A New Level of Learning, The Next Level of Care

iCare prepares future nurses for the healthcare demands of the 21st century
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ON THE COVER: Deena Jenkins (BSN ’09) and Sara Hollman (BSN ’09) engage in clinical-experience simulation utilizing the software program, iCare. iCare, a creative new learning tool developed by Dr. Tami Wyatt and Matt Bell of the College of Nursing and Xueping Li and Yo Indranoi of the College of Engineering, provides cutting-edge learning opportunities for students.

SUMMER 2010 • NUMBER 15

DEAN, COLLEGE OF NURSING
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Nursing Report is published annually for alumni and friends by the UT Knoxville College of Nursing

MAIL ADDRESS CHANGES TO
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Dear Alumni and Friends,

This is the last time I will address you as dean of the College of Nursing. I have announced my retirement and as I write this column, a search for my replacement is underway. It has been a wonderful 15 years and I am proud of our accomplishments during that time. The college is positioned well to move into the future and I am confident that we will achieve an even greater level of success.

Since I began my tenure, many changes have occurred. We moved into the era of sophisticated technological application. The use of simulation for clinical teaching and the use of classroom technology have become nearly routine. Online delivery of the doctoral program and the RN-BSN program, which began last year, provided access to nurses who could not leave their communities to further their education. We have been successful in acquiring federal funding for our research, and faculty have gained national prominence through their presentations and publications. We have participated in globalization of health care through our international and intercultural programs, and students who were involved in these experiences described them as “life-changing.” Our community service projects have assisted a number of vulnerable groups, and many of these projects are ongoing. Changes in the healthcare environment, which drive many of our initiatives, have underscored the critical role that nurses will play in the care of our population.

Although we have faced significant budget cuts as the economy worsened, support from you, our alumni and friends, have helped to lessen the blow. For example, because of your generosity, our available scholarships for nursing students have increased from a total of $30,000 in 1995 to over $185,000 in 2010. Despite the economy, we continue to excel in curricular innovations in both graduate and undergraduate programs. Our commitment to research, scholarly activities, and community service is reflected in our myriad accomplishments, many of which are described in this issue of the Nursing Report. Thanks to you, our alumni and friends, for your continued interest in and support of our initiatives. As I leave my position as dean, I take with me fond memories and lasting friendships.

Warmest regards,

Joan L. Creasia, PhD, RN
Professor and Dean

Keep in touch with the College of Nursing at http://www.nursing.utk.edu
• Send announcements to the “CLASS NOTES” section or let us know of address changes
• Find out about upcoming alumni events

Follow us on Facebook! Become a fan and stay up-to-date on the latest news, events, and accolades! facebook.com/utknursing
INAUGURAL NIGHTINGALA 2009

On Friday, October 2, 2009, the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, College of Nursing held the inaugural Nightingala, and it was a huge success! The first annual Nightingala raised more than $78,000 for the College of Nursing. Over 230 alumni and friends gathered at the Pavilion at Hunter Valley Farm to show their appreciation and support for UT’s College of Nursing and made the evening a truly memorable celebration.

The idea for the Nightingala was conceived at a Big Orange Breakfast, attended by Dr. Leonard and Gail Brabson of Knoxville. What began as an idea transformed into a celebration of friends, fun, and fundraising to benefit the UTK College of Nursing. The event featured silent and live auctions, dinner, and a celebration of the accomplishments of our college, our students, and our alumni. Local musician Freddie Brabson provided musical entertainment for the evening, and members of the college’s Student Nurses Association welcomed our alumni and friends.

Coach Pat Summitt, keynote speaker, talked about the milestones the nursing program has achieved and thanked those in the healthcare field for their dedication and commitment to helping people live healthier lives. Robin Wilhoit, emcee and anchorperson for WBIR-TV in Knoxville, shared the valuable assistance healthcare professionals had provided for her family. Also during the evening, the Dr. Sylvia E. Hart Distinguished Alumni Award was presented to Laura Preston Barnes (more information on page 26).

Tennessee Donor Services was the corporate underwriter for the inaugural event, which allowed all proceeds to directly benefit the College of Nursing. Sincere thanks from the College of Nursing to all who participated in this wonderful event!
SAVE THE DATE for the 2010 NIGHTINGALA!

ALUMNI AND FRIENDS of the COLLEGE OF NURSING
PLAN TO ATTEND THE SECOND ANNUAL NIGHTINGALA!
FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2010 at the THE FOUNDRY IN WORLD’S FAIR PARK

Musical Entertainment! Silent and Live Auctions!

Guest Speaker: Sam Venable, local author and contributor to the Knoxville News Sentinel

Presentation of the Dr. Sylvia E. Hart Distinguished Alumni Award to an outstanding alumnus/alumna of the College of Nursing. Robin Wilhoit, anchorperson for WBIR TV in Knoxville and member of the UTK College of Nursing Board of Visitors, will serve as emcee for the evening. Dr. Susan Martin, provost, will bring welcoming remarks.

Sincere thanks to Tennessee Donor Services for sponsoring the second annual Nightingala.

All proceeds provide support for the College of Nursing.

Tickets are $100 per person, $150 per couple. Cocktail/evening attire recommended. For more information, please contact Phyllis Moore at 865-974-3011 or reunions@utk.edu.

Online registrations are due by September 20, 2010 at http://alumni.utk.edu/reunions.

DON’T MISS THIS OPPORTUNITY TO CONNECT WITH FELLOW ALUMNI, CURRENT STUDENTS, THE NURSING FACULTY, FRIENDS, AND COLLEAGUES IN THE HEALTHCARE PROFESSION.
Dean Creasia Retires

Dean Joan Creasia plans to retire at the end of 2010. Creasia began serving as the college’s third dean on Oct. 1, 1995. Of all current deans on the UT Knoxville campus, she is the longest-serving. During her tenure, the UT Knoxville College of Nursing has maintained its leadership role among the state’s nursing programs and its graduates are some of the most sought professionals in the industry. The college’s partnerships with area healthcare organizations have increased, and community and global outreach efforts have strengthened.

The following is a conversation with Dean Creasia, as she reflects on her 15 years as dean of the College of Nursing at the University of Tennessee.

Q: How did you become involved in nursing education? What motivated you to pursue this career?
A: I didn’t have a life plan in mind other than going to college, getting married, and having a couple of children. When I was growing up, girls who went to college were most likely to become teachers or nurses. I was more attracted to nursing because it was a career in which you could go anywhere you wanted, work as much or as little as you wanted, and always be able to find a job. In my rational mind, that’s why I went into nursing. But when I got into the profession, I realized—I really love this! I like taking care of people and I especially loved working in the emergency department. I became involved in nursing education as a part-time medical-surgical nursing instructor. I found that really enjoyed the students and began to think seriously about a career in nursing education. After returning to school for advanced degrees, I became a full-time nurse educator. Being a dean was not something I had in mind when I first started out—and the dean’s role definitely did not fit my initial idea of only working two days a week!

Q: How much has the College of Nursing changed over the past 15 years? In what way is the college different today than when you arrived?
A: The change that stands out above all others is the advances in technology. When I arrived on campus 15 years ago, there were only five computers in the building. All of the technology that is now installed in the classrooms was found on rolling carts. If we had enough to go around, everyone could use it; but if
not, you just did without. That first year, we received some funds from a donor who indicated we could use the money in an area of need, with no restrictions. I decided to spend it on technology and outfitted our first computer lab. It was a big deal. Availability of cutting-edge technology and the use of simulation for clinical teaching are probably the most dramatic changes over the past 15 years.

