AGENDA
East Carolina University Board of Trustees
Health Sciences Committee
July 19, 2005

1. Approval of Minutes – May 6, 2005

2. Health Sciences Divisional Updates – Dr. Michael Lewis
   - School of Allied Health Sciences updates – Dr. Stephen Thomas
   - School of Nursing Updates – Dr. Phyllis Horns
   - School of Medicine Updates – Dr. Cynda Johnson
   - Action Item – Oral Health Disparities/Challenges

3. PCMH/UHS – Mr. David McRae
Mr. Hill began the Health Sciences Committee meeting at 11:15 a.m. and indicated that he had brought the North Carolina Business Magazine article for distribution.

A motion to approve the minutes of April 1, 2005 as distributed was made by Mr. Brody, seconded by Mr. Greczyn, and unanimously approved by the committee.

**Health Sciences Division Updates**

Mr. Hill referenced the information included on the disks (data on the School of Nursing, Laupus Library, and BSOM practice plan). He also noted that the first PhD in Nursing graduated this semester.

Dr. Lewis stated that Dr. Cynda Johnson sent regrets that she was not available to join the meeting today due to convocation activities. She also sincerely appreciated the Trustees attending convocation.

Dr. Lewis indicated that ECU School of Nursing and the School of Allied Health Sciences had produced the largest number of baccalaureates in the state. He also mentioned that the MFPP dashboard information was included on your
disks. The trends remained positive; productivity had increased; and revenues exceeded expenses. In regards to the CV Institute, the second cardiovascular valve symposium was held in Greenville last week with 100 of the top valve surgeons attending. Dr. Lewis noted that Dr. Chitwood plans to host next year’s symposium in conjunction with the ribbon cutting ceremony.

Dr. Leonard Trujillo, Department of Occupational Therapy, Allied Health Sciences, has been selected by the Governor’s Office as an alternate delegate to represent North Carolina at the White House Conference on Aging.

**PCMH/UHS Update**

Mr. Butler reported that several members of the hospital had recently attended a meeting of the American Hospital Association. Medicaid and Medicare legislation issues were a topic of great concern at the meeting. Mr. Butler indicated that they were not sure what the outcome would mean for budgeting purposes. He also mentioned a moratorium at the national level on specialty hospitals.

The meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.
The challenge to estimate allied health workforce supply

Despite the fact that the demand for allied health workers is strong and expected to grow, state policy makers still struggle with basic questions:

- How many professionals are practicing in the state?
- Is N.C. producing too many, too few, or the right number of professionals to meet the needs of the population?
- How many educational programs are in the state?
- Are the types and locations of educational training programs appropriate?

Because the vast majority of the allied health workforce is not licensed, it is difficult to estimate whether North Carolina’s citizens have adequate access to a well-distributed and well-prepared allied health workforce.

The role of the Council for Allied Health

To answer these challenges, the Council for Allied Health has partnered with the Cecil G. Sheps Center for Health Services Research and the North Carolina Area Health Education Centers (NC AHEC) Program to conduct allied health workforce studies. North Carolina is the only state that has a Council of Allied Health that exists to provide the General Assembly, the UNC Education System and the N.C. Community College System with data on the allied health workforce.

The Council’s workforce studies have enabled the North Carolina Community College System, the UNC system and private colleges to engage in educational program planning informed by data. The Council has also provided the infrastructure through which employers, educators and members of the allied health workforce have come together to address allied health workforce shortages.

North Carolina’s economy is undergoing a significant economic restructuring. Strong support for the Council will not only ensure that North Carolinians have access to an adequate supply of allied health professionals across the state, but will also support the growth of health care jobs that can provide employment for laid-off workers.

Health Care Jobs in North Carolina, 2003

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RNs</td>
<td>25.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physicians</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allied health professions</td>
<td>35.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing aides, orderlies and attendants</td>
<td>26.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LPNs</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total jobs</td>
<td>100%</td>
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</table>

Total jobs: 267,170

Did you know …?

Allied health is driving growth in the larger health care sector.

Between 1999-2003:
- Over 42% of total job growth in the health care sector was due to growth of allied health jobs.
- Job growth in allied health outpaced growth by: 22.4% in the total N.C. workforce; 5.5% in the broader health care sector.

North Carolina’s economy in transition: 1990-2004

Percentage of total employment

As recently as 1990, the manufacturing sector accounted for 27% of jobs statewide and 32% of jobs in rural counties. After more than a decade of plant closings and downsizing, the manufacturing industry now accounts for only 15% of the state’s total workforce.

Between 1990 and 2004, rural areas:

- lost 100,437 manufacturing jobs
- gained 62,777 jobs in health care and social assistance.


Allied health jobs projected to grow

Allied health is projected to add 28,570 jobs between 2000 and 2010 — a 36% increase over 2000 employment.

Allied health jobs represent a stable and relatively profitable employment sector, being:

- relatively less vulnerable to international competition
- more resilient to economic recession
- not as susceptible to outsourcing trends seen in manufacturing and other sectors.


For more information contact:
The Council for Allied Health in North Carolina
http://www.alliedhealthcouncilnc.org/
Critical Need
Looking for excellent educators

Plugged In
Nursing joins the wired revolution

Gender Bender
More men enter nursing

Exemplary Endeavor
Honoring first Distinguished Alumni Award winner
In response to a December report from the University of North Carolina Board of Governors, the faculty and staff of the East Carolina University School of Nursing are working to increase the number of nurses we graduate each year. According to the report, schools in the UNC system will need to double the number of baccalaureate nursing graduates as well as increase the number of master's and doctoral graduates. Indeed, we have a great challenge ahead of us!

Throughout this issue of Pulse, you will find examples of how your school is meeting this challenge with new degree options, increased use of technology, new relationships and more space.

The new health sciences complex being built near the Brody School of Medicine will help us graduate more nurses by increasing our capacity to train and educate students in a technologically advanced setting. The new facility will have eight clinical laboratories equipped with virtual learning resources that will provide students with hands-on opportunities to practice and perfect their skills.

Additionally, a grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services will help bring family nurse practitioner training to medically underserved areas through online education.

While we work to educate more students, we also need to bring in faculty members to teach them. Complicating this effort is the fact that experienced nursing professors are nearing retirement. Five of our own retired in December: Lou Everett, Lona Ratcliffe, Judy Barnes, Belinda Lee and Jeannie Yount. While we are honored to have shared and benefited from their bountiful nursing careers, we are finding it difficult to fill their shoes.

Graduating more doctoral students is one way to address the faculty shortage. Our first doctoral candidate, Elaine Scott, will receive her degree in May. Her dissertation looks into retaining new graduate nurses and the impact that has on the nursing shortage. Scott's research will be a valuable piece to the nursing shortage puzzle.

The centerpiece of this issue of Pulse is an article about our first Distinguished Alumni Award recipient, Dr. Dee Lowdermilk (BSN '66). Dr. Lowdermilk is not only a tremendous asset to the School of Nursing, but also to the nursing profession. She has dedicated her career to nursing education in the areas of perinatal nursing and women's health. Join us in applauding her work and make plans to attend the ECU homecoming celebration in October to hear Dr. Lowdermilk speak at the School of Nursing banquet.

The school has also received recognition in recent months. Our work to increase the diversity of our student population was noted by the American Assembly for Men in Nursing when the group named us the “Best Nursing School or College for Men.” Also, our graduate program was ranked by U.S. News and World Report as the nation's fifth largest in nursing distance education.

In order to meet the challenges ahead, we must recognize the importance of building strong bonds with students, alumni and friends. These challenges require a unified effort. Together, we will meet our goals and continue to provide quality nursing professionals to serve the citizens of North Carolina and beyond.

Phyllis N. Horns, R.N., DSN, FAAN
Dean, ECU School of Nursing
Gender bender
Diversity in nursing improves as more men enter profession

Critical need
Hiring new professors and clinical instructors from already stretched nursing pool

At the threshold
Retirement wave contributes to challenge of nursing shortage

From bedside to blackboard
Leaving the floor can mean less income but greater fulfillment

Hands-on teaching
Community college, university instructors maintain patient contact

Higher pursuits
First student graduates from doctoral program

Documenting the challenges
ECU, PCMH collaborate on bariatric nursing study

Plugged in: Virtual patients, real nursing
Technology is revolutionizing the way nurses learn

Exemplary endeavor
Dee Lowdermilk honored as first Distinguished Alumni Award winner

Art in nursing
Alumnus W. Roger Nelson maintains compassion in ever-changing profession

Philanthropic giving
New scholarships established for nursing students

Beta Nu highlights

ECU welcomes nine new faculty members
His mother was a nurse. His grandmother was a nurse. His aunt was a nurse. They all told him: Go into nursing.

But Bruce Bell loved music. He enrolled in the music education program at East Carolina University, but discovered he didn't want to teach. He wanted to play and compose music, but his piano skills weren't strong enough to pursue a performance degree.

It wasn't until he met his wife that he became interested in the health field. She was a nurse's aide, so he became a nurse's aide too. He began training as an emergency medical technician, thinking about possibly becoming a paramedic.

But riding in the back of an ambulance made him queasy. He also discovered nurses made more money.

After graduating in 1996 with an associate's degree in nursing from Vance-Granville Community College in Henderson, he entered a profession dominated by women.

While still a minority in the nursing world, Bell isn't alone. More men are entering the profession than ever before, posting steady growth over the past two decades. In 1983, there were roughly 5 percent or about 60,000 male nurses in the national workforce compared to nearly 9 percent or 160,000 in 2003, according to a recent Health Affairs article.

North Carolina's numbers appear to mirror those statistics. In 2003, there were an estimated 4,442 male nurses working in the state, compared to 64,829 female nurses. Also in 2003, 9 percent of students enrolled in nursing programs statewide were men, according to the North Carolina Center for Nursing.

By Crystal Baity

At right, Dan Drake, a perioperative nurse at Pitt County Memorial Hospital in Greenville, works full time while pursuing a master's degree at ECU.
“I think nursing is about caring, and to say that only females can ‘care’ would be like saying that fathers can’t care for their kids.”
— Daniel Drake, PCMH nurse.

Bell has worked at WakeMed in Raleigh for seven of the nine years he has been a nurse. He is enrolled part time in ECU’s RN to BSN degree option, tailored for working registered nurses, with 98 other students. Of those, five are men, said Belinda Temple Lee, director of RN/BSN studies for the ECU School of Nursing.

In North Carolina, officials predict a shortage of between 9,000 registered nurses in 2015 to about 18,000 by 2020. An N.C. Institute of Medicine Task Force was formed in 2002 to study the issue.

Several factors are looming: too few nurses for available slots; an aging population that will need more care as baby boomers grow older; and the advancing age of current nurses and faculty who prepare new recruits.

“At a time when demand is continuing to grow, the ability to meet it is deteriorating,” noted Russell “Gene” Tranbarger, Ed.D., RN, FAAN, professor emeritus in the ECU School of Nursing who retired in 2003.

In addition to producing more nurses, which would require expanding the state’s nursing education programs to allow more students, the task force said steps should be taken to attract a more diverse workforce.

While job security, advancement opportunities and good wages are enticing, the overarching draw for men and women is helping people.

“You are with people at their most intimate moments, from the birth of a child, the death of a family member, surgery, the operating room or intensive care,”
By Marion P. Blackburn

In a new twist on an old theme, nursing education is facing its own shortage as programs stretch to find enough instructors.

The ever-growing need for nurses requires programs to expand, but educators say they lack the faculty to do so. Competition from hospitals and other clinical settings, where pay is often higher, means academia is struggling to attract and hold teachers.

Compounding the problem, senior faculty members are retiring with only a limited number of highly recruited candidates to replace them.

The result is a twofold press to recruit instructors and enlarge programs which can send more nurses to the medical centers, doctors offices and rural clinics that desperately need them.

At the East Carolina University School of Nursing, the pressure is on. In December, five instructors with more than 150 years of classroom and clinical experience retired, though they will continue to teach part time as needed. In addition, the school has added six new tenure-track faculty positions.

While the school is making progress in recruiting instructors, the challenges are just beginning, said Dr. Phyllis N. Horns, dean.

