



Urban Health Program Newsletter

Welcome from Dean Joan Shaver

As we begin our 2006 academic year, I WELCOME you as new and continuing Urban Health students. At the UIC College of Nursing, we are about 'Advancing Nursing Leadership' for health in Illinois and beyond. We are top-ten ranked nationally and are the lead source of nurse talent for practice (entry-level and advanced) and academia (teachers of nursing), certainly in Illinois. Our graduates at every level are among the most preferred candidates for employment in healthcare and we know they are making a difference to healthcare. We eagerly look forward to counting you among our alumni upon graduation.

I know that you will find your studies here challenging, but through this program we have designed, you will receive support to optimize your success. A key contact is Dawn Carter to whom we are grateful for her enthusiastic creation of an Urban Health Program matched to your needs. I urge you to be knowledgeable about the program and what it offers and to partake of every opportunity to hone your leadership

skills. Leadership is not about position, but is a state of mind and behavioral execution of skills in one's professional practice. Anytime you are working with someone to bring about synchrony with ways of thinking to shape positive behaviors, e.g., patient self-care, you are applying leadership skills.



Having a student body that represents the widest variety of backgrounds and ethnic heritage is an overt goal for us. Those of you in the Urban Health Program make a major contribution to that goal and to our environment, so I thank you for choosing UIC CON to attain your degree in nursing. I look forward to knowing how your experience at the UIC CON unfolds and hope that you will find it enriching as you attain or expand your nursing credentials. Please feel welcome to communicate with me directly on issues that you think need special attention. I can be reached at jshaver@uic.edu, or by appointment and even impromptu if my office door is open (Room 118).

Unwilling to Settle for Less by Dr. Connie Dallas

Welcome to your best year ever at UIC! This academic year begins with thoughts and prayers for the thousands of persons affected by Hurricane Katrina. Yet, even while we gather our strength to tackle new challenges associated with helping others recover from Katrina, we cannot forget the ongoing challenges of eliminating health care disparities that affect people of color all over the United States. As professional nurses and the largest group of health providers, we should be unwilling to allow the US to settle for less than the complete elimination of health disparities. The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) identified six areas of health care in which there are significant differences in morbidity and mortality outcomes for persons who are Caucasian in comparison to those from African American, Latino/Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, and American Indian/Alaskan Native racial/ethnic groups. Those six areas of disparity are: infant mortality, immunizations, cancer, cardiac disease, diabetes, and HIV/AIDS.

Patients who receive culturally competent health care and are more satisfied with their health care may utilize health care services regularly and follow prescribed regimens, factors that may decrease health disparities. There is growing evidence that health providers who share the same race/ethnicity as their patients, may be more adept at providing culturally competent health care and increasing patients' overall satisfaction with their health care in comparison with providers who do not. The purpose of the College of Nursing (CON) Urban Health Program (UHP) is to recruit and retain members from under-represented minority groups for the nursing profession, thereby increasing the number of health providers who share the race/ethnicity of their patients.

The more that you, as a member of a racial/ethnic minority group learn about providing excellent health care, the more educational and research skills that you attain, the greater your ability to bring excellent health care services that can counteract disparities in morbidity and mortality. As members of the UHP, you have virtually unlimited opportunities to use every available resource at UIC to improve the quality of your educational experience. We implore you to take advantage of everything that a top-ranked college of nursing has to offer. Contact your Departmental Faculty Liaison regularly; work as a research/teaching assistant; attend available conferences, workshops, and brown bags; utilize the Writing Center; learn better test-taking skills; and above all else, strive for excellence!

This year, as you work hard to complete your many assignments, while you take care of everyone else, make sure that you also take the time to improve the quality of your educational experience. Admittedly, most of you have many important responsibilities outside of your education that compete for your time. But sometimes the grade that you settle for is not the best grade that you could have achieved with a little more effort. Try for the higher grade this time. Strive for excellence. Make this your best year ever and be unwilling to settle for anything less.

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Dr. Barbara Berger Joins the UHP Team



Dr. Barbara Berger, an assistant clinical professor in the Department of Medical-Surgical Nursing, joined the UHP team this fall semester. Dr. Berger teaches in both the undergraduate and graduate programs, including coordinating and lecturing in courses on health assessment; research and statistics; and pathophysiology. She also lectures on research utilization and evidence-based practice as they apply to nursing.

