Advancing Health Care Through Nursing Leadership

Advancing and Promoting the Profession: An Overview

Advancing the Profession: An Alumni POV

Offering a Home for Pediatrics

Advancing the Profession We Love
From The Dean

Helen Keller said it best. “Alone we can do so little. Together we can do so much.”

As a collective community, the nursing profession is firmly rooted in service to others, with millions of nurses around the globe waking up each day to serve on the frontlines of health care. With the mission of ensuring optimal outcomes for patients and supporting healthy communities, we possess valuable insight into critical issues facing our health care system. So why do we not have more influence on the work being done to transform health care?

The 2010 Institute of Medicine (IOM) landmark report, The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health, calls for nurses to serve in key leadership positions to inform and improve health care for the benefit of patients, communities, and health care organizations. In this report, nursing is called upon to drastically increase the number of leaders in pivotal decision-making roles on boards and commissions working to improve health. Although the report acknowledges nurses are not always perceived as playing a substantial leadership role in health care, it clearly points out that the depth of our academic achievements and professional experiences more than positions us to play this role.

This edition of KCON Magazine focuses on this call for nursing to establish a significant voice in local, regional, and national organizations. We share stories of KCON alumni who have answered the call and are volunteering their time and expertise through service on influential boards and committees. You will learn about their journeys to service, the personal and professional benefits of doing so, and their influence on all levels of the health care system. You will also hear from our Alumni Association executive board members, explaining why they volunteer their time and energy to give back to KCON.

Whether you recently graduated or have worked professionally for decades, we ask you to consider how you can help nursing establish a stronger leadership presence across the country. We must be intentional and true to ensuring the very best for our patients and communities. It is what we do as nurses.
2 Advancing and Promoting the Profession: An Overview

4 Advancing the Profession: An Alumni POV

8 Alumni Update

10 Student/SNA Update

12 Faculty/Staff Update

15 Offering a Home for Pediatrics

16 Advancing the Profession We Love

17 KCON In The News
Registered nurses are the largest sector in the health professions, with more than 3.4 million RNs in the U.S. Even though nurses are key members of the health care system, historically, they have been left out of policy-making decisions and are underrepresented in the leadership arenas that shape health care. It has been suggested that policy development has been nursing’s slowest area to advance; too often, it’s been nursing’s role to implement policy change, not set the direction (American Nurses Association, 2016).

Why is this so? One fact offers a hint. Only about 10% of all nurses join the American Nurses Association (ANA), even though it is the profession’s strongest and largest representing and lobbying organization.

Regardless of their education level, all nurses are expected to be advocates for both their patients and the profession itself. They are asked to not only do their jobs, but be active in the policy processes defining health care delivery and be responsible for supporting the profession. This means more than just serving on a temporary committee for a community event, although that service is certainly important. It means having an understanding of the broad psychosocial, economic, and cultural factors that are linked to health status and participating in ongoing efforts to improve the quality of the health care delivery system.

Put more simply, when nurses are not at the table, they cannot contribute their frontline knowledge and wisdom to policy discussions and decisions that could affect millions of patients and their families. To advance the nursing profession and health care in general, and to ultimately take better care of patients, nurses need to pursue opportunities to serve on professional committees and boards at all levels, from local to international. As a side benefit, this service will promote their careers and the growth of their specialty.

KCON’s dean, Cynthia McCurren, PhD, RN, FNAP, has been navigating this reality during her entire career. “As a nurse for more than 35 years,” she explains, “I have always held a firm belief that it is part of my professional responsibility to be active in one or more professional organizations that will allow me to advance the profession in some meaningful way. Through the years, I have used the following talking points with students, faculty, and other nursing colleagues:
• If we as nurses do not advocate on behalf of nursing education, practice, and regulation, we cannot complain if we lose control and oversight of our own professional destiny.
• Major deterrents to being a member of a professional organization are reported to be cost, balancing multiple demands, no perceived personal benefit, and the fact that it is not required for employment. Consequently, nurses are often not professionally engaged.
• It is common for only a few nurses to come forward and lead within nursing organizations. This can become a monumental load for them to carry, often leading to discouragement and burnout.
• While I understand balancing multiple demands, if all 3.4 million nurses in the U.S. gave just 10 hours a year to a professional organization, that would be 34 million hours toward advocacy, advancing the profession of nursing, and contributing to improvement in health care for our patients.
• If each nurse paid $200 per year for membership in a professional organization, that would be only 55 cents a day or $16.66 a month. That is quite an economic value when considered in the context of insurance that protects the very profession that is our career and financial security. We cannot expect 10% of nurses to protect 3.4 million nurses!

“In short,” she says, “if we each share just a small amount of responsibility, we can ensure one voice, promote professional security, enjoy political influence, and control our own professional destiny.”

