Gerontology

Rita LaReau,
Making a Difference in Gerontology

Hartford Fellowship,
Team to Study Wayfinding

LEI,
Taking Time for Gerontology
From The Dean

WHAT AN ADVENTURE IT’S BEEN!

As I look back on my career, and especially the last seven years as Dean of KCON, I remember it as an adventure. Little did I know when I made that first trip to the “cornfields” in 1973 that GVSU and KCON would become what they are today. We did the unexpected and we did it with flair. Back then, few thought it was necessary to educate nurses with the BSN. We believed it was the wave of the future, and in the years since, our students have proved we were right.

Being able to contribute to KCON by developing and teaching in the BSN, RN/BSN and MSN programs through my career has been very rewarding. Both GVSU and I have grown up through these years as we have watched health care and nursing mature.

I have also watched my faculty colleagues and staff mature. They are heroes and they have immeasurably enriched my career. They weren’t afraid to take risks, provide curricula that were ahead of the times, offer that BSN when it wasn’t valued, and start an MSN program when others said we weren’t ready. Now we are planning a doctoral program, and I know it will be groundbreaking for this community.

But the real impact of what we have done at KCON hit me when my family members needed nursing care recently. Everywhere I go, from Muskegon to Grand Rapids, I see our graduates, faculty and students – and they are providing care for my family. I saw an alum admit my father to an emergency room. Even though it was a very stressful situation, I relaxed because I knew the education that Grand Valley nurse had received. When my nephew was hospitalized, a new Grand Valley grad cared for him.

Our alumni are also chief nurse officers, educators, nurse practitioners and nurse researchers in our community. I know we all receive the best nursing care in the area because of Grand Valley.

So what’s next for me? I will continue with my interests in gerontology and expand on the osteoporosis research that I have been involved with for the last 20 years. I hope that students in other health fields will participate and make it a model for interdisciplinary research in West Michigan. And I expect there will be more adventures for me. I hope our new Dean, Cynthia McCurren, will have as good a time as I have had!
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MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Rita LaReau
MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN GERONTOLOGY

RITA LAREAU, GERIATRIC CLINICAL NURSE SPECIALIST

Inpatient care for the aging seems to be more complex every day. Hospitals have fewer beds available for a growing number of patients, they are more ill when admitted, and third-party payers demand quicker discharges. Can compassionate, high-quality geriatric nursing care survive in that kind of environment? KCON alumna Rita LaReau, MSN, APRN, BC-GNP, thinks so.

LaReau is a geriatric clinical nurse specialist at Bronson Methodist Hospital in Kalamazoo. A board certified geriatric nurse practitioner, she is an educator, consultant, practitioner, researcher and administrator. She is also a wife, mother and community volunteer who enjoys running, reading and gardening.

LaReau joined Bronson in October 2001. She focuses on care for inpatients 65 and older, supporting the hospital’s evidence-based geriatric nursing care. One of her biggest opportunities to create change came immediately after she was hired. In early 2002, she was chosen to be part of a team that developed Bronson’s participation in the NICHE program.

NICHE (Nurses Improving Care for Healthsystem Elders) is a program of the John A. Hartford Foundation Institute for Geriatric Nursing at New York University. Begun in 1992, the goal of NICHE is to create systematic nursing change that will help assure hospitalized older patients receive sensitive, exemplary care.

LaReau earned her MSN at KCON in 2000, where she was recognized for outstanding performance as a graduate student by Sigma Theta Tau International, Honor Society of Nursing.

She began her career as a nurse’s aide in Milwaukee, Wis., where she also received a BSN from Marquette University. During more than 20 years as a nurse, LaReau has held positions as a clinical instructor, staff nurse and leader in acute care, hospice, home health and nursing home settings.

How did she choose geriatric nursing as her specialty? “From some family experiences, I became painfully aware there were gaps in medical care for older adults,” LaReau says. “I decided if I was going for a master’s degree, I wanted to be focused so I could make a difference and help create change. When I graduated from KCON, Bronson was initiating a geriatric nursing program. I was fortunate to get in on the ground floor. It has been just the professional experience I wanted.”

