

VITAL SIGNS

Spring 2017

Newsletter of the University of Mississippi School of Nursing

Volume 4: Issue 2

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SON earns Governor's Award for JPS partnership

Courtesy of: Public Affairs

Coming to the table with potential partners and listening first, then responding with solutions, is a practice familiar to the faculty and students at the University of Mississippi School of Nursing.

That engagement technique is a testament to why the school was recognized at the 2017 Governor's Award luncheon, during the Mississippi Education Partnership Conference held in Jackson. The nursing school received the District & Community Governor's Award



Accepting the Governor's Award on behalf of the school were Drs. Kate Fouquier, Josie Bidwell, Janet Harris, associate dean for practice and community engagement and Anne Norwood.

for work done in collaboration with Jackson Public Schools in school-based health and wellness clinics.

...continued on page 4

SON brings home two Nightingale Honors



Receiving the SON of the Year - BSN award were Drs. Kim Hoover, Jennifer Robinson and Marcia Rachel.

Last month, nurses around the state donned their evening gowns and black tuxedos to come together to honor deserving nurses committed to service. At an event fitting the legacy of Florence Nightingale herself, the 2017 Nightingale Awards Gala celebrated 45 nominees vying for the 18 awards.

The School of Nursing took home the award for best baccalaureate degree program in nursing with its work in education, practice, service, research/evidence-based practice, interprofessional education and simulation.

...continued on page 7



Mission: To develop nurse leaders and improve health within and beyond Mississippi through excellence in education, research, practice and service.

Dean's corner



*Dr. Marcia Rachel
Associate Dean for
Academic Affairs*

Ending an academic year always provides a nice opportunity for reflection. We have a chance to celebrate successes, examine opportunities for improvement and plan for the future. The school of nursing has much to celebrate: successful completion of an outstanding accreditation site visit and all of the preparation involved with that; record numbers of highly qualified applicants to each of our programs and tracks; preparing to graduate the first cohorts of Neonatal and Primary/Acute Care Pediatric Nurse Practitioners; winning BSN School of the Year and the Governor's Award for the outstanding work we do; and ongoing accomplishments by and recognition of our students, alumni and faculty. We also have room for improvement. With the state's current budget situation, it is essential that we maximize our resources in order to continue to prepare graduates as nurse leaders, provide quality care to the community and implement community-based research to meet our state's unique needs. Regarding the future, I believe we are well-positioned to continue doing just as our

mission statement says—to improve health within and beyond Mississippi through excellence in education, research, practice and service. Our students, faculty, staff and alumni are givers extraordinaire. They lead all other groups on campus, documenting over 32,000 hours (8,245 of these within the past 12 months)—more than 10 times the number of the next highest school on campus. With the addition of our new mobile clinic, our outreach within Jackson and the Delta has continued to make a positive impact. We touch many lives. The funded and unfunded research conducted by our faculty and students is targeting underserved populations in creative ways. We are making a difference. And, finally, the faculty and staff are shaping our future as they provide innovative education opportunities and environments for the students. Our faculty and staff are the best! On a personal note, my future involves retirement at the end of this academic year. I have truly enjoyed working with the administration, faculty, staff and students and I am convinced that our outcomes have been exceptional. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to work with such talented and committed professionals. It has provided me with a sense of pride and gratitude that is simply indescribable.

Service pins awarded

As another academic year begins to close, 14 faculty and staff were awarded service pins, including Dr. Jean Walker and Cheryl Ervin-Jones for 20 years each. Dr. Mary McNair and Eloise Lopez-Lambert were recognized for 15 years. Dr. Janet Harris, Dr. Michelle Palokas, Cindy Conrad, Lydia Fisher and Katie Hall were awarded with 10-year pins. Tammy Fordham-Bell, Mary Jackson, Jeremy LeMere, Kathleen Rhodes and Monica White were all recognized for five years of service. Thank you to all for your combined 145 years of service to UMMC and the SON!

