To Improve the Human Condition: An Evolution of Change

Any successful organization finds itself in an evolution of change. Its foundation must evolve: experimenting, learning, and growing to “become” within a changing context of society and the world. In a nutshell, our work must be relevant to the future needs of society. The Institute of Medicine that focused on the future of nursing called out four points: Nurses should practice to the full extent of their education; Nurses should achieve higher levels of education…that promote seamless academic progression; Nurses should be full partners…in redesigning health care in the United States; and effective workforce planning and policy making, require better data collection and an improved information infrastructure.

The College of Nursing is contributing to this call for action. This edition of Nursing LEADS provides brief snapshots of evidence from our newest post-master’s DNP graduate to the announcement in late summer of the newly approved post-baccalaureate DNP program—the first in Ohio. You will read of the research on the effects of elevated lead blood levels in northwest Ohio, an overlooked health hazard. Alumni, faculty and students will share their stories of the impact they are having with people across the globe. Enjoy the pride of the college—our students, who help UT shine through its Student Nurses Association leader accomplishments. Lastly, we want to introduce you to our new faculty and staff this year who join current faculty that are committed to “improving the human condition.”

We continue to go “green.” Please send any updated email addresses to Amanda Kessler, assistant director of alumni relations, at amanda.schwartz@utoledo.edu and indicate that you are an alumnus(a). Always know that we want to hear from you and welcome a call at 419.383.5858, an email at tim.gaspar@utoledo.edu or a letter.

With appreciation for all you do for our College of Nursing at The University of Toledo!

Timothy M. Gaspar, Ph.D., RN
Dean and Professor
UT offers first post-baccalaureate doctor of nursing practice degree in Ohio

By Kim Goodin

The University of Toledo’s College of Nursing has been approved by the Ohio Board of Regents to offer the first post-baccalaureate doctor of nursing practice degree in the state.

The program is offered to baccalaureate nursing graduates who intend to continue their careers as experts in advanced practice nursing, nursing education and nursing leadership in health-care systems.

Dr. Timothy Gaspar, dean of the College of Nursing, said, “The changing demands of this nation’s complex health-care environment require the highest level of scientific knowledge and practice expertise to assure quality patient outcomes.”

Factors building momentum for change in nursing education at the graduate level, he said, include the rapid expansion of knowledge underlying practice; increased complexity of patient care; national concerns about the quality of care and patient safety; shortage of nursing personnel, which demands a higher level of preparation for leaders who can design and assess care, shortages of nursing faculty with doctorates; and increasing educational expectations for the preparation of other members of the health-care team.

UT’s program is designed for those who have earned baccalaureate degrees in nursing, whether newly graduated or already working in hospitals and other health-care facilities.

After practicing for 16 years as a registered nurse in northwest Ohio, Sue Recker decided the new terrain of health care required additional education. With her children now in college, UT’s new program came at an opportune time.

“I’ve always wanted to pursue higher education in the nursing field,” Recker, a full-time nurse educator, said. “Although I still love taking care of patients, the post-baccalaureate doctor of nursing practice degree will open more doors for me as a nurse educator, administrator and leader.”

She acknowledges that nursing has changed drastically since she began her career. “With this program, I’ll enhance my own abilities for patient care and learn to better educate nurses at the bedside on how to be the most effective caregivers.”

As a part-time student, Recker is in class one day per week. The program consists of a combination of campus-based and online courses. The current majors are family nurse practitioner and primary pediatric nurse practitioner. Additional majors are expected to be offered in the future.

Those who complete the post-baccalaureate doctor of nursing practice degree program will be prepared for the following types of positions:

• Advanced practice nursing in hospitals and communities;
• Clinical faculty in areas of practice specialization; and
• Leadership positions in health-care organizations and systems.

Graduates also will be eligible for national certification in advanced practice specialty areas.

UT’s post-baccalaureate doctor of nursing practice degree program will be administered by the College of Nursing and work in cooperation with the College of Graduate Studies.

International Scholarly Excellence Initiative - Taiwan Trip

Dean Timothy Gaspar, Dr. Phyllis Gaspar and Dr. Huey-Shys Chen recently visited Taiwan for an international scholarly excellence initiative trip.

The visit to multiple academic and health care delivery systems in Taiwan aimed to promote excellence in education and research through international cooperation, international network development, recruitment of international students, and the promotion of relationships and visibility for The University of Toledo.

Dean Gaspar, Dr. Gaspar and Dr. Chen participated in the "Signing Ceremony" to initiate a collaborative agreement between UT College of Nursing and Hungkuan University to facilitate cooperative exchanges of students and faculty, promote development of joint research and scholarly programs of study, and explore joint conferences, symposia, or other matters of common interest. In addition to the formal signing of the collaborative agreement, Dean Gaspar provided the keynote address to a central Taiwan audience entitled "A Focus on Quality and Excellence in Nursing Education-Forces of Change" and a second presentation on nursing accreditation and quality outcomes in nursing education. Dr. Phyllis Gaspar addressed nursing faculty at the China Medical University School of Nursing on her research that focused on "Implementation of Evidenced-based Practice" that impacted quality care outcomes. Dr. Chen spoke to MSN graduate nursing students at Hungkuan University on "Instrument Development" and the DNP at UT College of Nursing.

