

The PULSE

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A PUBLICATION OF THE SCHOOL OF NURSING

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The Pulse, a newsletter published twice a year by the Fairfield University School of Nursing, is written for and distributed to all alumni of the School of Nursing, as well as area nursing schools, local hospitals, healthcare facilities, friends and benefactors of the School of Nursing. Its primary mission is to keep alumni and friends informed about what is going on in the School and to highlight the impact of gifts and partnerships, focusing on the people behind them and the people – both students and faculty – benefiting from them.



Fairfield
UNIVERSITY

School of Nursing welcomes Nurse Anesthesia students



B.K. Angeletti

Appearing eager to begin their studies as the University's first-ever class of future nurse anesthetists, Fairfield's 11 new nurse anesthesia students gathered at Alumni House on Jan. 12 for a welcome reception held in their honor. The 29-month, fulltime program is a collaborative effort between Fairfield University, Bridgeport Hospital, and Bridgeport Anesthesia Associates. Upon graduation, these nurses will be in demand and among the highest paid in the nursing field.

Unlike most graduate students, this group will go through the program as a cohort, and Nancy Moriber, CRNA, MSN, APRN, director of Bridgeport Hospital's Nurse Anesthesia program, noted that their energy, humor, and camaraderie was already in evidence after just three days of orientation. That's a plus, since all have left their jobs and many have moved across the country to enroll in the program. Clementine Mainsah, for

example, had been working in Michigan as a cardiac intensive care nurse for two years when she left to join the program; recently, she moved into a dorm at Bridgeport Hospital. Drew Brown had been a surgical ICU nurse and moved from Missouri with his wife and two young children. His motivation? "Every CRNA [certified registered nurse anesthetist] I spoke to loves their job—not likes it, they love it. I'm attracted to the autonomy," he says.

Despite the daunting curriculum, admission into the program was highly competitive, says Dean Jeanne Novotny. Students will split their time between class work at Fairfield University, where they will take master's in nursing science core and specialty courses, and clinical time at Bridgeport Hospital.

CRNAs can work in a hospital setting or can open their own practices, working in collaboration with a physician. The Fairfield University program graduates nurses with a master's of science in nursing (MSN). "That's important to me. It will help further my career," said Manuel Falcon, who had been working as an ICU nurse at Hartford Hospital. A master's in nursing science is necessary for anyone planning to go on for a doctoral degree, he explains.



Message From Advisory Board Chair Nancy Lynch



Dear Friends,

The pages of this newsletter will reveal the achievements of another academic year at the Fairfield University School of Nursing. An exceptional student body representing 409 undergraduate and graduate students participated in classes and clinical placements with highly accomplished faculty and practitioners in the field.

This was the first year that the students had access to newly renovated classroom and laboratory spaces throughout the building, thanks in part to the work of the School of Nursing Advisory Board. This dedicated group of ambassadors for the School of Nursing has worked closely with Dr. Jeanne Novotny, dean, and members of the faculty to understand the most important current objective for the School's continued growth: the Learning Resource Center. This two-part project includes funds for construction and equipment as well as the related faculty and curriculum development. Its impact over the initial four-year implementation period will change nursing education delivery throughout the entire undergraduate and graduate curriculum.

The total fundraising goal for the Center is \$1,060,000, of which \$918,000 has already been raised with full participation from our Advisory Board. One of our Board members, Robin Bennett Kanarek '96, has initiated a challenge grant with her gift in order to encourage additional funding. We have also received gifts from a select group of alumni and private foundations and that support is reflected in our total fundraising to date. I would greatly appreciate your serious consideration of a gift, and encourage you to join us in this important effort to complete the fundraising for this project. Every gift brings us closer to our goal!

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Nancy P. Lynch, P'95
Chair, School of Nursing Advisory Board

If you have questions on how you might help the School of Nursing, please contact Noël Appel at (203) 254-4000, ext. 2025, or e-mail nappel@mail.fairfield.edu.

Addressing the needs of teen cancer survivors



Robin Kanarek (right, with daughter Sarah and husband Joe) has spent years advocating for teen cancer patients.

addresses issues of youth survivorship. The proposed project will provide important educational background for the undergraduate and graduate nurses who work with teens, young adults, and their families.