As the dean of KCON, McCurren strives to “walk the talk.” Throughout her career, she has led by example, serving as a member and/or leader in several professional organizations. Currently, her professional involvement includes:

• Member, American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN), serving on the board of directors and as a legislative representative for Michigan regarding nursing education, practice, and research. (Re-elected in February for a second term of service.)
• Member, AACN Leadership Development Advisory Group
• President, Michigan Association of Colleges of Nursing (MACN), representing nursing education and legislative advocacy
• Member, Executive Board, Michigan Organization of Nurse Executives (MONE)
• Member, American Nurses Association (ANA), national and state organizations
• Chair, Board of Trustees, Clark Retirement Community
• Member, Board of Directors, Metro Health
• Member, Kappa Epsilon Chapter-at-Large, STTI

“Nurses bring a full set of skills not found in other professions,” she concludes. “They play a crucial role in the call for the transformation of health care. When greater numbers unite in one voice, we can make a difference. I challenge every nurse: do your part!”

NOBC: 10,000 by 2020

It’s an aggressive goal. Ensure that at least 10,000 nurses are actively serving on U.S. boards by 2020.

The Nurses on Boards Coalition (NOBC) website (www.nursesonboardscoalition.org) is the home for this unusual campaign. The NOBC represents national organizations working to build healthier communities by increasing nurses’ presence on hospital/health system, corporate, insurance, and philanthropic boards; appointed advisory boards, commissions, panels, and task forces; citizen-elected boards; and even nonprofit, non-nursing boards.

With 21 founding members, including Sigma Theta Tau International (STTI) and the American Academy of Nursing (AAN), the coalition is promoting the idea that all boards benefit from the unique perspective of nurses when the goal is to improve health and health care systems at the local, state, and national levels. And, of course, the NOBC also is working toward that target of 10,000 by 2020.

The NOBC was created in response to the 2010 Institute of Medicine (IOM) report, The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health (http://iom.nationalacademies.org/Reports/2010/The-Future-of-Nursing-Leading-Change-Advancing-Health.aspx). The report recommended an increase in the number of nurse leaders in pivotal decision-making roles on boards and commissions that work to improve health. The NOBC’s founding members have clearly recognized that nurses play a huge role on the frontlines of care and that their perspective and influence must be felt at more decision-making tables.

If you’re interested in learning more about board participation, STTI is a great place to start. You might want to explore STTI’s Board Leadership Institute, to be held this year in August in Indianapolis. See http://www.nursingsociety.org/learn-grow/leadership-institute/board-leadership-institute-bli
Advancing the Profession: An Alumni POV

In keeping with the theme of this issue, KCON Magazine interviewed three of our active alumni for their points of view about professional service. All three are at different stages in their careers, but they have volunteered to serve on professional boards, committees, and/or teams — giving even more of their time and talents beyond their daily jobs. In these extended excerpts, they describe what serving and advancing the profession means to them.

Lola Coke
PhD, MSN (’93), RN-BC, ACNS-BC, FAHA, FPCNA

Lola Coke is an assistant professor in adult health and gerontological nursing at Rush University College of Nursing in Chicago, Ill. She has worked as a cardiovascular nurse for 30 years and is in practice as a clinical nurse specialist (CNS) in the secondary prevention of cardiovascular disease.

Professional Volunteer Activities (Selected)

• Treasurer and Former President, Board of Directors, Preventive Cardiovascular Nurses Association (PCNA)
• Member, Board of Directors, American Heart Association-Council on Cardiovascular and Stroke Nursing (AHA-CVSN)
• Chair, AHA-CVSN, DNP Toolkit Task Force
• Member, AHA-CVSN, Planning Committee
• Member, American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC), Expert Panel, Cardiac Vascular Exam
• Member, AHA, Writing Groups for Exercise Testing and Cardiac Rehabilitation
The first time I formally became involved in giving back as a volunteer to the nursing profession was as a student member of the SNA in my undergraduate program in the early 1970s. We held bake sales to raise money for the organization. Since graduation from nursing school, I have served in many volunteer capacities — from conducting CPR lifesaver classes for local church groups and Boy Scout troops to serving as the president of a national organization.

As a new graduate nurse, I was a member of American Association of Critical-Care Nurses (AACN). My undergraduate education faculty really encouraged memberships in professional organizations to enhance professional growth and to give back. Being a member of this organization was critical in helping me to stay on top of the latest advances in cardiac critical care.

Then, as a new faculty member, I joined the Michigan League for Nursing (MLN) and was a member for many years. I had the opportunity to present regionally on educational topics, including the use of multimedia in nursing education and the development of computer-adaptive testing methods and innovative clinical teaching strategies. Being a member of the MLN exposed me to other professional faculty members and helped to shape my educational philosophy and who I am as an educator.

When I went back to school for my master’s degree in 1990, my philosophy of nursing really changed. KCON’s faculty encouraged my professional growth, and their expertise helped me to develop and evaluate a nurse extern program at Butterworth Hospital. This was a novel concept then, and it’s now being resurrected across the country. Becoming a clinical nurse specialist was a role I truly embraced. I loved bedside nursing and working with the patients and the hospital to improve patient care and educate nurses and patients.

I continued to be a member of AACN and attended the national conference for many years. This networking with other like-minded professionals was important in helping me to stay motivated in the ever-changing health care environment. Clinical nurse specialists in the 1990s were at high risk for being downsized, and this was a critical time to work together to demonstrate the cost-effectiveness of the role. At that time I also was a member of the National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists (NACNS). It was very rewarding being involved with an organization that was pivotal to the preservation of the CNS in the acute care environment.

