NEW BUILDING ON THE HORIZON

A new Health and Human Services Complex is planned in the near future with construction anticipated to begin in late Fall or early Spring. The School of Nursing will be built in Phase I of the project. Phase II of the complex will consist of a second, adjoining building which will house the Rosalyn Carter Institute for Caregiving, Department of Psychology and Sociology, and Student Health Services. The facility will offer state of the technology and resources needed for nursing education. Housed in the School of Nursing will be a Clinical Learning Center which will serve as a virtual hospital. Specialized units such as med-surg, ICU, trauma, pediatrics and obstetrics will be located in the center as well as a primary care lab and basic competency lab. It will be equipped with state-of-the-art equipment and patient simulators that will enable students to experience highly complex patient care.

OUR FIRST SIMULATION LAB

The School of Nursing’s first simulation lab has three adult, high-fidelity patient simulators that look, feel, and act like “real patients,” and are now being utilized as a major component of student learning. Throughout the nursing curriculum, these simulators are now considered to be essential in terms of student learning of complex clinical skills and patient care decision making. With acuity levels of patients being greater nursing students need an opportunity to practice skills in a safe environment prior to caring for the “real patient” who is acutely ill.
Alumni Notes

As Dean, I am committed to our alumni, friends, and supporters to renew, strengthen, and maintain our connection with you. Please assist me with this by sending me an update on where you are, what you are doing, personal information that you would like to share, and certainly contact information (e-mails). I would like to publish a long list of updates by graduation year in the next newsletter. We are proud of the accomplishments of our alumni. Please either return the completed alumni update form in this publication to the School of Nursing or e-mail to son@gsw.edu

GSW School of Nursing Alumni
Chapter is now on Facebook.
Show your support and become a fan!

The School of Nursing is creating a database of its alumni. If you would like to receive updates electronically, please forward your email address to the Student Services Coordinator- SON@canes.gsw.edu

Georgia Southwestern Students Nurses Association

The GSW Chapter of the Georgia Student Nurses Association provides an excellent means for our students to become active in a professional nurses association. The chapter members have actively participated in community activities, particularly assisting families in need during holidays such as Thanksgiving and Christmas. They have recently completed a fundraiser to assist the Haiti disaster relief efforts. It is our goal to have all nursing students become members of this organization while at GSW.

Mu Pi Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International

Dr. Bonnie Simmons, President of our Mu Pi Chapter is planning an active year for the organization. For our members of Sigma Theta Tau, thank you for your continued support our chapter.

2010 School of Nursing Career Fair A Success!!

Thank you to all who helped make the 2010 GSW School of Nursing Career Fair a smashing success! Our rough estimate is that we had approximately 160 people attend including nursing students from Darton College and South Georgia Technical College. We are continually amazed at how hard people work and how willing they are to go above and beyond what is expected. The comments and feedback we have received have been so positive, employers and job-seekers alike have asked that we report how amazing our staff is, how well-organized the event was, and how beneficial it was for them to come.

Sandra Daniel, PhD, MSN
DEANS MESSAGE

Dear Alumni and Friends:

A newsletter from the School of Nursing has been long overdue! I would like to take this opportunity to bring you up to date on the happenings within the School of Nursing. There have been a number of changes and additions that have occurred since the last newsletter.

I was appointed Dean of the School of Nursing August, 2008 after serving one year as Interim Dean. What a pleasure it is to lead the School of Nursing at my own alma mater. I received both my associate and bachelor degrees in nursing from GSW. In 1986, I began teaching nursing here and have made this my career. I completed the pediatric nurse practitioner certificate program at the University of Alabama in Birmingham, earned a MSN from Valdosta State University, and my PhD in Nursing from the Medical College of Georgia.

I have had the pleasure of being a part of a highly successful nursing program. A legacy of excellence, created in 1956 with the first six graduates of the associate degree program, has continued over a span of 50 years. It is always a pleasure to receive a note, e-mail, phone call, or visit from our nursing alumni. We value our alumni and appreciate your support of our program. I am looking forward to the opportunity to strengthen our partnerships through regular communication.

In this newsletter, I will try to update you on important changes that have occurred and some that are planned. My plans will be to publish a newsletter annually to post periodic updates on the School of Nursing webpage.

www.gsw.edu/~son/
Federal Grant Awards

In 2008, the School of Nursing was awarded a three-year Nursing Workforce Diversity grant by the DHHS Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) totaling $764,000. This grant is providing scholarships and academic support in our “Prescription for Academic Success” to 30 students each year in efforts to create a more diverse nursing workforce. In 2009, the School of Nursing received two additional grants that provide student scholarships: $30,000 from HRSA for disadvantaged students and and $15,000 from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Dr. Leisa Easom serves as project director for the grants.