Editor's Notes

Vital Signs, a School of Nursing internal publication, is published three times per year. Content includes alumni, faculty, staff and student achievements, as well as photos from the semester. Please direct comments, suggestions or questions to nsrecruiter@umc.edu.

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www.umc.edu/son/news/

"The School of Nursing is dedicated to developing nurse leaders through unique community-based systems serving vulnerable populations; innovative partnerships; exemplary clinical experiences across the continuum of care; evidence-based practice and a research-intensive environment; a focus on excellence in teaching and lifelong learning; and highly qualified, expert faculty."

Alumni greetings

On behalf of the University of Mississippi School of Nursing Alumni chapter, I would like to thank each of you for your involvement and support of our school. It is such an honor to be a part of the great work that takes place in our school each day, and all of you contribute to the success of that work. I am excited to provide an update on the work that has taken place among our alumni.

The meetings of our sub-committees have begun, and we are excited to have this structure in place to support our mission. Those sub-committees include special recognition; nominations and elections; Nursing Alumni Day and School of Nursing strategic map committee. These groups have been hard at work to maintain consistency and a framework for our board's decision making.

Also, members of the Nursing Alumni Board recently joined April Mann Overstreet, director of alumni affairs, and Dr. Janet Harris on a trip to visit the School of Nursing's Jackson area clinics. It was certainly an eye-opening, educational experience for all who attended. The half day outing was a fabulous opportunity to highlight the great work taking place as a result of the school's partnership with our community.

Lastly, we had an extraordinary day of learning and networking during our annual Nursing Alumni Day! It was a great time sharing knowledge with each other as well as our nursing alumni and friends. This year, we were delighted to recognize Dr. LaDonna Northington as Alumna of the Year and, of course, always enjoy our educational offerings. We were fortunate to have Dr. Ruth Taylor-Piliae, associate professor of nursing at University of Arizona College of Nursing, give our Dr. Barbara Rogers Endowed Lectureship and Oglevee Papers Keynote and Dr. Johnnie Sue Wijewardane, chair of graduate nursing at Mississippi University for Women, give our Inez Driskell Lecture.

President-elect Heather Pierce, April Mann Overstreet and I are elated about the changes taking place as we move forward, and we are excited to work alongside each of you. If you are interested in getting involved as a School of Nursing alumnus, please contact me at aarnold@umc.edu. We would love for you to join us!

Sincerely,

Amber Arnold, DNP, RN
Nursing Alumni President, 2015-17
Class of 1999 (BSN), Class of 2009 (MSN), Class of 2013 (DNP)
(601) 815-9256 • aarnold@umc.edu



*Dr. Amber Arnold,
Nursing Alumni
President*

Upcoming events

Oxford Family Day
Fri., April 21

Honors Day
Fri., May 5

Classes end
Sat., May 13

RN-BSN Orientation
Tues., May 16

**Traditional BSN
Orientation**
Wed. - Thu., May 17-18

**MSN, Post-Masters and
RN-MSN Orientation**
Wed., May 17

**Traditional BSN Pinning
Ceremony**
Thu., May 25

Commencement
Fri., May 26

Memorial Day holiday
Mon., May 29

Classes begin
Tues., May 30

Independence Day holiday
Tues., July 4

**Oxford Accelerated BSN
Pinning Ceremony**
Fri., July 14

Classes End
Fri., August 4

Mississippi Nurses Association Conference • October 17-20, 2017
MS Coast Coliseum & Convention Center, Biloxi, MS

Governor's Award (cont.)



Rosalind Basham, a SON patient care technician, gives a hearing test to senior football player Antonio Shelton at the Lanier High School Teen Wellness Clinic.

Phil Hardwick, president of the Mississippi Association of Partners in Education, also known as MAPE, said in a news release that the awards program “is an opportunity to recognize outstanding partnerships and celebrate the positive impact [they are] making in public schools across Mississippi.”

“The way we engage with our partners in the community, I think, is what really separates the School of Nursing from other partners,” said Dr. Janet Harris, professor of nursing and associate dean for practice and community engagement.