After meeting with nursing students, nursing colleagues at various health care facilities and several key leaders and faculty at the Universities in Taiwan, several proposed activities for future consideration were identified that include: establish a visiting program for international scholars, graduates and undergraduate students; establish a model for faculty and student exchanges between UT and HKU; explore opportunities to expand the DNP applicant eligibility criteria to include international nursing students, administrators, professional nurses, and faculty; and to offer an immersive summer experience program beginning in summer 2013.

UT-BGSU Student Nurse Association recognized as Ohio’s best

By Casey Cheap

The Ohio Nursing Students’ Association has again recognized The University of Toledo for outstanding achievement and overall leadership as a top chapter in Ohio. The Ohio Nursing Students’ Association is the state chapter of the National Student Nurses Association.

The Student Nurse Association chapter at UT is held in conjunction with Bowling Green State University and has won the outstanding chapter of the year award three years in a row, since taking the prize again in 2012. Outstanding chapter criteria include strong leadership as well as active involvement in the community and research. Additionally, UT won the 2012 “Brain Bowl” challenge and had four students elected to state office of the Ohio Nursing Students Association.

The Brain Bowl includes student teams from nursing programs that competed annually at the OSNA convention in Columbus. The UT-BGSU chapter has also won the Brain Bowl three of the last five years. Brain Bowl winners in Columbus included Haley Johnson, Heather Gallagher, Betsy Hayes and Joshua Conklin.

The four elected state officers are: Joshua Conklin, elected vice president, Leslie Puchala as secretary, Ashante’ O’Dell as break chair and HKU; explore opportunities to expand the DNP applicant eligibility criteria to include international nursing students, administrators, professional nurses, and faculty; and to offer an immersive summer experience program beginning in summer 2013.

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The ONSA represents 1,500 members throughout Ohio and is a pre-professional organization that helps foster leadership in the nursing profession. Recent UT SNA bylaws have been modified and now CLN students may also participate and have representation in SNA.
Newest DNP Graduate Cites Benefits of the Program

Hollis Hamilton, DNP, MSN, RN, graduated from the post master’s Doctor of Nursing Practice Program in December, 2012. When asked why she pursued the DNP, Hollis explained that her decision was influenced by Dr. Timothy Gaspar and her father, “My dad used to say that an education is something that no one can take away from you. It is yours forever. It is investing in yourself and feeling that you are worth the time.” Not long after Dr. Gaspar arrived to UT, Hollis met with him to discuss the DNP. Under his encouragement and guidance, Hollis decided to pursue a terminal degree that focused on practice which was in keeping with her work as an administrator in a fast paced, hospital environment. With more than 33 years in the profession as clinician and administrator Dr. Hamilton felt it was important to choose a pathway that would allow her to address the challenges facing health care today.

It took approximately four years for Hollis to complete her degree. Upon entering the program she was uncertain about her area of interest, but recalls in her first semester that Dr. Gray suggested using the courses to relate to your topic. Dr. Hamilton’s capstone project focused on the development of a cost effective education program to alert nurses to behaviors of horizontal violence and interventions to distinguish those behaviors. “If nurses have a good work environment, a healthy environment, their customers are far more satisfied. It is incumbent upon managers to create the environment for that to occur,” she states. The biggest challenge for the graduate was juggling her work responsibilities with her course assignments, “It was very reasonable, I knew at the beginning of each semester what had to be done. I used my weekends when I had bigger blocks of time for writing.”

When asked how her practice has changed as a result of her DNP education she said, “I thought I understood evidence based practice prior to the program, but it is not just looking at research — it’s looking at the best research — researching experts not only in your area but from other disciplines. I can look at research articles and determine if data was collected properly, statistics are in line and then use these finding for my teaching. If you don’t know how to look at research, you are not going to pull the best evidence. There are not many nursing leaders with formal education in management. I am trying to get my students excited about management and to think about utilizing a theoretical framework.”

Dr. Hamilton is an associate professor at Lourdes University and teaches in the MSN Leadership program, “I encourage my students all the time to get their DNP. I believe so much that if students and others hear the benefit, they will do it and never hesitate. I am so pleased with my education. At first I was concerned about the level of interaction in an online program, but I am amazed at how well I got to know women who lived outside of my community. This was such a growth experience. Just do it. If you stew about it, you won’t do it.”

Her words resonate encouragement. For more information about the MSN-DNP program in collaboration with WSU, contact the College of Nursing Office of Student Services at 419.383.5810 or admnurse@utoledo.edu.

