

The PULSE

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Message From Advisory Board Chair Nancy Lynch



I have been involved with Fairfield University for many years. My husband graduated from Fairfield in 1963 and has served on the Board of Trustees for more than 18 years. Our son graduated in 1995. Over time, we have watched the many changes on campus as they have happened, one by one: the renovation of the Rudolph F. Bannow Science Center, the DiMenna-Nyselius Library, and the new Egan Chapel of St. Ignatius Loyola. I am so impressed with the increased intellectual rigor that so strongly enhances the life and reputation of this great University.

Today, we have a new challenge. The School of Nursing must keep up with the extraordinary pace set by the University. In the past year, we have established an Advisory Board to oversee and implement improvements to the School of Nursing that will keep us competitive with other universities and colleges, both in the lab and in the classroom. Since the Board's inception, our 11 members have met many times to narrow our focus to best meet that pace and serve the needs of the School. In consultation with Dean Jeanne Novotny, Ph.D. and the nursing faculty, it was decided that what is most needed is upgraded, technology-enhanced classrooms and a skills laboratory. For that reason, the Board is pleased to announce the launching of a three-year, \$1 million, campaign for the construction of a new Learning Resource Center (LRC), a high-tech facility that will include wireless computers, a multimedia and a demonstration classroom, plus simulation models, thus bringing this already fine program in line to compete with some of the best in the country [see page 2 for updates on the renovation of the LRC]. Board members were informed from the beginning that their commitment to contribute generously to this total amount is crucial to the overall support and success of this project.

This past March, I had the honor of traveling with Dr. Jeanne Novotny, Dr. Suzanne Campbell, assistant professor, and Noël Appel, advancement liaison for the School of Nursing, to present at a conference in Washington, D.C., hosted by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing Advancement Professionals. We spoke about the design and implementation of the Advisory Board, how to nurture and grow a devoted group of leaders, and the steps we are taking to meet its financial goals for the School. The incredible feedback gave us the validation we needed to confirm that the Board is on the right track with our fundraising and development efforts. It was a thrill for me to play a role in this extremely interesting and educational conference. I came away knowing that what we are doing is absolutely "right" for Fairfield University and something other larger institutions can only aspire to implement. We are truly on the cutting edge of this new idea!

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School of Nursing Learning Resource Center Project

Naming Opportunities

The Learning Resource Center - \$500,000 - \$1 Million

Simulation Lab (Rm. 217/218) - \$150,000

Auditorium (Rm. 203/205) - \$100,000

Home Care/OB/NICU (Rm. 219) - \$100,000

SimMan Room (Rm. 212) - \$100,000

Anesthesia Room (Rm. 209) - \$50,000

First Floor Classroom (Rm. 124) - \$50,000

Second Floor Classroom (Rm. 214) - \$50,000

Control Room (Rm. 210) - \$25,000

Office (Rm. 208) - \$25,000

Programmatic Component (General Gift Category)

Faculty and Curriculum Development - \$253,706

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Incoming students are now very savvy and selective when it comes to nursing schools. They “shop” the school and expect the labs to be state-of-the-art, complete with not one but at least two SimMan models, as well as other technology. They will go elsewhere if the school does not meet that criteria! To attract the best and brightest, it is not enough to have a superior faculty. We’ve got to give the students the latest learning tools. With your help, we can accomplish just that!

The collective generosity of the Advisory Board will not only foster more donations to the School, but is a moving testimony to the spirit of giving that these board leaders have evidenced in their lives. I urge you all – alumni, friends, and former faculty – to join with us in support of the School at a level you feel most comfortable. You can make a donation online at www.fairfield.edu/give.xml or call Noël Appel at (203) 254-4000, ext. 2025.

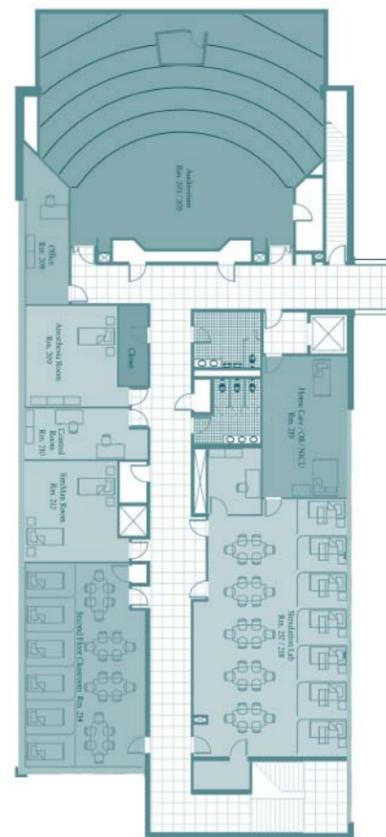
I look forward to keeping you updated on our progress and I welcome any comments or suggestions.

