My First 100 Days

Dean, Kirkhof College of Nursing
Dr. Cynthia McCurren

KCON and Taft Elementary School
A New Community Partnership

Save The Best For Last!
KCON and Community Health
From The Dean

I am delighted to bring greetings to all of you through the Spring 2008 edition of our magazine. After a long and snowy winter, spring brings a sense of growth, energy and excitement. These same feelings also characterize the environment in the Kikhof College of Nursing as we embrace opportunities for challenge and change.

We have many challenges ahead of us. Building a safer, patient-centered health care system has become the national focus of all health care professions following important reports issued since 1999 from the Institute of Medicine, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Joint Commission. Nursing has been identified as having the potential to make a significant impact on the transformation of health care delivery, helping to create a system that will be safe, equitable, accessible, quality driven and cost effective. As a result, the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) is leading the way toward curriculum revisions for undergraduate and graduate education.

This issue of our magazine highlights some of the community endeavors associated with KCON. Indeed, growth of community endeavors is critical to our curriculum revision efforts that will address the transformation of health care delivery. Health promotion, disease prevention, early diagnosis and intervention, and management of disease across the continuum, at both the individual and population level, are necessary to improve population health. From AACN curriculum guidelines, examples of strategies for learning include:

- Participation in population-focused community clinicals – e.g., creating smoke-free workplaces, improving health literacy among minority populations, and developing/implementing policies to minimize transmission of communicable disease in congregate dwellings (e.g., homeless shelters, daycare centers).

- Participation in individually-focused clinical prevention activities, such as providing health teaching for stress management, exercise, diet, cancer screening and obesity.

KCON is embracing the challenge to create curriculum changes that will address health care delivery reform through unique community experiences. I congratulate my faculty colleagues who work hard to develop creative learning environments for our students. I invite our KCON alumni to collaborate with us from your various points in the health care delivery system to further enhance learning opportunities. Together we will make a difference!

Happy Spring!

Cynthia McCurren
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MY FIRST 100 DAYS AS DEAN
In early November, Dr. Cynthia McCurren arrived on campus to become KCON’s new Dean. The KCON magazine team recently gathered her thoughts about her first few months on the job. Here are some of her comments.

**Question:** In Training Wheels for Nurses: What I Wish I’d Known My First 100 Days on the Job, editor Barbara Arnoldsen tells the reader, “You are about to embark on the journey of a lifetime.” But she notes that school may not have prepared graduates for the real world of practice and that they might be “in for some eye-opening surprises at the beginning...some good, some not.” What have been some of your eye-opening surprises?

**Dr. McCurren:** Of course, I expected to be welcomed when I arrived, but I found sincere warmth and a true effort to embrace me in the community at large as well as KCON. There has been a wonderful generosity of friendship, support and gifts. The welcome was quite creative. When I arrived I found my office decorated with a horse theme, consistent with my coming from Kentucky, complete with horse whips for “meeting control”! A beautiful horseshoe-shaped arrangement of red roses was delivered to the “New Dean—our Winner in the Run for the Roses!” It was such a lovely surprise and I truly appreciated it.

The larger university community has given me an equally warm reception, with an eagerness to partner together, address challenges and grow the university. Many alumni have made an effort to introduce themselves to me. And the students are just terrific. They are engaged and eager to know the “new Dean.”

On a lighter note, I would have to say experiencing more than 100 inches of snow in one winter, including Easter weekend, was quite an eye-opening surprise for someone from Kentucky!

**Question:** The book suggests that one must be prepared. When seasoned nurses were polled for a list of essential tools, all of them started with the letter “S,” like shoes, stethoscopes, scrubs and scissors. What advice did you get from seasoned deans about the essential tools you would need?

**Dr. McCurren:** The tools they described all began with the letter “C”:
- Critically assess all faculty and staff, resources and relationships.
- Evaluate the core values and the culture of the organization.
- Develop conscious awareness of the context of the organization.
- Carefully listen and establish effective communication.
- Create a shared vision.
- Maintain competency and character.

