The UNMC College of Nursing has received a two-year, $606,000 continuation grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to recruit more rural nurses into a master’s degree program that prepares nurses as leaders. The grant makes it possible for nurses in Nebraska to earn a master’s degree at home through distance education technology. It also emphasizes recruiting students from rural areas and those from diverse backgrounds.

The grant expands the Health Systems Nurse Specialist master’s degree program launched in 1996. The program offers three specialty areas that prepare nurses for leadership roles in community-public health nursing, nursing administration or nursing informatics.

“The rapidly changing health-care system is creating a pressing need for nurses with advanced knowledge and skills to help transform nursing and health care in communities and health-care organizations,” said Donna Westmoreland, associate professor and grant project director. “We’re preparing nurses to provide leadership in addressing urgent health-care problems, including patient safety, access to care for minorities and the underserved and the nursing shortage.

“Our program also teaches nurses the collaboration, research and information technology skills they need to be effective leaders in today’s turbulent health-care environment,” she said.

During the next two years, the program’s goal is to recruit, enroll and retain new graduate students, Dr. Westmoreland said. Fifty-four students currently are enrolled in the program, including students in Nebraska, Michigan, South Dakota, Iowa and Japan. To date, 26 students have graduated from the program.

“We have graduates in key positions throughout the state,” Dr. Westmoreland said. “While students are enrolled, they work on projects that have immediate impact on their organization or a community health issue. Faculty members also work with students to help them develop skills based on their individual career goals. The knowledge and skills graduates will bring to Nebraska communities are critical to addressing Nebraska’s health challenges.”

Michelle Ellermeier of Minden works as an evening house supervisor and infection control coordinator for Perkins Pavilion, Good Samaritan Village in Hastings, a 196-bed nursing facility. She is one of the students enrolled in the program.

“From the start, the program has consistently challenged and expanded my knowledge and understanding of health-care systems, management and the role of the nurse,” Ellermeier said. “I have developed and led educational in-services at my facility on pain management, helping our caregivers share and learn how to better evaluate and treat our residents’ pain. It also has given me a better understanding of health-care financial management; and in this era of decreasing Medicare and Medicaid reimbursement, I find these lessons crucial. “Leadership is extraordinarily challenging in a time of cost-cutting, and having the ability to incorporate the concepts of employee empowerment and systems’ thinking into our day-to-day workplace has helped improve our employee’s job satisfaction and increase efficiency,” she said.

Distance technology tools in the program have allowed her to pursue the degree, she said. “Having the program available through distance learning and the Internet has made it possible, not just convenient, for me to be in the program,” Ellermeier said.
People in the News

• Cheryl Bagley Thompson presented the following two posters at the American Medical Informatics Association Fall Conference in Washington, DC, in November: Extension of Air Transport Minimum Data Set to Fixed-Wing Environment and Development of User-Centered Interfaces to Search the Knowledge Resources of the Virginia Henderson International Nursing Library

• Carol Pullen, Steve Pitkin, Rosaline Olade and Leslie Pullen attended the Ninth SLOAN-C International Conference on Asynchronous Learning Networks in Orlando, Fla., in November.

• Nancy Fahrenwald is the 2003 Thomas Jefferson Ingenuity Award recipient; the first from the College of Nursing. The award is given annually to the UNMC PhD graduate within the last year who demonstrates “unmatched creativity and ingenuity in completing the research requirements of his/her doctoral dissertation.” Her dissertation work: “Moms on the Move: A Physical Activity Intervention for WIC Mothers” focused on the hard-to-reach rural, low income mothers in the Women, Infants, and Children program. Her interdisciplinary doctoral committee included College of Nursing faculty Jan Atwood and Susan Noble Walker.

• Fall Research Day for Graduate Nursing students was Nov. 11, cosponsored by the College of Nursing Graduate Program and Gamma Pi, Sigma Theta Tau International. Nineteen master’s students presented their research findings in poster and oral presentations. Kelli VanDenOever received the Dean’s Award for Outstanding Poster Presentation entitled The Impact of an Educational Program on Changes in Dietary Intake of Calcium and Vitamin D in Postmenopausal Women. Her advisor is Nancy Waltman. Jane Langemeier received the Dean’s Award for Outstanding Oral Presentation for her presentation entitled: Women’s Expression of Uncertainty During Genetic Testing for BRCA1 and BRCA2 Mutations. Julia Houfek is her advisor. There was a tie for the Rena E. Boyle Alumni Award for Clinically Significant Research. The award was received by Mary Sueper and Inglish Camero. Mary’s advisor is Jan Twiss and her research was on The Relationship Between Bone Mineral Density and Actual Height Loss in Perimenopausal and Menopausal Women. Inglish’s advisors are Kathryn Fandt and Sheila Ryan and her project was on Patient Perceived Barriers to Positive Outcomes in Hypertension Management: A Descriptive Qualitative Study. The Gamma Pi Chapter, Sigma Theta Tau, Award for Excellence in a Research Presentation went to Kristen Gloy and Donna Yost for their oral presentation on Activity/Exercise and Functional Status Changes Over the First Three Months After Percutaneous Coronary Intervention. Janet Nieveen is their research advisor.

