Excellence in Nursing
Published annually by Western University of Health Sciences' College of Graduate Nursing

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# Excellence in Nursing

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From the Dean

The call to action by the 2010 Institute of Medicine report on the Future of Nursing is as important to academia as it is to practice to improve the health care outcomes of our nation. As Dean I am fully aware of the need to provide transformational leadership to lead a complex organization. This vision is attainable due to an incredibly talented group of faculty and staff that I have the pleasure to serve. The CGN prides itself on its high quality reputation that we enjoy.

New technology impacts education as well as practice; therefore, nursing faculty must maintain practice expertise, incorporate best practices in teaching, and be skilled as guides, mentors and coaches to support our student’s educational goals. Many new faculty members often comment, “I had no idea how complex the role in academia was.” I would agree that the learning curve is steep; however, the return on the investment (students) provides a lifetime of satisfying memories.

In this publication, you will be impressed with the accomplishments of our students, faculty and professional staff, but these go beyond degrees, scholarships, and GPA's. Accomplishments include practice change (dissertation topics), national presentations, professional posters, service within the community, mentoring of students, tutoring, and leadership within organizations on-campus and in the professional community. At the upcoming American Association of Nurse Practitioner meeting, several CGN faculty and students will be presenters!

This year CGN’s 50 Masters of Science in Nursing Entry (MSN-E) students created history by achieving 100% pass rate on the NCLEX exam and were recognized at the annual pinning ceremony. For the past several years, the average passing NCLEX score has been 92-98% so our students were very proud of this milestone.

The CGN continues to break new ground as an innovative college. This spring we launched a Care Coordinator Pilot Program in partnership with the CA Institute for Nursing and Healthcare. This opportunity is funded by the CA Wellness Foundation and CGN is the university partner for this project. Currently 24 students are enrolled. Additional objectives for this grant include creating a white paper on needed roles for nursing in our state to meet the call to action by the Affordable Care Act. New roles, expanded scope of practice, new care delivery models, policies, and educational curriculum will need to be part of promoting and enhancing the health of our citizens.

New CGN initiatives this year include a fund raising campaign to further advance the technology in our simulation laboratory, incorporate a certificate program in Care Coordination, and completing a feasibility study to develop an Interdisciplinary certificate/master’s degree in Quality and Safety.

You are all invited to our second annual Interprofessional Quality and Safety Conference which is fast approaching. The conference will be on campus August 17, 2013. Please visit our home page for details www.westernu.edu/nursing. We hope to see you there!
Western University of Health Sciences

Hello Everybody:
The College of Graduate Nursing continues to set the standard for excellence in nursing education, with a combination of innovative academic programming, community service, and professional development that has raised the College’s profile.

2012-13 has been an especially fruitful year for the College. In August 2012, CGN’s inaugural Quality and Safety Education for Nurse Educators and Clinical Leaders conference attracted 200 regional and national nursing decision-makers to Ontario, California, to spend a day exchanging ideas about nursing’s key focus these days: patient safety.

The College in December 2012 also entered a linkage agreement with the University of La Verne that will help send qualified ULV students into WesternU’s Master of Science in Nursing – Entry (MSN-E) program. Those incoming students will have a lot to live up to: In February 2013, all 50 members of its MSN-E class passed the National Licensure Examination. The 100 percent pass rate was the first in the eight-year history of the MSN-E program.

These accomplishments are commendable, but they come as no real surprise to those of us who see the excellence and high standards at work in the College of Graduate Nursing each and every day. CGN has raised the bar for all of graduate nursing education and patient care, and in the following pages, you’ll see why. The College’s students, faculty, staff and alumni model the best of what makes WesternU itself so special: its combination of skilled hands and caring hearts.

President’s Vision

Our goal for Western University of Health Sciences should be nothing short of greatness, and we must aim high for our institution to be considered the national treasure that it deserves to be. At WesternU, aiming “too high” is considered a virtue, for it is in the setting of lofty goals and achieving them that great, sometimes unexpected, things can be accomplished. Even if an original target is not attained, simply coming close can yield impressive results.

Yet building tomorrow’s greatness cannot depend upon practices that were honored in the past but are ill-fitted to the work of the present. For example, greatness in teaching and learning can no longer be only about transmitting and acquiring information, as this is easily accomplished today through browsers and a WiFi connection. Rather, greatness in teaching, learning, research, and clinical care can only be realized through fostering creative, bold, and even audacious ideas.

This is why our Strategic Plan must be grounded on new models and new ways of doing things that measurably enhance the quality of our educational programs, as well as everything we do to surround and support those programs. What follows in this document are the foundations for our lofty aim of advancing Western University of Health Sciences Toward the Future of Health.

Institutional Mission

WesternU is a graduate university of medical sciences that produces, in a humanistic tradition, health care professionals and biomedical knowledge that will enhance and extend the quality of life in our communities.

Values

The people of WesternU are dedicated to caring as they pursue their educational, scholarly, patient care, and public service activities. The University encourages diversity and interdisciplinary collaboration between programs, students, faculty, staff, and administrators. The ideals of continuous quality improvement, lifelong learning, long-term planning, fiscal strength, adaptability, and agility in the rapidly changing worlds of health care and education are realized through innovation, teamwork, and collaboration within the University, as well as with its network of academic health centers and community partners.

My best to you all,

Philip Pumerantz, PhD, President
Western University of Health Sciences
Using a learner centered model, the College of Graduate Nursing faculty creates an environment that cultivates capacity for the nursing student to:

- Meet the diverse patient and population needs
- Function as a transformational leader
- Advance science and technology to deliver and enhance safe, quality and effective care
- Engage in health policy change to advance the profession of nursing
- Work independently and collaboratively to improve patient and population health outcomes
- Build foundations for lifelong learning
College of Graduate Nursing Philosophy

The Western University of Health Sciences (WesternU) College of Graduate Nursing (CGN) prepares nursing leaders entering the profession (Master’s Entry), or advancing their education to the masters and/or doctoral level (MSN and DNP). The CGN graduates are prepared to lead patient and family healthcare innovation in multiple practice settings. The following philosophy reflects the beliefs of the CGN regarding the profession of nursing, nursing education, and student-centered learning environments.

The Profession of Nursing
Nursing is an art and a science requiring foundational knowledge in both liberal arts and sciences. The societal demand to improve health care outcomes provides the context for nursing theory, research, and evidence-based nursing practice. Professional nurses are autonomous in providing preventative care, population health management, and direct patient-centered care based on the American Nursing Association social policy contract (ANA, 2010). Nurses strive to prevent illness and attain, maintain, and regain the health of patients, families, and communities through multiple roles. Within the healthcare systems of local and global communities, these roles include advocates, coordinators of care, direct care providers, administrators, educators, and researchers.

Health Care Systems
The 2010 Institute of Medicine report on the future of nursing, articulates that advancing nursing leadership will improve the care of patients and communities. The CGN is uniquely positioned with its programs led by expert faculty and administrators to prepare nursing leaders to meet this challenge. Improvement of quality of life and patient satisfaction serves as indicators of nursing excellence. At the same time, healthcare cost containment must assure patient centered care while providing an efficient and effective use of resources. Therefore, nursing must encompass the larger context of the healthcare system and participate in economic solutions.

Local and Global Communities
The CGN consists of individuals representing a variety of unique backgrounds and regions. Embracing this diversity provides the opportunity to enrich one another as well as influence local and global communities. Through the unique distance format the CGN students and faculty reach beyond the walls of the University creating innovative learning environments. In doing so, more local and global communities are impacted by the scholarship and core characteristics seeded in our students, graduates, faculty, and staff.
Nursing Education

Nursing education is a process that provides opportunities to expand and extend multiple ways of knowing for continued growth and competency for the student and the nursing profession. Nursing education draws upon various disciplines and involves organized learning experiences that augment previous knowledge and skill in the preparation to practice advanced nursing. The educational process supports personal, social, and intellectual development while assisting students to attain academic and professional goals. The CGN seeks to evoke honesty and the excitement of discovery, encourage self-expression, and serve as a catalyst for life-long learning.

Nursing education at the CGN is supported by eight pillars. Four represent the core characteristics of our graduates, faculty, and staff, and four represent the Boyer Model of Scholarship.

CGN Core Characteristics

• **Leadership:** Nursing professionals, as leaders, must be strategically placed at the forefront of healthcare change as full partners with other health care professionals. Therefore, graduating masters and doctorally prepared nurses is essential to advance healthcare and lead reform.

