Advancing Your Education

Pursuing Advanced Education: One Nurse’s Journey

Which Advanced Degree Program?

KCON Collaborates to Promote the CNL Role

Serving the LGBTQ Community

Supporting the Lifetime Journey
There is a growing need for thousands of highly educated nurses to fulfill the promise of health reform in the United States, and this is driving nurses, their employers, and schools of nursing to focus on preparing more nurses at the baccalaureate and graduate levels. In 2010, the Institute of Medicine (IOM) report “The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health” (www.thefutureofnursing.org/IOM-Report) issued a call for the academic progression of nurses, with two specific goals to be reached by 2020: an 80 percent baccalaureate-prepared nursing workforce and a doubling of the number of nurses holding the doctorate degree.

There is consistent evidence that higher degrees in nursing result in significant benefits for patients, employers, and communities. Across the nation, we are seeing momentum for academic progression, and thousands of nurses are answering the call to create better care delivery by advancing their education.

In this edition of KCON Magazine we share how the Kirkhof College of Nursing is part of this momentum. You will read the personal stories of students who have advanced their education by earning the RN-BSN and DNP degrees. A unique partnership with Sparrow Hospital is described, emanating from the vision of its nursing leaders for care redesign using the CNL role. Our stories also take you into GVSU’s Family Health Center, where nurses with advanced degrees are pursuing an initiative to support the care of those in the LGBTQ community. And reading the updates from many of our alumni will reveal that a number have advanced their education since graduating from GVSU/KCON.

The Fall semester is always a time of excitement as we look forward to a new academic year and the goals that make our daily work challenging and engaging. We hope you enjoy reading about the success of our graduates and continue to stay involved with our college as alumni, community partners, and friends.

Please support our initiatives, encourage the advancement of nursing education, and share our story so we attract excellent students, faculty, and practice partners in our quest to make a difference in health care delivery through the promotion of academic progression for nurses.
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**Correction** | On page 4 in Spring ’15, Issue 2, Vol. 8, we incorrectly labeled a photo in the “Carrying Babies in Slings” story. The KCON alumna is Rachel Overkamp, BSN (‘14), and the baby is Thomas Boon. We apologize to Rachel Overkamp and Kate Bleeker, BSN (‘14), for this error.
"I always knew I wanted to get my BSN degree," says KCON alumna Sarah (Curle) Jordan. "It was a critical step in my professional journey, because I want to someday further my education with an MSN or a DNP."

Jordan, an RN to BSN program graduate, is currently employed at Mary Free Bed Rehabilitation Hospital as an RN, working with brain and spinal cord injury and stroke patients. She is responsible for the assessment, monitoring, and care of patients. She also participates in interdisciplinary team conferences, patient education, chart audits, and reviews of the nursing staff.

Going Further

Jordan has been pursuing advanced education ever since she graduated from Novi High School in 2003. She attended GVSU, completing a bachelor’s degree in Health Sciences in 2008, and then applied to the nursing program at Grand Rapids Community College. She graduated from GRCC in June 2012 with an associate’s degree in nursing. Then she went back to GVSU for the RN to BSN program, graduating in April 2014.

Like so many returning students, Jordan has worked full time while pursuing her degrees. "I worked full time as a nurse tech at Mary Free Bed from 2008 to 2011," she explains, "and I’ve been working there as an RN since I graduated from GRCC."

As she reflects on what she has accomplished, Jordan says, "There was no specific ‘aha’ moment or event that made me want to go back for my BSN at the time I did it. I watch what is happening in the nursing field, and I know there has been a big push for ADN nurses to continue their education and obtain a BSN. It’s also clear to me that more job opportunities are open with a BSN."
KCON's RN to BSN Program

For many RNs with associate degrees, completing a BSN degree opens the door to additional career opportunities and further education at the MSN or DNP/PhD level. KCON’s RN to BSN program offers an accelerated completion option for RNs who want a BSN but do not want to repeat coursework or previous clinical field experiences.

The curriculum includes courses in humanities and the social, physical, natural, and health sciences, providing a strong scientific and humanistic foundation for the clinical nursing courses. The program is fully accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE).

Because KCON understands that any RN returning to school has many other responsibilities, the RN to BSN nursing courses are taught in a hybrid format — a combination of on-site and online classes. On-site sessions meet approximately once a month in downtown Grand Rapids. Clinical experiences can be arranged in or near students’ home communities.