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DAVIS RECEIVES HARTFORD FELLOWSHIP
TEAM TO STUDY WAYFINDING IN OLDER ADULTS

Research by a KCON faculty member could someday impact how nursing homes and assisted living centers are constructed.

Rebecca Davis, associate professor of nursing, has received a two-year, $120,000 fellowship from the John A. Hartford Foundation through the American Academy of Nursing, to study how elderly people navigate through familiar and unfamiliar environments.

"Some nursing homes are built like a maze," Davis says. "They have long, white hallways and all the rooms look the same. It can be difficult for people to find their way around, often because older people don't look at walls, they look at the floor."

Using a virtual reality computer program built by researchers at the University of Arizona, Davis will test subjects on how difficult it is for them to find their way through simulated rooms and hallways. Her past research has shown that older people tend to rely heavily on prominent landmarks (a distinct wall decoration, for example) while younger people can navigate with less information.

She started this project when her father-in-law moved into a nursing home. "When patients can't find their way to the dining room, they'll tend to stay in their own rooms," Davis says. "A creative environment helps people stay engaged and active."

She will collect data from 150 people, ages 55 and older, to see if different colors and cues help their navigational skills. Davis will work with Barbara Therrien, nursing professor at The University of Michigan, and Margaret Calkins, an internationally recognized leader in the field of environments for the elderly, particularly those with Alzheimer's disease or other dementias.

"There has been surprisingly little research that looks at modifiable aspects of a physical environment, how it affects behavior, and how it affects people's ability to function well," explains Calkins.

According to Calkins, who founded IDEAS Inc. (Innovative Designs in Environments for an Aging Society) in Kirkland, Ohio, only a handful of design and architectural firms specialize in wayfinding systems for hospitals and airports. (A version of this story was originally published by GVSU News and Information Services in Grand Valley Magazine, Summer 2007)
LONGITUDINAL ELDER INITIATIVE

TAking time for gerontology

It was an elegant, simple idea. Have a nursing student follow one client for 18 months through all clinical rotations, not just for one semester.

The idea emerged from the challenge posed by an aging population. How do you add gerontology-related issues to an already packed undergraduate nursing curriculum?

In 2004 a team of nursing faculty, led by Dean Phyllis Gendler, received a grant jointly funded by the John A. Hartford Foundation and the American Association of Colleges of Nursing. Cynthia Beel-Bates, Rebecca Davis and Susan Jensen developed a model for threading gerontology education throughout the curriculum. Along with changes to nursing courses, an innovative clinical assignment was created – the Longitudinal Elder Initiative (LEI).

In LEI, each student in four upper-level nursing classes is matched with an older adult. They meet three or four times a semester for four semesters. Visits begin with a physical assessment and a health history review. Additional assessments are conducted to determine any problems with depression, anxiety and other common geriatric conditions such as falls. The student nurse and client work together to establish health care goals, and create up to three plans during the four semesters to achieve those goals. The students also share information about community resources that may help their clients remain independent.

Participants must be at least 65 years old and not living in a nursing home. Currently, 278 nursing students are matched with area senior citizens.

Cynthia Beel-Bates, LEI project coordinator, and affiliate faculty Susan Jarchow and Kim Lanning recruit older adult volunteers from various senior communities throughout the west Michigan area.

"LEI has quickly become a powerful shared learning experience for both our students and the older adults," she says.

"Sometimes students are turned off by working with older people," Beel-Bates explains. "When they only see them in hospitals or nursing homes, it reinforces stereotypes that all elderly people are demented or frail. In fact, only five percent of the elderly are in nursing homes. We wanted to break this stereotype for these students and have them experience older adults who are active and enjoying life, and adapting to living with chronic illnesses as they age. The LEI program is doing that very well."
ALUMNI UPDATE

KCON’S RESPONSE TO THE NURSING SHORTAGE

Among KCON’s newest alumni are 23 graduates of the first full accelerated nursing program. KCON partnered with Spectrum Health to respond to the State of Michigan’s Accelerated Health Care Training Initiative. Grant funds were used to develop and implement a 12-month intensive adaptation of the BSN program.