A Nurse Practitioner Perspective on a Medical Mission to Tanzania, Africa

Jean Austin, MSN and Lorrie Elchert, MSN

As soon as Jean Austin, MSN and Lorrie Elchert, MSN learned there was a need for health care providers to go on a medical mission trip to Tanzania, Africa, they were ready to join the team.

When Jean and Lorrie arrived in Kilakwe, Africa, they learned that they were going to teach 14 health care promoters and registered nurses, who in turn would provide health care to their villages when they left. They taught groups, with the assistance of nurses, how to use an inhaler, suturing, putting on sterile gloves, taking blood pressures and pulses, listening to heart and lung sounds, medications and how to deliver a baby. Each day they had a different nurse and two health promoters working with them. They assisted with translation of Swahili and HeHe, in addition to carrying out testing and examinations of the many patients.

The local RN’s worked in hospitals and took time away from their families and jobs to assist them and their people. The nurses all had bachelor’s degrees in nursing and all worked in area hospitals. Their English was excellent, along with their disease recognition and diagnosis of common African disease processes. They had never seen a portable pulse oximeter, automated blood pressure cuffs, and most of all a “nurse practitioner.” They were interested in their expanded roles and asked many questions about their education. They were surprised that they could work independently and prescribe medications. Many are interested in pursuing a master’s degree.

As Jean and Lorrie started their first day in the clinic, the people amazed them. The Tanzanian people walked hours from villages and mountain areas and waited for hours in the hot sun with little to eat or drink. Tanzanians in this area were of the poorest in Tanzania. Very few had seen a doctor or even had a well check for their children. They were so caring, grateful and listened intently. The people used whatever resources, if any, to remedy their own problems. The next day word had spread and their volume of patients tripled. More than 200 people were brought down from the mountain village of Lufu by bus. Jean and Lorrie continued as long as they could throughout the long days and hours into the night. They witnessed diseases they typically wouldn’t see, such as manifestations of Tuberculosis, malaria, and AIDS. Vision changes from dust and UV because of no sunglasses or hats for protection were frequently seen. They ran out of glasses and sunglasses in a day and half. Muscle and joint pains from lifting or carrying for hours daily and its toll on the human body (i.e.; Walking from a well two miles to home with two ten gallon buckets of water on their head). Cracking, dry feet with tinea from the gallon buckets of water on their head).

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Mission Trip to Nicaragua

Denise Oancea, nursing instructor, will lead a group of nursing students on a mission trip to Nicaragua in March 2013 to deliver much needed medical supplies, medications and food.

During the trip, the Department of Health Ministry will determine where medical assistance is needed each day and then students will conduct research and set up portable mini clinics in their determined homes. Many doctors and volunteers will also be attending to help support those in need. Patient education will be a big part of the mission as well.

Nicaragua is the largest, yet poorest, country in Central America and is overwhelmed with widespread poverty and inaccessible care. Due to the society’s lack of health education and accessibility, health issues are escalating.

Help is needed in raising $5,000 to cover the medical supplies, medications and food. If you are interested in helping, donations can be made to The University of Toledo Foundation with attention.
Make a Gift

Please consider making a charitable gift to the University of Toledo College of Nursing by visiting https://give2ut.utoledo.edu/Default.asp and please enter code AG2013 NURSLDS NEW

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Elevated Blood Lead Levels in Children

The College of Nursing has an interdisciplinary research team focused on elevated blood lead levels in children. Dr. Marilyynne Wood, professor of nursing, Kathleen Ahonen, assistant professor of nursing, Bradene Moore, associate professor of legal studies, and Dr. Morris Jenkins, professor and chair of criminal justice and social work are involved in a research study including children and adolescents with elevated blood lead levels and impacts of nursing interventions.

“Elevated blood lead levels in children and adolescents can lead to impulsiveness and uncontrollable behavior interfering with their ability to learn,” Wood said. “No lead level is good in a child. If we can identify the levels in a child's bloodstream, we can intervene and improve quality of life.”

The research team purchased mobile lead level testing equipment with a grant they received. The grant allows the group to reach out to more children and provide interventions for those children with high blood lead levels. The intervention will include nutritional counseling and home assessment to hopefully locate the lead sources. To help treat and prevent high blood lead levels early on, the group will also test adolescents and pregnant teens.

The interdisciplinary research team presented their study “Elevated Lead Levels in Children and Adolescents: Behavioral Associations and Health Policy Implications” at the 7th International Advanced Practice Nursing Conference in London, England in August 2012 and presented again in July 2012 at the National Nurse Practitioners’ Symposium at Copper Mountain Resort in Colorado.

With the help of UT College of Nursing graduate and undergraduate students, the research team has also provided health fairs with free blood lead level screenings and lead poisoning education at area schools.

The research team is hopeful that they can influence local health policy to require blood lead level screenings before enrolling in preschool and childcare so that levels can be assessed before the start of school.