**Question:** Arnoldussen notes that often team members have been working together without your leadership for some time. They have considerable experience and strong opinions about getting the job done. Now you must step in and take charge. How do you manage that?

**Dr. McCurren:** I believe that each individual who contributes to KCON is part of our special team. Every faculty and staff member has had the opportunity to talk one-on-one with me. In these interactions they have shared their role in the college, personal career goals, views of the strengths and weaknesses of KCON, priorities for the college and something unique about themselves. To build and maintain a successful team, we must collaborate and create a shared vision that captures these individual strengths.

**Question:** Finally, where do you see KCON in five years?

**Dr. McCurren:** I believe we will be THE leader in nursing education for West Michigan, known for producing exemplary professionals that demonstrate nursing excellence through practice, leadership, research and service. Strong commitments to interdisciplinary teaching and learning, as well as community partnerships producing service learning, will be evident. We will be making a difference for reforming American health care.
At KCON we have a proud history of working with community citizens and agencies to craft nursing practices that meet their specific beliefs and expressed needs. This approach is based on a slow, purposeful development of relationships and is grounded in the nursing profession’s core belief in the dignity of—and respect for—individuals and groups.

One of our newest community partnerships involves the Wyoming Community Coalition and the Adopt-A-Block regional community improvement movement. Beginning as members of the coalition, KCON representatives included faculty and graduate students. As the needs of the community were identified, the coalition’s focus turned toward Taft Elementary School as a central point of contact in the Taft neighborhood.

Now KCON faculty and students are engaged with the school and community in several activities. Initially, we worked to introduce the notion of community health resources. We participated in the first annual Taft Elementary School health fair, to which the families in the Taft neighborhood were invited.

Next, we spent time in the school assessing health interests through conversations with the leadership team, teachers and staff. Two faculty members developed a health interest survey, which the principal distributed online to Taft teachers and staff. Based on the results of those surveys, KCON faculty met with the teachers to formulate a plan for health initiatives.

Since then, two students from the RN completion program have worked in the school, addressing identified health needs. During early 2008, seniors from the pre-licensure baccalaureate program began health surveillance activities in the school and provided health education related to their findings.

After these initial efforts, we are certain the KCON-Taft Elementary relationship will be productive and engaging for everyone involved in the months ahead.
SAVE THE BEST FOR LAST!

“We save the best for last!” This is the motto of KCON community health faculty who teach in the last semester of the undergraduate program. Within the past five years, KCON has developed unique clinical arrangements that combine true service learning within clinical course hours. Some of our community partners now include the Southwest Area Neighborhood (SWAN), Kent County Health Department, Mt. Mercy Senior Housing and Disability Advocates of Kent County (DAKC). Our goal at all of these sites is to engage nursing students in learning experiences that target poverty, homelessness and the underserved, helping clients toward well-being and an improved quality of life.

For example, at SWAN it was a win-win situation when GVSU students assisted an abused grandmother evicted into homelessness. Starting with no access to health care, she has transformed herself into an attractive, health-conscious woman involved in wellness programs. Students also participated in a collaborative with Get The Lead Out and Calvin College to educate paint retailers about practices to prevent lead exposure – a community health project.

As funding declines, KCON students assigned to the Kent County Health Department have become an even more important adjunct to government-supported care for vulnerable moms and babies who need a healthy start. Education about growth and development, parenting skills and potty training are all in a day’s work for these students.

At Mt. Mercy Senior Housing, students began by working to establish relationships with the residents with meals and education during each rotation. The site now has a student-run wellness center with health screenings, massages, and individual and group guidance. Not content with that, other student groups have rehabilitated a room into an attractive and popular exercise room.

KCON’s program at Disability Advocates of Kent County (DAKC) is designed to give a helping hand to those who have a disability. Working with clients in their homes, KCON students develop plans of care and intervene for health maintenance, wellness and a variety of lifestyle changes. For students, a key part of this program is to learn about community resources. At DAKC, they have the opportunity to assess each client’s needs and ensure that resources are identified and accessible.
ALUMNI UPDATE

ALUMS HELP HOSPITAL WIN MAGNET DESIGNATION

Holland Hospital received a wonderful holiday present last December when it was named a Magnet Hospital by the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC). The designation made Holland Hospital the only West Michigan hospital, and just the third hospital in the state, to receive the prestigious national honor.