Dr. Berger's research has focused primarily on people infected with HIV. She had developed an instrument to measure stigma as it is perceived by persons with HIV and has studied factors influencing HIV patients' adherence to their complex antiretroviral regimens. She has also collected and analyzed data for research utilization projects at the University of Illinois at Chicago Medical Center. She is currently investigating nonpharmacological interventions to improve sleep among midlife women.

Dr. Berger is certified as an AIDS-Care Registered Nurse (ACRN) and actively

participates in the Chicago chapter of the Association of Nurses in AIDS Care (CNAC), including co-leading an HIV journal club for CNAC members and others. She is also a member of the HIV/AIDS Nursing Certification Board (HANCNB, the organization that certifies nurses in AIDS care) and chairs the HANCNB Recertification Committee.

Dr. Berger is a great addition to the UHP team and is looking forward to working with the UHP program and students.

UHP Fall 2005 Welcome Reception

By Dawn Carter



It has become a tradition to kick off the new academic year and welcome new and returning UHP students at the Annual UHP Welcome Reception at Pompei. This event has proved to be a great way to begin what will be a challenging and rewarding year for students. It's also a fun and social occasion for students, faculty and staff to get to know each other outside of the College of Nursing. Many undergraduate and graduate UHP students joined the college this year and many returning students are one year closer to reaching their educational and professional goals.

This year, several special guests attended the welcome reception including Mr. Joel Shinault, Ms. Alicia Rodriguez, Ms. Cecelia Downs, Mr. Wes Bauer and Ms. Whitney Lynn. Mr. Shinault, a Recruiter and Admission Counselor for the UIC African American Academic Network (AAAN), spoke about the services that AAAN provides, including: personal effectiveness development, organized group study programs and a study center with textbooks, practice exams, books and magazines.

Ms. Rodriguez, a Recruitment and Admission Counselor for the UIC Latin American Recruitment and Educational Services (LARES) Program, spoke about the services that LARES provides, including: a survival guide for Latino students at UIC,



scholarships, a six-week bridge program for incoming freshman students and a peer mentoring program.

Ms. Downs, an Academic Skills Specialist for the UIC Academic Center for Excellence (ACE), spoke about the new online resources available on the ACE website that are tailored for health profession students, including: time management, stress management and study tips from current nursing students. These resources can be found at the following website: <http://www.vcsa.uic.edu/MainSite/departments/ace/home/Health+Professional.htm>. Ms. Downs is also available to meet with students one-on-one for academic assistance.

Mr. Bauer, a tutor at the UIC Writing Center, spoke about the writing assistance that the center provides, including: help with papers, dissertations/thesis and APA format, as well as helping students become better writers. Students can schedule one-on-one appointments with a tutor for one hour and it's free!

Ms. Lynn, a UIC Medical Student, spoke about her experience in the College of Medicine Big Sib, Little Sib program. She participated in the program last year as a Little Sib and will be a Big Sib to a new Medical Student this year. Ms. Lynn encouraged nursing students to participate in the new College of Nurs-

ing Big Sib, Little Sib program. She found it tremendously helpful when she was a new student and is looking forward to returning the favor and helping out a new medical student.

The welcome reception was a great evening filled with conversation, laughter, great food and fun! I'm looking forward to welcoming the new and returning nursing students to the College of Nursing and the Urban Health Program at



Interview with Phyllis Pelt, MS, RN



1. What is your role in the College of Nursing Urban Health Program?

My role in the UHP has been to serve as the liaison for the Urban Health Program for the Public Health, Mental Health and Administrative Nursing Department (PMA). I have a unique perspective since I am a graduate of the College of Nursing (Undergrad class of 1967 and graduate class of 1995). Consequently, I have personally experienced many of the challenges inherit in the

process of successful completion of programs at the CON. Currently, there are three African American full time faculty in the college of Nursing. I think that many times minority students seek me just to be gently encouraged and reminded to “hang in there.” The sign on my door indicates that I am a CON alumni which is a discussion starter for students who are perplexed and need a listening ear or referrals to pre-existing resources.

