Dean’s Corner
Falling Back into Rhythm at the College of Nursing

With summer coming to an end, the fall semester is upon us and in full swing. We had a successful summer of classes and worked to prepare students for courses this fall. Also, the College of Nursing staff and graduate assistants hosted many Kaplan Entrance Exam days for potential nursing students. As we gear up for this fall semester, there are so many things to be excited about! Of course, it is always exciting to begin a new semester, especially as we see new faces that are entering all of our programs. From professionals beginning course work on graduate degrees in existing and new programs, to very anxious undergraduates staring into the tunnel towards a bachelor’s degree in nursing, the opportunities for us to make an impact on future nurses and prepare them to better the healthcare of our state are bountiful.

Aside from the usual courses and operations of the College of Nursing, we all know that work is well underway on our brand new, state of the art, College of Nursing Building, Asbury Hall. I hope you all are as excited as I am to see the progress being made at the site of our new building. If you have not already, be sure to mark your calendars for our groundbreaking, which will take place on Wednesday, September 17th at 10:00 am. This is going to be a milestone for the USM College of Nursing that you do not need to miss!
South Mississippi Home Health Foundation Makes Gifts to Nursing

Recent gifts from South Mississippi Home Health Foundation included $400,000 to the Nursing Building Campaign at The University of Southern Mississippi, which helped push the private fundraising initiative above the $6 million mark.

The contribution to the USM Foundation in support of the campaign will be used for the creation of an endowment to assist with the maintenance and operations of the new building, which will be called Asbury Hall, and will also result in the naming of the facility’s lecture hall.

Construction has already begun at the site on the western edge of the University’s Hattiesburg campus, and is estimated to be completed by the summer of 2016. A formal groundbreaking ceremony will take place near the construction site at 10 a.m. on Friday, Sept. 19.

The $400,000 is part of a larger donation totaling more than $600,000 to benefit the University, with the majority of the giving focused on the College of Nursing. The additional gifts include $110,000 to establish a new endowed scholarship in honor of Dr. Frederick E. Tatum, M.D.; $5,000 for the nursing Dean’s Development Fund; and an additional $100,000 to endow a scholarship for Deaconess HomeCare and Hospice employees, as well as their children and grandchildren.

“Supporting education has always been an important goal of South Mississippi Home Health Foundation and Deaconess HomeCare and Hospice,” said SMHHF Board President Mary Stainton. “The College of Nursing at Southern Miss is one of the cornerstones for professional nursing education in Mississippi, and the construction of a new nursing building on campus is long overdue.”

In January of 2012, the USM Foundation announced an $8 million fundraising campaign to construct a new building for the College of Nursing. The campaign got off to a strong start with a $4 million commitment from the Asbury Foundation of Hattiesburg to name the building. The state-of-the-art facility, which will be located adjacent to the University’s Theatre and Dance Building, will increase the square footage dedicated to the College of Nursing by 135 percent, providing much-needed space for faculty and students and replacing a facility that can no longer meet the requirements of nursing education.

Dr. Katherine Nugent, dean of the College of Nursing at Southern Miss, noted that South Mississippi Home Health (now known as Deaconess HomeCare and Hospice Services) has a reputation of excellence in the Pine Belt, much like the University’s College of Nursing.

“South Mississippi Home Health and Deaconess HomeCare and Hospice have established a tradition of providing quality health care in the comfort of the patient’s home for more than 40 years,” said Nugent. “Our students have benefitted from scholarships funded by South Mississippi Home Health Foundation over the past three years through the Dr. Frederick Tatum Annual Scholarship. I am humbled that the foundation has chosen to continually invest in the future of the College of Nursing by naming the lecture hall, funding endowed scholarships, and supporting the mission of the nursing program.”

Founded in 1987, South Mississippi Home Health Foundation Inc. is a nonprofit organization funded by donations from Deaconess employees in Mississippi and from investment income.

