Partnership: The New Frontier

How connections between research, education and practice can improve nursing and health care

As Congress advances its debate about how best to improve health care, the UF College of Nursing is exploring and engaging in partnerships involving health care education, research and practice to enhance patient care.

“From our VA-UF Nursing Academy to our participation in the interdisciplinary UF Clinical and Translational Science Institute, the College of Nursing understands that progress and innovation do not exist in a vacuum,” said Dean Kathleen Ann Long, PhD, RN, FAAN. “We know that only by working together with other colleges, centers, disciplines and practice partners can we advance knowledge and achieve better care for our patients.”
Partnering for Patients
In accord with this theme, the College hosted the 4th Biennial Dorothy M. Smith Nursing Leadership Conference in January 2010: “Nursing Research and Education: Partnering for Patients.” Some 400 nurses and nursing educators gathered at the UF College of Nursing to discuss cutting-edge topics in health care such as clinical and translational research, and education for new practice models, including the Clinical Nurse Leader and Doctor of Nursing Practice models.

The Translation of Research
Keynote speaker, Ada Sue Hinshaw, PhD, RN, FAAN, professor, Dean of the Graduate School of Nursing at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, and former director of the National Institute of Nursing Research, discussed how clinical and translational research impacts health care across all disciplines, specifically nursing.

“Translational research enriches the science guiding nursing by introducing new ideas and perspectives and educating colleagues from other disciplines about nursing research, which provides new chances for constructive critique of nursing research and growth of the science.”

— Ada Sue Hinshaw, PhD, RN, FAAN
Keynote Speaker at Dorothy M. Smith Conference

“One of the main reasons this major change in science policy occurred was the recommendation that clinical research conducted in health settings should involve patients and expert practitioners. Thus, findings should be more relevant to clinical questions and quicker to translate to practice,” Dr. Hinshaw said. “Currently the average time for research to affect practice is 17 years.”

Dr. Hinshaw also pointed out the opportunities available to nurses via the growth of translational research. “Translational research enriches the science guiding nursing by introducing new ideas and perspectives, and educating colleagues from other disciplines about nursing research, which provides new chances for constructive critique of nursing research and growth of the science,” Dr. Hinshaw said.

A UF Perspective
Following Dr. Hinshaw, an interactive panel discussed clinical and translational research at UF. The panel featured Peter Stacpoole, PhD, MD, former director of UF’s Clinical and Translational Science Institute, and nursing faculty researchers: associate professor Ann Horgas, PhD, RN, FAAN; professor Meredith Rowe, PhD, RN, FAAN; and associate professor Joyce Stechmiller, PhD, ARNP, FAAN, who discussed translational research specific to nursing and other health professions.

In 2009, UF received the highly competitive National Institutes of Health Clinical and Translational Science Award, through which UF joined a prestigious national consortium of research institutions geared toward accelerating scientific discovery, enhancing care, producing highly skilled scientists and fostering partnerships with industry.

Nursing research encompasses both types of translation research. A significant number of UF nursing faculty members have witnessed the impact of their research in the clinical setting as well as the community. To outline examples of this type of research, both Dr. Rowe and Dr. Stechmiller discussed how their research has been translated to the community and the clinical setting.

Dr. Rowe’s focus on strategies to bolster the health of caregivers responsible for patients with dementia led to development of a home monitoring system for this vulnerable group to assist them in managing nighttime activity of

Faculty speaker panelists Dr. Joyce Stechmiller (center) and Dr. Ann Horgas (right) speak with Dorothy M. Smith Awardee and alumna Dr. Kathleen Jett.
persons with dementia and to prevent unwanted exits from the home.

Dr. Stechmiller’s research in wound care and prevention has resulted in development of evidence-based guidelines (at the national level and in consultation with industry) for implementation of wound care therapies.

Drs. Stacpoole and Horgas discussed the wealth of resources available to both faculty and students interested in clinical and translational research at UF and the movement in general.

“I think by engaging and utilizing the resources already provided by such a comprehensive entity such as the UF CTSI, the College of Nursing and its faculty and students can certainly benefit, not only in the relationships with interdisciplinary colleagues, but by sharing knowledge and enhancing the reputation of our College,” Dr. Horgas said.

Practice Partners and Innovation

In addition to research partnerships, the conference also focused on the future of health professions education and how innovation in education can influence patient care. Keynote speaker Cathy Rick, RN, NEA, chief nursing officer of the Veterans Health Administration of the US Department of Veterans Affairs, discussed the VA’s nursing program, including its innovations and partnerships with educational institutions to pilot a new nursing role, the Clinical Nurse Leader (CNL)—one that highlights a movement from the classroom to the clinical setting.

“The complexity of health care requires complex preparation. The CNL role, the master clinician at the point of care, is one of the most pivotal, transformational opportunities that the nursing profession has to fully contribute to health care transformation and reform,” said Ms. Rick. “In addition, I believe that advanced practice nurses need to be prepared at the doctoral level. The DNP degree offers these practitioners the level of expertise to help them better translate evidence into practice, which we so desperately need and what we owe our patients. It also puts us on an even playing field with our clinical colleagues.”