“If you don’t have faculty, you can’t increase the number of new graduates,” she said. “We’re not only trying to produce new nurses, we’re trying to produce more faculty to teach those nurses.”

The academic nurse

Nurses have a growing importance in academia, where tenured faculty conduct research and publish alongside peers in the humanities and other sciences. Doctorate-prepared nurses are highly sought after and hold respected places as professors.

Yet the academic shortage persists. One traditionally cited reason is that nurses seek advanced degrees later in life, obtaining terminal degrees at age 50 or later. There are signs this trend is shifting, however.

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Nationally, the American Association of Colleges of Nursing found the median age of nursing doctoral degree recipients was about 46 in 1999. Only 25 recipients, or 6.8 percent, were under 35, according to the organization’s 2003 report, “Faculty Shortages in Baccalaureate and Graduate Nursing Programs: Scope of the Problem and Strategies for Expanding the Supply.”

In comparison, the median age of all research doctoral awardees in the United States in 1999 was about 33.

Given that the mean age of retirement for full-time faculty in 2002 was 61 1/2 years, the number of productive teaching and research years are curtailed because of advanced age at graduation, the report said.

At ECU, 70 of 85 faculty are older than 50; 16 of them are near 60.

Compounding this shortage is a directive to double the number of new nurses graduating from the state’s baccalaureate nursing schools by 2010 issued by the Board of Governors of the University of North Carolina system, which includes ECU. That means hiring additional faculty to teach the approximately 240 nursing students the school would have to admit. The school currently admits 150 to 180 each year.

While more funding is available, the faculty may not be.
“Most of our faculty could find employment in a practice setting making far more than they do in the academic setting,” Horns said. The higher salaries and stimulation of the clinical setting have created enormous competition for qualified nurses.

By the numbers
The average salary for a nurse with a master's degree is approximately $60,800, according to the North Carolina Institute of Medicine. Compare that with the $40,000 to $48,000 new faculty members can expect to make at ECU in the first year and an average salary of about $50,000 for master's-prepared nurses.

In addition, many nurses hesitate to leave the clinical calling that inspired them in the first place.

“For a long time there has been a mentality that if you go into teaching, you're not a real nurse,” Horns said. “It discourages people who might be good teachers from going into it as a career path.”

Teachers retain identity as nurses, she said.

“Faculty are nurses whose role is to teach,” she said. “That is not only valuable, but essential.”

For instructors, there are advantages: a less intense pace; the satisfaction of guiding others; and a chance to pass on experiences.

And then there's the summer vacation.

“For a lot of our faculty, that is a very desirable feature,” Horns said.

Help wanted
Outside ECU, programs across the state face growing demands without the resources to meet them.

A 2004 report released by the Institute of Medicine’s Task Force on the North Carolina Nursing
nursing shortage

Workforce, which Horns served on, showed deficiencies in available instructors, classroom space and clinical training sites.

“Our problem is not one of needing to attract more young people into nursing,” the report said. “Each year we are turning away hundreds of applicants who meet entry requirements from our North Carolina nursing programs.”

Statewide, 5,446 potential registered nurses were denied admission to North Carolina nursing education programs in 2003 because those schools lacked the needed faculty, clinical sites and space, largely because of budget constraints, according to the report.

Finding a solution means more than increasing graduation rates, the report said.

“With changes in medical technology and acuity levels of patients seen in certain inpatient or institutional settings, North Carolina is likely to need not just an increased number of new nurses, but nurses who have enhanced educational preparation,” the report said.

At the North Carolina Center for Nursing, these concerns are well documented. A 2004 study showed that only 54 percent of qualified applicants were offered admission to nursing programs statewide.

“There is insufficient funding for new faculty, insufficient clinical sites and insufficient clinical preceptors,” said Linda Lacey, associate director of research and co-author of “North Carolina Trends in Nursing: 1982-2003 Nursing Student and Nursing Program Statistics” released last June.

“Our research shows beyond a doubt that our nursing education programs do not currently have enough faculty on staff, or the ability to hire new faculty quickly, that would allow us to admit all of the students who are interested in pursuing nursing careers,” she said.

Blueprint for the future

Already the School of Nursing is mapping out strategies to meet what Horns calls the “headache and challenges” of this two-pronged shortage.

In addition to its doctoral program, the school is offering more online classes, with some master’s concentrations entirely Web-based. The education concentration has 65 students enrolled, many of whom could become university faculty one day.

School leaders also anticipate the new 84,000-square-foot building on the health sciences complex will relieve some of the space crunch at the Rivers Building, where despite a new addition only one clinical lab is available, classrooms are packed and scheduling tedious.

“We’re anxious to move because we cannot expand within this location,” Horns said. “We are now teaching twice as many students as when this building was constructed.”

Though competition for new faculty is heated, candidates find a lot of advantages once they visit ECU, said Dr. Therese Lawler, coordinator of program evaluation for the school and former interim director of the doctoral program.

“It’s agonizing to be on a search committee. Everybody is vying for that pool,” she said. “Realistically, there are other choices available to these candidates. But we can hold our own. If we get people to interview with us, they can see the possibilities.”

For researchers, that includes a rich patient population with many types of conditions. “If you want to research any question, you can find it here,” she said.

And nursing is held in high regard at ECU, she said. “It is a fully participating academic discipline, and that is not true on all campuses,” she said.

Another recruitment advantage comes from the school’s close relationship with Pitt County Memorial Hospital, which in 2004 attained magnet status from the American Nurses Credentialing Center recognizing it as a supportive site for nurses.

Hurdles remain, however. “When we advertise for faculty slots, other disciplines may get 60 applicants for a position but if we get two, we’re thrilled,” said Lawler.

For Horns, the road ahead looks brighter as the profession expands and more nurses move into leadership positions.

“It takes a special kind of nurse to be a teacher,” Horns said. “It takes a special kind of person to mentor and help the next generation of nurses to reach their potential. It takes patience and creativity to teach the art and science of nursing.”
Six longtime faculty members who amassed 185 years of teaching and service at the East Carolina University School of Nursing retired this academic year.

Judy Barnes, Lou Everett, Belinda Lee, Lona Ratcliffe and Jeannie Yount retired in December, but have agreed to continue working part time to ease the transition as new faculty come on board. Eldean Pierce, another longtime faculty member, retired in October.

Dean Phyllis Horns described each as irreplaceable.

“Among that group are the most loyal and committed faculty that the school has ever seen,” Horns said.

Their departure illustrates the challenge that schools of nursing are facing across America. Retiring faculty outnumber ready replacements.

“Their experience, knowledge and wisdom have been very meaningful in moving the school ahead,” said Horns. “It’s a loss, and reflective of what’s going on nationally.”

Horns noted that in the next five to seven years, a substantial number of faculty members, including herself, will reach what traditionally has been considered retirement age. And many will choose to retire.

“Nursing as a discipline has not done as well recruiting faculty as other disciplines,” Horns said. “We need nurses to consider teaching as a legitimate and desirable area for career development and for making a significant contribution to nursing.”

“Retirement wave contributes to faculty recruitment challenge

The majority of doctoral programs in nursing are filled with people in their 40s or 50s. At ECU, undergraduates and new graduates are being encouraged to get advanced degrees in nursing at younger ages to increase the number of productive years available for teaching and research.

“As students are working on their BSN, we are trying to interest them in teaching, and preparing them for what they have to do to get there,” said Horns. “They must have experience in the field to be good teachers and good faculty members, but this experience does not need to extend over dozens of years.”

Each of the retirees brought a wealth of clinical experience to ECU, many beginning their teaching careers in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Judy Farrell Barnes of Kinston joined the school in 1974 as an instructor in maternity nursing and was promoted to assistant professor in the Department of Family and Community Nursing in 1980. She earned her bachelor’s and master’s degrees from ECU. She continued her practice by serving in the...
From bedside to blackboard
By Marion P. Blackburn

More than eight years went by before Melissa Schwartz returned to East Carolina University. A 1996 graduate with a bachelor's of science setting. Generally lower pay for teachers is a hurdle faced by nursing programs everywhere as they struggle to graduate more nurses.

“But it's not only about money,” Schwartz said.

realize how useful they could be as educators, she said. “Some nurses would be excellent instructors, but they think they're too old or that they wouldn't make good teachers,” she said.

Leaving the floor can mean less income, but for some, it brings greater fulfillment

in nursing, she dreamed of becoming a faculty member one day.

Her life took several turns before she and her husband moved to New Bern, where she worked at Craven Regional Medical Center.

She had a daughter, then a son. Her aging parents grew ill; they moved in. Now they live close by and she's responsible for their care.

Her story shows the complex route a nurse may take on the way to an advanced degree and teaching position. Eight years after receiving her BSN, she received an online master's degree in nursing education and administration from the University of Phoenix, which allowed her to teach at her alma mater. She came on staff last fall as a clinical instructor in adult health nursing.

“I love teaching. It's the best of both worlds. I get to be with the patients and the students.”

She hopes to complete a Ph.D. program by age 40, which is younger than the national nursing average of 46.2 years. That's still later than 33.7, the average age for doctoral degrees in other fields.

Annette Peery, 43, is pursuing a doctorate in education from North Carolina State University. She hopes to apply for a tenure track position at the School of Nursing after completing her doctoral degree, and she holds an MSN from ECU ('96). She has served as a certified diabetes educator at the Family Medicine Center at the Brody School of Medicine in addition to her experience as an ICU nurse.

“I still have lots of patient contact during clinical training with students,” she said. “I interact with patients and staff. I haven't lost that.”

Nurses who make the leap from the clinic to the classroom have a few new skills to learn, said Dr. Josie Bowman, chair of the Department of Adult Health Nursing. To help them adjust, new teachers are paired with a more senior instructor to meet weekly, then less often as they grow more accustomed.

Mentors can guide them as they learn to evaluate students instead of patients, she said.

“Everyone we hire has strong clinical skills, but when you start to teach them to someone else, you must use certain strategies.”

“’It’s not only about money. I love teaching. It’s the best of both worlds. I get to be with the patients and the students.’ – Melissa Schwartz, clinical instructor who made the leap from clinical nursing to teaching.
Many nurses are surprised to find that becoming a teacher doesn’t mean giving up patient care. For Joy Shepard and Becky Hylant, teaching brings them into contact with patients through their students, whom they supervise at clinical training sites throughout the community. The satisfaction of working with students, patients and their families led them to their current roles and both found the community college experience helped them become confident instructors. One is participating in a scholarship program that aims to support community college teachers as they pursue advanced degrees.

“Typically, a nurse who has worked for a few years in a hospital or community setting finds that they enjoy teaching and perhaps working with nursing students who are in their agency getting their clinical experience,” said Dr. Sylvia Brown, professor and associate dean for graduate programs in the East Carolina School of Nursing.

A recent survey conducted by the North Carolina Center for Nursing found that 14 percent of faculty are over the age of 60; almost 20 percent of programs have one or more faculty vacancies; and nine out of 50 schools have to turn students away for admission due to lack of faculty.

To help offset vacancies, ECU began an online nursing education concentration in 2003 to prepare future nurse educators. Graduates are prepared to teach in both the classroom and in a clinical setting. In two short years, the concentration has grown to 54 students or about 23 percent of the 239 students enrolled.

By Crystal Baity

Nurse and community college instructor Joy Shepard is pursuing a master’s degree at ECU through a Project Health fellowship.
in the MSN program, Brown said.

Many, like Shepard, will teach in associate degree nursing programs in community colleges upon graduation. Some, like Hylant, will move to a four-year college or university setting. Some continue for their doctoral degree so that they can become tenured faculty.

And it’s the love of teaching that keeps them going, Brown said.

Hylant began with a strong desire to make a positive impact on professional nursing. After 35 years in nursing, she still enjoys patient care and decision making about assessments and interventions. She works part time at an urgent care clinic in Greenville. After 20 years in the community college setting, Hylant recently joined the faculty at ECU, where she teaches clinical sections on nursing care of children.

“It continues to be very rewarding to witness student progress in caring for patients and their families. It is always energizing when students think through situations for themselves.” — Becky Hylant, clinical instructor, ECU School of Nursing.
First student graduates from doctoral program

By Crystal Baity

There are 93 doctoral nursing programs in the United States, but the number of students graduating isn’t keeping up with the number of faculty retiring each year.