I should mention that, as part of my graduation at KCON in 1993, I was inducted into the Kappa Epsilon chapter of the Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing. This membership gave me the opportunity to learn leadership skills.

I have served in various roles in many professional organizations, so it is difficult to choose one to highlight. But, for example, becoming a member of the board of directors of the Preventive Cardiovascular Nurses Association (PCNA) has advanced my career in many ways. I serve with nationally and internationally recognized experts in cardiovascular health and am continually learning from them. My work at national and international venues as a representative of the organization has been key in establishing relationships for collaboration in cardiovascular health. For example, as a board we went to Washington, D.C., and lobbied for health care reform that would promote prevention. I continue to learn many advocacy and leadership skills through the PCNA.

As a faculty advisor for my master’s degree and DNP students, I always tell them that being in a professional organization and giving back is an expected part of their role. I stress how serving others is not only rewarding but essential, and I always look for opportunities for students to participate in organizations. For the second-career master’s students, I challenge them to think about the education they already have in communications, science, and marketing and how that knowledge can advance bedside nursing. I stress that they are the ‘face’ of the next generation of nurses and they need to be active and visible.
Robert Durkee currently lives in San Antonio, Texas. He is a civilian employee with the U.S. Army Headquarters—Medical Command, helping to ensure quality nursing services and adequate nurse staffing at medical treatment facilities throughout the Army. From 2011-2015 he was a field representative (surveyor) for The Joint Commission Hospital Accreditation Program.

Professional Volunteer Activities

- Member, National Board of Directors, Association of Women’s Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses (AWHONN)
- Past Secretary/Treasurer, AWHONN Armed Forces Section
- Fellow, American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE)
- Member, Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society for Nursing

I became a member of STTI as a student nurse when I was invited by the nursing school faculty to join the organization. But the first time I can recall giving back to nursing as a professional was through involvement in a local chapter of the Association of Women’s Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses (AWHONN) while on active duty stationed at Blanchfield Army Community Hospital at Fort Campbell, Ky. I researched the topic and gave a presentation on adolescent sexuality and the implications for care delivery in this population. I had been a nurse for about three years at the time.

I joined the Army Nurse Corps right out of nursing school and I joined AWHONN soon after graduation, when I chose perinatal nursing as my area of specialty. From the earliest days, the importance of involvement in professional organizations and the need to develop the profession of nursing was emphasized.

Involvement in professional organizations like AWHONN demonstrated to me, very early in my career, the importance of remaining current with the state of the science/research in the field, along with the latest developments in care delivery, patient safety, and quality improvement. This involvement also helped shape my philosophy of nursing, including respect for individual patients and their family members and loved ones.

Also, my involvement in AWHONN provided me with greater visibility within the perinatal nursing profession. I became known within the organization as a man who was dedicated to women’s health. In January 2016 this led to me being the first man elected as a director on the national AWHONN board of directors.

My connections within AWHONN are helping me select which doctoral program I will enroll in within the next 12 to 18 months. I am fortunate that my current employer is very supportive of my efforts to achieve advanced education, as well as my work with AWHONN.

When I talk with newly minted nurses, I tell them, ‘Always remember why you chose the nursing profession. When you have a bad day or a bad week, take time to reflect on why you do what you do professionally. Always remember that those who seek your care are often afraid and don’t know the health care system as you have come to know it. Care for yourself and take time to recharge. You cannot take care of your patients and others you may be serving as a volunteer if you don’t take care of yourself.’

Selecting nursing as my chosen profession was a gift. Nursing provides us with the ability to affect patients on a one-on-one basis. This profession also provides an avenue to influence the care provided to vast groups of people. A thorough understanding of nursing care delivery is essential to the management of health care delivery systems throughout the country, and those systems need our commitment beyond our day-to-day work.”
Samantha Utter, the youngest of the three alumni in this story, has just begun her full-time nursing career. She works as an RN in the medical intensive care unit at Spectrum Health. She began working at Spectrum in May 2013 as a nursing assistant while she was attending KCON.

Professional Volunteer Activities

- Member, The Green Team, Spectrum Health
- Co-chair, The Green Team, Spectrum Health Grand Rapids Medical Campus
- Member, Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments (ANHE)
- Volunteer, GVSU Student Nurses’ Association (SNA)

“Throughout my career as a student nurse, I volunteered in a multitude of settings under GVSU’s SNA. When I entered nursing, I looked for ways I could give back to my community and continue my commitment to a healthier environment. It was then that I realized just how many volunteer opportunities are available for nurses!

To narrow down my options, I began looking for like-minded groups and organizations. Sustainable practices are a passion of mine. When I stumbled on Spectrum’s Green Team — a community of individuals that meets bimonthly to identify sustainable practices for Spectrum — I knew this was how I was going to give back. I became a member of The Green Team in July 2015, and this January I became co-chair for the medical campus in downtown Grand Rapids.

Everyone has the potential to create change. This might be helping a patient to work through a difficult situation. Or it might include the members of a nursing unit changing their processes to create a more efficient workspace. There are so many opportunities for us as humans to grow and inspire each other. Nursing creates that space for me.