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

Update on the Learning Resource Center upgrade

The expansion and enhancement of the Learning Resource Center is underway! Months ago, faculty gathered to discuss their visions of how they would like to teach. They’ve met with members of the Center for Academic Excellence, Health Communications, Visual and Performing Arts, as well as the Development, Media, IT/CNS, and University Operation Departments to get suggestions and input. Members of the Advisory Board did their part by raising awareness – and funds – to get the renovations started. Says faculty liaison Dr. Suzanne Hetzel Campbell, “It has been a privilege to work with the enthusiastic group of individuals on the Advisory Board who are helping us realize this vision. Their expertise, support, and encouragement has had a profound effect on my teaching and job satisfaction: To find that others care as much about the future education of nurses as I do has been incredibly fulfilling.”

The result: the creation of a center where students can learn in a risk-free, hands-on environment. Using simulation-based teaching will allow students to integrate nursing skills, critical thinking, and communication. Faculty will be challenged to provide enough background for the students to function, while encouraging independent learning in a variety of settings. “Watching students grow in self-confidence and gain experience in the performance of nursing skills and techniques is one benefit; providing the community with better-prepared graduate nurses is another,” says Dr. Campbell.



Groundbreaking master’s program in nurse anesthesia

When Bridgeport Hospital began looking for a new affiliation with which to partner for its nurse anesthesia program, it sent out feelers to schools all over Connecticut. “Then we met with Dr. Jeanne Novotny, and she sold us on Fairfield in about 10 minutes,” recalls Nancy Moriber, CRNA, MSN, APRN, program director of Bridgeport Hospital’s Nurse Anesthesia program. “The staff and administrators at Fairfield were so positive and energetic, and the attitude was such that we knew they would strive to make it all happen. We knew of Fairfield’s fine reputation, and we felt it was a real coup for us.”

The partnership between Fairfield University and the Bridgeport Hospital Nurse Anesthesia Program – the first and only nurse anesthesia program combined with a master’s degree in nursing in all of Connecticut – will allow students to earn a master’s degree in nursing plus a certificate in nurse anesthesia. The 29-month, full-time program will begin in January 2007. Students will take nursing courses at Fairfield, then will complete clinical work and anesthesia courses, taught by Bridgeport Hospital personnel, at Bridgeport Hospital. “I’m very supportive of the program, and I know that our relationship with Fairfield will be longstanding,” says Dennis Buonafede, M.D., medical director of the Bridgeport Hospital Nurse Anesthesia Program, who will be teaching one of the courses. “I anticipate that our candidates will not only have great intellectual skills, but good people skills as well.” The 50-credit program provides all clinical opportunities at one site to meet the standards set by the Council



Under the supervision of a physician, nurse anesthesia students prepare a patient for surgery at Bridgeport Hospital.

on Accreditation of Nurse Anesthesia (CRNA) Educational Programs. “This is a program for nurses who are looking for an additional challenge,” says Kenneth Stone, M.D., president of Bridgeport Anesthesia Associates. “It’s a tremendous opportunity for us to be able to train these quality clinical providers.”

Upon graduation, students will be eligible to take the certification examination administered by the Council on Certification of Nurse Anesthetists. Because they have a master’s in nursing (as opposed to a master’s in biology, as some programs offer), these graduates will be prepared to eventually earn a doctoral degree in nursing. “We expect that most graduates will make clinical practice their endpoint, although some will want to go on to do research and to get a doctoral degree,” says Charles Watson, M.D., chairman of the Anesthesia Department at Bridgeport Hospital. Regardless of the

direction they choose, “this community has a tremendous need for practitioners with an anesthesia background, especially as the population increases,” he adds.

“The field of nurse anesthesia is one of the pillars of advanced practice nursing and we expect this program to be very successful,” said Dr. Novotny, dean of the School of Nursing, noting that she expects up to 100 applicants for the 12 available spots in the highly competitive program.