In 2007, the Veterans Administration established the national VA Academy, a $40 million pilot initiative that funded partnerships between schools of nursing and local VA medical centers to develop stronger collaborations between the two, improve new graduate nurse retention, increase student enrollment and develop new practice programs. UF was one of the first four universities funded for the five-year program.

Ms. Rick also discussed the VA Academy and ways in which the VA fosters nursing practice and encourages education for nurses.

Another panel focused on new nursing roles in education and practice. It featured UF-VA Nursing Academy co-directors Maxine Hinze, PhD, RN, Chair of the College of Nursing Department of Adult and Elderly Nursing, and Maude Rittman, PhD, RN, chief nurse for research with the North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System. Hinze and Rittman discussed the academy’s progress thus far and its success in forging stronger connections between education and

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— Cathy Rick, RN, NEA
Keynote speaker at Dorothy M. Smith Conference

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During the Dorothy M. Smith Nursing Leadership Conference, the College of Nursing honors outstanding alumni who continue to uphold Dean Smith’s vision for nursing and health care with the Dorothy M. Smith Nursing Leadership Awards. This year, five alumni were recognized for outstanding accomplishments, and fellow alumni, faculty, guests and students were able to celebrate with three of the awardees at the conference.

Esteemed alumna and friend of the College, Dr. Linda Aiken, who considers Dean Smith to be a guiding mentor in her nursing career, presented the alumni with their awards. Unfortunately, two of the alumni, Mr. Mark Jones and Ms. Karen Pane, had last minute-scheduling conflicts and were not able to attend. Dr. Aiken accepted the awards on their behalf.

EDUCATION: Rose Kearney-Nunnery, PhD, RN, CNE, earned a Master of Nursing degree from UF in 1976. She was the first graduate of UF’s PhD in Nursing Science program in 1987 (the first such program in the state). She completed her basic nursing education at Keuka College in New York in 1973. She currently serves as Dean of the South University College of Nursing. Dr. Kearney-Nunnery served as Department Head in Nursing at Technical College of the Low Country in Hilton Head, South Carolina from 1995 to 1997 and as Vice President for Academic Affairs at the College from 1997 to 2005. She has also held faculty positions at Louisiana State University, the University of South Florida and the State University of New Paltz. Dr. Kearney-Nunnery was in the initial pilot group of nurses who were tested and certified as Certified Nurse Educators (CNE) by the National League for Nursing in 2005. Dr. Kearney-Nunnery has had a variety of published works, including “Advancing your Practice: Concepts of Professional Nursing,” now in its 4th edition.

RESEARCH: Kathleen Jett, PhD, RN, GNP-BC, earned a Bachelor of Science in Nursing, a Master of Science in Nursing, and a PhD in Nursing Science from UF, as well as a certificate in gerontology. Her emphasis was community health, gerontology, and culture and aging, respectively. She currently serves as a program director at the National Institute of Nursing Research/National Institute of Health in Bethesda, MD. Dr. Jett has held a number of research and administration positions in academia. Her dissertation dealing with aging and frailty in rural African-American women was funded by an F31 (NRSA) from NINR. This study began a program of research focusing on reducing health disparities among African-American elders. She completed a competitive Summer Scholars program supported by the John A. Hartford Geriatric Nursing Institute and then became a faculty member at Florida Atlantic University.

Dr. Jett has presented multiple times in local, national and international settings, both from peer-reviewed abstracts and by invitation. Her publications are almost exclusively peer-reviewed in journals selected to reach the broadest range of clinicians. She has co-authored two books, revisions to “Toward Healthy Aging” (2008) and “Gerontological Nursing and Healthy Aging” (2005), and was also inducted into the Distinguished Academies of Practice in 2006.

PRACTICE: Anicia S. Biglow, RN, PMH-CNC, BC, received her Master of Nursing in psychiatric-mental health nursing from UF in 1976 and her BSN from Florida State University in 1973. Ms. Biglow is the creator, owner and executive administrator of a successful psychiatric-mental health agency, HUG Inc., which provides comprehensive home-based mental health services in the Atlanta area. These services are provided by clinical nurse specialists and nurse practitioners in conjunction with community resources as well as psychiatric liaison consultations in general medical centers. She has broad experience in areas of administration, clinical practice, supervision, consultation and program development.
Ms. Biglow has designed, developed and implemented clinical specialty programs for several hospitals. Prior to forming HUG, Inc., Ms. Biglow served as the Director of Nursing and Medical Support Services at Charter Peachford Hospital in Atlanta from 1986 to 1991. Previously, Ms. Biglow served as a psychiatric clinical specialist at Shands at AGH.

