



The

# PULSE

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## Resource Center Celebration

The mood was festive, as the School of Nursing welcomed friends and the press to celebrate the dedication of the Fairfield University School of Nursing Robin Kanarek '96 Learning Resource Center.

Center a reality. “The result is that we have a cutting edge classroom and lab spaces that are fully equipped with sophisticated teaching tools and technology that are helping to educate our students, so they are prepared to provide the best in patient care.”



Jean Santopatre photo

(From left): Dr. Suzanne Campbell, Resource Center director, Robin Kanarek'96, Dean Jeanne Novotny, and Advisory Board Chair Nancy Lynch, P'95.

Robin Kanarek graduated summa cum laude from the School's RN to BSN program in 1996. In 2004, she and her husband, Joe, founded the Kanarek Family Foundation to honor the memory of their son, David, who had recently died of cancer. The Foundation has supported numerous projects, most relating to palliative care or pediatric care.

“Joining the Board [the SON Board of Advisors] was probably one of the better decisions of my nursing career,” Kanarek said. “When I went to school in the 70s, our practice setting was the hospital... It takes time to develop inner confidence, and I believe the new center will accelerate the process by allowing students to practice their skills in a safe environment.”

“Today, we honor the results of three years of focused effort by our nursing Board of Advisors as well as our nursing faculty,” said University President Jeffrey von Arx, S.J. “These Advisory Board members worked closely with Dr. Jeanne Novotny, dean of the School of Nursing, and her faculty as the strategic vision for the School was defined, vetted, and funded. Together, they have created classrooms and laboratories equipped with an integrated system of technology.”

Dr. Jeanne Novotny, RN, FAAN, dean of the School of Nursing, said that she is grateful to Kanarek, the Board, and the numerous contributors who have helped make the Learning Resource



Jean Santopatre photo

Olivia Weeks '05 and Dr. Sheila Grossman (right) demonstrate SimMan®. Weeks donated funds for the model upon her graduation in 2005.



Fairfield  
UNIVERSITY

School of Nursing

## Carole Pomarico honored

She's been a lynchpin at the School of Nursing for 35 years, teaching, encouraging, and recruiting new nurses to various programs within the school. On May 8, Carole Pomarico was honored for all that she has done for the nursing profession with a Nightingale Award for Excellence in Nursing, presented by the Visiting Nurse Association & Hospice Care of Southwestern Connecticut.

to best practices for teaching adults, and in particular, for teaching second-degree students.

Dean Jeanne Novotny called Pomarico both an outstanding teacher and advocate for students. "She helps each student to recognize his or her strengths and teaches them to use those strengths for personal and professional growth. She role models what it means to be a nurse in her manner and professional image."

Pomarico has led the Student Nurse Association for many years, and she also is the School of Nursing's liaison to the community. She has a proven record of success in encouraging students to take part in professional activities and community service activities, such as Hunger Clean-Up, the American Heart Association Heart Walk, and outreach programs for the elderly and underprivileged children in underserved areas of Fairfield County. She serves on Fairfield's Student Health Advisory Council and several faculty committees.

"I was especially moved that six of my students – past and present—were also honored," said Pomarico. They included April Aysseh, '03, a graduate of the second degree program and

now a pediatric nurse at Greenwich Hospital; and Roann Paligutan, '07, a graduate from the RN to BSN program and nurse at Stamford Hospital; as well as four students in the RN to BSN program: Sharon Pettway, a critical care nurse at Bridgeport Hospital; Ellen Stacom, a nurse with Nursing and Home Care, Inc.; Heidi Stellar a clinical educator and nurse at Norwalk Hospital; and Theresa Weber, a nurse at St. Vincent's Medical Center.

At the ceremony, Dr. Novotny, on behalf of the School of Nursing, accepted a 2008 Nightingale Nursing Scholarship worth \$2,500 that will help a student. The Nightingale awards are Connecticut's largest state-wide nursing recognition program, which is designed to focus public attention on the profession and honor achievement in nurses.



Professor Carole Pomarico (left) with Dean Jeanne Novotny at the Nightingale Award gala.