Currently, Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNAs) deliver approximately 65 percent

of the anesthesia in the country, depending upon the region, and are among the highest paid nurse professionals. They can administer any type of anesthesia – local, general, spinal, etc. – in both an office and a hospital setting, in collaboration with a physician. After several years of experience, some CRNAs choose to establish their own anesthesia groups and contract their services out to surgeons and office-based practices. CRNAs can also become involved in education and research. Because nurse anesthetists are responsible for direct patient care, students gain hands-on experience in a variety of regional and general anesthesia techniques under the supervision of CRNA and M.D. faculty. In addition to “routine” surgical cases, nurse anesthesia students enhance their preparation by participating in trauma, major burn, and high-risk obstetrical cases.

International Nursing

Opening doors to Ireland

Once upon a time, student nurses in Ireland did all their training in hospitals. That changed in 2001, when the entire country went to a baccalaureate system; student nurses now earn a college degree while getting their nursing training. “The change opened up tremendous opportunities for partnering,” says Meredith Wallace, Ph.D., director of the Nursing Study Abroad Program and the Elizabeth DeCamp McInerney Endowed Chair in Health Sciences. “The faculty there were struggling; even though they had master-level degrees, they were new to the academic rigors of the baccalaureate program.” Dr. Wallace has been to Galway several times over the years to consult on various aspects of running a college level academic program and to formalize the relationship between Fairfield and National University of Ireland in Galway. This semester, three Fairfield students are in Galway, while two students from Galway are studying here.



Jean Santopadre

Michelle McLaughlin (left) and Leanna O'Flynn

“Students benefit from seeing different cultural issues in healthcare,” says Dr. Wallace. “For example, in the United States there are a number of different resources for healthcare, even for people who don’t have insurance. In Ireland, you either have insurance or you use the nationalized healthcare system. Seeing the difference firsthand helps students understand the economics of healthcare.”

“Our course of study here is very different in terms of the way things are presented and the way we’re examined,” notes Leanna O’Flynn, a third year student from Galway. “Here, there’s more reading, and you’re kept on your toes because the assessments are continuous.” In Ireland, she adds, testing is likely to take place just once or twice a year, with five-week blocks of time spent in a clinical setting. Both O’Flynn and Michelle McLaughlin, another third-year student from Galway, say they enjoy the mix of courses they’re taking at Fairfield, from geriatric nursing to psychology and an elective. Their courses were mapped out before they arrived to coordinate with their required courses back home. “But they are

often taught differently,” notes McLaughlin. “For example, our sociology of law course is broad and goes into all kinds of social policy. In Ireland, that course would be law as it relates to nursing.”

Still in the discussion stages: a faculty exchange program, so nursing faculty can come to Fairfield University for research and teaching. Dr. Wallace is also hoping to expand the student exchange program, but there’s a fundamental problem: students pay little tuition in Ireland, so it costs them – or their school – a great deal of money to send them to the United States. “This year, Leanna and Michelle’s tuition has been paid for largely by their university. It’s an honor that the University of Ireland thinks so highly of our program that they’re willing to do that,” says Dr. Wallace.

Program in Padova

Now in its fourth year, the SON’s two-week summer program in Padova, Italy, is more popular than ever. This June, 15 students from a host of different schools will be studying under the direction of Dr. Jean Lange, associate professor of nursing and director of graduate studies. Classes are taught at the Institute of Research and Advanced Education, a partner of the University of Padova. “Through the program, I was able to learn about the differences in our healthcare systems, and during a visit to a hospital in Padova, I saw how care is delivered,” says Catherine Alessi ’07, of her experience last summer. “The personal attention we received in the ‘Research in Nursing’ class helped us to learn that much more.” The program is also open to graduate nursing students who take ‘Advanced Research’ and the ‘Development of Nursing Science.’ Each course provides three credits.

This summer, professional photographer Claudia Schechter, a member of the SON Advisory Board, will accompany Dr. Lange and the students to Padova. She will create a photo documentary of the program for development and recruitment purposes. A trained medical photographer, Schechter’s photography has taken her all over the world.

For more information about the program in Padova, visit www.fairfield.edu/studyabroad or call (203) 254-4332.

Diabetes Educator of the Year: Geralyn Spollett ’76

by Nina M. Riccio and Meredith Guinness

Geralyn Radowiecki Spollett ’76 first came to Fairfield University as a pioneer – a female in the third class of women. “I knew of the Jesuit reputation as educators, and the nursing program was touted as progressive, which was also appealing,” she remembers. “Plus, Fairfield provided me with scholarship money, and that meant a lot to me.” After graduating with a bachelor of science in nursing, Spollett went on 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.