**POLICY: Karen W. Pane, RN, MPA, CMCN, MPA, RN,** received her Bachelor of Science in Nursing from UF and her Master’s of Public Administration from the University of San Francisco. She is currently the Executive Officer of the Office of Research Services and Office of Research Facilities at the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland. In this role, she helps to coordinate administrative management activities and services provided to the NIH Office of Research Services. Her office accomplishes its mission by providing assistance in the areas of general administration, workforce planning and development, communications, and space management.

Prior to this, she served as the Acting Assistant Secretary for Policy and Planning at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), where she was a senior advisor regarding department-level strategic planning and the formulation and analysis of departmental policies. Her background includes a number of positions in policymaking organizations such as the U.S. Department of Labor and the Department of Health and Human Services/Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA).

**OUTREACH: T. Mark Jones, BSN,** received his Bachelor of Science in Nursing from UF in 1985. He is the President and an original shareholder of Ven-A-Care of the Florida Keys, Inc., an infusion pharmacy that has been in business since 1987. Jones and his company have been active in false claims act cases since the early 1990s. Ven-A-Care was founded to deliver drug therapy to patients. Mr. Jones served as the home health nurse who visited many of these patients. Through a twist of fate, he and his Ven-A-Care colleagues found themselves investigating false claims issued by a competing pharmaceutical company. Ven-A-Care filed suit against the company for a breach of fiduciary duty, state antitrust violations and unfair competition. They also filed a false claims lawsuit as whistleblowers acting on behalf of the government. The Department of Justice investigated the allegations and reached a settlement with the company, most of which was returned to states and the federal government.

Since that time, Mr. Jones and his partners have consulted on many cases involving pharmaceutical fraud and helped provide information for lawsuits. Ven-A-Care was given the Taxpayers Against Fraud Whistleblower of the Year Award in 2006 for the work they have done in returning more than one billion dollars to the public.

**Every two years since 2004, our College of Nursing has had the distinct honor of hosting the Dorothy M. Smith Nursing Leadership Conference. The conference provides a venue for bringing together nationally known leaders and scholars in health care and nursing to discuss the most critical issues affecting our profession today. We have been proud to host this acclaimed conference, which allows colleagues from Florida and across the country to engage in meaningful dialogue about how to address pressing issues and improve the future of care for our patients.**

This year, we examined partnerships across research, education and practice, not only in our profession but across disciplines. We were fortunate to host two keynote speakers, Dr. Ada Sue Hinshaw, founding director of the National Institute of Nursing Research, provided her perspective on nursing’s role in clinical and translational research. Ms. Cathy Rick, Chief Nursing Officer of the Veterans Health Administration, discussed how the VA works with educational institutions to pilot new practice models and roles with the goal of improving patient care.

In addition, interactive panels composed of faculty members and students expanded on these topics. One of these panels featured two of our recent alumni, who are now pioneering new nursing roles, the Clinical Nurse Leader and Doctor of Nursing Practice. It is because of nurses like these that I believe change in our health care system is possible. UF graduates are not afraid to forge new paths and break down barriers in the name of improving patient care.

The Dorothy Smith Conference allows us to bring cutting-edge ideas to Gainesville for our students, alumni, faculty members and practice partners. However, this event also allows us to celebrate the memory and visionary spirit of our Founding Dean, Dorothy Smith, and showcase alumni who embody her leadership.

The Smith Conference is a vivid reminder of the outstanding work of our alumni. It brings together our “brightest and best” such as Dr. Linda Aiken from the University of Pennsylvania. It also serves as a tribute to the many private donors and sponsors who help make the conference possible. Thank you to all of our alumni, friends and donors!
UF is roughly 1,000 miles away from the 7.0 magnitude earthquake that struck Haiti on January 12. But in those first few days following the disaster, the distance seemed more like a million miles. With every incoming phone call, people who had friends and loved ones in the earthquake zone braced themselves, praying to see the familiar 501 area code that would signal news from Haiti. In no time, students and faculty in the College of Nursing, the Health Science Center and the university community sprung into service, doing whatever they could to help.

It was Friday, January 15. Three days earlier a monster earthquake hit Haiti, leaving thousands of people dead and even more injured and homeless. Within 24 hours, the student group Gators United for Haiti was born. UF President Bernie Machen said he had just learned that a team of faculty and staff from the Health science Center was going to be airlifted the next morning to Haiti.

“The Gators are already in action and beginning to move forward,” Machen said.

Led by Michael Perri, PhD, Dean of the College of Public Health and Health Professions, our very own alumna and Clinical Assistant Professor Sally Bethart, MSN, ARNP, nurse practitioner, joined a team that spent eight days providing emergency medical relief to Haitian people from a small facility near Port-au-Prince. Within 24 hours, the student group Gators United for Haiti was born. UF President Bernie Machen said he had just learned that a team of faculty and staff from the Health Science Center was going to be airlifted the next morning to Haiti.

Bethart (seen here with Haitian children) and the team knew how important it was to create some sort of normalcy for the children affected by the earthquake. They would play simple games with the children after their health care shifts, creating toys from makeshift items.

