Greetings from the Interim Director

Let me warmly greet new and returning readers of our School of Nursing newsletter! The excitement of receiving new students and new faculty, along with the renewed enthusiasm of staff, faculty and current students prepares us for the fall semester and an exciting year ahead.

I am pleased and privileged to serve this school once again as its interim leader. Much has happened in the four years since I left the interim dean role. While serving on our Nurse Advocate Board, I followed the slow but steady formation of our College of Health and Human Services. Now, the baby has been born – and without too many complications, I might add.

Through the formation of our college, we will once again be leading the health care field. The potential for inter-professional research, education and practice positions us to address both the Institute of Medicine’s recommendations and the looming necessities of health care reform, i.e. the Affordable Care Act (ACA). As nursing faculty and students work to care for the sick and meet the health and wellness needs of a growing coastal population, we will be joined by our partner schools of Social Work (SWK) and Health and Applied Human Sciences (HAHS). Shared knowledge, skills and expertise are sure to enrich both the learning and practice environments. The school’s faculty and students in the clinical research track will also benefit from inter-professional ideas as they advance the steady development of biopharmaceutical and medical device products. So, stay tuned throughout the year to hear about our exciting collaborative endeavors.

In this issue, you will meet the 10 new faculty members who have joined the School of Nursing. Clearly we have an exceptional institution to attract such expert and dynamic folks! Enjoy reading about them.

Of course, our academic year would have never gotten off the ground without the continued dedication of our expert staff. Though there are ongoing changes in staff assignments, and new staff resources for nursing to utilize at the college level, my special thanks for “smooth sailing” go to Annette Richards, Debra Simpson and Robin Williams – our unique School of Nursing team.

Welcome to Students and Faculty!

We welcome back 65 returning graduate students, 199 pre-licensure students and 31 R.N. - B.S.N. students. We welcome our newest students: 36 in the F.N.P. program, 43 in the R.N. - B.S.N. program and 50 in the pre-licensure program.

We also welcome all of our returning faculty and our ten new faculty members. See pages 4-6 for biographical information and photos of the new faculty.
Notable Recognition:

Deborah Pollard has been selected to serve on the International Board of Lactation Consultant Examiners (BLCE) Item Writing Subcommittee for 2013-14.

Jane Fox has been selected as a peer reviewer for the Council for International Exchange of Scholars for 2014-15. This university organization administers the Fulbright Scholar Program for university-college faculty and students. This is the fourth time Fox has served in this position. Fox is also continuing to serve as board secretary for Smart Start of New Hanover County. Smart Start is a community-based, comprehensive approach serving children and their families. The organization funds services in three major areas: health, family support, and early care and education.

Congratulations to Zack Switzer (May ’14) for being awarded the student scholarship of the American Psychiatric Nurses Association (APNA) Board of Directors. The scholarship covers the costs of tuition, hotel and airfare to the APNA 27th Annual Conference held in San Antonio, Texas in October. And a one-year membership in the APNA and allowing him opportunities to participate in APNA mentorships, continuing education and other programs after attending. Switzer, who is among 10 undergraduate and 10 graduate-program nurses selected for the scholarship, is a veteran who is interested in pursuing psychiatric nursing as his nursing specialty and seeks to work with other veterans.

Erika Futch (Dec. ’13) received the Chancellor’s Achievement Award for taking a minimum of 15 hours and not receiving a letter grade less than an A-.

Notable Achievements

April Matthias presented her research utilizing a poster format at the 12th Annual Advances in Qualitative Methods Conference at the University of Alberta in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. Her poster was entitled “Reframing the Division of American Nursing Labor: Contemporary Events May Dissolve Historical Barriers to Resolution of the Entry-level RN Debate.”

Congratulations to Julie Smith Taylor and former graduate student Kelli Kelderhouse (Dec. ’12) for their recently published research. The citation is as follows: Kelderhouse, K. & Taylor, J. S. (2013). A review of treatment and management modalities for premenstrual dysphoric disorder. Nursing for Women’s Health, 17(4), 294-305.