“It’s happening right here,” said Dr. Martha Alligood, director of the doctoral program at the East Carolina University School of Nursing.

“We’re a little microcosm of the nation.”

Just this academic year, six long-time faculty members in the ECU School of Nursing retired. (See story page 7.)

The trend is seen at universities nationwide,
and the nurse faculty shortage becomes more acute at each degree level. “The higher you go in nursing, the greater the shortage,” Alligood said.

Fourteen students are in ECU’s three-year-old doctoral program, and the first student, Elaine S. Scott, graduated in May.

Professional doctorate programs are relatively new in nursing, according to the American Association of Colleges of Nursing, which represents baccalaureate and higher degree programs in nursing at public and private institutions nationwide.

Most doctoral nursing programs, 72 out of 93, were established in the past 25 years. The programs at ECU and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the only two in North Carolina, were established in 2002 and 1988 respectively. The University of North Carolina at Greensboro will begin a doctoral program in nursing this fall, and Duke University is expected to begin its doctoral program next year.

According to a recent AACN survey of 590 nursing schools, 2004 saw increases in enrollment and graduation from doctoral degree nursing programs. Enrollment in doctoral degree programs increased by 7.3 percent while the number of graduates increased by 2 percent.

Nursing rejected the “training” model of education in the 1950s. Since then, nurses have received academic degrees for all levels of nursing education, from bachelor’s to master’s to doctorates, which includes coursework in nursing science and research and culminates in dissertation research that contributes new nursing knowledge to the discipline, Alligood said.

Scott has been guided through the doctoral process by Dr. Martha Engelke, associate dean for research and scholarship, and by committee members Drs. Mel Swanson and Garris Conner of the nursing school and Dr. Brenda Cleary of the North Carolina Center for Nursing.

Scott has been studying influences on job and career satisfaction and reasons why new nurses leave their jobs and the profession, which she found is strongly associated with length and quality of orientation in the first two years after graduation.

Her findings have implications for educators and administrators of health care organizations. Strong orientation programs, adequate staffing and a

Dr. Martha Alligood directs the doctoral program in the ECU School of Nursing. There are 14 students in the three-year-old program and one of the first two students graduated in May.

At left, doctoral students listen intently during a Tuesday lecture in Rivers Building.
Documenting the challenges

ECU, PCMH collaborate on bariatric nursing study

By Crystal Baity

A study of nurses who work with obese patients and their families will help nurses learn from one another to provide better care.

The collaborative study between the East Carolina University School of Nursing and Pitt County Memorial Hospital found several challenges in working with bariatric patients.

Publication of the results is pending, but one challenge was the physical aspects of care, which often include equipment for mobility, the amount of time and staff needed to complete care tasks. Specialized equipment, most often used to facilitate ambulation and safety, and training are necessary for nurses. Other concerns included the availability of equipment, its storage location and access time within the hospital.

Several responses centered around the ability of nurses to safely perform their duties for patients and staff.

Another concern regarded patient dependency and the need for family members to assist with ongoing patient care after discharge. Sometimes bariatric patients are perceived as more demanding than non-obese patients.

“Bariatric patients are a unique patient type, which is why it is so important for us to learn from each other the best practices for their care,” said PCMH perioperative nurse Dan Drake, co-investigator of the study.

With the growing prevalence of obesity and insufficient research to guide nursing care of obese patients and their families, Dr. Mary Ann Rose and Drake led the effort to discover nurses’ perceptions of challenges in caring for the morbidly obese. Drs. Martha Engelke and Maura McAuliffe from the nursing school and PCMH nursing supervisor Kathy Dutton also were investigators in the study.

The group received a $1,000 ECU/PCMH collaborative research grant to analyze the results of three focus groups with a total of 17 nurses from four units of the hospital (heart center, surgery, rehabilitation, and labor and delivery) in summer 2004. An abstract of the data is to be presented at a national conference, Rose said.

The project also has resulted in the development of a national bariatric nursing consortium.

“This research effort started as a mechanism to generate descriptions of challenges and to develop future research questions,” Drake said.

Researchers have written a proposal for

Approximately one-third of American adults, or 58 million people, are overweight. More than 14 million are seriously overweight and about 5 million of those are so seriously overweight that it affects their health and life expectancy.
Virtual patients, real nursing

From simulated-patient mannequins to an online clinic, technology is revolutionizing the way nurses learn

By Marion P. Blackburn

Reaching for the patient’s pulse brings a strange sensation: the arm feels cool, the skin, hairless.

The arm belongs to a mannequin, but its vitals are critical to nurses training in the certified registered nurse anesthetist concentration. The model known as SimMan allows nurses to administer anesthesia, monitor reactions and even respond to a heart attack.

“It’s an adjustment, but it feels real,” said Jay Annis, 28, a student in the master’s concentration. “It creates an environment where it’s almost the real thing.”

SimMan could be a supplemental method of clinical learning at the East Carolina University School of Nursing. The new nursing school on the health sciences complex could have as many as six of them capable of reproducing the conditions nurses need to understand before advancing to human patients.

These computer-operated mannequins show the influence of technology in nursing. With its real-time reactions, SimMan allows nurses to develop skills before seeing their first patients. Decision-making, critical thinking and dexterity can mature in a low-risk setting.

Models are only one way technology is changing the field. Today, nursing uses online courses, Web sites and other electronic resources as routes to learning and many master’s courses are offered only online.

“Our first online program was the family nurse practitioner degree, and now all of the theoretical, or didactic, content for our master’s-level programs is delivered online,” said Dr. Sylvia Brown, professor and associate dean for graduate programs. “All of our MSN students are exposed to that kind of learning.”

Dr. Maura McAuliffe
Nurse Anesthetist Concentration Director
ECU School of Nursing

Is this the end of face-to-face instruction? No, but it does mean a concentrated learning experience. After making the leap to online learning, students usually embrace it, Brown said.

“Most of our master’s students are working at least part time. Many of them have families. So it’s more convenient,” she said. “Occasionally, a student prefers the classroom and we try to accommodate their learning needs.”

A new grant could enhance their online experience. The online family nurse practitioner concentration is developing a virtual clinic with video and animated patient models funded in part with a $650,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. It will bring simulated experiences in disease evaluation and screening.

The virtual clinic should supplement but not replace real clinical experiences, instructors say. Students will train at medical offices and hospitals as they always have, under guidance of preceptors throughout North Carolina.

The wave of technology in education is sure to grow. In fall 2004, the school won recognition from U.S. News & World Report, which ranked ECU as the fifth largest online graduate nursing program in the nation, as measured by enrollment and other attributes. The ECU School of Nursing offered its first online...
Dee Lowdermilk honored as first Distinguished Alumni Award winner, tapped as keynote speaker at homecoming celebration in October

By Crystal Baity

Dietra “Dee” Lowdermilk witnessed her first birth, and her first death, as a young nursing student in the 1960s. As she and her fellow nursing students watched, a newborn baby died. The physician’s kind and supportive nature, and his protective attitude toward his student observers, helped Lowdermilk through the difficult experience. “It showed us how we, too, could provide that kind of care to patients,” Lowdermilk said.

The magnitude of that event combined with her interest in obstetric courses at ECU helped her decide on maternity nursing as a career. Lowdermilk’s dedication as a nurse and longtime educator in women’s health led to her selection as the first East Carolina University School of Nursing Distinguished Alumni Award winner. The award recognizes an alumnus who has made exemplary contributions to the nursing profession.

Lowdermilk’s interest in nursing began in high school, when she worked as a nurse’s aide to laboring and postpartum women and newborns in the hospital in Lexington, where she grew up. Her interest continued as an undergraduate, spurred even more by ECU instructor Ruth Broadhurst’s obstetrics class.

After graduation, Lowdermilk worked first in public health, then in a variety of maternity and women’s health care clinical settings. Along the way, she met her husband Ed, a pharmacist, while picking up medicine for a cancer patient, and they married in 1968.

Since 1970, she has been in nursing education and has spent the majority of her career, since 1974, in the School of Nursing at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She is a clinical professor who teaches primarily in the undergraduate program and coordinates the maternal newborn course.

She also is co-editor of two maternity and women’s health textbooks and a leader in the Association of Women’s Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses. Among her many honors and awards, she has repeatedly been picked as favorite teacher by undergraduate students at UNC, chosen the North Carolina Nurses Association Nurse Educator of the Year, honored as one of the state’s top nurses by the Great 100 organization and named a fellow in the American Academy of Nursing.

“Dr. Lowdermilk’s strengths lie in understanding the needs and trends in perinatal and women’s health nursing, her ability to communicate information through teaching excellence, publications and consultations, and in her wide national and international network of educator colleagues,” wrote seven of Lowdermilk’s fellow UNC faculty in her nomination letter. “She is committed to dissemination of information that will advance evidence-based nursing practice in the care of women and infants.”

In her award letter, Dr. Phyllis Horns, dean and professor of the ECU School of Nursing, praised Lowdermilk for her “immense contribution to our profession and the

Opposite: Dr. Dietra “Dee” Lowdermilk of Chapel Hill reflects on her life as a nurse and teacher.
preparation of future nurses who will one day assume leadership roles in our discipline. Your work mirrors the commitment of the School of Nursing to these endeavors."

Lowdermilk says she was home alone, checking messages on her answering machine, when she received the news from Horns. “I just started smiling and laughing and then jumping up and down,” Lowdermilk said. “Then I felt overwhelmed and honored to be selected as the first recipient. I know that our school has many distinguished alumni. Of all my classmates, I’m not sure I would have thought I would have still been in nursing after all these years, much less being honored by the school.”

Lowdermilk, in fact, helped start the first alumni association for the ECU nursing school.

As a member of the third graduating class, she recalls a small, close-knit group with a brutal schedule of classes and labs that lasted until late evening.

“I remember getting our uniforms and hating those collars and cuffs. I remember the dean checking our hemlines so they were not so short. I remember the early bus rides to Pitt Memorial for clinical. I really hated 7 a.m.”

While living at John Umstead Hospital for a 13-week psychiatric rotation, she remembered “losing” a few patients who went AWOL after taking them to the canteen.

“I also remember great adventures in public health with Barbara Oyler and in med/surg with Evelyn Perry, who later was dean. I remember Dean Warren’s class on leadership held in the little house that was our nursing school building. She told us no one would get an A, but I can’t remember if that was true or not.”

Lowdermilk, 60, discussed the changes in women’s health, from technology to teaching, over the past 35 years. “When I first started teaching, there were no fetal monitors, just nurses sitting at the bedside monitoring contractions and listening to the fetal heart with a fetoscope,” Lowdermilk said. “My students now have never seen a fetoscope except in class and they think it is an amusing antique. Almost all labor patients are monitored with electronic fetal monitoring and computers are at the bedside for nurses’ notes.”

No longer do women stay three to five days in the hospital after giving birth. Twenty-four hours is common for uncomplicated deliveries.

“When I was a student in public health, we visited women who gave birth at home with ‘granny’ midwives. Now we have certified nurse midwives who are providing childbirth care in birth centers and hospitals,” Lowdermilk said. “In the ‘70s, women had to fight for giving birth naturally and have their partners present. Today, many women are opting for epidural analgesia and families are welcome at birth.”

Even the look of nurses has changed. All-white uniforms and caps have been replaced with colored scrubs. Teaching also has changed. Finicky film and slide projectors and overhead transparency machines almost have been eradicated.

“Now in my class, I have a computer as well as any kind of audio-video equipment that I might need. My syllabus is electronic and everything needed for my course is available on the Web.
By Crystal Baity

While technology and the nursing profession evolve almost daily, the art of nursing is a constant, says veteran nurse W. Roger Nelson.

“Our patients still need and expect compassion,” said Nelson. “Whether it’s a listening ear, a hand held, or a medical term explained, our patients look to their nurse to be a constant in a fast-paced, unfamiliar world.”

Nelson, 42, first became interested in nursing when he was working as a radiologic technologist. He wanted deeper involvement in caring for patients. That’s when he decided to go back to school while working the night shift at Pitt County Memorial Hospital, and earned an associate’s degree in nursing from Pitt Community College. He then went on to earn bachelor’s and master’s degrees from ECU.