"Nursing has provided me with the ability to meet challenges, encourage and support prospective nurses, current students, and graduates, embrace change, nurture individuals, facilitate creativity, encourage humor, and foster growth and critical thinking with students and colleagues," says Pomarico. "I am a professional nurse and I wouldn't change it for the world."

In 2006, Pomarico was named the School's adult program director, a position that involves recruiting, advising, nurturing, and supporting 'non-traditional students.' She has been integral in helping to build the School of Nursing's second-degree, Registered Nurse to Bachelor of Science in Nursing (RN to BSN), and part-time programs for adults. Her expertise in teaching second-degree students is considerable, and she is known nationally for her scholarship related

## Resource Center assessment

Dr. Suzanne Campbell is spearheading an assessment project to evaluate the extent to which the changes in the nursing curriculum related to the use of the School of Nursing Robin Kanarek Learning Resource Center and incorporation of innovative teaching methods are reaching its goals and objectives.

“When we developed the concept for the Learning Resource Center a few years ago, assessment was the fourth step of our plan,” said Dr. Campbell. The evaluation will include collecting quantitative and qualitative data from students, faculty, administration, alumni, and employers of students who will be asked to participate in surveys, focus groups, and/or interviews. The information will be



compiled into secure data files for the purposes of the evaluation. Associate Dean Phil Greiner and two external consultants are on the assessment committee, along with Dr. Curt Naser, facilitator for Academic Assessment, who developed the Eidos software used to track the data collected.

“By designing opportunities for each segment of the stakeholders to provide feedback on the various aspects of the project, the project director and

administration will have information to make any adjustments as needed and to ensure that the time, effort, and resources provided by the University will be best used,” said Dr. Campbell. The four-year assessment plan will complete its first year of evaluation by August.

## Advisory Board welcomes new member



The School of Nursing Advisory Board is pleased to welcome new member Charles Trunz, P’11. Trunz is president of North Shore Healthcare Enterprises, a strategic healthcare investment firm that focuses on expansion and the development and investment in new businesses within the North Shore-Long Island Jewish (NSLIJ) Health System. Prior to his position at NSLIJ, Trunz was senior managing director at JP Morgan for over 20 years, serving in several leadership capacities.

Trunz serves on the Alumni Association Board of Governors and the School of Business Board of Advisors at Georgetown, and on Advisory Boards at Fairfield Universities, Holy Child Academy, Make-A-Wish Foundation of Metro New York, and St. Mary’s [Manhasset, N.Y.] Parish Finance Committee. He is also CEO of the Gerry Trunz Foundation for the advancement of ovarian cancer research and palliative care services. His son Max is a rising sophomore at Fairfield.

### What’s your first roommate from Fairfield doing today?



- A. has seven children and owns a llama farm in Idaho
- B. started her own coffeehouse in lower Manhattan 20 years ago and now is a major importer of coffee beans on the eastern seaboard
- C. just got the leading role in an off-Broadway production

*Curious?* Find out these things and more. Catch up with your classmates. . . Share your stories and photos. . . Network for jobs at hospitals and nursing homes. Join the Online Community.

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**Fairfield’s Online Community**  
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To register, use the ID number printed with your mailing address on this magazine.

## Terry Quell new CNA president



Jean Santopatre photo

**D**r. Terry Tavella Quell, RN, '79, undergraduate program director, has assumed the presidency of the Connecticut Nurses' Association (CNA).

As CNA's chief elected officer, Dr. Quell will represent the association at national and state meetings and serve as the spokesperson for the association. She also will lead CNA's board of directors as it carries out its mission and strategic

initiatives concerning the education of nurses, legislation, and compensation to protect and advance the practice of nursing.

"I see my role as being patient advocate, and vocal proponent of the value of the profession," says Dr. Quell.

A major challenge to the nursing profession, she notes, is the looming shortage of registered nurses. Connecticut is facing a shortage of 11,000 nurses by 2010, and, just as alarming, almost 75% of nursing faculty will retire in the next 10 to 15 years. "We don't just need students to consider nursing, because that is happening and in fact, programs across the country are bursting at the seams, and turning away thousands of qualified candidates. The challenge now is that we don't have enough nursing faculty." She has called upon CNA members to further their education and to mentor younger nurses.

