

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN
EAU CLAIRE
NURSING ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

FALL 2006

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IMPORTANT DATES

- Graduation : Dec. 16, 2006 and May 19, 2007
- Wisconsin Center for Nursing Meeting- Sept. 14, 2006
- Graduate Program Application Deadline- Feb. 1, 2007
- Nursing Alumni Walk- Sat., Oct. 7, 8:00am

GREETINGS FROM THE DEAN

Greetings Nursing Alumni and Friends of the Nursing Program,

The 2006-2007 academic year is in full swing! For the first time, the entire university community met for breakfast in Zorn Arena to hear Chancellor Levin-Stankevich's address outlining his goals for UW-EC. Cultural competence and global understanding will be a goal for student learning.

Nursing students now have a special opportunity to enhance their foreign language skills. A minor, Spanish for Health Professionals, was approved last year. Nursing students, who complete the minor, will have a clinical experience where they will work with Spanish speaking clients. I am grateful for the

collaborative efforts of nursing faculty and the Foreign Language Department in bringing that opportunity forward.

We are well into the implementation of the 12 month accelerated BSN program for person's seeking a second degree. It is an intensive experience for both the faculty and the students. It is a learning opportunity for all of us.

I hope to see many of you at the Nurses' Walk on Homecoming morning. The walk has become a tradition and I enjoy reconnecting and learning about all the things UW-EC nursing grads are doing. In addition to an update on the nursing programs, we will have some exciting news to share with you re-



Dean Elaine Wendt (right) pictured with student, Kosmena Sherrington, who received the Loretta Donnellan Scholarship at the Nursing Awards Banquet on April 27, 2006.

garding the Fulfilling the Promise Campaign and the nursing programs. I am looking forward to visiting with you then.

L. Elaine Wendt

Dean, College of Nursing and Health Sciences

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 2005 NURSING ALUMNI WALK!

The 2005 homecoming walk was held on October 15th and was a rather special one for us. It marked the 40th Anniversary of the establishment of the School of Nursing in 1965, with the first class of baccalaureate-prepared nurses graduating in 1968. Eighty-six people attended the Walk and many others

requested 40th Anniversary t-shirts. The founding classes of '68, '69, and '70 were well represented among the attendees. Emeriti faculty participating in the Walk included Ms. Marilyn Burgess, Ms. Karen Danielson, Ms. Patricia Garber, and Dr. Rita Kisting Sparks. (Debra Jansen)



Ms. Garber, class of '69, (pictured to the left, in the hat) led the Walk.

ALUMNI RECEIVES DISTINGUISHED AWARD FROM UWEC

In conjunction with Spring 2006 commencement, the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire Alumni Association presented awards to six UWEC alumni.

Mary Campbell Bliss, a perinatal clinical nurse specialist for the Sutter Health Sacramento Sierra Region in Sacramento, Calif., received the Alumni Distinguished Achievement Award. This award recognizes distin-

guished service to the community, state, or nation in a manner that brings credit to the recipients and UWEC.

Bliss received her bachelor of science degree in nursing from UWEC in 1978 and her master's degree in maternal-child nursing from UW-Madison in 1985. She is a recognized advocate in the area of domestic abuse and chairs the Healthcare Domestic Violence Network in Cali-

fornia. She has also served in numerous leadership positions including nursing director of maternal child inpatient units at Sutter Roseville Medical Center and Methodist Hospital in California.

"Mary's passion for her profession and for serving those who can't speak for themselves-the unborn and the abused-is unprecedented," wrote Dean Wendt to the nominating committee. (1)



Mary Campbell Bliss received award from UW-Eau Claire Alumni Association at May 20, 2006 luncheon.

NEW SPANISH FOR HEALTH PROFESSIONS MINOR

A course in health care terminology within the new Spanish for health professions minor was offered Spring 2006, although the program officially begins this fall of 2006. It was a full class of enthusiastic students. Students worked on topics from basic anatomy vocabulary to cultural interactions. Students said the course was relevant to their nursing career, fun, and chal-

lenging. The first official course for fall 2006 is also full and had more interested students than it could accommodate.

The positive response to this one-of-a-kind program has been great. This program is one of the many ways the Nursing program is promoting culturally competent nurses for the future. (Jayne Bielecki, Nursing Instructor)



(Left) Professor Juan Chaves instructing during one of the courses offered for the Spanish for health professions minor. (Right) Students ask Professor Juan Chaves questions related to his course.

NURSING STUDENTS STUDY ABROAD IN COSTA RICA

The first groups of pioneers for the Costa Rica program have returned and are making progress with integration back into the American Culture.

Students had positive experiences overall and found the program challenging. One of their favorite experiences was living with their host families and learning about the Costa Rican culture. They enjoyed practicing their Spanish language skills and feel they grew as individuals.

Given this is the first time through it's wonderful to have such a positive response. Students are happy to recommend it to a friend!

(Jayne Bielecki, Clinical Instructor, Family Health Nursing Department)



A group of nursing students who attended the study abroad program in Costa Rica.