Two KCON alumni were part of the hospital’s magnet team, which began its two-year journey in January 2005. Patti VanDort, RN, MSN ('02), is vice president of nursing and CNO at Holland Hospital. Susan Shattuck, BSN ('99), MS, CS-BC, served as the magnet designation leader.

The Magnet Recognition Program® was developed by the ANCC to recognize health care organizations that offer sustained nursing excellence. The program provides consumers with the ultimate benchmark, measuring the quality of care they can expect to receive.

Kemper-VanDriel was honored in the sports, fitness and wellness category, one of six Tributel categories of professional achievement and advocacy. Throughout her career she has promoted wellness and health care for those who have limited access, while also stressing personal responsibility. “You have to take care of your body,” she says. “Exercise, eat right and don’t smoke. It’s basic, but it can be very hard to do.”

With a pedometer always clipped to her waistband, Kemper-VanDriel practices what she preaches professionally. Her target? Get in at least 15,000 steps and eat fewer than 1,500 calories daily.

SIMONS APPOINTED EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

In February, Sylvia Simons, RN, BSN, MSN ('91), joined Spectrum Health Hospice in Grand Rapids as its new executive director.

In her new position Simons is responsible for the daily operations and strategic planning of Spectrum Health Hospice. Previously, she was chief operating officer for Holland Home. She has expertise in acute care, long-term care, home care and hospice.
Sarah (Erickson) Adcock, BS, BSN (’06), is a registered nurse at Children’s Hospital Central California in Madera, Calif.

Joanna (Lewis) Curl, BSN (’91), is the director of Home Health and Hospice Care for Madison County Hospital in London, Ohio.

JoAnne Eakins, BSN (’75), MPA, received the Distinguished Leadership Award from the Michigan Association for Local Public Health - Nurse Administrator’s Forum. She is the personal health services director for the Ionia County Health Department.

François Gastinzi, BSN (’05), was featured in a November 2007 issue of the Detroit Sentinel. Originally from Rwanda, Gastinzi is employed at Spectrum Health’s Butterworth campus. Gastinzi also was featured on an “It’s a Guy Thing” poster honoring male nurses and telling stories of why men become nurses.

Mary Lagerwey, BSN (’77), MSN, PhD, associate professor at Western Michigan University’s Bronson School of Nursing, was a featured presenter at the February Brown Bag meeting of the Michigan State University Center for Ethics and Humanities in the Life Sciences. Her topic was “Ethical Usage of Narratives of Suffering: Stories of Childbirth at Auschwitz.” Lagerwey has published a book, *Reading Auschwitz* (1998), Vol. 5 in AtikaWis’s Ethnographic Series.

Amy Manderscheid, BSN (’03), was profiled in the January/February 2008 issue of the Spectrum Health publication, *Focus on Nursing*. She serves as chair of the Central Shared Leadership Council, an advocacy forum for professionals and their patients. Manderscheid also was quoted in the April issue of *E3 Healthy*.

Brenda (Sinning) McCrum, BSN (’02), is currently a neonatal/pediatric transport nurse for Bronson Methodist Hospital in Kalamazoo.

Lisa Tireman, BSN (’02), has been promoted to clinical educator for two units – Resource Team and Cardiology/Peds Surgical – at Children’s Memorial Hospital in Chicago, where she has been employed since graduation.

Michelle Troseh, BSN (’83), MSN (’99), was elected to the National Academies of Practice (NAP) as a distinguished practitioner-member in 2007. NAP, founded in 1981, is dedicated to interdisciplinary collaboration in healthcare. Only 150 distinguished members can be elected to membership, making this a significant achievement.

Joanne Urbanski, BSN (’84), MSN (’94), was named in 2007 as president/CEO of South Haven Community Hospital in South Haven.

