Upcoming Fall Dates:

Sept. 9: CHHS Convocation. McNeill Hall grounds. 4-6 p.m.

Sept. 10: UNCW Faculty Meeting. EB 162, 2 p.m.

Sept. 21: Faculty Council Meeting. 1051 McNeill Hall. 3-5 p.m.

Sept. 22: Nu Omega (STTI) Bd Mtg. NHRMC Conf. Room. 5-6 p.m.

Sept. 22: Nu Omega (STTI) Education Program. NHRMC Auditorium, 6 p.m.

Oct. 19: Faculty Council Meeting. 1051 McNeill Hall. 3-5 p.m.


Oct. 19: Faculty Council Meeting. 1051 McNeill Hall. 3-5 p.m.

Oct. 26: Pre-licensure Council. 1038 McNeill Hall. 3-4 p.m.

Nov. 12: STTI Induction Ceremony. Burney Center. 6-8 p.m.

Nov. 13: SON Research Day. 1051 McNeill Hall. 8:30 a.m.-12 p.m.

Nov. 16: Faculty Council Meeting. 1051 McNeill Hall. 3-5 p.m.

Nov. 23: Undergraduate (Pre-licensure) Council Meeting. 1028 McNeill Hall. 3-5 p.m.

Nov. 25-29: Thanksgiving Holiday. No classes.

Dec. 2: Last day of classes.

Dec. 4-10: Final Exams.

Dec. 11: Graduation Awards Ceremony. Kenan Auditorium.

Dec. 12: Commencement.

Greetings from the Director

What an exciting time to start my tenure as the new Director of the UNCW School of Nursing! The faculty and curricula of the school are a solid foundation upon which to build a new vision. As you probably already know, we begin the new academic year with a new Chancellor - Jose Sartarelli. He has already imagined a future that is “better,” “engaged,” and “global” using integrity, ethics, diversity and excellence as defining values for our University.

The School of Nursing is in a growth state and the defining values set by our Chancellor are synonymous with nursing, our school, and professional commitments well-articulated in the Code of Ethics for Nurses (2015). During this upcoming year our total student population will be close to 1,300 in six programs and our full-time faculty will be near or exceed 50 in number.

As we increase our programs and our student population, our faculty are dedicated to continuing to promote excellence in education, innovation in research and scholarship, and greater engagement to bring health to the community of southeastern N.C. and beyond. Pre-licensure board pass rates rank just below 100%, our online RN-BS program was ranked in the top 10 by the SR Education Group and as a whole our university was recognized in rankings for Best Southern School, best online and best “bang for the buck.”

Thank you to each of you who has made me feel so welcome and at home here in N.C. and in my new role as director. Your support is needed to continue to soar toward a healthier future. I look forward to meeting you throughout the year and I encourage you to introduce yourself as our paths cross at the school and in the communities where we live and work.

Be well, stay well, enjoy each day, and soar with us.

Welcome to Students and Faculty!

We welcome back 78 returning graduate students in the MSN program plus three postgraduate certificate students, 195 prelicensure students and 637 RN-BSN students. We welcome our newest students: 34 in the MSN-FNP program and two post-master certificate students, 154 in the RN-BSN program and 48 in the prelicensure program.

In the Clinical Research and Product Development program (CLR), there are 18 returning MS students and 46 undergraduates students. New to the CLR program are 27 MS students and 49 undergraduates.

We also welcome all of our returning faculty and our seven new full-time and three part-time faculty members. See pages 4-5 for biographical information and photos of the new faculty.
Notable Recognition:

Katie Alwes (MSN-FNP class of ’17) was awarded the Carrie Grace Seay Nursing Scholarship from the NCNA Southeast Region at the Spring ’15 Nurses Day Celebration. This merit-based scholarship is awarded annually and is designed to assist nurses achieve academic goals. Recipients are selected based on academic standings and recommendations. Pictured at left is Alwes with her husband on the evening of accepting her scholarship award.

Congratulations to Beth Gazza for being elected to the Board of Directors for the N.C. League for Nursing.

Diane Pastor has been appointed an Honorary Visiting Fellow at the University of Wollongong School of Medicine and Nursing in New South Wales, Australia. She will work collaboratively to conduct educational programs about family caregiving and dementia. Her term extends one year from July ’15 to July ’16.

