The Clinical Learning Center’s Team Approach to Student Success
The Clinical Learning Center

Cover Feature: The CLC has a team approach to student success

The Best of Both Worlds

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Working for Change

Alumni Feature: An Interview with three-time alumna and recipient of the 2014 Nancy Vance Award, Dr. Lauren Goodloe

On the cover: Nursing and medical students participate in a clinical learning simulation.

Connections is the official magazine of the VCU School of Nursing and is published twice yearly. Comments and letters may be directed to the editor.

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Hello Alumni and Friends.

The summer and fall semesters have been full of exciting activities and accomplishments for our school!

We were pleased to hold our first ever white coat ceremony in conjunction with the lamp lighting ceremony for our incoming traditional nursing students in August. This is a new movement in schools of nursing across the country. I encourage you to read more about this event in the SON news section.

In the area of academic programs, I am happy to share that the DNP program proposal made its way through the university approval process and is now under review by the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia. Pending approval, we plan to implement the program in 2015.

The School of Nursing continues to be involved in cutting-edge education practices as partners in the interprofessional education movement occurring at VCU and through our outstanding education offerings. I’m pleased to share with you the cover story on our Clinical Learning Center and our features on faculty, alumni and students. We’re proud of the commitment to nursing excellence and collaborative focus shared by all.

In the area of research, our outstanding faculty members are conducting a number of funded studies. The Office of Research has supported faculty on the submission of several grants this fall and several new proposals will be submitted in the spring.

In an effort to increase awareness of the great work under way at our school, we kicked off our new brand awareness campaign this fall to position the VCU School of Nursing as a national leader in research, education and practice. The annual report many of you received in the mail is an example of one of the visual options for our new brand. We’re very excited to see our brand come to life via digital and traditional marketing media, including a redesigned website that is scheduled to launch in spring 2015.

You will also notice a large number of new faculty in this edition of Connections. Increasing the number of faculty has been one of my highest priorities since coming on board as the new dean last year and we have been very successful in these efforts placing 15 faculty in full-time permanent positions since January 2014. I want to acknowledge the faculty and staff who have facilitated the search process, as well as Dr. Sheldon Retchin, Senior Vice President of Health Sciences, who secured additional faculty positions for the School of Nursing.

We hope to see you during Reunion Weekend, April 17-19, 2015. On behalf of the faculty, staff and students of the VCU School of Nursing, thank you for supporting our efforts to advance our school to even greater distinction.

Jean Giddens, Ph.D., RN, FAAN
Dean and Professor
Cover Feature

(l to r) Alumnus Dillon Madrigal, RN (B.S. ’14/N), and School of Medicine faculty member Dr. Joonki Choi observe the students’ perform through the control room glass during a simulation.
In the School of Nursing’s Clinical Learning Center (CLC), the dynamic synergy is evident from the moment you first arrive on the 2nd floor. In one of the spacious classrooms, you might find a group of undergraduate nursing students huddled around a hospital bed, eyes locked on an instructor demonstrating how to insert an IV in a mannequin. Further down the hall in an intensive care simulation suite, you might see nursing students side by side with medical students managing/caring for a mannequin in cardiac arrest as faculty observe behind one-way mirrors in the control room.

As nursing schools nationwide increase the use of advanced simulation in their curriculum, a recent study by the National Council of State Boards of Nursing confirmed that students are able to accomplish educational outcomes in simulation comparable to those in a traditional clinical learning environment. At the VCU School of Nursing, the Clinical Learning Center is at the forefront of nursing education, going beyond using the latest simulation technology to ensure students are ready to hit the ground running once they enter the health care delivery system.

Along with its state-of-the-art technology, the Clinical Learning Center uses a teaching approach rooted in inclusiveness, collaboration and evidence-based instruction, says Carla Nye, D.N.P., ARNP, CPNP-BC, CNE, associate professor and director of the CLC.

“Our attitude is that students are a part of our family and are partners in their education process. We want them to feel a part of something that is big and growing.”

Carla Nye

While the modern environment of the CLC continues to amaze students, the first-rate team of faculty and staff is the catalyst behind making the school’s clinical learning experience one of the most innovative in the nation, Nye says. In addition to Nye, the CLC staff includes Genevieve Beaird, RNC-OB (B.S. ’09/N, M.S. ’11/N), assistant director; Teri Smith, administrative professional; and Jamaal Ellis, simulation technician. The team works closely with faculty to design specific scenarios and provide effective guidance to ensure students meet the learning objectives.

“The faculty and CLC staff work hand in hand to ensure our students have valuable experiences in the simulation environment.”
lab that will propel their knowledge of nursing and ability to care for patients forward,” says Shelly Orr, M.S.N., RN, CNE, clinical assistant professor in the Department of Adult Health and Nursing Systems, who teaches several undergraduate course in the CLC.

Hallel Basco, a senior from Triangle, Va., says as a CLC student ambassador she’s had the opportunity to see the “behind-the-scenes” preparation that goes into every simulation experience.

“The CLC is truly blessed to have a team of diverse professionals that care about using simulation to engage students and push them forward in their education,” Basco says.

For new nursing students, their CLC experience starts with the nuts and bolts of what’s included in a patient exam. Then each semester, the simulations increase in difficulty and complexity, Nye says.

Basco describes her experience as a new nursing student observing senior students as they performed a “code” simulation on a mannequin in cardiac arrest.

“I was amazed at how realistic everything was – the students were serious and focused as they worked on the mannequin, treating it as a real patient,” Basco says. “I was also impressed how the mannequins reacted to the medications and CPR. In just the right moment, the mannequin came to, making groaning sounds, but breathing nonetheless.”

Ally Bess, a junior from Mahopac, N.Y., recalls how her classmates were in awe when they had to assess a patient with heart failure, implement interventions and follow up with a mock provider.

“They didn’t realize how much the mannequin could actually do and how the room’s equipment was set up and functioned just like the hospital,” says Bess, who had already been exposed to the CLC through her work as an ambassador. “We could hear irregular heart and lung sounds, check for peripheral pulses, even put a nasal cannula with oxygen on him and see the patient’s vitals improve.”

