Independent Practice in Connecticut for APRNs

(pg. 3)
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Ceremony Encourages Patient-Centered Care ......................................................... 2
Fairfield Alumna Helps Push Through APRN Independent Practice .................... 3
Faculty on the Move .................................................................................................. 4
Susan D. Flynn Oncology Nursing Fellowship ...................................................... 5
HRSA Grant Continued ............................................................................................... 5
Health Sciences Collaboration .................................................................................... 6
Michael O’Toole ’11 is Jonas Scholar .......................................................................... 6
Faculty in the News ..................................................................................................... 7
Student Achievements ................................................................................................. 8
Alumni on the Move .................................................................................................... 8
Welcome New Faculty ................................................................................................ 9
¡Cuidado! Faculty, Students Teach Fall Prevention ..................................................... 9
Faculty Accomplishments ........................................................................................... 10

Ceremony Encourages Patient-Centered Care

The School of Nursing is one of 100 schools to receive funding from the Arnold P. Gold Foundation and the American Association of Colleges of Nursing to pilot White Coat Ceremonies, a program to promote humanistic, patient-centered care among incoming nursing students. Nursing students will be provided financial support and guidance to offer a White Coat Ceremony on Oct. 25, which will consist of the recitation of an oath, cloaking of students in a white coat, and an emblem by an eminent role model. The speaker at the ceremony will be Linda Berger Sprack, MSN, former vice president of patient care services at Hartford Hospital and now statewide director of the Connecticut Nursing Collaborative. Students will also receive a specially designed pin that will serve as a visual reminder of their oath and commitment to providing high quality care to all patients – one that takes in an individual’s preferences, goals, values, and beliefs – and is met with ultimate compassion and sensitivity.

Fairfield Alumna Helps Push Through APRN Independent Practice

This past April, the Connecticut legislature voted to allow nurse practitioners to practice independent of physician oversight after they have worked three years (2000 hours) in collaboration with a physician. With that ruling, Connecticut joins 18 other states and the District of Columbia in allowing APRNs to practice independently. While physician groups opposed the removal of the collaborative practice requirement, nurse practitioners had argued that the oversight requirement made it difficult to open their own practices and left them at risk of being unable to practice if the collaborating physician died or retired. Some have reported having to pay significant fees for collaboration.

“This is the fourth time that we’ve tried to have the written collaborative agreement removed,” said Theresa Conroy MSN’03, now a state representative and an active voice in the fight for new legislation on the issue. “There were strong lobby groups on both sides, but all evidence and research regarding independent APRN practice in other states points to patient satisfaction and outcomes equal to that of physicians.” There is no weight to the argument that removing oversight compromises the safety of patients. The Institute of Medicine came out against the restrictions and has long wanted to remove barriers to practice.

The new ruling will ensure broader access to affordable healthcare, a particular concern since Medicaid enrollment has gone up drastically. “APRNs get paid at about 80% the rate of physicians. They have a holistic approach to medicine and are focused more on prevention and chronic disease management than on acute care,” said Conroy.

Thousands of Connecticut residents have joined the ranks of the insured since the passage of the Affordable Care Act. With the new ruling, more APRNs can be expected to open their practices.

This year, Gov. Malloy made APRN independence a governor’s bill, thus ensuring that he put his weight behind it. “My role was to work with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, tell them what an APRN does and make sure they had the facts,” said Conroy. “There was a lot of misinformation being presented by those against independence, such as saying that APRNs aren’t required to have continuing education. That misinformation actually worked in my favor, since legislators didn’t care for being misled.”

Conroy’s interest in politics was sparked by a political science course she took as an undergrad.

“My career was as a VA [Veterans Administration] nurse, so I was not allowed to run for office as a federal employee,” she says. Not until she retired from the VA in 2007 was she able to enter politics. Since then, she has worked on legislation concerning mental health care, and veteran’s issues, helped launch the Live Healthy Connecticut program for those living with chronic disease, and has spoken of the need to develop more livable communities for the disabled and aged. Her work this summer includes focusing on how to address the heroin epidemic in the state along with improving economic development including manufacturing programs and small business development.