The same academic programs were in place with exception of the Nurse Anesthesia program established in 2001 and the Homeland Security Nursing program initiated in 2005. We didn’t have the various methods of program delivery that we do now, such as distance education for the RN to BSN and PhD programs. The number of faculty has also increased. We had 28 or so faculty when I arrived, and we now have about 40 full-time faculty members. The college's development director actually worked for four colleges, the largest one being the College of Education. Now we have our own director of development. When we gave out scholarships my first year, we awarded less than $30,000. This year, we awarded more than $185,000. That is something to really be proud of.

Q: What were your biggest challenges as dean?
A: In the first few years, money was not nearly the issue that it has been recently. At that time, the challenges revolved more around establishing goals and doing new things with programming, research, and service activities. After awhile, when the budget was reduced, the challenge was to continue to do all of those wonderful things with less money.

Q: Do you think the next dean will have the same kind of challenges? Are there others that you see down the road?
A: It is pretty clear that higher education has been hit hard across the country due to the weak economy. So the challenge is to try to accomplish the college’s goals and initiatives with less money, but this challenge can develop into new ideas. The Dedicated Education Unit (DEU; more information on page 12) is a great example of a new idea that stretches resources and provides excellent clinical learning for our students. Some other innovations—using simulation as a clinical teaching tool, for example—will also be cost-effective in the long run because you can accommodate greater numbers of students with fewer faculty.

Maintaining our visibility in the community, regionally, and nationally is a university priority for the College of Nursing, so it is important to continue our movement in that direction.

Q: A dean search is currently underway, and he/she will have a lot of choices to make about how to move forward. What do you think are some of the big opportunities facing the College of Nursing?
A: One opportunity is being part of this campus as Chancellor Cheek moves us into the Top 25. The College of Nursing has achieved academic excellence and we are on the cusp of expanding our research programs. I believe this is the opportunity that will make us more visible nationally.

Another opportunity that is in the final stages of approval is the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) program. Launching this program will open some doors that previously were not available to us.

Since I became dean, there has been much turnover in the university administration. Since 1995, there have been seven presidents, five provosts, and four chancellors. We have had various supporters over the years, but the current administration consisting of Provost Susan Martin, Chancellor Jimmy Cheek and Interim President Jan
Simek really understand the college and our uniqueness. The timing couldn’t be better for a new person to come in. Plans have been put in place, for example with differential tuition, to allow us to increase our revenue and possibly be able to grow.

My advice to the new dean is to listen to the people you work with. Do what you can to accommodate their needs, and they will flourish. Putting up obstacles is not the way to make things work here. It is very important to understand the culture. When you come from outside UT, as I did, you have to figure out who the people are, how they operate, what they think, and play to that as best you can.

Q: What three words would you use to describe the College of Nursing?

A: Excellence. Innovation. Futuristic. We have maintained a standard of excellence in our academic programs, our students, and our outcomes. We have been innovative in establishing outreach initiatives and conducting research. We also understand that to move forward, you must look to the future. If you are not futuristic, you are going to become stagnant. And we cannot afford in this day and age to stay in one place—we must keep moving forward. You have to look toward the future, set goals for the future, and keep marching ahead.

Q: If you were meeting a group of new students and you wanted to share with them a piece of advice, what would you tell them?

A: For undergraduates, I would tell them that the opportunities are unlimited for nursing. Bedside nursing certainly is the most traditional role, but there are so many other opportunities in the profession. Getting an undergraduate nursing degree is only the first step in this satisfying career.

For master’s students, I would tell them that the sky is the limit. For advanced practice nurses, their opportunities are just now opening up. With healthcare reform not only on the horizon, but really knocking at our front door, the need for primary-care nurses is going to be bigger than ever. There are jobs for everyone—many which they have never even thought of. It is going to be an exciting time for nursing.

For PhD students who are embarking on a career in nursing education, I would tell them that the challenges are plentiful, but being an educator is satisfying, rewarding, and really a lot of fun. For students who aspire to a career as a nurse researcher, now is the time to start building your research program. It is exciting to be a part of a college like ours that is on the move.

Q: What are you most proud of from your years here? What are the contributions of which you are the most proud?

A: It’s hard to pick one experience, because many aspects of this job were quite rewarding. I like working with the students, and I like working with the faculty. Fundraising—which for some may not be so much fun—is fun for me. I think that as you achieve some success, you gain a little more confidence and that in turn breeds more success.

The establishment of the Vine Middle School Clinic was a great accomplishment. It was the first clinic that was established through the College of Nursing, and it was the first nurse-managed clinic in the local school system.

The Homeland Security Nursing program is another proud accomplishment. This program was new and innovative, and it generated a lot of national interest and significant federal funding. Sometimes you take a risk and it really pans out, and that’s very exciting.

I’m also proud of the international and intercultural experiences available to our students and faculty. We never engaged in international health care before my term as dean, but we began the program because we saw how it would benefit our students and the global community. After the college’s program was well established, the university’s “Ready for the World” intercultural-international initiative came into focus, and we were already leading the charge. Our experiences started with an annual trip to Africa, and now we go to Central and South America. Because of the success and interest in these international and intercultural experiences, we expanded the program to serve rural areas in this country as well.

But I didn’t do any of these things by myself. It took a team approach, a collaboration, to really make these endeavors the successes they are today.

Q: What do you hope your legacy will be?

A: Excellence in academics and movement into research. The programs of the college are excellent, as the outcomes demonstrate. We have a high pass rate for the undergraduate program on state board exams, well exceeding state and
national averages. We also have a high pass rate for certification exams for our master's graduates—100% at present. We received our first federal research grant during my tenure as dean, and our funded research is only going to increase over time. Our research programs are really moving forward, and I am very proud of our success in that area.

Q: So, what’s next? What does the future hold for you?

A: The first thing I am going to do after retirement is clean my closet! You may laugh, but I met someone the other day who recently retired from UT, and she was a volunteer at a local health clinic. I asked her how it was after retirement, and if she started volunteering right away. She said no, the first thing she did was to clean out her closet. I had to laugh because I have been saying that as a joke for so many months, but it apparently is true!

I don't have a firm plan, but I know I will do some volunteer work. I need to be involved in something and I will be looking for opportunities. My husband and I plan to travel to see our family in Virginia and Pennsylvania for more extended periods of time. But no grand plans at this point!

CREASIA KUDOS

“Joan has provided strong leadership for the college through many challenges and significant changes in the healthcare industry. As the faculty and the curriculum have adapted, her commitment to delivering the highest level of nursing instruction has never faltered. Throughout her 15-year tenure, she has been among the most highly regarded and highly rated administrators by faculty members.”

—DR. SUSAN MARTIN, PROVOST AND VICE CHANCELLOR FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

“Dean Creasia was my first clinical instructor. She was the most patient, practical, inspiring nurse. She was “of the real nursing world” and allowed her students to learn in that kind of environment. I will never forget the influence she had on me as a nurse and the way she truly cared about each of her students.”

—KATHRYN BLANKENSHIP (BSN '76)

“I remember when Joan first moved to Knoxville. We had lunch together and immediately formed a professional and personal friendship that has spanned many years. In the photo on page 6, she and her husband Don visited our home for the Annual Daylily Festival. They were responsible for shucking the corn. We had great fun—as usual.”