Redden is an IFAS extension agent who has been traveling to Haiti for more than 20 years as part of the FISH ministry, located in Christianville, Haiti. He worked with the US Southern Command, which is coordinating the Department of Defense’s response to the crisis in Haiti, to get space for 10 people and supplies aboard military transport.

The group got the call from Southern Command at 4 pm Friday, January 15, asking if the group could be at the airport and ready to go by 8 am. The team began quickly assembling medical supplies, bandages, antibiotics, painkillers, antiseptics ... whatever they thought they’d need on such short notice.

After 24 hours of waiting in a hangar at the San Isidro Air Base in the Dominican Republic, the US Southern Command flew the group via Blackhawk helicopters to the Double Harvest Compound in Croix de Bouquets, Haiti (about 7 miles east of Port-Au-Prince).

Double Harvest was selected because it had operating rooms that were underutilized.

The team began immediately working with the Partners-in-Health medical team that had recently arrived at Double Harvest, triaging patients and operating on those who needed surgery. For several days, the team worked with very few breaks, treating a large volume of trauma cases, including many that required amputations. In addition to the team, there were multiple other response groups and the Haitian medical staff that staffed and kept the “hospital” running 24 hours daily.

As the news spread about the availability of medical care at Double Harvest, the numbers of patients brought to the “hospital” swelled. The types of cases changed over time as the number of peo-
people with traumatic injuries decreased and people needing other kinds of medical care increased.

The group was then divided into two subteams: a medical/surgical group (Drs. Meurer, Risch, DeLaTorre, Melosh and Nelly) and a public health team (Drs. Perri and Gaines, Bethart, Celeste, and Redden).

While the medical/surgical team continued their efforts at Double Harvest, the public health team headed to Christianville. driving through Port AU Prince and witnessing, first-hand, the massive devastation, including the destruction around the Palace. At Christianville, they found the medical clinic, eye clinic, high school and virtually all buildings in the compound collapsed or damaged beyond repair. For several nights, they slept beneath the stars and experienced aftershocks. Following each shock, they invariably heard the crying and wailing of people in the community.

Each day, Bethart and the team set up an outdoor clinic in the courtyard of a collapsed school. As the word spread that help was available, the stream of people with injuries and medical problems grew. The team treated more than 50 individuals each day. In some cases, they needed to transport people to other facilities that could provide more extensive care.

“Between the medical/surgical team and our group, we easily saw on average 200 to 300 people a day,” Bethart said. “To see people who already had so little, and to have that taken away from them— it was heart-breaking.”

Despite the tragedies, there were moments of joy. On the way to Christianville, the group stopped in Carrefour, the epicenter of the quake, to search for Celeste’s mother (who had not been heard from since the quake). Although her home was destroyed, her mother was alive and well. The group shared a very special moment with Celeste, Bethart said, as mother and daughter were reunited.

In addition, Bethart and the team knew how important it was to create some sort of normalcy for the children affected by the earthquake. They would play games with them after their shift, creating toys from makeshift items.

The team met with community leaders to discuss immediate and long-term needs and to begin planning for rebuilding the schools. Throughout the town and countryside, tent cities began to spring up, and most people seemed to be hard at work in clean-up efforts, Bethart said.

Although it was certainly a difficult experience, physically and emotionally, it is one that Bethart would never trade.

“I was grateful for the opportunity to be a small part of this effort,” Bethart said. “Anytime you can use whatever skills and knowledge to help people who truly and desperately need it, you feel like maybe you did something. The Haitian people are amazing. This experience...it was life-changing.”
Third Career’s a Charm:
Accelerated BSN Student Proves It’s Never Too Late to Find Your Passion

When Gayle Wheeler was a young girl, someone told her the most interesting people never held the same jobs their entire lives. At age 56, Wheeler, never dull, is discovering a whole new career.

With her enrollment in UF’s accelerated BSN program, she is now avidly engrossed in career number three. The program currently enrolls a class of about 55 students who will learn five semesters’ worth of classes in a one-year period.

Long before she decided to enter nursing school, Wheeler earned undergraduate degrees in German and Russian, and taught language courses at the secondary level for four years, one of them in Germany. When her husband, Bruce (now a UF professor of biomedical engineering), made a career switch to the Midwest, Russian and German teaching jobs were not easy to find.

Wheeler went back to school, earned her MBA, and spent the next 23 years in business administration, serving as Vice President of Finance for an Illinois company that publishes books and information on sports health, fitness and nutrition. Although she was intrigued by what the company produced, her copious business duties kept her curiosity at bay.

She still maintained an active lifestyle, however, joining an adult co-ed soccer league. It wasn’t until a broken foot slowed her down that she had the time to delve into reading the company’s publications.

“The next thing I knew I was enrolled in a few nighttime nutrition classes here and there,” she said. “Then, I realized I wanted to get back to helping and working with people, and we moved to Florida where I picked up nursing.”

Wheeler is most excited about her future clinical experience in health promotion. She said she wants to focus her career on educating people about preventative lifestyles, so illnesses such as heart disease, obesity and diabetes can be avoided.