Jean Santopadre

Geralyn (Radowiecki) Spollett ’76

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. She establishes long-term relationships with her patients, helping them cope with diabetes through self-management education regarding their medication, stress, diet, and exercise levels. “For a nurse, diabetes is a wonderful field because it allows you to use all your skills and education in care and prevention. The focus of our care involves not just the individual, but the family and community as well,” she says.

Her efforts to share her knowledge with others have not gone unnoticed: In June, she will travel to Washington, D.C.,

to receive the American Diabetes Association’s 2006 Educator of the Year Award. “I want to bring attention to the ongoing problem of diabetes in the United States,” Spollett says. “The number of persons diagnosed each year continues to grow in epidemic proportions, and currently affects 20.8 million people.”

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 SON Alumni Excellence in Nursing Award. Last year, she received the Fairfield University Alumni Professional Achievement Award.

In recent years, Spollett has spent much of her time co-editing a much-anticipated book on diabetes management published through the American Diabetes Association, *The Complete Nurse’s Guide to Diabetes Care*. Focusing on the person instead of the “case,” the collection of articles, most written by

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Dr. Oliver Sacks opens SON lecture series

by Daniel Hayes, M.D.,
Advisory Board Member

Neurologist and author Oliver Sacks, the “poet laureate of medicine,” opened the School of Nursing lecture series on Oct. 26, regaling the audience with a personal discourse from 40 years of practice treating those with severe neurological illness, particularly Alzheimer’s disease. With a warm narrative and a relaxed and personal style, he wove together writings from well-known people as they were sliding into various stages of dementia, outlining in personal portraits the suffering of lives interrupted by the isolation of memory loss.

Dr. Sacks, who is best known for his books, *The Man Who Mistook his Wife for a Hat* and *Awakenings*, is a philosopher as well as a health care practitioner. As professor of medicine at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine, he provides oversight, leadership, and insight to generations of physicians, nurses, and caregivers of people with dementia. Dr. Sacks made it clear in his talk, “Alzheimer’s and the Preservation of Self,” that he is connected to those patients whose problems are great and whose care can often create feelings of hopelessness and isolation. Within the incurables, he finds the person. Beyond the seemingly helpless state of those “locked in,” his care has created models and programs that have made the difference in the lives of these patients and their families. This inspiring talk celebrated the role of the nurse, whose caregiving is complex, systems-oriented, technical but patient-centered, and always in touch with the person, not simply the illness.

What better way to celebrate the School of Nursing’s 35th anniversary than to remember that the gifts of compassion and respect for another person transcend all of health care and are central to the education of a nurse? Though Dr. Sacks’ predictions about the future treatments for dementia were hopeful, the value of the lecture was broad and grounded in his respect for the person. By focusing on patient-centered care, he was the perfect keynote speaker to kick off the lecture series.

SON personnel travel to D.C.

Last March, when the American Association of Colleges of Nursing Advancement Professionals met in Washington, D.C., for two days of workshops geared specifically for those involved with advancing schools of nursing around the country, Fairfield University was well represented.

Jeanne M. Novotny, dean; Noël Appel, School of Nursing advancement liaison; Nancy Lynch, School of Nursing board chair; and Suzanne Hetzel Campbell, assistant professor, led the workshop *Nursing School Advisory Board Development and Operation*. They gave participants an overview of how the Advisory Board was envisioned, defined, funded, and launched at a Masters I University School of Nursing. Participants learned firsthand how to create a vision early on; establish meaningful and integrated roles and responsibilities for the dean, faculty, board members, and representatives of the Advancement Division; clearly define the board's charge; design and implement a two-day board retreat; and engage board members, faculty, and advancement representatives in securing funding for a targeted initiative.

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nurses, is a vital tool in patient care with guidelines for management of both acute and chronic complications. Spollett is also guest-editing a summer edition of *Diabetes Spectrum*, which will focus on the disease as it relates to other issues, including HIV, AIDS, and cancer. This month, she will travel to Bologna, Italy, to lecture on the nurse's role in the use of insulin pumps for the Italian Diabetes Nurses Association.

"When you're working in the healthcare industry, a background of community service and a strong ethical grounding are very important," Spollett says when asked how her Jesuit background prepared her for the work she is now doing. "My time at Fairfield was very dynamic, and the faculty were particularly committed to students. I think of my time and experiences there as some of the best in my life."

Gifts, Grants, Partnerships

End-of-life care

Caring for people who are dying is among the top ten most challenging issues in nursing, and oftentimes, the reluctance to acknowledge death is at hand has made the nursing care that is provided less effective than it could be, said Dr. Meredith Wallace, associate professor of nursing.



