

The Synapse

A Communication Impulse

Connecting the Bethel University Nursing Department with its Alumni

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Uganda Christian University Celebrates First Nursing Graduation

On June 6th Sandy Peterson and Karen Drake were in Uganda for the celebration of the first graduation of the RN-BSN degree completion program at Uganda Christian University (UCU). Fourteen students graduated in this first class. It was Sandy's first trip to UCU and Uganda. It was meaningful for her to be present to extend our congratulations to Jemimah Mutabaazi, Director of Nursing Program, Doug Fountain, Acting Director of Department of Health Sciences, and the others in the administration on this momentous occasion. To commemorate this accomplishment, from the donations of nursing students, faculty, and staff, Bethel's Nursing Department presented the



UCU Nursing Program, a framed page from the illustrated St. Johns Bible from the Psalms and an Elmo, a projection device to use in classroom presentation. Chi-at-Large chapter of Sigma Theta Tau made a substantial contribution for the purchase of the Elmo. The presentation of these gifts was made at the pinning ceremony at the Ridor Hotel in the neighboring town of Seita. For Karen it was meaningful to see the fruit of her involvement in this program from its conception as a possibility in 2003 to its realization as evidenced by these first graduates. In addition she spent her last sabbatical as a Fulbright Senior Scholar at UCU 2006-2007 teaching these 14 students. In addition, the newest program – a masters' in nursing leadership with a focus on nursing education was launched during their visit. Sandy was a guest lecturer in the first Teaching and Learning in Nursing Education class. While Sandy needed to return after the celebration, Karen remained for the month of June to continue teaching. Three of the seven new masters' students are now full-time faculty in the nursing program at UCU.

Growth in the Nursing Department

Because of the long term nursing shortage and the number of strong applicants to the program, the Nursing Department has been working closely with the College of Arts and Sciences administration to increase enrollment in the pre-licensure program. One of the biggest hindrances for this has been inadequate lab and practice space. However, by working together, the department was able to temporarily use limited space from the library to house our computer equipment. This has given us room in the lab for additional practice space. This has resulted in the department's being able to admit seventy-one junior students for the 2008-2009 school year, the largest group of students admitted to the major. Our plan is to increase enrollment to ninety students over the next several years. If things go as planned, the department will have some additional space in the future to adequately serve our growing student body.

There are now four cohorts for the registered nurses who are completing their Bachelor of Science in Nursing through the College of Adult and Professional Studies (CAPS). Two cohorts begin in the fall (Mondays and Thursdays) and two start in the spring (Tuesdays and Wednesdays). In the Graduate School, the department will need to provide two sections of the core courses to accommodate the number of students interested in either the Nursing Education or Nursing and Health Care Leadership concentrations.

The Sim Man "Lives"...

That is what senior nursing students would tell you after spending a clinical day in the lab last spring simulating care for a complex patient and his family. The students took turns role playing the nurse and family members as they each cared for the Sim man during a day, evening, or night shift. After each scenario, students met with a faculty member to debrief and receive feedback on what went well and on areas for improvement.

The student feedback was very positive related to the learning experience. "I was thrilled to be working with a patient I couldn't harm and feel the freedom to implement interventions I was capable of doing as the RN," stated one student. Another student stated it was helpful to watch others in the nursing role and observe some of the things they did differently than what she might have done, giving her new ideas to incorporate into her practice. "The feedback I got in simulation for things like communication and organization was incredibly helpful and gave me such a confidence boost. I learned how to be more self-directed and how to perform the assessments I have learned how to do, but with confidence and without hesitation" was additional feedback from a student.

Faculty members are continuing to develop new scenarios to use with both junior and senior nursing students as simulation is incorporated in the nursing curriculum. If you wander up to the nursing lab this fall, listen... you may hear the Sim man talking, coughing, and moaning as Bethel nursing students make decisions on how best to care for him!

