

The PULSE

FALL 2006

A PUBLICATION OF THE SCHOOL OF NURSING

Message From Advisory Board Chair Nancy Lynch



Dear Friends,

The 2006-07 academic year is well underway, and the School of Nursing continues to thrive under the expert leadership of Jeanne M. Novotny, Ph.D., RN, FAAN. Her vision is complemented by the talented faculty who have made the education of the emerging nurse their professional objective and who bring to this vocation their own personal passion and research interests. The student in today's School of Nursing has access to an extraordinary level of academic vibrancy with a faculty that is attuned to the most recent developments in their specialty.

In my last communication, I outlined the objectives of the Learning Resource Center fundraising campaign. This campaign has a goal of \$1 million and we are currently seeking support in order to completely transform the teaching classrooms and laboratories used by the students. I am pleased to announce that the fundraising from the School of Nursing Advisory Board members has created a strong base of support to which we hope you will consider making a commitment. We invite you to join in a collective effort to change how nursing students are taught. Should you have any questions about this important project, please contact Noël Appel, School of Nursing advancement liaison, at (203) 254-4000, ext. 2025, or nappel@mail.fairfield.edu.

Many of you assisted the School of Nursing with support for the lecture series challenge grant. This was a successful effort and this year, due to the fruits of your investment, we were able to have noted authority Betty Ferrell, Ph.D., RN, FAAN present "Dying in America: Taking Control at the End of Life." This special lecture provided outstanding visibility to the School and the profession of nursing.

Once again, thank you to those who have already participated in our campaign for the Learning Resource Center, and we certainly welcome and encourage the participation of anyone who is considering the support of our School of Nursing.

Sincerely,

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



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New Advisory Board Member: Craig M. Haba '91



The School of Nursing is delighted to welcome Craig Haba, a 1991 graduate of Fairfield University with a degree in economics, to its Advisory Board. Haba is marketing director for biosurgery and wound closure technologies at Syneture, the suture and biosurgery division of U.S. Surgical, a leading medical device manufacturer based in Norwalk, Conn.

Even though he is not a graduate of the School of Nursing, Haba and his wife, LeAnne, have restricted their capital campaign leadership gift to the School because they strongly believe in its mission and the need for developing quality nursing leaders in the future. Haba brings high energy and a broad business perspective to the Advisory Board, both essential as the Board works to meet the demands of a rapidly changing healthcare industry.

Previously, Haba was employed by Tyco International, the corporate parent company of U.S. Surgical, where he focused on financial planning, strategy, investor relations, and Board of Director activities. Directly after his graduation from Fairfield, Haba completed GE's Financial Management Program, then spent 12 years at GE.

Haba has been a member of The President's Circle for 12 years and spent two terms on the Trustees Advisory Council. He dedicated eight years as a member of the Fairfield Awards Dinner Multicultural Scholarship Committee, served on the e-Business Advisory Council, the National Alumni Executive Committee, and also served as Class Chair for the "Our Promise" capital campaign. He has actively recruited Fairfield graduates into GE training programs.

Dr. Jean Lange honored by UConn

Dr. Jean Lange, associate professor and director of graduate studies in the School of Nursing, was honored in October by the University of Connecticut at its 10th Annual Alumni Banquet. Citing her work with the elderly and research into cross-cultural issues in healthcare, UConn also noted her involvement, along with that of Dr. Philip Greiner, on a three-year, 'train-the-trainer' model to disseminate best-practices in the care of older adults. Dr. Lange is currently studying cardiovascular disease among Puerto Rican women and is investigating the role of spirituality in coping with chronic disease.

Dr. Lange received her doctorate in nursing from UConn in 1999; she was the first person ever to graduate from that program. Her dissertation focused on electives in healthcare marketing and culturally related issues in research.



Dr. Suzanne Campbell named to Lactation Association Board

After serving three years on the Board for the Connecticut Breastfeeding Coalition, Dr. Suzanne Campbell, associate professor, has been elected Director-at-Large on the Board of the International Lactation Consultant Association (ILCA). In this position, she will be liaison to the Research Committee, and the *Journal of Human Lactation* editor. The ILCA is the professional association for current and aspiring International Board Certified Lactation Consultants. Its mission is to advance the profession of lactation consultancy worldwide.