The school uses what they call an “authentic partnership model.”

“We find out what their needs are then look at what resources we have available that we could potentially bring to the table to help them in their area of particular need,” Harris said.

When the Lanier Alumni Association was concerned about the prevalence of concussions on the high school football team and hearing loss in the band, Dr. Kate Fouquier, associate professor of nursing and director of the Lanier High School Teen Wellness Clinic, organized screenings with UMMC physicians and audiologists.

“They had had a number who had gotten pretty banged up in football, for example, and they were very interested in getting some kind of baseline data and screening for those kids,” Harris said. She said that four players were identified with repeated head injuries. “The coaches, because of their increased awareness, are much more careful to pull the players out of football

games when those injuries happen,” she said.

Fouquier also worked with the high school’s band director, Michael Wynn II, and Dr. Mary Frances Johnson, assistant professor of otolaryngology and communicative sciences at the School of Medicine, to provide band members with ear plugs to reduce damage to the ears. Of the 30 band members screened, two were identified with hearing loss, one of whom required hearing aids.

After an educational survey revealed the Midtown Public Charter School was lacking in medical protocols, leaders at the school reached out to the School of Nursing for assistance. Harris and Dr. Josie Bidwell, assistant professor of nursing and director of clinical services for the UNACARE Family Health Clinic, met with the principal and chief operating officer of the charter school to devise a plan.

“We listened to their needs and responded to them within a week,” Harris said. “We provided guidelines, policies and procedures and then completed the training for the teachers so that they were able to meet the requirements that had been put before them.”

The faculty of the charter school were trained in safe medication storage, how to recognize asthma attacks and the triggers that cause them, seizure precautions, recognizing and treating diabetic hypoglycemia, and recognizing common allergies and signs of allergic reaction, just to name a few.

Harris said that in a similar instance, the Jackson Public Schools Health Care Academies were looking for a way to provide students with a certificate to make them more marketable upon graduation and to build their self-esteem within their communities.

Bidwell and Harris met with Marquita Levine, director of academies, to discuss how the existing Community Health Advocate program could assist the Health Care Academies in meeting their goals.

“They were very excited about the ‘train-the-trainer’ concept,” Harris said. “Dr. Bidwell and her team trained health and science teachers so that they could train the students in the Community Health Advocacy role.”

Governor’s Award (cont.)

Health, science and math teachers from Murrah, Jim Hill, Forest Hill and Wingfield high schools attended an eight-hour train-the-trainer event. Each teacher was then paired with a CHA Master Trainer to help design and implement CHA training within their own school.

The nursing school has been providing care to students at Johnson, Brown and Rowan elementary schools since the first school clinics opened - Johnson in 1999, Brown and Rowan in 2008. But when Dr. Anne Norwood, professor of nursing and director of school-based clinics, heard that children were arriving to school on Monday mornings with tummy aches because they had not eaten all weekend, a plan was made to remedy the situation.

With the help of the Junior League of Jackson and the Mississippi Food Network, the nursing school organized a food pantry drive to provide food to needy families. Backpacks were donated by the Junior League to be filled with food and sent home with certain students over the weekend.

According to the award entry narrative, more than 30 nursing students volunteered to provide health screenings to the students in the elementary schools. UMMC students from nursing, medicine and the pediatric resident program participated in screenings, education and demonstrations that included depression screenings, handwashing demonstrations and everything from gun and swimming safety to stranger danger and seat belt use. The Food Pantry Drive reached 140 participants and there is now a food pantry open one



Dr. Josie Bidwell offers a nutritious shake sample to an elementary school student at a Food Pantry Drive.

night a month at Brown elementary for families with children in Brown, Rowan or Johnson elementary schools.

The Governor’s Award selection committee judged entries using criteria to determine overall effectiveness of partnership activities. It’s not difficult to see why the partnership between the School of Nursing and Jackson Public Schools won, but they are not ones to boast.