Faculty News

Goings. Dr. Joann Wessman officially retired as a full-time faculty member at the end of the 2007-2008 academic year. The university awarded her Professor Emerita status in recognition of the leadership she provided to the University community, through her involvement in campus ministry programs and to the Nursing Department. Joann was highly involved in the development of the master's program and for many years chaired the committee that was responsible for Bethel's Nursing Research and Practice Symposium. Joann's most significant legacy to the Nursing Department comes from her vision of nursing as ministry. She was highly involved in a number of projects that represented that vision. In collaboration with Dr. Nancy Olen, she participated in the Edgren Scholars Program. She and Nancy involved students in their research on the integration of faith and health in church-affiliated frail elderly. This was an ongoing research agenda. Joann developed and taught a series of courses on nursing as ministry. She is a master teacher, a fact that was acknowledged through the University's Excellence in Teaching Award in 2004. Fortunately the department and students will continue to benefit from her expertise; she will be an adjunct faculty member this fall, teaching in the graduate program. Retirement will also provide more time to devote to her role as coordinator of Riverdale Church's Family Health Ministries, writing articles and book chapters on faith-health integration in church-affiliated frail elderly for professional and lay audiences, and care for her nephew's three children, ages 3-9. Plans are also being made to have her teach a course in the master's program offered at Uganda Christian University.

Karen Christiansen, who joined the faculty as an adjunct instructor in 2002, left Bethel at the end of the 2007-2008 academic year. Karen was primarily involved in clinical instruction in acute care medical/surgical settings in both the junior and senior levels. Karen was able to communicate both her high expectations of students and her profound care for them in their development as nurses who practice from a Christ-centered perspective. Karen also was involved in classroom teaching in one of the patho-physiology courses and more recently taught in the course in cultural diversity offered through the College of Adult and Professional Studies. The Christiansen family is anticipating a move to the east coast.

Two adjunct faculty members who taught in the program offered through the College of Adult and Professional Studies will not be returning this academic year. **Erica Timko Olson**, who joined the faculty in 2006, teaching the *Theoretical Foundations of Nursing* and *Baccalaureate Nursing Roles* courses will be devoting more time to her doctoral studies. **Joyce Bredesen** has accepted a full-time teaching position at Metropolitan State University. She taught *Community Health Nursing: Theory and Practice* in 2007-2008.

Comings. Dr. Mary Alkire returns to the faculty after a year's absence. She will be teaching in both the RN-BSN degree completion and master's programs. Last year she served as a faculty member for Walden University, an academic institution that provides distance education. She will continue to be involved in distance education, offering the on-line portion of several hybrid (face-to-face/on-line) courses.

Betty Asher and **Barb Hallblade** have joined the department as adjunct faculty members. Betty Asher teaches in the junior-level lab course, *Foundations of Nursing Practice*. She completed her master's degree in nursing at Bethel University. Her most recent clinical practice includes the role of Education and Development Specialist in the HealthEast Care System and earlier staff nurse and lead preceptor at Woodwinds Health Campus. Barb Hallblade is teaching *Theoretical Foundations of Nursing* in the College of Adult and Professional Studies. She also received her master's degree in nursing from Bethel University. Barb has been on the staff at Unity Hospital since 1989 and during that time has served in a variety of roles: staff nurse in charge role on cardiac/renal step-down unit, member of the IV Therapy Team, Editor of *Nursing Matters*, the hospital's monthly newsletter, and most recently a staff nurse in obstetrics, special care nursery, and gynecology. In addition, she has been a clinical instructor for Anoka Ramsey Community College, a faculty member at Anoka-Hennepin Technical College, and most recently a clinical instructor for Inver Hills Community College.

Also joining the Department as an Adjunct Assistant in Instruction is **Kathy Fabro**. She will be working with Maureen Juarez in clinical in the course, *Nursing Care with Elderly Adults*. Kathy is currently in the Nursing Department's master's program and a clinical nursing instructor at Century College and a staff nurse on medical-surgical, pediatric, and hospice units at Woodwinds.

Faculty Activities

Marilyn Chambers and **Connie Dreyer** were featured in the Star Tribune in early September for their Rise for Seniors business that they founded in 2003. The focus of Rise for Seniors is to conduct needs assessments, outline options, and oversee services for the aging parents of adult children.