SON graduate appointed to State Board of Examiners

Connecticut governor M. Jodi Rell has appointed Susan Neistein, M.S.'96, to the state Board of Examiners for Nursing. The Board supervises nursing regulations and programs in Connecticut, issues nursing licenses, passes regulations on different practices, and establishes standards for education, school nursing, and retired licenses.

Neistein is an advanced practice registered nurse with a specialty in psychiatric and mental health care, and has been a member of the clinical management team for MedOptions, a provider of medical care and behavioral health services to longterm care facility residents, for the past seven years. She received a bachelor's degree in English literature from Binghamton University in New York and a master's degree in nursing from Fairfield University.

"To make this kind of commitment to the state of Connecticut shows what kind of character Susan has," said Governor Rell of the appointment. "It is my pleasure to announce this appointment, and I am confident that Susan's dedication will greatly assist the Board."

Former deans return to SON

School of Nursing Dean Jeanne Novotny and current faculty were delighted to welcome the School's three former deans for last spring's Professional Development Day. During a luncheon ceremony, the three – Drs. Phyllis Porter, Nancy Fasano, and Theresa Valiga – were recognized and presented with Fairfield University mirrors personalized with their names and the dates of their respective tenures as dean. And for those moments when they felt like taking a walk down memory lane, they were given a copy of the SON's 35th anniversary CD, which captures people and events over the life of the school.

Keynote speaker Nancy Valentine, Ph.D, RN, FAAN delivered her talk, "Ensuring Quality Healthcare through Partnerships and Collaboratives," in which she focused on innovative private sector and federal initiatives that support the development of future partnerships in healthcare environments. She encouraged attendees to become aware of their own attitudes toward collaboration.

Win-win partnerships

For hospitals to be designated with the prestigious "magnet" status, they have to show that they engage in evidenced-based practice initiatives; that is, instead of doing things the way they've always been done, they are required to show that there is research to justify their methodologies. For that reason, hospitals are more in need of nursing researchers than ever. Now, a new partnership agreement between Fairfield University and Stamford Hospital has provided that institution with the faculty research support it needs for magnet status.

This year, Visiting Assistant Professor Sally Gerard will split her time between the School of Nursing and Stamford hospital. In her half-time position at Stamford, she is charged with guiding a dozen nurses through a Web-based course on geriatric care. "Much of this work was done by Dr. Meredith Wallace, associate professor, last year for our geriatric certifica-

tion program," she says. "We're building on that work, and will add assessment tools to measure improvement in patient falls and nursing satisfaction."

In addition, TransCon Builders, which owns several nursing homes, has had a long relationship with the SON "and would love to have more of our graduates work for them," says Dr. Wallace. But with so many opportunities available for nursing graduates, they weren't attracting the numbers they need. A new partnership has Dr. Wallace and her associate, Kathleen Lovanio, MSN, APRN-BC, working half-time for TransCon, helping students rotate through their long-term care facilities as they implement best care practices and measure improvement in the reduction of patient falls, coordination of medicines, reduced transfers to hospitals and other facilities, and nursing satisfaction.



Fairfield's Online Community Has Launched!

Access is free and open to all alumni. Upon enrolling, you'll be able easily to:

- Join **FAN** as a School of Nursing (SON) grad, and **network** with alumni from a multitude of career industries and regions
- **Connect with SON friends and classmates** worldwide through an online directory
- **Register** for special SON alumni events
- Receive **advance notice** of University news
- ... and much more!

Join Fairfield's Online Community *today* at www.fairfield.edu/alumncommunity



SON Pinning Ceremonies

Seventy two new nurses graduated from the School of Nursing's undergraduate program and went into the world this year. The pinning ceremonies, which are part of the tradition, were held in May and August. In addition, nine graduate students received their degrees in May.

In May, Dr. Sheila Grossman, professor, told the graduating class that they are "a multi-talented group of leaders bound for a most successful professional and personal journey... All of those 5:30 wake ups, practicing therapeutics, preparing clinical care plans, analyzing case studies, and group presentations are done!" She urged them to be flexible in meeting the myriad challenges presented to them, and to do differently, and better, that which has always been done. "You have already found, that no matter what one might think, no one person is ever

going to be able to achieve as much as a group can. Due to the nature of our work, most of us know our limitations and are able to ask for help. It is this ability to ask for help with our patients that empowers us to be who we are."