• **Innovation:** The current healthcare system demands innovation and creative solutions to enhance quality patient outcomes in a safe environment. The future of healthcare will require new thinking, competencies, and inter-professional collaboration to create new systems of care.

• **Collaboration:** Optimizing the use of resources for the best outcomes requires working together in an interprofessional and intra-professional collaborative effort. Interdisciplinary collaboration enhances the capacity of others for mutual benefit. A common purpose is achieved by sharing risks, resources, responsibilities, and rewards. Nurses in advanced practice go beyond the basic communication, coordination, and cooperation to become fully engaged collaborative partners.

• **Compassion:** Compassion is caring in action and humanism is also a core value of WesternU. Together compassion and humanism guide the nursing curriculum in the context of valuing the quality of life for individuals, families, and communities. The recipients of compassionate and humanistic nursing care are complex organisms influenced through genetic, biological, behavioral, cultural, and environmental factors.
Boyer Model of Scholarship

Scholarship is integral to the learning environment and helps define outcomes achieved by students, faculty, and staff. The CGN embraces the Boyer Model of Scholarship as a dynamic framework fitting for leaders in advanced practice nursing who engage in activities that transcend knowledge acquisition and traditional learning.

• Discovery: The pursuit of new knowledge through research and creative activities such as publishing journal articles, authoring/editing books, presenting at conferences, reporting on new research, and/or literary works.

• Integration: The connection of knowledge and discovery into larger patterns and contexts, creating new perspectives, and transcending disciplinary boundaries to give meaning to isolated facts.

• Application: The employment of disciplinary expertise to results that can be shared and/or evaluated by peers. The application advances beyond the provision of service to those within WesternU to the greater community of health care and education.

• Sharing knowledge: Theory, evidence-based practice, and research go hand in hand creating a dynamic process that fosters creativity, independence, clinical reasoning, and moral imagination.

Student-Centered Learning Environments

Student-centered learning environments position students to be active participants in the learning experience. In safe and respectful environments, faculty and staff engage in interactive processes with students. In this atmosphere, faculty act as facilitators and role models while focusing on the provision and organization of the curriculum to guide students to construct and structure their nursing knowledge. Together, students and faculty co-create a milieu of respectful questioning, mutual growth, and evaluation. Students bring self-directed learning, a desire to excel, reflection, a respectful attitude, and willingness to participate in active engagement. The CGN staff guide the students through university and college processes and requirements to assure students are correctly placed and supported within the learning environments.
Accreditation
The CGN holds full accreditation from the CCNE and the Board of Registered Nurses, and Western University of Health Sciences is accredited by WASC.

Programs Offered
The College of Graduate Nursing offers terminal Masters and Doctor of Nursing Practice degrees, as well as a Post-Masters FNP Certificate. Masters degree students may choose from the following tracks: Administrative Nurse Leader (ANL), Ambulatory Care (AMB), Clinical Nurse Leader (CNL), and Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP).

Facility
The CGN employs 19 full-time and 2 part-time faculty members, 9 full-time and 1 part-time staff, and a few clinical adjunct faculty members. Pre-Licensure students complete the clinical rotations with a student faculty ration of 1:10.

Student Demographics

Grant Activity
In 2012, the CGN received HRSA funding in the form of student stipends for:
- Doctoral Students ($333,125)
- Advanced Nursing Education Expansion for Family Nurse Practitioners (3rd year of a 5 year grant totaling $1,056,000)
Western University of Health Sciences Master of Science in Nursing Entry (MSN-E) students, recently made history when all 50 entry-level nursing students passed the NCLEX exam to become a registered nurse (RN) on the first attempt. The 100 percent pass rate for these nursing students was a first in the eight-year history of the College of Graduate Nursing's (CGN) MSN-E program.

“The average national pass rate for the NCLEX exam in schools of nursing is 85 percent,” said Mary Lopez, PhD, RN, CGN assistant dean and director of the MSN-E program. “Our MSN-E program NCLEX pass rate has ranged between 90 and 98 percent for the last several cohorts. Last year our students achieved 98 percent.”

The MSN-E program accepts students who have a bachelor's degree in non-nursing majors and have completed the required science prerequisites for the MSN-E program. Students complete four semesters of the pre-licensure training then take the NCLEX exam in December to become a registered nurse.

“This is the first time in my 30 years of university education that I’ve seen students from a MSN-E program obtain a 100 percent pass rate,” CGN Founding Dean Karen Hanford, EdD, MSN, FNP, said.

Lopez said these students will be excellent nurses and that from day one they were interacting with faculty, responsible and accountable for their actions, and always studying as a team.

“I think our program is successful due to the combination of picking the right students that have an aptitude for nursing, using the latest teaching techniques to facilitate the students learning, partnering with excellent clinical facilities, and having enthusiastic and effective faculty” Lopez said.
Anna Marie Medrano has a career trajectory that illustrates “Novice to Expert” practice as described by nursing theorist Patricia Benner. Ms. Medrano entered the nursing profession in 2005 with an Associate’s degree from Mt. San Antonio College and landed her first RN position in an emergency department. While continuing to garner practice experience, she earned a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree from California State University, Dominguez Hills. Concurrently she progressively became an expert in emergency nursing as shown by her dedicated participation in a nursing preceptorship program and service as a Pediatric and Adult Simulation Critical Event Team Trainer, a Fire, Life and Safety Trainer and a member of the Hospital Mass Decontamination Team. Anna has had a long history of successful academic achievement beginning with high school graduation with honors and membership into the Phi Theta Kappa Society during community college. She has continued in her quest for knowledge at Western University of Health Sciences’ College of Graduate Nursing in the Ambulatory Care Nursing track of the Master of Science in Nursing Program. Anna Marie Medrano is planning to become a Family Nurse Practitioner with a Doctor of Nursing Practice degree.

Amber Brown faced many challenges growing up in an economically disadvantaged family. Her primary healthcare provider, a pediatric nurse practitioner, was one of the few people that encouraged her. She remembered Amber’s medical details, never seemed rushed, and treated her as a person rather than a patient. She’s one of the main reasons why Amber is embarking on the nursing journey to ultimately become a nurse practitioner paying close attention to those who need it the most. Amber loves caring for the mentally challenged, those who are cognitively impaired, and those who are homeless: the vulnerable populations who require the most care but more often get the least care.

Amber Brown is planning to become a Family Nurse Practitioner with a Ambulatory Care Nursing track of the Master of Science in Nursing Program. at Western University of Health Sciences' College of Graduate Nursing in the Society during community college. She has continued in her quest for knowledge with high school graduation with honors and membership into the Phi Theta Kappa

Julie Perkin is a highly accomplished nursing scholar pursuing a role as a Family Nurse Practitioner and concurrently completing her educational requirements in the Doctor of Nursing Practice. Her commitment to academic excellence is evidenced by superior academic achievement and functional performance. Ms. Perkin demonstrates exceptional critical and personal skills noteworthy of an academic scholar and reflects effective synthesis of education, learning, and service in her performance as a WesternU nursing student.

Her academic record and promise as a leading contributor to the nursing profession is well matched in her pursuit of advancing practice in public health policy. As a priori for public health, Ms. Perkin’s practice dissertation will investigate immunization health screening practice among concessioners within the National Park Services to promote prevention strategies to reduce risk of disease transmission. Ms. Perkin is a highly motivated learner maximizing her potential through the development of academic, leadership, and professional skills necessary to succeed as an accomplished practice doctorate and advanced practice nurse clinician.

Among her many accomplishments and contributions, Ms. Perkin was recently deployed to the 2013 Presidential Inauguration as part of the Nevada 1 Disaster Medical Assistance Team where she serves as a member to this state’s wide emergency response team. This professional team is a federal asset to the United States Public Health Service/National Disaster Medical System and provides essential emergency medical care and patient evacuation during times of natural or man-made disasters or in time of nation security emergencies. Ms. Perkin is a rising star among the nursing profession.