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Faculty on the Move

Former School of Nursing dean Lynn Babington was recently named the University’s senior vice president for academic affairs. She is the first woman, and the first nurse, to hold this position at Fairfield. Dr. Babington has served as Dean of the School of Nursing at Fairfield University since 2012; she has extensive experience in academic, hospital, and clinical settings, and was the unanimous choice for senior vice president by the search committee.

Dr. Meredith Wallace Kazer, former associate dean and graduate program director, will serve as dean for the next two years. Dr. Kazer is an award-winning researcher, professor, and nurse practitioner, and well positioned to take the lead as the School moves ahead with some exciting initiatives.

It is with mixed emotions that I announce my new role as the University’s senior vice president for Academic Affairs. As difficult as it is to leave the School I love so much, I look forward, in my new role, to supporting growth and excellence in the entire University community. And I am very pleased to leave Meredith Wallace Kazer at the helm of the School of Nursing. She has been an invaluable part of the leadership team for the last two years and has all of the expertise, experience, and energy to continue to lead the School of Nursing.

School of Nursing programs have grown and changed based on the skills and knowledge needed in today’s complex healthcare environment and the Nursing and Health Studies initiative has taken off, resulting in interdisciplinary opportunities focused on health for faculty and students across the campus. In support of this initiative and in collaboration with partners across campus, we designed a new building to provide cutting edge, innovative nursing and health-focused education.

I have had the privilege of working with an amazing team—faculty and staff, students, alumni, the Advisory Board and Partnership Council, and the many friends and supporters of the School. They have shown exceptional generosity of spirit, offered insights, advice and friendship, and I am so very grateful.

Over the past two years I so enjoyed working as associate dean, under the guidance and mentorship of Dr. Lynn Babington, that I believed I could have stayed in the position indefinitely. It wasn’t until Lynn moved into the role of the University’s senior vice president for Academic Affairs and I stepped into the dean’s office that I realized how well she had prepared me.

As I move forward with a vision for the School of Nursing, I plan to lend my experience with the master’s and DNP program to enhance the graduate and continuing education options here at Fairfield University. Increasing student support and resources through promotion of the excellent work of Fairfield University nurses and the Nursing and Health Studies initiative is one of my top priorities. I am proud to work with such an exceptional group of intelligent faculty who are the heart of this educational institution. Supporting faculty teaching, scholarship, and service are also goals of my term.

As access to healthcare expands in the U.S., the opportunities for nurses to become healthcare leaders are abundant. It is essential that nurses are prepared with the education to become full partners in healthcare systems. I am honored and grateful to have the opportunity to play an important part in this education, and look forward to meeting the challenges of nursing over the next couple of years.

Susan D. Flynn Oncology Nursing Fellowship

In memory of his late wife, Susan, who succumbed to ovarian cancer in 2013, Fred Flynn of Stamford has endowed a summer Oncology Nursing Fellowship program at Stamford Hospital. The Fellowship focuses on the education and professional development of oncology nurses using practice-based experience, under the guidance of a registered nurse. Each student is required to complete and present an evidence-based research project at the program’s conclusion.

Nursing students from Fairfield University and Boston College about to enter their senior year are eligible. Upon completion of the Fellowship program, the student will receive priority consideration for employment in Stamford Hospital’s oncology department. This summer, three Fairfield students were fellows in the program, two at Stamford Hospital and one at a similar program sponsored by Mr. Flynn at Westworth Douglas Hospital (Dover, NH).

“The Fairfield students are incredibly well prepared, and I couldn’t help notice how passionate they are about learning and their real desire to make a difference in their patients’ lives,” said Mary McKiernan, director of professional development at Stamford Hospital and one of the supervisors of the program.

“By being assigned her patients, I established a scope of admission.”

Fairfield students Jennifer Patten, Danielle Brouillard and Julie Earls, here with Fred Flynn, took part in the Susan D. Flynn Oncology Nursing Fellowship program.

HRSA Grant is Continued

The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) will continue its support of the School of Nursing’s Nurse Practitioner programs. This new grant of $605,000 over a two year period is earmarked for scholarships to encourage more nurses to become nurse practitioners.