August's pinning ceremony marked a new beginning for the SON's second-degree nursing students – adults who returned to school for the intensive, 18-month nursing program, perhaps years after graduating from college. Dr. Carole Pomarico, advisor to the second degree students, and Dr. Carol Fackler, one of their professors, both spoke to the group. "This program was not for the weak of heart," Fackler admitted. "We got you down the runway. You need to set the course for the rest of your journey."

Betty Ferrell delivers second annual SON lecture

The second annual School of Nursing lecture addressed the complex and controversial topic of end of life care and was delivered on Oct. 23 by noted oncology nurse and researcher Betty R. Ferrell, Ph.D., RN, FAAN. Dr. Ferrell, professor in the department of nursing research and education at City of Hope National Medical Center in Duarte, Calif., has dedicated her life to equipping caregivers with the knowledge they need to meet the unique needs of terminally ill patients and their families.

ing students with the skills to offer the most effective and compassionate care to patients, to challenge themselves, and to ultimately change the world for the better.

Dr. Jeanne Novotny, dean, said the goal of palliative care is to allow individuals to die in a manner that allows them choices. "Palliative care has recently undergone a great deal of research, and the role of the nurse at the end of life is becoming better defined."

The School of Nursing lecture series was launched last year with a talk by Dr. Oliver Sacks. A grant from the Gustavus and Louise Pfeiffer Research Foundation has provided support to bring Dr. Ferrell to campus and to spend time with faculty providing staff development for curriculum. The McKeen Fund, together with support from the General Re Corp. and alumni have made the lecture series possible. Prior to the lecture, the James Daly School of Nursing Award, established to recognize friends

of the School, was conferred upon General Re for its generosity over the years. SON Advisory Board Chair Nancy Lynch and Dr. Dee Lippman, professor of nursing, directed the question and answer session.



Photo by B. K. Angeletti

"We need role models to show how we can transform dying in America," she said, noting that the Fairfield University School of Nursing was preparing these role models, challenging them to influence the nursing field for the better. "We need to take control of the way we die." She spoke about the palliative care movement, which attends to the emotional, spiritual, and practical needs of patients and those close to them. "We can transform dying by supporting hospice and palliative care programs. Ask for them, demand them, be strong advocates for them," she said.

As medical advances make it possible to extend life, patients and families often turn to nurses for advice on making healthcare decisions. In keeping with the Jesuit mission of service to others, the School of Nursing aims to provide nurs-

Gifts, Grants, Partnerships

Three-year grant of \$736,710 to launch Youth Power Partnership by Meg McCaffrey

A \$736,710 grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Minority Health, will enable the School of Nursing to launch the Youth Power Partnership, a new program to enrich the experience of students at Bridgeport's Bassick High School. Funding for the first year is \$245,570, with a recommended future support of \$491,140. The School of Nursing, which has a long history of promoting health and wellness in the Bridgeport community, is the lead agency, in partnership with FSW Inc., MATRIX Public Health Consultants, and Bassick High School.

The grant will be used to establish a Youth Center at FSW, a non-profit human services agency, located across the street from Bassick High School. It will offer after-school and weekend workshops. A cornerstone of the program will be the student-mentoring component, in which each high school student will work closely with a Fairfield University student throughout the three years of the program.

Lydia Greiner, the project director and visiting assistant professor in the School of Nursing, said this program is evidence of Fairfield's ongoing commitment to the well-being of its neighboring communities. "We have proposed a comprehensive approach to address the health issue of risk behaviors in adolescents, with the overall goal of enhancing factors that we know help young people make healthier choices. Youth Power Partnership will provide activities and education designed to develop or expand individual, family and community factors through a program of academic enrichment, personal development and wellness, career planning, cultural enrichment, and service opportunities." Bassick High School Principal Ron Remy explained that Fairfield students have the potential to make a lasting impact on these high school students.

Dr. Jeanne Novotny, dean, said the program epitomizes how Fairfield students are trying to change the world for the better. "Our students will learn lessons of a lifetime and gain practical experience. At the same time, they will work to offer guidance to these high school students so that they can strive to reach their potential and find their place in the world."

