Leadership

Lori Wightman
Planning for the
Next Generation of Leaders

Using Leadership
Lessons Learned at Work

Serving Patients by Serving
Health Care Leaders

Leading in
Times of Change
From The Dean

“The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health” report (IOM, 2010) states that strong leadership will be required to realize the vision of a transformed health care system. Data collected for this report revealed that many do not view nurses as “leaders” and doubt their effectiveness in contributing to health care reform. Therefore, the nursing profession must produce leaders throughout the health care system — from the bedside, to the community, to the boardroom — working in collaboration with leaders from other professions. This is a challenge that the Kirkhof College of Nursing takes seriously.

Our college of nursing has a strong tradition of commitment to developing nurse leaders; utilizing curricular models, student organizations and experiential learning to ensure success; and fostering lifelong learning. Most nursing education programs would also make the same claim, so what differentiates a KCON graduate?

The Spring 2012 edition of KCON Magazine provides proof for our claims! Features include stories about:

- A current undergraduate student who has been selected to participate in the Peter Cook Leadership Academy at GVSU’s Hauenstein Center for Presidential Studies
- An alumna who is a leader in her professional career and is the current GVSU Alumni Association president
- An alumna who is now a CNO, transforming health care for rural Michigan and implementing succession planning to ensure ongoing leadership
- An alumna who is providing leadership within an interdisciplinary team for an international company that provides evidence-based clinical solutions and services

Many leaders in nursing started their career with KCON, and the numbers will continue to grow as we redouble our efforts to prepare leaders for 21st century health care. We hope you enjoy this issue of our magazine. If you know there is a leader in you ready to emerge, join us as we work together to make a difference in health care!
2 Planning for the Next Generation of Leaders
Lori Wightman

6 Using Leadership Lessons Learned at Work
Julie Bulson

7 Serving Patients by Serving Health Care Leaders
Kathy Wyngarden

8 Leading in Times of Change

10 Alumni Update

12 Student/SNA Update

14 Faculty/Staff Update

16 Wesorick Presents Meijer Lecture
Planning for the Next Generation of Leaders
Profile: Lori Wightman
DNP, MSN (‘94), BSN (‘86)

Lori Wightman is the chief nursing officer at Mercy Hospital Grayling in Grayling, Mich. She graduated from KCON with a BSN in 1986, returning to KCON to earn an MSN in 1994 with a dual track as a clinical nurse specialist and in administration. She completed her DNP studies at Rush University College of Nursing, Chicago, in 2009.

Before accepting her current position as CNO at Grayling in early 2010, Wightman held several nursing leadership positions in West Michigan. She became the cardiovascular service line director at Mercy Health in Muskegon after serving as part of the nursing leadership team at Spectrum Health. Then she was hired to open and develop a freestanding surgical center, a joint business venture that involved Saint Mary’s Health Care and 20 Grand Rapids surgeons.

“Florence Nightingale has served as an inspiration for me,” Wightman says. “Although she is primarily thought of as the founder of modern nursing practice, she was an exceptional leader who contributed to the development of the hospital as we know it today. She saw that the art and science of nursing practice needed to be delivered within the context of solid nursing leadership.”

Wightman feels blessed that she started her career as a bedside nurse with a firm foundation in leadership. “Grand Valley, even 25 years ago, incorporated leadership development into the BSN program,” she remembers. “That training has been critical throughout my career.”

What is Nursing Leadership?

When you talk with KCON alum Lori Wightman, CNO at Mercy Hospital Grayling, you immediately gain a clear picture of the current challenges in nursing leadership. She not only studied it during her DNP program, but she has lived it every day as a leader herself. See the right column on page 5 for some of her reflections about what nursing leadership requires.
The Wightman Leadership Succession Planning Model

As Lori Wightman, current CNO at Mercy Hospital Grayling, advanced in her career, she saw a consistent problem. “Over the years,” she says, “I became increasingly concerned about nurse leader turnover, nurse leader performance, burnout, lengthy nurse leader vacancies, and the effect this all had on nurses and patients. During my doctorate work I was fortunate to have two mentors who helped me develop a response: Gay Landstrom, CNO at Trinity Health, and Dr. Melanie Dreher, dean of Rush University College of Nursing. Their input and support was invaluable as I created a framework and succession planning model for leader development.”

After an extensive literature review and analysis, Wightman was able to identify the components needed for her model. (See Succession Planning Model illustration.) “The identification of high-potential individuals is the base of the model,” she explains. “Standard competencies and leader assessments serve as the cornerstones. The assessment results drive development plans and individual/organizational development. Coaching and mentoring are provided for personal and professional growth. All of this leads to a pipeline of qualified nurse leaders, with the succession plan at the top of the model. Both individual and organizational time, commitment and resources are required to ensure success.”