—DR. VANDA L. SCOTT, COLLEGE OF NURSING BOARD OF VISITORS MEMBER AND CEO OF SELECT SPECIALTY HOSPITAL

“Certainly one of the most visionary decisions Dean Creasia made was her approval of the Homeland Security Nursing (HSN) program to be proposed for federal funding. Our College of Nursing is now known across the U.S. and internationally as a leader in disaster education at the graduate level. Her “yes” poised the College of Nursing as a leader in nursing higher education in the 21st century; improved the lives of countless people in Tennessee and beyond; set the stage for partnerships and interdisciplinary linkages with entities that rarely interfaced with nursing previously; opened avenues for scholarship and research for cohorts of students and faculty; and provided mentorship for me. Through all of this I have learned much, interacted with remarkable scholars, and had the opportunity to grow and develop new skills. She is an extraordinary leader and mentor invested in the growth of her faculty and the betterment of the world. Thank you, Joan!”

—DR. SUSAN SPERAW

“What can one say about someone who was always there for me? I will always remember her encouragement and her advocating for more money to improve the Learning Resource Lab. From getting Sim-man to paying for pizzas as we cleaned and painted the lab, Joan was always there. I could not retire with a better person. Thank you for everything.”

—PAT MELCHER, CLINICAL INSTRUCTOR
Excellence in Academic Outreach

Ginger Evans, a tenured faculty member of the College of Nursing since 1983, was awarded the 2010 Academic Outreach Award. Evans is a clinical nurse specialist in adult psychiatric mental health and a certified sexual assault nurse examiner. This honor is awarded to a faculty member whose extraordinary contributions to the public have occurred as an outgrowth of academic pursuits and are related to the university’s academic mission. The land-grant mission of the University of Tennessee directs us to use our intellectual capital to benefit the state’s citizens. This honor goes to a faculty member who exemplifies excellence toward this mission.

In addition to her faculty position, Evans is on call for the SAFE Center and Safe Haven and has performed more than 300 forensic exams on victims of sexual assault in local clinics and emergency rooms. She shares her expertise with the community on behalf of victims of sexual assault, frequently testifying as a professional expert in assault cases, speaking to Knoxville Police Department recruits each year, and serving on the city’s Fatality Review Board and the Community Coalition for Family Violence.

In addition to her community involvement and tireless work in the classroom, Evans’s scholarship is evident in three peer-reviewed journal articles since 2004 and 33 conference proceedings in the past 10 years.

Excellence in Teaching

Dr. Mary Lynn Brown was honored with the 2009 Excellence in Teaching award. Brown was working as a critical care nurse when her passion for teaching led her to further her education and eventually join the UT faculty. It is the students’ hunger for knowledge and Brown’s ability to fuel it that keeps her going each day. She refers to times when she’s watched a flame go out in a student after failing a test or paper; she recognizes that challenge to turn their doubt into determination. In those times of darkness that our students may encounter, Brown works hard to show them they are valued, important, and needed in the nursing profession.

The Jefferson Prize

Dr. Susan Speraw was awarded the 2009 Jefferson Prize. The Jefferson Prize was established to honor a tenured or tenure-track faculty member who has demonstrated excellence in research and creative activity. The prize, made possible by an anonymous donor, honors the principles of our nation’s third president. Thomas Jefferson was proud not only of having written the Declaration of Independence but also of having founded the University of Virginia. He dedicated himself to the pursuit of freedom and knowledge.

In the post-9/11 environment, Speraw saw a great need for nurses to be trained specifically for disaster response. She turned this idea into reality by establishing the Homeland Security Nursing Program in 2005. The program was the first of its kind and drew national and international attention. Speraw has been unwavering in her commitment to the program and has assembled an impressive roster of instructors, including officials from the Department of Homeland Security, Oak Ridge National Laboratory, and NASA. Speraw’s nominator described her as a gifted scholar-educator-leader, saying, “She has the rare ability to blend these strengths into a cohesive whole, thus demonstrating the highest level of competence, personal and professional integrity, and human caring.” Speraw is also a faculty associate for the Howard H. Baker Jr. Center for Public Policy.

Chancellor’s Honors

The Chancellor’s Honors Banquet is held each spring to recognize students, faculty, staff and friends of the University of Tennessee for their extraordinary achievements. In 2009 and 2010, UTK Chancellor Dr. Jimmy Cheek honored the distinguished accomplishments of faculty and students in the College of Nursing.

The Jefferson Prize

Dr. Susan Speraw was awarded the 2009 Jefferson Prize. The Jefferson Prize was established to honor a tenured or tenure-track faculty member who has demonstrated excellence in research and creative activity. The prize, made possible by an anonymous donor, honors the
UT Alumni Association’s Outstanding Teacher Award

Mary Sowell was awarded the 2009 UT Alumni Association’s Outstanding Teacher Award. The UT Alumni Association’s Outstanding Teacher Award is one of the most treasured honors given to faculty, symbolizing excellence in the classroom. Sowell admits she may be “old school” in her instructional approach. She still advocates that students take notes and integrate the detailed material from “hand to brain.” She offers anecdotal examples from her years serving on the hospital floor and through her teaching experiences. She models the most effective patient care, knowing that students learn first by seeing and then by doing. Her reach extends far beyond the hospital floor. “It is an incredible honor to serve as their mentor and life coach during these most formative years,” she says of her students. “I am always amazed at the complexity of their lives and the depth of character these students possess.”

Extraordinary Campus Leadership and Service

Victoria Thomas (BSN ’09) was honored by the Chancellor for her extraordinary campus leadership and service. In addition to being a successful nursing student, Victoria was active in the Student Government Association, the Commission for Blacks, and the Council for Diversity and Interculturalism. She also worked extensively with the Black Cultural Programming Committee and was instrumental in planning a step show for Homecoming, the visit of the African Philharmonic Orchestra, and campus speakers like Cornell West and Ruby Dee. She also volunteered with Dance Marathon, Habitat for Humanity and Relay for Life. Thomas is currently pursuing a graduate degree in public health at Northwestern University.

TOP COLLEGIATE SCHOLARS

2010
Paige Lawson
Lauren Manning
Kimberly Neilson

2009
Benjamin Barbour
Sara Hollmann
Rachel White
Miranda Yother

Extraordinary Professional Promise

Renee Burk
Kelly Carlson
Maleah Hayes
Jeremy Mills

Student Success

In 2009, our BSN graduates and master’s entry students achieved a 99.6% first-time pass rate on the NCLEX licensure exam. In addition, our 2009 MSN graduates achieved a 100% pass rate on their certification exams for nurse anesthesia, adult nurse practitioner, family nurse practitioner, mental health nurse practitioner, and pediatric nurse practitioner. Congratulations to our graduates and to all of the coordinators and faculty who were instrumental in their success!
In January 2010, the College of Nursing implemented its first Dedicated Education Unit (DEU) for clinical teaching at Parkwest Medical Center on a cardio-pulmonary-renal unit. The DEU is a client unit that has developed into an optimal teaching and learning environment through the collaborative effort of nurses, management, and faculty. This entire unit has been dedicated solely to UT Knoxville nursing students.

On any one unit of area hospitals, there are usually students from multiple nursing programs working as part of their required clinical experience. The dedicated educational unit at Parkwest means that UTK nursing students get a more hands-on clinical experience.

During the spring semester, eight UTK nursing students worked on the unit two at a time for 12-hour shifts. They were placed around the clock, seven days a week to maximize learning. All students worked at least one 12-hour night shift. A total of six shifts was completed by each student, and some students opted for more night shifts after their first experience, citing the alternate pace as a different, positive learning environment for them.

“This level of exposure in the hospitals is more in line with the realities that professional nurses face,” stated Dr. Gary Ramsey, chair of the undergraduate program and coordinator of the DEU clinical teaching model. “Nurses in the profession may work at all hours, weekends and weekdays, and for long shifts. Students do not get a taste of this in their normal clinical experiences. This partnership truly shows our students what being a professional nurse is like.”