School of Nursing receives federal grant for ELDER Project

The School of Nursing has been awarded a \$467,645 competitive grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration to fund the development of the Expanded Learning and Dedication to Elders in the Region (ELDER) Project.

The grant, the largest federal grant received to date by the School of Nursing, will make possible the linking of the School of Nursing with multiple health care agencies, to provide best practices education to registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, and nursing assistants caring for older adults in those agencies.

The ELDER Project grant builds on prior grants to the School of Nursing for geriatric nursing education and sets the stage for further partnering opportunities with community organizations. Services will include focus group meetings, educational sessions, and patient care simulations delivered at Fairfield University. Drs. Philip Greiner, principal investigator, and Jean Lange, co-principal investigator, will direct the project. The training model used will ensure that new staff continue to benefit from the grant initiative even after the funding period is over.

Schechter Foundation gift for RN to BSN program

The Schechter Foundation has generously provided the School of Nursing with a \$6,000 gift, to be given annually, as scholarship money for RNs returning to the School for their BSN. The greatest challenge many of these returning students face is the cost of tuition, which has far outpaced the hospital tuition reimbursement structure. This gift allows the School to provide annual gifts of \$1,200 to five recipients to assist with tuition, lab fees, books, and travel expenses associated with clinical placements.

\$20,000 from St. Vincent Foundation

The St. Vincent's Medical Center Foundation has given \$20,000 to the School of Nursing to provide enhanced geriatric education to its nurses through the Web-based program developed by Dr. Meredith Wallace last year. "The goal is to enhance geriatric outcomes. While the course will take approximately two months to complete, the program and assessment will be conducted over a 12-month period," says Dr. Wallace, who adds that she is anticipating a minimum enrollment of 10 students.

Italian Adventures

With their heavy course loads and clinical requirements, it's impossible for nursing students to study overseas through conventional study-abroad programs. So, for the last four years, the School of Nursing has run a 12-day program in Padova, Italy, specifically designed to meet the unique needs of nursing students. The program allows both undergraduate and graduate students to earn three credits, and includes time spent at hospital and nursing care facilities to explore the differences in the healthcare systems of both countries.

One thing the program has not had until this year, however, is a photographic journal of the trip, says Dr. Jean Lange, associate professor and director of the Padova trip. "Fortunately for the School of Nursing, Advisory Board member Claudia Schechter is a professional photographer, and she volunteered to document the trip, paying her own way," says Dr. Lange. "I've tried to take photos on my own, but her professional eye captured the essence of why we were there – not just in the classroom, but the fun the students were having outside. The fact that she donated her services to us is a great gift."

Schechter's goal was simple: to depict the excitement of the experience for the students, and to entice more to go in the future. "I wanted potential students to see all the perks. We visited an Italian hospital and nursing home, and the camaraderie that developed among the group was infectious."

One of Fairfield's missions is to provide more than just classroom learning. Extensive opportunities for internships, study abroad, and service learning are hallmarks of the educational experiences provided to students.



Playing with the pigeons in Piazza San Marco.



Italian host Dr. Piera Poletti with Dr. Jean Lange.



A city bus in Padova.

Nursing Athletes

By Chris O'Connor, Assistant Director of Sports Information

Between class time, lab time, and clinical hours spent off campus, a nursing student's schedule is notorious for being difficult to juggle, especially after sophomore year when students begin clinical rotations. Then there's that special brand of student, the nurse-athletes, who keep up their course work while competing at the Division I level. Stag student-athletes spend approximately 20 hours a week in athletic-related activities, including practices, weight training, and competitions.

Last year, 18 SON students claimed this distinction; this year there are 20.

Janna Breitenwischer '08, who plays defense and midfield on the women's soccer team, takes full responsibility for staying on top of her studies. "In high school, if I missed something, I could let it slide," she says. "Now I know that I need to get things done on time, and make things up quickly if I'm away for a game, or I will really fall behind."