NEW ACCELERATED NURSING PROGRAM UNDER WAY

Classes began for eight students on May 22, 2006 for the “fast track” baccalaureate nursing degree program at University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire.

The program was funded by a federal education grant obtained with the help of U.S. Rep. Ron Kind (D-Wis.). Kind stated the state of Wisconsin and the nation are experiencing a shortage of registered nurses and the UW-Eau

Claire can use these grant funds to meet the professional nursing needs of the region.

The accelerated program requires two semesters, plus a Summer and Winterim session. The traditional baccalaureate nursing degree program requires three years to complete. “Students must meet the prerequisites for admittance to the nursing program (including science

and statistics requirements) and have at least a bachelor’s degree,” stated Dean Wendt. This program requires intensive studies and outside employment is not recommended for students. Graduates of the program will be eligible to sit for the national licensing examination. The next May 2007 start date for the accelerated program is contingent upon funding. (2)



Eight accelerated students pictured with Dean Wendt are the first to pursue the “fast track” baccalaureate nursing degree.

UW-EAU CLAIRE AND CVTC NOW HAVE JOINT ALLIANCE

The Chippewa Valley Nursing Alliance agreement took effect in Fall 2004 partnering the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire and Chippewa Valley Technical College to meet the growing need for nurses in the Chippewa Valley. According to Dean Wendt, the UW-Eau Claire nursing programs turn away about 180 highly qualified students each year. This is due to lack of university

funds to hire enough faculty to meet the needs of the nursing applicants. The Chippewa Valley Nursing Alliance allows 24 students to enroll in CVTC’s associate degree nursing program, and continue to take general education classes at UW-Eau Claire. Students also can continue to live in the residence halls, have a UW-Eau Claire advisor, and access to university services. After students com-

plete the 2-year CVTC nursing associate degree, they can enroll in the online Collaborative Nursing Program through the UW-System to earn a nursing bachelor’s degree. “We’re efficiently utilizing resources to graduate more nurses, which helps our community and our state,...” stated Steve Tallant, Associate Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs. (3)

“Allows 24 students to enroll in CVTC’s associate degree nursing program, and continue...class at UWEC.”

ANNUAL NURSING HONORS LUNCHEON A SUCCESS

The Annual Nursing Honors Luncheon was held on Thursday April 27, 2006 to recognize students in the Nursing Honors Program at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire. Both senior students in the Nursing Honors Program and alumni presented their honors research work. Students in the honors pro-

gram are required to complete eight honors credits and are encouraged to synthesize knowledge from the general studies area. Students may focus five of those credits on independent study projects. Students have focused their research studies on many different areas including “socio-political” as-

pects of the nursing profession, spiritual and psychosocial needs of the aging population, and assisting patients in the preparation and recovery from surgery. “This is a wonderful professional opportunity for the students to present their scholarship in a bit more of a formal way, and is also a form for sharing ideas,...” said Professor CeCelia Zorn. (4)



Pictured above are the student presenters at this year’s nursing honors luncheon were (from L to R) Audrey Pearce, Susan Karlman, Jamie Schultz.

NEW INSTRUMENT TO MEASURE QUALITY IN LONG TERM CARE

Mary Zwygart-Stauffacher, associate dean of the College of Nursing and Health Sciences, was part of a research team which completed a three-year project in 2005. The research team tested a tool to measure the quality of nursing home care. The instrument, "Observable Indicators of Nursing Home Care Quality Instrument," was used to measure quality in a 30-minute inspection of a

facility. The instrument is designed to guide nurses, health care professionals, consumers, and regulators to inspect a nursing home in a short amount of time, stated Zwygart-Stauffacher.

Researchers involved in this project visited 407 facilities in Wisconsin, Missouri, and Minnesota. Both the scores from the OIQ and the citation facilities received from the surveys by the state and fed-

eral inspectors showed a relationship which suggests that the OIQ can serve as an alternative to a full team of regulators. "We anticipate that consumers will find this helpful as they make decisions about long term care services," said Zwygart-Stauffacher. A consumer version of the OIQ is available and may help in determining selection of a nursing home for a loved one. (5)



Mary Zwygart-Stauffacher, associate dean of the College of Nursing and Health Sciences, is part of a research team that tested an instrument measuring quality.

ATTENTION NURSING ALUMNI!

Your gifts to support our programs over the next couple years can literally double in value and impact, thanks to a \$125,000 challenge grant from a Chippewa Falls foundation. The UW-Eau Claire Foundation, on behalf of the College of Nursing and Health Sciences, has received a grant from the Casper Foundation to stimulate a major funding initiative for the college. Gifts and com-

mitments received over the next several months that are designated for one of the key funding initiatives in the College will be eligible for a 1:1 match through the Casper Foundation challenge grant.

The three key funding initiatives are: 1) Invest in faculty to increase the program's ability to teach more students, 2) Invest in students to ensure their success, and

3) Investing in technology/facilities.