Recognizing that nurse practitioners are more needed than ever, especially since the implementation of the Affordable Care Act which will extend coverage to 20 million more Americans, HRSA has stipulated that the grant be used to support programs educating students to become primary care nurse practitioners. In Connecticut, nurse practitioners can practice independently, as well as in settings such as a clinic or physician’s practice. At Fairfield University, nurse practitioner students are encouraged to start their own practices.
With the University’s new Integrative Nursing and Health Studies initiative, the School of Nursing is actively seeking ways to collaborate with those of other disciplines on research and teaching opportunities.

The Fairfield University Reminiscence in Long-Term Care project is one of those collaborations, funded through the Interdisciplinary Health Studies Initiative. Dr. Alison Kris, associate professor of nursing, and Dr. Linda Henkel, professor of psychology, are working with nursing and psychology majors to develop interventions to help nursing home residents with mild to moderate cognitive impairment.

“We are creating memory boards with photographs from different periods in the resident’s life,” explains Dr. Kris. “We will engage in conversation about the photos with the resident, then leave the board up for about a week.”

A focus for nursing is then assessing whether this results in better caregiving—does the caregiver show greater empathy? Does he/she have a greater understanding of the resident’s likes and dislikes? Is there more time spent in conversation? etc. A focus for psychology is on examining changes in the resident’s cognitive and memory abilities and whether or not mood and feelings of well being have improved through the act of reminiscing.

“It has been a great experience to work closely with professors from the nursing and psychology departments, and other students from the psychology department throughout this project,” says nursing student Katlyn Kraus ’15. “I have had the opportunity to engage in all stages of the research study, which began with designing the study, to now implementing the intervention, and soon analyzing the results from the data. The project has been a valuable learning experience where I have gained more knowledge in both my field of study as well as the process of a research study.”

Throughout the project, students from both departments work collaboratively with faculty on all aspects of the research, from reviewing the literature in the field, to designing the study, to collecting data, to participating in the analysis of the data. As the project moves forward, students will join faculty in presenting results at regional and national conferences.

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Student Achievements

Our students make us proud! Congratulations to the following:

**Undergraduate Student Awards**
- Elizabeth K. Dolan Memorial Award for Excellence in Nursing: Sarah Roghanian
- Excellence in Geriatric Nursing: Lia Iacuone
- U.S. Army Nurse Corps Spirit Award: Rachel Godwin
- Bridgeport Anesthesia Assoc. Award for Professionalism: Rachel Beauregard
- Pin Award for Outstanding Contribution to the School: Teresa Smith
- Scholarships:
  - Mohammad Krom: $10,000 Scholarship in Critical Care Nursing, $7,500 Scholarship in Trauma
  - Tanya F. Krom: $10,000 Scholarship in Critical Care Nursing, $5,000 Scholarship in Trauma
  - Elizabeth Wood: $5,000 Scholarship in Critical Care Nursing

**Graduate Student Awards**
- Outstanding Academic Achievement/Maine BSN Program: Malgorzata Puzio
- Peer Recognition Award: Danielle Rivera

**Student Achievements**
- Sarah Mitchell ’15 has won a scholarship from Cherokee Uniform for her essay in the company’s “A Nurse I Am” scholarship competition.

The PULSE

**Alumni on the Move**

This past April, three SON graduates returned to campus to share their expertise with graduate students in Dr. Sheila Grossman’s Family Nurse Practitioner classes. Erin Radacico ’07 MSN’13 FNPN-BC, APRN, presented “Negotiating Your First APN Contract and Highlights of The First Year.” Radacico is a family nurse practitioner in Old Saybrook, Conn. In the Critical Care Nursing class, Kim Logue ’12 presented “RN Role on Telemetry Unit in Major Health Care Center: Preparing for First RN Position.” Logue is a registered nurse at Brigham & Women’s Medical Center in Boston. Later that month, Zachary Krom, MSN, RN, CCRN spoke to the same class on “Challenges of Critical Care Nursing.” Krom is a Clinical Nurse III on the General Surgery/Trauma Step Down Unit at Yale New Haven Hospital and a PhD student at the University of Connecticut.