Wightman’s model was piloted at Saint Mary’s Health Care in Grand Rapids in 2008-2009. Twenty-five nurse leaders identified as having high potential participated in the project. When it was completed, there proved to be a positive effect on recruitment; retention; length of time to fill nurse leader positions; patient, nurse and physician satisfaction; education costs; leader performance; and leaders’ perception of effectiveness.

“One of the things we were most excited about was the effect we had on their level of preparedness for leadership,” Wightman states. “We demonstrated that, over the course of 12 months, 94 percent of the 25 nurse leaders showed significant growth from the assessment process, the development plan, the coaching and the mentoring. They were seen as more competent, more capable, and more ready to assume a new or different position. Improving their skills and abilities was what we wanted to do for the succession plan — to make sure we had qualified, capable nurses in the pipeline to fill positions at Saint Mary’s as they became available.”

On the Ground in Grayling

So how does a commitment to nursing leadership development work every day, month after month, in a real-life setting? Lori Wightman is finding out as CNO of Mercy Hospital Grayling.

“Once I finished my DNP at Rush University,” Wightman says, “I felt moved to serve patients and nurses working in an underserved area. I had started my career in rural health nursing and knew the challenges faced by these nurses and communities. I also believed the move to become Mercy Grayling’s CNO would help me achieve my personal mission of growing nurse leaders.”
“Nurses and nurse leaders wear many hats in rural health care,” Wightman continues. “This means they have a broad understanding of health care. It is complex and challenging everywhere, but in a rural setting we are managing with fewer resources. At Mercy we have a number of talented nurse leaders who have diligently and creatively tried to keep abreast of health care change. However, many of them are going to retire in the next three to seven years, so leader development and succession planning is vital to the life of this rural community hospital.”

According to Wightman, her succession planning model has been embraced by the nurse leaders at Mercy Hospital Grayling. A number of high-potential leaders and bedside nurses with leadership potential have been identified and are being introduced to leadership behavioral competencies. Learning opportunities that develop leadership skills are being offered for all nurses in a variety of forums: a nursing blog, a nursing Facebook page, online learning, webinars, a nursing journal club, classes, and professional speakers. The first six high-potential individuals are scheduled to take a 360-degree leadership assessment this spring. Coaching and mentoring are underway with the high-potential personnel and, for the first time at Mercy Grayling, a nursing succession plan exists for all nurse leader positions.

“Some side benefits have already emerged from the model’s implementation,” Wightman says. “We have greater retention of nurses and nurse leaders, a change in culture driven by more leadership at the bedside, and more engagement in shared governance and clinical and performance improvement initiatives. We have approximately 130 nurses employed at Mercy Grayling. Since we started to implement the model, we have about 25 nurses enrolled in BSN or MSN programs. This is compared to only eight previously.

“My goal at Mercy Hospital Grayling is to have a stable leadership team in the face of constant change — nurse leaders who are capable of transforming care. The sustainability of our organization and our ability to fulfill our mission in a rural area depends on the quality of our nurse leaders.”

• “Competent leadership is more important than it has ever been in the profession of nursing — not only in formal leadership positions, but also at the bedside. Even the newest bedside nurses must have basic leadership skills to coordinate care, advocate for the patient, delegate tasks, and promote practice changes.”

• “In formal leadership positions, advanced, well-developed leadership skills are needed for the complex health care environment we face. Being able to respond with more speed and intensity to change is absolutely necessary if we are going to successfully transform health care.”

• “We must actively prepare nurses for formal leadership roles. ‘Baptism by fire’ is no longer acceptable. I remember the days when the best clinician on the floor was thrown into the first-line manager position with the words, ‘Good Luck!’ That was my introduction to leadership. I was quite content serving patients, but I was persuaded to take a vacant manager position on a telemetry unit. No orientation … no mentor … no coach. This method of filling nurse leader positions is unfair to other nurses, the patients and the nurses who accept these positions.”

• “During my doctorate studies I crosswalked well-defined nursing leadership competencies with 67 behavioral-based leadership competencies. Nursing tends to be more task oriented, and we must be able to complete those tasks. But I believe for nurse leaders to be as competent and capable as leaders in other disciplines, like the business world, we need to focus on behavioral-based leadership competencies that will allow us to participate in learning and evaluation that is comparable across disciplines. We have to understand that leadership skill development is evolutionary — an ongoing process that helps novices become experts. It’s critical that we develop and groom leaders throughout all levels of an organization so we can build the behavioral-based skills they will need in the future.”

• “What are some of the behavioral-based leadership competencies needed? In no particular order, one example is political savvy. Another is business acumen. A third is managing throughout the system — understanding the big picture and stepping beyond traditional department silos. Another that’s desperately needed is the ability to develop others. And there’s one behavioral-based competency I really like. It’s called managerial courage, the ability to make tough calls and take a stand.”

“Nurses and nurse leaders wear many hats in rural health care,” Wightman continues. “This means they have a broad understanding of health care. It is complex and challenging everywhere, but in a rural setting we are managing with fewer resources. At Mercy we have a number of talented nurse leaders who have diligently and creatively tried to keep abreast of health care change. However, many of them are going to retire in the next three to seven years, so leader development and succession planning is vital to the life of this rural community hospital.”