Update on our Baccalaureate Degree Program

Generic Prelicensure BSN:
According to the National Advisory Council on Nurse Education and Practice, at least two-thirds of the nursing workforce should hold baccalaureate or higher degrees by 2010. Currently only 34% of nurses are educated at the bachelor’s level. We are proud that we are offer the BSN. This program track is experiencing substantial growth as the demand for BSN in this geographic region continues to escalate. Our graduates have celebrated many career and educational successes post-graduation. Employers consistently provide positive feedback on your critical thinking abilities and clinical excellence. We have learned that you: our alumni, friends, and supporters serve as our best recruitment tool. Thank you.

Accelerated BSN:
In 2005, in response to a rapidly growing trend in the nation to reach new student populations in creative ways, the School of Nursing launched a new program track, a second-degree, accelerated program for individuals with a prior non-nursing degree.

The first cohort of students completed the program in May, 2007. The nine inaugural graduates of this new program were: Sulenia Bobb, Shawanda Griffin, Lithitya Granville, Robert Kite, Megan McGorman, Connie Ozimba, Angela Randall, Jill Wiggins, and Marianna Yinh. This program track is growing rapidly and provides a “fast-track” to nursing.

RN-BSN:
Most of you know that one program with a long history at GSW is the RN-BSN program track, designed for RNs wanting to complete the BSN degree. Since 2004, the RN-BSN program may now be completed totally online in response to the travel, family, and career demands that many RNs face. RNs can complete the program in three semesters of full-time study once core courses are complete. Part-time study options, as always, are also offered. For courses with a clinical component, faculty work with the student to identify quality experiences in locations that are geographically convenient to the student.

The program has experienced significant growth over the past three years. We currently have over 100 students enrolled full or part-time in the RN-BSN program.

LPN-BSN:
We now offer a program track for LPNs desiring to complete the BSN. Additional information may be found on our website.

I am pleased to report a 93% first-time licensure pass rate for 2009. This is well above the national mean of 87%. Congratulations to our newest group of graduates on their outstanding performance!

Forming Partnerships

The Medical College of Georgia expanded its Clinical Nurse Leader (CNL) graduate program on GSW’s campus this fall. The CNL program is one of the newest, most innovative, and rapidly growing model of nursing education in the country that prepares nurses to be advanced generalists. Through our partnership with MCG, individuals with prior non-nursing bachelor’s degrees enter and complete the prelicensure graduate degree program in 16 months. There are currently 20 students enrolled in the program on our campus. For more information about the education and role functions of CNL’s, I encourage you to read http://www.aacn.nche.edu/Publications/WhitePapers/ClinicalNurseLeader.htm

Faculty Notes

Dr. Leisa Easom, Mix Foundation Eminent Scholar, holds a joint appointment between the School of Nursing and the Rosalynn Carter Institute. This appointment represents the University’s growing commitment to establishing collaborative interdisciplinary partnerships. Dr. Easom serves as Chair of the School of Nursing and coordinates the Pope Fellows Scholarship Program at the RCI. Dr. Easom’s scholarly work has focused on caregiving issues in the field of gerontology. Dr. Easom completed both her undergraduate and graduate degrees in nursing at Valdosta State University. She earned her PhD in Nursing from the Medical College of Georgia. She is serving as the Interim Executive Director of the RCI.

Mildred Lapeza, MSN, RN, Assistant Professor of Nursing, joined us Fall, 2008. She holds both the associate and baccalaureate degree from GSW, a MSN from Valdosta State University, a BS in Zoology from the University of Georgia, and a Medical Technology degree from Georgia State University and Grady Memorial Hospital in Atlanta. She is a Clinical Nurse Specialist in Adult Psychiatric and Mental Health and maintains national certification in that area.

Mikki Guest, MSN, RN serves as Assistant Professor of Nursing, having joined the faculty Fall, 2008. She completed both her associate and baccalaureate degrees in nursing from our own GSW. She obtained her master’s degree in nursing from Albany State University with a nursing educator focus. She has experience in medical-surgical nursing and public health nursing. We welcome her as one of our newest faculty.

Rebecca Mathews, RN, MSN, Assistant Professor of Nursing, joined GSW Fall, 2008. She completed her BSN and MSN from Georgia College and State University.  

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and has received post-MSN certification in nursing education. She has extensive experience in acute care nursing and is certified in Wound Ostomy and Continence Nursing.

