health issues. Those who complete the certificate are eligible to sit for the national certification examination for nurse practitioners and/or clinical nurse specialists in adult psychiatric and mental health nursing. Didactic and practicum courses must be taken concurrently and in sequence over a 3-semester period beginning in a Spring semester.

Post-Master’s Certificate in Sleep & Sleep Disorders in Health and Disease [Online]

This 12 credit online certificate program in sleep and chronobiology aims to respond to the NIH call to facilitate learning for health professionals in the areas of clinical and theoretical dimensions of sleep and chronobiology. The courses in the certificate program aim to provide the student with fundamental information in the normative mechanisms of sleep as well as biological and environmental influences in sleep and wakefulness across the lifespan. From this foundation, additional course work focuses on diagnosis and intervention in sleep dysregulation with a particular focus on the formal sleep disorders. State of the science intervention strategies are addressed from both the behavioral and pharmacologic perspectives.

For more information on the Graduate options at UMass Lowell, see our website: http://www.uml.edu/college/SHE/Nursing/Programs.html
What I Learned in Ghana

By Valerie King MS-FNP
Clinical Assistant Professor U-Mass Lowell and alumna (‘81.’88.’98)
Faculty Advisor to Nursing Students Without Borders

In January 2011 I traveled to Ghana for my third trip supervising 10 undergraduate nursing students from U-Mass Lowell. Some of you may have followed my blog at http://blog.uml.edu/nswb/. Those were stories written on a day by day basis while I was in Ghana and when I go back and read them I am struck with some of the descriptions and raw emotion that I was feeling at the time. Now that I am back in the USA and currently doing some research about international service learning experiences I have had time to reflect and start to formulate in my mind what this type of experience is like for me as a nursing faculty but also what it is like for the student nurse.

The trip is always challenging for me in many ways. For those of you who may have traveled to developing countries you will understand what I am saying. The environment of Ghana is so different from home. Upon arrival at the airport you are met by the hot and humid heat and a cacophony of noise from the Ghanaian people. The trip from the airport brings your initially past urban concrete buildings that don’t look much different from home but very quickly you are immersed in the scenes of substandard homes made out of tin, clay bricks and thatch. Many homes do not have running water or electricity. The air, water and land pollution is incredible. People are cooking by the side of the road and chickens and goats co-mingle as members of the household. Due to the poverty there are many people selling items by the side of the road just to survive. Water, plantain chips, meat pies are often seen as well as the unique items such as Bibles, superglue and cufflinks. The women carry large bowls in their heads filled with merchandise or food and men and women sit all day at strategic intersections hoping to bring home a few cedes (currency) to feed their families. The abject poverty is what I remember the most and myself and the students feel guilty for our own comfortable homes and lives back in the USA. This sense of being thankful for my own blessings, especially clean water, is what has stayed with me the most.

Our accommodations this year have improved but the hotels are not nearly the standard of our US hotels.

Our rooms are often occupied by winged and crawling insects as well as frequent losses of water and electricity. I hate to complain when I see how the majority of the Ghanaians live. It is during those challenging living arrangements when you recognize your own personal strengths and also see the resilience of the nursing students. Most of them have never traveled outside their country and so they are not only being bombarded with these environmental challenges but also the emotional challenges of being away from your family and witnessing such horrible living conditions. We all develop somewhat of a sense of inadequacy as we recognize that our efforts are only going to affect a small minority of people. But we persevere because we know that at least we are making an effort to improve the health and welfare of the people we have come to know and love.

We are good nurses. We have come prepared to deliver medical and other supplies to the people of the Volta region in Ghana. In total, thanks to donations of funds and supplies from our family, friends and colleagues back at home, we are able to deliver over 700 pounds of goods. We distribute clothes, toys and books to 4 orphanages. We deliver medical supplies and medications to 2 hospitals and 2 outpatient clinics.

The students have designed and implemented 2 unique community health interventions. One addresses the risk of malaria which kills about 20,000 children per year in Ghana. The UML students deliver a program to mothers of young children about malaria, how to detect it, how to treat it and how to prevent it with proper use of insecticide treated nets. We have purchased 35 nets to give out to these mothers in addition to some thermometers. Of the 40+ women in the group not one of them had a net at home to put their children under. The second project was designed to educate children on proper nutrition and other healthy behaviors. The UML students delivered that program at a local school and orphanage to total of over 80 children. As a nursing faculty it was a joyous moment for me to see my students in action and being the “nurse”.

Student Jason Hebert teaches a mother how to use a thermometer to help detect fever in child with malaria.
What I Learned in Ghana (cont.)

In addition to our projects we set up impromptu hypertension screening clinics at multiple locations in various rural villages. My mandate was that I wanted to take my nurses to the places that there were no nurses. Many people assume that chronic diseases like hypertension and diabetes might not exist in a country with a lower rate of obesity and smoking but the amount of uncontrolled and dangerously high hypertension would surprise most of you. Under my direction the students detected the type of hypertension and treated with medications as per my protocol. The students who were weaker in their BP measurement skills became experts in a short period of time. I estimate that we checked between 500-750 people. These clinics were occasionally chaotic as we managed crowd control for the people that wanted to be seen by the American nurses.

The end of the day we debriefed and I was amazed at how this experience affects the students. Occasionally tears of joy and tears of happiness were witnessed. They all relayed such incredible stories of what they had experienced and learned. There is no finer moment as an educator when you hear that. We all had to find a way to decompress at the end of the day. Sometimes it was a wild game of cards or some limited time on the internet communicating with loved ones at home. New foods were tried but we still had our dreams of comfort food from home. Friends were made and Facebook linkages were made between the Americans and the Ghanaians.

Sightseeing rounded out our experience. From a tour of landmarks in the capital city of Accra, to a visit to our own US Embassy, to the slave castles at Cape Coast and to walking above the tree line at the Kakum canopy walk: we all experienced Ghana in our special way. A trip like this changes you. For my students it is the beginning of an awareness of their nursing skills and how they can apply them in international settings but also helps them to recognize their own strengths with adversity. For me it has reinforced my pride in the UML nursing students but also created a sense of looking at all of my patients with a much broader perspective. I have learned to try to see beyond the person. I look at where they have come from. Maybe they are an immigrant from a developing country like Ghana but maybe they are 10th generation American who still struggles to feed their family and survive. As a nurse we can’t lose sight of the challenges facing our patients. Challenges can make us stronger. This is what Ghana has taught me.