Most of the RNs in this program complete their degree in two years of part-time study. The nursing courses take five semesters to complete, some of which are sequential. The actual amount of time to graduation depends on each student’s educational background and class load preferences.

A KCON student support services coordinator is available to assist with admission and planning. The GVSU application is available online at www.gvsu.edu. Following admission to Grand Valley, each student develops an individualized plan of study in consultation with the faculty advisor.

Why KCON?

Of all the universities offering a BSN program, why did Jordan choose KCON for her degree work? “I picked GVSU because I already had a health sciences bachelor’s degree from there, so I knew the quality of Grand Valley,” she explains. “I also picked GVSU because, with KCON’s RN to BSN program, all I needed to take were the advanced nursing classes. So I knew the program, I knew some of the faculty, and GVSU just felt like home. It seemed fitting to continue my nursing education where I started from.”

Jordan notes that she learned valuable clinical, research, and leadership skills in the RN to BSN program, which she applies every day at her job. For example, with her new degree, she had the opportunity to serve as a preceptor for BSN students at Mary Free Bed in the fall of 2014. But she also emphasizes that anyone doing advanced degree work needs faculty support and at least one mentor.

The Importance of Mentors

“I’ve had two mentors and role models — one personal and one professional,” Jordan says. “The first is my mom. She’s an RN and I’ve always wanted to be a nurse just like her ever since I was little. She has a master’s degree in health administration, and she is a great nurse, role model, and mother.”

Jordan’s professional mentor has been Susan Strouse, PhD, RN, assistant professor at KCON. “Dr. Strouse is a wonderful educator and mentor,” Jordan states. “She has been very influential in my career both during and after the RN to BSN program.

“For example,” she continues, “for my final project in the program I created a scale to help my hospital classify our patients’ acuity level and use that to create staffing assignments. Dr. Strouse encouraged me to submit my project to the American Nurses Association-Michigan annual conference in October 2014. I was one of 11 submissions that were accepted to present. I received a lot of great feedback, and I’m still working on implementing the scale at Mary Free Bed. I hope to one day publish an article about it. Without her encouragement, I wouldn’t have dreamed this would be possible.”

So, what is the next step in Jordan’s advanced education plans? “In the next three to five years,” she says, “I plan to obtain a CRRN, the certified rehabilitation registered nurse certification for rehabilitation nurses. This specialization will help me provide greater care to my patients and their families. And then there’s the MSN or DNP at some point after that. But whichever I choose and whenever it happens, I know I want to continue to pursue higher education in nursing.”
Which Advanced Degree Program?

Kathryn Speeter, DNP (‘13), RN, AGPCNP-BC, CPHQ, started her career working as a staff nurse on a pediatric unit. This was followed by various nursing leadership positions, but she always dreamed of returning to clinical nursing practice.

“My primary field of interest is psychiatry,” Speeter says, “and I had served as a nurse executive in psychiatry for six years when I decided to go back to GVSU for an MSN. I took a few classes from 2005 to 2008. But it was difficult to balance school along with the demands of my job and personal life. So I eventually decided to put school on hold for awhile.”

Ironically, that decision proved to be one of the best things Speeter ever did in her nursing education journey. Soon after, KCON announced its plan to offer a DNP program beginning in Fall 2009.

“I knew I wanted to pursue a DNP rather than an MSN because it was important for me to pursue a terminal degree if I was going to recommit to school,” she explains. “And I was particularly interested in a practice rather than a research doctorate given my interest in returning to clinical work.”

According to Speeter, her decision to participate in KCON’s DNP program was influenced by the fact that it was a terminal degree that encompassed much more than clinical competence. “While the clinical focus was definitely important to me,” she continues, “I also wanted to learn about community population needs, the influence of technology and research on practice, health care policy and advocacy, interprofessional collaboration, and disease prevention and health promotion. KCON’s DNP program offered all of these components and it felt like the right fit for my professional goals.”

Today, Speeter works as an advanced practice nurse in a community setting, serving individuals with severe, persistent mental illness. Every day she encounters people who need not only great clinical psychiatric care, but also support and assistance with the coordination of care services and assistance and advocacy from a community health, policy, and health promotion perspective.