My current volunteer commitments don’t directly affect patients per se, but I know I’m making a difference. By following sustainable practices and encouraging my peers, I’ve been able to promote sustainable initiatives throughout the hospital, working on projects like continued staff education about recycling and conserving resources, ‘greening’ our waste stream, and an annual art competition focused on recyclable materials.

There are so many ways to become involved. Look around and find something you’re interested in. Ask your supervisor or educator if they know of professional volunteer opportunities you can become involved in. Look both inside and outside of your organization. Volunteering is both fulfilling and rewarding. Don’t be afraid to try something new!”
For this issue, KCON Magazine asked the four members of KCON’s Alumni Association Board executive team why they volunteer to serve on the board. Here are excerpts from what they said.

**Tracy Hosford, MSN, BSN ('02), RN, PCCN, President** “I volunteer because I believe in giving back. Through KCON I was able to pursue my dream of a career and my passion for nursing. I’m living my dream daily, and so much of that began with the amazing education and opportunities that came from my time at KCON.

The time I volunteer for this cause means that others may be blessed with opportunities and motivated to give of their own time and talents. The events we organize and participate in aren’t terribly time consuming, so others can participate even when they have little time to give. The sacrifice of some time and talent is worth the many returned rewards.”

**Jennifer Langholz, BSN ('09), RN, Vice President of Fundraising** “I volunteer my time because I love Grand Valley and the nursing profession. This is a perfect way to stay involved as a Laker alum and develop myself as a nursing professional. Since graduating, I’ve practiced in a few different specialties, but my involvement in the Alumni Association has always been able to enhance my experience as a nurse.

Serving as a leader means further professional development and learning from my peers. Many of the Alumni Association members are experts in areas of practice other than mine, and I love learning from them during our meetings and other events. On the board, we’re so excited about what all our GV alumni are doing in the community.”

**Amy Majeski, MHA, BSN ('02), NE-BC, Vice President of Membership** “I love volunteering to serve on the executive board because I received so much during my time at KCON from mentors who were previous KCON graduates. I felt such relief when I heard that some of my fears about becoming a nurse were normal and that I could thrive in the nursing world!

The time I spend with our alumni is always refreshing. KCON nurses are real caregivers, and not only for patients. They care about each other, and they care about sustaining an amazing nursing program at GVSU. I’m proud when I see so many of our alumni giving back to their communities beyond their service as a clinician.”

**Jennifer Ohman, DNP ('16), BSN ('02), Vice President of Education & Special Events** “I volunteer to help unite alumni with their alma mater through community events. It’s such fun working with friends to move the KCON Alumni Association forward as an active network of KCON alums.

Participating on the board is a way for me to demonstrate leadership while serving in the community. It’s heart-warming to see alumni band together during events, such as Community Outreach Week, and use their talents to serve Grand Rapids. Plus, I get the satisfaction of knowing that I’m able to give back to the school that gave me so much during my undergrad program and again now during my doctoral program.”
Katelyn Bailey, DNP ('15), BSN ('09), is working as a pediatric nurse practitioner at Lapeer (Michigan) Pediatrics.

Genevieve Barrett, PhD, BSN ('02), has received her PhD from the University of Kansas and is currently serving as clinical research coordinator at Mercy Health Saint Mary's.

Cynthia Betterly, DNP ('14), is working as a provider in geriatrics at Mercy Health Saint Mary's.

Julie Bulson, MPA, BSN ('99), is serving on the 2016 Bylaws Committee of the American Organization of Nurse Executives. She also serves on committees in the Michigan and federal departments of Health and Human Services.

Jaleen Dingledine, BSN ('12), moved to the Middle East to help Cleveland Clinic establish a new hospital in Abu Dhabi in 2015, and is now headed back to school to study for her CRNA certification.

Christine Frederick, MSN ('98), is serving as president of the board of directors of Walking With Children, Inc.

Abby Hegstrand, MSN, BSN ('07), is managing neurodiagnostics, the epilepsy monitoring unit, intraoperative neurophysiological monitoring, and neuro-ophthalmology for Mercy Health Saint Mary's. She also is an adjunct instructor at Spring Arbor University.

Lauren (Isaacson) Hirn, BSN ('14), is working at Borgess Pipp Hospital, Plainwell, as a long-term acute care hospital (LTACH) nurse.

Briana Hutchinson, BSN ('14), is an RN resident at the University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Nursing. She is working on a project to develop a standardized hospital policy and process for patients who have medical restrictions on the use of an extremity.

Aimee Johnson, MSN, BSN ('07), AANP, is working as a family nurse practitioner at Sparrow Medical Group Stanton.

Sarah Curle Jordan, BSN ('14), BS, RN, was featured in a Mary Free Bed Rehabilitation Hospital YouTube video: ‘Carry On by FUN (interpreted Mary Free Bed style)’ https://www.youtube.com/user/MaryFreeBed

Lucy Ledesma, DNP ('14), is working as an internal medicine provider at Mercy Health Saint Mary's and Mercy Health Physician Partners in Grand Rapids.

Carrie Lewis, MSN, BSN ('93), is working in Charlotte, N.C., as an inpatient nurse practitioner in pediatric hematology/oncology.

Amy (LaBarge) Majeski, MHA, BSN ('02), RN, NE-BC, is a nursing administrator and director of inpatient nursing at Spectrum Health Big Rapids and Reed City hospitals.