Considering her family’s accomplishments, Wheeler’s new career choice seems fitting. Her daughter, Julie, 25, is a second-year veterinary medicine student at the University of Tennessee, while her other daughter, Jean, 27, graduated from the University of Illinois with a degree in material sciences and engineering. Although it hasn’t been easy to switch from one

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Laura Francois has been dreaming about this moment for years. The 20-year-old junior nursing student and recently published novelist has had a whirlwind couple of months, complete with interviews, a book signing and her first real paycheck.

Her novel, Reckless Perfection, made its debut in December and has been in the works since middle school. Based on four main characters, the novel “talks about faith, relationships with friends, family, school drugs, alcohol and sex but is written in a non-graphic way,” Francois said.

After finishing her middle school homework, Francois concentrated on writing her novel. The next mornings at school she would have her friends read the updates and make comments in the margins.

“Most of it’s made up — it’s like a movie playing in my head but little subtle pieces in the book do come from my life,” said Francois, who already wrote the sequel to Reckless Perfection and has more works in mind.

Francois, who wants to obtain her Doctor of Nursing Practice degree with a focus in pediatrics, hopes to incorporate her nursing experiences with her writing. One character has cancer, so Francois will use her nursing knowledge to make the situation more realistic.

College of Nursing classmates and professors are often surprised to learn the soft-spoken Francois is a novelist, she said. Classmate Sandra Garzon, a friend since high school, is not.

“Not only has she been able to publish a book at such an early time in her life but she has done so while fulfilling another one of her passions — nursing,” Garzon wrote. “The fact that both of her passions differ so greatly demonstrates that there are no limits to what one can accomplish in life…(The) publishing of her new novel is the first of many great things that she is going to achieve, and I know this because everything she does is with incredible passion and dedication.”

Clinical Assistant Professor, Sandra Knapp, sees great potential for Francois incorporating nursing knowledge into her writing.

“She is an intelligent and caring person, and I am glad to see her pursuing her dream of writing,” Knapp wrote in an e-mail interview. “Being such a young writer, she should have opportunities to cover many topics for a long time…Maybe (Francois) will one day be known as the nurse who writes excellent fiction about nursing.”

WHERE TO BUY THE BOOK:
Reitz Union, Books Inc., www.amazon.com
Miracle Cromwell coos and cries like any baby. However, her entrance into the world was anything but ordinary, thanks in part to a quick-thinking University of Florida College of Nursing student.

November 19th was a typical fall evening near the UF campus: heavy traffic, dusk settling, and the Gator Marching Band practicing at Norman Field for that weekend’s home game. Senior nursing student, Emily Hunt, was on her way to work and sitting in traffic on Museum Road and SW 13th Street when she noticed the commotion ahead of her.

When a man in front of her told her a woman was having a baby in a van ahead of them, Hunt hopped off her scooter and ran to the front of the line. When she arrived, what she saw was out of a film or TV show. Hunt found Loretta Cromwell crouched over the front seat of the van, struggling with pain. She had labored all day and was sent home from her doctor’s office because she wasn’t dilated enough. But by 4 pm, her water broke, and the family of six headed to Shands at UF. They wouldn’t get there soon enough. As Hunt approached, Cromwell’s husband was delivering the baby.

“It was amazing having Emily there,” said Cromwell, Miracle’s father. “For her to come up and announce who she was and take control of the situation. I tell you what, that made me feel real good. I felt like she couldn’t have been in a better place after that. Everyone was trying to help, and I was holding onto the baby. And when [Emily] came, it relieved a lot of worry.”

Coincidentally, Sandra City, PhD, ARNP, a College of Nursing clinical assistant professor, was next to the car when one of the family’s older children yelled for help. City, an adult nurse practitioner, called 9-1-1 and assisted the delivery as best she could, though her only recent labor experiences were the births of her own children. She coached the father on what to do but Emily’s presence made a huge difference.

“It is so strangely miraculous that this dedicated and mature nursing student, who happened to be in her OB clinical rotation that semester, would be driving by at that moment and could help this family,” City said.

After emergency medical services arrived and the cord had been cut, the EMTs focused on the mother, so Hunt rocked and stroked the baby, providing her the warmth and comfort needed in the beginning of a newborn’s life.

When Loretta Cromwell was safely on the stretcher, ready for transport to the hospital, Hunt placed the towel-swaddled baby onto her chest. Cromwell lit up, and snuggled and kissed the baby. As luck would have it, at that moment the practicing Gator marching band started playing the UF fight song.

“I will always be grateful for [Emily]. I think she is going to be very successful in all that she does. She is my baby’s angel.” — Loretta Cromwell

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College of Nursing Hosts Third Annual Rita Kobb Lectureship

The third annual Rita Kobb Lectureship in Nursing Informatics and Technology took place Friday, October 30, 2009 at the HPNP Complex. The lectureship honored loyal and esteemed Gator Nurse alumna, Rita Kobb, MS, MN, ARNP, GNP-BC, Education Program Specialist at the Veterans Health Administration Office of Care Coordination and Director of VISN 8 Sunshine Training Center of Care Coordination and Telehealth with the North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System. Kobb, who specializes in care coordination/management, home telehealth consulting, and gerontological nursing, has been involved in over 65 publications and creative works.