Dr. Quell was recently appointed by the mayor to the Norwalk Board of Health. In addition, she sits on the School Based Health Advisory Board in Norwalk, and is the vice president of the Board of Directors of the Southwest Area Health Education Center (AHEC).

## In the News

### Focus on Women's Health

In March, the School of Nursing was awarded a \$100,000 grant from the Connecticut Health and Educational Facilities Authority (CHEFA) to support a new state-of-the-art simulation laboratory for educating students about women's health, including labor and delivery methods, emergency obstetrical situations, and infant emergencies. The grant will be used to fund the School's Women's Health Simulation Expansion Project. According to CHEFA, Fairfield University was one of only ten non-profits awarded a grant from a highly competitive field of 40 applications.

"The Women's Health Simulation Expansion Project will allow undergraduate and graduate students to practice skills prior to entering the clinical area," said Dr. Suzanne Campbell, associate professor.



Teaching tools, including 'SimBaby' and 'Vital Sim Anne,' will be purchased with the help of this grant. A birthing bed, infant warmer, and infant isolate will further enhance the real feel of a hospital, and familiarize students with the equipment that they will use in clinical experiences in family birth units. The lab for the Women's Health project will be located in the Fairfield University School of Nursing Robin Kanarek Learning Resource Center, which is directed by Dr. Campbell.

### Poster wins Award of Excellence

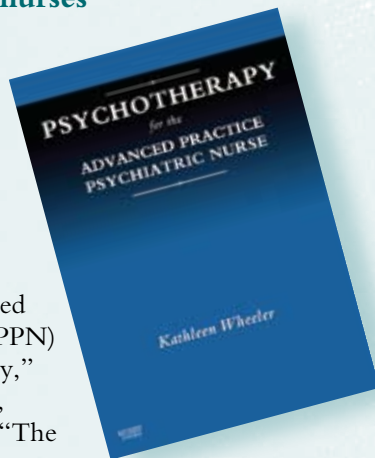
Nancy Moriber, assistant professor, director of the Nurse Anesthesiology program, and a candidate for a doctoral degree from Rush University, won a Sigma Xi award of excellence for her poster presentation this spring at the Rush Research Forum. Her presentation, Evaluating the Reliability and Validity of the Pediatric Perioperative Comfort Instrument (PPCI), was designed to establish the reliability and validity of an observational instrument that measures holistic comfort during the preoperative and post-operative period in children aged 2-10.

Moriber designed the PPCI based on the holistic theory of comfort. “It’s user-friendly and rapid, allowing a nurse in the operating room and recovery room to assess a child’s level of comfort within a minute,” she explained, adding, “Comfort is integral to the nursing profession and we need a tool to help us accurately measure comfort as an outcome of care provided to our patients.” If the tool is validated, the ultimate goal is to adapt it for use nationally in other nursing subspecialties such as home care, hospice and palliative care.

Moriber was also awarded a Golden Lamp Society scholarship for \$10,000 to support the larger study she will be conducting on 200 patients this year.

### Advice for psychiatric nurses

Dr. Kathleen Wheeler’s book, *Psychotherapy for the Advanced Practice Psychiatric Nurse*, has garnered some attention since its November 2007 publication date. “This well-done primer is a major contribution to the discipline of nursing in showing advanced practice psychiatric nurses (APPN) how to practice psychotherapy,” noted a review in the journal, *Perspectives in Psychiatric Care*. “The author aptly lays out a holistic paradigm for advanced psychiatric nursing (APN) practice by drawing upon a neuroscience of information processing, human development, attachment theory, and trauma.” In addition to her position as professor of nursing, Dr. Wheeler has practiced as a nurse psychotherapist for 25 years.



### Mentoring for Nurses

Dr. Sheila Grossman has received the American Journal of Nursing Book of the Year award for her book, *Mentoring in Nursing: A Dynamic and Collaborative Process*.