Innovative teaching-learning strategies were implemented to compress the current five-semester program into three semesters. These included case simulations, video streaming and podcasting, created through the use of advanced technology, model patient experiences and intensive clinical education. In spite of the demanding pace of this accelerated program, all of the graduates appreciated their experience. In fact, they said that it was the best way to complete their nursing education and they would do it all over again!

BEAUREGARD APPOINTED VICE PRESIDENT

Kay (Carmen) Beauregard, BSN, RN, has been promoted to vice president at William Beaumont Hospital in Royal Oak, Mich. Her primary responsibility will be to enhance improvements in patient flow and integrate them more closely with patient satisfaction and safety. Beauregard will oversee medical services, the emergency center, capacity management, quality and safety.

Beauregard received her BSN from Grand Valley in 1980 and a master’s degree from Central Michigan University. She began her Beaumont career in 1980 as a staff nurse, most recently serving as the hospital’s safety officer. A published author and national presenter, Beauregard received the American College of Healthcare Executives’ Dean Conley Award this year for her article titled, “Patient Safety: Mindful, Meaningful and Fulfilling.”

ALUMNI SHARE CAREER EXPERIENCES

The 2nd Annual Nursing Roundtable, held on February 28, 2007, brought together 40 students with six KCON alumni who shared their expertise on topics such as finding your first nursing position and the challenges of working ICU/ER. Alumni participants were Mary Barr (’97 & ’02); Hendrina Cupery (’92); Laurel Jander (’80); Kristi Potts (’79); Kerri Scholten (’97); and Pam Wilson (’94). Dr. Linda Bond and Sharon Etheridge (’89) were the hosts.
2007-2008 officers for Kappa Epsilon Chapter-at-Large (Sigma Theta Tau International) include: Jeanne Roode, MSN, CNA, CNRN (‘95), president-elect; John Vanderlaan, MSN, CEN (‘05), treasurer; Dianne Slager, MSN, FNP-C (‘02), faculty counselor, Calvin College; and Debra Vellkamp, MSN (‘97), nominating committee.


Catherine Clayrey-Sanford, MSN, CWOCN (‘00), received the 2007 Kappa Epsilon Chapter-at-Large Excellence in Education Award.

Lynn Fagerman, MSN, APRN-BC, PNP (‘97), was named the 2006 Outstanding Pediatric Nurse Practitioner of the Year by the Michigan chapter of the National Association of Pediatric Nurse Associates and Practitioners.

Keri (Gilmon) Gerken, BSN (‘07), is a registered nurse at Spectrum Health in Grand Rapids.

Roger Graves, BSN (‘04), certified for chemo administration, is working at James Haley Veterans Hospital in Tampa, Fla. A Magnet facility, it is one of 12 hospitals in the nation implementing TCAB (Transforming Care at the Bedside).

Amy Hoffman, PhD (‘91), (‘00), recently completed doctoral studies at Michigan State University College of Nursing. She was the invited speaker for the spring 2007 KCON recognition ceremony, sharing insights about heroes that have affected her life and career.

Nonnie Holmeister, MSN (‘97), received two awards from the GVSU graduate dean’s office: Outstanding Master’s Project in Nursing and a citation for academic excellence in the major.

Mary Kay Kampker-Vandriel, EdD, MSN (‘02), gave the keynote address for the Michigan School Nurses 2007 Conference, "Leadership & Dashboards." Director for Spectrum Health’s Healthier Communities, she was profiled in the Grand Rapids Press (July 1, 2007). Her efforts have won 22 national, state and local awards.

Keverne Lehman, MSN, BC (‘06), received the Outstanding Master’s Degree Student Award from KCON.

Brenda (Stinson) McCrum, BSN (‘02), is a neonatal/pediatric transport nurse for Bronson Hospital in Kalamazoo.

Kathryn Niemeyer, MSN, MSc, APRN-BC (‘90, ‘02), earned a Master of Science in Herbal Medicine in 2006 from the University of East London. She also recently presented research results at the American Herbalist Guild Conference in Boulder Col.