Dr. Meredith Wallace

The Gustavus and Louise Pfeiffer Research Foundation has awarded \$74,937 to the SON to teach students about nursing care for dying patients. This generous grant will allow the School to bring in a visiting expert in palliative care and will fund four faculty research projects.

The School of Nursing is modeling its palliative nursing care initiatives on its already-established project to incorporate geriatric nursing care into its curriculum. That program had been supported by a \$90,000 grant, as well as a 2005 Award for Baccalaureate Education in Geriatric Nursing from the John A. Hartford Foundation.

Fairfield University, Norwalk Hospital offer scholarship aid to nursing students



Sarah Stansel (left) and Eileen Borowiec '00

Eileen Borowiec had considered studying nursing as an undergraduate, but ended up pursuing marketing instead, graduating from Fairfield University in 2000. Her degree landed her a marketing position in the pharmaceutical industry, but she soon realized that a desk job wasn't for her. A Norwalk resident, Borowiec decided to pursue a second degree in nursing at Fairfield University. She entered the full-time accelerated degree program this summer, which meant she could not hold a full-time job. Needless to say, she was elated when Norwalk Hospital offered her a \$10,000 scholarship.

Sarah Stansel, another second-degree nursing candidate at Fairfield, will also receive the scholarship. "It was very significant," said Stansel, a Southbury resident whose first degree is in behavioral science. "Having a hospital in the area willing to help fund your education is a tremendous help."

In exchange for the scholarship, Stansel and Borowiec have agreed to work at Norwalk Hospital for two years. For Norwalk, the program is a way to recruit well-educated nurses. Norwalk Hospital also has a long-standing partnership with Fairfield in offering the Grace Cole Jones Scholarship to Fairfield University undergraduates who are Norwalk residents.

The second-degree program caters to local residents who will usually be looking for jobs at local facilities when they graduate, according to Carole Ann Pomarico, MSN, M.A., RN, assistant professor of nursing and adult program coordinator in SON. The program allows students with a bachelor's degree who have completed the required math and science courses and attained a sufficient GPA to earn a Fairfield University bachelor's degree in nursing in 15 months.

The arrangement is one of several partnerships that Fairfield University's School of Nursing is creating with local hospitals and healthcare agencies.

Partnership with St. Vincent's College

Fairfield University and St. Vincent's College will join forces so St. Vincent's students with an associate's degree can easily continue at Fairfield to earn a bachelor's degree. The two institutions, in addition to being in close proximity, also share a Catholic affiliation and a dedication to serving the less fortunate.

"In the Jesuit tradition of service, this collaboration addresses the need to expand nursing education and the number of professional and powerful nurse leaders in the region," said Dr. Jeanne M. Novotny, dean of Fairfield's School of Nursing.

"We are pleased to be a part of this collaborative effort in meeting the area's need for baccalaureate prepared nurses," said Joanne R. Wolfertz, Ed.D., R.N., vice president and dean of St. Vincent's College.

The partnership allows St. Vincent's graduates to transfer up to 70 credits from courses that have been identified as comparable to those at Fairfield. The program at Fairfield includes coursework in liberal arts as well as nursing. Students may complete the degree at their own pace and are able to finish in as little as 12 months. Students who wish to further their education may easily transition into Fairfield's master's degree program.



St. Vincent's College staff and students look on as Dean Jeanne Novotny (seated, far right) and St. Vincent's Dean Joanne Wolfertz (seated, center), sign a partnership agreement.

Joint faculty position with TransCon

Thanks to a \$40,000 grant from TransCon Builders, the SON has entered into a collaborative venture to share a nursing faculty position with TransCon's assisted living and nursing home facilities – Wilton Meadows, The Greens at Cannondale, Greenwich Woods, and Hamden Healthcare. The aim is to gain faculty expertise for each of the four facilities while bringing the clinical experience of a geriatric healthcare center to the University. The position is for the academic year beginning Sept. 1, 2006.

Geriatric Nursing wins award

The John A. Hartford Foundation's Institute for Geriatric Nursing has awarded the Fairfield University School of Nursing with a 2005 Award of Excellence for infusing geriatrics into the nursing curriculum. The goal of the program, under the direction of Dr. Jean Lange, associate professor, is to prepare students to advocate for and address the needs of older adults, and to develop faculty with the expertise to create learning experiences that impassion students to work with older adults. Dr. Lange was quoted extensively throughout the follow up book, *Caring for an Aging America: A Guide for Nursing Faculty*, produced by the Hartford Foundation.