Throughout the simulation exercises, faculty challenge students to think bigger and better than the learning exercise, according to Nye.

“We add in more context – give specific patient names, family issues and background information so that they can think beyond the fact that they have to insert a catheter,” she says. They also stress how to do procedures safely and provide as much opportunity as possible for students to take extra time to learn concepts or practice skills.
Students agree that practice opportunities help build confidence in making critical care decisions. Basco says being able to practice has been very helpful to her. She describes it as that first “confidence booster” that students need before entering their first patient’s room.

“Now I am more comfortable with patient interaction and hospital equipment. But, I still look forward to CLC days because I know that simulations are safe experience that will prepare me for the worst possible situations,” Basco says.

Bess agrees risk-free practice makes a big difference in the learning process.

“Although interacting with a real patient versus a mannequin is entirely different, being able to familiarize myself with the equipment and practice skills in a safe environment made it a much easier to transition to the bedside,” Bess says. “Most of the people who work in the CLC are nurses, so when I was there to practice they were able to share personal experiences to help solidify the information I was learning.”

Sometimes it takes more than practice for students to meet the learning objectives. When a concept is still not gaining traction, the CLC staff makes adjustments, Nye says.

“We consult very closely with faculty on what areas they feel students are still having an issue,” she explains. “We also recognize that sometimes you have to change direction in how you present information in order for the students to understand it.”

Orr also acknowledges the collaboration that goes into making sure students understand the concepts.

“Based on student performance and feedback, revisions are made to the simulations to provide optimal experiences – It’s a team approach!” Orr says.

While simulation helps students experience what it’s like in a “real world” health care setting, the CLC enhances that experience with interprofessional learning opportunities to make it feel even more like an actual hospital setting. Graduating nursing students work with graduating medical students on complex simulated patient scenarios.

“We want our students to know how it feels to work as part of a team and want the physicians to view nurses as a valuable team member,” says Nye. “This helps to improve communication and ultimately ends up in better decision making for the patients. All of the research has clearly shown that of the medical errors that occur, the largest percentage happen as a result of poor communication between health care providers.”

Nye also notes that the CLC is collaborating with the School of Medicine in some other types of interprofessional learning activities. She cites an example of a women’s health course in which third-year medical students played the role of the provider delivering a baby while the nursing students performed in the role of the nurse.

“The student response has been phenomenal,” she says. “We want to do more of that collaboration because that’s real life.” Nye adds that she hopes do some type of combined undergraduate and graduate nursing student collaboration, where nurse practitioner students have the opportunity to serve as the provider while undergraduate students play the nurse role.

In addition to providing real-life scenarios for nursing and other health sciences students, the CLC hosts visits from summer camps and other programs aimed at exposing middle and high school students to careers in health care.

The center also provides simulated training for external groups, such as LifeEvac, an air medical transport company, and LifeNet, a provider of organ and tissue banking services.

“We have such great resources here in this facility,” Nye says. “We would love to be a resource for other health organizations – to make a difference in these providers caring for the community.”
Daphne Terrell, RN, CNRN (M.S. ’08/N), recalls being torn between pursuing a career as a teacher or a nurse as she prepared to enter college.

“I had several family members pass away and a couple of them were in hospice care at home,” she says. “I was able to help with their care so that experience pulled me toward nursing.”

Eager to start her path to nursing, she enrolled in the B.S. nursing program at Columbus State University in Columbus, Ga. Following her graduation, Terrell moved to Richmond and started working in the Neuroscience Intensive Care Unit at VCU Medical Center. While working full-time, she obtained a master’s degree at the VCU School of Nursing and was approached about a clinical adjunct faculty opportunity by Anne Boyle, Ph.D., RN, CNE, a former assistant professor who is now retired; and Tanya Huff, M.S.N., RN, CCRN, CCNS, CNE, clinical assistant professor.

The chance to realize both of her early passions, nursing and teaching, was too exciting to miss. And she already felt she could handle it.

“Since I had just graduated from the nursing education track of the master’s program, it was an easy transition for me to step right in from my role as student into that of a faculty member,” Terrell says.

Terrell joined first as an adjunct faculty member and then came on board last fall full time as a clinical instructor in the Department of Adult Health and Nursing Systems. She still maintains her clinical practice as a PRN in the same unit at the medical center where she has worked for 14 years.
“I work with great people here at the school and in the hospital,” she says. “It’s like a family environment – everybody is so welcoming.”

In her faculty role Terrell says she enjoys interacting with students and watching them grow from their first nursing classes to the senior-level courses. She recalls what it was like when she was a student at SON taking core nursing classes.

“The instructors were very passionate about teaching,” she says. “Some of those assignments made me really reflect on what an instructor should do because they did such an excellent job. I would just sit in the classroom and say ‘one day these are some traits I hope to develop in myself.’”

Terrell is already showing some of those same teaching traits she had always admired. She is the recipient of a $15,000 clinical scholars award from the School of Nursing to develop a project to enhance student knowledge of electronic health records documentation. Terrell is working with Susan Lindner, M.S.N., RNC-OB, clinical assistant professor in the Department of Family and Community Health Nursing, to implement the project “Bridging the Gap to Meaningful Use by Enhancing Electronic Documentation Knowledge.”

The project involves introducing the simulated Electronic Health Record (EHR) at the beginning of the undergraduate program in the Health Assessment Lab to provide the foundation students need to perform physical assessments, document the assessment findings, and to communicate those findings accurately, according to Terrell.

“This early introduction makes the transition easier as students prepare to provide care to patients in the clinical setting,” she says.

Angela Starkweather, Ph.D., ACNP-BC, CNRN, associate professor and chair of the Department of Adult Health and Nursing Systems, says the timing of this project could not be better in terms of supporting both faculty and students in learning the language of safety and quality in health care.

“It blends several national initiatives in nursing education and will help to increase knowledge of current topics in health care technology and patient care for faculty and students alike,” Starkweather says.

Terrell says she hopes to do more research related to technology and education in the future. She is always seeking ways to engage students, such as inviting them to shadow her at the hospital during her shifts.