John Vanderlaan, MSN, CEN (‘05), has been admitted to the Michigan State University doctoral program in nursing. In addition, he has been appointed as project manager for the Culture and Women’s Health Project run by Dr. Denise Annals, BSN (‘80), of MSU.

Michael L. Williams, MSN (‘93), associate professor of nursing at Eastern Michigan University and faculty adviser for the Michigan Nursing Students Association, was awarded the 2007 Leader Award from the National Student Nurses Association.

Heather (Batke) Wood, BSN (‘07), is a registered nurse in the cardiothoracic ICU at the Detroit Medical Center’s Harper University Hospital.

Thomas C. Wood, BSN (‘07), is a registered nurse in the emergency room of St. John Hospital in Southfield, Mich.

Have news for the next issue of "Alumni Briefs"?
Send it to the GVSU Alumni Relations Office:
Email: www.gvsu.edu/aluwmn
Phone: 616-331-3509 or 800-558-0541

The Kirkhof College of Nursing Alumni Chapter represents more than 3,000 Grand Valley nursing alumni. It has been my privilege to lead this group of professionals as the chapter president since 2004.

We work as a partner with Grand Valley’s Alumni Relations Office, while also offering specific nursing events to enhance the connection between our graduates, GVSU and KCON. There’s a sense of pride and accomplishment alumni describe when they return to campus for activities, especially Homecoming events. I personally welcome you to chapter activities and look forward to meeting each you.
For more than 30 years, KCON has been committed to excellence in educating students and preparing the next generation of nursing clinicians, administrators, faculty and leaders. To accomplish this takes a dedicated, resourceful, creative team of faculty and staff. Our KCON 2007-2008 team includes:

Karyn D. Ackerson RNC, WHNP
Jacob W. Ainsworth MSN, RN
Jeannine Ali MSN, RN
Deborah R. Bambini PhD, RN, WHNP
Jean M. Barry PhD, RN
Kay Beebe MSN, RN, APRN-BC
Cynthia Beil-Barnes PhD, RN
Colette L. Bolen BSN, RN
Mary Ellen Bellman MSN, RN
Linda Bond PhD, RN
Cheryl Borgeness
Jessica Bots BA
Andrea C. Bostrom PhD, APRN, BC
Ruth Ann Britnell PhD, AOCN, HPCN, APRN-BC
Agnes Britton MS, RN
Amanda Brower AA
Joanne S. Brower MSN, APRN-BC
Lori B. Brown BS
Debra Brown Bays MD, RN-BC
Linda E. Buck BSN, RN
Julie A. Bulloch BSN, RN, MPA
Carolyne Carter Pugh BS, MEd
Mariana Chrzanski MSN, CNM, FNP
Kristin Cooper MSN, RN
Cynthia P. Covelli PhD, RN, CNRN
Jan Coy LT, RN
Elizabeth A. Cruce MSN, RN
Norine M. Cunningham MSN, RN
Melissa R. Daleo MS, RN
Rebecca D. Davis PhD, RN
Karen S. Delrie MSN, RN, CEN
Emily M. Drasci-Bialok PhD, RN
SNA RECEIVES COMMUNITY HEALTH AWARD

The GVSU Student Nurses Association received a Certificate of Commendation from the NSNA 2007 Community Health Projects Program. The Silver Award was in recognition of the SNA’s work for the October 2006 KySS walk. KySS: Keep your children/yourself Safe and Secure is geared toward the prevention and decrease of psychosocial morbidities in children and teenagers.

Jillian Mooney and Laura Anderson were the student leaders for this event. The SNA raised about $1,100 and donated it to the Children’s Resource Center, which focuses on child mental health, and to the National Association of Pediatric Nurse Associates and Practitioners (NAPNAP). Jean Martin, DNSc, RN-C, PNP, assisted the SNA with planning.

For more information about the GVSU-SNA, visit www.gvssna.com/ela/

ESELEKHOMHEN RECEIVES PRATT SCHOLARSHIP

Stacie Eselekhomhen, a student in KCON’s second-degree BSN program, is the 2007 recipient of the Pratt Nontraditional Nursing Scholarship. Eselekhomhen hopes to become a certified nurse midwife and work with underserved populations, both locally and abroad. Her husband is from Nigeria, and she is especially interested in educating women in Nigeria so they can become midwives and open their own clinics.

