The More Things Change….

The School of Nursing and Health Studies Reorganizes

As a result of a college-level reorganization effort, NIU nursing has exciting news! On July 1st, the stand-alone School of Nursing was re-established when the School of Nursing and Health Studies was dissolved. This change is a result of the College of Health and Human Sciences transitioning from its former composition of three schools and one department to the anticipated composition of five schools and one department over the course of the next two years.

NIU’s original School of Nursing was founded in 1959 under the leadership of Dr. Annette Lefkowitz, with its first class graduating in 1963. In the fall of 2007, the nursing, public health, and health education programs were combined to form a School of Nursing and Health Studies, as the three programs were deemed similar enough in terms of professional foci and research opportunities to give grounds for the merger.

Now, nine years later, the decision to create a stand-alone School of Nursing is based on several factors such as the size of the nursing program in relation to others in the college and the potential for growth. The public health and health education programs will join a newly formed school called the School of Health Studies, which will also house the nutrition program and the medical lab services program.
Nursing Summer Internships Wrap up

Nursing summer internships have it all – students gain knowledge and skills, get experience in a clinical setting and even get paid. The dividends may continue to result down the road, too, when students look to enter the workforce. This summer, 27 undergraduate nursing students participated in the summer internship program at four regional hospital sites. The internships were conducted at the following sites:

- Kishwaukee Hospital (DeKalb)
- Advocate Sherman (Elgin)
- St. Alexius (Hoffman Estates)
- Alexian Brothers (Elk Grove Village)

These internships have historically been a joint venture between the partnering hospitals and a grant from the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE), which was managed by NIU’s Career Services office.

This year, however, due to state funding issues, the IBHE grant was not funded. Rather than cancel the summer internship program, the Chair of the School of Nursing and Health Studies, Dr. Jan Strom, sought another approach. With the approval and support of Dean Derryl Block at the College of Health and Human Sciences, the School funded the IBHE-portion of the costs with departmental funds. Dr. Strom said, “This internship program provides such a rich and impactful experience for our students. We were fortunate this year that our generous alumni and friends provided the support needed to fund the internship this year.”

Students worked three 8-hour days each week over four weeks. They observed and worked in a wide range of areas, to include emergency rooms, pediatrics, and intensive care. Nursing student Avonnaah Whitfield said, “As a nursing student the internship was extremely instrumental in my growth. I grew in my skill set, critical thinking as well as my overall bedside manner. I cannot begin to explain how much I took away from the experience and I wish every nursing student had the opportunity to participate in one. I was able to perform CPR multiple times and perform skills that I’ve only read about and/or observed. I feel like my confidence was enhanced immensely and I am more excited than nervous going into my last semester of nursing school.”
“This is only a test…..”

Eighteen NIU nursing students volunteered their time to assist with a state-wide disaster exercise on June 15th. DeKalb County held its own disaster drill as part of this state-wide effort at the DeKalb County Health Department building.

This type of large-scale drill occurs every 4-5 years, so considerable planning and effort went into it, with several multiple agency planning sessions occurring over the past six months. The scenario was based on a bioterrorism attack using Anthrax. Nursing students played different roles in the process, from members of the healthcare team to victims or concerned citizens. NIU nursing instructor Mary Gawrys organized the nursing student volunteers and said their efforts helped DeKalb County in meeting their objectives for the drill.

SoN Visits Elementary School

Frank W. Reilly Elementary School 8th Grader, Grace Zambrano had an interesting assignment and reached out to the NIU School of Nursing for a little help. She was tasked with coordinating a presentation about nursing in higher education from a specific school in the region – in this case, NIU.

The presentation was to be given to about 300 6-8th graders, so she contacted NIU to see if someone would be willing to come to the school and speak about nursing and NIU. Kris Selig, Director of Nursing Laboratories and Human Patient Simulation at NIU, and Jessica Madrigal, Simulation Laboratory Specialist, made the trip into the city to speak with the kids.