“I couldn’t ask for a better job that is professionally and personally fulfilling,” Speeter states. “In the next five years I see myself becoming more involved in practice research, political advocacy, and mentoring others. My advanced nursing education has brought me to the point where I believe I can pursue these professional goals while continuing to improve the care that is provided to those who experience severe mental illness.”
KCON Collaborates to Promote the CNL Role

In collaboration with Sparrow Health System in Lansing, KCON is promoting a “win-win” approach to advance nurses’ education and expand their employment options. The focus? A program to promote and implement the clinical nurse leader (CNL) role in health systems.

Mary Lou Wesley, MSN, BSN, RN, is leading the program. She is CNO and senior vice president of Patient Care Services at Sparrow Health System. “One of the first things I did when I joined Sparrow was to begin discussions regarding the CNL role,” she explains. “I reached out to Cynthia McCurren at the Kirkhof College of Nursing to discuss starting a Sparrow CNL cohort. We found that we had a shared vision and passion for this role. We both saw the possibility to redesign the care delivery model to achieve better outcomes for patients, nurses, and health systems.”

Karen Burritt, PhD, RN, FNP-BC, assistant professor, is interim associate dean for graduate programs at KCON. “We started exploring options for delivering CNL education to Sparrow nurses in October 2014,” she says. “The purpose of the program we ultimately developed is to provide a high-quality CNL educational experience to a select cohort of Sparrow Health nurses.”

According to Burritt, nine nurses from Sparrow began the program this fall. The nurses who were chosen went through a rigorous selection process by both Sparrow and GVSU. After they were accepted, they enrolled in the MSN program at KCON for advanced generalist education.

“The program lasts for six semesters,” Burritt says. “The students will take their courses at GVSU through a hybrid online format for the first four semesters. Then they will be placed for two semesters at Sparrow Health or Mercy Health Saint Mary’s in Grand Rapids for their CNL practicum experience. When they complete the program, they’ll be awarded an MSN degree and will be prepared for the CNL role and qualify to sit for the national CNL certification examination.”

Wesley has successfully implemented the CNL role in three organizations during the past eight years. “In all three implementations,” she notes, “we were able to demonstrate the effect of embedding a highly educated, highly skilled nurse at the bedside or point of care delivery. In all three, we achieved high levels of improvement in quality, safety, patient satisfaction, nurse engagement, and retention.

“I have learned,” she concludes, “that it is critical to have a close relationship with a like-minded academic partner to be successful in this journey. Partnerships like this one with KCON are critical to the successful implementation and ongoing success of the CNL role.”
Serving the LGBTQ Community

Providing holistic health care for those who are traditionally underserved is at the core of the mission at GVSU’s Family Health Center (FHC). When defining who is “underserved,” the LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer) population has often been overlooked in the United States. But not at the FHC.

“We understand that individuals in the LGBTQ community potentially have special needs,” says Grace Huizinga-Hoyer, EdD, MSN, RN, assistant professor at KCON. “There are factors other than the physical symptoms anyone might experience — for example, issues related to hormone therapy or HIV prevention and treatment. Also, our patients might be dealing with the mental and emotional aspects of rejection by family or friends, discrimination, and stigmatization. We are continually seeking to build our knowledge and sensitivity so we can offer appropriate, effective care that leads to better outcomes for each individual.”

“GVSU has been committed to serving the LGBTQ community for many years,” says KCON’s dean, Cynthia McCurren, PhD, RN, FNAP. “In keeping with this, the FHC has been increasing its efforts, especially during the past year, to be a safe-haven care provider for our LGBTQ community members. We believe this is fully in keeping with the FHC’s mission.”

According to Huizinga-Hoyer, above all, individuals who identify as LGBTQ need a safe, comfortable primary care setting that is not focused solely on disease or urgent care. This need was identified with help from GVSU’s Milton E. Ford LGBT Resource Center and the Grand Rapids Red Project. Also, although the CDC approved guidelines for HIV prophylaxis in 2013, very few health care settings are filling this need; this is leading to an opportunity for the FHC in the arena of preventive medicine.

“We may not be able to provide all of the care needed for every individual in the local LGBTQ community,” explains Huizinga-Hoyer, “but through education and awareness we are continually building our referral network of other providers who understand those needs. We look forward to the day when we are widely known locally as experts and a ‘go-to’ health care resource in the care of LGBTQ patients.

“Several of our FHC staff members have loved ones and/or friends in the LGBTQ community,” concludes Huizinga-Hoyer. “So this is just one more reason we hold this population and their needs near and dear to our hearts. We want our LGBTQ patients to know that they don’t have to marginalize themselves in any way. They deserve, and with us they will receive, nothing less than exceptional health care that meets their needs.”
FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear KCON Alumni,

This fall I find myself reminiscing about my experiences as a KCON student. I remember the excitement when I completed my undergrad program 13 years ago, fulfilling my dream to become a nurse.

