E-Nursing: The Role of Technology in Today's Nursing Classroom
Sylvia, a 23-year-old pregnant woman, has been sent to the hospital by her doctor with pre-eclampsia for a possible induction. A UF College of Nursing faculty member and her group of BSN students in their OB/maternity clinical rotation assess Sylvia, who complains of a headache and is experiencing mild uterine contractions. During the assessment, they perform Leopold maneuvers to determine the location of the fetus, check the fetal monitor, interpret the fetal heart rate pattern, and monitor Sylvia for signs and symptoms of preeclampsia. The scenario culminates in successful delivery of the baby.

Fast-forward to reality: this type of clinical experience would not be available in an ordinary health care setting, where exposure to these types of complex problems are limited and may only be experienced by selected students when they occur. But “Sylvia” is actually one variable of “Noelle,” a simulated patient being used by Clinical Assistant Professor Jane Gannon, DNP, CNL, CNM, to expose students to the kinds of situations they may experience in professional practice.

“The simulation activity I am doing replaces a clinical experience where I would be on a labor and delivery and/or postpartum unit. The preparation I would need to do for that is far less than what I do in the Simulation Lab. However, the amount of time I spent in the past chasing down students, trying to find learning experiences for them, trying to assure they were all equally exposed to fundamentals was exorbitant, frustrating and usually nonproductive. In the Lab EVERYONE gets exposed to a scenario, either as a participant or an observer/helper,” Dr. Gannon said.

A Way of Life

Whether it’s with simulated patient technology or the use of cell phones on the unit, the typical nursing student’s academic experience looks a lot different than it did even 10 years ago. Students’ lives are filled with Facebook, MySpace, text messaging, iPods, and of course, computers. They take notes with a laptop and access their assignments via programs like Blackboard and WebCT. For a nursing student, that may mean engaging in clinical scenarios with simulated patients or contacting faculty members via text message.

Although the technological advances may appear impersonal to some veteran nurses, who began their clinicals by practicing on each other, they have actually allowed more fluid connections between students and faculty members, especially those in different cities and provided safer mechanisms for students to learn vital skills.

The College has been using distance delivery technology between its Gainesville and Jacksonville campuses for over a decade, and more recently with campuses in Tallahassee and Pensacola through its North Florida PhD Consortium. The continued growth and development of Web-based classes and delivery has definitely created new teaching/learning opportunities for faculty and students.

“I must admit the learning curve is continuous. As soon as you feel you have mastered something, a new technology is added or something changes,” said Rosalyn Reischman, PhD, ARNP, a clinical assistant professor on the Jacksonville campus and co-coordinator of the acute care nurse practitioner DNP and postmaster’s certificate program.

Dr. Reischman, like many College of Nursing faculty members, uses various forms of technology in her classes. AN e-learning allows her to use recorded lecture videos and voiceover PowerPoint (PPT) presentations as well as synchronous communication with Elluminate, a program that offers faculty to offer real-time Web conferencing and virtual classroom environment designed by faculty members for teaching and learning. In the live classroom she uses SimMan simulations for procedures like tracheal intubation, central venous line insertion, chest tube insertion and others.

She also uses Turning Point Technology, a system in which real time feedback in live lecture presentations is structured via PPT. She writes questions on a PPT slide, and distance students
respond to questions by clicking on remote control responders. The answers are tabulated and displayed on the next slide, which provides immediate feedback as to whether students are comprehending the material.

While the convenience and flexibility are great advantages, Dr. Reischman notes that there are some challenges.

“From a faculty perspective, with students in front of you, you can tell whether or not they are engaged and understand what you are trying to get across,” Dr. Reischman said. “Spontaneous questions are valuable. Also, nonverbal communication is lost with online learning.”

Virtually Connecting with Students

For Clinical Assistant Professor Leslie Parker, however, who coordinates the state’s only Neonatal Nurse Practitioner program, online classes are the preferred option.

Students from all across Florida, from Miami to the Panhandle, access the program online only, through Elluminate software. Students cannot see Parker, but they can hear and talk to her and their classmates. Students attend the live class via computer or can watch it later. The vast majority of Parker’s students attend the live class.

During the class Parker points to teaching tools on her computer desktop, such as X-rays, then goes into detailed instruction about abnormalities. She can pull up students’ tests and clarify or explain the answers to questions that were frequently missed or invite discussion about certain questions.

Parker noted that use of technology bolstered student evaluations of course content and that student participation had been remarkable. Once a semester all the students also come to Gainesville for an in-person class.

Far from feeling that her personal relationships with students have been diminished because of the program’s online format, Parker believes it may have helped her get to know her students better, and the convenience factor is a major plus.

“It is so much easier than going to the College, packing up all my stuff and trying to arrange for a classroom. I don’t even have to leave my house! I think my students really appreciate having ready access to me and to each other.”

Sarah Peacock, a Jacksonville BSN DNP student, was unsure of what to expect when watching classes from a live video feed. She had just started to use Web-CT when she graduated from UF in 2003; and her experience with e-learning was thus limited.