In a seven-day week, Nelson works three days as a family nurse practitioner at East Carolina Neurology and three days as a patient care coordinator at Pitt County Memorial Hospital.

“They are completely different,” said Nelson, who thrives on the diversity of the two jobs.

Eight-hour shifts at the neurological practice are devoted to patients with problems due to stroke, seizure, multiple sclerosis, Parkinson’s disease or other chronic illness. At the hospital, Nelson works 12 fast-paced hours at a time, moving from floor to floor, following staff and patients to ensure quality care.

Neurologist Daniel Lee, medical director of PCMH’s Sleep Center and associate clinical professor at the Brody School of Medicine, is Nelson’s supervising physician.

He says Nelson is a team player and excellent communicator with a great sense of humor who is often requested by patients. “He can explain disease pathology in a way people can relate to and understand,” Lee said. “His energies and talents are assets to our neurology office.”

Since Nelson was a student at North Pitt High School, he has worked two or three jobs at a time. Balancing work and family life is challenging but something he strives for daily.

“My family time is very important to me,” he said.

He credits his father, Ray Nelson, for serving as his mentor and role model. When Nelson was growing up in the small community of Stokes, his father worked two jobs. He farmed and worked at a factory but always had time for his family, Nelson said.

Roger Nelson now lives in Bethel with his wife, Jennifer Register, who soon will open a salon and boutique in town called Simply Jenny’s. The couple has a son, Wesley, who is a first-grader at Bethel School. Nelson’s first wife, Jane Burrus, died of breast cancer and leukemia in 1998. The couple had three children: Elizabeth, who is a junior business major at ECU; Kathryn, a senior at North Pitt High School who plans to attend ECU and major in biology; and Daniel, who died of a brain tumor at age 11 in 2000.

Nelson experienced the loss of his wife and son while he was in graduate school, and although he took some time off, he eventually completed his degree.

“One of the reasons I decided to go back to be an FNP was to get knowledge for taking care of my family,” he said.

Having lived the experience, he has even greater compassion for his patients who may be dealing with similar circumstances. Being able to relate “provides you with empathy and sympathy for the other person,” he said.
Virtual patients continued from page 17

course in 1998.

The virtual clinic

The grant for the family nurse practitioner concentration hopes to upgrade the virtual classroom with a virtual clinic.

Its overall aim is to increase the number and racial diversity of nurse practitioners in rural areas, and it will help the school do this by allowing it to tailor courses for nurses who have varied skills, from pediatrics to critical care.

The virtual clinic will help by providing simulated clinical experiences. Its animated patients will move, speak and respond to questions.

“We’re dealing with people who grew up with video games. That’s the way they learn best. It engages them.” – Dr. Alta Andrews, chair of the Department of Family and Community Nursing in the ECU School of Nursing.

Virtual patients

continued from page 17

In the next few months, virtual patients will take shape from information supplied by nursing faculty and brought to life with video and sound by technology support staff. The virtual clinic may be accessible by fall.

“This will prepare students to do a better job when they are face to face,” Andrews said. “It will give them the opportunity to learn with someone who won’t hold it against them—a computer. They can develop the skills they need to feel confident when they move into the real-life setting. They can review a skill numerous times, too, which they can’t always do in the clinic.”

Animated patients with standard symptoms and responses will allow students to develop baseline skills regardless of where they live. Virtual patients will eventually include adults and children who will allow nursing students to “evaluate” conditions such as arthritis while they screen for cancer and treat emergencies.

“There may be some conditions they may not see in a real clinic, so they can see them in the virtual clinic,” Andrews said.

Meet the “Sims”

SimMan will be joined in the new nursing school by companions that may include a “SimBaby.”

The new 84,000-square-foot nursing school will have eight clinical labs, many with a SimMan.

What distinguishes SimMan from other models is its ability to produce realistic human responses, said Dr. Maura McAuliffe, director of the nurse anesthetist concentration. Nurse anesthetist students have real-time practice administering narcotics, inhalation agents and other agents while monitoring.

Hands-on continued from page 11

to be very rewarding to witness student progress in caring for patients and their families. It is always energizing when students think through situations for themselves.”

The university setting encourages scholarly inquiry and supports critical thinking, Hylant said. Judy Andresky, a longtime faculty member at ECU, has helped in acclimating Hylant to her new role. Though she is a seasoned professional, learning a new system takes time.

For Shepard, venturing from the safe moorings of staff nurse to nurse educator took a great deal of courage, she said.

“Being a nurse educator is an immense responsibility, as the students watch the instructor carefully, modeling attitudes and responses,” said Shepard, who is an instructor in the associate’s degree nursing program at Beaufort County Community College, her alma mater. “It is an awesome responsibility to mold and mentor the next generation of nurses.”

Shepard, who received a bachelor’s degree in nursing from ECU, is currently enrolled in a nursing education option in the master’s degree program. She is one of five ECU students who received fellowships through Project Health, a North Carolina Community College.
patient responses.

“Vitals change, as a real-life patient’s would,” she said. “We use this model as a bridge from what they learn in the classroom to what they will do in the O.R.”

SimMan can also reproduce a crisis such as malignant hyperthermia, a rare adverse reaction to anesthesia. “We can use it to instruct students during encounters which you could never schedule,” she said.

Students also use “Smart Board,” a blackboard-sized screen that projects computerized presentations, images and even the Internet. This large computer “desktop” responds to the touch of a hand, shows highlights and saves changes.

Many of these advances have taken place in nurse anesthesia because these nurses often use highly technical equipment in the operating room, she said. Other technological developments include computerized charting of the anesthesia record that, along with infusion pumps, creates a degree of precision not possible a few years ago.

“Because these charts are generated by computers it means an anesthetist can more fully concentrate on monitoring patients,” she said.

Fewer walls to nursing

Of the more than 230 master’s students enrolled this spring, more than 190 are distance education students; 150 semester hours of graduate courses are delivered online.

The HHHS grant will improve those online offerings with “modular” courses that encourage students to move at their own pace, in addition to supporting the new virtual clinic.

Computerized learning has its own benefits, Brown said.

“The interaction makes it easier for people to transition to other forms of technology,” Brown said. That’s good news in a world of computerized charts, hand-held computers and online databases.

“We’re trying to take some of the barriers away,” she said. “Learners are more technologically savvy than they were a few years ago. Once they get used to this mode of learning, they love it.”

System program initiated in 2004 to give community college instructors an opportunity to receive advanced education.

It’s one tool in the effort to increase nurse faculty across the state.

Shepard will return as a full-time nurse educator at BCCC after graduation this August.

The Project Health program requires recipients to remain enrolled as a full-time student in an approved graduate level program. They also must work one year in the state community college system for each year the stipend, totaling $19,000, is awarded.

Programs like Project Health have been listed by the N.C. Institute of Medicine Task Force in its 2004 North Carolina Nursing Workforce Report as a priority recommendation to increase nursing faculty recruitment and retention. Others were to expand nursing doctoral programs and to offer off-campus RN-to-BSN nursing programs using a competitive grant approach.

The nursing education option in the MSN program at ECU takes 18 months of full-time study, although most nurses enroll part time and work. Online options, which are attractive to working students, are available in family nurse practitioner, nursing education, neonatal nurse practitioner and nurse midwifery concentrations, Brown said.
Tranbarger said, “These are the most emotionally laden, intense moments in life. It’s the nurse who is there. You really share the life and death moments of an individual, and you get paid to do it.”

The mean annual salary for registered nurses in North Carolina was $52,810 in 2003, according to statistics by the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The salary is enhanced by the opportunities in nursing. There is a match for almost every personality from adrenaline junkies to high-tech wizards.

“You can go anywhere in the world and get employment,” Tranbarger said. “The real beauty of nursing is there are so many different things you can do, from the emergency room to air care helicopters to military to sports medicine, whatever you can think of.”

Emergency medicine interested Daniel Drake, who met some male EastCare flight nurses when he was a high school student in Williamston. He decided on emergency nursing as a career and started working as a nurse in 1992 in the neurosurgical trauma intensive care unit at Pitt County Memorial Hospital. In 2003, he became a perioperative clinical nurse specialist at the hospital. Now he’s in graduate school at ECU, working full time with a wife and two little girls. Balancing school, work and family is challenging, but rewarding.

“Nursing is a great profession,” Drake said. “It allows career mobility up and laterally. There are so many options for nurses and unlimited places to work. I enjoy being a part of a profession that seeks to make people healthier in such a variety of ways.”

Michael Raper, a senior ECU nursing student who will graduate this spring, said nursing came as “a calling” to help others. “It’s an expansive field,” said Raper. “It doesn’t matter what your interests are, there’s a position open. And I think men bring a different point of view to different aspects.”

The 36-year-old Wilson native plans to work in the emergency room at PCMH after graduation. He previously worked in construction and retail.

“I had a chance to experience life before I really knew what I wanted to do,” Raper said.

For Tranbarger, he entered the nursing profession after completing his studies in a Chicago nursing school and hospital for men. It was one of only 12 nursing schools for men that existed in the United States at one time. Tranbarger realized after graduating in 1959 that “I was in a cocoon, and not the real world.

“A lot of schools didn’t accept men. Those barriers are down now.”

Nursing has been seen as a woman’s profession since the time of Florence Nightingale, regarded as the founder of modern nursing. Women in the Victorian era were expected to marry and stay home. But Nightingale didn’t want to marry. She wanted to be a nurse.

“As the Nightingale model took over in the United States, all the doors to nursing were closed to men and it became overwhelmingly associated with women,” Tranbarger said.

However, physicians began complaining in the late 1800s that female patients were cared for by female nurses and male patients had orderlies. A movement began to train men to be nurses, and the first male school of nursing opened in New York. Still, the motherly image of nursing remains.

“If you ask a person on the street to think of a nurse, a woman automatically comes to mind,” Tranbarger said. “It still clings.”

Perceptions or stereotypes may linger, but for men in nursing, it isn’t something they think about or encounter on a daily basis. In fact, some patients prefer male nurses.

“Patients and families
tend to have more to worry about than if their nurse is male or female,” Drake said. “I am respectful of people who desire to have a particular gender care for them because I understand that some people have past experiences or learned behaviors. This works both ways though. I have heard patients request male nurses. I think nursing is about caring, and to say that only females can ‘care’ would be like saying that fathers can’t care for their kids.”

“Men have had to fight the belief that women were nurturers and men were wage earners,” said Tranbarger, who began as an operating room nurse, served eight years in the U.S. Army which included teaching nurses during the Vietnam War, worked as nursing administrator at three different hospitals in North Carolina, and who later joined the faculty at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and finally ECU in 1992.

“I was able to find a niche for myself at each stage of my life,” said Tranbarger, 68. “I never left nursing.”

Bell, a father of two girls and two boys, expects to graduate from ECU with a bachelor’s degree in spring 2006. His wife Terry, who piqued his interest in the medical field years ago, is now a stay-at-home mom.

Bell, who plays piano and synthesizer for his church, said he will always be a musician regardless of his profession.

“When I was younger, I thought I had to be one or the other,” he said.

Bell’s grandmother lived to see him become a nurse but died the same year that he completed his first nursing degree. His mom, of course, was proud too.

Nursing has been a good career choice.

They told him so.

Higher pursuits continued from page 13

transitional period from school to work are critical for retaining and fostering competence in new graduate nurses, according to Scott’s dissertation summary.

“She has completed a study that has made an important contribution to the nursing profession, particularly since we have such a shortage of nurses and we need to identify ways to retain the nurses who graduate from nursing schools,” Engelke said.

A full-time student can complete the doctorate in three years, while a part-time student normally needs five years, although they are allowed six years to finish.

It is all part of developing students as scholars.

“Some have to give up ‘sacred cows,’” Alligood said. “Some of what we hold pretty true isn’t supported sometimes after you look closely. It sort of shakes the foundation when we look at nursing as closely as we do.”

Best of all, the rewards are great.

Graduates are prepared to work in advanced practice, executive, administrative, public policy and teaching roles.