Dr. Betty Ferrell to give second annual School of Nursing lecture



As an oncology nurse for 28 years, Betty Ferrell, Ph.D., RN, FAAN, has focused her clinical work and research on pain management and end-of-life care. She is currently a research scientist at the City of Hope National

Medical Center in California, and has had more than 270 articles published in peer-reviewed journals and textbooks. On Oct. 23, 2006, Dr. Ferrell will present "Dying in America," as part of the School of Nursing lecture series, which was launched last year by Dr. Oliver Sacks (see, p. 5). The lecture will be free and open to students, faculty, and friends of the School of Nursing; however, tickets are necessary.

In 1996, Dr. Ferrell received the Oncology Nursing Society Distinguished Nurse Researcher Award. The following year, she received the National Clinical Research Award from the Association of Community Cancer Centers. She was a member of the Expert Panel on Pain for the Agency of Health Care Policy and Research (AHCPR) and co-chaired the task force on "Pain in the Elderly" for the International Association for the Study of Pain from 1994 to 1996. She is currently the principal investigator of a study funded by the American Cancer Society on palliative surgery, and the principal investigator of the End of Life Nursing Education Consortium (ELNEC) project funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Dr. Ferrell has authored five books.

Please join the School of Nursing for what promises to be a thought-provoking talk. For tickets, call the Regina A. Quick Center for the Arts' Box Office at (203) 254-4000, ext. 4010.

New Advisory Board Member Sally Ann Pilkerton, BSN



A graduate of Regis University, Sally Pilkerton was part of the clinical study unit of Georgetown University Hospital and a member of the renal transplant team. She worked in Home Health Care and Hospice in Maryland for 13 years, and as a school nurse for 11 years. Two of her five children are Fairfield University graduates: Christopher '95 and Jeanne Marie '04. While raising her children, Sally was actively involved in their schools, serving as chairperson of numerous fundraising auctions and instrumental in establishing the Archdiocesan Youth Retreat

Center at Our Lady of Mattaponi in Upper Marlboro, Md. Presently, Sally is on the board of the Mercy Health Clinic in Montgomery County, and is chair of the Administrative Committee. She and her husband, Dr. A. Raymond Pilkerton, provide volunteer ophthalmology services to the clinic patients. Sally and Ray are on the Fairfield University Parents' Committee and are members of the Bellarmine Society, Fairfield's planned giving gift club.

Symposium on end-of-life care

The Connecticut Coalition of End-of-Life Nurse Educators hosts seminars to help nurses, nursing assistants, chaplains, and social workers deal with issues that surround end-of-life care. The next session, "Symptom Management in End-of-Life Care" will be held Sept. 16 at Fairfield University. The program will focus on the physical and psychological symptoms often experienced by those toward the end of life. Minimizing pain through assessment, management, and recognition of barriers to treatment will be discussed; participants will learn methods of pharmacologic and non-pharmacologic symptom control. Nursing participants earn 3.6 CEU credits for the half-day program. The program is \$20 and is open to everyone. To register, contact Dr. Jean Lange at (203) 254-4000, ext. 2713, or e-mail jlange@mail.fairfield.edu.

The next seminar, "Cultural and Ethical Issues Surrounding End of Life," will be Nov. 4 at the University of Connecticut in Storrs. Contact E. Carol Polifroni at carol.polifroni@uconn.edu for information.



Fairfield's Online Community Is Here!

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

- **Network through FAN** (Fairfield Alumni Network) with nursing alumni from a multitude of career industries and regions

- **Connect with friends and**

Help us build Fairfield's online community – update your contact information *today* at www.fairfield.edu/alumnicommunity

- **classmates** world wide through an online directory

- **Register** for special nursing alumni events

- Receive **advance notice** of University news

- ... and much more!

In the aftermath of Katrina

by Nina M. Riccio

It took her a few years, but Patricia Dunn '05 finally saved the \$5,000 she needed for the luxury African safari she had been dreaming about. She scheduled time off from her position as a nurse administrator at Greenwich Hospital and even completed a class in Swahili so she could converse with the people she met. Then something unexpected happened ... something called Hurricane Katrina.

For Dunn, a Connecticut resident who graduated from Fairfield last year with a degree in nursing (RN to BSN program), Hurricane Katrina brought back memories of the helplessness and frustration she felt after 9/11. Back then, she was prevented from helping out because she wasn't on the Red Cross registry, even though she had been a nurse for five years at that point. She took the initiative in the following months, signing up for classes in disaster preparation and mass casualty care, then made sure she was on that list to be contacted in case of another national disaster. A few days after Katrina hit, she got an e-mail. "The Red Cross said that the impact of this hurricane had been tremendous, and they asked for nurses who could spare any two-week period to come down and help," recalls Dunn.