• Pam Miya presented research titled, “Ethical Issues Confronting Nurses in Emergency Departments” at the American Society for Bioethics and Humanities/Canadian Bioethics Society joint meeting in Montreal, Canada, in October.

• Kim Rodehorst, Linda Jensen and Susan Wilhelm are the authors of an article which appeared in the Journal of Professional Nursing. The article is entitled: Students’ perspective of the effectiveness of an asynchronous on-line seminar.

• Catherine Todero was elected to the Research Committee of Sigma Theta Tau International at the Biennial Convention in Toronto, Canada, in November. Because the delegation also approved several bylaws changes including one that affects structure, this committee will change to an Advisory Council to the International Board and serve more as a “Think Tank” to provide direction to the organization in its mission to promote scholarship.

• Madeleine Leininger, founder of the Transcultural Nursing Society, was the honored guest at the 29th annual Transcultural Nursing Society Conference in Texas in October. Leininger was honored as the founder and major leader of the discipline of transcultural nursing with a human care focus. She has provided leadership to establish undergraduate and graduate programs with field studies beginning in the 1950s and continuing today. She is the author of 30 books and more than 250 articles on the subject. The Transcultural Nursing Society presented her with a self portrait, which will hang in the new Worldwide Office in Transcultural Nursing in Michigan.
UNMC receives grant to look at nursing shortages

by Vicky Cerino, UNMC public affairs
From UNMC Today

A research team at UNMC is developing a tool to help Nebraska communities predict and plan for nursing shortages. Mary Cramer, CON assistant professor, received a $5,000, 12-month grant from the American Nurses Foundation to conduct the research.

The grant, titled the Anne Zimmerman, RN, American Nurses Foundation Scholar grant, recognizes Zimmerman's contributions to nursing science. Dr. Cramer said the model she and colleagues are working on is unique.

"People haven't stopped to consider that we haven't defined what a shortage is and we haven't developed any targets at all for looking at nursing workforce needs," Dr. Cramer said. "I think everybody is focusing on the nursing shortage and rightly so — they're looking at what we can do to deal with the problem.

"Since nursing is such an important component in health care, this model would provide a more grounded and predictable approach for communities who need to know how many nurses they will need, versus the current method which only looks at economic factors like vacancy rates, turnover rates," Dr. Cramer said.

She said the current definition of nursing shortage also has been based on current staffing patterns, which can vary considerably between hospitals and communities.

"We start hearing employers say they can't hire registered nurses," said Dr. Cramer who specializes in community health nursing. "So programs gear up, colleges gear up and federal money gets assigned for educational programs. Nobody knows how many nurses are needed for sure.

"Most efforts to alleviate the nursing shortage have been aimed at ill-defined targets, or targets that have been arbitrarily set by current levels of employers' staffing needs. We need a more precise, predictive model that combines the demand for health services with what we know should be recommended ratios based on settings and demand for care."

The study's objective is to construct a scientific model to determine nursing workforce demand in Nebraska. The premise of the model is the need for registered nurses can be predicted from demands for health services within a population. The model should provide a look at geographic areas and population demographics and learn what the demand for services is and come up with some target number to predict the number of nurses needed, Dr. Cramer said.

The model could be a resource for health departments and policy makers, she said. Researchers will collect a variety of data and create a database of age, race, gender and health demand ratios in Nebraska counties to create a mathematical model. The final product will be a mathematical model to determine demand and identify nursing workforce targets in Nebraska.

"If we know certain characteristics of a population like the age, distribution, race and gender, we know from the literature and also studies that age is linked to certain conditions in society. For example, we know a certain number of people over age 65 will get Alzheimer's disease or dementia. Race also is linked to health-care conditions, including diabetes in the Hispanic population and hypertension and cardiovascular disease is linked to African-Americans.

"From this, we also know there are certain standards that tell us how many staff are required to be in that type of facility that links registered nurse staff to patient outcomes."

Dr. Cramer said during past nursing shortages, the market forces geared up and could handle the shortage. Shortages in the 1980s and 1990s were fairly rapidly corrected through the market economy of supply and demand.

The shortage is more serious now because there are other factors. Nurses are getting older, there are retention problems and young people aren't going into nursing quite like they were. So it's less likely we can immediately correct the problem," Dr. Cramer said.

Another factor in the shortage is a greater demand for nursing faculty. Nursing schools are having trouble attracting nurses to nursing education. "We can only admit as many students as we have faculty. If we can't hire nursing faculty, we can't let as many students in," she said.