2. What is your area of focus in the nursing profession?

My passion is prevention. This guided my professional transition into the school nurse specialty. Like many school nurses, my previous nursing experiences in the Intensive Care and Recovery Rooms at Hines Veterans Administration, The Coronary Care, Ob- Gyne, Family Planning, Medical Surgical and Public Health experiences enhanced my role as a school nurse manager and public health educator. In 1998, I was “drafted” into working with my mentor, Dr. Julia Cowell, who was a pioneer in the initial online development of school nurse theory and trends course work at the CON. The rest is “history” as they say.

3. Where did you receive your nursing credentials?

Wilson Jr. College (which is now Kennedy King, one of Chicago’s Community Colleges) is where I completed my pre-nursing courses. I am the 2nd oldest of 8 children and needed scholarship support to be able to live in the residence halls, which was the recommendation of my CON advisor. I graduated from UIC CON in 1967 with a BSN and received a MS in nursing from UIC CON in 1995. My school nurse credentials were earned at National Lewis University and I completed some doctoral course work at Rush university.

4. Tell me about the recognition that you have received during your years of service as a school and community nurse, such as the award that you recently received.

Much to my amazement, I have received several recognitions as a school nurse, leader and educator. I am most proud of the the

Cardew-Mullane Award in Clinical Excellence (1995), since I was personally taught by Dean Emily Cardew and was mentored by Dean Mary Kelly Mullane as an undergraduate here at the CON.

Other awards include:

- The US. Department of Health and Human Services Honorary Award for an Innovative Research Proposal that focused on the needs of Grandparents Serving as Primary Caregivers of their Grandchildren.

- Nursing Spectrum, Outstanding Nurse of the Year (1998)
- Most recently (June 2005) the National Association of School Nurses awarded me with the Outstanding School Nurse Educator award. This award was given for the first time this year and brings attention to the fact that school nurses nationwide need to take advantage of opportunities to learn and use “best practices” and standards in order to meet the diverse needs of populations in a culturally effective and proactive way. While in Washington, DC to receive the award, I was able to join with over 1,000 nurses who went to the “Hill” and advocated for the health service needs of the students we serve across the nation. This experience included an opportunity to talk to (and be photographed with) Senators Obama and Durbin about the challenges school nurses face in meeting the needs of students living in communities where resources are fragmented.

5. Where would you like to see the UHP go in the next 5 years?

I would like to see the UHP partner with the core classes at the CON to interact with elementary students and their families to share the range of nursing opportunities available today as well as strategies for becoming a BSN prepared nurse. I would like to see strengthening of a one-on-one mentoring program for students in the nursing curriculum at the CON. I would also like to see a renewed commitment of CON staff to engage in self reflection and discussion around the topic of cultural sensitivity and cultural effectiveness. For example time set aside at every department’s retreat for faculty to discuss issues of culture that impact our teaching and the success of our students especially underrepresented minorities.



Phyllis Pelt is currently the Director of the School Nurse Certificate Program and a Clinical Instructor at the CON. She helped pioneer the web-based format of the program. This graduate level school nurse specialty program prepares students for leadership roles in school communities, as well as the Illinois State Board of Education Type 73 School Nurse Certificate. This innovative and comprehensive program has expanded career development and knowledge dissemination far beyond the boundaries of a campus. Through weekly virtual chat sessions, Phyllis challenges school nurses in their professional role. Care of special needs children, early identification of hidden health problems in student populations, as well as awareness of the legal determinants are current standards of school nursing practice. Her work in school communities includes a focus on supportive services and advocacy for grandparents who are serving as the primary care givers of their grandchildren.

Phyllis Pelt is passionate about the recruitment and retention of gifted and talented minorities into nursing specialties and engages our community nursing students in ongoing intergenerational outreach efforts to attract “Future Nurses of America”.