The Frederick E. Tatum, M.D. Annual Nursing Scholarship is awarded to Southern Miss nursing students with a minimum 3.0 grade point average and preference given to students interested in home health care and community health. The first five recipients of the scholarship received funding at the beginning of the fall 2010 semester. The new gift from SMHHF will continue the annual scholarship for 2014-15 and create the endowment that will fund nursing scholarships in perpetuity.

Bob Pierce, the University’s vice president for advancement, complimented SMHHF on its vision for supporting the future of nursing. “It is special that South Mississippi Home Health Foundation’s board elected to invest in both capital infrastructure and endowed scholarships. These leaders took a long-term view, and Southern Miss nursing students decades into the future will still be reaping the benefits of these gifts to support scholarship endowments and the ongoing viability of Asbury Hall.”

Stainton pointed out that the new nursing building at Southern Miss will create greater visibility for the University’s nursing program and attract the highest caliber students and educators.

“With the ever-changing dynamics in health care, nurses have to be prepared to meet these challenges,” said Stainton. “The new facility will be equipped with the latest cutting-edge equipment and will be a great attraction to future nursing candidates and faculty. Southern Miss will get national recognition for this impressive facility.”

To learn more about the Nursing Building Campaign at Southern Miss, contact the USM Foundation at 601.266.5210 or visit: www.usmfoundation.com/nursingbuilding.

Written by: Van Arnold
Department of Advanced Practice Nursing: Soaring to New Heights!

Daring to Soar……
Insight from the Department Chairperson

Rowena W. Elliott, Ph.D., RN, CNN, CNE, AGNP-C, FAAN

As the incoming Interim Chairperson of the Department of Advanced Practice, I am honored to serve the College of Nursing and the University of Southern Mississippi in this role. In my 32 years as a registered nurse and now as an adult-gerontological nurse practitioner, I have always welcomed the opportunity to learn new concepts and accept challenges. With that said, I am excited to collaborate with the faculty, staff, students, and the community to make this an exemplary department. As this new academic year starts, it is my humble desire to utilize my experience as a leader, educator, and clinician to enhance our strengths and address those areas that need improvement. I am looking forward to working with the USM administration, faculty, and staff as WE work to improve nursing and healthcare in our community, our state, and our nation.

Eagles in Flight…
A Focus on our Faculty

Heather Morris is an instructor in the Department of Advanced Practice in the College of Nursing. She obtained her bachelor of science in nursing (BSN) in 1996 from William Carey College and her master of science in nursing (MSN) in 2004 from the University of South Alabama. She is a board certified Women’s Health Nurse Practitioner with extensive experience in providing health care to women of all ages. As a women’s health nurse practitioner, she emphasizes health promotion and disease prevention so individuals will live healthier and more productive lives. Her favorite and most rewarding aspect of being a nurse practitioner is providing prenatal care to pregnant women and continuing their care until the time of delivery. Heather is one of those “hidden gems” in the department. She teaches primarily in the baccalaureate program where she shares her expertise and knowledge. She is highly respected among her peers and especially amongst her students. Heather Morris is truly an “Eagle in Flight!”

From the Eagles Nest:
A Focus on our Students

Clint Walker is currently a student in the family nurse practitioner (FNP) program. He started in August 2013 and is projected to graduate in December 2014. He chose to attend USM because of his familiarity with the nursing program and USM campus. He received his bachelor of science in nursing (BSN) in 2010 from USM and thought it would be good to continue on in the same location. Clint decided to pursue a masters degree after 4 years of working in the operating room (OR) as a circulating nurse and after having a brief run in with cancer. He learned that he loved to teach patients about wellness and realized that he wanted to pursue a path with more continuity of care than his current position allowed. He wants to be able to help patients understand why their disease process happens and how to work with the physicians to both treat their condition and improve their overall quality of life through wellness. According to Clint, the best thing about the program is the level of online involvement. His wife was recently laid off, and he had to cut back his hours at the hospital considerably so money has been extremely tight this year. Being able to complete his course work without expensive trips to Hattiesburg every few days has been so helpful in keeping them afloat through this transition. After graduation Clint would like to work in family practice for a few years. He loves the versatility of this certification and appreciates the freedom to pursue a specialty after he develops a solid knowledge base. Eventually, Clint could see himself moving into a position with a medical weight loss facility or bariatric surgical center. Coming out of college I utilized a program in Jackson and successfully lost 60lbs. The quality of life benefit that I gained through this program was life changing for me, and I would love to be able to help other people struggling with obesity gain the level of enjoyment in life that I have gained.