Krystal Oliver, RN, MSN, Senior Lecturer of Nursing, has been a member of the GSW nursing faculty since 2005. She obtained her BSN from Valdosta State University and MSN from the University of Phoenix. Her clinical expertise is in acute care nursing. She dedicates much of her time working with academically high-risk nursing students to increase their program success.

Bonnie Simmons, PhD, RN; serves as Associate Professor of Nursing. Dr. Simmons obtained a Diploma in nursing from Piedmont Hospital School of Nursing, a BSN from Georgia Southwestern State University (another alumni of whom we proudly claim), MSN from Valdosta State University, and PhD in Nursing from Georgia State University. Many of you will remember Dr. Simmons who has taught obstetrical nursing for a number of years at GSW. Dr. Simmons currently serves as President of Mu Pi Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau and President-elect of the Georgia Perinatal Association.

Teresa Teasley, DNP, RN, serves as Associate Professor of Nursing, having joined the faculty one year ago after having taught and serving as Interim Dean at Darton College.

Dr. Teasley completed both her associate and baccalaureate degrees in nursing from GSW, her MSN from Troy State University, and the Doctorate of Nursing Practice from the Medical College of Georgia. She has clinical expertise in obstetrics, pediatrics, and psychiatric nursing.

Janet Wills, APRN-BC, M.Ed, RN, Assistant Professor of Nursing joined our faculty fall, 2008 brings extensive experience in nursing education and as a family nurse practitioner to GSW. She obtained her BSN from Florida State University, a Master of Education (Behavioral Science) from GSW, and MSN (Family Nurse Practitioner) from Albany State University. She taught at Albany State University for several years prior to joining us last year.

School of Nursing Graduates 51

The nurse pinning ceremony is a time-honored tradition when nursing faculty present newly-graduating nurses with a pin identifying the school from which they graduated. Of the 51 students who earned a bachelor of science in nursing at Georgia Southwestern State University’s (GSW) spring commencement May 8, 33 took part in the pinning ceremony the night before.

"The ceremonial pinning is a symbolic welcome to each nursing graduate entering the nursing profession, and it is largely considered to be the most meaningful event by both graduates and their families," said Sandra Daniel, Ph.D., dean of the School of Nursing.

"While many customs and traditions in nursing have been abandoned over the years, the pinning of graduates with a symbolic medal of honor has continued.

"The first nursing pin at GSW was designed by the first six graduates from the nursing program in 1956," Daniel added. "An addition to the pin was later added to represent the baccalaureate degree; however, the original design of the pin was retained. It is my honor and privilege as dean and as an alumna of GSW to welcome our class of 2010 to nursing and a long line of nurses who have continued a legacy of excellence."

This spring’s class is one of the largest in school history. With the addition of a new Health and Human Sciences Building, the capacity of GSW’s School of Nursing will be increased. The new building will be three stories with the majority of the space devoted to nursing classrooms and laboratories. Construction on the new building is expected to begin sometime in the next year, pending approval from the Governor’s Office.

Of the 51 BSN graduates this spring, 26 earned degrees through the “generic” four-year track, 16 earned degrees through the Accelerated BSN Program, and nine students completed the RN to BSN program.

As you can see, several of our faculty received one or more degrees from GSW and have returned to teach at GSW.

Joy Humphrey, RN, MSN, joined GSW Fall 2010 as Lecturer. She completed her MSN from GA College and State University and formally taught at Middle Georgia College.

LaManda Jones, RN, BSN serves as Lecturer while completing her MSN with a focus on Nursing Education. She is a graduate of GSW. Ellen Elder, RN, BSN serves as Lecturer while completing her MSN with a focus on Nursing Education. She is a graduate of GSW.

Rhonda Slocumb, RN, MSN, MPH serves as Lecturer while completing her MSN with a focus on Nursing Education. She is a graduate of GSW.

Staff Notes

Beth Howell Webb, BSN, RN, joined the School of Nursing May, 2008 as Clinical Lab Coordinator. Beth completed her BSN from GSW (2003) and has gained significant experience in acute care nursing and simulation learning.

Angel Ramos, Student Services Coordinator, holds a BS in Liberal Studies and MBA from GSW. He joined the School of Nursing in August, 2009. His role focuses on recruitment and admission coordinator of nursing students.

Kathy Arnold serves as student counselor for the Prescription for Academic Success program grant. She holds a master’s degree in Social Work.

WHERE IS THE GSW NURSE?

Send us your updates.
SON@canes.gsw.edu