“It really doesn’t matter who gets credit for the work that you do because, in any partnership, everyone is all in,” Harris said. “We’re engaged together as true partners and work together in bringing resources to the table. That is really what we have been able to do with the Jackson Public School System.”

However, the audience at the Governor’s Award luncheon thought more credit was deserved. They voted the School of Nursing and JPS partnership as the winner of the 2017 People’s Choice Award.

Four inducted into Nelson Order of Teaching Excellence



Dr. Janet Harris



Dr. Michelle Palokas



Tina Ferrell



Katie Hall

The School of Nursing had four more faculty members inducted into the University of Mississippi Medical Center’s Norman C. Nelson Order of Teaching Excellence. The Nelson Order, named after former Vice Chancellor Dr. Norman Nelson, was established to honor the institution’s finest educators. The inductees, including Dr. Janet Harris, Dr. Michelle Palokas, Tina Ferrell and Katie Hall, will receive a luncheon in their

honor and will be publicly recognized at this year’s Commencement. Dr. Harris will also represent the SON in the Regions Bank TEACH Prize competition.

PhD Student Receives Dean's Scholarship and Stipend



Carolann Risley

PhD student Carolann Risley is the most recent recipient of the School of Graduate Studies in the Health Sciences (SGSHS) Dean's Scholarship and Stipend. Risley made the decision to enter into the PhD in Nursing program after an injury to her back made it difficult to continue her work as a nurse practitioner. She says the scholarship and stipend could not have

come at a better time, allowing her to pursue her degree full time while giving her body time to heal.

Risley, the first person in her family to go to college, has overcome a great deal pursuing her education. When she was a child, she remembers her father telling her that girls were not meant for college. After high school, Risley worked and saved money to pay for her first year of college and slowly changed her father's perspective.

Risley feels that she has come full circle in her educational journey from saving every penny she had attending college to acquiring a scholarship that now pays for her to pursue her degree full time. Her passion for learning and the nursing profession completely changed her father's point of view.

Before her father passed away a few years ago, he made her promise that she would continue her educational pursuit and achieve her long-time goal of a PhD in nursing. Risley is well on her way to fulfilling that promise, "I view education as a privilege; it is a privilege to be here, and I feel so lucky to have found my place in the PhD program at UMMC," says Risley.

Last summer, Risley had the opportunity to spend a week at the National Institute of Health (NIH) in Bethesda, Maryland at a conference about Genomics and the role that nursing can play in how gene-sequencing information can be translated to help prevent or even reverse disease.

As a women's health nurse practitioner, she understands the benefits that genomics can play in women's health care. Risley was excited to attend this event that included scientists from all over the world and to see what is happening on the cutting edge of big-data science and how nurses can contribute. In her words, this was like "my Disney trip!"

Risley was also fortunate enough to attend the American Public Health Association (APHA) annual meeting last fall in Denver, Colorado. The APHA meeting brought together health professionals from all levels, including past surgeons general and heads of health organizations from around the world. She was in good company along with the former dean of the SON, Dr. Kaye Bender.

Dr. Bender, who is now the president and CEO of the Public Health Accreditation Board, was recognized last year as the SGSHS alumnus of the year. She is a strong supporter of the PhD in Nursing program. Dr. Bender provides a scholarship in the program, mentors PhD Jonas Scholar Angie Duck, facilitates national projects for PhD students and has mentored numerous faculty members at the SON.



Dr. Kaye Bender

DNP alumna selected for policy analysis program



Dr. Jessylen Age

DNP alumna Dr. Jessylen Age was selected to serve as a faculty leader in the 2016 Faculty Leaders Program in Policy Analysis at the Pardee RAND Graduate School in Santa Monica, Calif. According to the website, the program "seeks to build diversity in public policy through strong engagement of faculty leaders across the United States and in particular at colleges and universities serving students underrepresented in public policy. Faculty leader fellowships are awarded to 10-12 selected faculty to participate in a week-long policy analysis summer program held at the graduate school." Interested applicants for the 2017 program this July can email facultyleaders@rand.org for more information.