The Pratt Nontraditional Nursing Scholarship was established in 2000 by Judy Pratt, BSN (’88), a KCON alumna and BSN program advisor and recruiter.

“IT AT E E F,”

“The program is designed for individuals who have earned a previous bachelor’s degree in a non-nursing major. I felt that I received an excellent education and wanted to assist other second-degree students, especially because few financial aid opportunities are available to students starting a second career. I hope this scholarship will continue to benefit many nursing students in the future.”

JONKER RECEIVES FIRST FLENTJE SCHOLARSHIP

Lindsey Jonker, a student in KCON’s 2007 accelerated nursing program, is the first recipient of the Janice Flentje Memorial Nursing Scholarship. This scholarship was created by Flentje’s husband, Gregory, and their children, Abigail and Caleb, after Janice’s death in the summer of 2006.

Flentje, MSN, RN, an adjunct assistant professor at KCON, is remembered for her passions. They included her family, nursing, her students and the less fortunate. She was a tough taskmaster, demanding the best from both her students and herself.

In the difficult year that began with a diagnosis of cancer and ended with her death, she shared her illness, her treatment and her dying with her students and her colleagues. “I’m a teacher,” she said simply, as she used her own life to teach students how to be professionals ready to help those in the process of dying.
MAJOR SCHOLARSHIPS AT KCON

KCON is fortunate to have strong financial support from alumni, individuals, families and organizations that are committed to helping educate the next generation of nursing professionals. A big “thank you” to all of these contributors:

• Butterworth Nursing Alumni Scholarship
• Janice Flentje Memorial Nursing Scholarship
• Gall and Scott Haebich Nursing Scholarship
• HRSA Nursing Scholarship Program
• Michigan Nurse Scholarship Fund
• Eugene and Lillian Pawl
• Pratt Nontraditional Nursing Scholarship
• Esther Rehm Stotz Nursing Scholarship
• Volkhardt Family Nursing Scholarship
• Florence Cowan Ward Scholarship for Nursing
• Samuel L. Westerman Foundation Scholarship for Nursing

STUDENT BRIEFS

Michigan Nursing Students Association Board members for 2006-2007 included president, Whitney Lewis; second vice president, Heather Hall; and communications editor, Brianna Van Dop. Board members for 2007-2008 are communications officer, Timothy “Chet” Jelinger, II; and nominations and elections chair, Annie Chapman.

Heather Buttle, BSN (1971), was selected as the 2007 Lorene Fischer Outstanding Nursing Student for the State of Michigan. Bottle also received the Thomas M. Seykora Award for Outstanding Contribution at the GYSU Awards Banquet and was named the 2007 GYSU/KCON outstanding BSN student.

Kimberly Parrington Syme was awarded the 2007 Kappa Epsilon Chapter-at-Large Excellence in Student Performance Award.

KIRKHOF COLLEGE OF NURSING AUGUST 2007 GRADUATES

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN NURSING

Todd Dale Beck
Melissa Lynn Brooks
Stacy Anne Dunning
Kimberly Faith Hartman
Eun Jin Lee
LaDawn Marie Logic
Karen Lynn Meyerson
Tami Lou Nyssse
Kristin June Skantze
Katherine Marie VanOlleran
Deona Jeanine Willis
Kendra Grace Warden