This year’s distinguished lecturer, Ms. Kobb focused on “Technology and Teamwork: The VA’s Multidisciplinary Approach to Telehealth.” Various forms of health informatics employed by the Department of Veterans Affairs’ interdisciplinary staff and their positive impact on patients and families were discussed. She was joined by colleagues Kathy Moore, a VA occupational therapist and Lead Care Coordinator, and Jim Maudlin, a VA Chaplain working in the Advanced Illness/Palliative Care (AIPC) Program. Both presented case studies of their research and how health informatics are helping individuals everywhere.

College of Nursing 2009 Reunion Allows Gator Nurses to Learn, Play and Connect!

The College of Nursing hosted another fun and engaging Reunion Weekend on November 6-7, 2009, the most highly attended ever, with more than 330 people coming to our combined slate of events. On Friday, at the Florida Museum of Natural History, two informative presentations kicked off the weekend’s events. Jacksonville Campus Director and associate professor Andrea Gregg, DSN, RN, who also serves as current president of the Florida Nurses Association, discussed “Nursing’s Legislative Agenda: Policy Issues in Florida and Nationally.” Following Dr. Gregg was Associate Dean for Academic and Student Affairs, Karen Miles, EdD, RN, who informed guests about “Doctoral Education in Nursing: DNP and PhD.” Both presentations were well attended and inspired much interest and discussion.

Following the presentations were that evening’s cocktail hour and silent auction, held in the beautiful atrium area of the museum. Guests sipped on drinks, munched on appetizers and had the chance to bid on some silent auction items ranging from Gator memorabilia to Swarovksi jewelry. Lively Gator mascots, Albert and Alberta, joined the cocktail reception and posed for pictures with guests.

On Saturday afternoon, three hours before kickoff, Gator Nurses and friends enjoyed the annual tailgate party, held in the College of Nursing courtyard. Along with a bountiful selection of food, guests were treated to an assortment of fun options, including having their faces painted and their caricatures created. Saturday also concluded the silent auction, in which more than $3,100 was raised—an all-time record! All proceeds benefit the Alumni Council Book Awards fund.

The Gator football team also gave everyone something to smile about with an easy victory over Vanderbilt 27-3.

All in all, Reunion activities provided opportunities for alumni to mirror the year’s theme, and “Learn, Play and Connect”: they certainly did.

Mark Your Calendars!
This year’s reunion will take place September 24-25, 2010. More information will follow.
To honor the remarkable career of a College of Nursing educator, Ms. Linnea Schramm (BSN 1984, MSN 1987) recently established the Martha “Jo” Snider Fellowship, in honor of Dr. Snider, an associate professor. Ms. Schramm, an attorney in Chicago, was a former student of Dr. Snider’s.

In over 40 years at the University of Florida College of Nursing, Dr. Snider has taught more than 6,000 bachelor’s, master’s and doctoral students. On 16 separate years, undergraduate students voted Dr. Snider as “Outstanding Faculty Member,” and she received five “Teacher of the Year” awards. Recognizing the importance of integrating research into the curriculum, she developed one of the first undergraduate honors research programs in the country in 1981, and has continued to teach and inspire great efforts from her students in the area of research.

Dr. Snider’s impact on her students has not ended with their graduations. Many of her former students stay in contact with her, some who graduated more than 20 years ago.

This fellowship, established by Dr. Snider’s former student, Ms. Linnea Schramm, (CON BSN 1984, MSN 1987), will provide financial assistance for College of Nursing students pursuing graduate degrees in psychiatric/mental health nursing.

To announce the fellowship and honor both Dr. Snider and Ms. Schramm for her generosity and vision, Dean Long hosted a private reception in her home. The reception was a “surprise” for Dr. Snider, at Ms. Schramm’s request. Fellow colleagues, friends, former students and President Bernie Machen and his wife, Chris, were there.

Believing she was attending an anniversary party for Dean Long and her husband, Dr. Snider could not have been more surprised, or touched, by the news. President Machen and Dean Long presented her with a special certificate, and each honored her briefly, saving the main tribute for Ms. Schramm, who presented a glowing description of her former faculty member, her true mentor and friend.

“It is because of you and your encouragement that I am where I am today, and I cannot thank you enough for all that you have done for me and all of your students,” Schramm said.

The night was indeed a very significant and poignant night for Dr. Snider, who continues to inspire and influence her students.

“Dr. Martha “Jo” Snider epitomizes the best in nursing education, dedication to her students, investment in the scholarly pursuit of learning, and a commitment to true excellence. I join my fellow faculty members and I am sure many of her former and current students in congratulating Dr. Snider on this very special and significant fellowship in honor of her career,” said Dean Kathleen Long.