SON assists with free screenings for women

Students and faculty from the SON volunteered their time to assist in an interdisciplinary collaboration that provided free cervical cancer screenings to women in the community earlier this year. PhD student Carolann Risley was instrumental in coordinating the SON's involvement. UMMC saw a need for providing these types of screenings to help women who do not have access to this kind of care or simply cannot afford it. Increasing these screenings can help reduce deaths since many cervical abnormalities caught early can be treated before they become malignant. That is where UMMC and its nurses stepped in to care for those who are trying to care for themselves but sometimes have to forgo their own health needs in order to take care of others. Risley credits Patricia McDaniel, COO of University Hospitals and a nurse herself, who was vital in navigating many of the obstacles that needed to be overcome in order to make this event happen. "This program has established ways we can start to break down the barriers to change the culture of health and how we provide services outside of the fee-for-service model," said Risley. "A precedent has been set on how to continue these types of services in the future."



Carolann Risley (white coat, center) pictured with School of Nursing faculty and Traditional BSN students.

Nightingale awards gala (cont.)



Dr. Josie Bidwell with her Outstanding Community Nurse of the Year award.

"I am extremely proud to be a part of the SON family," said Dr. LaDonna Northington, assistant dean for undergraduate programs. "We have dedicated and passionate nursing faculty who give 100% and then 'more' to ensure our students the best educational opportunities possible."

One such faculty member was recognized for her outstanding service as a community nurse. Dr. Josie Bidwell, an assistant professor and director of clinical services at UNACARE Family Health Center, has proven time and time again her invaluable commitment to her profession, her practice and her community. Serving as the new host to the Southern Remedy Healthy and Fit weekly live radio show, she continues to run the Cook Right, Live Well teaching kitchen and expanded the community health advocate program to local Jackson Public Schools as a Master Trainer.

A firm believer in wellness and meeting people where they are, she has been instrumental with the Wellness Initiative at UMMC and serves on the medical advisory committee with UMMC-owned and operated University Wellness Centers across the metro area.

"To me the greatest honor in the world is to be able to serve the people of Mississippi," said Bidwell. "I do not really think I do anything worthy of an award. I am just trying to do the right thing for the person in front of me. When you work with such amazing populations of people and you see the struggles they face every day, it would be irresponsible to not help. My hope is this recognition sheds light on the issues affecting the health of our fellow Mississippians and spurs others to action. Nursing and medicine do not occur in the pages of a textbook, in the hospital, or in the four walls of a clinic. True health care takes place in the community, at church, in the grocery store, or in a parking lot. I hope that students see that in order to care for someone you have to serve and that is when true learning occurs."

Also nominated from the SON was BSN graduate and Oxford instructor Neeli Kirkendall for Faculty Member of the Year. Kirkendall was awarded the DAISY Faculty Award from the School of Nursing in July 2016.

Northington named 2017 Alumna of the Year



*Dr. LaDonna
Northington*

After nominating two different faculty members for the same honor, Dr. LaDonna Northington opened a surprising email that declared her the winner of the very award for which she had nominated others.

“I am deeply grateful, honored and humbled to receive this award,” said Northington. “As an alumnus of the school, I can truly say that being part

of the SON family is dear to my heart. I am a two-time graduate (BSN 1979 and MSN 1987).”

As the assistant dean for the undergraduate program and former director of the Traditional BSN program, Northington is no stranger to the many community-involved activities that go on within any given day at the School of Nursing.

“The Alumni Association encourages graduates of the school to give back to the school,” Northington said. “This giving can be in the form of money (i.e., scholarships, dues, donations, etc.), time (participating in annual reunions, research day, luncheons, volunteering as standardized patients for student learning experiences, etc.) [and] resources (equipment,

referrals, places, etc.). The association promotes activities that allow alums to meet, mix, mingle and/or collaborate at various venues throughout the year.”

Northington goes on to say that these such opportunities help to encourage former students and current students to become more involved in the future and sustainability of the SON. Involvement in these activities allow alumni to give of themselves and share personal experiences that might spark the same in another person and future nurse.