Congratulations to our New Prelicensure Cohort

According to the Office of Student Success (OSS), the newest prelicensure cohort in the SON is in excellent academic standing. This competitive group of students had a math/science prerequisite GPA average of 3.93, a non-math/science prerequisite GPA of 3.87 and an average TEAS score of 84.3.

News from the Office of Student Success

Members of the Office of Student Success are co-teaching the CHHS 205 course during the fall ’15 semester. The course examines career opportunities in health and human services and examines the health and human service systems in the U.S. and locally. The course also explores the impact of history, changing values and changes in the economic and political environment.

The OSS staff assisted the CLR program in their admissions process with the creation of an admission application form. The program admitted 49 new students for this fall 2015 semester.

Sigma Theta Tau Chapter News

The Nu Omega Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International will host an educational program from 6 – 7 p.m. on Sept. 22. Gayle Thear will present a program on Emotional Intelligence (EI). The presentation is designed to assist attendees understand the meaning of EI, how it impacts our lives, methods to identify EI skills and competencies, and learning strategies to improve one’s EI. The program will be in the NHRMC auditorium immediately following the chapter board meeting. One ANCC educational credit hour will be awarded to the participants attending the entire program.

2015 Officers of the Nu Omega chapter are: Ann Quinlan-Colwell (president), Karen Juma (vice president), Tom Curley (secretary), Stephanie Turrise (treasurer), Kelly Laham (first counselor) and Susan Crawford (second counselor).

Class Fundraiser Project

The prelicensure class of May ’16 will host two upcoming fundraisers benefitting the Wounded Warriors Project. The first event will be held Sept. 14 at McAlister’s Deli from 5 – 9 p.m. Ten percent of the sales from customers who mention their support for the SON while purchasing a meal will benefit the project. A second event will be held on Oct. 14 at Might As Well Grill from 5 – 11 p.m. For purchases from a customized menu the class will receive $1 per order. There will also be a raffle drawing to win door prizes.
Notable Achievements
Beth Gazza, Susan Crawford and Traci Bramlett presented at the Sigma Theta Tau International's 26th International Nursing Research Congress in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Gazza made a poster presentation and Crawford and Bramlett each made podium presentations. The titles of each of these presentations are as follows:

Bramlett spoke on New Start: A Family-Based Educational Program for a Predominantly Hispanic Pediatric Practice; Crawford presented Health Beliefs Related to Physical Activity in Patients Living with Implantable Cardioverter Defibrillators; and Gazza in collaboration with Teresa Shellenberger and Diana Hunker presented a poster on Using an Innovative Research-Based Process to Facilitate Scholarly Writer Development. Pictured from left to right in the photo on right are Gazza, Crawford and Bramlett.

In June, Robin Cunningham, Brandy Mechling and Diane Pastor (pictured in photo on left from left to right) presented at the International Nursing Association for Clinical Simulation & Learning Conference in Atlanta, GA. The topic of their presentation was The Use of Volunteer Standardized Patients (SPs) in Simulation Across the Nursing Curriculum: A New Direction for the Simulation Learning Center (SLC). Their presentation included the use of SP's for the Foundation’s course simulation, which allowed students to assess and give medications after the occurrences of various events, such as a fall, a stroke or a severe pain experience.

Each of the three faculty discussed recent simulation experiences using SPs: Cunningham on the use of simulation with senior nursing students taking leadership and delegation roles; Mechling on a hoarding simulated experience, which included video clips of extreme clutter; and Pastor on inter-professional collaboration using nurse practitioner students with social work graduate students delivering difficult health news to SPs. The faculty team shared positive responses from students and SPs and provided video clips and photos to the conference attendees.

Nursing student Andraya Zelle (May ’15) completed a Directed Independent Study (DIS) project with Tammy Arms last semester. This project has been accepted for publication. The citation is as follows:


Kelly Laham (pictured at right) published a workbook with active learning exercises to be used in the prelicensure Fundamentals course. The workbook utilizes a standardized patient that Laham created to apply fundamental nursing principles, which include professional communication, safety, therapeutic diets, cultural competency, evidence-based practice, ethics. The first edition will be used during the fall ’15 semester and continue with the spring course. A second edition with revisions is expected to be published. Below is the citation:

Welcome to Our Newest Faculty

Mitzi Averette has been a nurse for 38 years having graduated with her BSN from the Medical College of Georgia in ‘77. This past March, Averette graduated with her MSN in Leadership from Grand Canyon University with a focus on Servant Leadership and Organizational Change. Averette chose nursing to fulfill her desire to work in diverse settings and with people of various ages. She has accomplished this with experience working in the ICU burn unit at Grady Memorial Hospital to labor and delivery at Crawford Long, both inpatient and outpatient addictive disease programs at Charter Peachford Psychiatric Hospital, a pediatric office setting, and the short-stay surgery center at St. Joseph's Hospital.