“I always tell students that nursing school is definitely not easy, but it’s very rewarding once you’re working with patients and making a difference in someone’s life,” she says.

Her commitment to education and care for others has led to what she feels is her greatest accomplishment – being a role model for her daughters Gianna and Gabrielle, ages 12 and 14.

“One thing they will be able to say about their mom is that I’m a hard worker,” says Terrell, also crediting her husband Alfred for being very supportive of her decisions. “They don’t just hear me talk about the value of your education – they see me live it.”
What do studies on fibromyalgia, sickle cell disease, low back pain, and cardiovascular health have in common? These topics were studied this summer by four School of Nursing students selected for the 2014 VCU Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP) Summer Fellowship program. Susan Ghodrat, Jeff Petraco, Rebekah Roby, and Anna Young were among 33 students selected from across the University to participate in the program.

The students worked with nursing faculty who have collected data in the students’ field of study. They will present their findings at the VCU Undergraduate Symposium/Poster Day in spring 2015.

In addition to working with faculty, UROP Fellowship participants received a $1,500 cash stipend to defer the costs of their research. This year marks a record number of applicants and the first time the program has been opened to accelerated B.S. nursing program students.

Meet the School of Nursing students who were selected for this competitive research program:

**SUSAN GHODRAT**

Ghodrat, a senior Honors College student in the traditional B.S. nursing program, always fostered a passion for writing and felt like the UROP opportunity would allow her to combine her love of writing and health sciences. She worked with Jo Robins, Ph.D., RN, ANP-BC, AHN-C, HTP, assistant professor in the Department of Family and Community Health Nursing, on a research project, titled “Exploring the Relationships between Mindfulness and Biobehavioral Factors Associated with Health Outcomes in Women.” Ghodrat’s project involved a secondary analysis of baseline data that is being collected in Robins’ ongoing study, which examines factors that put women at increased risk for cardiovascular disease.

“The science of how mindfulness affects physiology and ultimately health and health outcomes is becoming a rich evidence base that will inform clinical practice,” says Robins. “This is a very exciting project that Susan is passionate about, especially since she uses mindfulness practices in her own life to navigate challenges as they arise.”

In addition to her studies, Ghodrat works as a care partner on the Cardiac Surgery ICU Unit at the VCU Medical Center’s Critical Care Hospital and volunteers as an undergraduate teaching assistant for UNIV 112 and 200 courses.

“Nursing is the most rewarding and affirming way to work with people,” Ghodrat says. “I continue to fall in love with the work I do.”

**JEFF PETRACO**

Petraco, an accelerated B.S. nursing student, worked as the bureau director of operations for the Pennsylvania Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) in Harrisburg.
Pa. before moving to Richmond four years ago. Petraco says he had considered becoming a nurse for more than 30 years and finally decided to pursue it as a career.

“My goal was to work in a stimulating, dynamic environment with the opportunity to work with folks in a helping profession,” says Petraco. “The School of Nursing is preparing me to do just that.”

Petraco worked with Angela Starkweather, Ph.D., ACNP-BC, CNRN, associate professor and chair of the Department of Adult Health and Nursing Systems. His study, titled “Measures of Pain Sensitivity that Discriminate Responders from Non-Responders after Receiving a Non-Invasive Neuroelectrocutaneous Therapy for Persistent Low Back Pain,” examined data Starkweather collected in her pilot study. It is consistent with data currently being collected in her latest grant project, “Pain Sensitivity in Low Back Pain.”

“Jeff collected important information that clinicians use to decide whether a treatment should be offered and it will help guide us on toward the next stage in this program of research,” says Starkweather.

Before coming to VCU, Petraco earned a bachelor’s degree in psychology from Dickinson College in Carlisle, Pa., and a master’s degree in health care administration and management from Temple University’s Fox School of Business in Philadelphia, Pa.

**ANNA YOUNG**

Young, an accelerated program student, first earned a bachelor’s degree in literary and cultural studies from William and Mary, but always maintained an interest in nursing.

She worked with Victoria Menzies, Ph.D., RN, PMHCNS-BC, assistant professor in the Department of Adult Health and Nursing Systems, on her study, titled “Polypharmacy and Symptoms of Pain in Women with Fibromyalgia.”

“I was really excited about the opportunity to work with Dr. Menzies because she has dedicated a lot of her career to studying fibromyalgia and her research is really interesting,” says Young. “I also loved her holistic approach to nursing care.”

Young examined data Menzies collected in two of her previous studies that involved women being treated for fibromyalgia. Additionally, Young analyzed statistics with Menzies and Leroy R. Thacker II, Ph.D., associate professor and biostatistician in the Department of Biostatistics and Data Services, and collaborated with Sallie D. Mayer, Pharm.D., M.B.A., BCPS, assistant professor in the Department of Pharmacotherapy and Outcomes Science at the VCU School of Pharmacy.

“Anna is an innovative and enthusiastic nursing student whose dynamic interest is something that the nursing profession can benefit from,” says Menzies.

Outside of the classroom, Young works as a care partner at the VCU Massey Cancer Center and volunteers at Mission of Mercy events, taking vitals, checking glucose levels and providing education to underserved populations.

Note: Jeff Petraco, Rebekah Roby and Anna Young graduated in December 2014.
An Educator and Leader

Lauren Goodloe is Working for Change

At the age of 13, Lauren Goodloe, (B.S. ’83/N; M.S. ’88/N; Ph.D. ’00/N) director of medical nursing and geriatric services and the administrative director of nursing research at the VCU Health System, started volunteering at St. Luke’s Hospital. She read to patients, transported them, delivered mail, and worked in the gift shop.

After graduating from high school, Goodloe decided she wanted to be a nurse, so she enrolled in St. Luke’s Nursing Diploma program.

“The program was the oldest nursing school in the state and had a stellar reputation – not to mention I knew many of the people in the hospital already,” Goodloe says.

Heeding the advice to never stop learning from then Diploma program faculty member Susan Johnson, Ph.D., RN, NEA-BC, who is now a clinical assistant professor at the VCU School of Nursing, Goodloe went on to obtain her B.S., M.S. and later, a Ph.D. in nursing at VCU. She also progressed to various leadership positions within VCUHS and served on boards of many local and national nursing organizations, working toward affecting positive change for all nurses.