Kanarek's interest in the needs of young cancer survivors is both passionate and personal. During her last semester at

The Kanarek Family Foundation, headed by Robin Bennett-Kanarek '96, a member of the School of Nursing's Advisory Board, is pleased to partner with the School as they seek support for a project entitled, *Nursing Curriculum Integration: Cancer Survivorship in Our Youth*. The School has requested funding from the Lance Armstrong Foundation to design a curriculum that

Fairfield, as she was finishing up the RN-to-BSN program, her 10-year-old son, David, was diagnosed with acute lymphocytic leukemia. The following years were a roller coaster ride of emotions for the family, as David endured two years of chemotherapy, celebrated a remission, bore the news of a relapse and the required stem cell transplant (his sister, Sarah, was the only suitable candidate), and enjoyed a brief victory before developing a lethal infection. He died in 2000, at the age of 15.

"The Kanarek Family Foundation was established to pay tribute to our son, David Bennett, to honor him and keep his memory alive," says Kanarek. "The Foundation will help expose the medical community to the special needs of teenagers and young adults battling and coping with cancer. We will support both financially and through education the efforts of medical professionals in providing specialized care and support to the patients in that age bracket."

The Foundation is also supporting the School of Nursing through a challenge grant to encourage fellow alumni, parents of students, and friends to support the Learning Resource Center.

Lauren Peyton '09: Cancer survivor chosen for film



Jean Santopatre

While her peers were learning the layout of their new high school and getting used to different classes and teachers, 14-year old Lauren Peyton was struggling with another kind of challenge: enduring eight months of chemotherapy and six weeks of radiation treatment for Hodgkin's disease, diagnosed the summer before her freshman year of high school.

Peyton handled the treatments well, but got some bad news midway through her sophomore year: a diagnosis of myelodysplastic pre-leukemia. For Lauren, that meant platelet and blood transfusions several times a week. "The disease didn't allow my blood cells to mature at the level they needed to, so the transfusions kept me going until a suitable bone marrow donor could be found," the Fairfield nursing student explains.

With no match to be made among her family or in the U.S., Lauren's donor angel turned out to be a now 28-year-old from Germany. "It took about seven months to find him, and now we're in touch through e-mails," she says. In the meantime, Peyton managed to maintain a 97 average, graduating from high school on time and taking her Regent's exams from her hospital bed. Today, she's a sophomore nursing student with plans to go into – what else? – pediatric oncology.

If Peyton's optimism and determination got her through the ordeal of handling cancer treatments, say her doctors at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York, it's her personality that led them to recommend her for the Triple Winners Campaign, a campaign to raise awareness and money for Memorial Sloan-Kettering. The campaign is funded through a donation from Stop & Shop, and includes a video that will be shown in all their stores. Peyton is one of the survivors profiled. "I tell my story and make sure that people know they can survive and come out OK," says Peyton. "After all, that's what I needed to hear."

As Peyton heads into her toughest year in the nursing program, she reports that she "feels great. My classes are a lot of work but I can manage. And I definitely feel a bit ahead of the game when it comes to meds and learning about patient care because of my personal experience."



Jean Santopatre

Fairfield sophomore Lauren Peyton makes her screen debut in a film developed for the Triple Winners Campaign to benefit Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center.

Faculty learning together

It takes a special group of faculty to commit to meeting twice a month for a full year, for two hours at a time, in addition to all the teaching, research, and clinical time they have to put in to get their jobs done. Yet that's exactly the commitment that seven nurses on the School of Nursing's faculty learning community have made.

Faculty learning communities are cohort groups formed to collaborate on achieving an identified goal, says Dr. Larry Miners, director of the Center for Academic Excellence and the facilitator for the group. In the case of the School of Nursing, the faculty agreed on the need to revamp the curriculum to incorporate more technology and simulation-based learning into each lesson. "The technology is here, and now we're working on the faculty development," said Dr. Miners. "This group is remarkable for its interest, commitment, and enthusiasm for the project." Miners and colleagues Dr. Kathryn Nantz, Dr. Roben Torosyan, and Dr. Aaron Perkus will facilitate other learning communities on campus; the one at the SON is the first to get started this year.

The first meetings and readings are designed to foster collegiality and trust, so that everyone moves forward together to make changes. The group will then move into the next phase: working individually to infuse more technology and simulation into their own curricula, then sharing the pitfalls and outcomes with their colleagues in a supportive environment.

"The central factor is that the group decides what they'll do and what objectives they'll work toward," said Dr. Suzanne Campbell, director of the Learning Resource Center project and a member of the learning community.