Patty White spoke at the Third Annual Southeastern School Nurse Conference on June 9. Her topic was “Assisting Children Through the Grief Process.”


Nancy Ahern has recently published three articles. Two of the articles were co-authored by faculty Nasrin Falsafi and Brandy Mechling. The citations are as follows:


News from the Office of Student Success

The formerly named Student Services Office has a new name: the Office of Student Success. And a new look. The front door to the office has been moved to face into the lobby of McNeill Hall (see photo at right). The reception area has been expanded and become more open with a new glass door and windows. With the physical modifications and name change, the director and staff are looking forward to serving students and faculty and extend an invitation to see the new facilities.

News from the Nu Omega Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau

The Fall 2013 educational program of the Nu Omega Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau will be Oct. 24 at 6 p.m. in Room 1051 of McNeill Hall. The speakers will be Elizabeth Gazza, who will offer tips for scholarly writing, and Barbara Lutz, who will address the evolution of a nurse scientist.

On Nov. 13 at 6 p.m. in the Burney Center Ballroom C, the Nu Omega Chapter will hold its annual induction ceremony for new members. Chapter members are being asked to consider nominating a nurse leader for chapter membership. Nominations will be accepted until Sept. 23.

Simulation Learning Center (SLC) News

The Simulation Learning Center has a new coordinator. Robin Cunningham has replaced Anne Zabriskie in this role. Cunningham has worked with simulation for several years at UNC Greensboro and has been a strong advocate for engaging students across the nursing curriculum through simulation. She is also collaborating with other faculty within the College of Health and Human Services to expand the simulation experience within other disciplines. Simulation Learning Center assistants Lindsay Futrell and Barbara Snyder will continue to assist in the efficient operation of the center.

ANS News

The Association of Nursing Students (ANS) is a service-based organization for all interested students. The organization focuses on volunteering for health-based projects and events around New Hanover County. Meetings are scheduled for every other Monday noon in Room 1051 of McNeill Hall. While not required, the meetings are recommended for all members. Dues are $7.50 per semester. Each ANS member is required to participate in two events per semester and obtain a minimum of 40 points by his or her graduation date.

The UNCW Association of ANS maintains updated information on organization activities on Facebook. Any questions can be directed to ANS president Caitlin Schultie at cms1636@uncw.edu or vice president Sarah Lamere at sjl6757@uncw.edu.

Faculty Representatives to the UNCW Faculty Senate

Four faculty representatives have been chosen by a quorum vote of the nursing faculty to represent the School of Nursing in the UNCW Faculty Senate. They are Nancy Ahearn, Anne-Marie Goff, Diane Pastor and Pam Levesque.
Welcome to Our Newest Faculty

Diane Pastor and her husband Don are from New York where she worked as adult health program director in Stony Book University’s School of Nursing. She is an Adult NP, who completed her Ph.D. at Columbia University and her M.B.A. in finance at Boston College. Her research interests include the needs of family caregivers caring in the community for frail elders and palliative/end of life care. Pastor’s research has been funded by Molloy College Faculty Scholarship Committee, Sigma Theta Tau, Columbia University School of Nursing Alumni Association and the John A Hartford Interdisciplinary Summer Scholars Program. In clinical practice, Pastor is experienced as a community health nurse, discharge planning, geriatric care manager and an adult health nurse practitioner in primary care. She and her husband have three adult daughters.