Her efforts have not gone unnoticed. Goodloe, who is assistant dean for clinical operations at the VCU School of Nursing, recently received the highest honor given by the Virginia Nurses Association – the Nancy Vance Award. The award honors and continues the legacy of Nancy Vance’s excellence in service. It is bestowed to a VNA member who has made significant contributions to the community through his or her exceptional leadership, sustained dedication and inspiring achievements.

“I am very humbled and honored to be in the same category with past winners and mentors such as Judy Collins and former Dean Nancy Langston, who have made such a great impact on the Commonwealth,” Goodloe said.

As a true leader, she credits her team of nurses and staff for her success. “I wouldn’t be where I am today
without the help and support from my well-educated, highly professional and experienced staff – it’s a team effort,” Goodloe says with a smile.

Goodloe recalls being interested in nursing leadership early in her nursing career. She held her first official leadership position at VCUHS in 1987, when she assumed an assistant head nurse type role on the night shift of the oncology unit. It was a position where she was committed to working with the night shift staff and making sure they had the support and education that they deserved. Goodloe also felt it was essential to reach out beyond her work environment to try to affect positive change. She accepted leadership roles in nursing organizations such as the Virginia Partnership for Nursing (VPN), Virginia Organization of Nurse Executives and Leaders (VONEL) and the Virginia Nurses Association (VNA).

At the VNA, she has held roles such as commissioner for nursing practice, commissioner for nursing education, and recently, was sworn in as president. In this leadership position, she hopes to be able to reach out to younger nurses and teach them to be engaged in their profession – to not just get a degree and work, but to continue their education and have the VNA assist with providing continuing education needs.

“They have so much to offer to change the way we practice. If given the (educational) opportunity, they will reach their potential and with that, change will happen,” says Goodloe. She would also like to bring attention to the importance of legislative advocacy – grassroots legislature – because “it impacts the health and welfare of patients in the Commonwealth and the way we do our job as nurses.”

Goodloe also served in other leadership roles, including the board of the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education, the Children’s Miracle Network of Richmond, the Department of Internal Medicine at VCUHS and the Virginia Partnership for Nursing.

When asked what is most rewarding about her role as assistant dean, she explains that it's working with the nursing students.

“The students inspire and assure me that there is hope for the health care (leaders) of tomorrow,” Goodloe says.

She says her dual role as educator and hospital administrator is very rewarding because she gets to teach students and see patients at the same time, as well as observe graduates that she educated apply what they have learned in the real-world hospital setting. She also acknowledges the strong partnership between the health system and the School of Nursing.

“I enjoy being a part of changing and building the relationship between the hospital and the school,” she says. “Not all schools have this synergy.”

Goodloe has been an important part of that synergy, according to friend and mentor Janet Younger, Ph.D., RN, CPNP, professor emeritus.

“Lauren Goodloe is a gifted collaborator and builder of trusting relationships. Her work to connect the VCU MCV and VCU SON was persistent and skillful. Many graduates of VCU SON benefited from the relationship she established,” Younger says.

Throughout Goodloe’s education and professional career, the School of Nursing has had a tremendous impact on her life. The rigor of education prepared her to lead, the encouragement she received for lifelong learning set her up for success and those who had been mentors are now incredible friends. Today, she is the one inspiring the next generation of nursing leaders to become compassionate lifelong learners.

“Dr. Goodloe is a mentor and an inspiration,” says Wendi Sears, B.S., RN, CEN. “I hope to be even a fraction of the leader that she is one day.”
Trula Minton Receives Governor’s Appointment

Governor Terry McAuliffe recently announced the appointment of Trula E. Minton, RN (B.S. ’79/N; M.S. ’88/N), to the Board of Health Professions, representing the Board of Nursing. Minton currently works as the chief nurse executive in Chippenham and Johnston-Willis Hospitals, Inc. She was recognized as one of SON’s 120 Visionary Leaders in 2013. Virginia’s health regulatory boards and the Board of Health Professions are led by 186 volunteers appointed by the Governor. Each board is composed of licensed health care practitioners and citizens with the mission to ensure safe and competent patient care by licensing health professionals, enforcing standards of practice and providing information to health care practitioners and the public. Minton’s appointment will expire in 2015.

Patricia Bernal Receives MCVAA Hodges-Kay Service Award

Patricia Bernal (B.S. ’80/N; M.S. ’91/N) was awarded the MCVAA Hodges-Kay Service Award for service to the Nursing Division of the MCV Alumni Association. Bernal has been active with the MCVAA Nursing Division for many years, serving as president of the organization in the late 1990’s and heading the reunion awards program for the last six years. Bernal came to Richmond in the late 1970’s in order to complete the RN to BS program and began giving back to VCU through service immediately after graduation. She established the Bernal RN to BS Scholarship in 2000 to allow other RN to BS candidates at the VCU Health System to earn their BS from the VCU School of Nursing. Though she officially retired in 2010 after more than 30 years at VCUHS, Bernal continues to work part time doing the work that she loves.

Alumni Inducted as AAN Fellows

Three School of Nursing alumnae received one of the most prestigious honors in nursing this fall as they were inducted as Fellows in the American Academy of Nursing. Peggy A. Guenter, Ph.D., RN (B.S. ’77/N), senior director of clinical practice, advocacy, and research affairs at the American Society for Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition; Emily Drake, RN, CNL (Ph.D. ’05/N), associate professor at the University of Virginia; and Sherry Fox, RN, CNRN (B.S. ’80/N; M.S. ’89/N; Ph.D. ’02/N), vice president of the Bon Secours Cancer Institute and director of the Cullather Brain Tumor Quality of Life Center at the Bon Secours Richmond Health System, were among the 168 nurse leaders inducted at the AAN annual meeting this fall.

