Breaking New Ground, Transforming Health Care

Dean’s Corner

I had the wonderful pleasure of welcoming the first class of Nurse Anesthesia students to be enrolled in the newly accredited Southern Miss Nurse Anesthesia Program. The 20 students talked about their excitement of being able to achieve this educational dream at Southern Miss and their apprehension of the program’s rigor. They are beginning an educational journey that will provide them with the competencies and knowledge needed to be certified as a nurse anesthetist, as well as, the skills to assume leadership in their practice area and in the health care arena.

The implementation of the Nurse Anesthesia Program is another landmark in the history of Southern Miss nursing and is the only nurse anesthesia degree granting program in Mississippi. This program is a 36 month, post-baccalaureate to Doctor of Nursing Practice degree.

We look forward to the success of this inaugural class.
The University of Southern Mississippi’s College of Nursing, Hattiesburg campus, welcomed a new group of nursing students for first semester BSN orientation on 01/11/2013. Approximately 68 students were welcomed to this event by faculty and administration, as well as returning students of the Student Nurses Association. A special thank you is extended to everyone who helped make this orientation successful. The area was beautifully decorated with USM colors, pompoms, balloons, and door prizes. The efforts of many assured that the students were welcomed in a positive manner. A special thank you is extended to the following individuals, businesses, and organizations:

- Cranford’s Drug Store, Seminary. (Sharon Easterling) - several beautifully wrapped gifts
- Sassy Girl, Petal. (Lisa Green) - several pieces of jewelry
- Cathy Hughes - several jump drives and CUTE balloons for decorations
- Elizabeth Tinnon - Vera Bradley gifts and decorations
- Susan Hart - USM "fancy" glass, mugs and other door prizes
- Uniforms Etc. - Stethoscope and 2 gift certificates totaling $90
- Scrubs & More – Stethoscope door prize; T-shirts for each student
- ROTC Army and Air Force – Lunch
- Forrest General Hospital – Breakfast
- Christian Nurses Fellowship- “A Nurses Prayer” bookmark

Also, a gracious thank you is extended to Wanda Holly, Administrative Assistant to Dr. Hart, whose assistance with setting up, decorating, and cleaning up was far beyond the call of duty.

In addition, a special thank you is extended to Jill Rushing, BSN Coordinator, whose eloquent delivery of the College of Nursing handbook, rules and regulations was indeed heard by all. And last but not least, the numerous SNA students and sponsor (Mary Hossley), who volunteered their time to assist in orientation, escorting the students to the book store, in the rain! Without everyone’s participation, the success of the orientation would have not been possible. We are off and running, and on behalf of everyone involved, we are thankful for the opportunity of welcoming and serving these students.
The College of Nursing at The University of Southern Mississippi added a memorable chapter to its storied history by welcoming the inaugural class of the Nurse Anesthesia Program to the Hattiesburg campus.

Following an extensive selection and interview process, 20 students were chosen for the new program, which will include 36 consecutive months of study and award a Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree. The inaugural group underwent orientation sessions on Jan. 8-9.

“I didn’t find out I was in until the last minute. The competition for one of these spots was really tough,” said Kim Burks, who earned her BSN at Southern Miss in 2010. “The idea of being in a doctoral program and learning advanced skills has always been appealing to me.”

And Dr. Katherine Nugent, dean of the College of Nursing at Southern Miss, was quick to remind the class that “you are setting the standard for all other classes to follow. The data we collect and observations we record will be used in making evaluations and assessments about the program from this day forward.”

Southern Miss is the first among Mississippi’s eight institutions of higher learning to offer a degree-granting nurse anesthesia program. Dr. Vickie Stuart, a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist in Hattiesburg since 1998, introduced the idea of a nurse anesthesia program to Southern Miss administrators in 2008.

“The two years of work that was dedicated to developing the Southern Miss nurse anesthesia program has been a rewarding career accomplishment,” said Stuart, who will serve as the program’s director. “Now that Mississippi has its own nurse anesthesia program many Registered Nurses will be afforded an opportunity for an in-state education.”

The program’s mission is to supply doctoral prepared graduates with the advanced knowledge in the area of clinical specialization of nurse anesthesia. The doctoral degree prepares the CRNA to assume leadership positions in education, management and patient care by offering a curriculum concentrating on quality assessment and improvement, health care system and organizations, leadership, best evidence of practice, health policy and health care economics.

“I am so excited to be part of this historic event. I am sure that the USM Nurse Anesthesia Program, with its innovative teaching methods, will be highly sought out by potential students from around the country,” said Dr. Marjorie Geisz-Everson, NAP assistant director.

Hattiesburg’s Forrest General Hospital will serve as the primary clinical site for the students in the Southern Miss Nurse Anesthesia Program. More than 60 qualified students applied for the coveted 20 spots in the new program.

“This program will contribute to the College of Nursing, the university, our clinical partners, and the community as a whole by expanding the educational offerings in health care,” said Stuart.”

The volunteer members of USM College of Nursing, Christian Nurses Fellowship (CNF), led by Sharon McDonald and Sharon Easterling, celebrated the birth of Christ in many ways this past Christmas season. A young teenaged girl from an underserved family, received gift cards, clothes, jewelry, cosmetics, and personal items, as she was selected as the Angel Tree recipient this year. Members donated the items to this beautiful young lady, not because the donation counted as one of their community projects; rather, they gave out of the goodness of their hearts so this young lady would receive a Christmas to remember. The students who participated were able to experience the true meaning of Christmas, realizing firsthand how much more blessed it is to give than receive.

Another activity members were able to “give back” to their community was through a “Canned Food Drive”. The recipient of this generous gift was to the “House of Hope”, an outreach program of Seminary Baptist Church, who provides food products to underserved families of their community, twice a month. Volunteers of the CNF brought five cans of food, counting as one community activity. The “House of Hope” was selected, as a means of giving back to the ladies of the church, who graciously provided a Fall semester kickoff, with numerous crock pots of taco soup, chips, brownies, cookies, cakes, soft drinks, and all of the fixings! A devotional was provided by Carolyn Keys Shedd, who challenged the students to be a lighthouse to fellow students or friends, shining their lights in a dark world.

CNF is a non-denominational group of student nurses who have chosen to live out the Golden Rule, “Do unto others, as you would have them do unto you.” Matthew 7:12. Prospective members can join the Facebook web site to keep up with activities, share special verses, leave prayer requests, or encourage one another. USM Christian Nurses Fellowship is the name of the FB page, and no fees are associated with joining the organization.
**DATES TO REMEMBER**

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<td>January 21</td>
<td>Martin Luther King Holiday</td>
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<td>January 28</td>
<td>Last Day to Drop Full Term Classes and Receive 100% Financial Credit</td>
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<td>February 11 - 12</td>
<td>Mardi Gras Holiday</td>
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**10 Great Tips for Nursing School Students**

1. Self-Care is Crucial.
2. Work Hard with a System that Works for you.
3. Develop Good Study Habits and be Organized.
4. Form a Study Group.
5. Ask your Professors for Help When you Have Questions.
6. Talk to Senior Nursing Students for Advice and Tips.
7. Get Some Learning Experience During the Summer.
10. Remember to Relax.

Source: http://scrubsmag.com/ten-tips-on-getting-through-nursing-school/

“The highest form of wisdom is kindness.”