Bethany McDade, MS, BSN ('09), was awarded an MS as an adult gerontology nurse practitioner from the University of Michigan in 2015. She is working as a nurse practitioner for a rehabilitation practice in Ypsilanti, Mich.

Heidi Newton, MS, BSN ('00), is working as a senior technical project manager at Great Lakes Health Connect in Grand Rapids.

Dawn Overbeek, BSN ('91), is working as a labor and delivery nurse at Holland Hospital.

Katie Post, BSN ('12), is working as a labor and delivery nurse, and is studying for her MSN at Michigan State University.

Ivy Razmus, PhD, MSN ('93), BSN ('80), was awarded a PhD from the University of Kansas in 2015. She is working as a wound ostomy continence nurse at Saint Francis Health System in Tulsa, Okla.

Jeanne Roode, DNP, MSN ('95), NEABC, is now vice president, clinical improvement & integration at Spectrum Health in Grand Rapids.

Mary Scheerhorn, MSN, BSN ('86), CEN, assistant professor in the Hope College Department of Nursing, received the 2015 Kappa Epsilon Chapter-at-Large (Sigma Theta Tau International) Excellence in Nursing Education Award.

Sylvia Simons, DNP ('14), MSN ('91), had an article published in the September 13, 2015, edition of the Grand Rapids Press, Health section, titled “Why is the Doctor of Nursing Degree Important and Necessary?”

Linda Spoelma, BSN ('91), is serving as treasurer of the West Michigan Chapter of the American Association of Critical-Care Nurses.


Nancy Steele, PhD, MSN ('94), is serving as a core leader on the Congressional Directive Board for Research in Military Women’s Health.

Lori Wightman, DNP, MSN ('95), BSN ('86), is the new system chief nursing officer at Regional Health, Saint Agnes Medical Center in Rapid City, S.D. She was featured in a major story posted on February 3, 2016, in The Atlantic magazine Health section titled “The U.S. is Running Out of Nurses.”

Michael Williams, MSN ('89), is serving as director of the School of Nursing at Eastern Michigan University.

Melissa Wilson, MSN, BSN ('09), was awarded her MSN in 2015 from Michigan State University. She is working as a family nurse practitioner at Spectrum Health’s urgent care unit.
STUDENT/SNA UPDATE

KCON Student Saves Driver

Anna-Marie Jenks, RN, a KCON RN to BSN program student, saved a life by the side of the road last winter. Andy George was eastbound on I-96 in the Clarksville area late in the afternoon on December 1 when he lost consciousness and his pickup truck went out of control. Jenks, who was driving nearby, noticed something was wrong when she saw George passed out, leaning against the driver’s side window. His truck left the roadway, drove through a ditch and into a wooded area, and finally came to a stop. Jenks and two men who also had seen what happened stopped to help, breaking a window to get to George.

“We got him out onto the ground, and I checked and I couldn’t feel the pulse, and his face had turned blue,” Jenks says. “He wasn’t breathing.” As her husband called 911, she performed CPR.

“I started chest compressions,” Jenks says. “I did about two rounds of them and he took this huge deep breath…. I checked for a pulse and he had one.” Paramedics rushed George to Spectrum Health Butterworth Hospital.

According to his wife, Kara, doctors believed he had a seizure. She says she knows there would have been no hope for her husband’s survival if the three strangers hadn’t cared enough to help. “There are so many good people in this world and I truly can’t thank them enough.”

The original version of this story was published by WOODTV 24 Hour News 8 web staff on December 2, 2015

Team Wins Award in Pitch Competition

Briauna Taylor, BSN ('15), DNP program student, is an entrepreneur as well as a working nurse and a doctoral student. She is a team member at Fluition Innovations in Grand Rapids, where an interdisciplinary group of five GVSU students/alumni has been working on a sit-to-stand device for use in health care.

On October 15, 2015, Fluition got a boost when they presented the project at the Michigan Women’s Foundation Entrepreneur YOU Pitch Competition, held at the Seidman College of Business. The team won second place in the Growth category and was awarded a check for $5,000 to advance their work. Assistant professor Lori Houghton-Rahrig, PhD, MSN ('01), BSN ('81), RN, has been helping the Fluition team members in their progress toward a preclinical trial. More information can be found at www.fluitioninnovations.com

Photo: BRIAUNA TAYLOR

Photo: ANNA-MARIE JENKS

Photo: Briauna Taylor, BSN ('15), DNP program student, is an entrepreneur as well as a working nurse and a doctoral student. She is a team member at Fluition Innovations in Grand Rapids, where an interdisciplinary group of five GVSU students/alumni has been working on a sit-to-stand device for use in health care.

On October 15, 2015, Fluition got a boost when they presented the project at the Michigan Women’s Foundation Entrepreneur YOU Pitch Competition, held at the Seidman College of Business. The team won second place in the Growth category and was awarded a check for $5,000 to advance their work. Assistant professor Lori Houghton-Rahrig, PhD, MSN ('01), BSN ('81), RN, has been helping the Fluition team members in their progress toward a preclinical trial. More information can be found at www.fluitioninnovations.com
Rachel Cardosa, MSN, DNP program student, was selected by the Michigan Council of Nurse Practitioners as a recipient of the MICNP’s 2015-2016 Student Scholarship award.