From “The 360° Leader” by John C. Maxwell

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3
Using Leadership Lessons Learned at Work

Julie Bulson, President - GVSU Alumni Association Board of Directors

Julie Bulson, MPA ('07), BSN ('99), was named to a three-year term as president of the GVSU Alumni Association Board of Directors in Fall 2011. She initially responded to a call for board members in 2007, and the rest is history. She was hooked on service to the university.

Bulson’s relationship with GVSU began in the late 1990s when she enrolled in KCON’s BSN program for registered nurses, and was strengthened when she completed her master’s degree in public administration in 2007.

“I'm eager to spread the word about GVSU in the community,” Bulson says. “At the same time, my overarching goal for this next three years is to improve the efficiency of the board. I’m using lessons learned during my career in nursing with Spectrum Health. As I’ve learned to do more with less there, I feel I can apply those lessons to this presidency role.”

Bulson is all about job descriptions, goal setting, organizational structure, accountability and getting more alumni involved in supporting the university personally and financially. Although her tenure is young, she has already instituted an orientation process for committee chairs and challenged committees to identify specific goals that will support the association and the university. She also wants to revisit the strategic plan to assure that the Alumni Association is doing its part to support the mission of the university.

Her approach to the board’s work is a logical fit with Bulson’s job as director of emergency preparedness for Spectrum Health Hospital Group. She is responsible for the development, coordination and implementation of disaster plans and emergency management programs that comply with the system’s safety, accreditation, and regulatory standards and requirements.

Like most nurses, Bulson started her career in direct care before moving on to leadership roles. Being a supervisor and working with less-experienced staff in a complex organization has been part of her professional development. Her passion for disaster nursing began with her involvement on a disaster preparedness committee, and her leadership skills have been evolving ever since.

“I believe that my understanding and passion for nursing has done much to shape the direction of disaster care within the Spectrum Health system,” she reflects. “My experience in this position has given me valuable tools for leading the Alumni Association, and I am delighted to have this opportunity to lead and be a voice for more than 80,000 GVSU alumni.”
Serving Patients by Serving Health Care Leaders

For Kathy Wyngarden, MSN, RN, FNP (‘01), the above quote by Thomas Jefferson describes the essence of her professional practice and her leadership style. From the early days in her career, patient welfare has been central to her practice, even when “taking the high road” was not always popular in the work setting. She believes that the patient is the most important member of the health care team, and this belief has been foundational to her life’s work.

Wyngarden, who has more than 34 years of experience as a practitioner, case manager, clinical nurse specialist and faculty member, currently serves as director of professional practice for the Clinical Practice Model Resource Center (CPMRC) in Grand Rapids. She leads efforts in engagement for the consortium’s members in collaborative learning, thought leadership, transformation science and clinical scholarship, which includes consortium summits and international conferences.

“I always wanted to be a nurse because of my compassion for the health and well-being of people,” Wyngarden says. “But as my career evolved, I moved from direct patient care to the mentoring, nurturing and coaching of nurse leaders. Building capacity for the entire patient care team is central to my work in leadership development.”

Wyngarden and Bonnie Wesorick were the originators of the work that moved CPMRC’s clinical practice model from a nursing practice model to a full-fledged interdisciplinary model for patient care. Wyngarden was the first pilot hospital coordinator to implement all aspects of the model. She also was the original author of several clinical practice guidelines, two of which are now part of the international standardized nursing language of the North American Nursing Diagnosis Association (NANDA).

In an interesting twist of fate, Wyngarden’s passion for the health of individuals has led her to the international stage. “I started by helping people at the local, individual level. And all these years later, I’ve been given the opportunity to help develop the skills of nurse leaders and serve humanity by co-creating processes and infrastructures for sustainable quality care. I couldn’t have imagined this when I was starting my career.”

“In matters of style, swim with the current; in matters of principle, stand like a rock.”
- Thomas Jefferson

Feature stories about the CPMRC have been previously published in the Fall 2008 and Fall 2009 issues of KCON Magazine.
Leading in Times of change

By Cynthia McCurren, PhD, RN

There is no denying that these are challenging times in health care. A recurring list haunts every journal, every meeting, every political speech — overwhelming even the most skilled leaders. With a sense of urgency we are called to accomplish many things:

- Create efficient, meaningful use of health information technology.
- Reduce fragmentation of care through improved coordination and implementation of effective patient “health home” models using interdisciplinary teams.
- Implement evidence-based chronic disease management approaches to improve outcomes.
- Integrate public health approaches for the management of population health, rather than merely treating disease.
- Adopt efficient quality and patient safety initiatives.
- Incorporate comparative effectiveness research and evidence-based best practices at the point of care in a timely, efficient manner.
- Address critical inequities and health disparities.
- Acquire cutting-edge clinical management skills in the face of emerging knowledge, including genomic/personalized medicine.
- Determine effective financial models that pay for performance and outcomes while ensuring equitable care for all.
These challenges also are driving change in higher education. We are called to develop innovative approaches to health professions education that will ensure tomorrow’s providers are fully informed and have the experience they need to effectively address the challenges they will face.