“The experience has been better than expected,” Peacock said. “I am amazed at how organized the professors are in using distance learning and how you can raise your hand and speak and be heard by the professor in another city. I feel as if I am in class in Gainesville and feel very connected with my instructors. I love how e-learning puts the whole course at your fingertips. It really enhances learning as opposed to just reading a textbook and taking notes.”

Sim-Clinicals

Let’s rewind back to Noelle, our simulated patient. We know what she can do for the faculty, but how well does she work for students?

“The simulation experience was very interesting,” said BSN Senior Lara Akinbo. “However, when it comes to therapeutic communication, it is hard to communicate with a simulated patient. It feels silly sometimes ‘talking’ to a mannequin. However, simulation was really effective in helping me learn to perform certain skills, for example, starting an IV.”

“I love how e-learning puts the whole course at your fingertips. It really enhances learning as opposed to just reading a textbook and taking notes.”

— Sarah Peacock, BSN to DNP student
There is a definite warming-up period for students that takes place prior to working with the simulated patient, Dr. Gannon said.

“But unease is usually replaced by curiosity. Once we are in the throes of managing a laboring woman in pain, they are right there at her side trying to help and excited at the prospect of witnessing a birth, even a ‘vinyl’ one. The students are very receptive to the experience,” Dr. Gannon said.

Gannon appreciates being able to identify strengths and weaknesses right away in our students. “For example, I can correct students’ weaknesses right away, like removing a tourniquet after a blood draw, so once they are in the clinical setting they are more apt to remember that step.”

Still to come are findings that hopefully show the advantages of simulated education to textbook and didactic strategies only.

Tom Bedard is a VA Nursing Academy faculty member and clinical simulation coordinator for the College of Nursing. He is currently directing a pilot program with a group of accelerated BSN students in which students are receiving weekly simulation education experiences. Bedard is also conducting a pilot study comparing two groups of VA residents, who are recent nursing graduates. One group is receiving clinical education through simulated scenarios and one is learning the same material via textbooks and readings. The study will assess whether the group receiving simulation education learns and understands the material more thoroughly than the groups using readings only.

Bedard’s enthusiasm and excitement for simulation technology is infectious. “My BSN students’ evaluation of this equipment have been outstanding, and they are calling for more of this type of clinical education,” Bedard said.

**Where Do We Go From Here?**

So what does the future hold for technology in the nursing classroom? If advances continue at their current rate, it may be almost impossible to imagine the face of nursing education 20 years down the road. Dr. Reischman encapsulates an important aspect of the evolving role of nursing instruction:

“The teacher’s role is gradually transitioning from the expert who disseminates wisdom in the classroom to a collaborative guide who steers students to the appropriate learning paths. In short, with the aid of technology, faculty members provide the roadmaps and students use them to find the answers. This is an important educational advance considering that in the health care field knowledge must be constantly changing and most updated.”

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**technology**

**1999 vs. 2009**

In just 10 short years, the face of technology, inside the classroom and out, has changed dramatically. Here is a snapshot of some of those changes.

- **THEN** – 3½ inch floppy disks
- **NOW** – Mass volume storage drives and DVD’s
- **THEN** – Music CDs were bought and listened to on your CD player
  - **NOW** – Music can be downloaded online and saved to an i-Pod, which goes everywhere.
- **THEN** – Taking pictures meant buying film and having it developed at local pharmacy.
  - **NOW** – Digital cameras now allow instantaneous viewing of photos, downloading and sharing them with millions on the Internet.
- **THEN** – About 69 million people owned a cell phone in the U.S.
  - **NOW** – Today, more than 190 million people own cell phones. Thirty-nine percent of these are smartphones, which allow access to email, the Internet, videos, and academic course content.
- **THEN** – Most students using computers at UF visited the campus CIRCA lab and waited for open stations. Gatorlink emails were optional and not required.
  - **NOW** – UF students are required to own a personal computer and have a Gatorlink email address, which faculty use to regularly communicate with students.
- **THEN** – Technology via the classroom was limited to TV replay classes, distance learning and Powerpoint presentations. Students obtained readings and syllabi via their local bookstore, in printed copy.
  - **NOW** – Almost all UF students use the e-learning system to access their classes and have some sort of Web-based component. Many students have only online classes and many access all materials online.

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Gator Nursing’s Heritage Inspires our Leadership

When I assumed the Deanship at the UF College of Nursing 14 years ago, I learned much about the heritage of the College and the ways in which our founding dean, Dorothy Smith, and those who followed her embraced innovation. Whether it was in the early integration of education, research and practice or the establishment of the state’s first doctoral program in nursing, Gator Nurses have never been content to simply follow. Instead, we have led in many facets of our profession, and the trend continues today.

Technology has permeated our lives. We now track patient care with high-tech approaches, and we use technology for communication between students and faculty members. The advent of online and distance learning has facilitated access to education for students who cannot attend classes, thus promoting opportunities for career advancement. Simulation now allows educators to teach complex skills and care management without endangering real patients, and the growing movement to electronic health care records requires that every health care professional become proficient in this modality.