Claudia Turkson-Ocran, BSN, DNP program student, published an article in the Grand Rapids Press, Health section, on December 12, 2015, titled “Managing Asthma: Know Your Triggers.”

The Kappa Epsilon Chapter-at-Large of Sigma Theta Tau International gave two Excellence in Student Performance awards in 2015:

- Jenna Buchman, BSN traditional program
- Eric Howard, RN to BSN program

Graduate Student Organization
President: Allison Reynolds
Vice President: Jennifer Campbell
Secretary: Diane Stein
Financial Officer/Treasurer: Kaitlin DeMaagd
Community Liaison: Amanda Taylor
Faculty Advisor: Geraldine Terry

Student Nurses’ Association
- President: Sarah Thornton
- Vice President: Brian Boyce
- Secretary: Jessica Taylor
- Treasurer: Katie Andrusaitis
- Communications Director: Jessica Payne
- Community Health Director: Carley Buning
- Curriculum Director: Ellen Vaas
- Image and Breakthrough to Nursing Director: Jessica Frisch
- Membership Director: Ellen Roderick
- Volunteer Director: Jamie Platt
- Faculty Advisor: Nancy Carlson
- Staff Advisor: Angela Caruso
Robinson Joins Traverse City Team

Mary J. Robinson, MSN, BSN (’02), RN, was recently appointed as KCON’s regional nursing programs coordinator for the greater Traverse City area. Robinson has certification as a long-term care administrator and experience in acute and long-term care, as well as rural, school, and public health. She has been a clinical faculty member for ADN education and has served in instruction and advising roles for three online nursing education programs.

When announcing Robinson’s appointment, KCON’s dean, Cynthia McCurren, PhD, RN, FNAP, said, “Consistent with our strategic plan and in response to the needs of our practice partners and the communities they serve, we are intentionally developing the support services needed for students in more remote areas to be able to advance their nursing education. We are delighted that Mary has joined us to help with this outreach effort!”

Faculty Participate in GVSU Retention Program

Nine KCON faculty members are serving as instructors in the second year of a retention initiative to help first-year students persist and go on to their second year at GVSU. The initiative, called the Academic Recovery Camp (ARC), includes a faculty professional development component and a one-week commitment to the camp.

ARC is focused on helping first-year students who are in jeopardy of dismissal from GVSU. The participating KCON faculty are part of a larger team with about two dozen other faculty members.

- Mary Bollman, MSN, RN
- Kelli Damstra, DNP, MSN, RN
- Sue Harrington, PhD, RN
- Amy Manderscheid, DNP, RN, CMSRN
- Nancy Schoofs, PhD, RN
- Dianne Slager, DNP, MSN, BSN, FNP
- Sally Stockdale, MSN, RN
- Elaine Van Doren, PhD, RN
- Joy Washburn, EdD, RNC, WHNP-BC

In her memory, the recently established student assistance fund has been renamed the Cheryl Borgman Student Assistance Fund. This fund provides non-tuition financial aid for students who have costs related to travel and lodging for clinical placements. The link to the fund can be found at [http://www.gvsu.edu/kcon/giving-315.htm](http://www.gvsu.edu/kcon/giving-315.htm) (scroll down). In addition, a bench with a memorial plaque will be placed in the CHS 300 suite lobby.
Deborah Bambini, Member, International Nursing Association for Clinical Simulation, Education Committee (2013-Present)
Member, Society for Simulation in Healthcare, Webinar and Education committees (2014-Present)

Jean Barry, Member, Journal of Nursing Administration, Editorial Board (1996-Present)
Member, American Nurses Association, Leadership Institute Task Force (2014-Present)

Cynthia Beel-Bates, Board Member, The Other Way Ministries (2011-Present)
Member, Dementia Friendly Grand Rapids, Steering & Curriculum committees (2015-Present)

Linda Bond, Member, American Nurses Association Michigan, Nominations Committee (2013-Present)

Ruth Ann Brintnall, Member, Hospice of Michigan, Board of Trustees (2007-Present)
Member, Hospice of Michigan, Board Development & Planning Committee (2007-Present)
Chair, Hospice of Michigan, Western Regional Advisory Board (2007-2015)

Paulette Chaponniere, Officer, ACT for Congo (2013-Present)

Dianne Conrad, Member, Michigan DNP Network, Michigan Council of Nursing DNP Roundtable of Distinction (2013-Present)
Secretary, Michigan Health Council (2014-Present)
Member, AACN, Competency-Based Education for Doctoral-Prepared APRNs Work Group (2015-Present)

Cynthia Coviak, Member, Spectrum Health Nursing Research Council (2006-Present)
Board Member, Muskegon Community Health Project (2011-Present)
Chair, Interprofessional Health Informatics Conference Planning Committee (2014-Present)

Kelli Damstra, Chair, Healthy Kent Breastfeeding Coalition (2015-Present)

Rebecca Davis, Committee Member, Heritage Community of Kalamazoo (2005-Present)

Kimberly Fenbert, Member, National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners, Pediatric Obesity Guidelines Revision Committee (2015-Present)
GVSU Representative, Kent County Health Department Dental Coalition