It wasn't an easy decision for Dunn to make – she had that African safari to think about, after all. Ultimately, however, "I knew that going down was something I needed to do," she says. On Sept. 6, just eight days after Hurricane Katrina left an unprecedented wake of destruction in Mississippi, Alabama, and Louisiana, Dunn was on a plane headed south. Arriving in Mississippi, Dunn was stunned at the devastation she saw. "For an hour's drive in from the coast, there was absolutely nothing standing intact," she recalls. "There was no running water or electricity, and the area was under

martial law. Signs said that looters would be shot. It was pretty terrifying."

"In New Orleans, the damage was so great because the levees broke and everything was flooded. Mississippi's Gulf Coast area was destroyed because it got hit with the full force of the hurricane," she continues. After a one-day training



Patricia Dunn '05

session, each nurse was given a van and told to cover a certain geographic area. "I filled the van with whatever first aid supplies and food I could get from the warehouse, parked in what had been a church lot, and treated the people who came." Simple things could present an unexpected challenge, she says. "In the 105 degree heat, the bandages wouldn't stick. I was literally using duct tape to close wounds." More frustrating for Dunn, however, was the fact that, even in a crisis and despite the fact that many of the local hospitals were closed, she was not allowed to diagnose, prescribe antibiotics, or suture a deep gash. "I knew then and there that to really be of help I'd have to become a nurse practitioner."

As for the people she met, "they were still in shock. Most were living in tents or under tarps." Some were surprised that a

Northerner would come to their aid, she said, "but I got around that by reminding them how much people from around the country wanted to help, just as they helped New York after 9/11." Despite the enormous difficulties the people in the area faced, "it was amazing to see how compassionate they were with their neighbors," she says. At night, Dunn was stationed either on the U.S.S. Comfort, the floating hospital anchored in Pascagoula Harbor, or at the Keesler Air Force Base in Biloxi.

The two-week experience affected Dunn so deeply that she's readjusted her life goals. "I had always been happy to work in the hospital, maybe become a nurse manager one day and make a good living," she says. "But working in Mississippi was such an emotional, transformative experience that I realized that kind of field work is what I need to do. Now, my goal is to join Doctors Without Borders or Operation Hope one day." To that end, she's asked Greenwich Hospital for a reassignment to the Emergency Room ("It's much better preparation for the work I intend to do," she says), and is going back to school – to Fairfield University, of course – to get her master's degree and become a nurse practitioner. It will take two-and-a-half years, but Dunn is sure the time and effort will be well worth it. After all, Africa will always be there, and the next time she books a trip to the region, it's more likely to be to work than to play.





Dean Novotny earns Vision Award

Dean Jeanne M. Novotny was honored with a Vision Award at the Mother M. Angeline Teresa Award Dinner presented by the League of St. Joseph's Manor on May 6. She was recognized for her commitment to the healthcare needs of the elderly, as well as for the education of future nurses, emphasizing gerontological nursing to ensure that the elderly continue to receive quality nursing care.

"Dr. Novotny has been instrumental in getting Fairfield University students to St. Joseph's for their practicums, and she has done so much to promote geriatric nursing and the need for good geriatric nurse education," says Sr. Michelle Anne Reho, St. Joseph's administrator.

At the School of Nursing, Dr. Novotny has shaped the curriculum by developing goals and strategies through programs that provide students with first-hand practical experience with the elderly. Over the past three decades, she has been a leader in the education and direction of nursing, including the development of the first collaboration between the World Health Organization and an American Red Cross chapter, and in the work of implementing advanced nursing care programs in Mexico, Chile, Zimbabwe, and Italy. She also received two Book-of-the-Year Awards from the *American Journal of Nursing for Distance Education in Nursing* and *The Nuts and Bolts of Teaching Nursing*.



Dr. Jeanne Novotny (left) and Sr. Michelle Reho

Our seniors speak...

"As a senior nursing student, my life has been full of clinical hours, care plans, and preparations for post-graduation. Yet through all the chaos I feel that the nursing faculty have been a true support system. Thanks in part to them, I secured a position in a hospital in San Diego, Calif., where in September I will begin my nursing career on a cardiac/telemetry unit."