UF College of Nursing faculty members have embraced the technology boom and taken the lead in several initiatives. We have employed distance delivery in our graduate programs for many years; we now also offer many classes in a Web-based format. In fact, almost all classes in our undergraduate and graduate programs offer some Web-based components, many of them employing UF’s Web CT e-learning system. This online portal allows students to access readings, assignments, quizzes and other materials, and provides forums for communication with faculty members and fellow students.

The simulation aspects of our programs have grown substantially. Professors Tom Bedard, Sally Bethart and Jane Gannon are leading in these initiatives, and simulation scenarios are being used at all levels of nursing education.

We are excited to be in negotiations to convert all of our patient records at Archer Family Health Care, our College’s nurse-managed clinic, to an electronic format. We are proud to be ahead of the curve in adopting this technology. We expect to have our electronic record system in place before many of the clinics and other health care facilities in Florida. This system will not only aid in efficiency and quality assurance, it will allow students who acquire clinical experience at the Archer facility, to gain knowledge in the use of electronic health care records. In these and other ways, our faculty members are using the latest technologies in order to improve education and ultimately, patient care.

Once again, the UF College of Nursing is proud to be in the forefront of exploring new ideas and applications for advancing the mission of professional nursing! Please visit us and learn more about these and other endeavors. Mark your calendars for the Biennial Dorothy M. Smith Nursing Leadership Conference on January 21-22, 2010, which will focus on new education and research models in nursing. We appreciate the support of our alumni and friends as we face the challenge of preparing graduates for tomorrow’s health care.

Kathleen Ann Long
PhD, RN, FAAN

FALL 2009
In a span of seven years, Sara Nowlis has provided nutrition workshops to rural villagers in West Africa as a member of the Peace Corps, worked in an oncology ward of a Jacksonville hospital, served as the case manager for people with tuberculosis in the Anchorage, Alaska health department and worked with an interdisciplinary health team in Uganda providing care for AIDS patients also suffering from TB.

This dynamic Gator nurse now finds herself back in Gainesville, at her alma mater, in the family nurse practitioner track of the inaugural class of BSN to DNP students.

Nowlis, who served two years in the Peace Corps immediately after graduation from UF in 2001, wanted to provide more than just education to the medically underserved people she met during this period.

“There was so much lacking in terms of primary care for these people, and I wanted to be in a position where one day I could travel to places like this and help provide this care, which is so desperately needed,” Nowlis said.

After her service ended with the Peace Corps, Nowlis enrolled in the University of North Florida’s Accelerated BSN program in her hometown of Jacksonville, where she also obtained valuable experience working in an oncology ward at a local hospital. From there she journeyed clear across the nation to Anchorage, serving in a health department as a case manager for people with tuberculosis.

Even while she came to care deeply for her Alaskan clients, Nowlis felt drawn to her previous humanitarian work in the Peace Corps. She applied for Doctors Without Borders, an international medical humanitarian organization. Within five months, Nowlis found herself in Uganda treating HIV/AIDS patients with a team of health care professionals.

But her journey was far from over. While in Uganda, it became evident she needed advanced education to meet the diverse needs of the people she sought to help. She decided to apply for the DNP program launching in Fall 2009. This involved taking the GRE exam overseas, but as with her other endeavors, she was up for the challenge.

“I always knew I wanted to advance my education, and I wanted to go to the best nursing program in Florida,” said Nowlis, a full-time student.

The College is happy to welcome this global nursing ambassador as part of the first class of BSN to DNP students, as she has never been afraid to venture down unknown paths in distant parts of the world. She is one of 52 students who comprise the first class of BSN to DNP students.

“It is kind of exciting to be at the start of something new in the nursing profession,” Nowlis said.

As for the future, Nowlis is considering working again with Doctors Without Borders because she feels passionate about the mission of global and humanitarian health care. She admits, however, it might be nice to settle in one place and develop her own private practice.

“This degree will open a lot of doors for me,” Nowlis said. “Even if I do settle somewhere, I know that my heart will lead me to work with underprivileged groups in need of health care. It’s truly been my calling.”

Nowlis is one of the first 52 students in a new UF program that allows graduates who have earned bachelor’s degrees in nursing to enter directly into study for the Doctor of Nursing Practice degree. UF is one of the first universities in Florida and in the nation to offer such a nursing program. The U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration Department of Health and Human Services awarded more than $900,000 to the College to facilitate transition of its advanced practice nursing education program from master’s to doctoral level. This education option will increase availability of primary healthcare providers in underserved areas and help address the critical nursing faculty shortage.