Wisdom from the Eagle:

The eagle is not afraid of a storm, but uses the storm to spread its mighty wings and uses the air current to soar to greater heights. As we face storms and challenges in nursing academia, the Department of Advanced Practice will use the current to help us …Soar to Greater Heights!!!
The University of Southern Mississippi announced today that a new three-year grant in excess of $1M will allow the university to offer an accelerated program for veterans with training as medics in the U.S. Army, U.S. Air Force, or as U.S. Navy corpsmen to earn their bachelor of science degree in nursing.

The program is supported in part by funds from the Division of Nursing, Bureaus of Health Professions, the Health Resources and Services Administration, and the Department of Health and Human Services.

The veterans’ bachelor of science in nursing degree program, which may be completed in as little as four semesters, incorporates the military experience and training veterans previously received in the medical field with the coursework required to complete the program. While maintaining the highest academic standards, clinical quality, and National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX) pass rates for nurses, the program is designed to shorten the time to degree completion.

“This program is exciting for The University of Southern Mississippi because it allows us to serve those who serve others—veterans who have sacrificed more than many of us will ever know,” said University President Rodney D. Bennett. “Our College of Nursing will deliver the highest quality education to men and women with great experience and allow them to pursue a four-year degree efficiently and effectively at our Gulf Park Campus.”

Prerequisites may be taken at an accredited college or university anywhere in the country and out-of-state tuition will be waived for students in the program. Students will also have the opportunity for military training and education credits.

“The access to USM’s Center for Military Veterans, Service Members and Families and to our dedicated faculty will further alleviate barriers and provide the specialized resources and support that our veterans deserve,” said Dr. Katherine Nugent, dean for the College of Nursing at Southern Miss. “We are excited to have this opportunity and proud that the university’s College of Nursing was chosen through a competitive grant application process and was one of nine nursing programs in the nation selected.”

With enrollment beginning in spring 2015, students will take courses on the university’s Gulf Park campus in Long Beach, which is located near Keesler Air Force Base and the Gulf Coast Veterans Health Care System, both in Biloxi, and the Naval Construction Battalion Center in Gulfport.

“This is a wonderful opportunity for our veterans who have served so honorably in defense of our nation, particularly those who have served in some of the most difficult positions in the military as medical service providers,” said Gen. Jeff Hammond, director of veteran and military student services at Southern Miss.

“It’s a great match with what we have to offer with this program, because these young people will bring a sense of service from their military background into the nursing program, which is service-oriented as well. If I were a medical corpsman coming out of the military and looking to advance my career opportunities, the BSN program at the university’s Gulf Park campus would be at the top of my list.”

For more information about the veterans’ bachelor of science in nursing degree program, visit [www.usm.edu/nursing/vbsn](http://www.usm.edu/nursing/vbsn) or email vbsn@usm.edu.

Written by: CHARMAINE WILLIAMS SCHERMUND
SimMom Training

The College of Nursing recently purchased new OB Simulators, for both the Hattiesburg and Gulf Coast Campuses. Faculty from both campuses participated in a two day training for this new high fidelity manikin.

BSN Orientation

The Hattiesburg Campus welcomed 75 new students into the BSN Program, and on the Coast we were happy to welcome 38.

OB Orientation

Hattiesburg OB faculty, Maria Brown and Cindy Welch, demonstrate the exciting new features of the new OB manikin, SimMom.

Senior T-Shirts

A drop box is set up in the LRC. Please use order forms and envelopes provided.

Student Nursing Ambassadors Now Accepting Applications

Click Here to Apply