The Academic Achievement Award is given to a graduate nursing student who has demonstrated academic excellence and leadership in nursing and is a positive role model for future nurses. This describes Tina Escobedo's nursing career perfectly. Her twenty-six year nursing background is multi-specialty and includes rheumatology, pediatrics, pediatric intensive care, emergency, mobile intensive care, clinical trials, and academia in both undergraduate and graduate nursing. She is a national speaker for the Rheumatological Nurses Society and a respected expert in this field in practice and research. Her professional goals upon completion of the Doctor of Nursing Practice degree include leading the FNP team at WesternU’s College of Graduate Nursing to higher levels of innovation by identifying factors that contribute to more meaningful and effective clinical experiences in the Family Nurse Practitioner curriculum. She also plans to focus on transitioning to practice the key pillars of the Institute of Medicine and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Tina Escobedo is a leader in academic achievement and is indeed a positive role model for future nurses.
Loretta Nguyen Zanetti has been an Army nurse for the past 11 years. She is currently the Chief Nurse at the Soldier Medical Support Center in Pinellas Park, Florida where she manages a team of 24 nurses, medics, and administrative personnel reviewing the care of soldiers injured in the line of duty. Loretta is completing her Family Nurse Practitioner Certification and plans to continue in active military duty as a Nurse Practitioner. Loretta says she has a huge sense of accomplishment when she can pull together her experience as an RN, the didactic training that she has received, and utilize the hands on training to come up with a diagnosis and treatment plan for her patients. She attributes her success at WesternU to the use of technology to stay connected.

Ivy Chua obtained approval from the Ministry of Health on positive findings from that study, the clinic satisfied with nurse practitioner care. Based on positive findings from that study, the clinic obtained approval from the Ministry of Health for two additional full-time NP positions. Minna was hired for one of those positions. At the clinic, Minna works as a consultant for the BCCH asthma center. She was invited to be a member on a British Columbia-wide expert panel to develop asthma guidelines for general practitioners. Minna also runs a ½ day outreach clinic at a downtown day care screening children for early referral to address health problems and enhance school readiness, an example of inter-professional collaborative practice. She has been invited to apply for a position as Assistant Professor at BC University as the first practicing NP, DNP. Minna was invited to give a podium presentation on inter-professional collaboration at the 2013 British Columbia Nurse Practitioner Association Conference and has submitted manuscripts for publication. Minna has exceptional ability as a practitioner and scholar who translates the best evidence to practice in order to improve health outcomes in her community.

Loretta Nguyen Zanetti

Ivy Chua

Minna Miller
DEAN’S AWARD
Given to a graduate nursing student for leadership ability, academic excellence, and service to the University and community.

It is my honor to nominate Jennifer Ballard-Hernandez, a Doctor of Nursing Practice student for this year’s Dean’s Award. Ms. Ballard-Hernandez has achieved her RN, BSN, MSN/FNP and soon her DNP degree in less than ten years. Her passion for nursing is evident in her scholarly endeavors which include: development of an innovative care delivery model, peer reviewed publications, and her leadership roles at Hoag Hospital in Newport Beach. Her out-patient CHF clinic has received national recognition (publications and presentations) in the fact that re-hospitalizations have decreased by 25%. Her academic success in the DNP provides further evidence of her intellect and ambition to improve patient care outcomes. She is a change agent and leader for the professional organization (CA Cardiology). She often gives thanks to her mentors, who have inspired her in her career. Ms. Ballard-Hernandez is an outstanding student and I know she will be a future mentor throughout her career.

PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP AWARDS
Given to a graduate nursing student who has shown positive leadership in health policy, organizational leadership, research or community health care.

“The nursing profession is without limits and I love what I do.” A quote from Alexandra Diebold-Fox who is a visionary Clinical Nurse Leader masters student. In addition to being a leader in her studies of graduate nursing at WesternU, she has implemented change in safety and quality in the practice setting. In 2010, Alexandra instituted a Nurse Physician Collaborative Council for the intensive care unit at Providence St. Joseph Medical Center in Burbank, CA. Initially it was a forum to voice frustrations and improve communication between physicians and nurses. Since then, the Council has evolved into a multi-disciplinary group changing the standards of care for intensive care patients. She also built a team and completed a quality improvement project that decreased the incidence of catheter associated blood stream infections in that same population. Currently Alexandra is collaborating with the Veteran’s Administration Hospital of West Los Angeles on another quality improvement project to implement a triage sepsis screening for nurses accompanied by a patient pathway. The aim of the project is to improve the mortality and morbidity of patients with sepsis by early recognition and treatment. Alexandra’s leadership has improved patient outcomes, the profession of nursing, and the health professions as a whole.

President’s Society Award
Presented to students in recognition of academic excellence, financial need and service to the college.

From the time she started school to become a Licensed Vocational Nurse, Sandra has taken every opportunity to learn more as she furthered her nursing career. After becoming a Registered Nurse, she developed her clinical expertise and began teaching new employees. This was followed by leadership positions in which she continued to grow and learn. Receiving a Master’s degree in nursing was the next step in her professional career. A comment by Sandra in her application to the program truly defines her outlook on nursing and life-long learning: “I continue to do what I love to do and that is to care for others and also continue to further my education to have the knowledge necessary to advance the profession and practice of nursing along with all the other great leaders.” Her excellence in clinical and desire to learn are also evident in her academic performance. As a leadership student, Sandra brings her clinical experience in teaching and leadership to her courses. She is a role model for other students and shares her knowledge and experience with them just as she does with her clinical colleagues. It is only natural to see her clinical excellence and interest in expanding her nursing knowledge exemplified by academic excellence. Sandra is an inspiration to future nurse leaders.

Andrea Correia entered the Masters of Science in Nursing Entry (MSN-E) Program with the intent to become a great nurse. During her pre-licensure journey, it became clear to us that Andrea is destined to become a great leader. Andrea is quiet and unassuming. Her motivation and passion to do the right thing and do it well comes from her deeply-rooted ethical values and sense of social justice. With a focus on achieving the right outcomes for a patient, family, or community, Andrea is able to engage, motivate, and inspire groups of students and professionals to work together for the common good.

Andrea was President of the Student Nurses Association. She helped the group broaden their focus and increase their presence in the community through service activities. The group collected clothes for the mental health closet at Arrowhead Regional Medical Center along with health screening and education at a variety of health fairs. Andrea helped to develop and coordinate health education for local Girl Scout troops. Andrea was recognized and awarded by the California Nursing Student Association as an outstanding member.

Andrea currently works as a pediatric nurse at Children’s Hospital of Orange County. She is recognized as an emerging leader within the organization. Within her first year of practice she has worked with the team to improve bedside reporting and has developed a presentation on early sepsis recognition and intervention within the pediatric population. She is actively involved in the Society of Pediatric Nurses.

It is not common to see this level of commitment to the profession and this level of leadership so early in one’s professional career. Andrea serves as a role model to all new nurses and exemplifies the leadership that is needed for health care change and transformation.
EXCELLENCE IN SCHOLARSHIP AWARD
Given to a graduate nursing student who demonstrates excellence in scholarly writing, publication, dissertation or professional presentation.

Being in the right place at the right time is how Jennifer Ballard-Hernandez describes the fortunate career paths that she has taken. Starting as a nursing assistant and advancing to a telemetry technician, she discovered her love of cardiology; she, like many other nurses, then stair-stepped her way from LVN to ADN nurse, to BSN, to MSN as both a family and gerontology nurse practitioner. Now she is fulfilling her educational experiences with a DNP where she continues to focus on cardiology.

Under cover of borrowed space, she created one of the first heart nurse practitioner lead failure clinics in Southern California and within months, decreased the readmission rate by 25%. With such successful outcomes, her heart failure clinic soon got a permanent home and she can proudly boast that her annual readmission rate is now 16%, a favorable comparison to the national average of 24%.

Her clinical scholarship is forever present in what she does. In June, she will present a podium and poster presentations at national conferences. She has been spotlighted by CDC on highlights of how nursing can improve cardiac care. She recently co-presented at WesternU’s Interprofessional Education (IPE) Phase 3 and set a new first for the university by bringing the patient to the IPE team meeting.

Jennifer said, “It has been through working side-by-side with incredible mentors and clinicians that I have been afforded the opportunity to work with the cardiac population. My DNP education has helped me refine my scholarship. The outcomes: better patient care and better cardiology health.”

NURSING EXCELLENCE AWARD
Given to a graduate with a minimum GPA of 3.0 who shows a desire to work in primary care in an underserved area and demonstrates financial need.

How does having been a water girl in a long term care facility, certified nurses’ aid, hospital corpsman for the U.S. Navy, associate degree nurse, baccalaureate nurse, public health nurse, school nurse, and master’s prepared family nurse practitioner achieve excellence in the nursing profession? The answer is to take everything known about health promotion, disease screening, and prevention, combine with basic tools, and then apply that knowledge and skills to the migrant work force of California’s Central Valley. The result is an individual who is widely recognized for providing excellent nursing care to an entire community.