The model also could help nursing schools better plan in communities on a long-range basis. It will help nursing schools better predict how many registered nurses they need to educate and what kind of specialties areas, like geriatrics, they need to be educating.

"The grant is a very competitive and prestigious grant to obtain within nursing circles," said Bernice Yates, associate dean of research, UNMC College of Nursing.
NOVEMBER GRANT SUBMISSIONS

- Susan Barnason (PI), Janet Nieveen and Lani Zimmerman. Telehealth Booster After Cardiac Rehabilitation. NIH/NINR - R03.
- Mary Cramer (PI). Predictive Statistical Model to Determine Need for Nursing Workforce in Nebraska. University of Nebraska - Nebraska Research Initiative (NRI).

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

INFORMAL CAREGIVING RESEARCH FOR CHRONIC CONDITIONS
PA Number: PA-02-155

National Institutes of Health/National Institute of Nursing Research/National Institute of Child Health and Human Development/ National Institute of Mental Health

Funding: NINR and NICHD limit exploratory/developmental grants (R21) to two years of support and up to $150,000 per year in direct costs. The NIMH limits R21 grants to three years of support and up to $125,000 per year in direct costs. The award amount for the R01 is unspecified.

Mechanism: R21 or R01

Priorities/Interests: Areas of special interest include the neurobiology of pain; management of symptoms associated with specific diseases; effects of cancer diagnosis and treatments, especially breast cancer; prevention of risk factors, particularly in young children; interactions among genetic factors, environment, and life style; issues related to life-stage transitions; ameliorating effects of chronic illnesses, such as metabolic and musculoskeletal disorders; and the health of minorities and other at-risk populations. The NINR invites applications for research grants to advance the science in informal caregiving by focusing on the caregivers of individuals with chronic illness, disability, or functional impairment requiring partial or full dependency on others. This program announcement (PA) targets studies of informal caregiving to improve caregiver health and quality of life, caregiving processes, and caregiving effectiveness and health outcomes. A key aspect of this announcement is to encourage research to advance science-based knowledge of informal caregiving, with attention to the caregiver. Clinical research areas appropriate to this PA include studies to improve the quality of informal caregiving; to prevent or manage caregiver physical and mental health problems related to caregiving; to reduce the burden of caregiving; to test the effectiveness of advances in caregiving processes, including new technologies; and to determine the impact of formal and informal support systems on caregiving outcomes and caregiving transitions or trajectories. Applicants should consider the feasibility of translation to practice and cost effectiveness for interventions tested.

Deadlines: Feb. 1, June 1.

Please contact the NNRC for these research grant guidelines
(Continued from previous page)

Contact: Dr. Nell Armstrong, National Institute of Nursing Research, Office of Extramural Programs
6701 Democracy Boulevard, Room 710, MSC 4870, Bethesda, MD 20892-4870, Email: nell.armstrong@nih.gov
Website: http://grants1.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PA-02-155.html

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AWARD IN INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH
RFA Number: RFA-GM-04-003 Department of Health and Human Services
National Institutes of Health/National Institute of General Medical Science
Funding: Approximately $1.5 million in FY04 to fund approximately 5-10 new grants. An applicant may request a project period of up to five years.
Mechanism: K07
Priorities/Interests: The PI is expected to develop courses or curricula at the undergraduate, graduate, or postdoctoral level (or combinations of these) that integrate the principles and conceptual approaches of multiple, diverse disciplines in emerging areas of biomedical research, including but not limited to the behavioral, quantitative, engineering and/or computer sciences. The curricula may be organized around an interdisciplinary theme that provides a framework for merging concepts and approaches from multiple disciplines into an integrated course/curriculum. These efforts should also encourage collaboration and interaction across departments, schools, and/or institutions.
Deadlines: Letter of Intent Receipt Date - Jan. 27; Application Receipt Date - Feb. 24
Contact: Alison E. Cole, PhD; Division of Pharmacology, Physiology and Biological Chemistry; National Institute of General Medical Sciences; Building 45, Room 2AS-49K; Bethesda, MD 20892-7952; Telephone: (301) 435-0202; FAX: (301) 480-3557; Email: colea@nigms.nih.gov

REDUCING STROKE DISPARITIES THROUGH RISK FACTOR SELF-MANAGEMENT
PA Number: PAS-03-166 Department of Health and Human Services
National Institutes of Health/National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke
Funding: NINDS has set aside $2 million in total costs to fund applications that do not score within the NINDS payline (see http://www.ninds.nih.gov/funding/ninds_funding_strategy.htm). The amount and timing of awards paid from set aside funds will depend on the overall scientific merit of the applications and the availability of funds throughout the duration of this solicitation (3 years).
Mechanism: R01
Priorities/Interests: This PAS solicits applications for research that will identify effective, culturally-acceptable interventions involving self-management of risk factors for first and recurrent stroke for members of minority populations.
Deadlines: Feb. 1, June 1, Oct.1.
Contact: Ronnie D. Horner, PhD; Program Director, Office of Minority Health and Research; NINDS/NIH; Building NSC, Room 2153; Bethesda, MD 20892; Telephone: (301) 496-2581; FAX: (301) 594-5929; Email: rh266m@nih.gov