In 2003, the Institute of Medicine (IOM) released recommendations in their report, “Health Professions Education: A Bridge to Quality,” stating that central competencies must include patient-centered care, interdisciplinary education and practice, evidence-based practice, quality improvement and informatics. In turn, the American Association of Colleges of Nursing has set new curricular standards for undergraduate and graduate education to meet the IOM’s expectations. The profession of nursing has found itself at a defining moment.

Based on extensive field research, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching released a text in December 2009 titled, “Educating Nurses: A Call for Radical Transformation.” The foundation’s study led to a set of specific recommendations for new approaches, new pedagogies and new policies to radically change how we currently engage in nursing education. There are demands for a “new kind of nurse” — one who is prepared for ever-increasing complexity and acuity, an exponential expansion of knowledge, a shift in care to home and community, an explosion of technologies, changes in demographics, increased attention to health promotion and the application of public health concepts. At the same time, there is a profound and growing nursing faculty shortage (the average age of faculty is 57 years) and limitations in the number, type and quality of clinical education sites. This is further complicated by an ever-increasing number of nursing programs opening in already saturated areas and a climate that tends to reward short-term fixes and cost savings over quality in nursing education and patient care.

To provide direction in this quagmire of circumstances for nursing, the IOM and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation released a report in 2010, “The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health.” This report challenges all nurses, offering recommendations to:

- Improve nursing education.
- Ensure that nurses practice to the full extent of their education and abilities.
- Provide opportunities for nurses to assume leadership positions and serve as full partners in health care redesign and improvement efforts.
- Improve data collection for workforce planning and policy making.

So, what is the message? More than ever before, we clearly need confident, empowered, visionary leaders to create change amidst great complexity. A different approach to leading and thinking is needed to lead in times of change. The philosophy of “generative leadership” has the potential to be the new approach that must emerge.

Generative leaders have certain characteristics: curiosity, optimism, the ability to reframe situations in new ways that stimulate creative solutions, and the awareness that there are multiple ways of knowing. And, of most importance for today, generative leaders anticipate and shape change rather than just react to it.

Effective problem solving can become stifled and bogged down by “band-aid” approaches, resulting in only incremental improvements and the persistence of historical traditions and methodologies. Traditional problem-solving techniques are a serious threat to today’s challenges in health care. Generative thinking attacks this threat because it is open to possibilities, considers new and different perspectives, and avoids personal biases. The generative leader creates a safe environment where unique and nontraditional thinking can be considered and appreciated. Focused listening and time for reflection are encouraged to discover deeper understanding, avoid “knee-jerk” reactions, and allow new and innovative possibilities to emerge. The skillful leader facilitates dialogue that captures individual insight and intuition. The resulting conversation is more meaningful, getting beyond the typical SWOT analysis that often captures just the surface problems. Individuals’ collective analytical skills come together to imagine what could be. A shared vision emerges to drive improved outcomes.

Leading in times of change is not easy. New thoughts, new solutions and new ways of navigating change are desperately needed in health care practice and education. Generative leadership provides a framework and hope for our challenging times.

Practicing Leadership at the Bedside

Carolyn Ignash-Connelly, BSN (‘10), and Thomas C. Wood, BSN (‘07), are just two of so many alumni who are taking the leadership skills they learned at KCON and successfully applying them at the bedside.

“I work at the University of Virginia Medical Center in Charlottesville,” says Ignash-Connelly. “The floor I work on is transplants, urology, hepatobiliary surgery, plastics and burns, and we have a step-down unit from the ICU, so we see a lot of traumas. I absolutely love it here. I am a ‘skin champion’ on my floor. I created a pressure ulcer prevention turning program for my first-year project, and it just went hospital wide. I have also started to orient new people to my floor.” Recently, Ignash-Connelly applied to the acute NP program at the University of Virginia.

Wood is the trauma program manager for MidMichigan Health in Midland. “I started off at Providence in Southfield in their ED,” he says, “and had an eye-opening experience delivering emergency care in an inner-city setting. After a year, I wanted to focus more on bedside trauma care, so I went up the road to Beaumont Royal Oak’s ED, a Level I trauma center. After gaining leadership experience as charge nurse of the ED, I helped with the ED transition at Bon Secours Hospital in Grosse Pointe. Finally, when my wife, Heather, signed up as a CRNA with MidMichigan Health in my hometown of Midland, I found out they were looking for someone to build a trauma program from the ground up. So I have been here since June 2011. I’ve spent countless hours trying to change a culture and develop the processes, protocols and personnel to become an adult Level II trauma center; it’s desperately needed up here.”