Beth Gazza began her nursing career over 30 years ago as a licensed practice nurse. She earned her B.S.N. and M.S.N. from Indiana University of Pennsylvania and her Ph.D. in nursing from Duquesne University. Over the past nine years Gazza held administrative appointments in nursing education. This include serving as dean for nursing and allied health and interim vice president for academic affairs at a community college and program director for entry level, degree completion, M.S.N. and D.N.P. programs at a private university in Pennsylvania. Gazza led successful continuing accreditation reviews involving NLNAC and CCNE and she facilitated learning in entry level through doctoral level programs using innovative methods such as online delivery. Her scholarly agenda focuses on nursing education, including nursing faculty development. She completed research to uncover the experience of being full-time and part-time nursing faculty and identified research-based faculty recruitment and retention strategies. Her most recent research addressed the development of scholarly writing abilities in nursing students. Gazza has served on two NLN task groups (Healthful Work Environments and Recruitment and Retention of Nurse Educators) and as a consulting member of the Nursing Education Workforce Development Advisory Council (NEWDAC). Through these opportunities she contributed to the development of the NLM Mentoring of Nurse Faculty Position Statement, the Healthful Work Environment Tool Kit, and the Mentoring Tool Kit. Her most recent publication “Using Social Media to Meet the Needs of DNP Preceptors within an Online Program” was published in June ’13 in the Online Journal of Nursing Informatics.

Penny Sauer achieved her ADN degree in ’89 while residing in Scottsdale, Ariz. She worked in a critical care unit and taught portions of the critical care course curriculum and ACLS. In 2001, Sauer moved to North Carolina to take a management position at UNC Hospitals. She obtained her B.S.N., her master’s in nurse education and her Ph.D. from UNC Greensboro. She taught clinical courses at Wake Tech while completing her M.S.N. and clinical rotations at Duke as she pursued her PhD. Sauer’s dissertation examined the mediating effects of resilience on nurses who are bullied at work. Her research interests focus on healthy nurse workplace environments, the nursing workforce and the transitions of new nurses. She has received research funding from the Gamma Zeta chapter of Sigma Theta Tau and from the N.C. Nurses Association of the Triangle region. While a Ph.D. candidate at UNC Greensboro, Sauer was recognized by the faculty with the Leadership Award.

Robin Cunningham joins the SON faculty as the simulation learning center coordinator. Originally from Maryland, Cunningham received her B.S.N. and M.S.N. from East Carolina University. She has her legal nurse consultant certification. Her career as a nurse has been spent working in neurosurgical, medical surgical and postpartum settings. She has taught in associate and baccalaureate programs since the ‘80s. Cunningham has incorporated simulation into numerous courses and led the Simulation Users Group at UNC Greensboro. Cunningham taught at UNC Greensboro for nine years where she was a clinical assistant professor, lab coordinator and has taught numerous nursing courses including a semester course in NCLEX preparation. Cunningham has served as the B.S.N. committee chair and Sigma Theta Tau First Counselor. She also developed and travelled on a short term study abroad to Peru last March and to the Dominican Republic the two prior years. Cunningham hopes to continue her research at UNCW in prelicensure and graduate simulation. Also, Cunningham has volunteered to work one week over the course of seven summers at Victory Junction Camp where children with chronic medical conditions receive care and medication administration. Cunningham and her husband have two children, and they enjoy boating, fishing and cycling. She also enjoys yoga, reading and traveling.
Traci Bramlett began her nursing career with an A.S.N. degree from Dalton (Georgia) State College. In 2002 she graduated from Kennesaw State (Georgia) University with her B.S.N. and in 2003 with a M.S.N.-F.N.P. This past spring Bramlett graduated from Mercer University Georgia Baptist College of Nursing with a D.N.P. Her nursing career has included working in the emergency department, acute care medical surgical units and in clinical research. As a family nurse practitioner, she has worked with adults in the acute care setting and in the area of hematology/oncology. However, the majority of Bramlett’s work experience has been in pediatrics. Her research focus has been on child obesity and her clinical dissertation included developing and implementing a family-based child obesity program for a predominantly Hispanic clinic in northwest Georgia. Her family consists of two children at home (ages 7 and 16 years) and four other children and grandchildren residing in Georgia. For relaxation, she enjoys playing tennis, cooking, and spending time with family.