Joanne Finazzi, Chair, Kappa Epsilon Chapter-at-Large, STTI (2012-Present)

Meridell Gracias, Member, Kent County Essential Needs Task Force, Food & Nutrition Coalition (2010-Present)
Committee Member, Kappa Epsilon Chapter-at-Large, STTI (2014-Present)

Susan Harrington, Member, Michigan Public Health Association, Nurse Executive Board (2012-Present)
Committee Chair, Association of Community Health Nurse Educators (2013-Present)
Chair, MidWest Nursing Research Society, Nursing Education Research Interest Group (2015-2016)

Barbara Hooper, Committee Member, Kappa Epsilon Chapter-at-Large, STTI (2013-Present)
Member, Ottawa County Community Action Agency, Advisory Board (2014-Present)

Mary Horan, Board Member, Michigan Department of Health & Human Services, Emmet County
Chair, Emmet County Bay Bluffs Medical Care Facility, Board of Directors

Lori Houghton-Rahrig, Member, Kappa Epsilon Chapter-at-Large, STTI, Awards Committee (2013-Present)

Susan Jensen, Commissioner, Commission for Case Management Certification (CCMC) (2011-Present)
Chair, CCMC National Symposium (held January 2016)

Elaine Leigh, Disaster Preparedness Volunteer, Ottawa County Medical Reserve Corps (2009-Present)
Member, Michigan State Board of Nursing (2012-Present)

Amy Manderscheid, Task Force Member, Kappa Epsilon Chapter-at-Large, STTI, Succession Planning Committee (2014-Present)

Susan Mlynarczyk, Chair, Kappa Epsilon Chapter-at-Large, STTI, Research Committee (2007-Present)

Sylvia Mupeti, Committee Member, Zimbabwean Women’s Action Group (1990-Present)
Member, Hospice of Michigan, Western Regional Advisory Board (2008-Present)
Editor & Associate Editor, Frontiers Journal of Public Health (2014-Present)

Patricia Schafer, Board Member, Ferguson Renaissance Center (2003-Present)
KCON Representative, Michigan Primary Care Association (2009-Present)

Luanne Shaw, Treasurer, Kappa Epsilon Chapter-at-Large, STTI (2014-Present)

Dianne Slager, Chair, Health Intervention Services, Board of Directors (2015-Present)

Sandra Spoelstra, Member, Michigan Department of Community Health Long-Term Care, Conference Planning Committee (2006-Present)
The following faculty and staff were recently honored for their years of service to GVSU:

- Jean Barry, PhD, RN, NEA-BC - 10 years
- Kellie Knight, MSW - 10 years
- Sylvia Mupepi, PhD, RN - 10 years
- Maureen Ryan, MSN, RN, CS - 25 years
- Elaine Van Doren, PhD, RN - 10 years
- Melodee Vanden Bosch, PhD, RN - 10 years
- Joy Washburn, EdD, RN, WHNP-BC - 10 years

FACULTY & STAFF BRIEFS

Andrea Bostrom, PhD, PMHCNS-BC, contributed a chapter on schizophrenia to Psychiatric Nursing: Contemporary Practice. The book recently received the 2015 #1 Book of the Year Award in Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing from the American Journal of Nursing.

Cassonya Carter, MEd, BS, recently received a letter of appreciation from Nancy Giardina, GVSU's assistant vice president for academic affairs, acknowledging CC's work with the 2015 Academic Success Institute and the Oliver Wilson Freshman Academy. Also, CC coordinated a concert in February in Flint featuring the Voices of GVSU. Water and other donations to help Flint with its water crisis were gathered in Grand Rapids before the concert.

Norine Cunningham, MSN, RN, joined a team from Michigan State University's College of Osteopathic Medicine and College of Human Medicine on a trip to Cuba in December to explore clinical opportunities for medical students.

Barbara Hooper, DNP, MSN, RN, NE-BC, received the 2015 Kappa Epsilon Chapter-at-Large (Sigma Theta Tau International) Excellence in Nursing Award: Outstanding Mentor.

Kim Manning, DNP, MSN, FNP-BC, APRN, a KCON embedded faculty member in Primary Care/Mercy Health Physician Partners (MHPP), was featured in an ad for MHPP in the September 20, 2015, edition of the Grand Rapids Press.

Sylvia Mupepi, PhD, RN, was featured in the GVFaces column in the September 28, 2015, issue of GVSU’s Forum newsletter (Vol. 40, No. 5). The story featured her local and international community/public health contributions. Also, Mupepi recently learned that her instrument, Cervical Screening Barriers and Beliefs Questionnaire, will be indexed in the American Psychological Association's PsycTESTS® database.

Janet Winter, DNP, MPA, RN, was the keynote speaker for the Spring Induction Ceremony for the Upsilon Epsilon Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing, located at Western Michigan University.