The BSN to DNP program currently has four specialty tracks: family, pediatric, adult and acute-care nursing. There are 152 total students enrolled this fall in the College of Nursing DNP program.
Among the College’s faculty honorees were:

- **Nursing Advocacy**: Andrea Gregg, DSN, RN, Associate Professor and Jacksonville Campus Director
- **Clinical Nursing**: Pamela Pieper, MSN, ARNP, Clinical Associate Professor and Pediatric Surgery Nurse Practitioner/Clinical Nurse Specialist for the Department of Surgery at Shands Jacksonville
- **Community Nursing**: Joan Castleman, MSN, RN, Clinical Associate Professor; Dee Williams, PhD, RN, Exec. Associate Dean/Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs and Associate Professor
- **Nursing Education**: Jo Snider, EdD, RN, Associate Professor
- **Nursing Research**: Jennifer Elder, PhD, RN, FAAN, professor and department chair
- **Role Model in Nursing Advocacy, Education and Research**: Kathleen Long, PhD, RN, FAAN, Dean and Professor

Those selected were honored in September at the FNA Centennial Celebration banquet in St. Petersburg Beach, Florida.

VA and College of Nursing Receive Grant to Improve Clinical Wound Treatment

The North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System, in partnership with the University of Florida College of Nursing, received a $70,000 grant from the VA Office of Academic Affairs to design and implement a nurse-led wound treatment program in order to improve clinical outcomes. The VA-UF partnership grant, one of eight awarded nationally, will be used to develop a one-year program focused on enhancement of interdisciplinary education for the prevention and treatment of pressure ulcers and development of evidence-based wound care for veterans.

Pressure ulcers and other chronic wounds present a serious threat to veterans’ health and quality of life and are prevalent in patients 45 to 65 years of age. Treatment of pressure ulcers has been estimated to cost the United States between $1.68 and $6.8 billion annually. Unfortunately, minimal attention has been given to interdisciplinary approaches to wound healing. The average number of hours devoted to skin and wound care in nursing educational programs is about 12 hours, and medical students typically receive only about four hours of instruction.

The one-year program will help increase knowledge regarding wound care and skin assessment for medical and nursing students.

“The idea is that this will eventually become a model for other VAs throughout the country,” said Maxine Hinze, PhD, CNL, College of Nursing Department Chair, and Co-Director of the VA-UF Nursing Academy. “Wounds are an important issue at the VA. Taking care of a patient with wounds is very costly, not just in terms of dollars, equipment and supplies, but in quality of life.”

Hinze and Maude Rittman, PhD, RN, VA Chief Nurse and Co-Director of the Academy, are principal investigators on the grant. The research team consists of Michelle Cox Henley, MSN, RN, Chief Nurse for Surgery and Wound Team Supervisor at the Malcolm Randall VA Medical Center; Joyce Stechmiller, PhD, ARNP, Associate Professor and VA Skin and Wound Care Research/Educator; and Linda Cowan, PhD, ARNP, Certified Wound Nurse, wound team coordinator and doctoral candidate at the College of Nursing. All are specialists in wound care.

“We are looking at the issues associated with wounds comprehensively in order to prevent them. Hopefully, this program will help decrease patients’ length of stay and better their quality of life, which is the bottom line for these veterans,” Dr. Hinze said.

Great 100

Many College of Nursing faculty members were recently honored by the Florida Nurses Association in the 2009 FNA Great 100 Nurses Centennial Celebration. The Great 100 Nurses were nominated by their peers and selected as representatives of excellence in diverse areas of nursing practice.

Among the College’s faculty honorees were:

- **Nursing Advocacy**: Andrea Gregg, DSN, RN, Associate Professor and Jacksonville Campus Director
- **Clinical Nursing**: Pamela Pieper, MSN, ARNP, Clinical Associate Professor and Pediatric Surgery Nurse Practitioner/Clinical Nurse Specialist for the Department of Surgery at Shands Jacksonville
- **Community Nursing**: Joan Castleman, MSN, RN, Clinical Associate Professor; Dee Williams, PhD, RN, Exec. Associate Dean/Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs and Associate Professor
- **Nursing Education**: Jo Snider, EdD, RN, Associate Professor
- **Nursing Research**: Jennifer Elder, PhD, RN, FAAN, professor and department chair
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Those selected were honored in September at the FNA Centennial Celebration banquet in St. Petersburg Beach, Florida.

VA wound nurse Linda Cowan (L) discusses wound procedures with VA-UF faculty member Carla Anderson.
Joining the faculty in 1997, Dr. Nancy Tigar’s expertise and contributions played an important role in the College’s community and public health nursing education program. In 2005, she spearheaded development of a new master’s in public health nursing program track and obtained funding from the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration to launch the program, the first in the state of Florida, in 2006.

Dr. Tigar earned her BSN in Nursing at the University of Pennsylvania, her master’s degree in Public Health from the University of Michigan School of Public Health and her Doctor of Public Health from the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill.

Prior to coming to UF, Dr. Tigar served as a faculty member at LaSalle University School of Nursing in Philadelphia and the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill School of Public Health. She also served as an assistant director and consultant for the National League for Nursing and as a nursing advisor to the National School Health Program in South Vietnam for the U.S. State Department.

The College bid farewell to Dr. Tigar and celebrated her accomplishments with a special afternoon tea attended by a roomful of faculty members, students, and friends.

“Using humor, grace and her passion for public health nursing, Dr. Tigar motivated students to become connected and actively involved within their communities,” said colleague Joan Castleman. “Her work while at the University of Florida helped address Florida’s growing need for public health nurses trained to address the state’s health crisis.”

