

Nursing is the frontline of health. Nurses are the face of patient care. *What could be more important?*

advances

university of nebraska medical center college of nursing 2009

Who will care for you and yours?

MIA: Nebraska's
critical nursing shortage.



■ **Brain IVs**
Teachers inject
stimulus **Page 12**

■ **Special section**
Solving the nurse
deficit **Page 15**

■ **Pocket alums**
Legacy notes in
white coats **Page 23**

■ **Next gen RN**
The fresh face
of care **Page 24**

UNMC COLLEGE OF NURSING

4 Leadership	A bold path forward. Building a cure for Nebraska's nursing shortage.
6 Research	Evidence elevates care. In touch: Patient perception is reality.
8 Support	One-on-one guidance. Student services foster academic success.
10 Engagement	All-out war on illness. Public health pivots on proactive nursing.
12 Education	360-degree teaching. Brain IVs: Tapping into the Why...
14 Alumni	The power of many. Plug in. Speak up. Give back.
15 Special Section	Who will care for you and yours?
23 Giving	White coat legacy. Pocket alums pay it forward.
24 Students	Blazing new frontiers. New roles. More responsibility. Greater expectations.
26 Forward	Constant need to know. College's continuing ed aims high, reaches far.
28 Donors	The roll of the charitable.
30 Grants	Research, education and training.
32 Publication	Professional journals.

Front page news. The College's efforts to end Nebraska's nursing shortage were detailed on October 22, 2008, groundbreaking day for its new nursing sciences and education center in Omaha (see right). At each of the College's divisions across Nebraska, public service activities by faculty and students are commonly in local news.

advances

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CONTENT | CREATIVE Paladin

DESIGN | PRODUCTION Markers Design

PHOTOGRAPHY DougMcMains.com

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS Faculty and staff, UNMC College of Nursing, special thanks to Dani Wilson-Baxter; UNMC Alumni Affairs; UNMC Public Affairs; University of Nebraska Foundation

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UNMC COLLEGE OF NURSING

5th endowed chair. She was a trailblazing, four-decade UNMC nursing administrator. And the College's longtime benefactor and tireless volunteer. Her estate added a large final gift: *The Carol M. Wilson Endowed Chair in Nursing* will focus on her passion, improving health systems, and enable the College to add a first-rate nursing scholar to the faculty.

New deans named. Nationally known cancer nursing scientist **Marlene Cohen**, RN, PhD, FAAN, has joined the College as associate dean for research, director of Niedfelt Nursing Research Center and first recipient of the *Kenneth E. Morehead Endowed Chair in Nursing*. See p. 6.

For the first time in the College's history, student services are now headed at dean level. **Rudy Garcia**, MPA, PhD, brings deep background in student affairs to the new post of assistant dean for student services. See p. 8.

Nursing economics. It looks like nurses will have a lead role in economic as well as physical recovery. The Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that nursing will create approximately 587,000 new jobs nationally by 2016 — at average annual income of \$62,480 for a full-time RN. A Nebraska Appleseed Center report shows that, among the state's top-10 growing jobs, only one — RN — pays sufficient wages to support a family of four.

Omaha. A 42,800 sq.ft. Center for College of Nursing Sciences will open in 2010 on the east end of the present building.



Appointments. **Sarah Thompson**, RN, PhD, associate dean for academic programs, was appointed to a three-year term as *Florence Niedfelt Professor*. Her endowed professorship will focus on health care quality improvement and interprofessional education.

Gov. Dave Heineman named **Mary Wendel**, RN, MSA, business manager of the College's Morehead Center for Nursing Practice, to the board of the *Nebraska Center for Nursing*, created to address the state's nursing shortage.

The Kearney division's **Heather Swanson**, RN, APRN, was appointed to the board of the *American College of Nurse-Midwives*.

Alumnus **Susan Hassmiller**, R.N, PhD, was named senior advisor to the *Robert Wood Johnson Foundation for Nursing*.

Awards and honors. Drs. **Nancy Waltman**, **Carol Ott**, **Jan Twiss**, **Gloria Gross** and dean emeritus **Ada Lindsey** won *Cancer Nursing* magazine's 2008 Research Award for their article on bone impact of postmenopausal breast cancer treatment.

Marlene Lindeman, RN, MSN, and **Connie Miller**, RN, PhD, won 2009 *UNMC Outstanding Teacher Awards*.

The Lincoln division's **Christie Campbell-Grossman**, RN, PhD, received the 2008 Outstanding Nurse Educator Award from the *Nebraska Nurses Association*.

Kathy Morris, APRN, DNP, director of the College's Family Health Care Clinic,

Norfolk. A 5th division is planned for 2010 as part of a 35,000 sq. ft. collaborative nursing education center, a partnership of the Norfolk community, Northeast Community College, Faith Regional Health Services and UNMC.



Photo courtesy Nebraska National Guard

Heroic. Lincoln division student and Nebraska National Guard member Sgt. **Heather Springer** won the Army Gold Star for Valor for courageous service under fire as a flight medic in Iraq.

was selected as a Fellow of the *American Academy of Nurse Practitioners*.

Ann Berger, RN, PhD, delivered the State-of-the-Science Lecture at the *Oncology Nursing Society's* annual conference. Dr. Berger is a widely known authority on chemotherapy fatigue and sleep disturbances in breast cancer patients.

Dean Virginia Tilden, RN, DNSc, FAAN, received the 2009 Lifetime Achievement Award from the 13-state *Midwest Nursing Research Society*.

Among her efforts to solve Nebraska's critical nursing shortfall, Dean Tilden spurred new and planned construction unprecedented in the College's nine-decade history.

THE
ADVANCES INTERVIEW
WITH DEAN
VIRGINIA TILDEN

Building a cure
for Nebraska's
nursing shortage.



A bold path forward.

With Nebraska's severe nursing shortage projected to worsen, Dean Tilden asks communities a simple question: Who will care for you and yours? Her response: Unparalleled building to raise enrollment. Accelerated programs for students and faculty. Higher academic standards for better care quality. Not just more nurses, but better educated nurses. Her message to Nebraska: Help us help you.

Q. Health care sits with the recession at the center of national anxiety. Where does nursing stand today?

A. Over 3 million Americans are registered nurses. We're the biggest of the health professions, and we have to be. Nurses have the most contact with patients — in every care setting.

At issue is a U.S. nursing shortage projected to grow to 20% over the next decade. The problem is most severe in largely rural states like ours. It affects every part of the state. The outlook: Nebraska will be short nearly 4,000 nurses in 2020.