FACULTY & STAFF TRANSITIONS

Welcome
Sandra Matthews, Receptionist/Clerical Support & Special Projects Coordinator

Reappointments
The following faculty members recently completed successful mid-tenure reviews and were reappointed with the rank of assistant professor:

- Dianne Conrad, DNP, FNP-BC, CDE, BC-ADM
- Sue Harrington, PhD, RN
- Lori Houghton-Rahrig, PhD, RN
- Melodee Vanden Bosch, PhD, RN
- Janet Winter, DNP, MPA, RN

Retirements
Daniel Wezeman, AAS, Data Manager
Offering a Home for Pediatrics

When people learn about GVSU’s Family Health Center (FHC), they tend to think of adult and student health care. But it’s also a critical part of the local health care system for children.

Kimberly Fenbert, DNP, MSN (’02), BSN, CPNP, is a pediatric nurse practitioner and KCON affiliate faculty member at the FHC. She notes that pediatrics, for patients from birth to 21 years old, makes up about 24 percent of the organization’s practice.

“We offer the full scope of pediatric primary care,” Fenbert explains. “We do well-child visits and see kids when they’re ill. We also do immunizations, lead screening, and hearing and vision screening. For teens and older adolescents, we also screen for depression and sexually transmitted infections as appropriate. Usually, starting around age 12, we like to have children come into the exam room on their own. It’s a good age to start talking openly about sexuality, drugs and alcohol, and other issues they might be concerned about.”

This sounds like a typical pediatrician’s office. So what makes the FHC different? According to Fenbert, it’s education and time. “Because we’re a nurse-managed health center we focus on disease prevention and health promotion,” she says. “So we take a lot of time with our patients and their parents, and we do a lot of patient education. For example, with our asthma patients, we go over their asthma action plan in detail and make sure they understand their medications and how to use their inhalers.”

Part of the FHC’s mission is to serve as a clinical practice site for KCON and other students. Two part-time graduate assistants in KCON’s DNP program have been involved with a quality improvement initiative in cooperation with Priority Health insurance for about three years. Claudia Turkson-Ocran, DNP (’16), BSN, and Briauna Taylor, BSN (’15), have taken on the challenge of reducing patient no-show rates and increasing access to health care at the FHC.

Priority Health provides a list of insured patients who show the FHC as their designated pediatrics health care provider. If they aren’t already active patients at the FHC, Turkson-Ocran or Taylor will try to call a parent and arrange a well-child check-up appointment. If they discover that the child is under the care of another provider, they encourage the parent to follow up with that provider. They also coordinate community support services with Health Net of West Michigan [http://healthnetwm.org/], an important partner in the initiative.

According to Fenbert, pediatric patient volume and quality of care have increased. “We are starting to explore duplicating the same process with other insurance companies,” she concludes. “It’s all part of us offering accessible, quality health care to the community while promoting an innovative learning environment.”
and community leaders together to participate in the development of a formal course to augment the traditional curriculum. This course focuses on learning the skill of polarity thinking, which the Center for Creative Leadership specifies as an essential skill for contemporary leaders who want to manage and sustain change. Since polarity thinking can contribute to person-centered and interprofessional values-based care, students who complete this course are prepared to influence policy and share their knowledge with people who are most in need.

Finally, in an example of hands-on efforts, the Wesorick Center is currently collaborating with a community partner in a demonstration project to help elderly persons age in place and manage their medications successfully. Collaborating with a community partner on a high-needs project like this is offering a project-driven learning opportunity for several KCON students. Outcomes will highlight the social determinants of health for this vulnerable population and might lead to further policy developments and services. Whatever the results of this and all of the Center’s other efforts, we will remain committed to helping every nurse serve and contribute to the advancement of the profession we love.
KCON Alum
Wins ANCC Award

Michelle L. Witkop, DNP, MSN ('97), FNP-BC, received the 2015 National Magnet Nurse of the Year ® Award at the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) 2015 national conference. Witkop is a nurse practitioner at the Northern Regional Bleeding Disorder Center, Munson Medical Center, in Traverse City. She received the Transformational Leadership component award, and was specifically honored for her groundbreaking regional and national research in better pain management for hemophilia patients.

Alumni Endowed Scholarship Goal Exceeded

It’s official! KCON’s Alumni Endowed Scholarship campaign exceeded its original $30,000 goal. Thanks to all of you who so generously made donations, the scholarship fund has more than $37,000 and this fall a student will be receiving a scholarship. Please help us continue to grow this fund so more students can reach their professional dreams.

Kirkhof College of Nursing Position Available

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

Assistant Dean for Practice: Successful candidate will develop, implement, coordinate, and evaluate academic practice/service models that support the strategic plan of the university and KCON, as well as the Michigan community. Will develop and sustain academic practice/service initiatives of faculty; establish new practice initiatives; assure quality, evidence-based nursing care at practice sites; oversee negotiation of practice contracts between KCON and health care agencies; coordinate practice/service efforts; oversee practice budgets; and support the academic and scholarship mission of KCON. Earned doctorate in nursing (PhD or DNP) or related discipline required and master’s degree in nursing preferred. If master’s degree is not in nursing, the earned doctorate must be a nursing doctorate; if nursing doctorate was earned via BSN to DNP or PhD, the requirement for a master’s degree is waived. Must be eligible for RN licensure in 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)
- Interprofessional Certificate in Palliative and Hospice Care

“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

Web Site: www.gvsu.edu/kcon
Phone: 616-331-3558
Fax: 616-331-2510
E-mail: Use “Contact Us” page on KCON’s Web site