“It is a fitting tribute to a truly excellent nursing educator.”

If you wish to contribute to the fellowship, you may do so by contacting our development officer, Anna Harper at aemiller@ufl.edu or 352-273-6360.
The UF College of Nursing is grateful for recent gifts of generous individuals and organizations from January to December 2009 to benefit our college. A tradition of excellence in education, research and practice continues to thrive, due in large part to the generosity of these philanthropic individuals and organizations.
practice. Those successes include decreasing the nurse turnover rate by 25 percent, increasing enrollment in the past two and a half years by 94 students, and encouraging evidence-based practice initiatives by nursing staff.

The panel also included two UF nursing graduates, Sara Gravelle, MSN, CNL, part of the first UF Clinical Nurse Leader class in 2007, and Karen Theoktisto, DNP, ARNP, part of the first UF Doctor of Nursing Practice class in 2009. These graduates provided their own personal perspectives from their experiences in these roles.

“What we see with the examples of both the VA Academy and our new CNL and DNP graduates is how innovation truly can drive success,” Dean Long said. “Hearing from these graduates—pioneers of these new nursing roles—was simply inspirational for everyone in the room. They are the innovators, those who will improve nursing care and who have the courage to go against the grain to do so.”

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course a night to a full-blown semester, she credits her family’s support for her motivation.

She also said she serves as the “mother hen” to most of her classmates.

“Everyone knows I usually have cash instead of just plastic, especially when it comes to paying for mailbox rentals,” she said. “I’m a lot older than everyone else; people definitely know my name.”

Wheeler said she encourages her classmates to learn by doing, rather than looking at their first job out of college as what they’ll be doing forever.

“People need to examine themselves and what they want out of a job, as well as pursue passions and think of life as a journey,” she said.

Special Delivery continued from page 9
After Hunt finished her shift as a hostess at Carrabba’s that night, she went to Shands to visit the Cromwell family.

“It was a blessing to me to have her there, and it was a blessing for my family to have those two women (Hunt and Citty) there,” Cromwell said. “I thank God for them.”

Hunt cites her obstetrics clinical instructor, Michele Brimeyer, MSN, ARNP, for everything she has learned this semester. Brimeyer, after hearing the tale from Hunt’s classmates, sent a proud and congratulatory e-mail to Hunt that night.

“It seems like it was fate that she was there that day and could help this family and their baby,” Brimeyer said. “But more than that, it is a testament to our College preparing nurses to not simply pass tests but to critically and practically apply the knowledge, theory, and skills of nursing practice.”

The Cromwells were struck by Hunt’s compassion and caring. Even after the baby was born, she continued to visit them in the hospital and contact them by phone. The Cromwells plan to attend her graduation in May.

“I will always be grateful for her,” Cromwell said. “I think she is going to be very successful in all that she does. She is my baby’s angel.”

IN MEMORIAM

The College of Nursing was deeply saddened with the passing of several alumni and friends. These women had a tremendous impact on the College of Nursing, both personally and professionally. Their contributions will not be forgotten. Our thoughts are with their families and loved ones. They will be missed by all of us.

Muriel M. (Moulton) Barr, 93, (1916-2009), of Port Charlotte, died Thursday, Nov. 26, 2009. A longtime friend of the College, Muriel worked as a registered nurse but thoroughly loved being a housewife. In 1980, Muriel and her late husband, John D. Barr, moved to Florida after John’s retirement from teaching in Hampton. While in Florida, she was a member of St. Nathaniel’s Church and the Locke Family Association. She is survived by family members, including her nephew and several cousins.

Janette Thomas Cain, a member of the first graduating class from the college’s BSN program in 1960, passed away on July 16, 2002.

Kathy A. Cooke, 56, (1953-2009), of Bowdon, Georgia, passed away Sunday, November 1, 2009. As a 1975 BSN graduate from UF, she worked in the health care field for more than 30 years. Her greatest pleasures were spending time with her friends and family. She is survived by her husband of 35 years, Al Cooke; her children and their spouses, Allen and Marissa Cooke of Acworth and Alice and Rodney McDaniel of Dallas; her grandchildren, Ethan, Coleman and Dylan; her sisters, Mary Jo Harrington of Ormond Beach, Florida, Connie Clark of Tallahassee, Florida, Alyn Stowe of Doraville and Valerie Carter of Starke, Florida, and their families.

Violet Marie Matson Larson, 83, passed away on January 19, 2010, following complications from pneumonia. Violet earned her MSN from the University of Florida in 1974. She worked in several areas ranging from in-hospital direct care to teaching at the university level. Violet was also involved in community outreach to Florida’s rural population. She was a loving, dedicated mother of six children.

Janice Carol Pinkston, 57, passed away on October 10, 2009. Janice moved to Gainesville in 1975 from Paris, Tennessee and earned her BSN from UF in 1977. She then worked for North Florida Regional Medical Center in Gainesville. Janice is survived by her husband, Wesley Pinkston of Gainesville, and two sisters, Anita Cannon of Paris, Tennessee and Mary Beth Brown of Archer, Florida.