This past spring I took another step on that journey when I completed my graduate degree at Michigan State University — an MSN with a clinical nurse specialist/nurse educator focus. After many years in burn care and trauma nursing, I realized that my professional goals aligned with the CNS advanced practice degree. I also found that sharing my knowledge and skills with others through education was my true passion.

This advanced education experience has not only provided me with important knowledge and skills, but also a network of new mentors and leaders who will remain dear to my heart. I have new motivation to use my expertise to make the health care we provide here in Grand Rapids even better.

So, where have you been on your nursing journey? What are your next steps? How will you give back to our community of KCON nurses?

If you would like to participate, find our KCON Facebook page and/or connect through the GVSU Alumni Association. Also, by pooling some of your financial resources with others through our Alumni Endowed Scholarship, you can help other KCON nurses on their journeys.

Thank you,
Tracy Hosford, BSN ('02), RN, PCCN

Katelyn Balley, DNP ('15), BSN ('09), had an article published in the May 10 edition of the Grand Rapids Press, Health section, titled “Prevent Childhood Obesity This Summer in Four Steps.”

Erin Craft-Otterbacher, BSN ('14), is working in the Nurse Residency Program at Mayo Clinic Scottsdale (Arizona), primarily in neurology/ENT. An article she wrote, titled “Using Nursing Process for System Change,” was recently published in the National Student Nurses’ Association’s magazine.

Sharon Greer, BSN ('96), is working as an integrated care specialist at Cardinal Healthcare Solutions in Charlotte, N.C.

Janice (Jan) Hodges, MSN ('90), is VP, Nursing Excellence, Project Management, at HealthLinx in Columbus, Ohio. She is working as a consultant with hospitals across the U.S.

Grace (Gembrowski) Hoffman, DNP ('14), is working at Mercy Health Physician Partners - Geriatrics in Grand Rapids.


Ron Perkins, BSN ('89), accepted a position this spring with CAE Healthcare in Sarasota, Fla. He is working on medical simulation scenarios for the health care division of this international company.

Rocio Sanchez, BSN ('09), is the practice manager at the Browning Claytor Health Center in Grand Rapids.

Kristi Stiles, BSN ('03), was the winner of a Fitbit Zip activity tracker, selected at random from more than 150 alumni who responded to our recent KCON Magazine reader survey. Thanks to everyone who took the time to give us your valuable feedback.

Find us on Facebook at “GVSU Kirkhof College of Nursing Alumni Chapter”
Perez Nursing Scholarship Created

This March, Allison Swets, BSN (’14), BA, and her husband, Roger Swets, formally established the Maria I. Perez Nursing Scholarship in honor of Allison’s mother, Maria Perez. Ms. Perez dreamed of becoming a nurse, but was unable to achieve her own dream due to finances. Instead, she worked hard as a receptionist so her children could go to college.

According to KCON’s dean, Cynthia McCurren, PhD, RN, FNP, this scholarship was established to assist KCON BSN students who are dedicated to promoting academic, professional, and personal growth and have been historically underrepresented in the nursing profession. The scholarship will be awarded to one student each academic year.

“We are pleased to announce that the first recipient of this new scholarship for 2015-16 will be Edith Munezero, a Second Degree program student,” McCurren says. “In addition, we would like to thank Lori Houghton-Rahrig [PhD, MSN (’01), BSN (’81), RN], assistant professor of nursing, who was instrumental in helping us establish this scholarship. We sincerely thank the Swets family for this generous tribute to their mother, Maria Perez.”

DNP Program Progress Approved

This spring, KCON’s dean, Cynthia McCurren, PhD, RN, FNP, was notified that the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) completed its review of the Continuous Improvement Progress Report (CIPR) submitted by the DNP program in December 2014.

“We were delighted that the program continues to meet all accreditation standards,” says McCurren. “Our DNP program received initial five-year accreditation in April 2012. The CIPR is required of all accredited programs at the mid-point of their approval period. This accreditation process is critically important to ensure quality and relevance. I want to thank everyone who worked to prepare the report and our entire KCON community for helping us achieve the level of excellence the CCNE has validated.”
Students Help Neighbors Brighten Smiles

This spring, some southwest Grand Rapids residents learned how to brighten their smiles, thanks to eight students in the KCON Second Degree program.