“Being recognized for participating in an organization that promotes a school of nursing that I love is easy for me,” she said. “I am indeed grateful and honored for this recognition. It will hold a special place in my career achievements.”

Special thanks goes out from her to Dr. Audwin Fletcher, the 2015 Alumnus of the Year, for submitting her award-winning nomination.

“There is no greater feeling than one received when friends and colleagues support each other,” said Northington. “I am truly blessed with great friends, great colleagues and to be a part of this UMMC School of Nursing and the Alumni Association.”

Reflections from a clinical research nurse



Andrew Majeste

*Courtesy of: Andrew Majeste,
DNP student*

As a doctor of nursing practice student, I think the clinical doctorate is the perfect marriage of clinical practice and clinical research.

Throughout my time in the DNP program at UMMC, I have learned fundamental skills that aid me in my everyday practice as a clinical research nurse. For example, this semester I am taking DNP finance which has enabled me to better understand the financial aspect of clinical trials.

Clinical trials can have a wide array of sponsors including the National Institutes of Health (NIH); the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS); the Department of Defense (DOD); and varying pharmaceuticals and biotechnology companies. The coursework covered in the DNP finance course has enabled me to better navigate the complex financial requirements each sponsor requires.

While research can seem overwhelming at the undergraduate and graduate level, there is immeasurable value in understanding research design and methodology. As research continues to guide clinical practice, as it should, nurses and nursing students should look for opportunities to expand their knowledge of both nursing research and clinical trials research.

SON collaborates with Joanna Briggs Institute



Dr. Robin Christian pictured with Dr. Amy Forsythe at the JBI conference in Adelaide, Australia. Also, Christian pictured with one of Australia's most-iconic animals - the Koala bear.

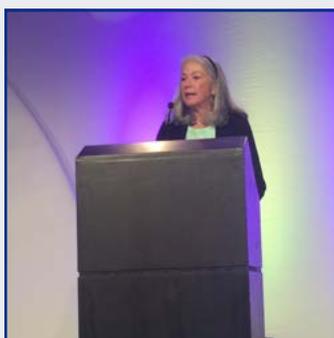
In 2015, the SON established a partnership with the Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI) at the University of Adelaide, Australia. JBI is an international not-for-profit research and development center that collaborates with over 70 entities across the world. According to their website, "the Institute and its collaborating entities promote and support the synthesis, transfer and utilization of evidence through identifying feasible, appropriate, meaningful and effective health-care practices to assist in the improvement of health-care outcomes globally."

The SON has established itself as an affiliate center with the institute to provide access to robust, evidence-based practice and research tools for faculty, students and community partners. The center provides an opportunity for vibrant, collaborative learning and research by faculty and students through interaction with real world, health care practice problems. JBI methodology has also been incorporated into the DNP curriculum.

"This collaboration is offering DNP students skills that they have never used before and teaching students how to look up information, how to answer a clinical question, and then what to do with that information once it is obtained," said Dr. Robin Christian, associate professor and founding JBI member for the SON. DNP students are required to complete systematic reviews that are publicized in the JBI database. To date, three current DNP students, Robert Ware, Danny Stuart and Rachel Lee have all been published. DNP graduate Dr. Amy Forsythe was also published. Last fall, Forsythe attended the 20th annual international JBI conference in Adelaide along with Christian.

"Attending JBI really opened my eyes to the caliber of professionals who contribute to the organization," said Forsythe. "I was so pleased to see the value the institute placed on all aspects of evidenced-based research and practice. Professionals from medicine, nursing, education, research and statistics were all incorporated."

Harris selected to March of Dimes national council



Dr. Janet Harris speaks at the March of Dimes National Meeting in Fort Lauderdale.

Dr. Janet Harris, associate dean of practice and community engagement, was nominated by the Executive Director of the March of Dimes (MOD) Dina Ray to serve on the National Volunteer Leadership Council. Joining the council, she became the first volunteer from Mississippi to serve at the national level. The council's role is to assist local boards to develop leaders in the local markets to promote the efforts of the MOD. This includes assistance with tool development, strategic planning and leadership development.

