

# focus

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## On the Graduate School of Nursing

"...where research, practice and service are the keystones of education."

## A message from the Dean

The University of Massachusetts Worcester Graduate School of Nursing is celebrating 15 years of nursing leadership in the Commonwealth. Throughout the past year, I have learned countless lessons about the tradition of that leadership. With a dynamic, productive faculty, we continue to develop exemplary models of quality patient care. With our outstanding alumni and students, we have established benchmarks to raise the standard of nursing care throughout the region, in spite of uncertainty in the health system. Our efforts this past year focused on expanding research and hospital and community-based collaborations to innovate graduate nursing education.

Amidst turmoil in the health care industry, our role at UMW remains clear: to improve the quality of life and health outcomes for Massachusetts' citizens. Yet, the challenge intensifies as the nursing work force ages, the work force shortage deepens and the burden of care created by an aging society with chronic conditions steadily rises. Never before has nursing been so prominent



Deans Harper and Lazare at this year's Annual Alumni Association Breakfast.

in the minds of the public, the industry or policy makers. Spurred by current conditions, legislation is targeted at scholarships and loan repayment to recruit and retain talented students and nurses. The mandate for nursing leaders to guide the profession toward accountable, high quality practice has never been more apparent.

The GSN is poised to play a central role in developing nurse leaders through its mission of research, service and education. This past year, we affirmed our commitment to this inte-

grated mission in the following ways:

- Ten new faculty were recruited to the GSN.
- Faculty presented national and international peer-reviewed papers and have begun to publish their results.
- Graduates of the master's, post-master's and doctoral programs have assumed leadership positions in Massachusetts and New England.
- Enrollment across the three programs has increased an average of 50 percent over last year.
- The master's and doctoral curricula include enhanced research and population-based content.
- Extramural proposals submitted and funded by our faculty and doctoral students have increased substantially.

These achievements reveal that our school, faculty, alumni and students are flourishing despite the changing health care environment. We develop and nurture nursing leaders who have the skills and competencies to guide us through these times. I invite every friend of the GSN to join us in improving the quality of life and health outcomes for Massachusetts' citizens. ●

## Acute care nurse practitioners are growing presence in health care

The role of the acute care nurse practitioner continues to expand as these specialized professionals remain valued health care providers who care for the sickest, hospitalized patients. Because of the demand for these advanced care nurses, the Acute Care Nurse Practitioner (ACNP) program was developed at the University of Massachusetts Worcester (UMW). Two recent graduates of the program, Theresa Mazzarelli, MS, RNCS, ACNP, and MaryEllen Wrubleski, MS, RNCS, ACNP, are experienced nurses who recognized the need for such a program to enhance their scope of practice and gain the knowledge and skills necessary to care for acute and critical care patients.

Terri received her post master's degree from the UMW Graduate School of Nursing in 1997 and currently works at UMass Memorial Medical Center. Terri and her ACNP colleagues established the Nurse Practitioner Attending Collaborative Service, in collaboration with cardiologists, drawing upon their expertise in direct care of inpatients. Interested in becoming an ACNP because of her cardiac experi-

ence, Terri attributes her enhanced knowledge of advanced assessment, diagnosis and management of acute care problems, as well as her ability to prescribe therapeutic interventions, to the educational preparation she received through the GSN program. She and her fellow cardiac medicine ACNPs frequently receive positive feedback in the areas of patient satisfaction and collaboration with physicians and referring cardiologists.

MaryEllen is a GSN graduate who currently works in Cardiothoracic Surgery at UMass Memorial Medical Center. Despite her extensive critical care experience, MaryEllen found a great need for the ACNP role when she triaged acute urgent care patient problems in a community hospital setting. She and her ACNP colleagues have been innovators in establishing the ACNP role in pre-admission testing of cardiac surgical patients (both inpatient and outpatient), managing acute care post-op cardiac surgical inpatients, and in follow-up evaluation of cardiac surgical patients in the clinic via telephone. Thanks to these efforts, the cardiothoracic surgery ACNPs continue to receive



Left to right: Theresa Mazzarelli, MS, RNCS, ACNP, and MaryEllen Wrubleski, MS, RNCS, ACNP

positive responses from patients and colleagues in their provision of direct care, ongoing education of nurses and streamlining of patient follow-up care.