Troseth Recognized as Distinguished Alumnus

Michelle R. Troseth, MSN (‘97), BSN (‘83), was named a Distinguished Alumnus by the GVSU Alumni Association at the December 2011 commencement ceremonies. In addition to this honor, she was also given the 2011 Excellence in Nursing Leadership Award by the Kappa Epsilon Chapter-at-Large of Sigma Theta Tau International.

Troseth is the executive vice president and chief professional practice officer for Elsevier Clinical Decision Support and the Clinical Practice Model Resource Center (CPMRC) in Grand Rapids. She is responsible for continuing to improve the professional practices of health care providers and transform the culture of health care settings around the world.

Troseth started her career as a critical care nurse and later joined her former professor and mentor, Bonnie Wesorick, founder of the CPMRC. The center works with health care organizations to provide clinicians with resources that focus on coordinating and improving patient care using the latest clinical information and health information technology.

A member of the American Nurses Association, Troseth regularly makes presentations to national and international health care professionals, has contributed to several health care publications, and has led comments at the federal level regarding health care reform. Among her many accomplishments and awards, Troseth has been inducted into the National Academies of Practice as a distinguished practitioner in nursing.

A feature story about Troseth and the CPMRC was published in the Fall 2008 issue of KCON Magazine.
Halsey Barlow, BSN (’08), is working in a medical intensive care unit at the University of California, San Diego.

Genevieve Barrett, BSN (’06), is working at Saint Mary’s Health Care. She contributed an article, “Rules for Grieving Don’t Apply to Everyone,” to the October 23, 2011, edition of the Grand Rapids Press.

Adam Boone, BSN (’07), is working in Tele/Med Surg at MetroHealth.

Josh Brinks, BSN (’93), NP, has been hired by the Spectrum Health Medical Group, Family Medical Practice.

Julie Balson, MPA (’07), BSN (’99), was elected to the Grand Valley State University Foundation Board of Directors.

Ishita Das, BSN (’10), is working on a progressive care unit at the Fred and Lena Meijer Heart Center, Spectrum Health.

Julian Dormitzer, BSN (’11), is working at Fenway Health, Boston, on a research team studying HIV prevention in adolescents.

Bridget Graham, BSN (’04), is working as a clinical nurse leader at Saint Mary’s Health Care.

Kimberly Harper, BSN (’09), is working as a critical care RN at Saint Mary’s Health Care.

Kathy Youngs Hascher, MSN (’03), BSN (’90), is working as a nurse practitioner at Grand Rapids Women’s Health.

Marlene Holstine, RN to BSN (’01), MBAHCN, CNOR, is director of ICU, ER, Surgery and Urgent Care at Spectrum Health Zeeland Community Hospital.

Laura Mullins, MSN (’98), CNP, has joined the staff at West Michigan Cancer Center in Kalamazoo. She is a certified genetic educator through the Oncology Nursing Society.

Elain M. Richardson, BSN (’94), MBA, OCN, is currently the administrative director of nursing for St. Anthony Hospital in Oklahoma City.

Julia Dunlop Schmittdiel, BSN (’85), is the founder and president of the Zoe Foundation in Chicago, an organization dedicated to finding a cure for atrial fibrillation and other related cardiac electrophysiology disorders.

Karen Collier Sobbeck, BSN (’01), is working at Forest Hills Pediatric Associates as a telephone nurse supervisor and asthma educator.

Dane Stahl, BSN (’10), is working in adult inpatient psychiatry at University Hospital, the University of Michigan Health System, in Ann Arbor.

Stacy Rae Thomas, BSN (’09), is serving in the United States Air Force as a surgical nurse in Biloxi, Miss.

Mara Torranda-Bihler, BSN (’08), is working in surgery at the Fred and Lena Meijer Heart Center, Spectrum Health.

Christina (Schwarz) Menardie, BSN (’09), is working as an RN on a cardiothoracic progressive care unit at Mayo Clinic Hospital in Phoenix. She also works as an RN recruiter for Mayo and is involved in initiatives for transforming nursing practice.

Karen Goldman Meyerson, MSN (’07), is the manager of the Asthma Network of West Michigan. She also works as a nurse practitioner in a private allergy practice.

Katie Michniewicz, BSN (’08), is working in a medical intensive care unit at St. Joseph Mercy (Ann Arbor) Hospital.

Alisha [Groot] Middel, BSN (’09), is working in inpatient hematology/oncology/bone marrow transplant at Helen DeVos Children’s Hospital.

Sara Vollink, BSN (’08), is working in the neonatal ICU at Saint Mary’s Health Care.

Shelly Myers Walters, BSN (’94), is working in the emergency department at Saint Mary’s Health Care.

Heather [Battle] Wood, BSN (’07), CRNA, is working as a staff anesthetist at MidMichigan Health in Midland. She recently graduated from Wayne State University with her master’s degree.