Barbara Lutz has recently joined the faculty as the McNeill Distinguished Professor. She comes to UNCW from the University of Florida College of Nursing. Certified as a rehabilitation nurse and an advanced public health nurse, Lutz received her B.S.N. from the University of Iowa, her M.S. in community health from Northern Illinois University, and M.S.N. and Ph.D. in nursing from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Lutz has more than 30 years of experience as a public health, home health, and rehabilitation nurse. Actively involved in national professional organizations, she is on the Board of Directors of the Association of Rehabilitation Nurses and is past chair of the Rehabilitation Nursing Foundation. She is immediate past-chair of the Stroke Nursing Committee and current member of the Nursing and Rehab Professionals and Stroke Manuscript Oversight Review committees of the American Heart Association. She is a Fellow of the American Heart Association, National Academies of Practice and American Academy of Nursing. Her research focuses on interventions to assist persons with chronic disabling conditions, such as stroke and their family caregivers as they transition home from inpatient rehabilitation. She and her husband John, a retired manufacturing executive, reside in Hampstead.

Pamela Levesque began her nursing career as a L.P.N. at New Hampshire Tech and received her B.S.N. from the University of New Hampshire and her M.S. from Northeastern University. She began her doctoral work at the University of Massachusetts – Worcester in nursing and then continued at the University of New Hampshire in education. She completed her formal education as a D.N.P. at Regis College in Weston, Mass. Levesque recent moved to North Carolina from Rhode Island where she was the associate director of nursing for the RN-BS and pre-licensure program. Prior to living in Rhode Island, Levesque taught in an associate degree program through the masters level of nursing education which included curriculum development at all levels including an online FNP program development. She received the Commissioner’s Award for Teaching Excellence from the State of New Hampshire while teaching in the associate degree program. Levesque has been a family nurse practitioner for 18 years working in family practice, occupation health/urgent care, college health and, most recently, in home health among the chronically ill Medicare population. Levesque’s area of research is transgender health; access and quality of care which includes FNP knowledge, attitudes and self-efficacy for caring for transgender persons. She is interested in possible integration of LGBT curriculum content in nursing programs. For recreation she enjoys reading, yoga, kayaking, walking and animals.

Tamatha (Tammy) Arms began her nursing career as a certified nursing assistant. She has worked in a variety of areas after receiving her ADN from Eastern Kentucky University and her R.N.-B.S.N. and M.S.N. from UNC Greensboro. She is an adult and geriatric nurse practitioner. Most recently she graduated from the University of Tennessee Health Science Center with her D.N.P. in psych-mental health (PMH) and will sit for her FNP PMH boards soon. Her clinical dissertation focused on integrating primary care and mental health care in the outpatient setting and her research interests include mental health in the older adult. A part-time clinical faculty in 2011, Arms returns to UNCW to teach mental health clinical and gerontology to pre-licensure nursing students. In her free time, Arms enjoys the outdoors and recently travelled across country to Yellowstone National Park with her husband.
Nancy Ahern, born and raised in Delaware, completed her B.S.N. and M.S.N. (Maternal-Child CNS) at the University of Delaware and her MEd from Salisbury (Maryland) University. After teaching in nursing programs and working as an education director and maternal-child clinical nurse specialist in Delaware, she moved to the eastern shore of Maryland and helped to open a new community hospital as the education director. Ahern moved with her husband and three sons to Florida in 1999 and taught at two universities, more recently at the University of Central Florida where she was a regional campus program coordinator for three years. After completing her Ph.D. in nursing at UCF, Ahern was assistant professor and coordinator of the university honors in the major program. In 2010 she relocated to California and taught in the California State University system and became the associate director of the School of Nursing for the past two years. Scholarship and research interests include maternal-child nursing, innovative teaching strategies and academic success of students. However, her primarily focus has been on the risks and resilience of youth, especially adolescent and pre-adolescent risky behaviors (the subjects of a number of her publications). Ahern is also a reviewer and/or editorial board member for a number of scholarly journals. She has co-authored one book and written a number of textbook chapters.