Both Terri and MaryEllen continue to show great exuberance and commitment in their ACNP careers and futures. Terri said, "It's exciting to pre-cept others. You can't help but smile when you see what they're doing and learning." MaryEllen, who is also involved in educating ACNP students, added, "I envision my role as continuing to advocate for quality feedback and communication, timely care and full patient access for the cardiac surgery patients I treat." ●

## Alumni celebrate at annual breakfast



Accented with white linen tablecloths and elegant centerpieces, the 11th GSN Alumni Association Breakfast was marked by excitement as 150 attendees watched Dean Doreen Harper present awards to students who displayed exemplary leadership skills, as well as academic and clinical accomplishment. Chancellor Aaron Lazare joined in the recognition of the 15th anniversary of the GSN and acknowledged some of the "best and brightest" students to graduate this June.

The celebration breakfast included many "first-time" awards. The Lillian R. Goodman Award was presented to Barbara Aronson, an outstanding GSN doctoral student with a deep commitment to professional practice, education and research. Lauren Dansereau, a first-year student, received the Lucie Russell Scholarship Award. Generously supported by Lucie's family, the award recognizes a student with a deep commitment to the ideals and purpose of the profession.

Jill and I were pleased to present Kristine Ruzycski ('88,'93) with the first Alumni Association Award. She was recognized for founding and leading the Alumni Association, her unwavering advocacy of the nurse practitioner and for her ability to maintain patient practice skills that focus on individualized care.

The breakfast was a great way to network, reminisce with alumni and introduce ourselves to this new group of advanced practice nurses.

Sunday, June 3 was also a memorable afternoon for the faculty, staff and graduates of the GSN, as 17 master's of science degrees, six post master's certificates and three postdoctoral degrees were presented during Commencement exercises. Jill and I welcome these new members to the Alumni Association and feel energized and confident that the profession will survive the challenges ahead!

Jill Diana

## Advance nursing by joining the MCNP

**M**ore than eight years ago, a grassroots meeting started the Massachusetts Coalition of Nurse Practitioners (MCNP), a non-profit organization promoting the advancement of nurse practitioners. Seed money for the MCNP was collected by literally "passing the hat" at a Boston conference, illustrating the enthusiasm and support for the new statewide organization for advanced nursing.

Since that time, the MCNP has grown to include over 1,200 members and nine regional chapters. Initially part of the Marlborough Chapter, representatives from Worcester formed the

Greater Worcester Region Chapter three years ago. Membership currently totals 264.

The MCNP promotes the professional development of nurse practitioners; collaborates with other professional nursing and non-nursing groups; encourages participation in the public policy process; fosters high standards of advanced practice; and works toward the improvement of access to health care for all. The Greater Worcester Region Chapter offers frequent dinner lectures throughout the year, providing an opportunity for colleagues to network and enhance their knowledge of a

variety of topics. The chapter has also sponsored donations for needy individuals and families in the community.

Doris McConnell is the local MCNP representative. She attends regional summit meetings and serves as a liaison between the statewide organization and the local chapter. All nurse practitioners are invited to join the MCNP to support one another professionally, enhance their education and receive updates on important legislative issues. For more information about MCNP, visit [www.mcnweb.org](http://www.mcnweb.org) or call (781) 575-1565. ●

## Save the Date

### September

3 Third annual Walk to Cure Cancer, UMass Worcester campus 10 a.m.

26 GSN Open House 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.

### October

10 Annual Meeting Sigma Theta Tau/Iota Phi, 6 p.m.

### January

9 GSN Open House 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.

## Consortium will address nursing shortage

**T**he nation is experiencing an increasing shortage in nursing positions at all levels of practice, teaching and research. In response, the deans of the five University of Massachusetts Schools of Nursing wrote a proposal to explore various strategies to increase the number of advanced practice nurses, nurse educators and nurse scientists to meet the health care needs of the citizens of the Commonwealth. On September 27, 2000, University of Massachusetts President William M. Bulger awarded a 2001 President's Award of \$150,000 to support the UMass Five Nursing School Consortium proposal.