Dr. Sandra Seymour was one of the few faculty members to have worked with all the UF College of Nursing deans. Dr. Seymour first taught medical-surgical nursing at the CON in 1969. She eventually left for clinical nursing and nursing faculty positions in Virginia and Tallahassee but returned in 1976 to teach selected classes in sexuality and health at the CON.

Most recently, Dr. Seymour, a family nurse practitioner, and associate professor, taught courses in advanced practice nursing. As a nurse practitioner, she provided patient care at Archer Family Health Care. She also served as President of the College’s Faculty Organization from 2007 to 2009 and Chair of the Department of Women’s, Children’s and Family Nursing from 1996 to 1998.

Dr. Seymour earned her BSN at the University of Virginia, her MN in Medical/Surgical Nursing at the University of Florida, and her PhD at Florida State University. She was educated as a family nurse practitioner at UF. Prior to coming to UF, she held education and clinical positions in Washington D.C., Virginia, and Tallahassee.

“Sandra Seymour has been a consummate clinician for decades,” said Dr. Jo Snider, EdD, RN. “She has the knowledge, sensitivity and interest to invest in people and their lives. She is an illuminating teacher and an irreplaceable friend. The College of Nursing, its faculty, students and staff, have known her only in positive ways.”

In September, family, friends and faculty members gathered to honor Dr. Seymour’s 27-year tenure with “Cheeseburgers in Paradise,” a Jimmy Buffett-style bon voyage party.

Dr. Sandra Seymour (L) with Dean Long.

Former External Affairs and Resources Chair Anna Kelley presents Dr. Tigar with a token of appreciation.

UF to Host SNRS Annual Conference in 2011

The University of Florida College of Nursing will serve as an official host of the 2011 Southern Nursing Research Society (SNRS) Annual Conference in Jacksonville. SNRS encompasses the southern region of the U.S., the Bahamas and countries of Caribbean and Latin America. Faculty members from UF will attend the 2010 February SNRS Conference in San Antonio, Texas not only to present research and network with other colleagues, but to collaborate with former conference hosts and enhance preparation for SNRS 2011.

For those planning to attend the 2010 conference in San Antonio, be sure to look for a Florida-friendly display and giveaways previewing the 2011 conference in Jacksonville. Information regarding SNRS is provided at www.shrs.org, and more details about the 2011 conference will be forthcoming in future issues of The Gator Nurse.
According to a University of Florida College of Nursing study, a regular tai chi exercise program can help people better control their diabetes and lower glucose levels. Tai chi is an ancient Chinese martial art that combines deep breathing and relaxation with slow, gentle circular movements. This low-impact exercise employs shifts in body position and stepping in coordination with arm movements.

In a study of adults diagnosed with type 2 diabetes, those who participated in a six-month supervised tai chi exercise program (two days on campus and three days at home per week) experienced significantly lowered fasting blood glucose levels, improved management of the disease, and enhanced overall quality of life, including mental health, vitality and energy.

“Tai chi really has effects similar to those of other aerobic exercises on diabetic control. The difference is that tai chi is a low-impact exercise, which means that it’s less stressful on the bones, joints, and muscles than more strenuous exercise,” said Beverly Roberts, PhD, RN, and Annabel Davis Jenks endowed professor at the College.

In collaboration with visiting professor Rhayun Song, PhD, RN, of Chungam National University, Roberts’ study findings which studied older Korean residents were featured in a recent issue of the Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine.

About 7.8 percent of the U.S. population (23.6 million children and adults) have diabetes. Risk factors include obesity, sedentary lifestyle, unhealthy eating habits, high blood pressure and cholesterol, a history of gestational diabetes and increased age. Many risk factors can be reduced through exercise.

“People assume that for exercise to be beneficial you have to be huffing and puffing, sweating and red-faced afterwards,” Roberts said. “This may turn people off, particularly older adults. However, we have found that activities like tai chi can be just as beneficial in improving health.”

Sixty-two subjects, mostly older adult Korean females, participated in the study. Half of this group participated in at least 80% of the 6-month tai chi program. The other half of the sample served as a control group. Participants who completed the tai chi sessions showed significantly improved glucose control with type 2 diabetes and reported higher levels of vitality and energy.

“Those that participated in the tai chi sessions actually had lower blood glucose at three and six months,” Roberts said. “Those also had lower hemoglobin a-1-c, which means they had better diabetic control.”

“Tai chi provides a great alternative for people who may want the benefits of exercise on diabetic control but may be physically unable to complete strenuous activities due to age, health condition or injury.”

In addition to improved blood glucose levels, participants also reported significantly improved mental health. This was encouraging, since people with less depression are typically more active and independent, Roberts added.

Tai chi has also been used for people with arthritis and disabilities to increase balance, muscle strength and mobility and to reduce risk of falls. “It is worth investigating its effects in other conditions, especially in older people,” Roberts said.