Kathleen (Kathi) Rindahl, a central valley resident for nearly two decades demonstrates the power of nursing excellence in her practice. With a new idea, coupled with small amounts of funding and paper records, Kathi has helped screen more than 3,500 K-12 school aged children over the last year for obesity, early onset diabetes, vision and hearing, and dental screenings. With a 3-phase project, Kathi’s work has identified several previously undiagnosed children with Type I diabetes, numerous kids at more than 80% height and weight with altered glucose levels, improved vaccination rates and TB screening, and has introduced hundreds of kids to their first tooth brush.

As Kathi states, “Many of these families routinely forego basic medical care, often because of immigration status. As a routine way of life, migrant families often live near fields and lack basic access to running hot or cold water. Centralized cooking is routine. Many children have never visited a dental provider.” While the focus of her work has often been on the children, the parents themselves often have chronic conditions. Nurses have a responsibility to care for the population of the community. Furthermore, “It’s an honor to care for this population and I have a job I truly love” says Kathi.

VULNERABLE POPULATION SERVICE AWARDS
Given to a graduate nursing student who has gone above and beyond in connecting the College of Graduate Nursing to the WesternU community and future nursing students.

Juanita Dubon is an accomplished and dedicated nursing scholar completing her combined educational requirements as a Family Nurse Practitioner while pursing the Doctor of Nursing Practice as a terminal degree in nursing. She repeatedly demonstrates a strong commitment to the scholarship of nursing providing service and medical care to underserved populations and impoverished Latino women in the community of Pomona, California. Her practice inquiry is investigating the effectiveness of evidence-based health interventions to support and promote breast feeding among pregnant Latino adolescents and young adults.

Through her scholarly work and guided leadership, Ms. Dubon has been instrumental in promoting an innovative practice solution at her health care facility to advance the well-being of infants and mothers by improving breast feeding outcomes. Her commitment has led an effective campaign to adopt and implement a milk bank program as an alternative intervention to augment exclusive breast feeding across this vulnerable community. Ms. Dubon’s work is reflective of her selfless giving, time, and dedication aimed at initiating policy change to improve practice in health care delivery. Demonstrated by her effort to combine and integrate the elements of evidence-based practice, she is leading to shape and direct change to promote quality care and improve the outcomes for this health disparate group.

Of note, Ms. Dubon continues to serve our country in the military armed forces as an Army officer where she holds the rank of Captain. She practices what she preaches – demonstrating integrity and adherence to the highest standards of professional nursing practice.

This is awarded to a graduate nursing student who has contributed significantly to the health care field among vulnerable populations. Eric has exemplified this throughout his career in nursing. Looking up to his mother who has been a charge nurse on a medical surgical floor for her lengthy career, Eric appreciated the dedication and compassion. This led him to volunteering for San Pedro Peninsula Hospital known as Providence Health Systems. Eric began his career at Harbor UCLA Medical Center working in the Emergency Department and specializing in adult emergency, trauma and critical care services. While there he also served as a Domestic Violence Screening Instructor, which happens to be very dear to his heart. He is currently working at the VA Loma Linda in the Emergency Department providing care to our Veterans. Eric has also been employed with Mercy Air providing services to underserved areas.

Future plans for Eric are to continue his education and obtain his terminal degree in nursing and transition into academia.
Vulnerable Population Service Awards

Given to a graduate nursing student who has gone above and beyond in connecting the College of Graduate Nursing to the WesternU community and future nursing students.

Steven Do is a Vietnamese-American who has a caring heart dedicated to serving those who are in need of health care services in the Southern California Vietnamese community. As an active member of the Vietnamese Student Association (VSA) at Western University of Health Sciences for over 5 years, Steven has held several positions including community service chair, communication chair, and publicist for campus events. The VSA routinely provides health fairs to the uninsured Vietnamese community. This inter-professional organization performs screening assessments for bone density, cholesterol, blood sugar, dental, and vision health problems. They also offer hepatitis B vaccinations and other immunizations. Steven reports that knowledge about health issues is lacking in this non-English speaking community and he is striving to create awareness about the importance of taking preventive action. “It makes me feel really warm inside after each of these health fairs to see how my actions are going to make a positive impact on these patients.”

Steven credits his inspiration to his Mother who passed away in 2005. She was a breast cancer survivor and uninformed about being a hepatitis B carrier. Steven is currently pursuing a career as a Registered Nurse, passing his licensure examination in December 2012. He has 2 main goals after graduation: to become a Family Nurse Practitioner and open a clinic offering low cost health care in Orange County, and to plan a two week trek to Vietnam with colleagues from the VSA. Health services will be delivered to his father’s village, Tuy Hoa. Steven is currently seeking sponsorships and donations for this journey. He hopes this outreach program will be hugely successful and continued annually in various locations throughout Vietnam.

Nicholas Sedor has been helping others most of his adult life. His experience with diverse and underserved people has been the primary motivation towards becoming a nurse. Nic has volunteered in free clinics through Central America including helping orphans in Mexico, working in free clinics in Costa Rica, and Mayans in the Guatemala jungle. He has learned that the basics of health care such as good hygiene, clean water, and balanced diets are the underlying cause of many underserved peoples’ ailments. However, he explains that giving time and resources influences part of the healing process by both helping physically and creating in others an incredible sense of personal significance. Together helping vulnerable populations can bring great healing and hope in both the giver and receiver.

Recently, to meet his desire to meet the needs of vulnerable people at a local level, Nic and his wife created an opportunity for MSNE students to join him in volunteering at a free clinic in Downtown Pomona. Nic coordinates a volunteer program at the clinic and has built a base of over a dozen volunteers that help at the clinic on a regular basis making him very deserving of the Vulnerable Populations Award.

Southern California Cancer Pain Initiative Award for Excellence in Pain Management

Given to a graduate nursing student who has gone above and beyond in connecting the College of Graduate Nursing to the WesternU community and future nursing students.

On October 22nd of 2012, four MSNE students from the College of Graduate Nursing received special recognition. These students were Jazmine Scott, Lauren Huss, Alaina Markie, and Dymphna Mallari. These students demonstrated a capacity for caring and advocating for the relief of pain. They were presented with the award of Excellence in Cancer Pain Management by the Southern California Cancer Pain Initiative.

The Southern California Cancer Pain Initiative (also known as SCCPI) is one of several pain initiative groups across the country. This alliance in pain initiative groups has been instrumental in changing laws that have hindered the appropriate management of pain. Additionally, the alliance has brought forth the awareness of the consequences of unrelieved pain.

Being recognized by this group is indeed quite an honor. Several individual and group awards and one life time achievement award are presented at a special gala every other year. We extend our heartiest congratulations and encourage these awardees to continue this great work long into their careers.
THE BOBBI STAHLE LEADERSHIP AWARD

A trailblazer in many facets of her life, Bobbie Stahl knows firsthand the value of leadership and has generously funded an award again this year.

Bobbie was raised in Los Angeles and started her working career as a professional saxophonist after graduating from the Hollywood Conservatory of Music. She played in the big bands of the 1940s and also acted in movies of that era. Her career path changed after she met and married Dr. William Stahl, now deceased, who was then a young osteopathic medical student at the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Los Angeles. It was this time that Bobbie decided to go back to school at the Methodist Hospital of Los Angeles to become a registered nurse. The couple planned to provide healthcare as medical missionaries after both had graduated, however, circumstances changed and they instead settled in Pomona. Here the Stahls built the Garfield Cottage Hospital and Clinic where Bobbie served as administrator. Under her guidance the hospital achieved Joint Commission and California Medical Association accreditation.

Among Bobbie’s other numerous accomplishments and areas of service are: founded and served on the board of the nurses association in Pomona; a BS and teaching credential from the University of La Verne; an instructor at San Antonio, Chaffey, and San Bernardino Valley colleges; an early president and member of the board of trustees of the United Hospital Association; president of the California Osteopathic Auxiliary; Pomona Woman of the Year; trustee of Azusa Pacific University; and, most importantly, member of the WesternU Founders Committee and recipient of the Humanitarian of the Year Award in 1995.

Given to a College of Graduate Nursing student who exemplifies leadership and compassionate caring.

When she entered the DNP program in 2012, Diane Pestolesi was already a recognized expert in nursing education, featured in the seminal Carnegie Foundation national study on nursing education reform for her exemplary clinical teaching skills. Diane reports that the DNP program at WesternU has provided her with “a new lens” through which to view her work as a nurse educator and it has provided her insight and theory to better understand and describe some of the very complex dynamics and challenges facing nursing today. “The education I am getting at WesternU has enabled me to ‘see the ripple effect’ of how a few dedicated professionals who impact their local environment to improve health outcomes can ultimately make an impact on a much larger scale.”