*The goals of the five-campus collaborative are to:*

- increase access to graduate nursing education (master's and doctoral);

- develop the *network infrastructure* (faculty, curriculum, research databases) to promote program linkages and technology-enhanced instruction across the five schools of nursing; and
- *link resources* (faculty, curriculum, practice, research) across the technologically enhanced programs.

A faculty member from each campus was designated to serve on a task force, charged with developing the strategies that address the collaborative's goals. The faculty named to this task force are: Professors Genevieve Chandler (Amherst), Victoria Palmer-Erbs (Boston), Nancy Dulhy (Dartmouth), Barbara Mawn (Lowell) and Lois Howland (Worcester).

*The anticipated outcomes of this collaborative effort are to:*

- increase enrollment of students in graduate nursing education;
- increase the number of graduate courses offered through technology-enhanced education and other nontraditional instructional methods;
- increase efficiency by sharing faculty resources, clarify course offerings and registration of students; and
- develop programs designed to meet life-long learning needs of nurses.

The task force has conducted a five-campus curriculum assessment identifying similarities and differences as well as gaps in graduate education. It has also surveyed faculty regarding activities, skills and interests related to inter-campus collaboration. This information has allowed the group to highlight

areas of duplication, areas where resources may be shared, and ideas for new initiatives involving women's health, pediatrics, child/adolescent and gerontology mental health and school health.

According to University of Massachusetts Worcester task force member Lois Howland, "Developing effective collaboration among a diverse faculty from five unique and autonomous schools of nursing in a statewide university system presents both challenge and opportunity, but we believe we will be more than the sum of our parts. The five-campus consortium is allowing the faculty to develop programs that are responsive to the education needs of nurses, ultimately providing better health care to the Commonwealth's citizens." ●

### Excellence Award

UMMS Professor of Medicine Jane G. Zapka, ScD, (center) was recognized at a recent luncheon by representatives of the GSN for her receipt of the American Academy of Nurse Practitioner's State Award for Excellence.

GSN Associate Dean Mary Kay Alexander, EdD, (shown third from left) and Assistant Professor Susan Bauer, DNSc, nominated Dr. Zapka in recognition of her significant contribution to the status of health care delivery and the practice of nurse practitioners. Shown with Zapka and Alexander (from left to right) are GSN graduate Rick Boyajian, student Lisa MacDonald, Bureau of Health Quality Management Health Policy Coordinator Marie-Eileen Onieal, Sigma Theta Tau Chapter President Margaret McAllister, and Dean Doreen Harper.



### Graduate School of Nursing

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### Graduate School of Nursing – The First 15 Years

**1985**  
Graduate School of Nursing established; first dean appointed: Dr. Kathleen Dershel

**1986**  
First class accepted

**1987**  
First class graduated

**1988**  
Initial accreditation by the National League for Nursing

**1990**  
HIV Subspecialty established

**1991**  
Second dean appointed: Dr. Lillian R. Goodman

**1994**  
First PhD Program in Nursing (in UMass system) initiated: Collaborative between Amherst and Worcester campuses  
Cardiac Nursing Subspecialty introduced

**1995**  
First Adult Acute/Critical Care-Nurse Practitioner/Clinical Specialist Specialty (in UMass system) initiated  
Geriatric Subspecialty established

**1996**  
Nurse Practitioner Attending Collaborative Service (NPACS) implemented with the Department of Medicine

**1997**  
Graduation of the first five PhD candidates in the nursing program

Accredited for eight years by the National League for Nursing  
Cancer Prevention and Control Education program (CPACE) Subspecialty initiated

**1999**  
Dean Goodman retires; fund raising initiated to establish endowed chair

**1999**  
Correctional/Institutional Subspecialty introduced

**2000**  
Third dean appointed: Dr. Doreen C. Harper

**1990-2000**  
63 faculty publications  
Two books  
\$2.5 million in grants  
\$400,000 in traineeships  
453 master's and 16 PhD diplomas awarded

**2001**  
Advanced Practice Nurse Education Specialty established