

Unison



UConn

School of Nursing

Spring 2007 ■ Volume 9



*Featuring*

*Innovative Research, Expert Practice,  
and Evidence Informed Education*

## Dean's Welcome



*E. Carol Polifroni*  
*Interim Dean*

Welcome to our ninth edition of Unison. For those who have received this annual publication before, you will note an entirely new look. Unison 2007 features the School, faculty and student highlights organized and presented in a completely different manner. The three priorities of the School of Nursing - research, education and service have highlighted headings. Additionally, the School adopted PRAXIS as its philosophical principles two years back. Activities associated with our PRAXIS are highlighted to illustrate our commitment and adherence to this philosophy.

In spring 2006, the faculty adopted *Transitions* as the framework for their research activities within the School. *Transitions* guided the development of our vision and the 2006-2007 operational plan.

We anticipate that by the time Unison reaches you, we will be beginning a final transition — appointment of the School's seventh dean.

During the 2006-2007 academic year, the School witnessed several exciting firsts:

- We created an **Urban Service Track (UST)**, which is an interdisciplinary education program incorporating nursing, medicine, pharmacy and dental medicine to care for underserved populations in urban areas and a **Rural Health Network** to address mental health and other issues concerning cultural and rural populations.
- We welcomed our first faculty member in January to our developing **Faculty Practice Plan**. This is a joint appointment with the School of Nursing and Student Health Services.

- We expanded our nationally awarded **CARELINK** program to different populations while adhering to the philosophy of serving the underserved.
- We were funded by the **Department of Higher Education** in Connecticut to create learning communities in the New London and Waterbury areas to recruit underrepresented individuals to nursing as a career.
- We are in the process of creating a **Clinical Learning Laboratory** with simulations rooms to develop technical skills and facilitate media viewing.

As for research at the School, I am happy to share that we have submitted more grants than in previous years. Tenure track and clinical faculty are engaged in research and scholarship, using Boyer's model as a guide for the research expected within each role. I hope you enjoy reading about our innovative research in this Unison.

*“Your contributions will continue to assist us in providing quality graduates...”*

I invite you to visit Storrs, tour our facilities and converse with our faculty and students. Your contributions will continue to assist us in providing quality graduates who deliver evidence informed care in all types of practice settings, conduct the research needed to remain on the forefront of care delivery and design the systems that enhance professional nursing practice.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "E. Carol Polifroni".

E. Carol Polifroni  
Interim Dean

## Urban Service Track and Rural Health Network Cares for Underserved

The School of Nursing in partnership with the Schools of Dental medicine, Medicine and Pharmacy has created an Urban Service Track. In this track students are passionate about three things: caring for underserved populations, working in urban areas and participating in inter-professional education and care delivery.

For 2006-2007, husky scholars were selected from applications received from the existing student population. In the future, these scholars will be accepted into the program based on applications submitted at the time they apply for admission to the school. The goal is to have five new urban scholars per school per year.

The collaboration with our health profession colleagues is rewarding and challenging. As many are aware, the Schools of Nursing and Pharmacy are located in Storrs, whereas the other two schools are in Farmington. A further interesting factor that needs to be addressed is that the nursing majors begin as Freshman, while the other three disciplines have students in post baccalaureate programs. The School of Nursing was the first to select its urban health scholars for 2006-2007.

Our first scholars are two undergraduates, Caitlin Mulligan and Katie Crevier, and three graduate students: Michelle Banville, Rachel MacGillis and Alysia Monaco. These Husky

Scholars were selected from 10 applications received in fall 2006. To date, they have participated in National Primary Care Week, an interdisciplinary program on health literacy, and plans are underway for a cultural competency program in spring 2007. The majority of the Urban service activities will occur in the Hartford area.