Kathy Zeller Maguire ’84 was commissioned into the Air Force Reserves after her graduation from Fairfield’s School of Nursing. She has recently retired at the rank of colonel. During her time in the reserves, she was awarded five meritorious service medals.

Philipp Lee Carabuena ’09 was commissioned as a second lieutenant into the Army Nurse Corps in 2010. He was deployed to Afghanistan with the 26th Combat Support Hospital in September 2013, and recently returned to the States where he is stationed in Augusta, Georgia.

Welcome New Faculty

Audrey M. Beauvais, DNP, MSN, MBA, RN, CNL, has joined the School of Nursing as the new associate dean for undergraduate programs. Dr. Beauvais holds a BSN from Fairfield University, an MSN and MBA from Sacred Heart University, and a DNP from Case Western Reserve University. She returns to Fairfield with extensive administrative experience in academic and hospital settings as well as in the insurance industry. Immediately prior to Fairfield, she was an assistant professor, director of the undergraduate nursing program, and coordinator of the patient care services administrative track at Sacred Heart University’s School of Nursing. She has published and presented in multiple areas broadly involving psychiatric nursing, and this year received the Josephine Dolan Diamond Jubilee Award from the Connecticut Nurses Association for her contributions to nursing education.

Susan Bartos, BS, RN, CCRN began at the School of Nursing as a visiting lecturer. Susan earned a baccalaureate in nursing from Moravian College and is currently completing her PhD from the University of Connecticut. Her dissertation focuses on measuring self-care in women with heart failure.

Linda Roney, MSN, RN-BC, CPEN comes to the School of Nursing this fall as a visiting lecturer. She earned a BSN from Villanova, and an MSN from Southern Connecticut State University. She is currently completing her doctorate of education from Southern Connecticut State University. Her clinical experience is as a pediatric trauma coordinator at Yale and her scholarship focuses on pediatric trauma education.

**¡Cuidado! Faculty, Students Teach Fall Prevention**

By Meg McCaffrey

Fairfield University nursing and Spanish language students shared their skill sets last spring to teach an evidence-based program in Spanish designed to address the fear of falling and fall prevention for the older adult population. Called a ‘Matter of Balance,’ lessons aimed to increase activity levels among older adults, and to teach exercises to improve balance and muscle strength. It’s a vital endeavor. Falls are more common than strokes and can be just as serious in their consequences. They are also the most preventable problem that results in nursing home placement.

For several years, the program has been taught in English by Fairfield University’s School of Nursing students and faculty in numerous area towns and cities, so the introduction of Spanish opened it up to a whole new audience.

The eight-session, two hour a week course introduced ways to make the home safer to ward against falls, complete with a safety checklist. Participants were also shown how to get up from a fall, good walking posture, and exercises to strengthen core body muscles.

“That is what education at Fairfield University is all about - purposely providing interdisciplinary opportunities for students where they have the opportunity to learn from each other,” noted former School of Nursing dean and now senior vice president of Academic Affairs, Lynn Babington.
UPCOMING EVENTS

Saturday, Sept. 27
Graduate Information Session for anyone interested in pursuing an MSN or DNP. 8:30 a.m. On campus in the Kelley Center. RSVP: gradadmis@fairfield.edu

Oct 19 & Nov. 20
SON Open House for high school students interested in nursing.

Alumni Weekend
Friday, Oct. 24: Reception for nursing and health professionals, hosted by the Class of 2015. 6-8 p.m. Bannow Science Center.

Saturday, Oct. 25:
Healthcare panel: “Growth in the Healthcare Industry and the ACA” 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Quick Center for the Arts

Wednesday, Nov. 5:
American Nurse Project documentary, 5 p.m. Quick Center for the Arts

THE PULSE EDITORIAL BOARD

The Pulse is published by Fairfield University for alumni, students, parents, benefactors, and friends of the School of Nursing, as well as selected healthcare agencies and nursing schools. Editorial offices are located at:

Fairfield University
1073 North Benson Road
BLM 103
Fairfield, CT 06824-5195

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