- Sarah Gillespie '06

"I feel that my education here at Fairfield has been exceptional. All of the faculty are willing to help students succeed in any area of nursing. The clinical experiences were very rewarding and they helped me to realize my true interest in the area of pediatrics. I hope to be working in that field upon graduation this year. I would recommend Fairfield for its nursing program to anyone who asks."

- Heather Izzi '06



Dr. Quell receives Nightingale Award



Dr. Theresa Tavella Quell '79, assistant dean of the School of Nursing, was the keynote speaker at the sixth annual Nightingale Awards for Excellence in Nursing ceremony on May 4. She spoke on the future of nursing in Connecticut and the critical need

for nursing faculty in the state. She also accepted \$1,000 on behalf of the SON to be used for a scholarship for an entry-level nursing student. The Nightingale Awards for Excellence in Nursing program was developed in 2001 to celebrate and elevate the nursing profession. The six nursing schools in the area each received an award at the ceremony.

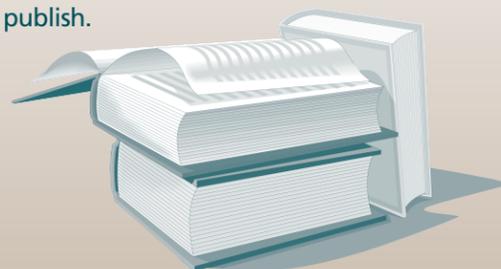
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAY

Mark your calendars for June 17, when the School of Nursing will hold a professional development day here on campus. The topic, "Partnerships in Progress: Pathways to the Future in Nursing," and the program will feature keynote speaker Nancy Valentine, RN, Ph.D., FAAN, principal of Valentine Group Health. Breakout sessions will focus on partnerships existing between key faculty members and community leaders. All three former SON deans - Drs. Phyllis Porter, Nancy Fasano, and Theresa Valiga - will be in attendance. For more information and to register, call Dr. Joyce Shea at (203) 254-4000, ext. 2575.

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



Please detach and send

Spring 2006

Let's Stay Connected!

Spring 2006

We love to hear from our alumni and friends! We also want to do our best to keep you informed of events and plans at the School of Nursing. Please help us by filling out the form below. Send to: Maggie McCaffery, Fairfield University School of Nursing, 1073 North Benson Road, Fairfield, CT 06824.

Your Name	Class	Degree
<small>FIRST</small> _____	<small>(MAIDEN)</small> _____	<small>(IF APPLICABLE)</small> _____
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City, State, Zip _____		Work or cell phone () _____
Check if this is a new address <input type="checkbox"/>		E-mail _____
Comments? _____		

Spouse _____	Children, ages _____	
Signature _____	Date _____	

UPCOMING EVENTS

Check inside for more details.

June 17: Professional Development Day. "Partnerships in Progress: Pathways to the Future in Nursing." To register, call Dr. Joyce Shea at (203) 254-4000, ext. 2575.

July 25: SON Graduate Program Information Session. 5:30 p.m. - 7 p.m. Register online at www.fairfield.edu/grad or call (203) 254-4184.

Sept. 16: "Symptom Management in End-of-Life Care" half-day seminar. To register, call Dr. Jean Lange at (203) 254-4000, ext. 2713.

Oct. 23: Dr. Betty Ferrell lecture. For tickets, call the Regina A. Quick Center for the Arts Box Office at (203) 254-4000, ext. 4010.



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Message From the Dean:



An historic year in the School of Nursing is coming to a close! As a new academic year unfolds, we continue to focus on the pressing healthcare challenges that touch each sector of our society — individual, family, and community. One aspect of meeting the challenge is the new graduate track in nurse anesthesia. The first students will be admitted in January 2007 and I hope that you will focus your attention on the article about this program on page 3 of this issue.

It takes all of us working together to make things happen and to continue the proud heritage and traditions of the School of Nursing and of Fairfield University. Often, we read something and think, "I'm going to get involved. I'm going to work toward making things happen." Then we get busy and forget how important the issue was to us. If you believe it is important to educate enough registered nurses in the future, here are some things you can do: 1) Take care of yourself and your fellow nurses. 2) Commit to your own professional development. It is never too late to go back to school to get that advanced degree. 3) Contribute to the School of Nursing at www.fairfield.edu/give.xml or support the University with a contribution to the Annual Fund.

As we embark on the journey into the future, I hope that you enjoy reading about all the varied and exciting things that are happening in the School of Nursing. Please let us know how we can assist you — and do take special notice of the Professional Development Day on June 17. We hope to see you there!

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