The DEU learning model enables the college to educate a larger number of nurses in a better way. Selected nursing staff who work on this unit at Parkwest agree to collaborate with faculty to be preceptors, educators, and clinical expert role models for the students. The nursing staff is prepared for their teaching role through a workshop provided by faculty in the College of Nursing to introduce the concept of the DEU, to review the curriculum, clinical course content, and expected clinical outcomes, and to explore teaching/learning strategies to facilitate clinical learning.

With only UT nursing students on the unit, staff will be able to develop closer relationships with both the students and the faculty and will avoid confusion of different outcomes and expectations of different nursing programs. Allie Brown, the UT faculty member on the unit, explains that this arrangement benefits not only the students but the nursing staff as well.

“I have been on other units where in a five-day period, there were three different nursing schools with students,” Brown said. “It is very difficult for nurses to really know how to help students when they constantly shift from nursing program to program and even from beginning students to advanced students, all within a week. By having only one school on the entire unit, all levels of personnel are able to embrace the students and make the learning environment a more positive place.”

“Students often graduate and never have any idea of what happens on the night shift, and many start...
out working nights,” Brown said. “By exposing them to the various shifts before graduation, we are preparing them more for the real-world work environment.”

Recent nursing graduate Jeremy Mills (BSN ’10) agrees that this particular arrangement has been a great part of UT Knoxville’s nursing program.

“While I certainly had much experience in the hospital by that point, I still walked in nervous and unsure of my own skill set. The DEU changed everything for me,” Mills said. “By the end of the second DEU shift, I knew in my heart that I could definitely be a nurse.” Clinical settings are fast-paced and demanding. “Having students all vying for the attention of a single, occasionally over-extended nursing instructor can lead to a hectic day, especially considering that the average clinical day is only around six hours,” Mills said. With longer shifts and more personal contact, the DEU provides a clearer picture of what it’s like to be nurse.

“The nursing student, for the first time, gets a true sense of what it means to work a 12-hour shift as a nurse,” Mills said. “The student starts with report, maintains total patient care throughout the day, and ends by giving report to the oncoming nurse. I had certainly never worked a 12-hour shift before the DEU, and this was the first time that I saw what it really means to work as a nurse in a hospital environment.

Ramsey agrees that the DEU experience is valuable. “This model of education means that we can increase the number of students in the program while utilizing the same number of faculty,” Ramsey said. “It’s more efficient, and it provides more personalized instruction needed to create an optimal learning environment for nursing students. Students come out of this experience with a better understanding of nursing.”

DEU models are unique. The UTK College of Nursing is one of only two programs in the Southeast to utilize the DEU learning model (the other is the UT Health Science Center in Memphis). The University of Portland was the first hospital in the country to employ this particular model, which UT Knoxville followed closely.

“These arrangements are so rare that there is not much information or research about them,” Ramsey said. “That is why we are also using this as a case study and will be publishing research about the trends yielded from this learning model.”

The DEU will continue to be used each semester, with groups of senior BSN students having clinical rotations for adult medical-surgical courses.

Thanks to this experience, Mills not only better understood the profession but had a job waiting for him after graduation.

“I fell in love with the unit almost immediately,” he said. “I’m excited beyond belief that I was able to get a position on the unit and look forward to assisting the future UT nursing students.”

Ultimate model of clinical teaching impacts the community at large in several positive ways:

- A teaching environment that meets student and staff needs allows them to thrive in a positive work environment.
- As they assume work tasks in a realistic 12-hour shift, students become better prepared to transition to the real work setting.
- Nursing faculty resources are used more efficiently: faculty-to-student ratio may be increased while maintaining a safe environment for patients.
Already a competitive, nationally ranked program, the College of Nursing at UT Knoxville is becoming even more cutting-edge, thanks to iCare—a creative new learning tool.

iCare is an educational software program that integrates electronic health records (EHR) into a clinical-experience simulation for students. Developed by Tami Wyatt and Matt Bell of the College of Nursing and Xueping Li and Yo Indranoi of the Department of Industrial and Information Engineering, iCare helps prepare future nurses for the demands of the evolving healthcare climate of the 21st century.

So how does iCare work? In most hospitals and other medical facilities, only licensed medical practitioners are allowed to enter a patient’s medical information into the facility’s computerized database. While nursing students see the resulting EHRs during their clinical training, they don’t get a hands-on opportunity to work with them. Yet when they graduate, they are often expected to know how to manage EHRs. iCare allows students to learn about EHR systems during their education instead of on the job.

Working with a computerized manikin that can simulate a variety of injuries and illnesses, an instructor programs the manikin with a set of symptoms. Using iCare, each student then examines the patient; records and retrieves such data as physical assessments, vital signs, and medication administration; and retrieves orders and diagnostic results for patient-care scenarios built into the program. Depending on the student’s preparation level and the patient’s ailment, the instructor can set up the program to give the student prompts like “check for appendicitis.” The instructor then evaluates the students on how well they perform on their patient assessments.
**Building the System**

The search for a tool like iCare started more than two years ago when Wyatt and Bell began researching existing applications and software used to educate nursing students on EHR systems. “We were having difficulties giving students experiences using health information technology, so we searched for systems to use in our simulation lab. Unfortunately, some of these systems cost up to $70,000 a year,” Wyatt says.

Facing a hefty price tag for an EHR system, Wyatt decided instead to build one. Through a relationship developed in previous years with Xueping Li in industrial and information engineering, Wyatt found just the help and expertise needed to take on such a project. While Wyatt’s and Bell’s expertise focused on usability testing and content—the look, feel, and flow—of the iCare application, Li and Indranoi did the programming.

Currently in its first version, iCare can be used to document and record the nursing care of simulated adult patients. Future versions will address children, infants, and patients with mental illness.

**Testing the Market**

With assistance from the University of Tennessee Research Foundation, further testing will occur with other universities across the U.S. And with the aid of the UT Center for Entrepreneurial Growth in partnership with Tech2020, the iCare team is forming a company to take their product to the national market.

“Testing iCare with a variety of users will promote its expansion to an audience beyond the UT Knoxville College of Nursing,” Wyatt explains. “Refinement and further testing of iCare will yield a program that offers unique features such as student reports, testing modes, and data-mining capabilities.

“**ADDING iCARE TO THE CURRICULUM MEANS THAT NOT ONLY ARE STUDENTS GETTING VITAL EXPERIENCE IN DATA RETRIEVAL, CHARTING, AND DATA ENTRY, THEY ARE ALSO GETTING A NEW EDUCATIONAL TOOL TO REINFORCE THEIR SKILLS IN NURSING ASSESSMENT AND CRITICAL THINKING. THIS PROGRAM WILL HELP MAKE THEM MORE COMPETITIVE PROFESSIONALS,”**

Wyatt says.

The researchers and developers anticipate expanding iCare to other programs for health-professional education, such as pharmacy and physical therapy, that must ensure their graduates’ competence in data entry and retrieval and in managing healthcare records.

For more information about iCare, visit [http://icare.utk.edu](http://icare.utk.edu).
INTERNATIONAL HEALTH CARE MISSION 2010: PERU

During spring break this year, while many students were parasailing in Puerto Vallarta or diving with dolphins in Xel-Ha, 13 students and two faculty members from the College of Nursing were in Lima, Peru, providing primary nursing care to some of Peru’s poorest citizens.

Each year students and members of the nursing faculty travel abroad to take their nursing skills to those in need. These international healthcare mission trips have taken them to Ghana, Belize, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama, and last year to the Dominican Republic, to help some of the world’s most neglected populations.

Working with local healthcare providers, the group offers primary care and conducts community assessments. Assessments include home visits where the students and instructors offer education on nutrition and dietary needs, prenatal care, proper sanitation, safe food and water storage practices, and sanitary living conditions. They also conduct physical exams.