Stephanie Ferguson Elected to Institute of Medicine

Alumna Stephanie Ferguson, Ph.D., RN, FAAN (M.S. ’87/N), international health care consultant, was elected as a member of the Institute of Medicine (IOM) during its 44th annual meeting. Election to the IOM is considered one of the highest honors in the fields of health and medicine and recognizes individuals who have demonstrated outstanding
professional achievement and commitment to service. She was also the recent recipient of the HRH Princess Muna Al-Hussein Award from the American Nurses Credentialing Centre in recognition of her dedication to nursing and significant contributions to health care across borders. Ferguson is currently the director and facilitator of the International Council of Nurses (ICN) Leadership for Change Program and the ICN-Burdett Global Nursing Leadership Institute. She is also a World Health Organization (WHO) consultant and a consulting associate professor for Stanford University.

Tracy Kemp Stallings Receives Community Service Award

Tracy Kemp Stallings (B.S. ’85/N; M.S.H.A. ’95/AH), chief operating officer of HCA Virginia’s Johnston-Willis Hospital, received the 2014 Bernard L. Savage Community Service Award from the Chesterfield Business Council of the Greater Richmond Chamber. The Bernard L. Savage Award recognizes an individual for selflessly giving time, talent or other resources to promote and enhance the quality of life in Chesterfield County. Stallings, who served as chairwoman of the Greater Richmond Chamber Board of Directors in 2011-12, serves on the Watkins Centre Community Development Authority, the Chesterfield Health Center Commission, and the advisory committee for the Women’s Leadership Initiative of the United Way of Greater Richmond & Petersburg.

Marilyn Tavenner Receives AACN Policy Award

Alumna Marilyn Tavenner (B.S. ’83/N; M.H.A. ’89), administrator for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, was recently presented with the American Association of Colleges of Nursing Policy Luminary Award. The annual award recognizes a nursing leader whose work in public policy has made lasting and significant contributions to the nursing profession. Tavenner manages all aspects of CMS, the $850 billion federal agency that ensures health care coverage for 100 million Americans.

Nursing Alumnae Share Path to Entrepreneurship in Lecture Series

Alumna Lisa Feierstein (B.S. ’78/N), president of Active Healthcare, Inc., and alumna Carolyn McCrocklin (B.S. ’82/N; Ph.D. ’09/N), president of American Critical Care Services, were guest speakers at the VCU School of Nursing for the first Nursing Entrepreneurs Series held last spring. Both women shared strategies for becoming a successful entrepreneur, which included examining your own skill sets, partnering with the right people and staying on top of the changes in health care.
A Letter from the Alumni Chair

As 2014 comes to a close I find myself reflecting with great pride on the accomplishments of our VCU Nursing family, but more so on their unselfish service. Accomplishments demonstrated by such proud and faithful alumni as Lauren Goodloe (B.S. ’83; M.S. ’88; Ph.D. ’00), assistant dean for clinical operations at the VCU School of Nursing, who was recognized with the Nancy Vance Award by the Virginia Nurses Association in September. This award represents the VNA’s highest honor and is bestowed upon a Virginia nurse who demonstrates character above reproach and unusual qualities of generosity in service. World Health Organization consultant Stephanie Ferguson, Ph.D. RN, FAAN (M.S. ’87), is another stellar example of the unselfish nature of nurses as demonstrated by significant contributions to health care across borders received the HRH Princess Muna Al-Hussein Award at the 2014 ANCC National Magnet Conference in Dallas. Ferguson, director and facilitator of the International Council of Nurses (ICN) Leadership for Change Program and the ICN-Burdett Global Nursing Leadership Institute, was selected for her many contributions over the years to the advancement of international nursing collaboration with ANCC.

There are other VCU Nursing alumni worthy of mention. Alumni such as Denise Lynch (B.S. ’89), Mary Jo Ellis Kahn (B.S. ’71; M.S. ’74), and Margaret Lewis (B.S. ’88), all of who were recognized with honors during Reunion Weekend. There are many others deserving of acknowledgment but to share their stories would require that this magazine be changed to a multi-volume book series.

The point being, when we each made the decision to attend the VCU School of Nursing we did not just agree to pay tuition and attend classes, we chose to invest in ourselves, our goals, our dreams of success, and in our healthcare system. We knew that our studies and clinicals at one of the best nursing universities in the nation would prepare us exceedingly well for the challenge at hand in addressing the needs of our future clients and in facilitating the healing process. We knew that the return on our investment would be experienced at and away from the bedside, in leadership capacities that span from our place of employment to the international stage, through research that identifies new ways to treat and prevent health-related crises, and in shaping the minds and hearts of the next generation of nurses – nurses who will one day care for us and our families.

Investment requires commitment. It requires giving, but the reward is so much greater than the gift itself. At VCU, there are many ways to invest. You can invest your money in scholarship programs that help support our alumni-in-training. You can become a mentor and provide advice and encouragement to a nursing student as he/she strives to join your ranks. You can host a career-networking event between our newest alumni and those with more experience in our profession. And you can join VCU Alumni and champion your alma mater in a leadership role. Many opportunities exist. The question is, are you committed?

James L. Jenkins, Jr., RN (B.S. ’07/N)
Chair, VCU School of Nursing Alumni Division
Vice-President for Nursing, MCV Alumni Association
VCU SON Accelerated Class of 2007
Reunion Weekend 2014 Features Investiture Ceremony, State of the School Address and Alumni Awards

The VCU School of Nursing celebrated its 2014 Reunion Weekend with a variety of festive activities, including an investiture ceremony for Deborah McGuire, Ph.D., RN, FAAN, associate dean for research, who received a medallion for being the school’s first ever Florence E. Elliott Professor. Activities kicked off on Friday with a lecture by alumna Elizabeth Day (B.S. ’95/N, M.S. ’01/N), who presented on the topic “Finding Balance When you are Topsy Turvy” in Younger Auditorium. The weekend’s activities also included an alumni tea, a State of the School address by Jean Giddens, Ph.D., RN, FAAN, dean and professor, as well as the presentation of alumni awards.