“People are doing different things with a Ph.D.,” said Alligood, who is in her first year as director of the program at ECU. “Some are teaching, some are in practice, some are in different kinds of practice.”
Governor appoints Horns to institute

Dr. Phyllis Horns, dean of the School of Nursing, has been appointed by Gov. Mike Easley to the North Carolina Institute of Medicine.

Horns has served as dean of the School of Nursing since 1990. She also served as interim vice chancellor for the Division of Health Sciences from 2001-2002. She is an active member of the National League for Nursing Board of Governors, North Carolina Council of Deans/Directors of Baccalaureate and Higher Degree Programs, American Nurses Association and Sigma Theta Tau Beta Nu Chapter.

She received her doctorate in nursing from the University of Alabama at Birmingham in 1980 and her master’s degree in public health from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1971.

Chartered by the N.C. General Assembly in 1983, the N.C. IOM seeks solutions to statewide health care issues. The 100 members are selected from government, education, business, the health and legal professions, hospital and health insurance industries, private philanthropy and the public at large. The purpose of the organization is to assure that complex health issues are examined and disseminated to public sector officials with decision-making authority.

Dr. Cynda Johnson, dean of the Brody School of Medicine at ECU, was also appointed to the institute. Both will serve five-year terms.

National magazine recognizes school for distance education program

The School of Nursing at East Carolina University has been named by U.S. News & World Report as having the fifth largest online graduate nursing program in the nation.

This is the first time the school has been named to the list, said Dr. Sylvia Brown, professor and associate dean for graduate programs in the ECU School of Nursing.

The nursing school has been a leader in the delivery of online education on campus, and provides innovative methods in its distance education offerings, Brown said.

The innovations include virtual classrooms with audio capability, use of a streaming media server to deliver audio and video content, the development of a virtual clinic that has simulated patient “cases” representative of the community demographics, the use of handheld computers for the collection of patient data, and development of virtual communities for each graduate concentration where students can meet and exchange information.

“We deliver more than 150 semester hours of graduate courses online in the MSN program,” said Brown. “Our program was selected based on enrollment, limited class size and economic efficiency in educational costs.”

The school was listed in the magazine’s Oct. 18 edition.

School of Nursing honored as best nursing school for men

The nursing program at East Carolina University has been selected as the recipient of the 2004 Best Nursing School or College for Men Award.

The board of directors of the American Assembly for Men in Nursing chose ECU as the first recipient of the new award because of its activities and programs that address issues surrounding men in nursing, according to the award letter.

ECU was chosen from several university nursing programs that were nominated.

The award was presented in December at the annual Luther Christman Awards Dinner during the 30th annual AAMN conference in Tucson, Ariz.
Helping hands
Senior ECU nursing students raise tsunami relief funds

During the spring semester, several senior nursing students led an effort to raise funds for tsunami victims in southeast Asia.

By March, students had raised more than $2,000 and planned to raise additional funds until graduation. All monies collected were to be sent to CARE.

Committee members were Laura Harrington, Elizabeth Huston, Anna Mountcastle, Michael Raper, Mary Jo Taddie, Monica Tulloch and Nicole Vannoy. Dr. Martha Engельke served as faculty advisor for the project.

Donations were received through collections, by mail and at a Web site set up for the effort at www.care.org/ECU. All donations were earmarked for the tsunami relief.

Raper had the idea to start raising funds based on personal experience.

“I worked with the American Red Cross during Hurricane Floyd during the flood,” Raper said. “I worked the emergency shelter at North Pitt High School. I went in for an eight-hour shift and ended up being stranded there for about two weeks. I had first-hand experience of what natural disasters can do to people. I knew it would be a long-term recovery effort.”

Obesity can be attributed to many factors ranging from over consumption of high-calorie, low nutritional foods to burning too few calories with a sedentary lifestyle. Other causes include genetics, metabolic or other biochemical physiological disorders.

Overweight and obese people have been shown to suffer from low self-esteem, quality of life and function. Health problems associated with obesity include high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, osteoarthritis, stroke, cancer and decreased life expectancy, according to the national Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. For more information on obesity, go to www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpha/obesity/index.htm.

Consortium for Bariatric Nursing

Inspired by East Carolina University’s designation as a National Bariatric Surgery Clinical Research Center, nurses from the ECU School of Nursing and Pitt County Memorial Hospital have developed a collaborative group to explore the challenges facing nurses in the care of morbidly obese patients.


The bariatric consortium is developing a Web site, and has a link from www.nursing.ecu.edu. The National Association of Bariatric Nurses Web site is www.bariatricnurses.org.
Beloved alumni recognized

Last fall, the Beta Nu Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau made a gift to the ECU School of Nursing to establish a scholarship in honor of Eldean (’74 BSN) and Hal Pierce to recognize their long-standing commitment and service to the school. Following that gift and subsequent ones from others, Beta Nu made another donation to bring the fund to $25,000, the minimum amount required to create an endowed scholarship.

Eldean Pierce, who started teaching at the School of Nursing in 1974 and retired last August, remains a beloved member of the School of Nursing family. Hal Pierce, as many faculty members, alumni and students know, was bestowed honorary alumnus status for his commitment and tireless efforts on behalf of the school and its alumni program. Beta Nu established the criteria for the new scholarship fund. The first scholarship will be awarded in the amount of $500 this fall to a student who is a Beta Nu member. The annual scholarship amounts will increase to $1,000.

To donate to the Pierce Beta Nu Scholarship, make your check out to “The Medical Foundation of ECU” and specify “Pierce Scholarship” in the memo. Gifts should be sent to the Medical Foundation of ECU, Attn: Troy Munn, 525 Moye Blvd., Greenville NC 27834. All gifts are tax-deductible.

Nurses helping nurses-to-be

To help the ECU School of Nursing address the national nursing shortage, the Nursing Leadership Council of the Brody School of Medicine at East Carolina University has established the Nursing Leadership Council Scholarship. The annual $500 scholarship will benefit students considering nursing as a second career, older students who are returning to school, and nurses with a diploma or associate’s degree who are working toward a bachelor’s degree. The scholarship is aimed at students who are ECU employees.

Janet Moye, director and chair of the NLC, said the idea for establishing the scholarship arose from the council’s desire to give moral and financial support to students in the ECU nursing program.

“We are acutely aware of the nursing shortage and the fact that this shortage is exacerbated not only for the increased need by nurses, but also because the workforce is aging and it’s important to attract men and women into the field,” Moye said.

Moye added that the council understands the sacrifices made by nurses who return to school and wants to help lighten their burdens, especially for fellow ECU employees.

The NLC raises scholarship funds through proceeds received from its silent auction, held at the annual Nurse’s Day dinner, and through sales of an NLC-commissioned Brody School of Medicine ornament.
Family honors children

Raymond and Peggy Reed of Waynesboro, Va., recently contributed $26,000 to the East Carolina University School of Nursing to establish the Vickie C. and Steven E. Whitehurst Scholarship.

The endowed scholarship was established in honor of Vickie, and in memory of Steve, Peggy Reed’s children.

The award recognizes the quality of nursing care that Steve Whitehurst received at Pitt County Memorial Hospital his death in March 2004.

Vickie Whitehurst earned her BSN and MSN from the ECU School of Nursing and is nursing administrator of clinical operations with ECU Physicians.

In making the announcement, the family expressed appreciation for the outstanding care Steve Whitehurst received from Drs. Gary Levine, Thomas Ellis and Gordon Downie, all ECU physicians, and Sharon Mayo, PCMH certified nurse assistant, according to Troy Munn, director of development for the School of Allied Health Sciences and School of Nursing at ECU.

Of the total commitment, the Reeds made $25,000 available to establish the principal for the endowed fund and $1,000 to enable the school to make an immediate award in fall 2005 while the principal accrues the interest needed for future scholarship awards, Munn said.

The scholarship will be available to undergraduate nursing students at ECU with a minimum 3.0 grade point average with preference given to Ayden-Grifton High School graduates. Peggy Reed is a native of Ayden.

For more information, contact Munn with the Medical Foundation of ECU at (252) 744-2238.

Students now expect me to post my PowerPoint lectures before class on Blackboard,” Lowdermilk said. “It’s hard to believe I made it through nursing school just by taking notes in class.”

Balancing teaching, faculty and scholarly responsibilities remains a challenge, but Lowdermilk says being with students in clinical units meets her need to provide patient care while teaching.

“I still get excited when I see a birth, and I love watching the students’ faces as they see their first birth. It makes me feel good, too, when I see a former student who is working in obstetrics and they tell me how much I influenced them to go into the specialty.”

She will retire from full-time teaching this year, but plans to teach part time, revise her textbook and work in consultation and research.

“I don’t think I will ever retire totally from nursing. It’s too much a part of me. I may, however, begin to focus on older women’s health and leave the birthing of babies to younger nurses,” Lowdermilk said.

Exemplary endeavor continued from page 20

“I still get excited when I see a birth, and I love watching the students’ faces as they see their first birth. It makes me feel good, too, when I see a former student who is working in obstetrics and they tell me how much I influenced them to go into the specialty.”

– Deitra “Dee” Lowdermilk, first recipient of the East Carolina University School of Nursing Distinguished Alumni Award.

In Memory

Susan Akers Bracken of Sanford died Jan. 18, 2005. She received her BSN from ECU in 1977.

Dorothy Bennett Harrell of Carrollton, Va., died Jan. 15, 2005. She earned her BSN from ECU in 1995.


Jean Merritt Owens of Washington died Jan. 8, 2005. She received her BSN from ECU in 1964.

Bruce R. Sharpe of Brooklyn, N.Y., died Oct. 29, 2004. He received his BSN from ECU in 1996.

Reta Padgett Walters of Rancho Palos Verdes, Calif., died Dec. 20, 2004. She received her BSN from ECU in 1971.

Sarah Jones Wooten of Wilson died Jan. 22, 2005. She received her BSN from ECU in 1964.
Donors

Linwood Godwin
Byrum Jr.
James Craven Cashwell
James William Caviness III
Lana F. Chang
Cathy Dixon Clark
Cindy Leary Coker
Peggy Cress Cormier
Phoebe M. Dail
Rebecca A. Davin
Bonnie J. Davis
Cynthia Angermeier Davis
Connie Jo Howard Deaver
Teresa Dilday
ECU Senior Nursing Class
Andrea Holbgood Edwards
Patricia Grobusky Emmert
Margaret R. Griffin
Jessica E. Griffin
Deborah Lynn Holmes
Griffiths
Selene W. Gwalney
Carol Campbell Hallisey
William K. Hamilton
Vickie Lane Harris
Cathy Maas Hastings
Paula Patterson Hawkins
Michele Miller Hollar
Phyllis N. Horns
Marion J. Howard
Margie Hunter
George Robert James
Brenda Morgan Jarman
Jeanette Ann Jones
Oscar Neal Evans
Farm Life Rutianettes
Pamela J. Farmer
Cassandra F. Garoute
Warren Garst
Ida P. Gaskill
Margaret Elizabeth Gerber
Gertrude E. Skelly
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Teresa Mercer Godfrey
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Annette Grady Greer
Norma B. Jones
Sarah Best Jordan
Mary K. Kirkpatrick
Karen C. Krupa
Rosanne V. Leahy
Wendy S. Leutgens
Mary C. Loose
Jennifer Hulse Love
Deitra L. Loundermailk
Barbara D. Malpass
Rose Quinn Malpass
William B. Martin
Richard Eugene
McDaniel
Merrill Lynch Company
Amelia D. Minton
Tammy Lin Moser
Linda P. Murphy
Troy L. Munn
Dianne Okonsky
Carol Ann Osman
Sonya L. Oxendine
Mallie B. Perry
Allison Malone Phillips
Hal Warren Pierce
Piney Grove Church
Diane Adkins Poole
J. Craig Quick
Susan J. Raines
Lona P. Ratcliffe
Jo Anne Rodri
Bridge F. Rogers
Mary Ann Rose
Tanya Amanda Rowe
Kathy Rowell
Mary Ann Scarborough
Rebecca C. Scarff
William E. Shelton
Sigma Theta Tau, Beta Nu Chapter
Janet Wright Simpson
Ann D. Siva
Mark M. Smith
Vickie B. Smith
Frances Wilson Smyth
Sharon Mann Stanley
Nancy Lou Nicks
Stephenson
Jacquelyn Jones Stone
Allyson B. Sugg
Ronnie Stewart Syverson
Virginia B. Taylor
The Gravely Foundation
Linda Titus
Donna S. Thigpen
Gay Dew Thompson
Frances G. Thunberg
Sandra D. Todd
Paul D. Ticheler
Elizabeth Turner
University Book Exchange
Lois L. Voncannon
William P. Vurnakes
Paul H. Watson
Charlie Martin Wells
Margaret Hammet West
Rebecca D. West
Jo Ann M. Weaver
Debra Ann Wheeler
Marjorie B. Wilkie
Marilyn York Willis
Rebecca Copeland Wood
Alma B. Woolard
Annette Wysocki

ECU honors 47 students with scholarships

The School of Nursing held its annual scholarship awards program on Nov. 18 in Mendenhall Student Center. A total of 47 students were presented scholarships. Below is a listing of each scholarship and the recipients:

**Graduate student scholarships**

Gertrude E. Skelly Charitable Foundation Scholarship Fund,
$1,000 each awarded to Batrice Adcock of Greenville, Tammy Morton of Louisburg, Marvin Pearson of Old Fort, Donald Wayne Turner Jr. of Wilmington, and Edmond White of Greenville.