“Tai chi provides a great alternative for people who may want the benefits of exercise on diabetic control but may be physically unable to engage in strenuous activities due to age, health condition or injury,” Roberts said. “Future studies should examine whether tai chi may similarly benefit those with conditions such as osteoporosis or heart disease.”
**accomplishments in brief**

**Assistant Professor Jodi Irving** has been appointed to Meridian Behavior Health, Inc.’s Advisory Board. The Board’s focus will be enhanced mental health education and endowment support.

**Professor and Department Chair Jennifer Elder**, collaborated with current PhD student, Tina D’Alessandro, to write an article titled “Supporting Families of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders: Questions Parents Ask and What Nurses Need to Know.” The article was published in the *Journal of Pediatric Nursing*. Elder and D’Alessandro also presented *Recent Updates in Autism Diagnosis and Treatment: What Pediatric Nurses Should Know* at the 25th Annual Pediatric Nursing Conference in Orlando. Dr. Elder also had another article published in *Journal of Pediatric Nursing*, “Introduction to the Special Series on Child and Adolescent Mental Health”.

**Assistant Professor Donna Neff** was recently appointed as the Co-Chair of the VA Nursing Academy Advisory Board. She also is an appointed member of the National Advisory Board for the Nurse Practice Councils – Florida Hospitals.

**Associate Professor Sunny Yoon** was selected to receive a University of Florida Research Foundation (UFRF) Professorship award for 2009-2011. Dr. Yoon also was named as one of the UF Research Foundation Professors, one of 30 faculty members from UF recognized with this distinction. She coauthored an article titled “Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS): Epidemiology, Diagnosis and Treatment—An Update for Health Care Practitioners” which was accepted in the *Journal of Gastroenterology and Hepatology*. She also is a reviewer for the *Asian Nursing Research* journal, along with Dr. Beverly Roberts.

The May 2009 issue of *Applied Nursing Research* contains an article by **Assistant Professor Lori Thomas** on “Effective Dyspnea Management Strategies Identified by Elders with End-stage Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease.”

**Crystal Bennett**, a PhD student under the supervision of Annabel Jenks Endowed Chair Beverly Roberts, was awarded a University of West Florida SCAC faculty grant. Dr. Roberts has been selected as an International Career Advisor by Sigma Theta Tau International.

**Associate Professor Joyce Stechmiller** received funding from NIH as a co-investigator on a project titled “HealthPoint” that focuses on wound healing—her area of expertise. Dr. Stechmiller has also reviewed grant applications for the NIH section on Behavioral Medicine Interventions and Outcomes (BMIO).

**Courtesy Associate Professor Dr. Mary Rockwood-Lane** was inducted as a Fellow into the American Academy of Nursing in November.

**VA Chief Nurse Maude Rittman** and the VANA faculty were awarded an “Innovations in Education” grant from the VA for their project, “A Nurse-Led Multidisciplinary Wound Care Education and Clinical Program.”

**Department Chair Maxine Hinze**, was honored with the College of Nursing’s President and Dean Award for Outstanding Service.

**Visiting Assistant Professor Susan Salazar** successfully defended her PhD dissertation, “Determinants of Follow-Up after Abnormal Pap Screening in Low Income and Minority Women” at Barry University.

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**Gator Nurses Receive Unique Distinction**

Three UF nursing alumni received designation by the VA Office of Health Services Research for the first nurse-led research center of excellence: the James A. Haley Veterans’ Hospital Nursing and Hospital Services – Patient Safety Center of Inquiry in Tampa. The Center’s director, Audrey Nelson, PhD, RN, FAAN (PhD 1990) and its associate directors, Pat Quigley, PhD 1992, ARNP, CRRN, and Gail Powell-Cope, PhD, ARNP, (BSN 1979, MSN 1984) collaborated to help the Center earn the designation.

“Part of what makes this really special is that this is the first nurse-led research center of excellence in the VA,” Dr. Quigley said. “Our commitment is to reduce the burden of illness, injury and disability for people living with a disability or who are newly disabled. It’s all related to positive rehab outcomes and to maximize them.”

The Center will receive $5 million over the next five years, helping the VA continue to fulfill its existing research mission, while advancing the science of rehab and developing a more robust Center in terms of health and rehab services. The funds will also boost continuing research efforts, including training for new generations of investigators.

The program launched in October.
Due to popular demand, the College of Nursing has reprinted “A Labor of Love,” a compilation of memoirs written by Dr. Mary Elizabeth (Betty) Hilliard, PhD, CNM, founder of the College of Nursing’s midwifery program.

The book details Dr. Hilliard’s remarkable journey from a nursing student to her retirement from the University of Florida in 1990.

As part of Dr. Hilliard’s dedication to the College of Nursing and to nurse midwifery, she has made a substantial bequest to support continuation of the nurse midwifery program. Her bequest establishes a professorship in nurse midwifery, one of the first in the nation. Donations from alumni and others will help fully endow the professorship, which honors Dr. Hilliard and will help the College of Nursing attract a premier faculty member in the field.