This year’s alumni award recipients are Denise Lynch (B.S. ‘89/N) for Outstanding Practice, Mary Jo Ellis Kahn (B.S. ’71/N; M.S. ’74/N) for Outstanding Service, and Margaret Lewis (B.S. ’88/N) for Outstanding Alumna. They are pictured in the upper right photo from left to right: James Jenkins, RN (B.S. ’07/N), chair of the VCU School of Nursing Alumni Division; Denise Lynch; Margaret Lewis; Mary Jo Ellis Kahn and Dean Jean Giddens.
Development Update
By Brian Thomas, senior executive director of Development, MCV Foundation

Under the leadership of Dean Giddens, the VCU School of Nursing continues to make excellent progress on many fronts. Total gifts to the School of Nursing topped $2 million in Fiscal Year 2014. Since last spring, the School has hosted several outreach and stewardship events to thank donors for their support of the School and share with them the tremendous impact of their support. In September, donors who made gifts of $1,000 or more to the Clinical Scholars Endowment were recognized for their dedication at a Clinical Scholars Circle reception in honor of alumna Mimi Bennett (B.S. ’72/N; M.S. ’76/N), for whom the first Clinical Scholars award was named. Guests heard from Kathleen Martin Bell, RNC-OB, WHNP-BC (B.S. ’07/N; M.S. ’11/N), clinical instructor, and Daphne Terrell, RN, CNRN (M.S. ’08/N), clinical instructor in the Department of Adult Health and Nursing Systems, on their projects – training nursing students to serve as doulas and introducing the electronic health record in the first nursing class, respectively. Thirty guests participated in the celebration at Willow Oaks Country Club.

The School celebrated the 20th annual Sadie Heath Cabaniss Society Dinner November 4 at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts. This event recognized distinguished annual donors to the School. During the evening the impact of donor support was illustrated through the stories of Ally Bess, a scholarship recipient who shared her story of how she came to be a student in the VCU School of Nursing. Dr. Angela Starkweather, associate professor and department chair, Adult Health & Nursing Systems, spoke about the importance of donor support from the perspective as an NIH funded researcher. And, Dr. Pamela Parsons, clinical associate professor, Family Community Health Nursing and director for Practice and Community Engagement, spoke about the honor and prestige associated with endowed professorships.

Katherine Haydon began her new role as senior director of development for the School of Nursing on December 1. Kate earned her BA in Policy Studies from Dickinson College. Prior to joining the staff at the School of Nursing, Kate worked for Benedictine College Preparatory as Director of Advancement and helped lay the foundation for a campaign to secure the school’s future. Previously, Kate served as the Major Gifts and Planned Giving Manager for Virginia Museum of Fine Arts where she helped maximize the museum’s program of cultivating, stewarding and closing gifts from its donors and prospects.
In Memory of Dr. Lorna Barrell

Dr. Lorna K. Barrell, associate professor emerita in the VCU School of Nursing, died at her home on Sept. 16, 2014. Dr. Barrell had a long and successful career and was a leader in advancing the professionalism of psychiatric/mental health nursing.

Colleague and friend, Dr. JoAnne Henry, associate professor emerita, said, “Lorna loved teaching and guiding students. She was a mentor who kept in touch with former students throughout their careers. They continued to seek her advice and valued her friendship throughout their lives.”

“In memory of Dr. Lorna Barrell

In her career, Barrell taught at the University of Illinois and Rush University prior to joining VCU in 1982, where she served as chair of the Department of Nursing Systems, Community and Psychiatric Health. Dr. Marya Olgas, associate professor emerita, said “Lorna and I met in 1970 at the University of Illinois. Our relationship quickly became that of valued colleagues and friends, which included her husband and my sister. Traditions developed: celebrating birthdays, Greek Easter, drives to Williamsburg for lunch followed by shopping at Merchants Square, plus the lighting of the Christmas tree at the Jefferson to welcome in the holidays. It was an honor to be her friend and I miss her.”

Barrell authored many articles in professional journals. An accomplished academic, leader and administrator, Barrell felt teaching was the best part of her career. When she retired in 1996, Barrell established the Legacy Lecture in Psychiatric/Mental Health Nursing with her colleagues, Drs. Katherine Bobbitt (BS ’56/N), associate professor emerita; Gloria Francis, professor emerita; and Barbara Munjas, professor emerita. The Legacy Lecture Fund has grown over the years thanks to the dedication of its founders, friends and alumni and is nearing its goal to convert to a professorship in Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing as planned by the fund’s founders. This will aid the School in recruiting and retaining psychiatric nursing faculty which are in short supply and high demand nationwide.

Of her colleague and friend, Dr. Katherine Bobbitt said, “As a member of Lorna’s department, I experienced first-hand the many attributes she shared with faculty and students. Teaching and mentoring were special to Lorna. However, our journey together after her retirement holds the strongest and most profound memories. It was marked by fun, medical challenges, faith and things that really matter—family, church, friends, her students, and especially her cat. Lorna was such a fighter as she dealt with one challenge after another. She earned the title of being “a real trooper”—and that she was, professionally and personally.”

~JoAnne Henry

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~JoAnne Henry
Patricia Kinser Receives CCTR Endowment Fund Grant

Patricia Kinser, Ph.D., WHNP-BC, RN, assistant professor in the Department of Family and Community Health Nursing, was awarded a $50,000 grant from the CCTR Endowment Fund to support her study, titled “Social, environmental, and epigenetic mechanisms underlying postpartum depression: A pilot study.” Kinser’s study involves following women through their pregnancies and into the postpartum period to collect relevant data to explore potential social, environmental, and epigenetic (DNA methylation) mechanisms of postpartum depression. Kinser also recently received the Fan Free Clinic Award for her work as a volunteer medical provider of women’s health services at the clinic since 2007.

Candace Burton Receives Advanced Forensics Nursing Certification

Candace Burton, Ph.D., RN, FNE, assistant professor in the Department of Family and Community Health Nursing, received board certification in Advanced Forensics Nursing (AFN-BC) from the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC). This relatively new certification is attained by external review of a research and practice portfolio. has enhanced the science and practice of nursing in the Southern region.

Ann Hamric Co-Chairs AAN Bioethics Panel

Ann Hamric, Ph.D., RN, FAAN, professor and associate dean of academic programs, co-chaired the first meeting of the Expert Panel on Bioethics at the American Academy of Nursing. The Expert Panel on Bioethics provides broad ethical guidance and review on issues pertaining to nursing practice, education, and research that the discipline of nursing and society faces.