According to Maureen Ryan, EdD(c), MSN, RN, assistant professor of nursing, the KCON students helped southwest neighborhood residents learn more about dental health through numerous activities and visits. “For their community clinical experience, the students decided to focus on dental health after completing a community assessment and speaking with residents,” she explains.

At Sibley Elementary School, the nursing students led activities for children who attended CATCH — a health promotion program — using toothbrushes, dental floss, mouthwash, and other items. The students led similar activities at the PREP (Parent, Resources, Education, Play) program at The Other Way Ministries. Finally, on June 3, the students wrapped up their clinical experience by organizing and hosting a health fair during a picnic at Servant’s Community Church.

A version of this story was originally published in the June 18, 2015, issue of “GVNow.”

Reporting on GVSU Graduates

KCON recently received a message from Douglas Kindschi, PhD, former dean of GVSU’s Mathematics and Science Division, and currently director of the Kaufman Interfaith Institute.

“Two weeks ago I entered Blodgett Hospital for back surgery. During my five days while in the hospital I had excellent care and couldn’t help but ask the care givers where they did their education. I am pleased to report that those caring for me included three PAs, three OTs, the PT, and the majority of the nurses; all were Grand Valley graduates. Their skill and their caring were without exception of the highest level.”

GVSU Honors KCON Students

At the annual GVSU Student Awards Convocation, held on April 6, the following students/new alumni from the KCON community were honored:

- Brandy Alexander, BSN (‘15): Outstanding Undergraduate Student in a Discipline
- Lucy Ledesma, DNP (‘15), BSN (‘01): Outstanding Graduate Student in a Discipline
- Lauren See-Jacques, BSN, MSN program student: Outstanding Graduate Student in a Discipline

In addition, Julie Bulson, MPA (‘07), BSN (‘99), DNP program student, received the 2015 Glenn A. Niemeyer Award for excellence in all aspects of a well-rounded academic experience. This is GVSU’s most prestigious academic award.
Jenna Lenza, Traditional program student, a GVSU varsity softball player, was named to the All-GLIAC First Team and also the GLIAC All-Academic Excellence Team 2015. She also has been featured on the GVSU Athletics web page.

Two KCON students joined Rebecca Davis, PhD, RN, professor of nursing, in presentations at the national meeting of the Gerontological Society of America in Washington, D.C., in November 2014:

- Brandy Alexander, BSN ('15)*: “An Eye-Tracking Analysis of Four Female Older Adults with Normal Cognition to Identify Changes in Wayfinding Strategies in a Virtual Environment.”
- Jennifer Ohman, BSN ('02), DNP program student: “Visual Environmental Cues and Wayfinding Performance Within a Virtual Senior Residence”

KCON received two major awards from the NSNA board of directors at the 63rd annual convention of the National Student Nurses’ Association this spring in Phoenix, Ariz:

- Global Initiatives in Nursing Award
- Breakthrough to Nursing Project Award

Congratulations to everyone involved!

The following students/new alumni gave poster presentations in April at the Midwest Nursing Research Society’s 2015 annual research conference in Indianapolis, Ind.

- Jennifer Awad, BSN ('15): “The Effect of Environmental Factors on Health-Related Quality of Life in People Diagnosed with Obesity-Related Nonalcoholic Fatty Liver Disease”
- Leda Evans, BSN ('06), DNP program student: “Integrative Review of Flipped Classroom Literature”
- Lucy Ledesma, DNP ('15), BSN ('01): “Implementation of Motivational Interviewing in a Multidisciplinary HIV Clinic in an Academic Medical Setting”
- Cheryl VerStrate, DNP ('15), BSN ('11): “Exploration of Chemotherapy Safe-Handling Practices and Identification of Knowledge Deficit Among Oncology Nurses in the Ambulatory Care Setting”

*Alexander was a KCON Traditional program student at the time.
Spoelstra Joins Administrative Team

Sandra Spoelstra, PhD, MSN, BSN, was recently appointed as KCON’s new associate dean for research and scholarship. According to KCON’s dean, Cynthia McCurren, PhD, RN, FNAP, Dr. Spoelstra will lead the advancement of KCON’s scholarly efforts.