"Our scholar-athletes are usually quite strong students, so they really are top-notch in their abilities to excel in both areas and manage their time appropriately," says Dr. Theresa (Tavella '79) Quell, assistant dean. "As health care providers, we feel very strongly that students should be well-rounded, and often it is a sport or other non-academic activity that helps 'maintain their sanity' when the stress level rises." Dean Jeanne Novotny is the NCAA self-study chair for the University, so she has a great appreciation for the role athletics plays in the development of the whole person.

"I work with the athletes when they have to miss a nursing lab in order to be at a game," says Diane Mager, director of the

Learning Resource Laboratory. "We make arrangements to go over what they miss, or we work it out so that they can sit in on another lab on a different day. The same is true for test-taking."

Most of the SON faculty use WebCT, so it's easier to have course materials available for students who might miss a class, adds Dr. Phil Greiner, associate professor. "In the School of Nursing, we try very hard to be user-friendly."

Depending on the sport, student-athletes usually practice before or after their clinicals, and seldom need to miss one for sports unless the team makes playoffs. In these cases, students schedule additional clinical time to complete the clinical hours.

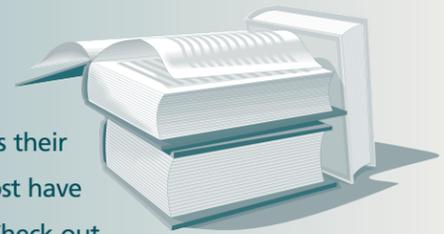
Finding time to study is a challenge. Says Breitenwischer, "I have two night classes, so that cuts into my time. I do most of my work the other two nights and on weekends when we don't have games. When have road games," she laughs, "my ride on the bus is with books open."

Calling all SON alums!

Over the years, the SON has been delighted to welcome back a number of outstanding alumni to work with our students. Many opportunities exist for involvement, including volunteering for alumni panels, guest lecturing, mentoring RN and graduate students in practicum courses, and becoming adjunct faculty to teach in the classroom and clinical areas. Helping students develop into independent, caring practitioners is a very rewarding experience, and we invite our alumni to join us in preparing the next generation of nurses. If interested, please send your resume or contact Dr. Jeanne Novotny, dean of the School of Nursing, at jnovotny@mail.fairfield.edu or call (203) 254-4150.

The School of Nursing publishes

Our faculty members have been busy! Besides their normal course loads, most have found time to publish. Check out their impressive list of articles, books, and presentations on our website: www.fairfield.edu/nursing





The PULSE

UPCOMING EVENTS

January 9: Back to Campus Day for new and returning graduate and part-time undergraduate students. Noon – 7 p.m., Kelley Administrative Center.

January 29: Native American author Leslie Marmon Silko lecture and book signing. Barone Campus Center Oak Room, 7 p.m., \$10. Call (203) 254-4307 to reserve your seats.

March 28 - 30: Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education Self-Study. On site evaluation team visit.

April 14: Glee Club 60th anniversary concert, featuring original music by noted composer Gwyneth Walker. Quick Center for the Arts, 8 p.m. For tickets, call the Box Office at (203) 254-4010.



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Message From the Dean:



“The object is to relieve human suffering, heal the sick, and restore the wounded.” These words were spoken on Aug. 16, 1905 at the opening of the Wesley Memorial Training School in Atlanta, Ga. To this day, those words ring true in schools of nursing across the country, and especially at Fairfield University.

Caring has always been at the forefront of our school’s 35 year legacy. We are dedicated to teaching our students; preparing nurse leaders; sharing the good work of our graduates with the community; and, of course, healing – or caring for – humanity. During this time, our school has continually raised standards by educating nurses to be leaders in service to others.

Our forward momentum is evidenced by the commitment of the Advisory Board, whose financial support has made the update of the Learning Resource Center a reality. In addition, the passion of our faculty for the work of the profession as it is embodied by Jesuit ideals is highlighted in this issue of *The Pulse*.

The entire faculty and staff of the School of Nursing are preparing for a comprehensive assessment in March 2007, which will be conducted by a team of evaluators representing the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) for the purpose of accreditation of our undergraduate and master’s programs. CCNE ensures the quality and integrity of undergraduate and master’s education and supports the continued growth and improvement of collegiate professional education.

Now, turn the page, enjoy reading about our accomplishments, and glimpse our future at this most exciting time in our history!

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