Jo Robins Selected as Grant Reviewer

Jo Robins, Ph.D., RN, ANP-BC, AHN-C, FAANP, assistant professor in the Department of Family and Community Health Nursing, has been selected to be a grant reviewer for the American Nurses Foundation (ANF). She will be responsible for assisting ANF by critiquing and scoring research proposals and recommending allocation of funds to grantees.

Victoria Menzies Attends Harris Manchester College Summer Institute

Victoria Menzies, Ph.D., RN, PMHCNS-BC, assistant professor in the Department of Adult Health and Nursing Systems, was one of two VCU faculty selected to attend the Harris Manchester College Summer Institute. The partnership with the University of Oxford’s Harris Manchester College was established in 2005 after years of ongoing summer faculty exchanges. Harris Manchester College is Oxford’s newest and smallest college, offering undergraduate and postgraduate degrees.
Sean Convoy Receives Recognition for Work with the U.S. Navy

Sean Convoy, D.N.P., M.S.N., P-MHNP-BC, clinical associate professor in the Department of Adult Health and Nursing Systems, received recognition for his provision of training and resources for the Navy’s Caregiver Occupational Stress (CgOSC) training with the Naval Center for Combat & Operational Stress Control.

Joanna McAbee Selected to Serve on Advisory Panel

Joanna McAbee, M.S.N., LNP, RN, instructor in the Department of Adult Health and Nursing Systems, has been selected to serve on the American Psychiatric Nurses Association’s Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRN) council advisory panel.

Jean Giddens Completes AACN Wharton Leadership Program

Jean Giddens, Ph.D., RN, FAAN, dean and professor, completed the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) Wharton Executive Leadership Program. Launched in 2012 in collaboration with the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, this world-class enrichment experience is designed exclusively for top academic leaders in schools of nursing.

Giddens is also the recipient of a 2014 Alumni of the Year award from Colorado State University’s School of Education, where she received her Ph.D. in education and human resource studies.

Holly Buchanan Accepted for NLN LEAD Program

Holly Buchanan, D.N.P., M.S., ANP-BC, assistant professor in the Department of Adult Health and Nursing Systems, was accepted into the 2015 National League for Nursing (NLN) LEAD program. LEAD is part of the NLN Leadership Institute in the Center for Transformational Leadership, which focuses on leadership development for nurse educators who have experienced a rapid transition to an administrative position or aspires to lead.

Kyungeh An Receives CCTR Endowment Funding for Research Project

Kyungeh An, Ph.D., RN, associate professor in the Department of Adult Health and Nursing Systems, has received endowment funding by the Center for Clinical and Translational Research (CCTR) for her research project, titled “The impact of autonomic dysfunction on liver-related symptoms in non-alcoholic fatty liver disease and their relationship to systemic inflammation and insulin resistance.” An is the co-investigator along with Richard Sterling, M.D., professor in the School of Medicine’s Department of Internal Medicine.

Angela Starkweather Inducted as AAN Fellow

Angela Starkweather, Ph.D., ACNP-BC, CNRN, FAAN, associate professor and chair of the Department of Nursing Systems, was recently inducted as a Fellow in the American Academy of Nursing (AAN). Starkweather has made significant contributions to advancing nursing science, largely through a research focus on innovative biobehavioral approaches to pain management. She is the principle investigator of a National Institutes of Health (NIH) R01 grant to study the influence of genetic factors on pain perception and how this may contribute to an increased risk of chronic low back pain.
Jeanne Salyer Receives March of Dimes Educator/Researcher/Author Award

Jeanne Salyer, Ph.D., RN, FNAP, associate professor in the Department of Adult Health and Nursing Systems, was one of 21 nurses statewide recognized on Nov. 1 with a Nurse of the Year award from the Central Virginia March of Dimes. Salyer received the Educator/Researcher/Author Award. The Nurse of the Year awards ceremony is a statewide event that recognizes exceptional nurses, creates awareness of professional excellence and promotes the future of nursing, while advancing the mission of the March of Dimes.

Tracye Proffitt Receives National Nurse Educator Certification

Tracye Proffitt, M.S., RN, ACNS-BC, CCRN, clinical instructor in the Department of Adult Health and Nursing Systems, received her national nurse educator certificate. Certification helps faculty demonstrate their expertise in nursing education and assures students and peers that the highest levels of excellence are being met.

Carla Nye Selected for NLN Simulation Educators Leadership Program

Carla Nye, D.N.P., ARNP, CPNP-BC, CNE, associate professor and director of the Clinical Learning Center, was selected for the National League for Nursing’s 2015 Leadership Development Program for Simulation Educators. The program is designed for the experienced simulation nurse educators who wish to assume a leadership role in simulation.

Three Faculty Selected for New Intramural Grants Awards

The Office of Research is pleased to announce the following recipients of the new School of Nursing Intramural Grants Program (IGP). The program was created to fund pilot work that will help faculty members prepare for the submission of larger external grants. Award winners and their projects include:

- Tara Albrecht, Ph.D., ACNP-BC, RN, assistant professor in the Department of Adult Health and Nursing Systems – “Exploring relationships between biobehavioral factors, symptoms and distress in acute myeloid leukemia.”

- Nancy Jallo, Ph.D., RNC, FNP-BC, WHNP-BC, CNS, assistant professor in the Department of Family and Community Health Nursing – “A pocket computer delivered stress coping intervention for hospitalized pregnant women at high risk for preterm birth.”

- Leigh Small, Ph.D., RN, CPNP-PC, FNAP, FAANP, FAAN, associate professor and chair of the Department of Family and Community Health Nursing – “Facilitating activity skills-building training.”
About 60 new undergraduate VCU School of Nursing students in August participated in the school’s first-ever white coat ceremony, a rite of passage that welcomes students into medical professions.

The students entered Younger Auditorium in the VCU School of Nursing building – Sadie Heath Cabaniss Hall – dressed in scrubs, each holding his or her own white coat folded over one arm. They stood along the front of the room, facing their supporters, and heard from Jean Giddens, Ph.D., RN, FAAN, dean of the VCU School of Nursing.