The funding initiative is being held to celebrate the nursing program's 40th anniversary at UW-Eau Claire and to focus attention on significant needs in the program. "We are so thrilled to have this opportunity to significantly leverage new gifts for our nursing program," says Dean Elaine Wendt. (Kim Way)



Dean Wendt is pictured above with donors Jane and Jim Moore.

CULTURAL CARE: A PERINATAL EXPERIENCE AT HOLY FAMILY BIRTH CENTER

For the past 9 years, UW-Eau Claire nursing students have had the opportunity to enrich their development with a diverse clinical experience at Holy Family Birth Center. Holy Family Center, at the heart of the Rio Grande Valley in Weslaco, Texas, near the border of Mexico, is a very special place. Holy Family Birth Center is a nurse-managed birth center that was started in 1983 by Sister Angela Murdaugh—a certified nurse midwife who came to the Rio Grand Valley, discovered the maternity care needs of the seasonal farm workers and "promised myself that it would happen". The mission of the Holy Family is to provide comprehensive health care from conception through four weeks after birth for underserved women and families in a God-centered atmosphere. The philosophy of care given to women and their families is simple, holistic, and compassionate. Eighty percent of the Holy Family patients live below the poverty level, yet no one is ever turned away because of inability to pay.

As a clinical group, the students and faculty arrive for the week and live in La Casa (the visitor's house) on the grounds at Holy Family. The week of clinical care at Holy Family is *life changing*. Students learn about birth, about culture, about caring, about nursing, about life, about their inner self...It's transforming! (Rita Sperstad)

ALUMNI GREET UWEC CHANCELLOR IN MARSHFIELD

Chancellor Brian Levin-Stankevich was welcomed at a reception at the Sr. Frances Conference Center at Saint Joseph's Hospital in Marshfield on August 15, 2006.

UWEC alumni from central Wisconsin greeted the Chancellor and received an update on the State of the University. The Chancellor, his administrative team, and the College of Nursing & Health Science leadership team met with

Saint Joseph's Hospital President Michael Schmidt and his administrative team.

UWEC and Saint Joseph's Hospital have partnered in providing baccalaureate nursing education since 1988. Over 300 students have graduated from this program and the majority of graduates have remained in central Wisconsin and are practicing in the area.

Beginning this fall, selected courses in the BSN@Home (RN to BSN) program and the MSN program will be ITV'd to the Marshfield site. If you have questions regarding the course offering please contact the Associate Dean's office, 715-836-6012.

(Dean Elaine Wendt)



Brian Levin-Stankevich, Chancellor of the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire speaks at the alumni event held at St. Joseph's Hospital in Marshfield.

UW-EAU CLAIRE FACULTY RECEIVES SERVICE AWARD

Linda Duffy, a UW-Eau Claire faculty member in Marshfield received the Melsen Volunteer Award from the Occupational Development Center in Marshfield. The ODC provides employment opportunities including job skills training and long term employment for people with disabilities.

Duffy, a clinical instructor in Nursing systems, taught a

class which involved looking at emerging health care interventions and various wellness activities. Duffy and her students started offering hand massage and seated upper back massage to clients at ODC. "We transformed a conference room into a wellness center with relaxing music, subdued lighting, and décor modifications," said Duffy. ODC stated this has had a significant

positive impact on their clients. This volunteer agreement began four years ago and both the clients and staff were delighted with the program. Since then, Duffy and her class of nursing students each semester, have continued this partnership by offering sessions needed by ODC clients related to the wellness concept. (6)



Linda Duffy, a clinical instructor in Nursing Systems at Marshfield, received volunteer service award.

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- (5) From: UW-Eau Claire News Bureau, Aug. 30, 2006 News Release, "Nursing Professor Helps Create Instrument to Measure Quality in Long-Term Care Settings".
- (6) From: UW-Eau Claire News Bureau Feb. 3, 2006 News Release, "UW-Eau Claire Nursing Instructor in Marshfield Recognized with Volunteer Service Award".

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MARK YOUR CALENDAR! ALUMNI UPDATES

- This year's **Nursing Alumni Homecoming Walk: October 7th, 2006; (8:00am, registration 7:30am)**; Please see our "News/Events" link (on our website listed above) for registration information.
- The **Class of 1976** will celebrate a **30th reunion September 16th** with a dinner on campus (Davies Center). The group hopes to have a tour of campus and the School of Nursing earlier in the afternoon. The class is preparing a booklet of information and memories about ourselves and will share that with each other. Speakers planned at the dinner include Dean Elaine Wendt and Emeritus Rita Kisting Sparks. The class is also planning a gift to the School to be used by students now and in the future. (Vicki Vogler)
- Please continue to contact the College of Nursing and Health Sciences if you have an **upcoming reunion**.
- Please call the alumni office for **nominations for outstanding alumnus**. Or you may look at the alumni website online www.uwec.edu/alumni



The 2005 Nursing Alumni Homecoming Walk at the campus bridge.