"I became involved in the [MOD] as a child – walking door to door collecting dimes," said Harris. "My older sister had polio as a child before the MOD research led to the development of the polio vaccine. As an adult, I became involved with the MOD in the early '80s. I had a healthy child of my own and wanted to give back – so I agreed to chair (1982) the walk that was then called the WalkAmerica."

Over 30 years later, she co-chaired the 2014 walk with Dr. Terri Gillespie and raised the most money ever in Mississippi, up to that time. Harris has been on the Mississippi board since and currently serves as market board chair. "It is very exciting work; and I am honored to serve in this capacity," Harris explains.

Fall/spring semester events from Oxford

Accelerated BSN students on the Oxford campus participated in even more community events to not only benefit the Oxford community but also disaster relief for the Louisiana communities affected by recent floods. Upcoming events include an evidence-based practice poster presentation at Baptist Memorial Hospital - North Mississippi on Tuesday, April 18 from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. and then Family Day on the Oxford campus will be Friday, April 21. All family members are invited to come and tour the school to see what happens in a day as a SON student!



Several students participated in disaster relief for Louisiana by collecting and loading supplies that would be taken to help those who were affected by the flood.



The incoming Oxford Accelerated BSN class committed to and signed the SON Code of Honorable and Professional Behavior during the Honor Code ceremony last September.



Collection Drive

Benefiting students at the Lafayette Middle School

Bring items by December 8th

- Tums, Acetaminophen, Ibuprofen, etc.
- Band – Aids and bandage supplies
- Cough Drops
- Deodorant – travel size
- Feminine products
- Grab – n – go breakfast items

*Box in Kitchen

Students wrapped up the fall semester with community events including Wellness on Wheels with blood pressures checks, blood glucose monitoring and general health/wellness education; Operation [Flu] Immunization with the School of Pharmacy; packing shoe boxes for Operation Christmas Child; and a collection drive for the school nurses at Lafayette Middle School.



In February, Accelerated BSN students on the Oxford Campus participated in a two-week series of interprofessional education with students from the School of Pharmacy and School of Applied Sciences (dietetics and speech language students), pre-health professions and Oxford MSN program. All of the students joined together in small group collaboration and simulation experiences. Above, an interdisciplinary huddle between nursing, pharmacy, dietetics and speech language students discuss a case. Annabeth Pardue, an MSN nurse educator student, and Matt Peugh, an Oxford Accelerated BSN student, collaborate on a simulated patient at the bedside. Lastly, further discussion is continued away from the bedside.

Career fair ignites opportunities for nursing students



Farrah Banks talks with Traditional BSN seniors Megan Christy and Megan Bauerle.

Courtesy of: Public Affairs

Goal number one for the University of Mississippi School of Nursing is to train excellent nurses. Coming in a close second is helping ensure these qualified, new nurses find good jobs upon graduation. Helping to make that goal a reality is the Ignite Career Fair, which for the first time was a collaboration between the nursing school and the University of Mississippi Career Center in Oxford.

For more than 10 years, the School of Nursing has been hosting the event that features recruiters from hospitals, clinics and organizations from Mississippi and surrounding states for an afternoon to meet prospective employees from the ranks of junior and senior nursing students.

This year's fair was the second led by Farrah Banks, director of student affairs and service learning in the school. Attending were 200 students and 12 employers, including nurse managers from the Medical Center.

"Last year was my first year to do the event," Banks said. "I started in January, and the event was in February. I didn't have time to revamp it the way I wanted to, to make it my own."

This year, however, was a different story. Banks teamed up with Jonathan Harrington, associate director of employer services at Ole Miss, to provide nursing students on the Jackson campus with the full range of career services available to their Oxford counterparts.

"I had participated in events sponsored by the Career

Center on the Oxford campus as a recruiter," Banks said. She was impressed by the organization of the events and how students had online access to information about the vendors who were attending the events.