Q. Is the nursing shortage because students aren't interested in nursing?

A. Just the opposite. Interest far exceeds capacity to educate. Across the U.S., qualified applicants are turned away because of insufficient faculty, facilities and resources. UNMC has had to turn away half of qualified nursing applicants — over 1,000 students in the past five years alone.

Q. If the supply of nurses is down, does that mean demand is slowing?

A. Demand is exploding. The elephant in the waiting room of health care is the Baby Boom generation. As huge waves of Boomers enter retirement, it puts tremendous strain on the entire health system. We need more nurses in all aspects of geriatric care.

Other factors raise demand for BSN and MSN nurses. Among them are rapid medical advances, more specialized care and increasingly complex medical technologies.

Q. How is the College addressing the nursing shortage?

A. We're raising enrollment capacity statewide through new and improved facilities.

We recently finished a \$600,000 upgrade in Scottsbluff. We're looking at expansion in Kearney. In Omaha, construction is underway on a new nursing sciences center. Planned in Lincoln is a \$17.5 million home to replace cramped rental space. In Norfolk, we're working on a new UNMC nursing division as part of a nursing education collaborative.

Q. The College is also reshaping the curriculum. In what ways?

A. We'll expand our accelerated BSN program to get more nurses into service faster. We'll add an accelerated MSN program.

The nursing pipeline is choked by a faculty shortage as well as inadequate space. So we'll increase enrollment in our fast-track BSN to PhD program, created for those who want to be educators. Throughout the graduate program, we're adding elements to incent and prepare teachers, especially for high-demand specialties.

We're adopting Institute of Medicine recommendations, particularly at the BSN level. It's all aimed at elevating care quality. The focus is on critical thinking, collaborative training and patient safety. One goal is to manage illness and disease in context of the patient's background, environment, circumstances — everything that bears upon health. We want students framed in holistic care, not just isolated health events.

Q. You've sought out statewide speaking engagements. What's your message?

A. I talk about how the nursing shortage affects people at the local level. In every community, I pose a question that seems to drive it home: "Who will care for you and yours?" I tell them what UNMC is doing to solve the problem — and how they can help us to help them have enough nurses in their future.

Q. You also initiated an ongoing series of meetings with local business leaders, educators and health care providers. What's the goal?

A. The nursing shortage carries a dual penalty. It affects both physical and economic health, especially in small towns and rural areas. Nebraska communities need health care to draw and hold residents — and the businesses that employ them. The goal is to form benefit-laden partnerships to help communities attract, educate, retain and upgrade nurses.

Q. Is Norfolk a model for local partnerships across Nebraska?

A. Absolutely. Norfolk civic and business leaders are near completion of a \$12.9 million campaign to fund a collaborative nursing education center. It will operate as a partnership of Northeast Community College, Faith Regional Health Services and UNMC.

That model can be replicated statewide on a smaller scale. At minimum, local partners can create "Nursing Nebraska" scholarships, work-study programs and other incentives for qualified students in exchange for post-graduate service commitments in their communities. Everyone wins. Students may not otherwise be able to fund their education, and communities may not otherwise be able to attract nurses.

Q. What's on your agenda in the year ahead?

A. We're working on centers of excellence to move nursing to the next level. They will require donor help, and it's my job to make the case. Nursing stands at a transformative crossroads. Donors big and small find it exciting — and forever rewarding — to be part of large efforts that yield large dividends in better patient care.

Dr. Cohen joined the College last fall as Associate Dean for Research and first holder of the Kenneth E. Morehead Endowed Chair in Nursing.

THE ADVANCES INTERVIEW WITH MARLENE COHEN

In touch: Patient perception is reality.



Evidence elevates care.

Nationally known for improving cancer care, Dr. Marlene Cohen has a prodigious body of publication and a long record of research funding by the National Institutes of Health. Her studies focus on human reaction to cancer diagnosis, symptoms and treatment.

"I was STRUCK by how nurses, other professionals, and even family members UNDERSTOOD LITTLE about patients' experiences."

Q. What informs your work?

A. Florence Nightingale was the first among many to discuss the need to understand patients' perceived needs in order to meet those needs effectively. My work has been designed to better understand patients' experiences because the meanings that patients attribute to their experiences help create the needs they have and determine how these needs can best be met.

Q. In what areas have you focused — and why?

A. My program of research focuses on understanding how the world is perceived by patients, their family members and professional staff. I've examined these perspectives in order to improve the care that professionals provide.

Among her many lasting contributions to nursing, Florence Nightingale pointed out how important it is to understand patients' perspectives. It is far more likely that nurses and other professionals will meet needs that they understand than those of which they are unaware.

My earliest work compared nurses' and patients' perspectives — first with persons who had surgery, then with persons in critical care settings. I was struck by how nurses, other professionals, and even family members understood little about patients' experiences. After the studies of people with acute illnesses I studied persons with a chronic illness, diabetes, and again found disparity in staff members' understanding.

I then started a job in a cancer center, learned more about persons with cancer and became fascinated with the variety of needs this disease and its treatments evoke. I'm interested in just about every-

thing. I've studied nurses' experiences working with persons with cancer. I've also studied persons who do not have cancer, to examine ways to promote health and prevent disease — cancer screening, for example.

In addition, my research has examined care of persons undergoing active treatment, including breast cancer and stem cell transplantation patients. I've worked with cancer survivors, and my recent studies have been with people at end of life, including a group enrolled in a Phase I clinical trial. Each study has led to another. I found both differences and similarities among the experiences of patients who had different cancers and treatments.

My goal is to describe these experiences so that staff can better understand them and to develop more effective interventions to help patients and their loved ones.

Q. What studies are you engaged in now?

A. I'm continuing work on three previously funded projects. Two of the studies examine symptoms at end of life.

One involves the effect of hydration and the meaning of hydration to the families and patients. The other examines fatigue, combining a drug, methylphenidate, with a therapeutic telephone call from a nurse. It's fun to work with the nurses doing these interviews and the therapeutic phone calls, and to hear the fascinating stories of the patients and families.

The third study is work with a physician colleague who is a new investigator, helping her examine symptoms that children with cancer experience.

All of these studies examine cultural similarities and differences, which has

been an important theme in much of my research. The distance technology for which the College is so well known has helped me stay in touch with my research teams in Houston.

I'm also developing a grant proposal with Associate Dean Sarah Thompson and Dean Virginia Tilden to look at symptoms in persons with cancer who are in nursing homes, a setting in which Drs. Thompson and Tilden have expertise. I look forward to developing other studies with colleagues here in Nebraska.