Pam Friesen had a beneficial sabbatical this spring. She did further research on Student Success strategies and had an opportunity to do site visits and phone interviews with six schools of nursing. As a result of this work, the Bethel Nursing Department has adopted additional strategies for promoting student success. This sabbatical also provided time for rest and renewal plus a chance to travel to Texas for the spring wildflowers.

Maureen Juarez volunteered and worked as a Clinic Manager for the St. Mary's Health Clinics during the summer. She and her husband also traveled to Peru for 10 days in August on a Dental Mission Project.

Bernie Missal has received a Fulbright Award for spring of 2009. She will spend the spring term at the University of Nizwa in Sultanate of Oman. Her project "Promoting the Profession of Nursing" is a combination of research and teaching. The research portion, "Omani women's transition to motherhood" is a continuation of research conducted in the United Arab Emirates where Bernie lived for 26 years prior to coming to Bethel.

Sandy Peterson and **Tim Bredow** have published the second edition of their text on Middle Range Theories.

Marge Schaffer has had a productive spring and summer. She collaborated with Rose Jost, Family Health Manager from Bloomington Health Department, to publish an article entitled "Pregnancy-Free Club: A Strategy to Prevent Repeat Adolescent Pregnancy" in the July/August issue of *Public Health Nursing*. She has been functioning as a research consultant and co-chair of the Evidence-Based Nursing Committee at Hennepin County Medical Center. In April Marge and **Bernie Missal** presented at the Iowa Conference on Evidence-Based Practice. In June Marge presented with Pat Schoon from the College of St. Catherine and Bonnie Brueshoff, Director of Public Health Nursing for Dakota County, at the Henry Street Consortium on *Creating a Sustainable Partnership between Education and Practice for Population Health*. Marge is now the President of the Chi-at-Large Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International for 2008-2010. This summer Marge also worked on a book about nurses' stories of communication at the end of life, which will be published by Sigma Theta Tau. Amidst all of her scholarly work, Marge made time to take a canoe trip in Vermont with her husband in June and spent many hours playing with her two-year old grandson.

Deb Solomon: Beth Peterson and Deb Solomon along with Bonnie Westra from the U of M presented to the MN Home Care Association regarding *Improvement of Quality Through Academic and Clinical Partnerships*. The presentation was very, very well received!!

Student Accomplishments

Heidi Bredemeier wrote a devotional based on her experiences in Uganda, which was published in the July/September, 2008 edition of the *Journal of Christian Nursing*.

Nikki Umhoefer Borner has won two athletic awards this year: the NCAA Post Graduate Scholarship and the ESPN Magazine Academic All-American Second Team Award.

Ann Gihl in the master's program is now the chair elect of the Symposium Committee for the Pulmonary Hypertension Association. She will also serve on the Executive Leadership Committee at the national level.

Debbie Rescoria, Jackie Tillman, Heidi Bredemeier, Jackie Standish and **Linda Shell** are five new graduate members at large who are serving on the Chi-at Large Chapter of the Sigma Theta Tau International Board.

Janelle Shearer, a graduate of the master's program, won second prize for her poster presentation, *Oral Medication Management in Home Health Agencies*, in the 17th Annual Nursing Research Conference at Mayo Clinic.

2008 Nursing Research & Practice Symposium Poster Winners

Laura Nugteren, RN, BSN
Nancy McGillivray, RN
Loreen Kimble, RN

Ann Gihl, RN, BSN
Rose Reiter, RN
Shona Elsberry, RN

Debra Sullivan, RN, BSN
Carlene Gilbert, RN
Sharon Tacheny, RN

Jacqueline Standish, RN
Lindsey Bednarchuk, RN

Emily Mattsson
Christina Olson
Heidi Bredemeier
Leslie Collins

Tierra McDearmon
Stacy Patnode
Susan Brueske

Patricia Murray
Joanna Paul
Hannah Carlson

Ike Okechukwu
Holly Bergsten
Rachel Carlson

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