Patricia Ann Yow Memorial, $500, awarded to Mary Ann Turner of Clarkston.

Gravely Foundation Scholarship, $500, awarded to Holly Ann Hall of Moyock.
By Troy Munn

Alumni and friends of the ECU School of Nursing know the school will move to the health sciences campus in 2006, into a new $58 million, 300,000-square-foot facility it will share with the School of Allied Health Sciences and the Laupus Health Sciences Library.

What many may not know, however, is that state funds made available by the passage in 2000 of a $3.1 billion bond referendum will be used only to fund the bricks and mortar of the new facility, not the technology and other vital items inside the building.

To help the school be technologically up-to-date and competitive with other nursing schools in North Carolina and elsewhere, we will have naming opportunities within the new facility and invite alumni and friends as well as corporations and foundations to get involved. Naming opportunities are an excellent way for alumni and friends to invest in the school and honor or memorialize family and friends. Classrooms, conference rooms, laboratories and other locations are available for naming.

Please call me toll free at (888) 816-2238 or e-mail me at munnt@mail.ecu.edu for more information on naming opportunities within the School of Nursing's new facility. Your gift will be a tremendous way to invest in a new generation of nursing professionals and leave a legacy for loved ones.

What’s in a name?

By Troy Munn

McLees joins Medical Foundation of ECU

Donna J. McLees has joined the Medical Foundation of ECU as president and associate vice chancellor for development for the Health Sciences Division at East Carolina University. McLees comes to ECU from Hinsdale, Ill., where she was president of the Adventist Health System Midwest Region Foundations for three years.

McLees has an undergraduate degree from Wake Forest University and a certificate of health care administration from Duke University.

Norma Miller Daffin Neonatal/Parent Child Nursing, $1,250, awarded to Joanna Hunter of Charlotte.

Roccapriore-Tschetter Fellowship, $1,000, awarded to Tonique Tabron of Wilson.

Naomi Bartoe Graduate Nursing Assistance Fund, $1,000, awarded to Stephene Bell of Belhaven.

Berbecker Foundation Scholarship, $500, awarded to Helen Freeman of Mars Hills and Stefanie Sandlin of Hampstead.

Eunice Mann Garner Memorial, $7,500, awarded to Linda Hofler of Greenville and Joan Wynn of Wilson; and, $1,000, awarded to Laura Carmon of Greenville, Alicia Chapman of Greenville, and Roslyn Patterson of Huntersville.

Pauline Vincent Memorial, $500, awarded to Stephanie Oder of Columbus.

Jefferson Pilot-Catherine and Max Ray Joyner, $1,000, awarded to Teri Askew-Jackson of Winterville and Janet Woods of Ayden.
Construction continues
on the new $58 million, 300,000-square-foot health sciences complex which will house East Carolina University’s School of Nursing, School of Allied Health Sciences, and Laupus Health Sciences Library.

A topping out ceremony, in which the last beam is put in place, occurred March 31.

The new complex, set to open in 2006, will house classrooms, laboratories, and offices. It is near the Brody School of Medicine and is adjacent to Pitt County Memorial Hospital, providing a multidisciplinary learning environment for students pursuing health care as a career. The building is funded by a voter-approved bond referendum for the state’s university and community college systems.

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**Student scholarships continued from page 28**

**Mabel Cooper Hayden Memorial Scholarship**, $1,000, awarded to Pamela Phillips of Kinston.

**Undergraduate student scholarships**

**Ruth Glass Bunting**, $500, awarded to Christy M. Cox of Lucama.


**JA’s Uniform Shop**, $500, awarded to Krystal Privette of Greenville.

**Perry/Oyler**, $500, awarded to Carrie Lynn Knott of Jacksonville.
A total of 67 students at East Carolina University are recipients of the 2004-2005 North Carolina Nurse Scholars Awards.

Upon graduation, recipients of this competitive merit-based program commit to working for at least one year, per each year funded, as a registered nurse in North Carolina.

The program was created to address the shortage of trained nurses practicing in North Carolina and approved by the N.C. General Assembly in 1989. The first recipients were funded for the 1990-91 academic year.

Award recipients are chosen on the basis of academics, leadership potential and desire to practice nursing in North Carolina.

Awards range from $3,000 to $5,000 a year for undergraduate students and from $3,000 to $6,000 a year for graduate students.

Master’s nurse scholars are Kristen Barbee, Rebecca Carter, Daniel Drake, Lori Farmer, Starlette Godwin, Teresa Gross, Timothy Guin, Carol King, Tonya Manus, Sybil Meadows, Dianna Moss, Michelle Rising, Lisa Smith and Cynthia Williams.

Undergraduate nurse scholars are Jenna Barnes, Ashley Bennett, Nancy Blake, Kathryn Boswell, Kristy Byrd, Hannah Carroll, Candice Cogdell, Mallory Conway, MarQuita Corbett, Christy Cox, Margaret Derrickson, Sonyal Dove, Lindzie Durham, Kelly Emery, Brenna Evans, Jessica Farmer, Melissa Farmer, Nicole Griffin, Marquita Harris, Kathy Hodges, Ashley Hubbard, Adanna Igboke, Chanee Lawler, Ryan Lewis, Charles Manning, Gregory Maruzzella, Alice McKinney, Laura Meyers, Michael Miller, Crystal Moore, Lisa Moore, Tonya Nenni, Tina Palman, Crystal Parker, Heather Parker, Jessica Parker, Angel Peele, Jennifer Pope, Rebecca Pritchett, Victoria Runyon, Kaleza Slade, Ashley Smith, Rachel Smith, Roslyn Stewart, Kara Stocks, Rita Sweet, Kaitlin Thomas, Rhonda Van Hook, Michelle Walston, Megan Warchol, Jenna Whitehurst, Allison Winslow and Amanda Zepeda.

Demaree/McGinnis Scholarship, $300, awarded to Matthew Benson Paramore of Winterville.

Patricia Ann Yow, $500, awarded to Elizabeth Duncan of Greenville.

American Legion Post #39, $500, awarded to Deana Carman of Fountain.

Health Sciences Golf Classic, $1,000, awarded to Heather Dare Helms of Greenville.

Meredith Griffin-Revels, $815, awarded to Alison Dees of Greenville.

Sherry Hawkins, $500, awarded to Pamela R. Alligood of Rocky Mount.

Jefferson Pilot-Catherine and Max Joyner, $1,000, awarded to Kristy Jo Byrd of Dover and Jason S. Webb of Farmville.

Charlotte M. Martin Memorial Beta Nu, $500, awarded to Jaime Devers of Cary.

Jo Ann Maurer, $3,000, awarded to Hettie V. Peele of Greenville.

UBE Scholarship, $250, awarded to Jennifer Pope of Greenville.
Sigma Theta Tau, the international honor society of nursing, announces its 2004 inductees into the Beta Nu Chapter at East Carolina University. The November induction ceremony honored 68 people. Sigma Theta Tau inducts junior and senior nursing students along with registered nurses, graduate nurses and community leaders.

Melissa Bailey
Shannon Baker
Kellye Billings
Erin Bishop
Julie Blackman
Stephen Blackman
Nancy Blake
Melissa Brookman
Garrett Brooks
Heather Brown
Lauri Bullock
Amanda Burdick
Susan Campbell
Rebecca Carter
Ernestine Carthon
Mary Catherine Cashion
Alicia Chapman
Sharon Cherry
Jessica Cimo
Martha Clayton

supplemental nursing pool at Lenoir Memorial Hospital. Lou Whichard Everett of Greenville joined the faculty in 1979 as an instructor in community mental health and later served as professor and associate dean for the undergraduate program. She is a licensed marriage and family therapist and earned her bachelor’s and master’s degrees from ECU. She received her doctorate in education from North Carolina State University. For five years, Everett has been creator, planner, developer and host of “Family Focus,” a local cable television program that promotes healthy families.

Belinda Temple Lee of Greenville joined the faculty in 1972 as an instructor in adult health nursing. She was promoted to assistant professor in 1975 and began serving as the RN/BSN coordinator in 2002. She received her bachelor’s and master’s degrees in nursing, a master’s degree in health education and a master’s in education from ECU as well as a family nurse practitioner certificate. She recently began working as a family nurse practitioner in the Hyde County and Lenoir County health departments.

Eldean Pierce of Winterville served as an instructor and assistant professor at ECU. She also worked as a family nurse practitioner at Greenville Family Doctors. She earned her bachelor’s degree, graduate degrees and a family nurse practitioner certificate from ECU. Before entering nursing education in 1974, she worked as a staff nurse at Pitt County Memorial Hospital. With colleagues from the Public Relations Committee of Sigma Theta Tau, Pierce developed the Career Profiles for the honor society’s Web site.

Lona Kaye Presser Ratcliffe of Greenville has served as instructor, assistant professor and associate professor in the school since 1967. Since 1988, she has served as clinical coordinator working with area agencies and organizations in placing students for their precept experience prior to graduation. She received her bachelor’s degree from ECU and her master’s from Emory University. She has continued her clinical practice by serving in the supplemental nursing pool at PCMH.

Eugenia “Jeannie” Yount of Washington joined the faculty in 1974 as an instructor in psychiatric-mental health nursing and was promoted to assistant professor in 1975 in the Department of Family and Community Nursing. She received her bachelor’s and master’s degrees in nursing and a master’s degree in child development and family relations from ECU. She has served the school not only as a teacher but also as course coordinator in psych-mental health, director of RN/BSN Outreach and Campus Programs and spent 12 years as director of student services. She has continued to work with patients through Tideland Mental Health Center and at a private counseling practice.
Striving for excellence

By Annette I. Peery

The Beta Nu Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International at the East Carolina University School of Nursing has had a busy and exciting year.

At our fall meeting in September, Heather Helms, a new student member, reported on her experiences at the Sigma Theta Tau conference in Dublin, Ireland, last summer. In October, Dr. Josie Bowman challenged our new inductees to strive for excellence in their practice, wherever it takes them. Dr. Lou Everett attended the Chapter Leader Academy in November and received the Sigma Theta Tau International Pinnacle Award for Public Media. We congratulate Everett and appreciate her work in the community and for Beta Nu.

Beta Nu held a successful banquet and silent auction in November. A tradition began during this banquet: a tribute to a Beta Nu leader. This year, we honored Eldean Pierce and announced the start of the Hal and Eldean Pierce Beta Nu Scholarship. The scholarship is now endowed and managed by the Medical Foundation of ECU. To donate to the Pierce Beta Nu Scholarship, make your check out to “The Medical Foundation of ECU” and specify “Pierce Scholarship” in the memo. Gifts should be sent to the Medical Foundation of ECU, Attn: Troy Munn, 525 Moye Blvd., Greenville NC 27834. All gifts are tax-deductible.

We began 2005 activities with our mentoree/mentor social in February followed by our spring banquet. Both events were successful and well attended.