Have news for the next issue of “Alumni Briefs”?  
Send it to the GVSU Alumni Relations Office:  
E-mail: www.gvsu.edu/alumni  
Phone: 616-331-3590 or 800-558-0541  
All KCON alumni are automatically members of the KCON Alumni Chapter. Please stay in touch and consider joining in on some of our activities.

Find us on Facebook at “Alumni of the Kirkhof College of Nursing GVSU”
Kappa Epsilon Presents Student Awards

The Kappa Epsilon Chapter-at-Large of Sigma Theta Tau International gave two student awards in 2011:

Carol Robinson, a DNP student, received the award for Excellence in Graduate Student Performance. Her scholarship in end-of-life care (Kelly Tomaszewski and Ruth Ann Brintnall, advisors) was also accepted by the Society for Simulation Education for its 12th Annual International Meeting on Simulation in Healthcare (IMSH) in San Diego in January.

Molly Steensma, a BSN student, received the award for Excellence in Undergraduate Student Performance. She has provided significant leadership to GVSU’s SNA.

Student Sends Kudos

A former student from Sue Jensen’s NUR 220 class sent an inspiring e-mail to Jensen recently. Here are some excerpts:

“Last fall I took your Nursing 220 class online. I took my health assessment and ‘change’ seriously. … I lost 40 lbs this last year. My current cholesterol is 140 and my HDL is over 60. My latest triglycerides were just 17.

“I didn’t consciously increase my physical activity, but as I lost weight I was able to do things like ride bikes, walk the golf course, and spend an entire day walking the malls with my daughters. I am not sure if my weight loss sparked my activity level or if my activity helped my weight loss. Probably both.

“I just want to say thank you for the class, which allowed me to research different diets and find one that fit me. … I feel great and look better than I have for 20 years.”

MichBio Student Career Day Held

On November 1, 2011, KCON nursing students teamed up with GVSU’s College of Health Professions and the Van Andel Institute to present the 7th annual MichBio student career day for a select group of local high school juniors and seniors. This event is held in conjunction with the annual statewide MichBio Expo, which took place in Grand Rapids this year. MichBio student career day gives high school students a chance to learn about various careers in the biosciences, interact with current college students and faculty/researchers, and gain some preliminary hands-on practice with equipment used in these professions.

Student Donates Lots of Socks

Brittney Wesche, a BSN student, donated 1,000 pairs of socks to Déagé Ministries of Grand Rapids this winter. She paid for the socks with money she earned selling “The Sock Project” T-shirts. Wesche says she came up with the idea after a friend working at Saint Mary’s Health Care told her that many homeless people who visit the emergency department don’t have socks. Déagé Ministries provides a wide variety of services for individuals who are in crisis and/or homeless.

A version of this story was originally published in the Grand Rapids Press.

DNP Student Organizes Health Fair

Rebecca Sypniewski, MSN (’03), BSN, a student in KCON’s DNP program, recently organized a health fair for senior citizens at Evergreen Commons in Holland. It was the first health fair held at the facility and it was a hit. KCON nursing students helped Sypniewski lead sessions for participants on osteoporosis, healthy eating, blood pressure management, vision screening and other topics.

Sypniewski, who works at the GVSU Family Health Center as a family nurse practitioner, is among the first graduates of KCON’s DNP program this spring. Her doctoral focus is on elder health. “I would like to expand my practice as a nurse practitioner to advocate for older adults,” she says. “I would like to develop creative and innovative ways for older adults to ‘age in place’ or live independently.”

We thank Michele CoFill, News and Information Services, who wrote the original extended version of this story for GVSU’s “Success Stories” online feature site.
New Organization Assists Aspiring Nurses

GVSU has created a new organization — the Pre-Nursing Student Association — to assist and provide networking opportunities for any undergraduate who is interested in enrolling in a KCON nursing program. More than 50 members currently meet monthly to explore the realities of the nursing profession before they are admitted to a program. Janine Sulavik is serving as the first president of the GVSU Pre-Nursing Student Association.

The Student Nursing Association is reserved for those already in a nursing program. So, according to Sulavik, the main function of the pre-nursing group will be to offer information, a discussion forum, and networking or volunteering opportunities. “Creating the group was important because there are so many unknowns for freshmen,” Sulavik says. “We are kind of just thrown into our freshman year, and some pre-nursing students don’t even completely understand what the job of a nurse entails or what the various branches of nursing are. We hope this new group helps with that process.”

KCON Student Selected for 2012 Cook Leadership Academy

Justin Gray, a BSN program student who will graduate this August, was recently selected as a 2012 fellow of the Peter Cook Leadership Academy at GVSU’s Hauenstein Center for Presidential Studies. The Cook Leadership Academy, which serves university students at all levels of their development, is one of the Midwest’s pre-eminent centers for the exploration and development of leadership excellence. It is dedicated to inspiring, informing and connecting high-potential leaders at GVSU who are committed to serving their community, state and nation.

Gray also was recently honored for his service to the Crohn’s & Colitis Foundation of America (CCFA), Michigan Chapter. He is president and founder of the Crohn’s and Colitis Student Initiative at GVSU and is the Grand Rapids event chair for CCFA.