Diane demonstrated her exceptional talent in teaching “situated learning” co-presenting, with DNP colleague Jennifer Ballard-Hernandez, a case study on a patient with heart failure to inter-professional student colleagues from the nine WesternU colleges. Diane and Jennifer brought the actual patient (Diane’s father-in-law) via Skype to the case conference to talk with students about his most recent hospitalization, his disease, and a medication error that almost cost him his life. Diane’s career plans are to use her DNP preparation as a faculty member and executive leader in associate degree nursing education, becoming more active in professional organizations locally, statewide, and nationally to promote nursing education at all levels to be a “bridge to healthcare reform,” and to improved patient outcomes.
The Tribute to Caring Award acknowledges a student for compassion and willingness to give and inspire others. Eric Eschweiler is truly exemplary of this award. Having volunteered at San Pedro Peninsula Hospital now known as Providence Health Systems, this gave him a great sense of empathy for others and a desire to give. Eric also serves the community as a Domestic Violence Screener and instructor providing not only a service but, again, the kind-heartedness that is needed when managing these sensitive situations. Eric continues today working at the VA Loma Linda in the Emergency Department providing compassionate care to our Veterans. He plans to continue his education and obtain his doctoral degree in nursing. We look forward to assisting and guiding Eric through this new journey of his life.

Michelle Gutaryov enriched her passion for nursing while volunteering for the Providence Tarzana Hospital in San Fernando Valley, California. She noticed she could help patients in pain by listening to their story. She found smiles radiating from patients after creating a cleaner environment for them in the hospital. As an emergency room volunteer, she noticed the changes she made in others’ lives impacted her own life in a positive manner. Family and friends sought her out for her compassion and empathy. She understood their struggle and offered companionship during their journey to wellness. She hopes to provide higher level of care with her Master of Science in Nursing degree. We look forward to guiding her on her educational journey.

A Tribute to Caring Admissions Scholarships

A Tribute to Caring is an annual fundraising event held by WesternU, which allows each college the opportunity to award funds to deserving applicants to help offset some of their tuition costs as they enter the health professions at WesternU.
The Donatini Family is proud to select Casee Kelly as the recipient of our daughter’s memorial award. Casee, your experience with your sister and your nephew, Jacob, echoes that of ours with Corinne. Because of this, we know that you too understand just how important it is to bond with your patients and their families; that being a nurse is more than just administering meds and taking vitals. It is about compassion and treating a patient as an important individual. We know that you will carry out Corinne’s legacy and make her proud.
A near-fatal accident injuring her husband shifted Therese’s career from accountant to registered nurse. At the time of the accident, Therese, mother of four, was a CPA with her own accounting practice. As she cared for her husband, she discovered her talent and passion for caregiving. So she returned to school, became a certified nursing assistant, surgical technician, and eventually a registered nurse. Her business background and nursing expertise influenced Therese’s recent move into a nursing leadership position in ambulatory surgery. Therese has an insatiable thirst for learning and bringing the best evidence into practice. During her practice improvement project to prevent use of expired implants and medications in the surgical setting, she introduced a change management mobile application that practitioners can load on their smart phones to guide dynamic improvement processes. Therese’s research paper focused on addressing the needs of children and adolescents with attention deficit disorders, bringing in the strongest evidence to guide interventions for optimal development and quality of life. Community service is a family value for Therese and her three daughters, who volunteer regularly at the Las Vegas Rescue Mission. During Therese’s community health practice, she was invited to write protocols on asthma case management, a significant public health issue in her community. Therese’s vision is to run a nurse-managed clinic, working collaboratively with physicians to get specialty services to those in need. Therese is clearly on a career pathway as a nurse leader who will make a significant difference in her community.

Roy G. and Marion I. Kramer Scholarship Fund Award

Roy and Marion Kramer are among the earliest supporters of WesternU. Roy was a member of the Board of Trustees until shortly before his death in 1999 and together the couple served on the founders Committee of the University’s charter college, College of Osteopathic Medicine of the Pacific (COMP) for many years.

A nurse by training and a lifetime of service to others, Marion never fails to send in an annual check in support of the scholarship fund she designated to help a deserving College of Graduate Nursing student in 2004. The Kramers also created a generous endowment to aid medical students and physical therapy students in 1992.

Marion’s nursing students reflect the evolution of the profession and the educational process. She began as a nurse’s aide at Covina Hospital while still in high school. Her formal coursework began at Citrus Junior College with her nurse’s training beginning at St. Joseph’s Hospital in Orange in what was to be their last nursing class. The hospital program, however, was discontinued midterm requiring the class to transfer to another program and Marion selected nearby Queen of Angels Hospital in Los Angeles. This program required an entrance exam, so the students had to cram in test preparation along with remaining current in the courses.

Throughout this trying time, Marion could rely on the steadfast support of her mother, Vivian Felski Wilson, who had been a Red Cross Nurse in World War I. But chronic asthma would soon reverse their roles. Due to the shortage of nurses after World War II, Marion was appointed as a special duty nurse at St. Joseph’s to comfort her mother during her final struggle with the disease.

The College of Graduate Nursing proudly recognized Marion’s many contributions to the profession and the community at the 10th Anniversary celebration held in 2007. Today we continue to treasure our friendship with this remarkable woman.

Given to a graduate nursing student for academic achievement, community service, and financial need.
Alyssa Salas understands the power of therapeutic touch and an empathetic ear. When she volunteered at the Gardner Comprecare Clinic, San Jose, California, she would hold your hand and encourage you to voice your uncertainties before procedures. She hopes to bring the theater arts to health care and provide another venue for expression of pain, happiness, and fear. Through this alternative method of communication, she plans on increasing patient confidence, fortitude, self-discovery, and mood. She is working toward her degree of Master of Science in Nursing with a role concentration as a Family Nurse Practitioner and plans to serve the uninsured and lower socioeconomic Spanish speaking communities of California. Alyssa exemplifies holistic nursing care during her medical surgical clinical rotations. Patients seek her attention to provide reassurance either through communication or healing touch. The patients’ eyes and tears say more than any words. The patients treasure and value Alyssa’s compassion and ability to see them as people not defined by their illness but defined by their achievements.

Rosaleen Egan Clark Memorial Scholarship Awards

Rosaleen Egan Clark was born in Limerick, Ireland, and immigrated to America in 1922 with her twelve siblings and parents, settling in New York. She was extremely bright but could not attend college – even with a scholarship – because she was needed to care for her terminally ill father. Later she married, raised three children, and at the age of 56 went back to school to earn a degree in social work.

In 2004, Rosaleen came to California to live with her daughter, Eileen Clark Ansari, a nurse, and son-in-law, a physician and medical school professor specializing in nuclear medicine. After a brief illness she passed away in 2008. In looking through her mother’s high school yearbook, Eileen learned of her early wish to become a nurse. That was the inspiration to establish a scholarship at CGN.

Working with the Diamond Bar Woman’s Club and the Ansari family, the Rosaleen Egan Clark Memorial Scholarship Fund was launched in 2009 with an award to an MSNE student. “Rosaleen was a lively woman and the Diamond Bar Woman’s Club is pleased that her interest in education and nursing will live on through this generous scholarship in her memory,” said club member and longtime Western University supporter, Dianne Forbing.

Given to a graduate nursing student who demonstrates compassion for patients and a commitment to the nursing profession.
Nicole Acosta's health and wellness promotion within the community began when she was in the girl scouts where she achieved the silver award. Her love for volunteerism continued well into her college years. While pursuing her undergraduate degree, she served as the philanthropy chairman for her sorority. As the chairman, she raised money and awareness for foster children and their court appointed special advocates. Being of Cuban descent and with relatives who immigrated to America, she felt close to her heart the cause of providing access to health care among migrant Hispanic populations. To help decrease the gap, she served as their bilingual Spanish and English translator for the free Catholic Worker Clinic in Guadalupe, California.

As a student at WesternU, Nicole continues to translate for the Hispanic population at the Pomona Health Center. Furthermore, she serves as a volunteer medical assistant providing blood pressure and diabetes health screenings. As President of the National Student Nurses Association, she utilizes the power of many to advocate for community awareness such as with the Haiti relief drive, Pomona health promotion fair, book and clothing drives. Nicole also continues to stay involved with the Girl Scout troops and their educational activities.

After completing her Master’s in Nursing, Family Nurse Practitioner role, she plans on continuing to be the pebble that causes a ripple in the water. Nicole plans on utilizing Nightingale’s philosophy and creating an environment of health and wellness for Hispanic migrant populations.