Gail Haslerkamp Venner, BSN (’81), MSN (’90), is the program manager for the heart failure program at Borgess Medical Center in Kalamazoo.

Jeff Wiersma, BSN (’96), is with the U.S. Public Health Service, stationed with Home and Security in Special Operations in Florida. A certified Air Force flight nurse, he does medical escorts around the world. In the past 2 1/2 years he has earned more than 3 million flight miles.

Michael Williams, MSN (’93), CCRN, CNE, associate professor at Eastern Michigan University’s School of Nursing, was the winner of the 2007 Nursing Spectrums Excellence in Teaching Award.

Sharon Zinah, BSN (’96), was a recipient of the fourth annual Hillman Award for 2008. Zinah is a manager, community health programs, with Spectrum Health Healthstar Communities and received the Medical Health Care Advocate award.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

It’s the time of year to welcome the newest members of the Kirkhof College of Nursing Alumni Chapter, which now represents more than 3,000 nursing alumni. One privilege of being a GVSU graduate is membership in the Alumni Association. There are no fees for membership and there are many benefits.

So, congratulations and welcome to all of our newest graduates!

If you have any questions about the KCON chapter, please call the GVSU Alumni Relations Office at 616-331-3590 or 800-558-0541.

Or send an e-mail through the “contact us” link at www.gvsu.edu/alumni.

Elaine Leigh, MSN (’02)
STUDENT/SNA UPDATE

KCON STUDENTS ELECTED TO STATE BOARD

Christina Schwarz and Jesse Ovlasuk were elected by their peers in February to serve on the state board of directors of the Michigan Nursing Students Association (MNSA). Ovlasuk will be working with advertising, and Schwarz will be chair of nominations and elections. Both are currently enrolled in KCON’s BSN program.

“The MNSA has 12 board members, so it is exciting to have more than one of our students on the board during any one year,” says Nancy Schoofs, faculty advisor to KCON’s SNA.

Cynthia McCurren, Dean of KCON, says, “It is a great honor for Jesse and Christina to be elected to serve in this capacity. It reflects the confidence of the MNSA in their leadership and organizational abilities. We are very proud of both of them.”

KUDOS...

KCON’s former dean, Dr. Phyllis Gendler, received some great feedback about the college’s programs and students just as she turned over the reins to Dr. Cynthia McCurren. Here is one wonderful story.

“... the most moving [feedback] came from a professor in another college at GVSU. She e-mailed me about a May [2007] graduate. This professor had recently been hospitalized, and our new graduate cared for her the day after she was admitted. The seriousness of her condition was not known at that time. After our graduate went home from her shift, she was concerned, and did some research, and later called the hospital to report her concerns. The physician told this professor our graduate had saved her life. I accepted her thanks for having ‘such an amazing nursing program...if it were not for ... I would not be here... . I just think that it is amazing a recent graduate of the nursing program was able to diagnose a condition that the doctors were not aware of. In addition to her knowledge, she was also a wonderful, loving, caring person.’”

OTTE SCHOLARSHIP CREATED

The Candace Otte Scholarship for Nursing has been established at KCON by friends and colleagues who wanted to create a lasting memorial to honor Candace Otte (Ingram), a pioneer in CPR training. She served as director of emergency medical services programs at GVSU during the ‘70s and ‘80s, and later at Davenport University.

Candidates for the new scholarship must be enrolled part-time or full-time as a BSN or graduate nursing student in KCON. Preference will be given to candidates who are licensed paramedics, advanced EMTs, or have equivalent training.
AND MORE KUDOS

Here is another story from Dr. Gendler, from a couple who participated in the Longitudinal Elder Initiative (LEI).

“We have been extremely impressed with ‘our’ nursing students. Not only do they have great personalities, but they are professional and punctual. The meetings have been educational for us also. They offered several suggestions to make our home safer and each has been followed. These young women not only speak well as future nurses, but also for the university in selecting candidates for this program. We are pleased to be part of their learning experience.”

SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS
2007-2008

Congratulations to the following scholarship recipients at KCON

Lynn Kraemer Memorial Scholarship
Dawn Pohl
Kaylee Yonker

Esther R. Padnos Scholarship
Kevin Momber

Eugene and Lillian Pawl Scholarship
Sarah Herbeck

Esther Rehm Stotz Nursing Scholarship
Ashley Boyer
Kelsey Gossen
Annalyn Hawkes
Amber Osborne
Rachel Pitney

Volkhardt Family Nursing Scholarship
Amanda Hakes
Steven Jablonski

Florence Cowan Ward Scholarship for Nursing
Arlene Dekam
Chenoah Dickinson-Hendershot
Anne Herbeck
Sara Klein
Sarah Muckey
Katelyn Nelson
Deborah St. Pierre

Westerman Foundation Scholarship for Nursing
Amanda Hakes
Anne Herbeck
Sandra VanDyke
Deborah Bambini, PhD, assistant professor of nursing, was awarded the Pew Faculty Teaching with Technology award during the seventh annual Teaching and Learning with Technology Fair in March.

The awards are presented annually to faculty members who implement innovative teaching methods using technology. Bambini was recognized for being an early adopter of multiple forms of technology and engaging her students in wiki and WebQuest projects. She is also a presenter at workshops hosted by GVSU Educational Technology.

Cassonya Carter Pugh, admissions coordinator for KCON, was recently selected as the recipient of the 2008 Ethel Coe Humanities Award for her exemplary leadership and compassionate work as a role model and mentor. This honor is part of the Giant Awards, a program begun 26 years ago by the local African American community and Grand Rapids Community College’s Continuing Education Office.

The Giant Awards annual event recognizes African Americans who have contributed to changing the quality of life in the Grand Rapids metro area. Each Giant Award is named for an individual who pioneered change that promoted the inclusion of minority individuals in all walks of life in Grand Rapids.

In addition to her position at KCON, Carter Pugh is founder and director of The Voices of GVSU gospel choir.
Gayla Jewell, PhD, associate professor of nursing, received the 2008 University Outstanding Teacher Award at the GVSU Faculty Awards Convocation in February. Jewell joined Grand Valley in 1986.

In part, her award citation read, "Dr. Jewell is a skilled motivator who thinks of herself as a 'co-learner' with her students. Her teaching is constantly evolving to meet the new challenges of a rapidly changing field.... She promotes strong critical thinking skills and is known for providing 'life-changing' experiences for her students that instill in them a great sense of purpose and responsibility."

Nancy Schoofs, PhD, associate professor of nursing, presented the "Nurse-Patient Relationship" at the 2008 Sjogren's Syndrome Foundation National Patient Conference in April. She was also honored with the Awareness Award at the convention for her work in publishing and presenting on Sjogren's Syndrome.

At the annual Service Award and Holiday Gathering in December, Kay Kline, PhD, and Kay Reick, MSN, were each recognized for 20 years of service. Phyllis Gendler, PhD, was honored as a 25-year award recipient.

Welcome to Luanne Show, RN, MSN, CEN, who was hired as an adjunct faculty member for KCON last November.
THE KIRKHOF COLLEGE OF NURSING CURRENTLY OFFERS THE FOLLOWING PROGRAMS:
• Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN)
• BSN Degree Completion for RNs
• BSN Second Degree
• Accelerated BSN Second Degree
• Master of Science in Nursing (MSN)
• Continuing Education Courses & Workshops

FUTURE PROGRAM:
Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) classes anticipated to begin Fall 2009 (approval pending).

“We are creating exceptional learning opportunities for our nursing students. In just five years we have doubled the number of students in our undergraduate nursing programs, helping to respond to the critical nationwide shortage of nurses. Many of our graduates choose to live and work in this area, greatly expanding health care services. Our commitment is to continue this dynamic connection between Grand Valley and the community.”

Dean, Kirkhof College of Nursing
Dr. Cynthia McCurren

The Kirkhof College of Nursing is fully accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) and recognized for its outstanding teaching, scholarship, service and research.