Dr. Spoelstra holds a BSN and an MSN from Northern Michigan University and received her PhD from Michigan State University. She has a significant record of scholarly accomplishments. Dr. Spoelstra has been the primary investigator on 12 externally funded grants totaling more than $2 million, has been the first author for 17 peer-reviewed articles, has made numerous podium and poster presentations, and has served as an editorial reviewer for 20 different publications. She has taught nursing at the undergraduate and graduate levels at three universities. Prior to her academic career, Dr. Spoelstra operated her own business in home health and hospice care for 27 years.

KCON Walks to Florence

We know there’s something called the Atlantic Ocean in the way, but 40 KCON faculty and staff participated in “Walking to Florence” during Fall and Winter semesters, 2014-15.

The program was KCON’s response to a university-wide Deans for Wellness Initiative sponsored by GVSU Human Resources’ Health and Wellness division. The goal was for KCON participants to virtually walk from Grand Rapids to Florence, Italy, birthplace of Florence Nightingale. The journey started with the Fall semester and the participants had to “return” by April 2015.

Besides walking, running, biking, and swimming, faculty and staff could also do gardening, chair exercises, housekeeping, and other activities to earn miles for the journey. The same conversion chart that Health and Wellness utilizes for its pedometer challenge was used to include as many fitness levels and abilities as possible.

Collectively, KCON’s 40 participants made it to Florence and back, “walking” a total of 11,708.14 miles. The participants averaged 287.7 miles each.

Davis Receives Niemeyer Award

Rebecca Davis, PhD, RN, professor of nursing, received the Niemeyer Award for Outstanding Faculty at the GVSU Student Awards Convocation help on April 6, 2015. This award is named for Glenn A. Niemeyer, the first provost of Grand Valley; it is GVSU’s most prestigious academic award.

Davis is an expert in gerontology and the care of older adults. She received a National Institutes of Health (NIH) grant in 2012 to research wandering behavior among people with dementia, and has received numerous national and regional awards for her work.

In her award nomination document, Sylvia Mupepi, PhD, RN, associate professor, stated: “Dr. Davis’s commitment to student learning, innovation towards program and course development, personal growth, faculty development and professional growth is outstanding among our faculty. She holds students to high standards of learning and practice, providing both undergraduate and graduate students with research opportunities — a current trend in the promotion of evidence-based practice.”
New Faculty

Dianne Slager
DNP, MSN, BSN, FNP-BC,
Assistant Professor

BSN, ’90, University of Michigan
MSN, ’02, Grand Valley State University
DNP, ’15, University of Michigan-Flint

Dissertation: “Gekendeman: (That we may together know) Increasing HIV screening at an urban Native American clinic”

Experience: Has served as a registered nurse, APRN, and nurse educator for Calvin College, with international experience from 1983-1991 in public health care in rural Liberia, West Africa. More recently, served as a nurse practitioner at the Nottawaseppi Huron Band of the Potawatomi Health Center. Has completed several publications related to her interest in rural/underserved populations and community-based care.

Marie VanderKooi
DNP, MSN, BSN, RN, CMSRN,
Assistant Professor

BSN, ’82, University of Michigan
MSN, ’91, Grand Valley State University
DNP, ’14, Grand Valley State University

Dissertation: “An evidence-based evaluation of medication barcode scanning acceptance in a community hospital”

Experience: Held staff and leadership positions at Spectrum Health Blodgett Hospital from 1979-1998, followed by leadership responsibilities for professional nursing practice and informatics in the Spectrum Health system. Has served as a clinical preceptor for GVSU’s nursing and physician assistant programs, and for the nursing programs of Calvin College and Hope College. Holds certification in nursing informatics and is a member of a national nursing content expert panel.

Pamela Wadsworth
PhD, MSN, BSN, WHNP-BC,
Assistant Professor

BSN, ’99, Wayne State University
MSN, ’05, Arizona State University
PhD, ’15, Arizona State University

Dissertation: “A constructivist grounded theory exploration of well-being in female adult sexual assault victims/survivors”

Experience: Has held staff nurse positions since 1999 in acute care/labor and delivery, has served at Planned Parenthood, and has practiced as a WHNP in Arizona and Michigan. Has two years of clinical education experience with Michigan State University’s College of Nursing. Received two awards during her doctoral education and serves as a reviewer for one professional journal. Holds certification as a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner-Adult (SANE).