Gray, who plans to pursue a career as a nurse anesthetist, says, “Being active on campus and involved in the community is a large part of who I am.” In addition to his work with CCFA, he is serving as president of Grand Valley’s chapter of Omicron Delta Kappa (ODK), a national leadership honor society, and is a GVSU Admissions Office ambassador.

SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS 2011-2012

- Butterworth Nursing Alumni Scholarship: Sarah H. James
- Janice Flentje Memorial Nursing Scholarship: Lauren N. Griffith
- Gail and Scott Haebich Nursing Scholarship: Kristen L. Slatinsky
- Lynn Kraemer Memorial Scholarship: Ashley A. Boyer
- Sarah P. Loveland
- Jean E. Martin Doctor of Nursing Practice Scholarship: Lindsey R. Jelsma
- Jaclyn L. Lubbers
- Julie R. Rogalski
- Esther R. Padnos Nursing Scholarship: Nicole M. Brown
- Katie A. New
- Beth A. Williamson
- Judith S. Pratt Non-Traditional Nursing Scholarship: Marc D. Hemmeke
- Elizabeth A. Lee
- Kelli M. Damstra
- Nadine M. Mushimbele
- James L. Strodtbeck
- Amber J. Hop
- Caroline A. Rhoda
- Taylor J. Westers
- Amber J. Hop
- Caroline A. Rhoda
- Taylor J. Westers
- Karla L. Lubbers
- Sabrina Oster
- Rhonda S. Patrick
- Jaleen M. Dingle dawn
- Erin M. Nicoson
- Cassie L. Pedley
- Amanda S. Pickford
- Nicole C. Snyder
- Jessica N. Stevens
- Keara T. Vinson
- Brittney Wesche
- Western Michigan Nursing Scholarship
- Drs. Esther & Enrico Sobong Scholarship
- Dr. Esther Rehm Stotz Scholarship
- Carollann R. Bailey
- Brittany R. Hawthorne
- Teasa J. Hilgendorf
- Sabrina Oster
- Rhonda S. Patrick
- Western Michigan Nursing Scholarship
- Jaleen M. Dingle dawn
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Coviak Receives Faculty of Distinction Award

Cynthia Coviak, PhD, was one of 20 faculty members who received Faculty of Distinction honors in January during Campus Leadership Week. This new award was created by the GVSU Circle of Omicron Delta Kappa National Leadership Honor Society to recognize the important role that faculty members play for students inside and outside the classroom. Recipients are nominated by current students, alumni and others from the campus community. Faculty members serve as advisors to more than 95 academic student organizations at GVSU.

Jensen Elected to National Executive Committee

Susan Jensen, PhD, CCM, was elected as secretary for the 2011-2012 Executive Committee of the Commission for Case Manager Certification (CCMC). She has served as a national CCMC commissioner since 2009.

Jensen is a board-certified case manager who specializes in workers' compensation and disease management. She has more than 20 years of experience in case management and more than 25 in nursing. In addition to her duties as an associate professor at KCON, she is part owner in two case management companies serving six states.

CCMC's mission is to advocate for professional case management excellence through certification and related programs and services. “Having a leader with this area of expertise at the national level benefits both KCON and Dr. Jensen individually,” commented Dean Cynthia McCurren. “This is another example of our faculty’s commitment to promote health care change and be seen nationally as a leading nursing education program.”

Remembering Janet Bain Banta

GSU professor emerita and KCON colleague Janet Banta passed away on January 9, 2012, at age 88. She had a distinguished career as a nurse and then served as an inspiring professor of nursing from 1974 to 1988. When she retired, KCON established the Banta Award (later the Banta-Perkins Award) for Nursing Excellence. This is presented during each commencement ceremony to the outstanding senior nursing student, as chosen by her/his peers.

Banta attended East Grand Rapids High School and earned her bachelor’s degree at the University of Michigan. She completed her MSN at Western Reserve University-Francis Paine School of Nursing, returning to GVSU to earn a master’s degree in education. She and her husband, Jim, were married for 59 years, and they raised five children on a farm in Cascade Township.
Welcome, New Faculty!

Paulette Chaponniere, PhD, MPH, was featured in the November 10, 2011, issue of GVSU’s “Lanthorn” in an article highlighting her career, experiences, family, and goals and aspirations as a KCON faculty member.


Lori Houghton-Rahrig, PhD, completed graduation requirements for her PhD in December 2011.

Susan Kraus, B5, MEd, was featured in the Winter/Spring 2012 issue of “Colleagues,” a publication of GVSU’s College of Education. The article, titled “Out of Many, One People,” showcased a recent GVSU international partnership delegation trip to Jamaica.

Sylvia Mupepi, PhD, was the featured speaker in February for the “Her Story” series sponsored by the GVSU Women’s Center. The series gives the campus community an opportunity to hear authentic stories from women leaders at Grand Valley.