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN NURSING

Laura Elizabeth Anderson
Erin Nicole Andreo
Niki Angela Balanowski
Joy Renee Balsford
Jennifer Lynn Blodgett
Joseph F. Borowsky, Jr.
Rachel E. Briggs
Elizabeth Catherine Brower
Sarah Lynn Buehrle
Noelle Nicole Carter
Carrie Lynn Clute
Elin Lindsey Colegrove
Hillary T. Dennis
Maureen Catherine Duba
Daniel Scott Dustin
Ann Marie Finn
Michelle F. Gehrke
Ashley Nicole Hazelett
Nicole Brooke Hutchcraft
Timothy Chester Jelinger II
Audra Suzanne Klocko
Stacie Lynne Kunkle
Pamela Renee Lampen
Whitney Dawn Lewis
Steven Norbert Martin
Amy Lynn Martinez
Trekka Marie Mattern
Erin Kendall McNitt
Marilya Mostiany
Julie Anne Meyer
Stacey Lynn Middendorf
Andrea Paula Mihnajlov
Jillian Margaret Mooney
Mary Jane Muller-Montgomery
Kerri Lynn Myers
Abby Renae Newton
Lisa Lynn Orcasitas
Lindsey Marie Pawlik
Pamela Anne Perry
Lindsey Lee Phillips
Judith Ann Pike
Allison Marie Pline
Megan Terese Renkema
Michelle Lynn Richter
Katie M. Roelofs
Mark R. Roy
Brianna Rae Rusnak
Lisa Marie Schoen
Emily J. Shafer
Opal Esther Stellman
Radmilla Stepanovic
Heather Lynn Tuftman
Holly Lynn Twiest
Abbie J. Vander Lugt
Cassie Jo VanDussen
Kimberly Joy VanZanten
Kelli Lynn Visscher
Katie Marie Wieringa
Andrea Christy Wilkey
Alix P. Zacharski
REICK RECEIVES TEACHING EXCELLENCE AWARD

Kay Reick, MSN, RN, has received a 2007 Pew Teaching Excellence Award from GVSU. For 31 years, Reick has distinguished herself as an outstanding nurse educator. Her high expectations of herself and her students have made her an exceptional role model and mentor. She uses the case study method extremely effectively to enable students to design nursing care in a classroom environment. The encouragement, caring and compassion she shows allows her students to discover their potential and challenge themselves to be the best nurses they can be. During her career, Reick has also been instrumental in assisting nurses in Albania to advance their profession and improve nursing care. Congratulations, Kay!

BRINTNALL APPOINTED TO STATE BOARD

KCON assistant professor Ruthann Brinnall, PhD, AOCN, HPCN, APRN-BC, has recently been appointed to the Advisory Committee on Pain and Symptom Management for the Bureau of Health Professions, Michigan Department of Community Health.

This appointment recognizes Brinnall’s extensive clinical and academic experience with end-of-life (EOL) nursing. She was chosen to attend the first national End-of-Life Nursing Education Consortium (ELNEC) meeting in 1999. She then developed an EOL nursing course for GVSU that won a national education award from ELNEC and the AACN in 2002. Brinnall was a founding member and served as chair of the EOL and Palliative Care Section of the Midwest Nursing Research Society. She currently is a KCON representative for the Greater Grand Rapids EOL Coalition.

WELCOME, NEW FACULTY & STAFF

Kelly Ackerson, RNC, WHNP, Visiting Instructor
Chris M. Wood, OP, RN, PhD, GNP, Assistant Professor
Jeanne Smith, BSBA, Multimedia Instructional Design Specialist

In partnership with Spectrum Health and funded by a state grant, KCON developed a new course, “Clinical Teaching in Nursing.” The course prepares bachelor’s-level clinicians to serve as clinical faculty. Three of the nurses who completed the course recently are actively serving as clinical faculty. Welcome to Collette Beitel, Jessie Lewis and Julie Garnsay.
FACULTY TRANSITIONS

The following faculty were recently promoted: Andrea Bostrom, PhD, RN, CS, to professor; Rebecca Davis, PhD, RN, to associate professor; Susan Jensen, PhD, RN, CCM, to associate professor; and Linda Scott, PhD, RN, to professor.

Rebecca Davis, PhD, RN; Kay Reick, MSN, RN; and Nancy Schoofs, PhD, RN, were recently granted tenure.

Emily Droste-Bielak, PhD, RN, and Kay Kline, PhD, RN, have begun phased retirements, continuing to teach the equivalent of one full-time semester each year.

Jean Martin, DNSc, RNC, PNP, has stepped down as director of the RN/BSN and MSN programs and is returning to the faculty role.