Sarah Lynn Lawson has focused her practice and research on issues of sexual assault and the relationship of genital injury patterns in women after consensual and non-consensual intercourse. In the past, Lawson was involved in several studies addressing injury patterns in sexual assault victim, motivations for use of emergency department services and accidental injuries in elderly patients. During several international research initiatives, she has worked with victims and health care providers from both South Africa and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Her current research interest focuses on health disparities in the attitudes of Hispanic men towards sexual assault prevention. She has been a forensic nurse examiner providing evidence collection and caring for victims of sexual assault for more than 15 years. Lawson has previous research funding from the National Institute for Nursing Research, Emergency Nurses Association, Emergency Medicine Foundation, the University of Miami Provost award, several University of Virginia faculty funding awards, and Sigma Theta Tau. The University of Virginia School of Nursing has honored her with the Shannon Award (for clinical and academic excellence), Clinical Excellence Award and by the Emergency Nurses Association’s Nurse Research Award. Prior to UNCW, Lawson was at the University of Miami where she continued her research interests and expanded her area to sexual assault prevention using bystander attitudes and beliefs model with young non-college Hispanic men (English and Spanish speaking).

Welcome to our Newest Faculty

Pictured below are the 10 new School of Nursing faculty and Barbara Jo Pennington (new to the Clinical Research faculty in January 2013 and standing fourth from left) with Susan Pierce (interim director standing fourth from the right). We welcome these individuals who bring their special talents and gift in their respective nursing specialties to the nursing and clinical research programs.
Dr. James McCann Accepts New Position

James McCann, former director of the School of Nursing, accepted the appointment of dean and full professor at the Bon Secours Memorial College of Nursing in Richmond, Va. Bon Secours, a Catholic organization with a 150-year history of serving those less fortunate, has 50 health facilities in six states. It is the goal of the college to reach out to these facilities thereby increasing the number of nurses with B.S.N. degrees. Consisting of 300 pre-licensure students, the college has an expanding online R.N. to B.S.N. program and is currently developing a M.S.N. program.

During his four-year tenure as the director of the School of Nursing, McCann made numerous achievements for the school and served as its leader during the transition into new facilities and as it became a part of the College of Health and Human Services. McCann’s accomplishments are numerous, but the most outstanding activities under his leadership are listed below:

- The development and implementation of a new five semester pre-licensure curriculum;
- The improvement of the admissions process for the pre-licensure program as far as efficiency, objectivity and transparency;
- The transition into to a new building (McNeill Hall);
- An increase in enrollment in all five programs (pre-licensure, R.N. to B.S.N., M.S.N., and the undergraduate and graduate clinical research programs) and the creation of seven new faculty positions to serve the increased enrollment;
- The early development of a D.N.P. program;
- Creation of a community advisory board and increased membership on the Nurse Advocate Board;
- The successful appointment of two distinguished professorships positions and the development of a new distinguished professorship position.

Throughout his tenure at UNCW, McCann created a compassionate, trusting, caring environment during a difficult time of transition. While his focus has been on maintaining the integrity in the curricula and academic programs’ operations, McCann advocated for faculty development and student success.

We thank him for all of his numerous contributions, his devotion to nursing education and his friendship. We wish him continued success in his new endeavors at Bon Secours.

New Course Format Developed for the R.N. - B.S.N. Program

Beth Gazza, April Matthias, and Carol Heinrich have been collaborating with the UNCW Office of e-Learning to revise nursing courses within the R.N.-B.S. program into a new 7½ week format. Faculty also participated in professional development activities related to best practices in online teaching/learning. Using the Quality Matters Course Rubric, the revised nursing courses were reviewed by the Office of e-Learning and by curriculum specialists from Academic Partnerships. The courses in the 7½ week format began Aug. 20.

One student commented: “I just wanted to let you know how well this course is set up. I have taken several online courses and have not seen one that comes close to this one.” Appreciation for the hard work and effort in developing this new format goes to the R.N.-B.S.N. faculty working on this project and to Patsy Gonzalez, Beth Oyarzun and Sheri Anderson from the office of e-Learning.

Please submit calendar events, notable achievements, community events, research/scholarship activities and questions for faculty/staff to our editorial and production staff: Sandy O’Donnell (odonnells@uncw.edu) or Debra Simpson (simpsond@uncw.edu).