“This book will help inspire a more cohesive, flexible, and empowered nursing force, whether in academia, the hospital unit, or any health care facility,” one reviewer wrote. Features of the book include definitions and components of the mentoring process, models and strategies, coaching, mentor and mentee perspectives, and multicultural competency.

### Student wins library prize



Award-winner Jessica Lavine flanked by Dean Jeanne Novotny and Assistant Professor Alison Kris.

To encourage students to use all aspects of the library resources available to them – including services, electronic resources, and collections—the DiMenna-Nyselius Library Research Prize was created. This year, the prize went to nursing student Jessica Lavine '10, who showed an impressive ability to negotiate the information-gathering process when doing research for her paper on pressure ulcers. She developed a list of keywords, then accessed appropriate nursing databases, such as CINAHL and PubMed, used advanced search features, and consulted with a reference librarian. “[Jessica] wrote a beautiful paper on the care and treatment of pressure ulcers in long term care facilities,” said her professor, Dr. Alison Kris. “She was able to approach the topic with level of sophistication beyond that which is usually seen at the sophomore level.”

### Palliative care infused into the curriculum

A team of faculty engaged with integrating spirituality and end-of-life care into the undergraduate and graduate curricula can chalk up a number of accomplishments, including five ELNEC trained faculty, three published research projects supported by the Pfeiffer Foundation, and several national and international presentations. Faculty also co-sponsored a conference on palliative care that was attended by 60 participants across the state. Drs. Grossman, Lange, Shea, and Moriber are currently working on a longitudinal study to assess graduate student outcomes regarding their knowledge and attitudes, and refining an instrument that tests nurses’ knowledge about end-of-life care.

## End-of-life care for children and adolescents

Palliative and end-of-life care for children and adolescents are topics that are not well integrated into the healthcare profession. To address this issue, Dr. Eileen

O'Shea, DNP, RN, is spearheading a project to infuse pediatric palliative care into the both the undergraduate and graduate curricula, with the help of three substantial gifts to develop faculty expertise and redesign nursing curricula.

The Nursing Curriculum Integration: Pediatric/Adolescent Cancer Palliative Care project has received a

pledge of \$50,000 from the Kanarek Family Foundation, in memory of David Kanarek, and \$15,000 from the Daphne Seybolt Culpeper Foundation. An additional \$50,000 has been received from University Trustee Frank Carroll '89 for a two-year project related to research associated with pediatric palliative care.

“Most nursing programs have a commitment to educate students regarding issues related to health promotion and health maintenance of children, youth, and families,” Dr. O'Shea explained. “Less time is devoted to educating students about the multidimensional needs of families with children who have life limiting illnesses.” As a result, she adds, most graduating nurses are not well prepared to support the 55,000 children and families per year who will experience the loss. “To make improvements in palliative and end-of-life care for children and youth, we must make changes in our education for all health care professionals. And what better place to start than with the education of our future nurses?”



Jean Santopatre photo

## Student profile: Francis Obiako

One of the interesting things about the students enrolled in the second degree nursing program is that they come from a range of backgrounds and areas of study.

Take Francis Obiako, for example. Five years ago, the former economics major owned his own business in his native Nigeria, designing shoes that were then manufactured in China. Life was good and his business was doing well, but then he won the U.S. visa lottery he had applied for a year earlier. It was a tough decision, but he ultimately decided to close his business and head across the ocean. “I wanted to challenge myself with something else,” he said simply.

“My childhood dream was to become a doctor, but I came here with an open mind,” he said, noting that he also considered getting his MBA. “But every place I looked needed nurses, so I

looked at some second degree programs and thought I'd give it a try.” After the first week, he was hooked, and eventually found he had a particular affinity for geriatrics. “I cared for one woman who had a hip replacement. She was scheduled to go home at 11 a.m., but asked her family to pick her up late because she wanted to thank me when I came in for my shift. I love having that kind of interaction with people, of making a difference in their lives,” he said. “I've found a whole new world in nursing.”