RECENT FACULTY PRESENTATIONS

Here are just a few of the presentations KCON faculty made during 2006:


Mupepi, et al. (2006, October). Opportunities to construct, diffuse, and distribute knowledge using cutting-edge organization development methods and technology in southern Africa. Presentation at the Southern Management Association 2006 Meeting, Clearwater Beach, FL.

Schoofs. (2006, August). Student employment and academic achievement. Presentation at the Michigan Nursing Education Summit, Livonia, MI.


FACULTY BRIEFS

Cynthia Beel-Bates, PhD, RN, facilitates the GVSU Alzheimer’s Support Group.

Ruthann Brintnall, PhD, RN; Susan Mylnarczyk, PhD, RN; and Joy Washburn, EdD, RN, recently completed their doctoral studies.

Joy Washburn, EdD, RN, received the 2007 Kappa Epsilon Chapter-at-Large Excellence in Nursing Research Award.

Kappa Epsilon Chapter-at-Large officers (2007-2008) include Cynthia Beel-Bates, PhD, RN, president; Jean Berry, PhD, RN, vice president; and Susan Jensen, PhD, RN, and Joy Washburn, EdD, RN, GVSU faculty counselors.
**RECENT PUBLICATIONS**


Gendler. (2007). Did you know that we have a nursing shortage? *Kappa Chronicle, January, 1.*


**RECENT GRANTS**


Kirkhof College of Nursing & Spectrum Health Center. (July 2005-June 2007). State of Michigan, Department of Labor & Economic Growth, Bureau of Workforce Programs, Accelerated Health Care Career Training Award. (1) Accelerated nursing program for individuals holding a baccalaureate degree in another discipline, and (2) program to prepare clinical educators to be “teacher-clinicians”; $1,204,000.

IT TAKES A VILLAGE
CARING FOR OLDER ADULTS AT THE FAMILY HEALTH CENTER

At the GVSU Family Health Center, KCON students and faculty work with the staff to provide nursing care that brings healing for the mind and spirit as well as the body.

The center, also known as KCON’s Academic Nurse-Managed Health Center (ANMC), is located in the Heartside neighborhood of Grand Rapids. It provides primary care to a diverse client base and serves as a hub for community health initiatives. A clinical practice site for KCON students and others, it also offers faculty opportunities in community service, administration and research.

Older adults make up 20 percent of the population served by the Family Health Center. Some of these clients also participate in KCON’s Longitudinal Elder Initiative (LEI). (See related story, page 5.) In that case the center remains the primary health care provider; the student obtains permission from the client to share information so care can be coordinated.

“The beauty of the LEI program is that students can visit seniors in their homes. We don’t have the opportunity to do that,” says Monica Lyons, one of the center’s family nurse practitioners.

“Information provided by a student after a home visit is critical to us as primary care providers,” she explains. “For example, a patient may tell us that she’s been taking a medication as directed. If I notice the number of refills isn’t correct, the student, the pharmacist and I can pool our information to help her.”

“To borrow a phrase, I believe it takes a village — a community of support — to properly care for our older adults,” says family nurse practitioner, Mary Koenen.

“Whether they live independently, with family or in assisted living, they need more than a primary care provider,” she says. “They need a robust support system. Few seniors do well completely on their own.”

Loneliness is a huge problem for older adults, Koenen notes. Another big issue is, “How do I still contribute to the world?”

“This is another thing the students can do for them that we cannot,” says Koenen. “Our clients are proud and feel useful when they contribute to the education of the next generation of nurses, even if it’s in small ways. So the KCON students help ease loneliness and give their clients’ lives continuing meaning. They’re an important part of the ‘village’ that supports deeper healing.”
MAKING A DIFFERENCE

NICHE doesn’t prescribe how hospitals should handle geriatric care. Instead it serves as a resource for changing the culture in health care facilities. It provides tools, materials and services to help institutions analyze their current practices and develop protocols that fit their environment. NICHE focuses on areas under the control of nursing practice – where nursing interventions can make a positive difference in patient care.