If you are interested in getting a copy of Dr. Hilliard’s book or contributing to the professorship, please contact Anna Harper at 352-273-6360. There is a limited supply of reprinted books available. Donations to the Betty Hilliard Professorship Fund are welcomed.
Gainesville Gator Nurses Reconnect

More than 25 local College of Nursing alums gathered to mix and mingle in September at the College’s Gainesville Gator Nurse Gathering. Alums reconnected with fellow classmates while munching on hors d’oeuvres, sipping wine, and sharing stories about the nursing profession. Dean Long addressed the Gainesville alums regarding exciting current programs, including information about the DNP program, already in its second year. The “cocktail hour” reception offered local alums a chance to have fun, share experiences and discuss their busy professional and personal accomplishments. If you are interested in hosting a Gator Nurse reception in your local area, please contact the Office of Alumni Affairs at 352-273-6395.

The University of Florida Bequest Society

Create a lasting legacy for nursing education

Even during these tough economic times, Gator Nurse alumni and friends still want to support the mission of our College of Nursing. In the last issue of The Gator Nurse we informed you about other ways of giving to the College, including bequests or real estate. In this issue we want to provide more detailed information about these options.

Over the years, many University of Florida alumni and friends have remembered the University in their estate plans. In recognition of such commitments, UF supporters who document a specific or residual bequest provision of at least $10,000 will be recognized through the University of Florida Bequest Society. Additionally, individuals whose bequest provisions total $100,000 or more will be recognized at the distinguished level. Donors wishing to remain anonymous can still qualify for membership by completing the Bequest Provision.

To be recognized in the Bequest Society, simply provide the University of Florida Foundation, Inc. with either a copy of the specific provision reflecting your estate commitment for benefit of the University, or contact Anna Harper (aemiller@ufl.edu or 352-273-6360), who will answer questions and send you a Bequest Provision form.

Bequests may be designated for the unrestricted use of the College or for a specific purpose of your choice. A bequest gift of $30,000 or more may be designated to create an endowed fund in memory of a loved one or to carry your own name. The annual spendable income from the endowed fund, as defined by University of Florida Foundation, Inc. policy, provides perpetual recognition for the person or persons named.

**Annual spendable income can:**
- Ensure financial assistance for graduate students and faculty.
- Help support research to improve patient care.
- Help fund faculty members who will impact future generations of students.

**You decide!**

For more information, contact Anna Harper at aemiller@ufl.edu or 352-273-6360, or visit http://www.uff.ufl.edu/HowToGive/
Have you left your mark

at the College of Nursing?

This is your opportunity to make sure everyone knows you were here. Order a commemorative engraved brick to celebrate a birthday, anniversary or graduation. Honor those who have made an impression on you—your parents, a mentor or an exceptionally special professor.

Future Gator Nurses will be able to see your continued support of the College each time they visit, and your purchase supports the College of Nursing Dean’s Excellence Fund.

4” x 8” bricks are $250; 8” x 8” bricks are $500

For further details and/or to order, please visit www.nursing.ufl.edu. Here you will be able to download the order form, print and return it. Or contact Yancy Jones at yancy@ufl.edu or 352-273-6614 for more information.
1960’s

Carole Dotter Pohl, MSN 1968, BSN 1961, is a graduate of the UF College of Nursing’s second class (1961). After working for a few years at Shands, she completed her MSN in 1968. She is now retired after serving 13 years in practice and 24 years as a university professor. Pohl lives in North Carolina near Asheville, where she was reunited with Nancy McAllister Rogers, who graduated with her in the BSN class. The two have enjoyed reminiscing about the early years in the College and the privilege of having Dean Dorothy Smith as their mentor and teacher. They found her to be truly inspiring and instrumental in the lives of all her students.

1970’s

Ann-Lynn Denker, BSN 1973, who currently serves as director for the Center for Nursing Excellence at Miami Jackson Health System, was recently appointed to the Board of Nursing by Governor Charlie Crist.

1980’s

Karen W. Pane, BSN 1984, is currently the Acting Assistant Secretary for Policy and Planning at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Also serving as the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy and Planning, she is a senior advisor regarding department-level strategic planning and the formulation and analysis of departmental policies. Ms. Pane oversees all aspects of VA Department of Defense collaborations. She supports the identification, development, analysis, and review of issues affecting veterans’ programs and fosters quality management techniques and procedures throughout the VA. She is also a volunteer with the Emergency Healthcare Reserve Corps (EHRC), Emergency Health and Medical Services Administration, District of Columbia, and the Department of Health. Ms. Pane formerly had served as Director of the Office of Performance Monitoring, Center for Program Planning and Results at the U.S. Department of Labor.

Tonja Hartjes, BSN 1986, PM-FNP 1998, ACNP 2008 has taken a new position as the SICU/CTICU Clinical Nurse Educator at the Malcolm Randal Veterans Affairs Medical Center (VAMC). She was honored to be offered this position and looks forward to a long career with the VAMC. She also will continue her clinical practice as an ACNP PRN at Shands UF in the CTICU.