Recent Publications


FACULTY & STAFF TRANSITIONS

Welcome
Bradley Freestone, Temporary Receptionist/Clerical Support and Special Projects Coordinator
Jill Smallidon, BA, Administrative Assistant to the Dean

Promotions
Linda Buck, MSN, RN, promoted to Senior Academic Advisor
Angela Caruso, BS, MEd, promoted to Senior Academic Advisor
Kelley Monterusso, MS, BBA, promoted to Director of Communications and External Relations
Nancy Schoofs, PhD, RN, promoted to full professor

Retirements
Ruth Ann Brintnall, PhD, MSN ('85), AOCN, CHPN, APRN-BC
Cynthia Coviak, PhD, MSN ('85), CNE, is starting phased retirement
Susan Jensen, PhD, RN, CCM

Farewell & Thank You
Larry Boekeloo, MPA, Family Health Center Practice Manager
Sandy Dettmann, MD, Visiting Professor
Ron Perkins, BSN ('99), GVSU Simulation Team
Heather Renter Wallace, PhD, Assistant Professor
Cathy Weisbeck, PhD, MSW, Wayfinding Project Director

FACULTY & STAFF BRIEFS

2015-2016 officers for Kappa Epsilon Chapter-at-Large (Sigma Theta Tau International) include:
• Meridell Gracias, DNP, RN, vice president
• Luanne Shaw, MSN, RN, CEN, treasurer
• Elaine Van Doren, PhD, RN, secretary
• Karen Burritt, PhD, RN, FNPBC, and Barbara Hooper, DNP, MSN, RN, NEBC, faculty counselors
• Joanne Finazzi, DNP, RN, governance committee
• Sue Mlynarczyk, PhD, RN, PNP, research committee

Paulette Chaponniere, PhD, MPH, RN, is serving as cochair of the Public Health Nursing Research Interest Group of the Midwest Nursing Research Society.

Evelyn Clingerman, PhD, CNE, RN, FNAP, was appointed to the board of directors of the Migrant Clinicians Network.

Norine Cunningham, MSN, RN, was recognized this spring by the Boys and Girls Club of Grand Rapids as the 2015 Volunteer of the Year.

Rebecca Davis, PhD, RN, was featured in the March 29 Grand Rapids Press, Health section, in an article focused on senior living that was submitted by Covenant Village of the Great Lakes.

Joanne Finazzi, DNP, RN, recently nominated the Senior Meals on Wheels program in Grandville to receive Blue Cross Blue Shield’s Michigan’s Senior Advocate Award. She received notification in July that the program was selected to receive the award; a recognition ceremony was held in August. (See page 5 of KCON Magazine, Spring ‘15, Issue 2, Vol. 8, for related story.)

GVSC Family Health Center staff members were featured as part of a story about GVSU’s connections to the local community in Vol. 4 of a magazine supplement to the Grand Rapids Business Journal, titled “Bridging Downtown Grand Rapids.” It was distributed in August 2015.

Susan Harrington, PhD, RN, is serving as chair of the Nursing Education Research Interest Group of the Midwest Nursing Research Society.

Jamie Lomers, RN, FNPBC, had an article published in the August 9 Grand Rapids Press, Health section, titled “LGBT Community can Face Health Care Difficulties.”

Susan Mlynarczyk, PhD, RN, PNP, is serving as chair of the Pediatric Research Interest Group of the Midwest Nursing Research Society.

Kelley Monterusso, MS, BBA, was honored as the outstanding graduate student in a discipline (Communications) at GVSU’s Student Awards Convocation in April. She also was inducted into the Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi.

Kathy Watt, PhD, CP, FNPBC, has a joint appointment with the GVSU Student Counseling Center and the Family Health Center. She was featured in the April 12 Grand Rapids Press, Health section, in an article titled “Vitamin D Plays an Important Role in Your Health.”

RECENT GRANTS

Cooper, Mlynarczyk, Schafer, & D’Amour. (March 15, 2015-June 1, 2015). Kappa Epsilon Chapter-at-Large of Sigma Theta Tau International. The CATCH Program in an After-School Venue: Children, Undergraduate Nursing Students, and Families; $1,500.


Strouse. (March 15, 2015-June 1, 2015). Kappa Epsilon Chapter-at-Large of Sigma Theta Tau International. Preceptors’ Perceptions About the Culture of Nursing and Their Role in Bringing Students Into That Culture: A Focused Ethnography; $357.