Selig brought a baby simulator, which started crying during the presentation. She asked a student to come up and try to calm the baby – which then stopped crying but turned blue in the face! Selig talked the students through some possible problems and they decided oxygen was the best approach – and the baby recovered! Grace’s teacher, Mario Rueda, said the presentation made quite a difference in the program for them.
Thank you, Clinical Partners!

This month the School of Nursing and Health Studies hosted a “thank you” breakfast for clinical agency partners who play such a critical role in nursing and public health students’ education.

The attendees consisted of hospital program coordinators, preceptors and program directors, among others. After a catered breakfast, Dr. Strom asked for some feedback (see below).

List the top three reasons your organization accepts NIU students:

- It’s a chance to develop and assess potential future employees
- To support a collaborative relationship with NIU
- To provide future nurses and public health students information about, and experience in, our organization
- Because we are committed to nurse education and the profession

List the top three reasons your organization accepts NIU students:

- They participate heavily in our daily activities
- They bring enthusiasm and fresh perspectives to the field
- They bring fresh eyes, curiosity and can help rejuvenate a department stuck in complacency
- Because they ask a lot of questions, it forces us to be sharp and current on our practice
It Ain’t Easy Being Green.. Or is it?

The School of Nursing will be accepting NIU’s challenge to “go green” through the Green Office Initiative program this fall. The program requires offices to adhere to select items from a menu of green initiatives, qualifying them for bronze, silver or gold level designation. More information on the program can be found at:


Lots of options for future students; NIU’s School of Nursing has a lot to offer… to include a very handsome mascot.

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….as in the number nursing programs in the state of Illinois.

http://www.free-4u.com/nursing/Illinois-Nursing-Schools.cfm

We’re looking for nursing Graduate Assistants for the fall!

To apply, go to:

http://www.niu.edu/grad/_pdf/assistantship_application.pdf
Welcome Aboard!

As we approach the next academic year, we will be welcoming a number of new faculty and instructors. Below are just a few and more will be highlighted as the summer progresses.

Kathy Chambers
Instructor

A true Huskie, Kathy earned both her undergraduate and graduate degrees from NIU. She was born in Chicago and spent much of her childhood in Cincinnati. She now lives in Aurora. She is a Family Nurse Practitioner and works for the Advocate Medical Group in a retail clinic in Montgomery. This coming semester, Kathy will be teaching the clinical course for mental health nursing. In her spare time, she enjoys going hiking and spending time with her two granddaughters and her dogs. She likes listening to music and reading as well. Welcome to Team Nursing, Kathy!

Caren Corrigan
Instructor

Caren was born and raised in Aurora and now lives in Plainfield. She earned her bachelor’s degree in nursing from Aurora University and completed a graduate degree in nursing here at NIU. She’s worked as a nurse practitioner in gastroenterology for the past seven years, but also has experience in critical care, the endoscopy lab and as a nurse educator at Edward Hospital in Naperville. She will be teaching pathophysiology this coming semester. She is a runner and enjoys spending time with her family and friends at the lake. She also has a love-hate relationship with golf. She has three children – Bryce (24), Carlie (21) and Brady (17). Welcome to Team Nursing, Caren!
Cindi Moller
Instructor

Cindi will be joining the team this fall to Med-Surg II (NURS 333) at Advocate Sherman for us. She originally graduated from Elgin Community College, then completed her bachelor’s degree at the University of Saint Francis. Later, she completed the nursing graduate program at NIU. She was born in Elgin and spent most of her career working in critical care. When not with her family, she likes to walk, hike, golf, read and boat. Welcome to Team Nursing, Cindi!

Faculty Week is August 15-19
...summer will eventually end.

The School of Nursing welcomes your donations. Please go to www.niufoundation.org to donate online or contact Christine Radtke at cradtke@niu.edu or (815) 753-1390.