1990’s

Mary Weber, PhD 1997, is an associate professor at the University of Colorado-Denver College of Nursing and option coordinator for the College’s Family Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (FPMHNP) master’s program. She was recently appointed to an endowed professorship as part of a $3 million gift to fund an endowment for the Psychiatric-Mental Health Nursing specialty in the graduate program. Her primary focus is to redesign and reopen the Psychiatric Mental Health option in the graduate master’s degree program.

Sylvia Worden, MSN 1993, BSN 1991, was an ARNP at the UF Student Health Care Center for five years and taught undergraduates at the College of Nursing for a year prior to that.

For the past five years she has served as the administrator of the student health center at Golden West College in Huntington Beach, California. In May 2009, she moved to Orange Coast College in Costa Mesa, California, to serve as Associate Dean of Student Health Services. Orange Coast College is one of California’s premier community colleges, and the student health center there serves a student body of 25,000.

Cary Carter, BSN 1993, is working at Shands at UF as a (CRNA) Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist. He graduated with his MSN from Barry University in Miami Shores and received his clinical training at Orlando Regional Medical Center, Winnie Palmer Hospital for Women & Babies, and Arnold Palmer Children’s Hospital in Orlando, FL. Carter is also a captain in the U.S. Army Reserve and will deploy to Afghanistan in 2010 to provide anesthesia services to our soldiers in that region.

2000’s

Sean G. Smith, BSN 2006, is currently a flight/ICU nurse, based in southern New Mexico. He has been accepted to Duke University’s Nurse Anesthesia Program, class of 2012. He previously worked at Shands at UF as a flight nurse and educator. He is very grateful to all of his UF professors and alumni mentors at “big” Shands!
Dear Gator Nurses,

This fall I am again reminded of how proud I am to be a Gator Nurse, and to be involved with our Alumni Council. Whether through the visionary spirit of our education programs or the quality of our amazing nursing students, Gator Nursing really does stand out.

In September, along with my fellow Alumni council members, I had the privilege of reading more than 50 student applications for our Nursing Alumni Council Book Awards from our new junior class. While it was time consuming, it made me realize the depth of excellence and talent we have in our own nursing students. It was extremely challenging for us to select the 10 students from that group to receive Book Awards. Every applicant was worthy!

It also made me recognize how significant is the work of our Alumni council—we need to increase funding for these awards. Every year, proceeds from our Reunion Weekend Silent Auction go toward the Book Awards. We appreciate all of the alumni and friends who bid on items and help us expand this fund each year which greatly benefits our nursing students. We certainly encourage and invite those who want to give directly to the Book Awards to do so—hopefully we will be able to assist more students in a meaningful way.

Our nursing students are the future of our profession. I am confident that Gator Nurses will be at the forefront of improving health care and elevating our profession, and I am happy that our Alumni Council can do our part to recognize and assist these students.

Have a wonderful holiday season! Hope to see many of you at the Dorothy M. Smith Nursing Leadership Conference on January 21-22, 2010.

Bonnie Pepper

Go Gator Nurses!

Bonnie Pepper

IN MEMORIAM

Dr. Carol Ahem Williams, 76 (1933-2009), passed away August 9, 2009 in her home in Columbia after her 20-year battle with cancer. She earned her MN degree in Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing from the University of Florida in 1971 and was later appointed to instructor and then assistant professor at the University of South Carolina (USC) College of Nursing. After earning a DSN degree in Community Mental Health Nursing at the University of Alabama in 1982, she became an Associate Professor, and upon retirement in 1999, was awarded the title of Professor Emerita. At USC she taught undergraduate and graduate courses in psychiatric mental health nursing and supervised master's and doctoral student research. She made numerous nursing research and practice presentations at professional meetings around the world and published extensively in prestigious professional journals.

She is survived by her daughter, Karen Williams Hammack; grandsons, Mathew and Rex of Longwood, FL; sister, Elaine Jennings of California; and many friends and professional colleagues.

Save the Date • February 12, 2010

College of Nursing Career Fair

With Gator Nurses in high demand, the Office of Alumni Affairs is bringing the best hospitals and health care companies in the Southeast to Gainesville to meet our students and graduates.

Please contact Lindsey Stevens at lmstevens@ufl.edu or 352-273-6395 in the Office of Alumni Affairs for more information.

president's message

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The Gator Nurse is produced three times a year for the alumni, friends, faculty and staff of the University of Florida College of Nursing.

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DOROTHY M. SMITH NURSING LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE
University of Florida College of Nursing
January 21–22, 2010 | Gainesville, FL

National leaders discuss how nursing education, research and practice can partner together to achieve better outcomes for patients.

Topics include:
• Clinical and translational research: applications for nursing
• Education for New Practice Models (CNL and DNP)

Gain continuing education credits. The program meets requirements of the Florida Board of Nursing for 5.75 contact hours of continuing education. The UF College of Nursing is an approved provider of continuing education in the State of Florida (provider number 50-2826).

Presented by: Thomas M. and Irene B. Kirbo Charitable Trust

Sponsored by: Florida Hospital

Log on for full details online—discussion descriptions, speakers and registration
www.nursing.ufl.edu/DMSconference | ph 352-273-6395 | fax 352-273-6505