Though the strategy for these trips is much the same as for treating needy populations here in the U.S., the group’s biggest challenge is adapting to the cultural differences they face in these countries. While it can be distressing for students to see the levels of poverty that are often evident in developing countries, it’s important for them to step outside their home culture and environment and experience how other people live.

“Nurses today take care of patients from many cultures and backgrounds,” says Karen Lasater, clinical assistant professor in the college. “These patients have different communication styles, family structures, religious beliefs, personal values, dietary preferences, and biological variations. While each student in the nursing program is required to take a course to learn about varying cultural perspectives on health and illness, having them actively working in different kinds of communities is the best way to develop cultural competence and a global perspective. These are lessons you can’t learn in a classroom.

“Respecting the individuality of each patient and his or her family is crucial in developing the nurse-patient relationship,” Lasater concludes. “Through this relationship, promotion of health can occur. During UT’s international trips, student nurses strengthen their cultural sensitivity and awareness. Incorporating this understanding into everyday care of patients, whether in a foreign country or back home, is vital to being a successful nurse.”
Ten years ago, Dr. Bernie Naylor, an orthopedic surgeon with the Tennessee Orthopedic Clinics, established a medical mission trip to Guatemala. The goal was to help the people of Antigua, Guatemala, by repairing broken bones and correcting birth defects in children. The Guatemala Medical Mission trip relies heavily on donations from local businesses and private individuals. The surgeons, nurses, surgical techs, and interpreters are all volunteers who donate their time each year to the cause.

In January 2010, three senior students from the Nurse Anesthesia Program were chosen to participate in the mission trip to Antigua. Kathryn Clabo, Shannon Fielland, and Lisa Shaw took part as student nurse anesthetists during a week-long medical mission at the Obras Sociales Hermano Pedro Hospital and Orphanage. The anesthesia care team, consisting of one anesthesiologist, two CRNAs, and three student CRNAs, provided general and local anesthesia for 66 surgical cases.

The majority of the people in Antigua are manual laborers. The patient population receiving care consisted of pediatric and adult patients undergoing orthopedic-related surgeries, such as congenital bone deformities and traumatic injuries that had not healed correctly. Broken bones improperly healed can completely change one’s livelihood—one’s ability to provide food and shelter for self and family. The Guatemalan people are very grateful for the care provided every year by the medical mission. The trips are life-changing experiences for the student CRNAs, offering them an opportunity to serve a very needy population.

Students and faculty in the College of Nursing put their skills to work to help earthquake victims in Haiti.

Maleah Hayes, senior in nursing, helped to organize a relief effort for Haiti. She worked with the non-profit organization One Vision International, along with a college group at Sevier Heights Baptist Church, to gather items to help victims of the earthquake.

Hayes said her background in nursing made her want to help. “Since I am soon to become a registered nurse, my heart was eager to go and serve in Haiti,” Hayes said. “I can’t go yet and provide the medical attention as a nurse, and I know most other students can’t just stop classes and go; however, there are major ways that we can help now.”

Hayes asked students to donate bandages, antibiotic ointment, Germ-X wipes, medical tape, and many other items to One Vision International. Hayes said volunteering in Haiti did not start with the earthquake. Last semester, a group of students went to Haiti to help orphans and distribute shoes. The shoes were given to the orphans directly off the feet of the students that volunteered.

Dr. Susan Speraw, coordinator of the College of Nursing Homeland Security program, has visited Haiti in past years and taken medical groups with her. Her daughter, Catherine Dorvil, went to Haiti in mid-January to organize relief programs.

Dorvil was in Leogane, Haiti, an area that was hit especially hard by the earthquake. Dorvil described the environment in Leogane as treacherous through her daily journal. “Places where houses completely collapsed and bodies are crushed underneath—the smell is pretty horrid,” Dorvil said. “Leogane is unreal. It’s completely flattened. Maybe 10 houses in the entire city are standing without damage.”

Speraw said that Haitians need funds the most. “Haiti is absolutely in my heart,” Speraw said. “It’s so close to us geographically, and in terms of development, it is worlds away.”

Karyn Casey, pediatric nurse practitioner and clinical assistant professor, traveled to Haiti with her husband, Dr. Mike Casey, orthopedic surgeon, and a team of others in early February. The Caseys were asked to go to Haiti on a medical mission. “As one of the few pediatric personnel on board, I personally requested pediatric supplies—medications, pediatric crutches, bandages, and casting material,” Casey said. Casey also urged students to help in any way possible in providing relief for Haitian victims.
ACCOMPILISHED ALUMNI PROGRAM

Three notable alumni of the College of Nursing visited campus in spring semester 2010 to participate in the Accomplished Alumni Program coordinated by the UT Office of Alumni Affairs. The program brings noteworthy alumni back to campus to share their career success stories with students and other alumni.

Janice McKinley and Laura Barnes were featured in March. McKinley and Barnes spoke to a nursing class about career development and current issues in the nursing field. Steve Catlett, associate vice chancellor of alumni affairs, presented the awards to them after they spoke to the class.

Janice McKinley is vice president and chief nursing officer at Parkwest Medical Center in Knoxville. Under her leadership, Parkwest has won eight “Top 10 Hospital” designations, the VHA Leadership Award for Clinical Excellence, and numerous other awards. She was the first recipient of the University of Tennessee Dr. Sylvia E. Hart Distinguished Alumni Award in 2002.

Laura Barnes is the vice president for patient care services at East Tennessee Children’s Hospital. Laura is the recipient of numerous awards including Tennessee Hospital Association Nurse of Distinction Award and the College of Nursing Outstanding Alumni Award for her accomplishments in the areas of management/administration and community service.

Joe Emert, president of First Choice Medical in Maryville, Tennessee, and a former member of the Chancellor’s Associates, appeared at the College of Nursing in April for the Accomplished Alumni Program. Besides sharing with a sizeable class of nursing students some facts and features of his career—especially his entrepreneurial experience—Emert accepted the award presented to him by Dean Joan Creasia.

For the benefit of future nurses, whose practice is likely to require intercultural experience, Emert and his wife, Cindy, have established the Clariece Stewart Emert and Betty Simpson Papp Endowment for Intercultural Healthcare Opportunities in the College of Nursing. The endowment honors their mothers, both of whom were nurses, and provides financial assistance for students participating in healthcare mission trips.

Many thanks to our Accomplished Alumni for their support of the College of Nursing!

ALL ABOUT WOMEN

All About Women, an interactive, day-long experience, was held in August 2009 at the Knoxville Convention & Exhibition Center located at World’s Fair Park. Thousands of women from the Knoxville area took part in the event, which featured more than 100 free services and activities geared especially for women. College of Nursing students and faculty participated in this event to promote health and wellness to women in the Knoxville community.

Students in the BSN and MSN programs led interactive educational activities to teach women in the community about healthy living. They also provided free health screenings, including cholesterol, blood pressure, BMI, and bone density, and information about self-examinations and other women’s health issues. Dr. Susan Speraw, coordinator of the Homeland Security Nursing program, talked with participants about how to prepare for a disaster, and Dr. Mary Lynn Brown, coordinator of the Adult Health MSN program, participated in a panel discussion on heart health. Dr. Peggy Pierce, coordinator of the Family Nurse Practitioner program, and Pat Melcher, clinical instructor in the BSN program, coordinated student participation in the event.