NBNA Conference Recap

By *Natasha Jackson*



This summer, I had the opportunity to attend the 33rd Annual National Black Nurses Association Conference, at the Marriot in downtown Chicago. It was truly a delightful experience that incorporated nursing, African-Americans, the UIC

College of Nursing Urban Health Program and issues in healthcare that are critical in minority populations. I was able to learn and gain valuable knowledge about what minorities face in the healthcare arena. I attended a seminar with Sheon MacNeill, who is the undergraduate UHP Student Liaison, about women's health and how important education, prevention and early detection are with all health related problems. This seminar was great and informative! I meet many people and never knew there were so many African-American nurses interested in becoming the best! I was surprised and happy about the number of people that I saw at the conference and I met a woman who is a CPR instructor. We have been in contact with one another since the conference.

I had the opportunity to also have lunch with Dr. Connie Dallas, the new UHP Director, and Dr. Eva Smith, who retired as UHP Director in December of 2004. I was so

ecstatic to have eaten artichokes for the first time in my life. I did not know how to eat them but with Dr. Dallas' help I learned very quickly! I found that she loves artichokes and I enjoyed them as well. The restaurant is named Bandera's and they have great cheeseburgers! Over lunch, I was able to hear both of these inspiring and motivational women talk about their research studies with differences in thoughts and experiences. I wish I could have captured this moment on tape as it's historical in my eyes. To see both of these well-known women together was fascinating and enlightening! I was honored to be in their presence.

Back at the Marriot, I joined Tracy Bartholomew (Assistant to the Associate Dean for Academic Programs at the CON) to help out at the recruitment booth, as the UIC College of Nursing was a sponsor of the conference. We had an excellent time together giving out free Urban Health Program bags to high school students who attended the conference and are interested in healthcare professions. We also gave other attendees information about one of the best nursing school's in the country – UIC! I was happy to converse with Gladys Wildon, a graduate nursing student at UIC, and her daughter who is following in her footsteps and is enrolled at a nursing school in Kentucky.

Overall my experience was tremendous! I really feel like I gained a vast amount of knowledge about minority health issues. To see all of the lovely nurses in red dresses

was absolutely beautiful. This was in honor of the "Heart Truth Campaign" for heart disease, which is the number one killer among women. I really feel that the theme for the conference was well articulated with all of the various seminars—"Clinical Nursing Practices to Improve Patient Outcomes." By the time the conference was over, I knew that I would like to become a lifetime member of National Black Nurses Association when I graduate from nursing school. I definitely hope to help people understand and implement their skills to improve patient outcomes.

To the Urban Health Program:
I want to thank you for this experience.



Upcoming Events

Analyzing Multiple Choice Questions During an Exam

Cecelia Downs, UIC Academic Center for Excellence

Monday, November 14, 2005

12-1pm, College of Nursing, Room 143

Please RSVP to dtcarter@uic.edu.

All College Cultural Workshop

"Worlds Apart"

Undergraduate:

Tuesday, November 22, 2005

9am-12pm, College of Nursing

Graduate:

Tuesday, November 22, 2005

1-4pm, College of Nursing

Or

Monday, November 21, 2005

5-7pm, College of Medicine Room 106 or Univ. of Illinois Medical Center at Chicago, Hospital Room 1130



Blackboard Online Workshop:

Friday, November 18th through November 22, 2005.

Please RSVP to dtcarter@uic.edu by November 14, 2005.

Resume Writing Workshop

Jamie Velasquez, Office of Career Services

Monday, November 28, 2005

12-1pm, College of Nursing, Room 159

Enjoy your semester break!

College of Nursing Annual Job Fair

Monday, January 23, 2005, 11am-1pm and

Monday, January 30, 2005, 11am-1pm

College of Nursing, 1st Floor Lobby

Who's Who In UHP



Dr. Connie Dallas
UHP Director



Dr. Barbara Berger
UHP Faculty Liaison
MSN



Dawn Carter
UHP Coordinator

Phyllis Pelt
UHP Faculty Liaison
PMA



Dr. Carrie Klima
UHP Faculty Liaison
MCN



Kelly Pennington
UHP Graduate
Assistant



About UIC's Urban Health Program

The mission of the UIC Urban Health Program is to improve the quality of health care services for medically underserved urban populations by expanding health profession education opportunities for underrepresented groups and others interested in serving in Health Professions Shortage Areas of Illinois.

Do you have any ideas or would you like to submit an article? Please let us know:

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