The Urban Service Track is one major example of interdisciplinary collaboration that will ultimately enhance role fulfillment and quality patient care delivery. Simultaneously, the School of Nursing is sponsoring development of a Rural Health Network in the Willimantic area. This project has its origins in the *Compañeros Por Salud: Partners in Health* initiative started in 2004. Since then, under the direction of Deborah Shelton, the program has evolved into a working partnership with the Willimantic community to study and ultimately provide services to persons in need. In 2007, the activities of the Rural Health Network are similar to that of the Urban Service Track with Health Literacy being a major focus for spring 2007. Our students will be in the Covenant soup kitchen in Willimantic on a weekly basis working with the population on literacy issues. Again, we expect a mutually beneficial relationship to grow from these partnerships with a focus on enhanced undergraduate and graduate education leading to quality care delivery to the underserved in a variety of settings.

HHF partners, the UConn faculty and students, the University of Michigan, Johns Hopkins University and NYU, work closely with the HHF clinic and field staff.

Gebrian states it is clear that the combined perspectives of nursing (UConn '77), public health ( MPH Hopkins '81) and medical anthropology (PhD UConn '93) have provided a strong platform for this community-based primary health care. This public model promotes the greatest good for the most people. Since 1988, services have been based on an evidence-based process – modifying, improving, and utilizing feedback to create a highly motivated program “owned” by the people themselves.

There are successes — some village men and women are now nurses, illiterate fathers teach others life-saving healthy behaviors. USAID Washington awarded HHF a \$1.5 million grant to aid mothers and newborns. HHF is now a field training site for scores of other organizations in Haiti.

*To learn more about the works of HHF please contact Bette Gabrian at [bette@haitianhealthfoundation.org](mailto:bette@haitianhealthfoundation.org).*



## Nursing Students' Impact Windham Community

Through research, teaching and clinical practice students and faculty at UConn School of Nursing are making an impact in the Willimantic community. Initiated by Dr. Shelton in February 2005, the goal was for the School of Nursing to make a difference in the health and welfare of the community that surrounds the University of Connecticut. The Willimantic community was identified as a target for its close proximity to the University, its cultural diversity and its health care challenges. “*Compañeros Por Salud: Partners in Health*” was formed to address the health needs of the Hispanic and Latinos, the largest subpopulation of the community.

In 2006, six nursing students participated in service-learning activities involving an interdisciplinary student-run health clinic at the Covenant Soup Kitchen and at the migrant farms in collaboration with the Eastern AHEC, UConn School of Medicine, and School of Pharmacy. Reflections of the students can be summarized in the words of one student: “This visit to the clinic made me proud to be a part of something that could really help those who really needed it.” Other activities this year include: *Third Thursday* health screenings, free health screenings for community residents by nursing students and faculty with support of Sigma Theta Tau Nursing Honor Society-Mu Chapter. Ongoing community need assessments and focus groups utilizing the “*Community as Partner*” framework document health issues and services needed. Mental health training for “promotores,” the AHEC community health workers, was provided by nursing doctoral student, Mary Grace Amendola, RN, MS. A teaching manual in both English and Spanish was provided to AHEC for ongoing training.

New initiatives for 2007 include a health literacy program provided by undergraduate nursing students at the Covenant Soup Kitchen and other community agencies. Dr. Beck plans to expand her Postpartum Depression Prevention research project to the community to access the pregnant Hispanic/Latino women in Willimantic.



*Pictured left is doctoral student, Mary Grace Amendola, RN with nursing student, Felicia Lucas '08 (right) providing health information and processing screenings during a monthly Third Thursday Street Festival in downtown Willimantic.*

## Nursing Students Provide Health Service on Campus



Nursing students provided health information and blood pressure readings during the 2006 UConn Wellness Fair held on Storrs Campus in October.

*Pictured left to right are: Kathy Cooper-McDermott, Clinical Instructor; and nursing students Heather Field '08, Aimee Soucy '08, Monica Ronaghan '08, Emily Mackey '08, and seated front Amy Schreiner '08, and Corey Slusarski '08.*