We hope you can join us for events for 2005-2006. The calendar will be posted on the Beta Nu Web site (accessible via the ECU School of Nursing Web site, www.nursing.ecu.edu) and in the fall newsletter, which will be mailed in late summer. If you are a Beta Nu member and have not been active, we invite you to become active. We also want to be sure you receive the Beta Nu newsletter and other announcements, so please send your current e-mail and address to Annette Peery at peeryamel.mail.ecu.edu or call her at (252) 328-4116.

Felicia Collins
Amanda Cox
Yeshica Cruz-Guzman
Jennifer Cuthrell
Caleb Depp
Jamie Devers
Maurice Donald
Karen Edmundson
Christopher Erickson
Catherine Fischer
Danielle Frederick
Rejeanna Freij
Starlette Godwin
Mary Guinn
Linda Sue Hammonds
Laura Harrington
Edward Healey
Heather Helms
Susan Hill
Kyrle Holbert
Kathryn Hord
Deanna Horton
Patti Hudson
Kimberly Huffman
Peiyi Jantzen
Sharona Johnson
Malinda Langley
Mary Lockey
Bridget Lucas
Nicole McKnight
Cassie Melock
Donelda Mullen
Cori Nielson
Lauren Patterson
Margo Phillips
Ryan Ransom
Ginger Raynor
Chantel Schoneboom
Mary Simpson
Amber Stallings
Ashley Stevens
Karen Szuba
Glen Thomasson
Dana Wade
Michelle Walston
Teresa Woles
Brad White
Amanda Wizniak

Annette I. Peery, MSN, RN, CDE
President, Beta Nu Chapter
Sigma Theta Tau International
Martha Raile Alligood, RN, BSN, MSN, Ph.D., joins the faculty as a professor in the Department of Family and Community Nursing and as director of the doctoral program. She earned her nursing diploma from the Good Samaritan School of Nursing in Zanesville, Ohio, a bachelor’s degree in nursing from the University of Virginia, a master’s degree in nursing from Ohio State University and her doctorate from New York University.

Tiffany A. Buck, RN, BS, BSN, MSN, joins the faculty as a clinical instructor in the Department of Family and Community Nursing. She received her bachelor of science in biochemistry at North Carolina State University and a bachelor of science in nursing at ECU. She received a master’s degree in nursing with a family nurse practitioner concentration at ECU.

Sharon S. Cherry, RN, BSN, MPH, joins the faculty as a clinical instructor in the Department of Adult Health Nursing. She earned her BSN from ECU and her master’s degree in public health from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Ruth P. Cox, RN, BSN, MSN, Ph.D., comes to ECU as director of the family nurse practitioner concentration and clinical associate professor in the Department of Family and Community Nursing. She received her diploma in nursing from Watts Hospital School of Nursing in Durham. She earned her BSN from the University of Virginia, MSN from The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., and doctorate from Florida State University.

Melissa R. Schwartz, RN, BSN, MSN, comes to ECU as a clinical instructor in the Department of Adult Health Nursing. She earned her BSN from ECU and her MSN from the University of Phoenix.

Rebecca Ann Barfield Hylant, RN, BSN, MSN, joins the faculty as a clinical instructor for the Department of Family and Community Nursing. Hylant received her diploma in nursing from Wilson Memorial Hospital School of Nursing. She earned her BSN from UNC-Chapel Hill and her MSN from ECU.

Joy Kieffer-Phillips, RN, BSN, MSN, joins the faculty as a clinical instructor for the Department of Adult Health Nursing. She earned her BSN from the University of South Florida at St. Petersburg and her MSN from the University of Phoenix.

Rodney L. Smith, II, BSN, MLA, Lt. Col. USAF (retired), comes to ECU as clinical associate professor in the Department of Adult Health Nursing. Smith received his BSN from the University of Hawaii and his MLA from Texas Christian University in Fort Worth, Texas. He earned a certificate in nurse anesthesia from the Wilford Hall USAF Medical Center, Lackland AFB, Texas.

Frances G. Thunberg, RN, BSN, MSN, joins the ECU faculty as a clinical associate professor in the Department of Family and Community Nursing. Thunberg earned her BSN and MSN from ECU.
Calendar

--- May ---
6
SON Honors Convocation,
12:30 p.m., Wright Auditorium
6-12
National Nurses Week

--- August ---
24
Fall classes begin

--- October ---
28
School of Nursing Homecoming,
5:30-7:30 p.m., Rivers Building
29
Homecoming (vs. UCF)

--- December ---
16
SON Honors Convocation, time and place TBA

Purple Alert

You can make a difference!

Purple Alert is a grass roots effort designed to organize and communicate important facts to East Carolina University constituents by phone, e-mail or fax.

Purple Alert will present information about current and proposed legislative issues, provide a forum for discussion, and provide contact information for legislators who make decisions. Elected officials depend on you as constituents to be informed and communicate your interests to them.

Visit www.PurpleAlert.ecu.edu to learn more and to sign up for updates. For additional information, e-mail purplealert@mail.ecu.edu or call the Purple Alert Hotline at (252) 328-9300.
Alumni on the Web

The School of Nursing has unveiled a new link on its Web site that makes it easier for classmates to keep in touch and informed.

Log on to www.nursing.ecu.edu and click on SON Alumni under the SON Resources.

Information on alumni and program news, awards, upcoming events, faculty/staff updates, and a faculty spotlight will be listed. Alumni can also update their own information under the Update Information link.

If you have suggestions or comments, please e-mail Theresa Holman Moore at holmant@mail.ecu.edu.

Give us your news!

The School of Nursing wants to stay in touch! Feel free to drop us a line with information that you would like to share (new job, professional certifications, awards, etc.)

Send your information to the Editor, Office of News and Information, Venture Tower, Suite 202, P.O. Box 6028, Greenville, NC 27835-6028.
From the Top

Summer is in full swing and we are ending a great fiscal year at the School of Medicine. ECU Physicians has had four consecutive record months for charges, collections and patient appointments. Many thanks to you; the staff who have worked extremely hard to enter the charges, record the collections, schedule the patient appointments, make the reminder calls for appointments, and see the patients.

Congratulations to ECU Women’s Physicians on the relocation into their new facilities. Dr. Michael J. Lewis, Vice Chancellor for Health Sciences; Dr. Cynda Johnson, Dean of the Brody School of Medicine; Dr. Ed Newton, Chairman of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology; Dr. C. Debra Barker, Co-Medical Director of ECU Women’s, Melvin Mclawhorn, Pitt County Commissioner; Pat Dunn with the Greenville City Council and Mark Phillips, Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce Board participated in the ribbon cutting ceremony.

Mark D. Darrow, MD
Medical Director, ECU Physicians
Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs
Associate Professor of Family Medicine

ECU Women Update

ECU Women’s Physicians celebrated the move into their new location at 2160 Herbert Court on Wednesday, June 29th with a ribbon cutting ceremony and open house. The 18,000+ square foot building provides state of the art women’s medical care. ECU Women’s Physicians provides complete care in all aspects of women’s health. Specialists at the clinic offer treatment services including obstetric and gynecological care, reproductive services, midwifery, invitro fertilization, genetics counseling, menopause counseling, complex testing for urinary and fecal incontinence, pelvic floor muscle rehabilitation, robotic gynecological surgery and pelvic floor reconstruction.

MONTHE-AT-A-GLANCE

July:
- National Mobility Month
- International Group B Strep Awareness Month
- UV Safety Month

WEEK-LONG OBSERVANCES

July:
- 4-10 Freedom Week
- 5-11 Take Charge Of Change Week

August:
- 1-7 World Breastfeeding Week
- 1-7 Simplify Your Life Week
- 3-9 Drug Addicted Baby Awareness
- 4-10 National Bargain Hunting Week
- 4-10 National Smile Week
- 7-12 National Health Center Week

RECOGNITION DAYS/EVENTS

July:
- 1 National Financial Freedom Day
- 3 Stay out of the Sun Day
- 4 Independence Day
- 11 World Population Day

August:
- 1 National Minority Donor Awareness
- 3 Sisters’ Day
- 8 Family Day
- 14 National Financial Awareness Day
- 26 Woman Equality Day

Adverse Weather

This is also the beginning of hurricane season for us. Keep in mind we have an adverse weather information phone number (local 744-5080) that may be accessed for updates related to severe weather. The Adverse Weather/Disaster Operations Plan is available on-line at http://www.ecu.edu/grouppractice/.

Talk with your supervisor and be familiar with your responsibilities during these events.

What’s Inside

Welcome Aboard – 2
Pharmacy Update – 2
Contact Center Update – 2
Social Work Update – 2
ASCO Honors – 3
Congratulation – 4
Logician Update – 4
Welcome Aboard

Leisa D Batts; Patient Access Services
Gloria D Frelix; Radiation Oncology – Admin
Donna S Gray; Social work Services
Terry A Icard; IM–Pulmonary
Erika D Jackson; Contact Center
Kenetta M Jackson; Billing & Reimbursement
Miriam A James; Internal Medicine–Admin
Doris L Jarman; Surgery–Transplant
Jane C Johnson; Radiation Oncology – Admin
Tamikia L Jones; Patient Access Services
Cynthia R Lipscomb; Surgery–Admin
Catherine A Parham; Family Medicine
Kelly Pearce; Eastern AHEC Administration
Jennifer L Smith; Laupus Library
Marietta H Wagner; Peds–Neonatology
Jason N Woolard; IM–Cardiology

Pharmacy Update

DO YOU EVER ARRIVE AT WORK TO DISCOVER YOU LEFT YOUR GLASSES AT HOME AND NOW YOU CAN’T READ ALL OF YOUR PAPERWORK?

BRODY OUTPATIENT PHARMACY HAS THE SOLUTION.
The Pharmacy now stocks a variety of strengths and styles of reading glasses.
These glasses regularly retail for $9.99 but Brody Outpatient Pharmacy is offering them for just $8.41.
Stop by today and pick out your favorite pair.
As with all of our products, delivery is available.

Social Work Update

Medicare Part D – Prescription Drug Plan coming in 2006

Beginning January 1, 2006, the new Medicare Part D prescription drug plans will be available to people with Medicare. Insurance companies will work with Medicare to offer these drug plans. These plans are different from the current Medicare drug discount cards which will phase out in the next year.

Medicare Part D prescription drug plans will provide insurance coverage for some prescription drugs. Like other insurance there will be a monthly premium (about $35) and co-pays for drugs.

The different drug plans offered will vary in what drugs are covered and how much a patient has to pay. There is standard level of coverage that Medicare will set, but some plans may offer additional benefits.

For patients this means it will be necessary to consider each plan and determine which plan will provide the most benefit. It also means that not all patients’ medication may be on their plan, or if a patient’s medication changes, their plan may not cover the new medication. Doctors will need to be aware that different patients may have different Medicare formularies.

Enrollment for Medicare Part D will begin November 15, 2005. Patients need to enroll by December 31, 2005 to be sure that their coverage will begin on January 1, 2006. Otherwise coverage will begin the first day of the month after they enroll.

There is also an assistance program to help low income patients with the monthly premium and co pays. Patients can apply for this assistance at Social Security or the Department of Social Services this summer.

ECU Physicians Social Work department will also assist patients with information about Medicare Part D and applying for the special assistance.

Call the Social Work Department at 744-3544 if you have any questions, and encourage your patients to do the same so they can get the most benefit possible from this new program.

Contact Center Update

Personnel Update: We would like to extend a very warm welcome to Erika Jackson, our newest agent in the Contact Center. Welcome aboard Erika!

Operations Update:
1. Over the next few months, we will be conducting a remote agent pilot project for the purpose of developing and formalizing a process for potentially utilizing remote agents in the future. Mary Schiller, Contact Center Supervisor, is leading this project and she recently completed a very critical developmental step in the process by successfully establishing computer network and telecommunications connectivity from her home to the School of Medicine. With this connectivity, she is now capable of taking calls at home, using the full application of our computer telephony system, as well as, Logician. We are very excited about this project and what it may ultimately contribute towards future operations.
2. Beginning July 1st, the Contact Center will begin supporting the Mental Health Clinic at Doctor’s Park 1, by processing patient calls for prescription refills and medical lab results. We are looking forward to working with the patients who will be accessing this clinic as well as the clinical and patient access staffs.