Gifts, Grants, Partnerships

\$100,000 for Learning Resource Center

The McKeen Fund has awarded Fairfield University a \$100,000 gift to support the Learning Resource Center in the School of Nursing. The Center allows students to practice and master a variety of skills prior to using them in a live clinical setting. The Center's state-of-the-art classrooms and lab provide a teaching environment where students can learn the physiologic components of patient care, safety and technical skills, and the communication, leadership, and teamwork skills necessary to deliver exceptional healthcare.

This gift is earmarked for faculty and curriculum development, which is being done in collaboration with the Center for Academic Excellence. The nursing faculty will form a Faculty Learning Community with seven participants this spring (see article, page 3), where they will together redesign courses that incorporate the rich resources available in the new lab and classrooms, including a human patient simulator.

"It is so important to have resources to support faculty as we explore and create innovative ways to educate students to meet the demands of healthcare in the 21st century," said Dr. Suzanne Campbell, assistant professor of nursing and the project director. "We appreciate the generosity of the donors who have helped our vision for the Learning Resource Center become a reality."

Fairfield University also has received foundation grants for the Center from the Daphne Seybolt Culpeper Foundation (\$10,000), and the Gladys Brooks Foundation (\$10,000). The McKeen Fund, a family foundation, has been supportive of the University, giving two grants totaling \$51,000 in 2005 to help establish the annual School of Nursing lecture series and launch the School of Nursing Advisory Board.

Nancy Lynch P'95, chair of the Advisory Board, said it was rewarding to see people outside the Board understand the importance of the Learning Resource Center. "I think this will certainly spur other people to be more involved and interested in the School of Nursing."

Conference in Washington, D.C.

Dr. Jeanne M. Novotny joined Linda R. Cronenwett, dean, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and Bernadette Mazurek Melnyk, dean, Arizona State University for a workshop entitled, "Strategic Planning and Fundraising Strategies" in Washington, D.C., in March. During this session, advancement professionals from nursing schools across the country had the benefit of learning directly from the deans about the interconnection between strategic planning and setting fundraising priorities for a school. Through detailed case studies, participants also learned about specific strategies for working with individual, foundation, and corporate donors to realize long-term growth for nursing schools.

Dr. Meredith Wallace, APRN, associate professor and Elizabeth DeCamp McInerney Professor of Health Sciences, joined Dr. Mary Palmer, the Thomas L. Umphlet Professor at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Nursing, and Dr. Elizabeth Swanson of the University of Iowa School of Nursing, to conduct the workshop, "Faculty Engagement in Development." The faculty described how they serve as active partners with advancement in the area of individual (alumni, parent, and friends), foundation, and corporate fundraising. This information was illustrated with case study examples that outlined recent experiences with different types of donors interested in supporting their nurs-

ing schools. Noël Appel, School of Nursing Advancement liaison, designed these two workshops as part of her role on the steering committee for this annual advancement professionals' conference. Appel has served in this capacity for three consecutive years.

State awards \$40,000 grant

Fairfield University has been awarded a \$40,000 grant to increase the number of qualified nursing faculty and to improve patient outcomes in terms of quality of care. The grant, distributed through the Health and Education Initiative Programs of the Connecticut Department of Higher Education, will fund the development of the School of Nursing's "Leveraging Clinical Nurse Leader Partnerships to Provide a Pipeline to Expert Clinical and Faculty Positions," directed by Associate Professors Dr. Jean Lange and Dr. Meredith Wallace. Through this project, the School will develop a new master's level curriculum for Clinical Nurse Leaders (CNL). Danbury Hospital, Greenwich Hospital, St. Vincent's Medical Center, and VA New England Healthcare System are teaming up with the School of Nursing to create, implement, and evaluate the program, which is expected to begin in fall 2007. The hope is that it will become a model for other academic and healthcare organizations.

A very special suturing class

by Nina M. Riccio

Sitting on the advisory board of a nursing school might entail giving advice or raising money. Rarely, though, does it involve pigs' feet.

Then again, not every advisory board is fortunate enough to join forces with Craig Haba '91. Haba, who graduated with a degree in economics, is now a marketing director at Syneture, the suture and biosurgery division of U.S. Surgical. Throughout his career, he has been a firm supporter of Fairfield University in general and of the School of Nursing in particular. He and Dr. Jeanne Novotny, dean, had discussed ways in which the School of Nursing and U.S. Surgical might collaborate.

"It was very fortuitous when Craig came on the scene and suggested doing a wound healing class for us," says Dr. Meredith Wallace, associate professor and the Elizabeth DeCamp McInerney Professor of Health Sciences. "We had previously identified a lack of suturing skills among our students and that was a hole we wanted to address." While it is not part of the standard nursing curriculum, she explains, nurse practitioners are often called upon to do minor suturing once they're out in the field.