"So, I thought, 'why can't we do that here in Jackson?' Jonathan and I had a conversation July of last year to talk about how we could work together to make this happen," Banks said.

"One of the systems that we use here in the Career Center is EmployUM," Harrington said. "That is our software system that allows students to see job postings and see employers that recruit here and on campus."

Through the online system, students can research employment opportunities, upload resumes and potential employers can upload job opportunities. The benefits provided by the collaboration between the two campuses didn't end there. Harrington said that part of what the Career Center does for Ole Miss students is help prepare them for that first meeting with a potential employer.

"We put together workshops for students to teach them the necessary skills of how to research companies and how to approach them at campus events," he said. "For a career fair to be more effective, students need to do their homework. They need to research the companies that are present. They need to really understand what jobs are available and be able to approach the employer."

As a pilot program, Harrington took part in the Leadership Retreat for nursing students. He presented information to the student leaders about how to prepare for a career fair. Banks said that plans are in the works to continue these workshops in the coming months for the traditional nursing students.

Another first for the career fair were onsite interviews.

"This is the first time that we've ever provided onsite interviews with the Ignite employers. We scheduled an optional time frame to interview students that they meet during the career fair," Banks said.

... continued on page 12

Ignite Career Fair (cont.)

“We sectioned off a private location in the student union for employers to meet with students for a one-on-one conversation,” explained Banks.

Senior nursing student Lovel Lockhart was one of the many students awaiting her interview time. She and classmates Keyara Freeman, Jasmine Stasher and Adreana Crosby were dressed professionally in suits, appreciative of the opportunity to learn more about career prospects available to new graduates.

“Career fairs like this are great for me because it gives me a little bit more information about different departments and different types of nursing,” Lockhart said. “You kind of get a feel for what each institution has, which ones don’t really fit into your lifestyle and which ones can give you what you want from the nursing field.”

Ramie Polk, a nurse manager from the stroke program in the neurology department, said that she is looking to fill 10 nursing positions on 4 South in the Adult Hospital. Taking part in Ignite for the first time, she said that she appreciates being given the opportunity to have conversations with so many potential hires at once.

“It’s so hard to get good applicants, and this way you get to meet them and talk to them,” Polk said. “You get to see different personalities at one time.”



Seniors, from left, Jasmine Stasher, Keyara Freeman, Lovel Lockhart and Adreana Crosby talk with recruiter Shelly Francka about career opportunities with Mercy Nurses in Springfield, Missouri.

The collaboration has afforded the two campuses an opportunity to fulfill one of UM Chancellor Jeffrey Vitter’s goals: more interaction between Oxford and the Medical Center. Toni Avant, director of the Career Center, said that she sees the collaboration lasting for years to come.

“We are very excited about the collaboration between the two schools,” Avant said. “We will be working with Farrah on an event for the accelerated program on the Oxford campus in June. It is a continuum. I think it’s great!”

In Memoriam



The last six months have seen the deaths of three alumna and one former faculty member. Last November, Judith Mayr Fitzpatrick, a BSN class of 1976 and MSN class of 1978, passed away at her home. After her time at UMMC, she went on to earn her PhD in educational psychology from Mississippi State University and worked as a marriage and family counselor. A month later, Brenda Kay (Jemerson) Jones, a BSN class of 1973, passed away at her home. After graduating, she became a staff nurse at the newly opened NICU at UMMC and later retired to own a special occasions business. At the beginning of the year, Mary Hellon Bramlett Retchless (BSN Class of 1959) passed away. She served in the U. S. Army during the Korean conflict after teaching psychiatric and public health nursing at Keuka College in New York. Former faculty member Dr. Sherry Felder lost an eight-year fight with cancer towards the end of January. She also served as director

of student affairs and started the nursing program on the Oxford campus. In mid-March, a 1998 BSN graduate and Clinton resident Ronnie Craig White also passed away. November also marked the one-year anniversary of the death of Dr. Sharon Wyatt who succumbed to her own battle with cancer.