“During the past six years at Bronson,” LaReau says, “we’ve made many positive changes in our nursing practices for elderly inpatients. We’ve embedded NICHE into our nursing care system. For example, NICHE classes are now part of orientation for all new nurses. And, as a result of the NICHE program, we have a wide variety of patient assessment tools that we use every shift.

“There is a movement underway for nurses to use evidence-based practices,” explains LaReau. “All of the tools we use, and the NICHE program itself, are evidence-based practices. So we’ve raised the bar for geriatric nursing care by implementing the NICHE program.”

Measurable results have emerged from the Bronson/NICHE partnership. According to LaReau, there has been a gradual, steady decrease in falls during the past six years, as well as a reduction in the pressure ulcer rate. Patient satisfaction is up and overall outcomes measures are showing improvement – a major achievement when caring for older adults.

Reflecting on her time at KCON, LaReau says, “Without an MSN and my geriatric nurse practitioner certification, I wouldn’t have been in this role. I had enormous support from my family, and I also have to say Phyllis [Gendler] is part of the reason I’m here. I was an older, mature nurse when I went back for my master’s degree. She gave me encouragement and helped me persist when things got hard. Along the way I’ve discovered that, as an advanced practice nurse, you really can make a difference in patient care.”

KCON RECEIVES FULL REACCREDITATION

The undergraduate and graduate nursing programs at KCON received full reaccreditation from the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) in April 2007.

The Kirkhof College of Nursing received accreditation for the maximum of 10 years and no compliance issues were identified, according to Dean Phyllis Gendler. CCNE, affiliated with the American Association of Colleges of Nursing, granted KCON initial accreditation in 2002.

“This renewal is a testament to the quality education nursing students receive at KCON,” says Gendler. “It shows that we are meeting the needs of students, the community and the university.”

The CCNE’s on-site evaluation team met with students, alumni, faculty and KCON’s Community Advisory Council. They heard very positive comments and learned that KCON students are especially appreciated in the community.

In its report, the CCNE accreditation team commended KCON for student and faculty work in the “Get the Lead Out” project. They also recognized KCON’s commitment to the Academic Nurse-Managed Health Center (ANMC) in downtown Grand Rapids, where many patients are homeless or from low-income backgrounds. (See story on page 15.)

The CCNE’s on-site team also called KCON’s physical resources “excellent,” with students and faculty having access to modern simulation labs, diagnostic equipment and a health sciences library in the Cook-De Vos building.

For more information about the NICHE program, visit www.battfordin.org/programs/niche/index.html
The mission of the Kirkhof College of Nursing is to provide quality nursing education to a diverse population of students. Kirkhof College of Nursing strives to improve the well-being of people through leadership in nursing education, professional practice and scholarship.

**Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN)**
- BSN Degree Completion for RNs
- BSN Second Degree
- Accelerated BSN Second Degree
- Master of Science in Nursing (MSN)
- RN to MSN Option
  (for nurses with non-nursing bachelor degrees)
- Combined MSN / MBA

**Post-Master’s Degree Certificates**
- Advanced Practice Nursing
- Nursing Education
- Nursing Administration

**Continuing Education Courses & Workshops**

Detailed information about admission criteria can be found on the KCON Web site: www.gvsu.edu/kcon
WELCOME TO KCON'S NEW DEAN!

Dr. CYNTHIA MCCURREN

We extend a warm welcome to Dr. Cynthia McCurren, the newly appointed Dean of the Kirkhof College of Nursing. She succeeds Dr. Phyllis Gendler, who is retiring as Dean in November and will return to teaching and research within nursing.

Since 1983, Dr. McCurren has held various positions at the University of Louisville School of Nursing. She was appointed Associate Dean for Academic Affairs in 2001 and became Interim Dean in 2006. She served as Director of Nursing Research at the University of Louisville Hospital from 1998 to 2003.

Dr. McCurren holds a PhD in nursing from the University of Kentucky, and earned her MSN and BSN degrees at the University of Missouri. A noted scholar in gerontological nursing, she brings many years of administrative experience, a commitment to interdisciplinary collaborations, and an inclusive and supportive leadership style. Under her leadership KCON is expected to continue to expand upon its leading role in nursing education in West Michigan and beyond.