As for the class itself, "Wow, what he was able to offer!" says Dr. Wallace with unabashed enthusiasm. "Not only did he teach, he brought all the latest equipment so our students could become comfortable with it. He also brought two colleagues from the Syneture team, so that our student/teacher ratio was favorable. And he brought the pigs' feet."

The class included a "wet lab" in which students learned about new sutures, suture needles, and biosurgery technologies such as topical tissue adhesive. "They also got a hands-on opportunity to suture and close wounds on the pigs' feet, which look and feel similar to skin," explains Haba, noting that this class is one that is normally taught to surgical residents and medical school students. "We thought the nursing students at Fairfield would find it valuable to better understand suture and needle technologies available today. They asked great questions, and developed a new perspective of the science of wound healing and closure." Colleagues Mike Ianniruberto and Marcellus Willis assisted Haba in teaching the class.

After a short lecture, students got to work, spending two hours cutting, suturing, tying, and even gluing. Michelle Leonard, an RN who is back at Fairfield for her M.S., is sure her new skills are ones she'll be using if she goes back to working in a family practice setting. "Once patients get to know you, they're much more comfortable having you suture in the office than facing the emergency room," she says, adding that

"what was so great about this class was the immediate skill learned. And with so many nurses being called to respond in an emergency situation, such as Katrina, these skills will be so important."

"To offer the class, and to offer it so well, was a tremendous service to our students," says Dr. Wallace, who freely admits she'd like to have this guest lecturer back for a repeat performance. "The more we can expose our students within a supervised environment, the better prepared they will be in their jobs. It not only raises their level of expertise, it raises their confidence. And with such expert instruction, it's our students who really benefit."



Craig and Marcellus provide instruction before students begin suturing.



Mike shows students how to close with a new knot technique.



Photos by Peter Sarawit

The dream team

by Meredith Guinness

The nameplate atop Kathy Borrelli's desk says 'Kathy Borrelli, HN.' "It's for 'honorary nurse,'" says Borrelli, administrative assistant, who, after 18 years in the School of Nursing, definitely deserves the distinction.

Borrelli is part of a trio Dean Jeanne Novotny calls her "dream team," three key people who make everyone's life a little easier through their skill and solid teamwork. "These are the stars, the ones who hold the school together," Dr. Novotny says of her administrative team members Borrelli, Joan Millen, and Cathy Tuttle.

The SON has had just three office support staffers since the 1980s. "Given the considerable growth the school has witnessed, it's remarkable that these three are able to manage their work without missing a beat," says Dr. Novotny. In 1989, when Kathy Borrelli began working at Fairfield, there were only 120 students in the traditional undergraduate program and six or seven adult learners taking classes through University College. The graduate program did not exist. Now, there are approximately 350 earning a bachelor's degree and approximately 65 in the various graduate tracks.

Borrelli, Tuttle, and Millen's days are filled with supporting faculty, preparing for Advisory Board meetings, planning ceremonies, making sure catalogs are up-to-date, scheduling speakers, and keeping exacting records on malpractice insurance, OSHA requirements, student immunizations, and other critical matters. "It all comes through here," says Millen.



Keeping the School of Nursing in healthy, working order: Joan Millen (left), Kathy Borrelli, and Cathy Tuttle.

Jean Santopatre

One reason the three are so able to run the busy office may be their interest in things related to healthcare. Millen, who has worked in the SON since 1999, is a former lab technician. Borrelli spent 11 years as an administrative assistant at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center. And Tuttle, who moved to the SON a few months ago after four years in the Graduate School of Education and Allied Professions, is "married to an engineer," she says, laughing.

A shared sense of humor is another key to their success. The sunny office includes funny stuffed animals and plaques, including one that reads 'Good Morning... Let the Stress Begin!' "Everyone has a job they do, but there's a lot of connection, too. Lots of teamwork and laughs," says Tuttle.

Borrelli is so used to nursing terminology and facts that she often knows the answers to questions on the exams that pass her desk. And working in a nursing school has definite perks, the three agree. "If you don't feel well," Borrelli says, "there are plenty of people around to help."

Dean Novotny echoes the sentiments of the School of Nursing faculty when she says, "it's a pleasure to come to work everyday because of these three wonderful people. We can always count on them and we could not exist without them."