Nicole was also a recipient of the NSNA Promise of Nursing scholarship and was acknowledged at the NSNA 61st annual convention held in Charlotte, North Carolina.
DEAN’S LIST

Spring 2012
• Associate Degree to Master of Science in Nursing
  Karen Pike
  Janet Garcia
  Phao Nguyen
  Alexandra Diebold Fox

• Doctor of Nursing Practice
  Jennifer Ballard-Hernandez
  Tina Escobedo
  Patti McCluskey-Andre
  Colleen Nevins

• Post-Masters Family Nurse Practitioner
  Cassandra Castillo
  Janet Garcia
  Phuong Nguyen
  Alexandra Diebold Fox

• Master of Science in Nursing – Pre-Licensure
  Michele Columbus
  Lovet Hollis
  Jennifer Rigling
  Sharlee Stone

• Master of Science in Nursing – Ambulatory Care
  Kara Barne
  Nancy Freehette
  Bomi Moon
  Alvin Rocha
  Helen Van

• Master of Science in Nursing – Clinical Nurse Leader
  Cheryl Bartel
  Vanessa Aspericueta
  Michael Burks
  Loretta Nguyen

• Master of Science in Nursing – Family Nurse Practitioner
  Melissa Miller
  Jennifer Oh
  Jacqueline Sutton
  Teresa Louie

• Master of Science in Nursing – Leadership & Management
  Melissa Gomez

Fall 2012
• Associate Degree to Master of Science in Nursing
  Jason Torres
  Anna Medrano
  Nicholas Garcia
  Ailton Smith

• Doctor of Nursing Practice
  Jennifer Ballard-Hernandez
  Tina Escobedo
  Patti McCluskey-Andre
  Colleen Nevins

• Post-Masters Family Nurse Practitioner
  Stacia Guillen
  Michael Burks

Summer 2012
• Associate Degree to Master of Science in Nursing
  Jason Torres
  Anna Medrano
  Sandra Moreno

• Doctor of Nursing Practice
  Jennifer Ballard-Hernandez
  Tina Escobedo
  Patti McCluskey-Andre
  Colleen Nevins

• Post-Masters Family Nurse Practitioner
  Cassandra Castillo
  Katherine Cohen
  Colleen Nevins
  Alliston Smith

• Master of Science in Nursing – Pre-Licensure
  Katherine Cohen
  Deann Helton
  Nhatminh Nguyen

• Master of Science in Nursing – Ambulatory Care
  Sana Alam
  Happiness
  Katherine LaValley
  Carmela Trinidad

• Master of Science in Nursing – Clinical Nurse Leader
  Alliston Smith
Who’s Who Nominees 2012-2013

The College of Graduate Nursing and Western University of Health Sciences are delighted to announce that the names of the following students have been submitted to the Who’s Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges for the 2012-2013 academic year.

Michael Burkes
Andrea Correia
Juanita Dubon
Tina Escobedo
Sylvia Estrada
Linda Fonju
Deann Helton
Sandra Moreno
Loretta Nguyen
Nhat Nguyen
Julie Perkins
Quoc Pham
Cara Schoeman
Andrea Tizano
Thuy Tran
Men in nursing have become increasingly more visible with men moving off the night shift and demonstrating leadership in all areas of nursing. Approximately 7% of the nursing workforce is comprised of men who see nursing as a viable career with salaries capable of supporting a household. Often stereotyped, men in nursing strive to remove barriers to practice and bring attention to issues affecting men’s health and health care provided by men.

The American Assembly of Men in Nursing (AAMN), a professional nursing organization for male nurses, was founded in 1974 by Luther Christman to discuss issues and support the direction of men in nursing. Today, this organization encourages men to become nurses, promotes a humanistic approach to healthcare, supports and encourages the contributions of men in nursing, and advocates for continued research, education, and discussion at both local and national levels.

WesternU is proud to have established the local chapter of the AAMN this year. This group is led by President, Kyle Martin, and Vice President, Anthony Ngo. Both Kyle and Anthony are Masters of Science in Nursing Entry (MSN-E) students. Dr. Rodney Hicks, Professor and Assistant Director of the Doctor of Nursing Practice program at WesternU, serves as the faculty advisor for this group. This collective group of leaders attended the annual conference for AAMN held in San Francisco in October 2012. The WesternU Men in Nursing organization is dedicated to advancing the image of men in nursing and recruiting the next generation of nursing students at Western University of Health Sciences.

Approximately 7% of the nursing workforce is comprised of men who see nursing as a viable career with salaries capable of supporting a household.
Students In Motion

DNP Association

RNc

SGA
Please support the community blood supply by giving blood.
The Importance of Mentoring

Mentoring is how the art and science of nursing is transmitted. We all know that we can read books however it is actually seeing the role implemented that counts. It is also the way we give back. Others did this for me and now it is my time. Also in the role of mentoring we mentor the mentee to be a mentor!

The Challenges of Mentoring

Learners come from diverse backgrounds and experience levels. My goal is to have the clinical experience be worthwhile and provide information the mentee can use and transmit to others.

Reasons for Being a Mentor

We need to have high level functioning practitioners in advanced roles. There are several nurses that shared their expertise with me and it was an invaluable experience. I could describe each one of them and what I learned from them, that is how important mentoring is.

Dr. Ramer exemplified herself as a true mentor. She is a seasoned clinical nurse director at the clinic where she works, despite her enormous experiences she is very down-to-earth in assisting her mentees. She is very knowledgeable, approachable, supportive and friendly. She made every effort to negotiate with other departments she deemed necessary to provide me with the rich experiences I needed as a mentee to fulfill the objectives for my clinical experience. She obtained special permission for me to be able to attend the IRB committee meetings, enabling me to witness how research decisions/protocols are made. To me this was just going out of her way to make sure I have the first hand information I needed to fulfill my course objectives. She even used her influence to arrange for me to meet with one of the chief medical directors for research in the AIDS clinic, to round with him and be able to ask as many questions as I can regarding research and how the research results are been disseminated/translated to the bedside (from bench to bedside). She obtained special permission for me so that I can have more access to some information that I needed. Even when some staff became an obstacle, she knew how to handle the situations to gain me access. She is also a DNSc graduate, maybe this is why she truly went out of her way to expose me to the extent she did, or she is just a plain good, knowledgeable and human indeed! I highly recommend Dr. Ramer to WesternU as a future mentor to my other DNP colleagues.

Catherine Azubuike, MSN, RN
Mentee, DNP Cohort IV
Becoming Three Dimensional: Mentor of the Year

Lindsay Harris, a 1st year RN-MSN student, began her studies at CGN taking the Leadership and Professional Role course. One of the assignments was to find an RN mentor, in the practice setting, who had a master’s degree in nursing and with that mentor, complete a career goal plan. Lindsay studied the readings about mentorship, participated in the Seminar Weekend activity, but had one thing missing; a potential mentor. Her work setting at the time did not have a masters prepared RN, nor did her other connections with the nursing world outside of CGN. She decided to join another professional organization just in the hopes of finding a mentor who would meet the criteria of the assignment.

Dr. Sally Morgan, one of her professors for the Leadership and Professional Role course, provided instruction regarding mentorship. Included in that instruction, and without naming names, gave examples from her experience including a mentorship relationship that has been going on for more than thirty years. Dr. Morgan knew of Lindsay’s dilemma and asked that she keep her abreast of finding a mentor at the new professional organization.

One morning Dr. Morgan was very surprised when she received an email from a very excited Lindsey. The email said she had gone to church, became acquainted with the parish nurse, and was happy to find out she had a master’s degree. When Lindsay approached the parish nurse about being her mentor and described the assignment, the mentor was more than agreeable to be Lindsay’s mentor. You see, the parish nurse turned out to be Joanne Gray, MSN, RN: the same Joanne Gray who has mentored Dr. Morgan for most of her nursing career.

Joanne Gray has been a leader of nursing in her career of more than 60 years. She has written numerous grant proposals, all of which have been accepted and funded. She has been a faculty member of baccalaureate and masters programs and Director of Education at a number of hospitals. Joanne has consulted hospitals preparing them for Joint Commission accreditation. She was the Director of the Regional Health Occupation and Resource Center in Orange County where she developed groundbreaking innovations that are used by institutions and businesses today. These include; residency programs for newly hired registered nurses, scope of practice protocols for licensed vocational nurses, and training guidelines for non-licensed healthcare personnel. She has developed role descriptions for preceptors and conducted research on mentorship differentiating it from preceptorship. In her retirement, Joanne has volunteered her services as a parish nurse.