“On one level the white coat symbolizes the science of nursing and the commitment to providing quality, safe, compassionate, patient-centered care, but on another level this white coat symbolizes a transformation that is about to happen to each and every one of you,” Giddens said. “Starting tonight, the white coat represents you as a health care professional. You represent nursing and you represent the VCU School of Nursing.”

After Giddens’ remarks, faculty, staff and alumni helped each student don his or her white coat for the first time.

“The white coat ceremony was a physical manifestation of our place and acceptance into the nursing profession,” said Aprille Singson, one of the nursing students who participated. “It really legitimized the importance of what we’re all going to do in the future.”

VCU was one of 100 schools of nursing across the country to be selected to receive funding support for the ceremony from the American Association of Colleges of Nursing and The Arnold P. Gold Foundation.

White coat ceremonies have occurred at medical schools for more than 20 years, but this new collaboration between APGF and AACN marks the first time a coordinated effort has been developed to offer similar events at schools of nursing.

The white coat ceremony was combined with the school’s annual lamp lighting ceremony.

The lamp is a symbol rooted in the story of Florence Nightingale, who became known for carrying a lamp during her night rounds tending to wounded Crimean War soldiers.


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Marianne Baernholdt, Ph.D., M.P.H., RN, FAAN, is a professor and director of the Nancy F. Langston Center for Quality, Safety and Innovation. She most recently served as associate professor and director of the Rural and Global Health Care Center at the University of Virginia School of Nursing. Her research has focused on quality and safety in rural health care. Baernholdt earned a nursing diploma from Bispebjerg School of Nursing in Copenhagen, Denmark; a bachelor’s degree in nursing from the Pace University School of Nursing; a master’s degree with a double major focusing on international health and clinical nurse specialist critical care from Columbia University School of Public Health; and a doctorate in nursing from the University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing. Baernholdt was also a post-doctoral fellow at the University of North Carolina School of Nursing.

Pamela Biernacki, D.N.P., RN, FNP-BC, is an assistant professor in the Department of Family and Community Health Nursing and program director for the master’s degree program. Biernacki most recently served as an adjunct clinical instructor in the Family Nurse Practitioner program at Duke University. She has also previously taught pre-licensure students and served as program chair at a community college. She maintains her clinical practice at a family practice in Williamsburg. Biernacki earned a bachelor’s degree in nursing from the University of Maryland, a master’s degree in nursing from Old Dominion University, and a Doctor of Nursing Practice degree from Duke University.

Holly Buchanan, D.N.P., RN, ANP-BC (B.S. ’02/N; M.S. ’04/N), is an assistant professor in the Department of Adult Health and Nursing Systems. Buchanan most recently served as a teaching assistant at the University of Virginia School of Nursing. She has clinical experience as a nurse practitioner at Sentara Norfolk General Hospital and at Mid Atlantic Dermatology, both in Norfolk. Buchanan earned a bachelor’s degree in biology at the University of Richmond, a bachelor’s degree and master’s degree from the VCU School of Nursing, and a Doctor of Nursing Practice degree from the University of Virginia.

Rachel Cloutier, M.S., ACNP-BC (B.S. ’10/N; M.S. ’11/N), is a clinical instructor in the Department of Adult Health and Nursing Systems. Cloutier most recently served as an acute care nurse practitioner at the Virginia Cancer Institute. Cloutier earned a bachelor’s degree in physiology from Boston University and a bachelor’s and master’s degree in nursing from the VCU School of Nursing. She was the recipient of the 2011 VCU School of Nursing Master’s Student Temple Award.

Sean Convoy, D.N.P., P-MHNP-BC, CDR, NC, USN, Retired, is an associate professor in the Department of Adult Health and Nursing Systems. He most recently served as an adjunct faculty member and assistant professor at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences in Bethesda, Md. His areas of research include challenges associated with military mental health stigma and developing military cultural competence. Convoy earned a bachelor’s degree in psychology from Elon College, a bachelor’s degree in nursing from Norfolk State University, both
a master’s degree in psychiatric nursing and a post master’s nurse practitioner certificate from the University of Virginia, and a Doctor of Nursing Practice degree from Rush University.

Kimberly Davis, M.S., RN, is a clinical instructor in the Department of Family and Community Health Nursing. Davis most recently served as adjunct faculty at the VCU School of Nursing for the past two years in four different undergraduate courses. She earned a bachelor’s degree in nursing from Saint Anselm College and a master’s degree in the nurse educator track at the VCU School of Nursing.

Piotr “Peter” Dybas is the post-award and business manager. He most recently served as the senior financial analyst in the Family Medicine and Population Health Department of the Division of Epidemiology at VCU. Dybas earned a bachelor’s degree in accounting from VCU.

Pam Parsons, (M.S., ’83/N; Cert. ’92/GNP; Ph.D., ’04/N) is a clinical associate professor and director of practice and community engagement in the Department of Family and Community Health Nursing. Parsons most served as an assistant professor in the School of Medicine and an affiliate faculty member in the School of Nursing. She is the project director of the HRSA Nursing Education, Practice, Quality and Retention-funded Richmond Health and Wellness Program for Older Adults, an interprofessional community-based program targeting low-income seniors. Parsons earned a bachelor’s degree in nursing from Old Dominion University, and a master’s in nursing, gerontological nurse practitioner post-master’s certificate, and Ph.D. in nursing from the VCU School of Nursing.

Shelly P. Smith, D.N.P., APRN-BC (M.S., ’01/N), is an assistant clinical professor in the Department of Adult Health and Nursing Systems. She most recently served as an adjunct faculty member at the VCU School of Nursing and at the University of Virginia School of Nursing. She has spent the last 13 years as a nurse practitioner in Richmond, most recently at Bon Secours. Smith earned a B.S. and D.N.P. in nursing from UVA and a master’s in nursing from the VCU School of Nursing.

Buddy Weston is the building manager. Weston most recently served as the project inspector for VCU Renovations and worked as an electrical contractor for over 20 years.
The VCU School of Nursing held its first ever white coat ceremony for new traditional students. Read more about this historic event on page 22.