Development for deans conference

This past February, the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) held its Development for Deans conference in Florida, with more than 270 people from schools across the country in attendance. Dr. Jeanne M. Novotny, dean, Dr. Suzanne Campbell, APRN-C, IBCLC, faculty Advisory Board member, and Noël Appel, School of Nursing advancement liaison, were among them. Topics included the role of the dean in successful fundraising, implementing successful leadership boards, and learning to be good stewards of

gifts from alumni, parents, and friends. "The conference helped me to recognize the importance of faculty involvement in development and appreciate even more how the School of Nursing Advisory Board has taken the lead by example," said Dr. Campbell. Just as important, said Appel, is the fact that participation deepens the expertise of the Fairfield team "and ensures that our efforts working with alumni, parents, and friends are at the cutting edge of development within the academic setting."

Diabetes educator to deliver School of Nursing lecture



Jean Santo-patre

Geralyn Radowiecki Spollett '76

to earn a master's in nursing, with distinction, from Boston College, returning to Fairfield from 1986 to 1991 as an adjunct professor in the School of Nursing.

Now the associate director of the Yale Diabetes Center, Yale University School of Medicine, Spollett spends her days doing clinical work, research, and education, and developing programs for African-American, Hispanic, and Native American persons with diabetes. "For a nurse, diabetes is a wonderful field because it allows you to use all your skills and

Mark your calendars for the third annual School of Nursing lecture, which will be held on Oct. 29, 2007, in the Kelley Theatre of the Quick Center for the Arts.

This year's speaker will be one of our distinguished alumnae: GERALYN RADOWIECKI SPOLLETT '76. After graduating with a bachelor of science degree in nursing, Spollett went on

education in care and prevention. The focus of our care involves not just the individual, but the family and community as well," she says. Last year, she received the American Diabetes Association's 2006 Educator of the Year Award.

As one of the foremost experts in her field, Spollett is in demand on the lecture circuit, and has presented throughout the United States as well as internationally. She is an associate editor for *Diabetes Spectrum*, has written for most of the major diabetes journals, and has been a reviewer for many nurse practitioner journals and nursing texts.

In 1994, she was selected by her students at Yale for the Excellence in Teaching Award, and the next year won the Connecticut State Award for Excellence in Clinical Practice from the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners. At Fairfield University, she was honored with the 1996 School of Nursing Alumni Excellence in Nursing Award. In 2005, she received the Fairfield University Alumni Professional Achievement Award.

The lecture is free and open to the public; however, tickets are required. Please call the Quick Center box office at (203) 254-4010.



Fairfield Alumni Network (FAN)

www.fairfield.edu/alumnicommunity

Spread your network of contacts among Fairfield graduates of all ages and stages of career development. Join the more than 1,400 Fairfield Alumni Network (FAN) volunteers currently registered in Fairfield's Online Community. Be the next to sign up as a volunteer so you can be a career resource for others!

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Fairfield's Online Community – Register Today!
www.fairfield.edu/alumnicommunity

Log on using the ID number included in your address on the back of this newsletter



The PULSE

UPCOMING EVENTS

July 24: Graduate Information Session. Learn about Fairfield's 33 graduate programs, including nurse anesthesia, nurse practitioner, and healthcare management master programs. For details and to register: www.fairfield.edu/grad
On campus at the Kelley Center, 5:30 p.m.

Aug. 24: Pinning ceremony for second degree students. Alumni House, 10 a.m.

Oct. 29: Third annual SON lecture with distinguished speaker GERALYN RADOWIECKI SPOLLETT '76. Quick Center for the Arts, 8 p.m. To reserve a seat, call the Box Office at (203) 254-4010.



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Message From the Dean:



This has been a very busy time for faculty members, staff, and students in the School of Nursing! Much of our work has focused on preparing for the visit by the accreditation team from the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education. The visit on March 28, 29, and 30 was comprehensive and we were pleased that the team felt that we met all standards. The official outcome and the accreditation decision will be made and sent to us in a formal letter after the accreditation board meets next fall. A very special thank you to the members of the Advisory Board and our Partnership Council who participated in the on-site visit.

On January 12, we hosted a reception to welcome our first class of nurse anesthesia students. In another January celebration, we launched our Faculty Learning Community (FLC) Project. Under the leadership of Dr. Suzanne Campbell, project director, and Dr. Larry Miners, director of the Center for Academic Excellence, this four year project will ultimately change the way that faculty members teach and the way that students learn in their nursing courses.

I am especially delighted that we have a feature article on our administrative support staff, Kathy Borrelli, Joan Millen, and Cathy Tuttle. Every day that we come to work, faculty members and I know that we could not exist without the support that they give to us. We are so blessed!

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