Vanden Bosch. (March 2015-March 2016). Kappa Epsilon Chapter-at-Large of Sigma Theta Tau International. Focus Groups: Middle-aged Women, Type 2 Diabetes, and Physical Activity; $1,333.
Here are some of the presentations KCON faculty made during the past year:


*Craft-Otterbacher was a KCON Traditional program student at the time.
**Evans is a KCON DNP program student.
Supporting the Lifetime Journey

By Evelyn Clingerman, PhD, CNE, FNAP

As we have noted previously in KCON Magazine, the mission of The Wesorick Center is to provide scholarly leadership to unite interdisciplinary healers in the research and implementation work essential to transform practice at the point of care.

To accomplish this transformation in practice requires that we continually pursue advancement in nursing education and research in multiple ways. For example, The Wesorick Center provides continuing education for students, alumni, faculty, and community partners through the Interprofessional Institute for Polarity Thinking in Health Care. We offer access to leading thinkers and educators through The Distinguished Wesorick Center Lectureship series. And most recently, we added KCON’s newly developed post-baccalaureate interprofessional certificate in palliative and hospice care to our growing list of programs and responsibilities. (See page 7 of KCON Magazine, Spring ’15, Issue 2, Vol. 8.)

We believe that a nursing career offers the opportunity for a lifetime journey of learning, exploration, and growth. So we also believe that advanced nursing education can be found both within and beyond the formal requirements of a BSN, MSN, DNP, PhD, or specialty certificate.

At The Wesorick Center, we assist undergraduate and graduate students as they take on projects or expand their knowledge in independent study courses — providing a safe, supportive learning environment that is intellectually stimulating and creative. We offer numerous high-impact learning opportunities for students who wish to supplement or expand their usual coursework. The Wesorick Center is an open learning environment where students partner with scholars and community experts on projects or courses that may ultimately lead to transformations in health care.

We also know that KCON has decades of experience in graduating alumni who go on to do great things and give to their communities. The Wesorick Center assists by collaborating with KCON alumni who are developing a project or proposal for use in their organizations. And we work with KCON faculty and staff as needed to help alumni who wish to return for an advanced degree.

You will note that partnerships are at the core of all of our efforts. Partnerships are found when those in a relationship nourish one another, joining hearts, hands, and minds to intentionally accomplish a common mission. At The Wesorick Center, we are partners in the professional development of providers today and tomorrow, supporting those nurses who are ready to say: “Now. It’s time to do this. It’s time to grow.”
Kirkhof College of Nursing
Positions Available

Seeking faculty eager to promote distinction in teaching, scholarship, service, and practice.

Tenure Track Faculty: Seeking faculty members, with preference given to applicants with expertise in pediatrics, psych/mental health, community health, or nursing administration, and applicants with certification as an Adult/Gero NP, Adult NP, PMH-NP, or PNP. These positions include teaching, scholarship, and service, with opportunities for professional practice as desired. Earned doctorate (in nursing preferred, PhD or DNP) and earned master’s degree in nursing required. Ability to meet criteria for professor, associate professor, or assistant professor appointment. Evidence of area of expertise and a program of scholarship. Minimum of one year teaching experience at undergraduate and/or graduate levels.

Regional Nursing Programs Coordinator – Traverse City: Successful candidate will recruit and retain undergraduate and graduate students, assist students with planning their educational and career goals, foster a student-centered academic advising environment, and supervise student clinical experiences. Must display initiative, flexibility, and a high level of professionalism, strong work ethic, and commitment to excellence. Master’s degree in nursing and relevant experience in nursing practice and higher education required, along with ability to establish partnerships throughout northern Michigan.
THE KIRKHOF COLLEGE OF NURSING CURRENTLY OFFERS THE FOLLOWING PROGRAMS:

- Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN)
  - Traditional Undergraduate Program
  - Second Degree Program
  - RN to BSN Program
- Master of Science in Nursing (MSN)
- Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP)

“We are creating exceptional opportunities for faculty and students, engaged in dynamic teaching and learning experiences. A revised curriculum for the BSN degree program tracks is ensuring that our graduates attain the competencies they need for an evolving health care system. With an urgent need for evidence-based care, care coordination, and quality/process improvement in our care delivery models, our MSN program prepares our graduates with these critical skills and eligibility for the Clinical Nurse Leader certification. Since 2009, we have been averaging 35 new students per year in our Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree program, preparing them for Advanced Nursing Practice (Child/Adolescent or Adult/Older Adult) or Health Systems Leadership. All of our graduates are committed to the Future of Nursing — leading change, advancing health.”

Dr. Cynthia McCurren
Dean, Kirkhof College of Nursing