According to the 2002 Institute for Women’s Policy Research Status of Women report, the state of Tennessee tied for 49th in the nation in women’s health. All About Women is an ongoing initiative committed to improving the health and well-being of women in Tennessee, and the College of Nursing was proud to participate in this initiative.
ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT—DIANA WHALEY

In recent humanitarian and natural disasters, nurses have been called upon to provide health care, advocate for the injured and displaced, and find resources in devastated areas. Diana Whaley, a 1996 graduate of the UTK College of Nursing, has been privileged to serve in all of these capacities through her efforts with 24 national and international disaster response teams.

Ms. Whaley's work began as a first responder with the American Red Cross in 1992, joining the National Disaster Team in 2001. In the past ten years, Diana and her husband have served as missionaries and health workers in developing countries and the United States. Her Tennessee experiences have involved disaster response to hurricanes and tornadoes, services with remote area medical clinics, as well as serving on a “condolence team”—providing care to those who lose family members during a crisis. Diana was a responder for the 9/11 terrorist attack in New York, Hurricane Katrina, and the recent Haiti earthquake relief efforts. To date, she has been involved with 14 missions to Haiti in conjunction with Voice of Children, providing humanitarian support in Port-au-Prince and other remote areas of Haiti.

Creating awareness of volunteer opportunities is a key aspect of Ms. Whaley’s current role as American Red Cross Nurse Liaison for Tennessee. Whaley states, “Unfortunately, many nurses are not linked in to professional disaster support networks.” Although training is available for relief RNs who will work on “strike teams,” Diana reports that recruitment and retention of nurses is an ongoing challenge as well as a barrier to disaster preparedness. Membership and participation in professional associations such as the Tennessee Nurses Association helps to establish a provider network and ensures compliance with national standards for disaster services.

In recognition of her national and international contributions, Diana recently received the Florence Nightingale Medal, the highest international distinction that can be awarded to a nurse. The award is given to nurses who epitomize the fundamental principles of the American Red Cross Movement: humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity, and universality. On behalf of the College of Nursing and nursing alumni, we congratulate Diana and join the American Red Cross in recognizing her professional accomplishments. As one of her grateful clients said, “You give us hope.”

— By Dr. Maureen Nalle
First Fulbright Scholar—Dr. Bonnie Callen

In 2009, Dr. Bonnie Callen was selected as a Fulbright Scholar, a prestigious program that sends 800 U.S. faculty and professionals abroad each year to lecture and conduct research in a variety of fields. With this selection, the College of Nursing achieved yet another milestone, as Callen is the first faculty member in the history of the college to be chosen as a Fulbright Scholar.

Callen’s Fulbright appointment was to teach and conduct research at the Catherine McAuley School of Nursing and Midwifery at University College in Cork, Ireland, in fall 2009. She worked with Irish researchers to study the growing trend of obesity in the aging population as well as interventions that can help older adults. Callen’s goal was to discover similarities and differences in the U.S. and Irish nursing schools that might lead to developing more effective interventions in both cultures and in other countries.

Upon her arrival in Ireland, Callen began to learn about the differences in the ways the schools operate. “One of my office mates and I started talking and comparing notes. What a difference! Their students have oral exams over each section of study at the undergraduate level. Interestingly, they don’t have a book, only suggested readings. They told me that books were too expensive. Our students would certainly agree.” In addition to her teaching and research, Callen also had the opportunity to travel throughout Ireland to attend conferences and deliver presentations, and to learn about Irish culture from the Irish Fulbright Commission. The Irish culture program included lectures on language policy, the history of the language, the current status of the language, and Irish mythology.

Callen was surprised and delighted to learn she had received a Fulbright to teach and do research in Ireland. She was even more surprised and delighted when she learned that her brother, a state employee in California, had received a Fulbright to teach in Kiev, Ukraine. “What is interesting,” Callen said, “is that neither of us knew the other was applying!”

Callen was one of two UT faculty members to be awarded a Fulbright for the 2009–2010 academic year. Callen, associate professor in nursing, has been at UT since 2003. She teaches transcultural nursing and community health nursing, and she is a faculty advisor for the RN to BSN program. Her research has focused on nutrition and obesity in older adults and has involved the Meals on Wheels Program. She is currently interviewing 100-year-old residents in Knox County about their lives and the role of nutrition in their successful aging.

While in Ireland, Callen and her husband communicated with colleagues and friends through a blog. To learn more about Callen’s semester in Ireland, visit http://callensinireland.blogspot.com.
Mary T. Boynton Lecture

What does it mean to be a culturally competent healthcare professional? This question was posed to nursing students, faculty and administrators at the 2010 Mary T. Boynton Lecture.

This year, the UTK College of Nursing welcomed Dr. Josepha Campinha-Bacote as the Mary T. Boynton Distinguished Lecturer. Her presentation, entitled “A Culturally Conscious Approach to C.A.R.E. (Clinical, Administration, Research, Education),” focused on a culturally conscious approach for positively affecting the quality of healthcare for all patients. Participants examined her model of cultural competence in healthcare delivery, including the constructs of cultural desire, cultural awareness, cultural knowledge, cultural skill, and cultural encounters.

Dr. Campinha-Bacote is president and founder of Transcultural C.A.R.E. Associates, a private consultation service that focuses on issues in transcultural health care and mental health. She is also on the faculty at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio. She received her BSN from the University of Rhode Island, MSN from Texas Women’s University, MA in Religion and Theology from Cincinnati Christian University and her PhD from the University of Virginia. She is a fellow of the American Academy of Nursing and has been inducted into the Transcultural Nursing Society as a transcultural nursing scholar.

Campinha-Bacote has been recognized both nationally and internationally for her accomplishments. She has delivered more than 1,000 presentations on transcultural health care and has served as an advisor and consultant to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office on Minority Health to develop and implement culturally and linguistically appropriate services in health care. She currently serves as a consultant to the National Center for Cultural Competence in Washington, DC, and on several HRSA grants focusing on cultural competence in the health professions.

The annual nursing scholar visit, which became the Mary T. Boynton Distinguished Lecture Series in 1992, began with the opening of the PhD program in the UTK College of Nursing in 1989. Mary T. Boynton, retired faculty in the College of Nursing, has been an instrumental leader in nursing education at UT. With her generous support of the lecture series, she has established a legacy of education for years to come through visits from nationally and internationally accomplished scholars, researchers, and practitioners.

RN-TO-BSN PROGRAM GOES ONLINE

The College of Nursing is making it easier for registered nurses with two-year associate’s degrees to get their bachelor’s degrees in nursing. Beginning in summer 2009, the upper-division nursing courses in the RN-to-BSN program transitioned to an online format. The curriculum can be completed in three semesters or can be taken on a part-time basis. It allows RNs the flexibility to work around various schedules while completing the degree.

“This online program makes earning a BSN more accessible,” said Gary Ramsey, chair of the undergraduate nursing program. “We work with prospective students to assess their college credits and help them formulate a plan to complete any additional prerequisites they may need. This program makes good use of faculty resources and students’ time and will allow more BSN nurses to graduate from the university.”

According to a special report by the Tennessee Hospital Association, higher proportions of baccalaureate-prepared registered nurses may help stabilize the workforce, because registered nurses with a BSN are found to have higher levels of job satisfaction, which is key to nurse retention. The same report, “Curing the Crisis in Nursing Education: A Master Plan for Tennessee,” indicates that nearly 60 percent of registered nurses in Tennessee hold only an associate’s degree or diploma.

“There is a nursing shortage in our state which is expected to grow, but we can have a positive influence on the local and state nursing workforce if we’re able to produce more baccalaureate-prepared nurses,” Ramsey said.