Melodee Vanden Bosch, PhD, completed graduation requirements for her PhD in December 2011.

The following faculty and staff were recently honored for their years of service to GVSU:

- Erin Busscher, BA, MEd, has resigned.
- Jan Coye, PhD, RN, academic community liaison, has retired.
- Denise Gross is the new secretary in the Office of Student Services.
- Shannon Helton, BA, is the new assistant practice manager for the GVSU Family Health Center.
- Grace Hoyer, PhD c, MSN, has accepted the position of KCON’s acting academic community liaison.
- Ruth Ann Stone, administrative assistant to the dean, has retired.

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FACULTY & STAFF BRIEFS

Susan Harrington
PhD, RN Assistant Professor
BSN, ’75, College of St. Teresa
MSN, ’06, Oakland University
PhD, ’11, Wayne State University

Dissertation: “Objective physical activity and sleep characteristic measurements using a triaxial accelerometer in eight year olds.”

Experience: More than 30 years nursing practice experience, with a background in community health, case management and critical care. Six years experience in nursing education, with a focus on community health, school nursing and epidemiology.

Janet Winter
DNP, MPA, RN Assistant Professor
BSN, ’88, University of Michigan
MPA, ’03, Grand Valley State University
DNP, ’10, Rush University

Dissertation: "Inpatient fall prevention program: Reducing patient falls through implementation of a clinical fall prevention team"

Experience: 28 years nursing practice experience, with a background in health care administration/health care systems/public policy.

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The following faculty and staff were recently honored for their years of service to GVSU:

- Erin Busscher, BA, MEd - 10 years
- Cynthia Covia, PhD, RN, CNE - 25 years
- Rebecca Davis, PhD, RN - 10 years
- Nancy Schoofs, PhD, RN - 10 years
Wesorick Presents Meijer Lecture

More than 300 people attended a Frederik Meijer Lecture presented by Bonnie Wesorick on November 7, 2011. The event, which drew people from both GVSU and the greater Grand Rapids area, was co-sponsored by KCON and the Frederik Meijer Honors College.

Wesorick is the founder and chair emerita of the Clinical Practice Model Resource Center (CPMRC) in Grand Rapids and the founding donor of the Bonnie Wesorick Center for Health Care Transformation at KCON. Her presentation focused on the importance of integrating and improving health care systems to enhance patient care. In describing the many significant changes that have been made by her CPM team, she stressed the great amount of work yet to be done and pointed out that students need to get involved and stand up for a better and more interdisciplinary patient care model among all medical professionals.

A feature story about Wesorick was published in the Fall 2009 issue of KCON Magazine. We thank Brooke Shelton for her contribution to this article.
What if YOU Could Help Transform Health Care?

No matter what nursing degree you currently hold, Grand Valley State University offers programs that can help you take the next step in your career.

- RN to BSN degree completion
- BSN to MSN
- BSN to DNP
- MSN to DNP

Kirkhof College of Nursing... transforming tomorrow’s health care!

Kirkhof College of Nursing
Positions Available

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

*Tenure track faculty positions* are available in undergraduate and graduate programs, including a DNP degree program ([http://www.gvsu.edu/kcon/](http://www.gvsu.edu/kcon/)). An earned doctorate is required (in nursing preferred, or related discipline); a master’s degree in nursing is required. Preferred qualifications: applicants with expertise in psych/mental health, community health or nursing administration; applicants with certification as GNP or PNP. KCON is housed in a state-of-the-art facility in Grand Rapids; our Academic Nurse-Managed Center is located in close proximity.

KCON Centers of Distinction
The Aging Population: Best Practices
Human Response in Health and Illness
Reforming Health Care Delivery and Education
Vulnerable Populations: Best Practices

For more information, please contact the dean, Dr. Cynthia McCurren, (616) 331-5726. Apply online at [www.gvsujobs.org](http://www.gvsujobs.org) for assistance call Human Resources at 616-331-2215. Review will begin immediately and continue until the position is filled. For more information about Grand Valley, see our website at [www.gvsu.edu](http://www.gvsu.edu). TDD Callers: Call Michigan Relay Center at 1-800-649-3777.
THE KIRKHOFF COLLEGE OF NURSING CURRENTLY OFFERS THE FOLLOWING PROGRAMS:

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

“We are creating exceptional learning opportunities for our nursing students. We launched a revised curriculum in January 2012 for our BSN program to ensure that our students attain the nursing competencies needed for health care in the 21st century. A revised MSN program began in Fall 2010 to prepare Clinical Nurse Leaders, an emerging role critical for the transformation of care delivery. Our Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) program began in Fall 2009. Enrollment is approaching 75 students, and our first class just graduated this April. Our commitment is to continue to provide nursing education that prepares nurses with the knowledge, skills and insights needed to effectively contribute to health care reform and improved outcomes.”

Dean, Kirkhof College of Nursing
Dr. Cynthia McCurren