After moving to N.C., Averette worked in home health until she took a clinical instructor position at Fayetteville Tech Community College. In ’09, she began to focus on teaching with simulation and became the FTCC simulation lab coordinator in ’10. Averette was chosen as one of 20 faculty nationwide for the 2011-2012 cohort of the NLN Leadership Development Program for Simulation Educators; she is the current chairperson for the NCNA Simulation Council.

Averette and her husband have a 17-year-old high school senior who plans to follow in his father's footsteps at NC State. They enjoy their three dogs and love to go camping “every chance we get.” “We live in rural Hoke County and I really enjoy that my husband's entire family lives on the same street!”

Melissa Barber (pictured right) began her journey in nursing with graduation from a small community college in Sumter, S.C. After one year of hospital experience, she worked as a travel nurse for seven years. She chose N.C. as her home and completed her BSN in ’07. She continued her academic journey earning her MSN in ’10 with the support from her family, friends, and colleagues. She anticipates completing her Ph.D. in the spring from East Carolina University.

As an Emergency Department nurse of 14 years, Barber had the privilege of collaborating with the healthcare team to provide care for thousands of patients and their families. Sharing her knowledge with others has become her new passion in nursing with a teaching philosophy that focuses on the learner. “I am excited to continue my professional journey collaborating with academic experts to engage in teaching, learning, and scholarship.” Barber is married with two cats. She enjoys spoiling her niece and anxiously awaits ECU Football season every fall.

A native of N.C., Amanda Jeffries has recently joined the SON faculty as a full-time lecturer where she will be leading clinical for Adult Health II and teaching in the RN-BSN online program. Jeffries is a registered nurse with a clinical background in critical care and a specialty in cardiovascular care. She is an experienced charge nurse and preceptor and has worked diligently to incorporate evidence based practice in her practice for improved patient outcomes. Jeffries earned the BSN and MSN with a concentration in nursing education from East Carolina University. She has experience as a clinical, lab, and classroom instructor focusing on adult health and health assessment. Jeffries currently resides in Raleigh, N.C. Her hobbies include reading, travel, “Netflix binging” and hiking with her boxer named Humphrey.

Kathleen Molden (pictured right) earned her undergraduate nursing degree at Duquesne University and later did graduate work at Drexel University. She has worked in various hospital units: medical-surgical, community, pediatrics and maternal-newborn. Molden began teaching nursing in 1986 in a community college. Since then she has taught in various curriculums from LPNs to BSN students both online and in the classroom.

Molden is married with has two grown children. Her family also consists of two Shelties who “provide me with plenty of hugs and kisses.” In addition, she has two grandchildren ages four and nine months. In her leisure time Molden enjoys walking, reading, swimming and participating “in all that life has to offer.”
Melissa Reedy (pictured right) has been a nurse for 21 years having graduated as an ADN nurse in '94. After graduation and for the next 13 years she worked in the NICU. At that time she transitioned into public health as a “health promotions nurse manager” where she became a chronic disease self-management educator. In 2006, Reedy graduated with her BSN from the University of Phoenix online. She also earned her MSN-Ed degree in '10 from the University of Phoenix. Two years ago, Reedy began teaching ADN and LPN students at a local community college. She will be teaching online RN-BS students and community health to prelicensure students this fall. Reedy is married with four teenage sons and stays busy with their sports and other activities. For recreation Reedy enjoys reading, trips to the beach and training for half and full marathons.

Diane Parker (pictured left) is the Clinical Coordinator for the Graduate Nursing Program. Originally from California, she began her nursing career as an ADN in ‘87 after graduating from Cuesta College. She later obtained her BSN from Fayetteville State University in '94 and her MSN-FNP at UNCW in '01. Her clinical experiences as an RN have included inpatient medical-surgical, pediatrics, neonatal ICU and out-patient pediatric and adult home care. Parker's clinical experience as an advance practice nurse has been in out-patient adolescent and pediatric clinics with a special area of interest in pediatric asthma and pediatric behavioral health. Her teaching experience began in '07 as a part time lecturer and clinical instructor at UNCW in the undergraduate and graduate nursing program. She has also served as pediatric clinical preceptor for the past ten years. Parker is married with three children, all of who “love the outdoors and are very active.” When she is not working Diane can be found “watching her kids, who all surf competitively or traveling to a soccer match somewhere in NC. She also enjoys boating, running and gardening.