For more information on the RN-to-BSN program, please visit our website at http://nightingale.con.utk.edu.
**FACULTY ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2008–2009**

**Publications**


HALL, J. (2009, October). Women becoming resolute after childhood maltreatment: Overcoming family of origin perceptual confinement. 15th International Conference of Nurses Network on Violence against Women international. Miami, FL.


**Paper Presentations, National**


**Paper Presentations, Regional**


CALLEN, B.L. (2009, April). Preparing undergraduate nursing students for community assessment with geriatric assessment simulation. Connect the Dots: Geriatric Nursing Education, and Clinical Simulation, hosted by the Center for Lifelong Learning, School of Nursing. University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, and Flanders University, Adelaide, Australia, Durham, NC.


**Posters, International**


**Posters, National**


**Posters, Regional**


**Funding**


Bell, D. (2009). Nurse Anesthesia Traineeship Award. Health Services Resources Administration, Bureau of Health Professions, Division of Nursing.


Cressia, J.L. (2008). Nurse Traineeship Award. Health Services Resources Administration, Bureau of Health Professions, Division of Nursing.

Cressia, J.L. (2009). Nurse Traineeship Award. Health Services Resources Administration, Bureau of Health Professions, Division of Nursing.


Mixer, S.J. (2008). Transcultural nursing. College of Continuing Education and Distance Learning, Middle Tennessee State University.


Wyatt, T.H. (2008). Developing and testing an innovative psychosocial asthma management intervention. Graduate Arts and Sciences Faculty Professional Development Award, The University of Tennessee, Knoxville.


**Honors and Awards**


Blackburn, L. (2009). Outstanding Classroom Teacher Award. The University of Tennessee, Knoxville.


Chyka, D. (2009). Outstanding Clinical Faculty Award. The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, College of Nursing.


Providing culturally competent nursing care is no longer a luxury; rather it is an expectation and a standard of care. Through a federal Cultural Competence Grant, a “Train-the-Trainer” model was used to teach evidenced cultural competence to the participants of the conference, which included faculty and students from area nursing programs. UT College of Nursing Assistant Professor Dr. Sandra Mixer, with Dr. Marilyn McFarland and Dr. Hiba Wehbe-Alamah, both of the University of Michigan-Flint, taught participants about the culture care theory, ethnonursing research method and application, cultural assessment, and integration of culturally congruent/competent care into nursing education and curricula. Numerous materials were provided to the audience for use in educating students, colleagues, and nurses in practice. Dr. Tami Wyatt and iCare provided flash drives of the conference materials for participants.

Dr. Joan Uhl Pierce brought greetings on behalf of the Transcultural Nursing Society and shared the newly proposed Standards of Cultural Competence that were presented at the International Council of Nurses this past year. These standards are available for comment from nurses worldwide at http://www.tcns.org.

Five UT MSN students—Melissa Bradshaw, Natasha Gilley, Crystal Moses, Kelly Steely, and Catherine Talbot—presented evidenced-based projects to address culturally competent care delivery. The students identified a cultural challenge/opportunity in their practice settings and presented evidence based on emic (patient and family) and etic (professional) views about the delivery of culturally congruent nursing care—care that is satisfying, beneficial, and acceptable to its recipients. Students gave presentations on the care of Hispanic persons and postpartum women, the stigma of obesity, culturally congruent communication in caring for Japanese families, and African American women’s perceptions of care.

The 2010 Sigma Theta Tau Research Day had great attendance and participation from students and faculty from area nursing programs.
Dr. Sylvia E. Hart Distinguished Alumni Award—Laura Barnes

The 2009 recipient of the Sylvia Hart Distinguished Alumni Award is Laura Preston Barnes. Laura was recognized with this honor at the first annual NightinGala, an event that celebrates nursing and the contribution that nurses make to the health of our community.

A graduate of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, College of Nursing’s undergraduate and master’s programs, Laura is primarily known for her dedication to ensuring the best possible care for children and her commitment to the highest standards of nursing practice. She began her career at East Tennessee Children’s Hospital as a staff nurse in the intensive care unit. Her leadership potential was quickly recognized and after only one year, she was appointed head nurse in the unit. Shortly thereafter she assumed responsibilities as assistant director of nursing, child life coordinator, director of children’s home health, director of child health education, and director for critical care services. In 2006, she was appointed to her current position as vice president for patient care services, a position that involves excellent leadership, endless dedication, and ongoing commitment.

Laura is recognized for her leadership by the professional nursing community as well. She is the president-elect of the Tennessee Organization of Nurse Executives and serves on the board of directors for the Tennessee Center for Nursing. She was recently selected to attend the Johnson & Johnson Wharton Fellows Program for Nurse Executives, which she describes as an awesome leadership experience.

Laura is the recipient of numerous awards including the Tennessee Hospital Association Nurse of Distinction Award and the College of Nursing Outstanding Alumni Award for her accomplishments in the areas of management/administration and community service.

Leadership, dedication, commitment—three simple but powerful words. Laura exemplifies all of these characteristics in her professional practice and is a truly deserving recipient of the Sylvia Hart Distinguished Alumni Award. The college is honored to recognize Laura Barnes for her outstanding accomplishments and contributions to the nursing profession, the children, and the community at large.

RECOGNIZING THE OUTSTANDING WORK OF OUR STUDENT NURSES

“Words cannot express how much it meant to me to have you caring for me during the birth of my son. I am so thankful to have had you with me during such a special time for our family. Thanks so much!”
—Julie Spires, RN at UT Medical Center
CLASS NOTES

BSN

Nancy Schulz ('77) has been elected District 3 Commissioner for Newton County, Georgia. Schulz, a nurse practitioner who works part-time at the health department, and her husband, Dick, own and manage The Oaks Course in Covington, Georgia.

Deborah Ellen Rogers Crownover ('79) is a senior clinical analyst at Duke University Health Systems. She received an MSN degree in nursing informatics from Duke in 2009. She and husband Robert have two children, Rachael Jones and George.

Alana Rozell Booth ('90) wants to find her friend, Lori Beth Bennett, who also graduated in 1990. Email: aboothtn@comcast.net.

Kimberly Patchett-Pruett ('91) lives in California at Travis Air Force Base and works as a nurse anesthetist. She and husband Lt. Col. Billy Pruett have 3 children. Her 19-year-old is a freshman at UT!

Edna Diana Whaley ('96) received the 2009 Florence Nightingale Medal from the American Red Cross. This is the highest international distinction that can be awarded to a nurse and is given every two years. This year only three were awarded in the U.S. and 28 worldwide. The medal “honours exceptional courage and devotion in caring for victims of armed conflict or natural disasters, or exemplary services or a creative and pioneering spirit in the areas of public health or nursing education.”

Holly Rozzelle Pierce ('97) is a nurse practitioner at Vanderbilt University Medical Center. She and husband Bobby have one son, Landon, born in February 2009.

Leslie Cheek Fry ('99) has worked in surgery at Vanderbilt Medical Center in Nashville for 10 years. She specialized in orthopedic surgery for 8 years and then changed to cosmetic surgery. She writes that she loves her job and still gets excited about going to work everyday. Since she works at an educational hospital, she often encounters student nurses, medical students and residents. Remembering how it feels to be a student nurse in an overwhelming new environment, she makes it a point to teach them without intimidation every time she has the opportunity. Leslie writes that she is proud to be a graduate from UT’s program and feels that her education has enabled her to be a superior nurse with the confidence needed to excel in her career.

Wesley and Kristen (Garrett) Karcher ('04) currently live in North Carolina and welcomed their first child Emma in January 2010. Wesley works as a CRNA at WakeMed Hospital in Raleigh. Kristen works as a nurse practitioner for the abdominal transplant program at the University of North Carolina. They will celebrate their fifth wedding anniversary in July.