Amy E. Plager, 52, passed away on April 16, 2009. She earned her BSN in 1979 from UF. She was residing in Clarkston, Georgia at the time of her death.
alumni news

1980s

Judith R. (Dallamn) Sands, BSN 1981, earned her Master of Science in Leadership from Nova Southeastern University. She is currently the Risk Management Specialist for the Health Professions Division of Nova Southeastern University.

1990s

Denise Henning, BSN 1993, MSN 1997, is a Service Line Leader for Women’s Health at Collier Health Services, a federally qualified health center in Immokalee, Florida. She is a practicing midwife and provides prenatal and gynecological care to a service population that is predominantly uninsured or covered by Medicaid. From 2003 to 2008, she served as Director of Clinical Operations for Women’s Health Services at the Family Health Centers of Southwest Florida, where she supervised nurse-midwives and other clinical staff. Prior to this, Ms. Henning served as a Certified Nurse Midwife in several locations in Florida and as a labor and delivery nurse in a Level III teaching hospital. She is President of the Midwifery Business Network and a chapter chair of the American College of Nurse Midwives. She was recently nominated to serve on the MACPAC panel (Medicaid and CHIP Payment and Advisory Commission).

Lewis McKenzie, BSN 1997, continues in his role at University of North Carolina Memorial Hospital (Chapel Hill) where he has been the MICU Nurse Manager since August 2005. He was selected in October 2008 as one of North Carolina’s Great 100 Nurses—a program that honors Nursing Excellence in North Carolina.

Versie Johnson-Mallard, MSN 1996, is an assistant professor at the University of South Florida College of Nursing. She recently won a competitive grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) to study strategies to prevent the spread of viral sexually transmitted infections among college students and young adults. She was one of 15 nurse educators from around the country to receive this three-year $350,000 Nurse Faculty Scholar award. The grant began in October 2009.

Jacqueline Rychnovsky, MSN 1997, just completed a one-year health policy fellowship in the office of Senator Daniel Inouye (D-HI). Throughout the year she was instrumental in advancing health reform legislation to fund nurse-managed health centers and nurse practitioner residency training programs in federally qualified health centers. Rychnovsky earned her Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing in 2004 from the University of San Diego and is currently serving on active duty as a US Navy Nurse Corps Captain, operating the Nurse Corps Policy and Practice office at the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery in Washington, D.C.

Faculty Emeriti

Faculty Emeritus Virgie Pafford is currently residing in Gainesville. She would love to reconnect with former students, classmates or faculty. Please send notes to 2254 NW 15th Ave, Gainesville, FL 32605 or give her a call at 352-376-3023.

Do you have an update to share? Please contact Tracy Wright, tracyb@ufl.edu or (352) 273-6421.

Brittany Blanton Latimer, BSN 2007, MSN 2008, and her husband Christopher (left) had identical twin boys in April 2009. In July 2009, Brittany began working for Magnolia Pediatrics in Lake City as a pediatric nurse practitioner. Magnolia Pediatrics is owned by Stacey Cervantes (pictured at right), who is also a UF nursing alumna and the Latimer twins’ pediatric health care provider!

Dear Gator Nurses,

It’s unbelievable that this year I will finish my term as President of the UF Nursing Alumni Council—it seems like I just started! I can say that these past two years have truly been a wonderful and memorable experience for me, and I strongly encourage all of you to become more involved with alumni efforts, whether it be on our Alumni Council, as a class representative or even helping to gather items for our annual Silent Auction. It is a small investment of time that reaps many rewards personally and professionally. The friendships I have reestablished or made since becoming active with Alumni Council have truly been worthwhile. It is always wonderful to connect with Gator Nurses especially those you may never have had a chance to meet otherwise!

Reading this issue of The Gator Nurse reminds me of why I am so proud to represent our College of Nursing. This spring the College hosted another inspiring Dorothy M. Smith Leadership Conference, exploring the most innovative and cutting-edge topics in our profession today. We were also able to honor five outstanding alumni in distinct areas of nursing excellence with Dorothy M. Smith Nursing Leadership Awards. It is also fitting that this conference affords our students the ability to meet these alumni and observe the impact of a UF nursing education!

The stories about our nursing students featured in this issue illustrated just how unique, compassionate, brave, talented, and intelligent our students are—both in and out of the classroom. Whether they are helping a family and their newborn baby at time of need, attempting a third career, or penning their own novel, our Gator Nursing students are more than just “ordinary” nursing students.

Finally, I am very happy to see the generosity and foresight of so many of our alumni and friends, who even during a difficult economic climate, contributed to the College to advance our missions of education, research and service. At a time when state funding has been slashed, private funding helps the College to continue its tradition of excellence.

Go Gator Nurses!

Bonnie Pepper
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*Several components of the program may require some individualized learning experiences and residency to be arranged at student’s home site.