Obiako will graduate in August, and has applied to the VA hospital in West Haven, the place where he did most of his clinical rotations. Already, he's thinking long-term, and may someday apply to Fairfield's nurse anesthesia program. But it's his short term plans that are more definite, and include a December trip to Nigeria to visit the family he hasn't seen in five long years.

## The power of partnerships

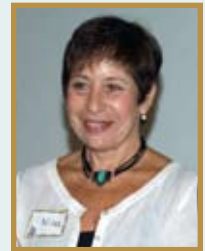
When Nina Fausty joined St. Vincent's Medical Center in Bridgeport two and a half years ago, her focus was to advance professional nursing practice and ultimately apply for Magnet Hospital designation. "The Magnet journey involves transforming the practice environment to improve quality of care and service provided," she said. "It's the improvements we make along the way that improve patient outcomes and enhance the work environment for the nurses." Those improvements include changing the governance style so that bedside caregivers have more say in decision making, and increasing the number of baccalaureate educated nurses.

It's that attention to detail that makes the School of Nursing's partnership with St. Vincent's so valuable. "We are delighted to be working with a first class medical center on so many important initiatives to optimize patient outcomes," said Dean Jeanne Novotny. "This is such an exciting partnership!"

Twenty-eight St. Vincent's nurses have already completed the School of Nursing's geriatric certificate program,

16 nurses attained national certification, and there's interest in beginning another program. Partly because of that education, fall rates among patients have been reduced. In fact, Fausty and Dr. Jean Lange, associate professor in the School of Nursing, have parlayed the results into an article, "Acute Care-Academic Partnerships to Improve Quality of Care for Older Adults," that highlights the successful outcomes of a faculty-mentored geriatric nurse certification program. Not only does the patient benefit from improved care, but nurses who attained national certification had significantly improved satisfaction with their professional status, the authors concluded.

Every time the hospital has a staff education day for nurses, Professor Carole Pomarico is there to discuss the School's RN to BSN and master's in nursing programs. "The last time, forty of our staff members signed up for information," said Fausty. "It's all consistent with our vision to advance professional practice at St. Vincent's."



# Fairfield University School of Nursing



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## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Thurs., July 24 Graduate Information Session** for those interested in learning more about graduate programs in the School of Nursing. 5:30-7 p.m., Kelley Center on campus. See [www.fairfield.edu/grad](http://www.fairfield.edu/grad)

**Fri., August 22 Graduation for Second Degree students.** 10 a.m.-noon, Barone Campus Center.

**Mon., Sept. 15 Open VISIONS Forum** with historian and author Douglas Brinkley. 8 p.m., Quick Center for the Arts, \$45. For tickets, phone the Box Office at 254-4010.

**Fri., Oct. 10 School of Nursing Open House** for high school juniors and seniors interested in a career in nursing. 9 a.m. registration in the Quick Center for the Arts; tours of facilities and panel discussions to follow. To register, contact the Office of Undergraduate Admission at (203) 254-4000, ext. 4100.



## School of Nursing

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## Message From the Dean:



It is with great pride that I am able to tell you about a new initiative in the School of Nursing: palliative care for children. Pediatric palliative care focuses on caring for children – and their families-- with serious or complex medical conditions so that they can live the best possible life given their extraordinary circumstances. Care for this very special population group should be holistic in nature and address the psychosocial and spiritual needs of the child, as well as his or her physical comfort. Unfortunately, the nurses who are on the frontlines of caring for these children and adolescents often don't have the education they need to achieve this goal.

We plan to change that. Spearheading this effort will be Dr. Eileen O'Shea, a new faculty member and an expert in this area of research. With \$115,000 in funding she has already received, she'll begin revising our curriculum to better prepare nursing students to be knowledgeable and able to fill the needs of these children and their families.

I would also like to turn your attention to the pictures on the front of this issue celebrating the dedication of the Robin Kanarek Learning Resource Center. It was truly a magical day and wonderful tribute to Robin, who has been such a good friend and support to the School of Nursing.

Sincerely,

Jeanne M. Novotny, Ph.D., RN, FAAN  
Dean and Professor