Alexis Green Dunn ('05) graduated from Emory University with an MSN in Nurse Midwifery in December 2009. She writes that she is forever grateful for the strong nursing curriculum at UT.

Mei Jin ('07) is working at PCM in Knoxville.

MSN

Patricia Garner Dalferes ('95) is a family nurse practitioner at the Multipractice Clinic in Louisiana. She wants to contact Peggy Watson, Ranae and Laura. Let’s have a reunion party this year!

Melissa Woods ('01) has been teaching at Clemson University as a graduate lecturer in mental health in primary care for approximately two years. She also serves as an undergraduate clinical instructor for the mental health in nursing class. She continues to work on a contractual basis at AnMed Hospital. Being the first NP to work on the Behavioral Health Unit has been a challenge, but after 4 years, things are going smoothly. She also serves on the Research Council at AnMed. She and her wonderful significant other, Abdalla Bamashmus, MD, live on Lake Hartwell in Anderson, South Carolina.

Renee James ('03) has been appointed to the Cardiac-Vascular Nurse Content Expert Panel by the American Nurses Credentialing Center. She is the nurse manager for the Vascular Surgery Transplant Unit at the University of Tennessee Medical Center.

PhD

Dr. Cynthia (Cindy) Winkler ('96) was named Executive Vice President at US Radiosurgery. Winkler, a 30-year veteran of the healthcare industry, oversees operations of all US Radiosurgery Centers. She is responsible for developing strategies for long-term growth and maintaining the company’s commitment to patient-care quality.

Dr. Sharon Isenhour Sarvey ('01) became dean of the School of Nursing at Barton College in Wilson, North Carolina, on July 1, 2010.

Dr. Mona Marie Shattell ('02) was promoted to associate professor for the School of Nursing at the University of North Carolina. She lives in Greensboro, North Carolina.

Retirements

Dr. Mitzi Davis retired in May 2010 after 26 years in the College of Nursing. She joined the faculty in 1984 and taught every level of nursing student from baccalaureate through doctoral. For the past several years, Mitzi was the coordinator of the nursing of women and children course in the undergraduate program.

Pat Melcher retired at the conclusion of the 2010 academic year after 11 years in the College of Nursing. Pat served as coordinator for the foundations course in the undergraduate program, as coordinator of the learning resource center, and as the college’s health officer.

A sincere thank you to Mitzi and Pat for their dedication and service to the College of Nursing.

In Memoriam

Patricia Ann (Fox) Walls (BSN '94) passed away in April 2010. Her husband, Mike Walls, established the Patricia A. Walls Endowed Nursing Scholarship, which will provide an annual scholarship to UT nursing students who are single parents or non-traditional students.
In Memoriam—Courtney House

An excellent nursing student who had been eager to begin her career helping others, Courtney House was supposed to graduate with her classmates in May. But the senior died in September 2009 only months after being diagnosed with cancer.

Courtney’s memory was honored at the College of Nursing’s commencement exercises with a special pinning ceremony, where her mother and stepfather, Gail and Charles Andreasen, were presented with the nursing pin that Courtney would have received at graduation.

Courtney, a straight-A student, always gave 100 percent in her efforts, said Gary Ramsey, chair of the undergraduate nursing program.

“Even after her diagnosis with cancer, she remained committed to pursuing her nursing degree and made arrangements to continue some of her courses. Her integrity, strength, and character were present until the end of her life,” he said.

When only 3 months old, Courtney was diagnosed with respiratory papilomatosis, a disease that causes recurrent polyps to form on the larynx and trachea. Courtney’s family was told that the condition was not life-threatening but would require laser treatments to be done every so often to remove the polyps. Before Courtney’s passing, she had endured 158 laser surgeries.

At age 5, during one of those surgeries, a machine malfunctioned, shooting pieces of silver into Courtney’s lungs. During the process of removing the silver, the polyps seeded into her lung tissue. The incident made her more prone to lung infections and abscesses in the years that followed. Courtney and her family knew that there was a possibility that the polyps could become malignant but hoped this would never happen.

In June 2009, Courtney began working 12-hour shifts at a local hospital. After the first couple of weeks, she started experiencing lower back pain, which at first she attributed to the new long hours. Initial doctors’ appointments and blood work showed that Courtney’s calcium was high but otherwise nothing was wrong. Eventually, she ended up in the emergency room with severe pain. An abdominal CT scan showed that lymph nodes in her abdomen were enlarged; lymphoma was suspected.

While this was grave news, Courtney and her family understood that lymphoma could be a very treatable cancer and they worked to prepare Courtney for the treatment plan to come. A biopsy was scheduled to confirm the lymphoma but after comparing the results of the biopsy with Courtney’s PET scan results, she was diagnosed with squamous cell carcinoma in her lungs, lymph nodes, and hip bones.

Courtney died Sept. 15, 2009. In a blog posted shortly before her death, Courtney wrote about having God on her side.

“The doctors can say what they want, but I know who holds my future. To me, this is just another trial in life that I, with God’s help, will overcome and will be able to use my story to tell others what God has done for me. So I have chosen to turn this over to God and let the world see what he can do! Please pray and thank God every day for all he has done and will continue to do. God is so good.”

Courtney’s family has established the Courtney House Memorial Scholarship in her honor. Once the endowment is fully funded, the scholarship will be available to a rising senior in nursing with preference given to students from Knox County. To contribute to the Courtney House Memorial Scholarship, please contact the College of Nursing Development Office at 865-974-2755.
SPOTLIGHT ON SCHOLARS 2009–10

Artie Ruth Reilly Scholarship
Olivera Dessieux
Robin Harris
Lauren Mitchell BSN 10
Whitney Schewe BSN 10

Absher Undergraduate Memorial Scholarship
Maleah Hayes BSN 10

Baptist Health System/Fields Family Scholarship
Donna Blanton

M. T. and Mary Boynton Graduate Nursing Student Endowment
Stephanie Powers

William M. and Mary D. Curtis Scholarship
Jenny Beth Jordan BSN 10

Dr. Theresa S. and Harold K. Dyer Nursing Scholarship
Marissa Benedict BSN 10

Fraker Family Scholarship
Marissa Benedict BSN 10

Dale H. Goodfellow Scholarship
Kimberly Neilson BSN 10

Gossler Scholarship
Sheena Cole BSN 10
Candace Hunt MSN 09
Tia Imhoff MSN 09
Tina Jackson Post-MSN 09
Tracy Jenkins MSN 09
Amy Patterson MSN 09

Betty Jo McAfee Greene Memorial Scholarship
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MALEAH HAYES
The quote below comes from Maleah Hayes (BSN ’10) who was awarded a scholarship from the Dr. and Mrs. Lee Alton Absher Undergraduate Memorial Fund.

Hayes, a recent BSN graduate from Shelbyville, Tennessee, never thought that she would attend UT, but after visiting and learning more about the nursing program, she knew that coming to Knoxville was the right choice. “I knew that I would receive a quality education and leadership development from UT.” Hayes counts the diverse amount of clinical work required though the college as the “best” experience to prepare her for her career as a nurse. Opportunities such as working in medicine, in surgery, and with community service outlets in Knoxville and rural Kentucky, and the chance to interact with patients, have all added to her education. “It’s great to learn different assessments, see different types of nursing.”

She values this scholarship not by the monetary amount, but by the honor that came with the award. “It is truly humbling that my work has been recognized. People believed in me, and that has instilled a little more endurance in my life.” Upon graduation, Hayes accepted a position at Vanderbilt Medical Center and plans to eventually go back to school to become a Family Nurse Practitioner.

“I am very honored that people are willing to be so giving.”
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