Heidi Winslow has been associated with the SON for several years as a part-time clinical instructor. She has recently become a full-time lecturer having graduated from California State University with her BSN in 1986. Winslow’s work experience includes a post-surgical unit at the U of SF Medical Center and part-time at various hospitals in the San Francisco area, many of which offered care to numerous diverse ethnic groups. Winslow later worked in the CCU/ICU with open heart patients at the VA Hospital in San Francisco. This hospital was associated with UCSF and Stanford and afforded Winslow opportunities to work with medical pioneers in cardiac care. In order for her husband to complete his military commitment, she and her husband moved to Hawaii where she gained nursing experience working in the ED. When the youngest of her four children left for school, Winslow returned to school and nursing. Winslow and her husband (pictured left with her family) actively participate in walking, jogging, swimming, surfing and boating.

Martha Hepler (pictured right) obtained her BSN from West Virginia University/Glenville State College Joint Nursing program and her MSN with a specialty in education from Duke University. Her work experience includes nursing in the neonatal ICU, obstetrics and gynecology. Hepler has served on the nursing faculty at Bladen Community College and UNC Pembroke where she was the director of the Clinical Learning Center.

Hepler was chosen last Feb. among 20 people world-wide to participate in the ’15 NLN Leadership Development Program for Simulation Educators. She is currently working on a group project to identify exemplars and key ingredients for the implementation of a low-cost standardized patient program.
Update on the Clinical Research Program

The Clinical Research (CLR) BS Program welcomes 49 new students this fall semester. These students enter as juniors and join the 48 CLR Seniors. CLR students participate in internships during both semesters of their senior year. Wilmington-based students participate in internships at clinical research companies, such as PMG Research, PPD, INC Research, Chiltern and SEAHEC/New Hanover Regional Medical Center. Since most CLR courses are online, students may participate in internships elsewhere in the country and this includes internships at research sites in California, New Hampshire, Florida and N.C.

Jim Lyon continues as the graduate program coordinator in the CLR program and Barb Pennington is assuming Susan Sinclair’s former role as program coordinator of the CLR undergraduate program. The CLR faculty express their appreciation to Sinclair for her tireless efforts in building and maintaining the CLR program over the past several years. Meanwhile two new part-time faculty members will teach in the CLR Program this fall: Linda Shostak, a graduate of the CLR MS program and current senior director of Data Management at INC Research in Raleigh, and Daisy DeWese-Gatt, MPH, an executive director of clinical development at PPD.

Jared Kerr and Barb Pennington joined 28 UNC faculty members from N.C. who attended the UNC Instructional Innovation Incubator (i3), a Summer Fellowship in Online Course Design in May. The National Center for Education Statistics reports more than 46,000 students took classes exclusively online through N.C. universities in 2012. The i3 Workshop provided a unique opportunity for creativity and innovation for online course development. UNC faculty participated in a collaborative learning environment with experts in learning technology and instructional design. The conference focused on connecting students and faculty online similar to means in which they connect in person. Faculty were also given resources needed to succeed in online teaching.

Simulation Learning Center (SLC) News

Three SON faculty, Robin Cunningham, Brandy Mechling and Diane Pastor, presented at the International Nursing Association for Clinical Simulation & Learning conference in Atlanta, GA in July. See related story under Notable Achievements on page 3.

The UNCW Simulation Learning Center (SLC) has had a Standardized Patient (SP) program in place for several years. This year the SLC is very fortunate to have several individuals serve as SPs bringing the total to 22. All but one of our SPs are volunteers and they express that they enjoy “giving back to our students.” The student response is very positive to the SP simulations and they feel it is preparing them for actual patient encounters within the clinical setting. One of the goals of simulation is to mimic real patient situations.

This semester the SLC has adopted a "Fiction Contract" for all prelicensure students. This is their commitment to "suspend disbelief " in simulation and engage in simulated patient scenarios as if they are real situations. The students will be prepared ahead of time. This is shown in the literature to improve student engagement & enhance learning and confidence.

Please submit calendar and community events, news of research/scholarship activities and notable achievements and recognition to our editorial and production staff: Sandy O’Donnell or Debra Simpson.

Have a Great School Year!