Call Center Information Tidbit:
Call centers support patient loyalty.
60% of callers are repeat callers.
Previous call center callers respond to marketing at a rate twice that of non-call center callers.
ASCO Honors Community Oncology Practices for Increasing Clinical Trial Participation

–Award Recognizes the Value of Diversity in Forwarding Progress Against Cancer–

Alexandria, VA–Twelve community oncology practices are being honored by the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) for their commitment to cancer research, and their efforts to expand the demographic range of clinical trial participants. The Clinical Trial Participation Awards was presented on May 15, 2005 at ASCO’s 41st Annual Meeting held in Orlando, Florida.

Today, less than five percent of adult cancer patients are enrolled in clinical trials. An even greater enrollment discrepancy exists among underrepresented populations. This lack of participation slows progress in the development of new therapies. By increasing clinical trial participation within underrepresented patient communities, the likelihood of discovering more effective therapies for these patient groups increases greatly. This model has already been proven within the field of children’s oncology where 75 percent of children with cancer are enrolled in clinical trials. Approximately three-quarters of children with cancer survive their disease long-term, compared with half of adults. The increased survival rate for children can be directly linked to their higher rate of participation in clinical trials. “Increasing diversity among patients in the clinical trial setting will allow doctors to better understand and treat cancers across various populations,” said ASCO President David Johnson, MD. “With the Clinical Trial Participation Awards, we are honoring practices for their exceptional dedication to improving the quality of cancer care in underrepresented communities.”

Selection for the award was based on nominations by each of the National Cancer Institute Cooperative Groups and the ASCO Clinical Practice Committee, which identified those practices that enrolled the highest number of patients to phase III trials over a three-year period with a special focus on practices that had a high accrual of underrepresented populations. This awards program is supported by a grant from the Coalition of National Cancer Cooperative Groups and enables ASCO to provide award recipients with travel grants to attend ASCO’s Annual Meeting.

**Honorees include:**

**Breast Imaging Section, Mallinckrodt Institute of Radiology, Barnes–Jewish Hospital; St. Louis, MO**
Represented by Dione Farria, MD, MPH; Nominated by the American College of Radiology Imaging Network

**Evanston Northwestern Healthcare; Evanston, IL**; Represented by David J. Winchester, MD
Nominated by the American College of Surgeons Oncology Group

**Kinston Medical Specialists; Kinston, NC**; Represented by Peter R. Watson, MD
Nominated by the Cancer and Leukemia Group B

**University of New Mexico Pediatric Oncology Program; Albuquerque, NM**; Represented by Jami D. Frost, MD
Nominated by the Children’s Oncology Group

**Kansas City Cancer Center; Overland Park, KS**; Represented by Robert J. Belt, MD
Nominated by the ASCO Clinical Practice Committee

**Our Lady of Mercy Cancer Center; Bronx, NY**; Represented by Peter H. Wiernik, MD
Nominated by the Eastern Cooperative Oncology Group

**Leo W. Jenkins Cancer Center; Greenville, NC**; Represented by Howard D. Homesley, MD
Nominated by the Gynecologic Oncology Group

**Cedar Rapids Oncology Project; Cedar Rapids, IA**; Represented by Martin Wiesenfeld, MD
Nominated by the North Central Cancer Treatment Group

**Hotel Dieu Oncology Clinic, St. Catharines; St. Catharines, Ontario**; Represented by Brian Findlay, MD
Nominated by the National Cancer Institute of Canada, Clinical Trials Group

**Medical Oncology Hematology Associates; Philadelphia, PA**; Represented by Ajit Desai, MD
Nominated by the National Surgical Adjuvant Breast and Bowel Project

**Mt. Sinai CCOP; Miami Beach, FL**; Represented by Michael A. Samuels, MD
Nominated by the Radiation Therapy Oncology Group

**Presbyterian Hospital of Dallas; Dallas, TX**; Represented by James F. Strauss, MD
Nominated by the Southwest Oncology Group

For more information on participating in a clinical trial, including matters concerning patient safety, decision factors, and questions to ask the research team, visit ASCO’s patient website, People Living With Cancer at: www.plwc.org/clinicaltrials.
Congratulations

Diana Strickland, RDMS, RDCS from the Department of OB/Gyn has been appointed to the office of Second Vice President of AIUM (American Institute of Ultrasound in Medicine) for a two-year term.

Group Practice

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Appointment
Management
August
Meetings
Calendar
Nurse
Care
Policies
Check
Practice
Development
Risk
Director
Search
Group
Social
Health
Summer
Heat
Tasks
Inbox
Training
Internet
Web
July
Words
Mail
Work

Send Newsletter Submissions to: Victoria Bennett
Group Practice Administration 1K–20
Phone: (252) 744–2322
Fax: (252) 744–3447
bennettb@mail.ecu.edu

Logician Update

Health Information Systems/Services: Logician Update
Clinical Content Info

Revised Clinical Content:

- Clinical List Update: Previously entered data now appears on the form only for the histories and clinical lists. Click the specific ‘Add to note’ box to convey the information to text in the note.
- Pediatric Immunization Administration: Revised to include new Pediatric vaccine for Hib. This new vaccine replaces the current 4 dose vaccine ‘Heminf B’ with a three dose ‘Pedvax Hib’.
- Referral Request—Pt Info: The dropdown choice in the Procedures/ Radiologic studies field for ‘EMC’ is changed to ‘Emb/SEP’. A purple reminder to include ‘rule out’ information and specific body area for all tests/consults/referrals is added. Buttons to enter ‘All responses no normal’ are added on the second page to some of the procedures so that these fields may be completed more efficiently.

Tips of the Month and other Reminders

- Documents with a preliminary signature shows on the Unsigned Documents name of the person affixing the preliminary signature and not the person to whom the document was routed to for final signature. Please remind all faculty to sign preliminarily signed (italicized) documents routed to them. If the document was routed to the attending incorrectly, please return to sender or forward to the correct faculty. DO NOT REMOVE document from the desktop
- DO NOT ‘ADD NEW’ pharmacies to the pharmacy list. If unable to find a certain pharmacy, please call or flag Medical Records Manager and any new or change pharmacy information will be added.
- Providers MUST dictate the correct ‘Dictation Placeholder’ number as well as the patient identifiers (name, DOB and MRN number) to ensure transcription is returned to the correct patient chart and update.
- DO NOT CHANGE the information for Referring Physician in the Contact List section for Registration. This field is not linked to an individual patient but rather is linked to a VIP status displayed on a patient’s banner.
- The formulary for ECU Care patients is listed in Logician as the ‘ECU Care’ Custom Medication list. Providers should reference this list when ordering medications for patients enrolled in ECU Care.

Other Issues, Questions and Discussion

- A new lab interface has been recently implemented with PCMH so that additional labs (from orders outside of ECU outpatient such as Nursing Homes/Home health and PCMH labs) are imported as previously signed ‘courtesy copy’ documents in Logician. This change is an important step in the import of other test reports, discharge summaries, operative notes, and other PCMH documents rather than scanning.
- Requests for new or major changes to current clinical content (forms, templates) must be forwarded to the department using the Clinical Enhancement Request form. This form is found on our web site: www.ecu.edu/hiss selecting ‘Request forms’ and may be completed on line. Once printed this request form and any additional paper documentation may be attached and forwarded to: Judy Tucker, Lakeside Annex #2 or faxed to 744–5504.
- Orientation schedule for Logician training has changed. Training is from 9:20–11:45 on Wednesdays. Be sure to see our website for locations.

Where we’re going...

- Logician’s Orders Module still rolling out across ECU Physicians clinics.
  - Cardiology and Pulmonary are live now.
  - GI: Go live targeted; July 2005.
  - Dermatology: Go live is tentative October 2005.
- Psychiatry is currently on a Logician phase 1 implementation.
MFPP Key Performance Indicators
Fiscal Year-to-Date May 2005 to May 2004

- Patient Visits Up 3.8%
- Productivity is Up…
  - # Faculty Same 0.0%
  - RVUs (Relative Work Value Units) Up 5.6%
- Charges Up 15.2%
- Collections Up 8.9%
- Total Revenues Up 6.2%
- Total Expenses Up 4.6% ¹

¹ Expense increase primarily personnel costs reflecting:
  - MFPP match of state mandated employee increases
  - Movement of state funded positions to MFPP to offset state budget cuts, and
  - Market equity increases in clinical positions.
MFPP Key Performance Indicators Through May 2005

**Last 4 months (Feb – May) were record charge and collection months**
Fiscal Year-to-Date PROJECTIONS
For the Period July 1, 2004 through June 30, 2005
(Results Reported in Millions)

<table>
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<tr>
<td>Total Revenues</td>
<td>114.72</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Expenditures</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Personnel</td>
<td>87.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Operating/non operating expenses</td>
<td>24.06</td>
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<tr>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>1.94</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expenditures</strong></td>
<td>113.00</td>
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<td><strong>Surplus before transfers</strong></td>
<td>1.72</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Transfers</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Transfers In and Reallocations</td>
<td>1.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus Auxiliary Assessment</td>
<td>(1.30)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Banner Implementation</td>
<td>(0.27)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grant Salary Recovery</td>
<td>(1.21)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Net Transfers (Out)</strong></td>
<td>(1.26)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Net Projected Surplus</strong></td>
<td>0.46</td>
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Reasons for Financial Turn-Around

- Allocation of $3 Million in State Funds from ECU (both 1-time and permanent funds)
  - New teaching faculty positions
  - Transfer of expenses for support positions from medical school to university
  - Allocation of funds for Disaster Relief reversion
  - Information technology projects

- Reallocation of $2.4 Million in MFPP expenses using State lapsed salary funds
Reasons for Financial Turn-Around

- Hard work of faculty & staff
  - Record activity for
    - Charges
    - Collections
    - RVU Generation

- Concerted efforts to improve all revenues
  - Focused efforts on revenue processes/cycles
  - Focused efforts on contract revenue

- Effectively “Telling our Story” regarding unique challenges for Brody School of Medicine*

*Resulting in ongoing and significant support from the ECU Board of Trustees and Chancellor Ballard
Factors that could have a negative impact on FY 05-06 budget

- Projection of $1.8M of legislated salary increases

- Full cost of recruitment packages for Chairs of Anatomy, Comparative Medicine, Emergency Medicine, and Medical Humanities, and Chief of Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine is not known

- Ability to move additional technology expenses to East Campus is unknown due to the expected elimination of vacant positions due to State budget cuts

- Continuing discussion about increasing the University’s Auxiliary Tax to 1.75%
July 19, 2005

Greetings from the Laupus Library

THE PLACE WITH TWO FRONT DOORS

As we prepare to enter our new library through a dramatic new front entrance, user data from the last four years suggests the library as a “place” is still very important. This data also shows the library may indeed have a new “virtual” front door. I think you will find the following graph of interest.

While our total virtual visits are increasing, due in great part to our excellent electronic resources, we continue to maintain a strong volume of in-person visits as well. We anticipate the new building will encourage continued high in-person visits to Laupus Library, the “place” with two front doors.

FACULTY NEWS

Congratulations to Jeff Coghill, MLS who was recently named to the editorial board of the Journal of the Medical Library Association. Jeff joined the faculty of the Laupus Library in 2001 and serves as the Collection Development Librarian.
**PREPARING FOR THE BIG MOVE**

On June 6, administrators and department heads from Laupus Library had their first opportunity to see inside of the new library building currently under construction. It was a walk through a different world. Plumbing, sprinklers and wall studs had been roughed in. Almost all the domed roof had been installed and windows were covered in plastic. Standing in the place where the new entrance will be, you could envision users making their way through the ground floor lobby, ascending the large staircase and entering into the library for the first time. They are coming to the “place” called the library. This new “place” will provide state-of-the-art facilities for individual and group study, use the latest technology to access information in the Information Commons, and use the technology classroom, computer lab and multi-media center for teaching and learning.

As I have reported to you throughout FY 2005, we have been actively engaged in preparing the collections for moving. The next ten months will be even busier as we finalize operational details for the move and working in this new environment. I will update you on our progress throughout the coming year. In the meanwhile, the best word I can use to describe the new library is WOW!

The faculty and staff of Laupus Library send you their very best wishes for a wonderful summer.