In the great world of nursing, quintessential moments can occur as did in this story of mentorship becoming three dimensional. Lindsay Harris and Dr. Sally Morgan have had the privilege of being mentored by the best, Joanne Gray, MSN, RN.
Elena Padilla is known on her unit at Pomona Valley Medical Center as the kind of nurse you want to take care of you. Her professional manner is supplemented by a cheerful disposition and soft caring approach. She has the distinction of being the most requested preceptor by students for the last three years. One of Elena’s outstanding qualities is that she talks with her student at the start of the shift, sets objectives together, and goes out of her way to find students opportunities to learn and practice. She knows how to tailor her approach to the student’s learning style and is able to discern the strengths and weaknesses in each student and incorporate those qualities into a learning action plan for the day. It is no surprise that the students and faculty selected Elena Padilla for MSN-E preceptor of the year.
A round Halloween every year for the last four years, safety has been taught in “The Lab of Horrors.” The nursing lab, which is designed to mimic a small hospital, is transformed from a clean, organized hospital to a hospital in which safety, fire code and infection prevention infractions abound. The lab is decorated in Halloween motif and has its own resident mad nurse.

The students can join the fun by wearing costumes. This, however, is a learning event and the students must participate. They have to identify as many infractions as they can. The infractions include items such as spilled water on the floor, unattended medications, a urinal with urine (fake) sitting next to a tray of food, and an expired fire extinguisher, etc.

The participants include students from the first semester and students from the fourth semester. As expected, fourth semester students are able to identify almost all of the infractions, whereas first semester students can usually identify about one half. The results of this exercise were presented in poster form by Linda Flores, MSN, RN, CEN and Patricia Shakhshir, PhD, CNS, RN-BC at Odyssey, a research conference held by Southern California Chapters of the Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing. This poster was awarded second place in the innovative poster category.
Alumni Spotlight
Shannon Smith-Bernardin MSN, RN, CNL

University of California, San Francisco - School of Nursing
Currently in PhD program, Nursing, Health Policy
2012 – 2016 (expected)

Western University of Health Sciences
MSN, RN, CNL Nursing
2004 – 2007

Dartmouth College
BA, Psychology, Biology
1992 – 1996

Shannon Smith-Bernardin grew up in a small town in the state of Maine. After high school Shannon attended Dartmouth College in New Hampshire, where she was a double major in Psychology and Biology. Shortly after college graduation, Shannon moved to Los Angeles where she was exposed to the large population of individuals who are homeless and/or suffering from addiction. Shannon became an EMT and started working with homeless groups in Los Angeles; her experiences sparked a new desire to help others through a new career path, nursing. Shannon met with Dean Karen Hanford and decided that WesternU was the place she wanted to be. As the program was on the cutting edge of nursing and Shannon was by nature a trailblazer, it was the perfect fit. She started out in the first cohort of MSN Entry students and was encouraged by Dean Hanford to pursue the MSN portion of the program with the CNL focus. During this time, Shannon transitioned from Los Angeles and began working as an ED Nurse at San Francisco General Hospital. She then moved to a medical-behavioral unit, where she worked closely with the homeless population and began to engage with a variety of community services aimed at stabilizing individuals who were homeless. Through her CNL education and with the mentorship of Professor Marci Horowitz, Shannon assisted in the development of a program that would allow Emergency Departments in San Francisco to track the homeless population who were “high-utilizers” within the emergency department. These “high-utilizers” went from ER to ER looking for food, shelter, and medication, and were cared for by numerous urgent/ emergent programs throughout the city. Shannon’s passion and education helped her become an advocate for social issues, especially homelessness and addiction. Largely due to the connections created while developing her CNL project, Shannon pursued and was offered the position as staff nurse in implementing San Francisco’s Medical Respite program. After six years working as the Intake and Sobering Coordinator for the Medical Respite and Sobering Center, Shannon has become an integral part of the city’s efforts to engage with high-utilizer clients throughout the city. She was recently awarded the 2013 EMS Community Services Award for her dedication and innovation in caring for the city’s chronically homeless, alcohol dependent individuals. She is currently a doctoral student at the University of California at San Francisco, where she studies Health Policy. The education and mentorship that Shannon received from the Dean, Professor Horowitz, and other faculty members while at CGN has helped her to lead the way in her profession while advancing both nursing and health policy.
In 2011, Western University of Health Sciences, College of Graduate Nursing (CGN), implemented the RN Transition Program in response to California’s current down economy which results in fewer jobs available for its new RN graduates. In addition, CGN recognized the need to ensure that its graduates were prepared to meet the new challenges and demands of healthcare communities for qualified and competent nurses. The Institute of Medicine (IOM) Initiative on Nursing recommends implementation of nurse residency programs that will help ensure qualified and competent nurses to deliver care and services that are safe, evidence based, timely, efficient and cost effective.

The RN Transition Program is a 12-week program offered to current students who recently completed the pre-licensure portion of the MSN-E program, passed the NCLEX, and are currently enrolled in the post licensure portion of the program. The program has a didactic component and 288-precepted clinical hours. The goals of the program are to provide additional education, coaching, and clinical experience in order to improve competence in clinical areas and professional skills. Although employment is not guaranteed, our clinical partners participate in the interview and selection process with the goal of selecting someone that will fit the organization for possible future employment. There are five major hospitals where RN residents complete their residency hours: Pomona Valley Hospital Medical Center, Queen of the Valley Hospital Medical Center, Intercommunity Hospital of Covina, Foothill Presbyterian Hospital, and St. Joseph Hospital Medical Center. The clinical partners are actively involved in program design and evaluation.

To date, CGN has successfully offered two programs with 37 residents. The third program is scheduled for Spring 2013. All 37 residents are currently employed, with the majority of the residents obtaining a job either during or within 60-days of program completion, and 11 are employed in the hospital where they completed the RN Transition Program.

The program has received overwhelming positive evaluations from RN residents, preceptors, and clinical partners. The residents consistently report that the experiences gained in the residency program not only increase their clinical skills, but also developed their confidence, time management, and delegation skills. All reported that participation in the RN residency has given them an advantage over hundreds of other applicants in securing their first employment. The preceptors and clinical partners have reported that residents are well prepared, enthusiastic, and dedicated.

One of the key factors in the success of the RN Transition Program is our preceptors. The clinical partners carefully select an experienced RN preceptor to match the RN resident. The RN preceptor takes on the responsibility to guide the RN residents as they increase their competencies and act as a coach, mentor, role model, nurturer, and teacher to enrich residents’ clinical experiences. CGN is fortunate to work with the finest RN preceptors.

Sandra Cantero-Romero, completed the RN Transition Program in Spring 2012 at Pomona Valley Hospital Medical Center. She was hired following completion of the program and is currently working in the Intensive Care Unit. Sandra was given the opportunity to precept with Cathy Gilbertson, RN, CCRN in the Coronary Care Unit. Cathy has over 13 years of RN experience.

Sandra reports: “Before the transition program, I had never worked with a preceptor before, thus I was a bit nervous about the experience. I thought this preceptor would treat me as a “know it all nurse” because I had just completed the RN program and I was still going to school to pursue my masters’ degree. To my benefit and surprise, Cathy was nothing like I was expecting. I find it hard to describe with words how incredibly amazing my preceptor was during the transition program. She was patient, knowledgeable, a good teacher, and even a better nurse. She took the time to listen to my expectations and worked with my schedule. Little by little she trained me and showed me the way while allowing me to choose my own learning methods. She took the time to look for learning opportunities for me within the unit and she advocated for my learning. In addition, she helped me network within the hospital so that I could be considered for opening positions. Furthermore, the level of respect and care she showed to her patients was immeasurable. Not only did she help transition into the nursing role, as a profession, but she was able to teach me, through her actions, the art of nursing care. I would like to thank the College of Graduate Nursing at WesternU and especially to Ivy Tuason for putting this program together. Not only was I able to successfully transition from a student nurse to a new nurse, but I was also able to find a position within the organization at which I completed the program.”

This is just one of the many positive comments received from the RN residents regarding their preceptors. With our ongoing collaborative efforts with our RN residents, clinical partners, and preceptors for continuous program evaluation and improvement, we are confident that the RN Transition Program at the College of Graduate Nursing not only assists in improving students’ marketability and employability, but also provides a better-prepared nurse to meet the needs of today’s healthcare.

To date, CGN has successfully offered two programs with 37 residents. The third program is scheduled for Spring 2013. All 37 residents are currently employed, with the majority of the residents obtaining a job either during or within 60-days of program completion, and 11 are employed in the hospital where they completed the RN Transition Program.