Q. In what nursing specialties is the College's work influential?

A. As a new Nebraskan, I'm still learning about the College, but my decision to come was really influenced by the fine work of faculty members.

They are excellent teachers who care very much about students and student learning and success. This passion for education is demonstrated by the six training grants that were submitted just last December, all of which propose various ways to improve the education we provide. They are also outstanding research scientists. The College has great strength in both oncology and cardiovascular research.

In both of these fields, the College has gained major funding for important and innovative investigations. Examples include health promotion studies involving exercise and weight loss, and symptom studies examining sleep disturbances, fatigue and neuropathy. In addition, several proposals are now being reviewed which will bring exciting new opportunities to the College. I look forward to sharing those with you next year.

Dr. Garcia joined the College in January in the newly created post of Assistant Dean for Student Services. He brings deep background in student affairs.

THE
ADVANCES INTERVIEW
WITH
RUDY GARCIA

Student
services foster
academic
success.



One-on-one guidance.

When BSN students reach UNMC, they've already completed pre-requisites but now face stiffer academic hurdles. MSN and PhD students need support matching their advanced level. Nearly all must balance study and work. Student services come in many forms but have one goal: thriving students who win their degrees.

Q. What attracted you to the UNMC College of Nursing?

A. I've worked at several other universities and UNMC stands out as one of the most caring and supportive places for students.

With over 1,000 students, the College of Nursing is the biggest of UNMC's health colleges. It composes one third of UNMC students and continues to grow.

Q. What was your first challenge?

A. Being new to the position, to UNMC, and to the state of Nebraska, I had a huge learning curve.

Getting a current, accurate and complete picture will help me make informed decisions. But the basic student services challenge is the same in Nebraska as in Colorado, Arizona or elsewhere — to help students be successful in and out of the classroom.

The faculty and staff have been overwhelmingly supportive in my transition. I truly appreciate their commitment and determination to develop a strong student support environment and minimize frustrations for students as they navigate their way through the various processes of academia.

Q. For the first time, student services are led by an assistant dean. How do you see your role?

A. I bring a different perspective to the College of Nursing, given that my background is in student affairs and student services.

I'm also an assistant professor in the department of Families and Health Systems. I anticipate being more involved in the academic side of the College, helping to develop and teach courses on health care leadership and management as well as courses on ethics, culture and diversity in nursing.

Nurses and nursing faculty need preparation in these areas to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing, highly competitive field in a global economy.

Q. What is the scope of student services?

A. Student services can involve everything from recruitment and advising to locker assignment and coordinating the white coat induction ceremony. At the graduate level, students are more independent and need more specific support, especially from faculty.

The core mission of student services is to help move students from admission to graduation, supporting them every step of the way.

Q. How are student services changing?

A. The digital generation demands a different level of support. Student services now involve not just admission and graduation but everything in between. It requires an attentive professional staff. Our role encompasses the total student: academic success, involvement, leadership, satisfaction, progression, mentoring, career exploration and much more.

We work hard to ensure that each student's focus goes beyond applying and being accepted to becoming a successful nursing student.

Q. What common issues face students?

A. Transitions can be difficult. Undergraduate students who go straight to college may assimilate differently than students who work first. Most RNs advancing to a BSN degree continue to work full time and thus do part-time study.

Graduate students may have to adjust to college again after working, raising a family or a long time away from school. All these students need careful attention. It's our job to cultivate success — as students, as nurses, as leaders.

Q. What's on your student services agenda?

A. We'll be proactive in meeting student needs — in recruiting, retaining and graduating students. We will reach out to Nebraska students, border to border, all backgrounds, rural and urban.

We want our students to look like Nebraska, America and the world. An inclusive nursing college reflects UNMC's position as a world-class health sciences center. Nebraska's Initiative 424 makes inclusion more challenging in recruiting students and faculty, but our message re-mains clear that all are welcome.

We'll strive to enlist potential faculty members through our graduate programs. The nursing shortage mirrors a faculty shortage, so educating new teachers is imperative. Students spend more time with instructors than student services staff, so faculty are an important link in our retention and mentoring efforts.

A 500-mile wide nursing campus poses some logistical issues. We're upgrading our all-campus student information system. We'll work to improve communication between campuses so that students feel more connected to UNMC as well as their city campus.

Space is tight. We're planning more student services room in our new Omaha building as well as in planned facilities in Norfolk and Lincoln.

Q. What's ahead?

A. We need to reach out to students sooner than we do. If we plant seeds early in middle and high school, students can adjust coursework accordingly. Ideally, students should be thinking about math and science well before they enter high school.

"What **DRIVES** nursing? Prevent avoidable illness, manage unavoidable disease, expand access to basic, affordable care. That's also the **ROOT** of public health policy."

Chair of the Department of Community-Based Health in the College of Nursing, Dr. Cramer also teaches in UNMC's College of Public Health.

THE
ADVANCES INTERVIEW
WITH
MARY CRAMER

Public health
pivots
on proactive
nursing.



All-out war on illness.

Generous donations from longtime UNMC benefactors Ruth and Bill Scott provided primary funding for both the new Center for College of Nursing Sciences and College of Public Health building now under construction. A community health expert discusses the dividends that will flow from these gifts.

Q. How does Nebraska benefit from the Scott gifts?

A. The Scotts had the remarkable vision to recognize and address Nebraska's pressing needs in two inseparable areas: nursing and public health.

The new nursing facility will help solve the state's critical nursing shortage. It allows us to increase enrollment. To expand accelerated programs to prepare nurses and faculty. To improve educational services and support for our campuses and clinics across the state. All of which means more nurses for Nebraska.

The BSN degree is entry level for public health nursing. The nursing shortfall means Nebraska's regional public health departments can't hire enough BSN and especially advanced practice MSN public health nurses. Our state badly needs both not only to provide nursing care but also to help shape public health policy.

The Scott gifts really brighten the picture. Especially for rural health departments, where nurse deficits are greatest. And generally for wider public access to basic health care — through school nurses, for example, and at community clinics and shelters.

Nebraska's economy is helped, too. UNMC will be able to attract more nursing and public health research funding, which means jobs across the state.

Q. What do the Scott gifts mean for UNMC?

A. They enable UNMC to extend its state, regional and national leadership in public health education, policy and practice. They also strengthen UNMC's position in the top tier of health science universities. The College of Nursing (CON) and the College of Public Health (COPH) will have state-of-the-art facilities, which are key in attracting top students and faculty members.

COPH did not have its own building. It had to borrow classroom and clinical space scattered across UNMC. A new home will centralize faculty and resources. It will also facilitate collaboration in research and education with all UNMC health colleges and with public health agencies. CON and COPH, for example, are working on a joint MSN/MPH degree program.

Q. What are the aims of COPH?

A. To prepare a professionally trained workforce for state and local health departments. Nebraska has a fairly new system of regional departments. The state and UNMC are positioned for national leadership in health care delivery for a rural population. Innovation and collaboration are priorities. COPH will offer advanced education in environmental/occupational health, epidemiology and biostatistics. Joining the current master's degree will be doctoral programs in toxicology, health promotion, health services research and administration.

Q. What do you teach at COPH?

A. The course is *Health Systems and Policy*. It's offered through CON.

Q. What are today's issues in public health?

A. Let's start with health care reform — accessibility, quality, cost, insurance. Those things affect everyone. The penalty is most severe on rural, poor and minority populations — which is its own public health issue: care disparities. About 47 million Americans have no health insurance. In today's economy, that number grows quickly with job losses. The U.S. ranks 46th in life expectancy, 42nd in infant mortality. We have a higher obesity rate than all other industrialized countries. Diabetes is at epidemic proportions, especially in Nebraska and

especially among our Hispanic, black and rural residents.

AIDS, H1N1 flu, bioterrorism, geriatric care and sexually transmitted diseases present huge challenges. So do virulent, fast-spreading agents, whether introduced by terrorists or a new pandemic — like the 1918 influenza strain that killed over 40 million people worldwide. That seems unimaginable today, but it could happen again.

The nursing shortage is a serious public health issue. Nebraska must not only prepare more nurses but also better educated nurses — with BSN degrees and above — for our increasingly complex health horizon.

We need to shift focus to proactive, 360-degree patient care that emphasizes wellness, that helps people control chronic interrelated health problems. The U.S. needs to move beyond our reactive system that defaults to emergency and intensive care for isolated health events. If we do, we'll see better patient outcomes and lower costs.

Q. You earlier said nursing and public health are inseparable. How so?

A. Of the health professions, nursing is easily the largest, with the most patient contact. In many communities, nurse practitioners, clinical nurse specialists and nurse-managed health centers are the first — sometimes only — source of care, especially in rural areas. From its beginnings, nursing centered on health promotion, disease prevention and managing chronic illness. In 19th century America, nurses were advocates for serving the poor and vulnerable, including immigrants and minorities. That hasn't changed.

What drives nursing? Prevent avoidable illness, manage unavoidable disease, expand access to basic, affordable care. That's also the root of public health policy.

Virtual reality learning: Instructors can program high-fidelity simulated patients with a wide range of interactive speech and life-like symptoms.

Brain IVs:
Tapping
veins into
Why.
What.
When.
Where.
How.



360-degree teaching.

It is in their DNA. They are all-in. Fully immersed. Deeply engaged. Eager to illuminate. Born to share knowledge. Their tools: probing questions, tall hurdles, gentle nudges. They watch closely. For an upturned face, a knowing smile, eyes that light with understanding. Here you meet a few educators who inspire.

1 In her modest, understated manner, **Katherine Bravo**, RN, MSN, PNP, percolates enthusiasm for her work. She is a pediatric nurse practitioner, with clinical specialty in children's urology and medical/surgical nursing. Her calling came early in her training. "I knew it on my first pediatric rotation," she said. "You see the joy in their faces. It's incredibly rewarding." She also coordinates the Omaha division's pediatrics training, Accelerated BSN program and RN to BSN classes. "I love to see the evolution," she said, comparing new students to new parents. At first, they're "eager but nervous," afraid of making mistakes. With knowledge and experience, she said, "Their confidence grows. They 'get it.' Then the key is to teach them to practice with integrity."

2 Outstanding nurses have special ability to relate to people and gain trust. **Pamela Jones**, RN, MPH, PhD, is one of them. Her talent is apparent as she speaks with articulate zeal about community health nursing — where there's routine need to work not just with patients and students but a wide range of health professionals, government agencies and local stakeholders. With early background in oncology and home health nursing, she "found my niche" in public health. Of special interest are health disparities and the role of community groups, churches and service organizations in influencing behavior. Her current research examines their impact in tobacco prevention and cessation among African-Americans. Like most things in life, she said, health hinges on relationships.

3 Her father was a physician. Her mother was a teacher. Her older sister was a nurse. For a small-town Minnesota girl fascinated by science, the career path was a natural. After earning her BSN degree, **Mary Megel**, RN, PhD, began work under intense conditions — as a U.S. Navy nurse in the Vietnam War. Her three advanced degrees merged her driving passions: nursing and education. She's taught an extraordinary breadth of courses to undergraduate and graduate students, all of which she dismisses as "absolutely fun." She quotes with ease passages from Florence Nightingale's seminal *Notes on Nursing*. "I'm a teacher," she said simply. "I'm here for students. I make it a point to be in my office if they have questions, problems or want to talk about nursing."

4 Growing up in Seoul, South Korea, **Yaewon Seo**, RN, PhD, found joy in helping people. Her parents were her model, as was a nurse relative. Yonsei University School of Nursing, where she earned BSN and MSN degrees, set her sights high. A new dean inspired her on the need to keep growing and to balance teaching, research and practice. After her PhD at Case Western University, she was drawn to UNMC by its cardiac research. Her research examines heart failure symptom management, restorative exercise and daily living activity disabilities. Her clinical background is medical/surgical nursing, and she enjoys clinical teaching. Like her former dean, she said, educators should lift student aspirations. Her husband, a computer systems analyst, is a PhD student in information science.

5 "I can't remember not wanting to be a nurse." With those simple words, **Margaret Wilson**, RN, PhD, CPNP, expressed the fire that drives her teaching and research. Her specialty is pediatric nursing, especially children's response to pain and hospital stress. Quiet children, she noted, may be in pain. Her work factors temperament, personality and environment. It tests interventions and medication, with focus on preventive, proactive care. In adult transplant patients, she explores how nurse interaction with caregivers aids recovery. She's advised many PhD students, "helping them improve their communication and get their work published." On teaching: "I love it when students 'get it,' especially after they've struggled," she said. "It's about how they can make a difference, especially in children's lives."

6 His words radiate quiet passion, empathy and great urgency. During early training, on psychiatric nursing rotation, he met an unforgettable 21-year-old. The man, unable to speak coherently, played flawless classical music. From that moment, **Michael Rice**, APRN-BC, PhD, FAAN, lived to nurse the mind. He tells how physical and mental illness converge. How an abused woman has eight times the risk for postpartum depression. How maternal health risks can predispose child psychosis. How his psychiatric nursing column advocates evidence-based practice. How the solution forms in a collaborative, multidisciplinary team treating the 360-degree patient. How he returned to his native Nebraska to help improve its mental health services. How, long ago, his parents shaped his path.



Plug in.
Speak up.
Give back.

The power of many.



Teacher. Mentor. Donor. Leader. Dr. Rebecca Keating-Lefler, here surrounded by her students, guides the way for both students and alumni.

Triple alum heads association.

Her colleagues say she leads by example. Her students say she stimulates and inspires. Her friends say she always steps up. Meet Rebecca Keating-Lefler, RN, PhD. This extraordinary woman was driven to lead, now including the alumni association.

At age 14, Beckie Keating lost her mother to a tragic fall. That experience, coupled with her father's habitual willingness to help people, led her to nursing. Her parents set the mold: one person can change the lives of others.

She earned all three of her nursing degrees from UNMC. She's a teacher, mentor and role model in the College's department of Families and Health Systems. Her specialty is women's health and high-risk obstetrics. Her research focus is single, low-income mothers. Her educational passion is health

policy, leadership and health outcomes management.

She long ago walked the talk: she and her husband created a nursing scholarship fund for disadvantaged students. Her "pay it forward" outlook now guides the alumni association. It can leverage the power of many, she said, to make good things happen — banding nurses together, for example, to fund a class gift or to influence health policy.

"Health care in our country is at a critical point," she said. "As the biggest of the health professions, nurses are in a pivotal position to lead the way. But we must speak up."

She noted that the College of Nursing is the largest of UNMC's schools, with the most alums. "It's important," she said, "to connect, to give back, to foster the next generation." A place to start, she suggested, is sponsoring a new student at the White Coat Ceremony (see p. 23).

Join or renew your membership now.

Go to www.unmc.edu/alumni. Click on *Join* at top left. It's fast and easy.

2008 distinguished alumnus award.

Maj. Gen. Kimberly Siniscalchi, RN (MSN — UNMC '88) is chief of the Air Force Nurse Corps and assistant surgeon general for medical force development, directing over 19,000 nurses and 34,000 medical personnel. Assignments included chief of medical combat support operations and chief White House nurse.

Alumni Weekend is Oct. 2-3.

Visit www.unmc.edu/alumni for details. Watch your mail for registration forms.

Nursing is the frontline of health. Nurses are the face of patient care. *What could be more important?*



Who will care for you and yours?

Nebraska's critical nursing shortage.



When you or yours need urgent medical care, whose face will you see most often?

If you or a loved one is hospitalized by sickness, disease or injury, who is always there? Who is the one constant? Who is the face of 24/7 care?

Nurses are the hub of health care — whether treatment comes in an emergency room, doctor's office, community clinic, homeless shelter or, especially, school clinic and nursing home.

Precisely because they're always there, nurses are sometimes taken for granted. Sometimes undervalued.

Next time you need medical help, please consider the many levels of care that face brings you.



THE CRUCIAL ROLES OF NURSING IN MODERN HEALTH CARE

1 Act as patient advocates.

As the largest of the health professions — with the most patient contact — nurses are a *powerful voice for their patients* as well as for broader *health care reform*.

2 Form the hub of health care.

Beyond managing the patient's prescribed care, nurses are the hub connecting the whole medical team. They must *communicate expertly* with doctors, pharmacists, therapists and other health professionals.

3 Blend vast knowledge with nimble skills.

Modern nurses must call on broad nursing knowledge backed by *agility* in health informatics, medical technologies and hands-on procedures.

4 Make critical care decisions.

Today's nurse is routinely expected to make key care decisions based on *evidence and keen observation*.

5 Shift focus to wellness & prevention.

Nursing is predicated on health promotion, disease prevention and illness management — an *affordable, proactive* model often lost in an expensive, reactive system that defaults to emergency treatment and intensive care.

6 Widen access to basic health care.

Nurse practitioners, clinical nurse specialists and nurse-managed health centers are increasingly the first line of care, especially in rural areas.

7 Stand as sentinels of patient safety.

Nurses must be forever vigilant, must *anticipate* patient risks, must *act* quickly in preemptive treatment, must *intervene* early to prevent medical errors.

Nurses are much more likely than any other health professional to recognize and correct errors that are often life-threatening. — Institute of Medicine

THE URGENT QUESTION BEHIND TWO PRESSING PROBLEMS

Will enough nurses be there when you need them?

Like a tightening vise, two converging forces put exponential pressure on tomorrow's nursing care. At risk is the likelihood that there will be sufficient nurses, across all specialties, to care properly for you and your family.

PROBLEM ONE

Snowballing shortages.

Like the entire U.S., Nebraska faces a critical — and growing — shortage of nurses. The state's current shortfall is projected to jump to 20% — nearly 4,000 nurses — by 2020.

The problem is mirrored — and the nursing pipeline choked — by a nationwide *shortage of faculty*. Not only is there insufficient faculty, many teachers are nearing the end of their careers. Reflecting national numbers, the average age of nursing faculty at UNMC is **54**.

Half of Nebraska's nurses with bachelor's degrees are UNMC graduates. But today at UNMC and across the U.S., *half of all qualified applicants are turned away* because of insufficient faculty, facilities and resources.

PROBLEM TWO

Tsunami demand.

As it ages, the largest generation in U.S. history puts *unprecedented* strain on health care.

Huge waves of retiring Baby Boomers will dramatically increase demand for nurses everywhere — at physician offices, community clinics, outpatient centers, hospitals and

nursing homes. A gathering tsunami looms for geriatric care.

Completing the perfect storm: Rapid medical advances, rigorous new care standards and increasingly complex medical technologies demand more — and better educated — nurses across all specialties.



OUR SOLUTIONS: A BOLD CHARTER OF PARTICULARS

What we're doing to end the nursing shortage and elevate the quality of care.

SOLUTION ONE

Raise enrollment capacity with unprecedented construction.

This would have been *unthinkable without enormous help from generous donors*. Never before in the College's nine-decade history has there been so much building afoot over such short time.

Completed: A major renovation in **Scottsbluff**. Underway: A 42,800 sq. ft. connecting structure in **Omaha**. Planned: a 5th division in **Norfolk** as part of a new 35,000 sq. ft. collaborative nursing

education center. In **Lincoln**: a 45,525 sq. ft. permanent new home, replacing temporary leased space. Contemplated: larger student capacity in **Kearney**.

This is not about bricks and mortar. It's the *how* we'll get more nurses and more faculty working to serve Nebraska communities.

SOLUTION TWO

Add speed: Accelerated preparation of both nurses and nursing faculty.

To get more nurses into service faster, we're expanding our *one-year Accelerated BSN* program. We'll streamline our *RN to BSN* program to advance current nurses. And we'll increase our *fast-track BSN to PhD* program, created for those who want to be educators.

SOLUTION THREE

Embed IOM benchmarks across curriculum to elevate care quality.

With all the health sciences at UNMC, the College of Nursing is fast adopting Institute of Medicine recommendations throughout our bachelor's, master's and doctoral curriculum.

IOM guidelines include interprofessional team training, critical thinking, evidence-based practice, wide application of informatics, cultural sensitivity, continual quality improvement — and foremost — *patient safety and patient-centered care*.

imagine

ENDLESS DIVIDENDS IN BETTER CARE

How you can help.

Our driving imperative is unchanged since 1917: UNMC will lead the front rank of nursing science and service — through bold vision, with bold action.

Our endeavors fall squarely under UNMC's three-fold mission: education, research and patient care.

The things that excite us most are presented here. They will yield endless dividends in better care. They also require donor help to see fruition. We warmly welcome your participation.

“Quality patient care hinges on having a well-educated nursing workforce.”

C. Fay Raines PhD, RN

President, American Association of Colleges of Nursing



EDUCATION

Center for Nursing Education Excellence

The Nursing Education Center will be a leader in sophisticated learning technologies. *Robotic patients, computerized simulations, miniature ICUs and trauma centers will replace 50% of the need for nursing student training sites in clinical agencies.* In addition, the Center will develop *educator pathways* in the MSN and PhD programs that inspire and encourage students to become nursing faculty.

Accelerated Pathways to a Nursing Career

To address the nursing shortage and build on our successful Accelerated BSN and Accelerated PhD programs, we will open an *Accelerated Master's-Entry program* for academically gifted students with baccalaureate degrees in other fields to enter nursing at the master's degree level.

Geriatric Education Excellence

To answer the swelling demand for elder care, we will increase geriatric nursing faculty and students and *develop more master's and PhD geriatric specialists to serve the state.* To counteract workforce burnout in nursing homes, we will offer a *Geriatric Leadership program to prepare nurse administrators for long-term care facilities.*

RESEARCH

Center for Advancing Symptom Management

Nursing care often centers on lessening discomfort — on managing symptoms of disease or its treatment. This Center will be a hub for faculty research and student education focused on *alleviating difficult symptoms such as pain, nausea, fatigue and insomnia.*

Center for Palliative and End-of-Life Care Research and Training

This is a giant unmet need — and a subject often avoided. We must address it squarely: *by 2020, nearly 40% of deaths will occur in nursing homes.* Dual purpose of this Center: 1) *Interprofessional training* for nursing, medical, and pharmacy students in *team-based care* of the dying. 2) Research focused on alleviating pain and anxiety, on *easing life in its final stages.*

Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Research

We'll work closely with the College of Public Health on shared goals. The research focus will be to *discover how public health nurses and school health nurses can slash disease risks in Nebraska,* especially in small towns and rural areas.

PATIENT CARE

Center for Nursing Cancer Care

Working collaboratively with the UNMC Eppley Cancer Center, nursing faculty and students will develop *state-of-the-art cancer survivorship programs.* This Center will also conduct research that seeks *advancements in cancer care.*

Center for Health Care Quality Improvement

The patient-centered goal is simple: develop new nursing standards and practices that prevent errors, reduce mistakes, prompt intervention, increase safety, improve care and create better outcomes. This Center will expand and concentrate nursing faculty engaged in *quality improvement for patient care delivery systems.*

CREATE A LASTING LEGACY

Why your gift is needed.

Many think the UNMC College of Nursing is fully funded by tuition and state revenue. Those sources, however, leave a sizable shortfall, which must come from grants and gifts. Your gift enables us to prepare tomorrow's nurse leaders and scientists. It helps ensure a nurse will be there when you or a loved one needs care. All gifts, no matter the size, are most welcome and appreciated.

- Gifts may be **designated** for any purpose or **unrestricted**.
- **Naming opportunities** are available — for example: an endowed scholarship, professorship or learning center in your family or foundation name.
- **Memorials and honorary gifts** are a superb way to recognize a relative or friend.
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A 500-MILE NURSING CAMPUS WITH **GLOBAL IMPACT**

For more information on giving:
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The White Coat Ceremony launches new nursing students with a symbol and pledge of professionalism. In the pocket is a personal legacy.

Pocket alums pay it forward.

White coat legacy.



New garb. Old tradition. Fresh twist.

In generations past, students were formally ushered into nursing by a capping ceremony. Caps are long gone, but the tradition lives on as the Nightingale White Coat Ceremony.

At the event, sponsored by the alumni association, new students recite and sign the Nightingale pledge, which emphasizes scientific, patient-centered care. Elements include dedication, ethics, integrity, advocacy, respect, collaboration and leadership.

Coats are donned with ceremonial help from senior students, deans and faculty. Each coat bears the College pin, symbolizing heroic, ever-faithful care.

The effect on students and their families is apparent, said Tiffany Brunt, a student services advisor who coordinates the ceremonies. "You see pride on their faces.

They sense they've entered a true profession. They even stand straighter."

Waiting in the coat pocket is a personal legacy, a passing of the torch. A card presents the name of their white coat sponsor. Included is the alum's address and year of graduation.

Among these "pocket alums" is Pam Bataillon, assistant dean for administration. "For students, it brings the heritage alive," she said. "It creates a human link. For alums, it's touching to get a note in return — and rewarding to follow their progress."

That legacy is a bargain, said student services director Larry Hewitt. "You can sponsor a white coat for \$45," he said. "Many alums gift five or ten." To sponsor a coat, go to unfoundation.org/nursing.

Communicating the vision.

Since our last issue, the College has a new development director. Kathy Wolfe brings vast communications expertise to her post at the NU Foundation. "It's my privilege," she said, "to express the College's vision. I hope my enthusiasm is contagious." Find out. Help realize the vision. Kathy's contact information is above.



Kathy Wolfe

Photo courtesy Kameron Blynn Images

Students Embracing the future

UNMC COLLEGE OF NURSING

Exceptionally well qualified at all levels: In the Accelerated BSN program, for example, CON students last year had an average 3.73 GPA at entry.

Ahead:
New roles.
Greater responsibility.
Higher expectations.



Blazing new frontiers.

Like those before them, they are eager, enthusiastic, passionate about nursing. Everything else has changed. Today's students face a fluid, technology-filled future in which they must know more, do more, and make fast, critical decisions at high levels of patient care. Here you meet the new face of nursing.

"Learning is not attained by chance; it must be sought for with ardor and attended to with DILIGENCE."

— Abigail Adams

BSN

1 As a girl in Chaing Mai, Thailand, **Wattana Barrett** wanted to be a nurse. But when she began university study, she found that, at 4'11", she was "too short for nursing." So she earned a degree in biology and kept her dream alive as a science teacher. She came to the U.S., married, and got a job in comparative medicine at UNMC, where she also volunteered at the Child Life Center and College of Pharmacy. Meanwhile, she took nursing prerequisite courses at UNO. She then began the Accelerated BSN program, an intensive, one-year path for strong, degreed students. "My teachers are so understanding and classmates help out," she said. "Heart, cancer, transplant — you gain so much patient experience here." She plans to be an ICU nurse — and, after more school, a nurse anesthetist.

2 **Abigail Simende-Tsimba** grew up with her future husband in Harare, Zimbabwe's capital and largest city. He came to the U.S. first, she joined him in 2002, they married, and she attended Bellevue University, where the couple had friends. A scholarship to UNO followed. Abigail majored in biology and minored in chemistry but found herself drawn to nursing. "As a career, biology felt limited and nursing seemed more rewarding," she said. Now a level 3 student in the Traditional BSN program, she likes the learning environment. "There's one-on-one time with instructors, and you can go to them with problems. Students help each other out." Obstetrical and pediatric nursing are currently among her career interests. Her husband shares her science DNA: he works in the blood bank reference laboratory of the American Red Cross.

MSN

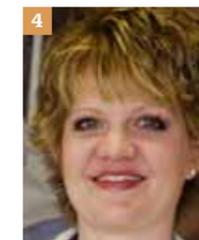
3 Her heart is on her sleeve. "I love UNMC," said **Lisa Biga**. "I love the College of Nursing." This high-energy, high-focus native of Omaha also loves learning. She has a bachelor's degree in business and a master's in health promotion earned while working at a Fortune 500 firm. Finding that "not meaningful," she then got a BSN degree while working two jobs, in ICU at one hospital, in dietetics at another. Her MSN specialty track, nurse practitioner in women's health, fits between full-time work in ICU and as a graduate assistant. Inspiration came from her parents, both teachers. Her model was watching ICU nurses care for her grandfather: "They helped families. They gave me strength." Her goal is to own a women's holistic health clinic focused on evidence-based practice. Her friends say: If Lisa wills it, it will happen.

4 Raised on a farm near Oakland, Iowa, **Melissa "Missy" Snelling** became interested in nursing when, just out of high school, she assisted the EMT crew with the local volunteer fire department. That led her to Omaha for a BSN degree and work in ER nursing. Seeking more autonomy, she entered CON's MSN program in 2007. Her specialty track is family nurse practitioner, and she continues to work in ER and as a graduate assistant. "Care goes above and beyond here," she said. At the family nursing clinic, she said, a team once worked 4 hours to stabilize a diabetic woman with severe hypoglycemia and no insurance. "I thought, 'no where else.' It's nice to make a difference." She and her husband, a cardiovascular ICU nurse, expect their second child in August.

PhD

5 For **Nadin Abdel Razeq**, surgery opened the door to an advanced nursing career. While hospitalized in her home country of Jordan, she found herself thankful for and intrigued by her nursing care. That interest led her to a BSN degree at The Hashemite University, a MSN degree from the University of Jordan, and — after a web search — to UNMC for her doctoral nursing studies. Her specialty interest is neonatal and pediatric pain management. There is "great need" in that area across the world, she said. As a graduate assistant, she helps senior faculty with research studies. "People here are so friendly, open and helpful," she said, "with respect for other cultures." Now in her second year of PhD study, she plans to teach, practice and do research in Jordan.

6 **Khaled Suleiman** would never say so, but he is a trailblazer of sorts in his home city of Amman, Jordan. He was the first exchange student in a collaborative education accord reached by the College's international program director, Dr. Sheila Ryan, and her peers at Al-Zaytoonah Private University of Jordan. After obtaining his BSN and MSN degrees there, Khaled came to UNMC to concentrate on cardiac surgical nursing. As a strong student with fluent English skills, he found the academic transition smooth. Adjusting to American food and social customs was hard, he said, but he soon made "many friends. Everyone is so nice." His research interest is sleep disturbances in patients recovering from cardiac surgery. After receiving his PhD degree in 2009, he will teach and practice in Amman.



"In 2008, 178 PROGRAMS served 16,353 NURSES ... Almost half were independent ONLINE study ... Users come from 49 STATES, U.S. territories and Canada."

Widely regarded as an expert in program evaluation, Dr. Bevil joined the College in 1998 and has driven huge growth in its CNE program.

THE ADVANCES INTERVIEW WITH CATHERINE BEVIL

College's continuing ed aims high, reaches far.



Constant need to know.

As the College approaches its 30th year in CNE, much has changed. The learning landscape shows a seismic shift. Rapid medical progress can outdate knowledge within a few years. Health care routinely employs technologies not long ago considered science fiction. It's now imperative that nurses stay on the front edge of advancement.

Q. What are CNE requirements?

A. They vary by state. A total of 32 states require CE for nurses, ranging from a high of 30 hours every 2 years to 5 hours each year.

Q. What's the scope of the College's CNE program?

A. We provide high-quality, low-cost continuing education to nurses throughout Nebraska and the U.S. We collaborate with professional groups, medical education firms and providers of continuing medical and pharmaceutical education. Our programs span the spectrum of delivery options, from traditional live conferences and printed learning materials to teleconferences, webinars, online offerings and live video.

Q. What forces shape CNE?

A. Flexibility and convenience, for starters. Nurses have congested schedules with little free time. They're responsible for satisfying their state's CE requirements to maintain licensure, and it can be difficult to get time off to attend local or out-of-town conferences.

In small towns and rural areas, live learning activities are limited. When time is not the problem, money can be — CE tuition reimbursement is often not available.

We solve distance, time and cost constraints through the web. Many of our offerings are online, each is available for a year, and most are at no cost. The entire process, from registration and learning to evaluation, test and certificate of completion, can be done anytime via computer.

Q. What sets the College's CNE apart?

A. Three things, in my view. The first is quality in every detail of content and delivery. That flows from the unique

skills of our CNE team, which combines nursing, program planning, evaluation, budgeting and IT expertise.

The second is extensive collaboration with high-quality providers who bring additional resources. It's mutually beneficial. Professional organizations and education firms seek to work with us, and it's a major way we've built traffic.

Third, we stick to what we do best. Rather than attempt everything, we serve a subset of the nursing community. Our target profile is nurses similar to the College's graduates: BSN and above. Our site shows high incidence of MSN users.

Our programs appeal to clinical specialists in areas such as cardiac, oncology and hemophilia — and to advanced practice nurses in primary and acute care. In 2008 alone, we brought 26 programs to UNMC or CON faculty, all at no charge.

Q. How has the CNE program changed in the last decade?

A. In 1998, 30 learning activities served 1,600 nurses, generating 11,600 contact hours. Of those, 26 were live meetings and 4 were independent study. In 2008, 178 programs served 16,353 nurses, generating 54,112 contact hours. Almost half were independent online study. Our first online offering came in 2006; today, almost all independent study options are online. To date, we've presented 101 online programs. Monographs and telephone conferences are rare, due to higher cost and shrinking preference.

Technology has reshaped CNE. Our challenge is to offer state-of-the-art delivery for younger nurses who grew up with IT yet serve earlier generations, not all of whom are comfortable going totally online. We strive to have choices for both groups.

Q. What elements do users like?

A. The online evaluation system provides a flexible resource for completion and award of credits. Nurses can jump in and out as time allows, returning to where they were or to review or to reprint documentation certificates.

Q. Describe your online student profile.

A. We've had 5,133 registered users since 2006, including over 900 physician assistants and other health professionals. Among nurses, master's degrees are predominant. Users come from 49 states, U.S. territories and Canada. Of the nearly 20,000 certificates issued, almost 86% are in primary care areas, followed by 12% in oncology topics.

Q. What about rural reach?

A. One local indicator is online registration for conferences, begun in 2007. Of the total, nearly two-thirds were from outside the metro Omaha and Lincoln areas. Serving rural and underserved areas is among our goals.

Q. How is CNE evolving?

A. Primarily in delivery and evaluation. Today, we go well beyond satisfaction questions about program presenters and content. We study effects on nurses and care — knowledge increase, practice impact, residual benefit, why and why not. This helps us link learning activities to quality care.

Q. What's ahead?

A. We're launching an online, multi-module certificate program in hemophilia nursing that fills a national need. For the first time, hemophilia nurses can be certified for advanced competency through a formal learning and assessment process.

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UNMC COLLEGE OF NURSING

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Cuddigan, J. (P.I.) National Pressure Ulcer Advisory Panel, *Pressure Ulcer Treatment Guidelines Revision*. 7/1/07 – 9/30/09.

Filipi, M. (P.I.) MARS Foundation, *Impact of Structured Weight Resistance Training on Balance in MS Patients*. 7/1/07 – 6/30/10.

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Schulz, P. (P.I.) CON Research Award, *Elderly Patients Knowledge and Use of Symptom Management Strategies Following Coronary Artery Bypass Surgery*. 6/9/08 – 6/9/09.

Schumacher, K. (P.I.) Subaward Agreement with University of California, San Francisco (Prime Award National Institutes of Health, National Cancer Institute R01 CA116423; Miaskowski, C, PI), *Improving Cancer Pain Management Through Self Care*. 4/1/08 – 7/31/12.

Seo, Y. (P.I.) LaFramboise, L., Dumitru, I. CON Research Award, *Factors Related To Disability in Activities of Daily Living in Persons with Heart Failure*. 11/2/07–1/1/09.

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Wiggins, S. (P.I.) Freeman, J. CON Boost Award, *Sleep Actigraphy in a Group of Child and Adolescents*. 6/6/08 – 6/6/09.

Wilhelm, S. (P.I.) Community Healthcare Foundation, *Motivational Interviewing to Promote Sustained Breastfeeding: Hispanic Mothers*. 7/1/08 – 6/30/09.

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Graduate Students

McCabe, P. (P.I.) Waltman, N. (Advisor) Sigma Theta Tau International, *Predictors of Symptoms and Psychological Distress in Patients with Recurrent Symptomatic Atrial Fibrillation*. 6/1/08 – 5/31/09.

Rines, K. (P.I.) Waltman, N. (Advisor) American Cancer Society, *Masters Degree Scholarships in Cancer Nursing*. 8/1/07–7/31/09.

Trewhitt, P. (P.I.) Waltman, N. (Advisor) American Cancer Society, *Masters Degree Scholarships in Cancer Nursing*. 8/1/08 – 7/31/10.

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Barry, T. (P.D.) U.S. Dept of Health & Human Services, Nursing Education Practice and Retention Grant, CFDA 93.359, *Reducing Disparities in Type 2 Diabetes Care Through a State-Wide Network of Nursing Centers*. 6 D11HP08312-01-01. 7/1/07 – 6/30/12.

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Cramer, M. (P.D.) Region 6 Behavioral Healthcare Services, *Tobacco Free Nebraska Program (MOTAC)*. 7/1/08 – 6/30/09.

Cramer, M. (P.D.) Charles Drew Health Center, *Evaluation of Douglas County Healthy Start Initiative*. 6/1/08 – 5/31/09.

Grigsby, K. (P.D.) Ellermeier, M., Stuart, N. CON Education Award, *Coaching Undergraduate Students to Academic Success*. 10/10/08 – 11/9/09.

Kaiser, K. (P.D.) Lancaster County Medical Society, *Medicaid Enrollment Center Contract*. 7/1/08 – 6/30/09.

LaFramboise, L. (P.D.) Miller, C., Jensen, J. University of No. Carolina at Chapel Hill, *QSEN Project – Pilot School Learning Collaborative*. 7/15/07 – 6/30/09.

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Miller, C. (P.D.) LaFramboise, L., Nieveen, J. CON Education Award, *Student Learning Outcomes after Intergration of Quality and Safety Education Competencies into the Undergraduate Nursing Curriculum: A Pilot Study*. 4/14/08 – 4/13/09.

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of care **Page 24**