(Continued on next page)
Douglas County Health Status Indicator Report

The most recent copy of the Health Status Indicator Report, which portrays the latest health data for residents in Douglas County can be accessed at http://www.co.douglas.ne.us/dept/health/publications/HSI2002a2.pdf. You may also access this and other helpful information at Douglas County Health Department website: http://www.co.douglas.ne.us/dept/health/index.php.

FACULTY REVIEWERS NEEDED FOR RESEARCH FORUM

Faculty members are invited to participate as faculty reviewers in the upcoming 35th Annual Midwest Student Biomedical Research Forum (MSBRF). The Forum, co-sponsored by the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC) and the Creighton University Medical Center (CUMC), will be held February 21, 2004 at the Double Tree Hotel Downtown, Omaha, NE. The MSBRF offers UNMC, CUMC, and Midwest region students the opportunity to prepare abstracts of their original research and present their work to faculty and peers. Presentation formats include oral, poster, and manuscript abstracts, all competing for cash awards.

The success of the Forum depends in large part on the faculty support of the sponsoring institutions. Faculty are needed to review and critique abstracts and manuscripts prior to the Forum and to judge oral and poster presentations the day of the Forum. Each abstract and actual presentation will be scored by three different judges.

The focus of the event is to improve the student’s ability to communicate, and every effort will be made to match subject matter of the submitted work with the reviewer’s area of interest or expertise. However, this is a presentation exercise so any scientist should be able to judge any presentation. Abstract and manuscript review takes place in early January. Judges for the oral and poster presentations are needed for both the morning and afternoon sessions of the Forum on Saturday. Faculty can also volunteer in more than one area. If you are willing to serve as a faculty reviewer, please contact the NNRC for a response form. You can also contact Brenda Ramm, UNMC. Her email address is bram@unmc.edu and her phone number is 402-559-9250. The response form, due Dec. 5, should be returned to Brenda Ramm, UNMC zip 6800.

Faculty members are also invited to support the MSBRF by attending the Forum and encouraging their students to both submit abstracts and attend the Forum as well.

The University of Nebraska Medical Center announces the EIGHTH ANNUAL CARDIOVASCULAR RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM

Theme: Cardiac Imaging
Feb. 6

PURPOSE:
• To exchange ideas that will enhance research collaboration and create awareness of cardiovascular research.
• To foster a discussion and partnership among researchers and clinicians regarding patient care and medical management of chronic cardiac disease.
• To inspire students to take an interest in cardiac imaging research.

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS
• The symposium includes poster presentations from clinical fellows, postdoctoral fellows, and graduate students currently involved in the investigation of all aspects of cardiac imaging. Abstracts can be new or recently presented material.
• The abstract submission form and instructions are available in an on-line fillable form at http://app1.unmc.edu/ unmccce/rt_forms.cfm. Submit abstracts to Joan Husted, HRM, Program Associate, Center for Continuing Education, UNMC, 986800 Nebraska Medical Center, Omaha, NE 68198-6800 OR email as an attachment to jhusted@unmc.edu.
• All abstracts are due by Dec. 15.
• A $250 award winner will be selected from abstract submissions in both the basic and clinical science areas.
Thank you

I want to thank everyone for the cards and get well wishes I’ve received during my leave of absence. The flowers from the college were absolutely gorgeous and brightened my home for a couple of weeks!! I am on the mend and still hope to be back to work Dec. 1. You are a great group of people to work with and I truly appreciate your thoughtfulness!!!

Carol Meyer

Thanks to everyone for your kind thoughts during my recent illness. Your cards helped cheer me up, and the flowers from the college were beautiful. Thanks also to those of you who pitched in to help take care of items that couldn’t wait until I returned to work. It is great to work with such caring and supportive people!

Brenda Kea

I would like to thank everyone for their encouraging words and gifts after the birth of our son Nathanael in November. They are very much appreciated, and it makes me proud and humbled to work in such a kind caring place as the CON.

It is also a neat thing when the place you work personally touches your family. I am referring to Shirley Wiggins and two student nurses and their care of Nathanael when he had to return to the hospital in Lincoln for bilirubin treatment when he was just a few days old. They were very professional with a personal touch, and my family and I were touched.

Thanks again for making this a great place to work, and making it feel like home.

Ben Lass