The program has received overwhelming positive evaluations from RN residents, preceptors, and clinical partners. The residents consistently report that the experiences gained in the residency program not only increase their clinical skills, but also developed their confidence, time management, and delegation skills. All reported that participation in the RN residency has given them an advantage over hundreds of other applicants in securing their first employment. The preceptors and clinical partners have reported that residents are well prepared, enthusiastic, and dedicated.
Dissertation Spotlight

Louise Black-Robinson, DNP, MSN, CNS
Colorectal Cancer Screening and Preventative Practices and Beliefs Among African Americans

Shirley Bristol, DNP, JD, RN, CNS
Improving the Quality of Informed Consent for Clinical Research Participation

Susie Chen, DNP, MN, MA, RN
Health Services Utilization among Elderly Chinese Immigrants in Los Angeles

Ana H. Corona, DNP, RN, FNP-BC
Cervical Cancer Screening in Latina Women: A Culturally Structured Project Proposal

Cecelia Crawford, DNP, MSN, RN
Using a Collaborative Center for Integrative Reviews and Evidence Summaries to Narrow the Education-Practice-Research Gap

Diane Fatica, DNP, ANP-BC, FNP
Effect of Implementing a Walking Program in an Underserved Population with Diabetes Mellitus Type 2

Geraldine C. Fike, DNP, MSN, RN, CCRN
Comparing Telephone Versus Mail Dissemination of the Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and System Survey (HCAHPS) Among Patients with Low Literacy

Tammi L. Harris, DNP, MSN, RN, GNP-BC
A Descriptive Analysis of Selected Variables Associated with Hospital Readmissions Among Adult Heart Failure Patients

Nicolann Lynn Hedgpeth, DNP, NP, RN, AOCN
Systematic Review of Psychosocial Interventions for Anxiety in Adult Cancer Patients

Helen Kelly, DNP, MSN, RN, CNS
An Examination of Factors that Influence Infants at Risk for Celiac Disease: An Integrative Review

Christine Magladry, DNP, MSN, RN, FNP-C
The Effectiveness of Mental Health Education as a Strategy to Improve Identification of Mental Illness in Adolescents: An Integrative Review
Gabriella Malagón-Maldonado, DNP, MSN, APRN, CNS
Reframing the Interprofessional Approach to Care for Long-Term Acute Care Patients: An Exploratory Study to Inform a new Model for Collaborative Practice

Rose Juanita Mays, DNP, MSN, RN
Can Compassionate Care be Documented in the Electronic Medical Record?

Kathleen Menasche, DNP, MSN, RN, CNM
Collaborative Practice Between Certified Nurse-Midwives and Obstetricians and the Factors Involved in Working Together to Normalize Childbirth: An Integrative Review

Andrea Morris, DNP RNC-NIC, CCRN
Cue-Based Feedings: Evidence-Based Practice

Juliann Perdue, DNP, RN, FNP
Integration of Complementary and Alternative Therapies in an Acute Rehabilitation Hospital: A Readiness Assessment

Linda Pierog, DNP, MSN, MBA, RN, FNP
30 Day Lifestyle Modification Intervention for Patients with Low-Risk Chest Pain Episodes

Dianna Danced Scherlin, DNP, MS, RN
Faculty Development and Support For Service-Learning as Part of Nursing Program Curricula: An Integrative Review

Tracey Swanson, DNP, MSN, RN
Assessing Effective Strategies to Increase Cervical Cancer Screening Awareness by Hispanic Women: An Integrative Review

Debra Wallace, DNP, RN, FNP-BC
Clinical Inquiry: Exploring the Feasibility of a New Graduate Transition-to-Practice Residency that Supports the Nurse Practitioner in a Large HMO Setting.

Xinxia Zhao, DNP, MSN, RN, FNP
Hepatitis B Knowledge and Preventative Practices Among Chinese American Immigrants in Southern California
Karen Curtiss plays with paper dolls on a regular basis, but they aren’t an exercise in scissor art to her – they illustrate some crucial, and troubling, data about patient safety in hospitals.

Curtiss, founder of the nonprofit CampaignZERO – Families for Patient Safety, and the author of “Safe & Sound in the Hospital: Must-Have Checklists and Tools for Your Loved One’s Care,” was one of the keynote speakers at the Quality and Safety Education for Nurse Educators and Clinical Leaders conference held Wednesday, Aug. 15, 2012 at the Doubletree by Hilton Hotel in Ontario, Calif.

The conference was coordinated and sponsored by the College of Graduate Nursing at Western University of Health Sciences, in collaboration with The Health Workforce Initiative and the California Institute for Nursing & Healthcare.

Citing statistics that show nearly 300,000 lives are lost by accident in U.S. hospitals every year, and that one in every three patients is accidentally harmed in some way during the hospital stay, Curtiss asked the conference’s 200 participants to each pick up a string of six paper dolls from their tables. “Imagine these are the six people closest to you, who would call on you if they needed help,” she said. “Now – which two would you pick to be harmed?”

As nervous laughter and chatter from the assembled nurses, nurse educators and other health professionals swelled, Curtiss said that the exercise was useful in making cold numbers translate into something real, and that it drove home nationwide issues: Hospital safety needs to improve, patients and their families must be strong advocates for their own care, and nurses play a critical role in ensuring that care is patient-focused and safe.

Curtiss’ book, “Safe & Sound in the Hospital,” offers guidance and checklists for patients, including things like making sure all visitors wash their hands, taking notes about care, sharing the notes among various providers, helping nurses when possible, and handling “deity docs” who marginalize nurses and patients.

“As nurses, I want you to be prepared to see people coming in with the checklists, and for you to be OK about it,” she said.

These steps can be crucial safeguards in preventing infections, medication mixups, bedsores, and a variety of other hospital accidents that can lead to injury and worse, Curtiss said.

Curtiss was preceded in the keynote by Mary Foley, RN, PhD, director of the Center for Nursing Research and Innovation at the University of California, San Francisco, who said safety issues are often a direct reflection of how the health care system itself works. “Patients are too often forced to navigate the fractured health care system on their own. Patients and their families make health care decisions when they are not fully informed of their options,” she said. “Our goal is respecting patients’ wishes, and making sure they are full partners and fully informed about health-care decisions.”
Curtiss’ presence at the conference was an acknowledgment that “we had a knowledge gap and a participant gap in who we heard from at conferences – it was never consumers,” Foley said.

Conference attendees welcomed the keynote message. “Mary and Karen were enthusiastic,” said Debbie Chow, ADN Program Director and Department Head at Long Beach City College. “Karen, as a consumer advocate, was nice to see and hear.”

Karen Hanford, EdD, MSN, FNP, dean of the College of Graduate Nursing, welcomed conference participants by noting that the event was the first in what is planned as a series of WesternU-led conferences about nursing issues. “It has been my vision since becoming dean to create a center of excellence in our region. You are all part of that dream.”

“We have brought quality and safety expertise to the Southern California community, and we are part of a new leadership that nursing is going to take in the Inland Empire for developing new systems of care,” Hanford said later. “If nurses are like-minded on the best things to do, it will change organizations.

“I loved the concept of bringing down the barriers, working together and achieving outcomes,” said Carla Schneider, Emergency Department Director for Hoag Hospital in Newport Beach, about Wolff’s presentation.

Jan Boller, PhD, RN, College of Graduate Nursing associate professor and Doctor of Nursing Practice Program director, said the conference was one of the most satisfying she has ever been a part of. “We’re used to working in our own little silos, but to get safety to be in every organization and across all settings, we’re going to have to work together,” she said. “This will take a shift in thinking about who’s important in the discussion of patient safety.”

“What’s most exciting for me is the potential for consumers to partner with nurses and other health professionals,” continued Boller, who is CGN’s The Fletcher Jones Foundation Endowed Chair for Nursing Quality and Safety. “That’s the power of change, and is what will help us get those (variable health outcomes) numbers down. Our power lies through working closely with patients and families through all of this, across all care settings.

“Our goal is that there will be no variation in excellence.”

The conference was funded in part by grants from the Fletcher Jones Foundation and the CA Community College Economic and Workforce Development Program Grant at Golden West College. Additional sponsors include the WesternU Phi Alpha chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International and the California Institute for Nursing and Health Care.

The 2nd annual conference, which will be held on August 17, 2013, will adopt an interprofessional focus towards quality and safety. This dovetails not only with the nursing profession’s broad goals, but also with WesternU’s commitment to interprofessional education. For more information about the conference, please visit: http://www.westernu.edu/nursing
PROGRAMS:
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BSN to MSN
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Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP)