

Practice makes perfect

Simulation technology brings new learning opportunities to UAA nursing students

Imagine a lifelike mannequin that coughs, moans, says “ouch,” and gives nursing students the opportunity to practice their skills before entering the “real world.” This scenario is now a reality. Nursing students can experience high-tech clinical simulation like never before on UAA’s campus.

Established in 2007, the Alaska Clinical Simulation Task Force was formed to evaluate the feasibility of bringing high-tech simulation equipment to the University of Alaska. After consideration and research, the University decided to enhance the simulation technology in its curriculum.



Above: SimBaby is a valuable tool for hands-on simulations.

Left: The Sim Lab control room allows nursing faculty to operate software and observe sessions through one-way glass.



teaching philosophy,” said Jean Ballantyne, director of UAA’s School of Nursing. “With this equipment, we can ensure our students have the range of experience they need to enter the workforce.”

Clinical simulation presents students with situations that require them to integrate theory and practice, and think critically to ensure patient safety. It also helps increase their self-confidence prior to entering a clinical unit.

UAA’s Nursing Resource Center recently remodeled its space to add two simulation labs to accommodate this new technology. Each lab features a simulation mannequin and audio/

video equipment to record training sessions. A shared control room behind smoked glass provides a space for nursing faculty to operate software and observe sessions.

Recorded sessions are used for debriefing and sharing with the School’s 11 outreach sites in rural Alaska. “The recorded sessions are a great way to stay connected to our outreach sites,” said Marianne Johnstone-Petty, coordinator of the Nursing Resource Center. “Although outreach students aren’t physically participating in the sessions, they’re still learning new skills by observing Anchorage students in action.”

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“This technology changes our

Message from the Director



Dear Alumni and Friends,

It is with pride that I invite you to read the first issue of the UAA School of Nursing newsletter, *Vitals*. Dan Doyle, a graduate of our M.S. program, did his professional project on staying connected with alumni through newsletters. I'd like to dedicate this issue to Dan in recognition of his work to launch this project.

Vitals reflects the essence of keeping strong connections with our alumni and friends. As director of the School of Nursing, making and maintaining those connections is one of my goals. To that end, each issue of *Vitals* will feature stories on our students and alumni, our outreach sites and updates on our various programs.

Change is constant in health care delivery, with the nursing profession being called to deliver care that has reached a height of complexity never before experienced. As we face these challenges, we depend on our strong partnerships with communities, health care facilities and professionals, especially nurses, to deliver quality nursing education in Alaska. We are fortunate to have a dedicated and committed nursing workforce in Alaska. Your support of nursing education is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Jean E. Ballantyne, Ph.D., RN

Director & Professor, School of Nursing

School of Nursing seeks NLNAC continuing accreditation

The School of Nursing is in the process of seeking continuing accreditation from the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission (NLNAC). The first process involved a 300-page self-study in Fall 2008 outlining the School's mission/governance, faculty, students, curriculum and instruction, resources, integrity and educational effectiveness.

This was followed by a site visit. Representatives from NLNAC came to UAA in February to see the nursing program. To fully understand the School's statewide reach, the representatives also visited the Ketchikan, Valdez and Fairbanks outreach sites.



The next phase will involve the Evaluation Review Panel, which will meet in June 2009. The panel will validate the work of the site visitors and extend it by noting points of agreement and raising any questions where lack of clarity exists. The panel will then make a recommendation to the NLNAC Board of Commissioners, which will determine the accreditation status of the program.

The Commission will meet in July 2009 to determine the outcome of UAA's continuing accreditation. The School will receive the Commission's decision and a copy of the Evaluation Review Panel summary within 30 days of the meeting.

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RRANN works to increase percentage of Alaska Native nurses in Alaska

The Recruitment and Retention of Alaska Natives into Nursing (RRANN) program is designed to increase the number of Alaska Natives and American Indians who graduate with an associate's or bachelor's degree in nursing.

Alaska Native/American Indians comprise approximately 16 percent of the state's population. RRANN hopes to increase the number of Alaska Native/American Indian nurses in Alaska to match that percentage. Current data show that only 2.4 percent of Alaska's nursing workforce is Alaska Native/American Indian.

"Increasing the percentage of Alaska Native nurses in our state will make a huge impact on the quality of care for Alaska Native patients," said Randi Madison-Jacobs, RRANN coordinator. "More nurses will speak in Indigenous languages and understand the philosophies."

A 10-year anniversary party was held in April 2008 to celebrate the program's accomplishments and service to our community. Since RRANN's beginning in 1998, 93 students have graduated from the program. For the 2009-10 academic year, 10 more graduates are anticipated.



The RRANN program provides support services for Alaska Native and American Indian students.

Scholarships make a difference

Shelley Larson '06 grew up in Gold Creek, a flag stop located north of Talkeenta, along the Alaska Railroad. Shelley was homeschooled for several years, prior to her family moving to nearby Talkeetna. After high school, Larson started her nursing education at Mat-Su Community College. Two years into the program, she decided to take a break from school to work. Ten years later, after climbing as far up the ladder as she could at her job, Larson came to UAA to finish her degree.

As a young, single mother with a 3-year-old son, Larson started by taking one class at a time, working up to full-time status by adding more classes each semester. "I knew I couldn't work, attend college and be a good mother, so I had to replace my income with scholarships," said Larson. "I made it a goal to apply for as many scholarships as possible."

Because of scholarships, Larson was able to complete the nursing program without having to work. "Literally, scholarships changed my life and I'm thankful to the donors who support scholarships at UAA."

While at UAA, Larson was a part of the Recruitment and Retention of Alaska Natives into Nursing (RRANN) program. Larson shares, "It helped to have a group of people that had been through similar experiences as me, like homeschooling and growing up in rural Alaska. The academic tutors and living stipend were important, but the encouragement from the RRANN staff was the most uplifting."

After nearly six years of study, Larson graduated from UAA in August 2006 with a bachelor's degree in



Thanks to scholarship support and a healthy dose of determination, Shelley Larson earned her bachelor's degree in nursing in '06. She is now a Registered Nurse II at the Alaska Native Medical Center.

nursing and a minor in gerontology. She completed her preceptorship at the Alaska Native Medical Center (ANMC), and got hired on full-time in October 2006. She currently works as a Registered Nurse II.

"Literally, scholarships changed my life and I'm thankful to the donors who support scholarships at UAA."

Larson's favorite part of being a nurse is the patients. "My job never gets boring," said Larson. "Each shift has different challenges and opportunities, and I feel like I'm always in learning mode. People really appreciate nurses, and that gives me a lot of satisfaction."

Larson, who is an Alaska Native of Tlingit descent, didn't know much about her heritage before working at ANMC. "Part of the reason I wanted to work at ANMC was to learn more

about my culture," shared Larson. "My exposure to different Alaska Native cultures has allowed me to develop my own cultural identity."

Shelley stays connected with UAA's School of Nursing by mentoring students who complete their clinical or preceptorship at ANMC. "My motto for any student is that 'education is a short term commitment for a long term gain,'" Larson said. "I encourage students to take charge of their School of Nursing experience and treat it like a job interview. It's where students establish their work ethic and willingness to learn."

When Larson isn't working, she enjoys exploring Alaska with her son, Eli, who's now 11. When Eli leaves for college, Larson plans to return to UAA to pursue her master's in nursing in hopes of furthering geriatric research among Alaska Native elders. You can bet she'll be applying for scholarships then as well!

UAA steps up to help meet Alaska's extreme health care needs



Left: Artist's rendering of the HSB (first phase) as seen from Providence Drive.

Below: Chancellor Fran Ulmer and UA President Mark Hamilton during the ground breaking ceremony.

Alaska is in great need of well-prepared graduates in the health care workforce. As one of the largest and fastest growing sectors of Alaska's economy, the health care industry makes up more than one in every 12 jobs in Alaska. Although this incredible growth is exciting, it challenges the University of Alaska to respond vigorously to address our state's needs for health care providers.

UAA has a growing reputation for offering quality education in many arenas, especially health care. More people than ever are turning to the University for health care-related training and education. In excess of 70 percent of health-related jobs in 2014 will require at least an associate's degree or significant postsecondary vocational training, and almost 30 percent of those will require a bachelor's degree or higher.

The University is working hand-in-hand with industry, governmental and community entities to maintain and develop our health care programs supporting workforce development and high-demand careers. UAA, which



educates over 75 percent of UA health students, has prioritized the development of new health care training opportunities.

With the tremendous growth of the health programs over the past few years, and the addition of many new ones in the coming years, UAA currently lacks the proper facilities to house these programs. The existing spaces scattered across UAA's campus limit development and do not provide the interdisciplinary environment needed to adequately prepare students for the health care workforce, but that will soon change.

The University received \$46M from the State of Alaska in June 2008 to build the Health Sciences Building (HSB) on UAA's campus. This

building is essential to move the University forward in addressing Alaska's health care workforce needs.

In October 2008, UAA broke ground on the new 62,500 square-foot HSB.

The HSB will be the anchor structure for the new health sciences campus in Anchorage, and will house four key programs: WWAMI Biomedical Program, nursing, clinical laboratory assistant and physician assistant. Not only will it provide a home base for the programs in Anchorage, but it will also improve distance capability for the programs offered at other sites across Alaska.

The HSB will house a number of media-rich "smart" classrooms. Additionally, there will be a floor dedicated to state-of-the-art laboratories that incorporate simulation equipment and experiences to improve the confidence and skill of students prior to their clinical work with actual patients.

The new HSB is a welcome addition to UAA's campus. With new and expanding programs, and the new HSB on the horizon, there are many programs and job prospects for students to look forward to at UAA.

Bethel, Alaska

The UAA School of Nursing offers its Associate of Applied Science degree program via distance delivery to 11 communities across Alaska, as well as on the Anchorage campus. Using a blended delivery model with online and on-site clinical instruction, the program is offered in Bethel, Fairbanks, Homer, Juneau, Kenai, Ketchikan, Kodiak, Kotzebue, Mat-Su and Sitka. Sites in Barrow, Dillingham, Nome and Petersburg are also being evaluated for future offerings.

This issue of Vitals highlights the Bethel Outreach Site. Each issue of the newsletter will feature a different outreach site of the UAA School of Nursing.

Established in 2004, the Bethel Outreach Site accepts students into its program every other year. Students attend classes at the University of Alaska Fairbanks' Kuskokwim Campus, where they link to Anchorage campus nursing courses via videoconference. A new cohort of nine students started in January.

Located about 400 miles west of Anchorage, Bethel is home to just over 6,000 people and is the service center for 56 villages in the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta.

"We have students who come from communities of 200 people that are only accessible by boat or snowmachine," said Mary Weiss, assistant professor in the UAA School of Nursing. "One of the main challenges of being an outreach instructor in Bethel is that I have to be especially mindful of the lifestyle and values of this community, and translate the program into this lifestyle."

"The University's Recruitment and Retention of Alaska Natives into Nursing (RRANN) program has been invaluable and is one of the big reasons for the success this program has had,"



Current Bethel nursing students (left to right): Bessie Francis, Boris Forester, Kendra Harding, Sandra Fox, Nikki Pollock, Kristen Kinegak, Kevin Phelan, Irene Beaver, Michelle Simmons

Bethel

The Bethel Outreach Site is now in its fifth year.

said Weiss. "Our advisors are available to talk with students and help them through any difficult situations they may be experiencing, either personally or academically."

Because the Bethel cohort is small, students have the opportunity to develop close connections with instructors and fellow classmates. "I think being in a smaller group allows us to bond and work closely with each other," said Gracie Nelson, a Bethel nursing graduate. "Each of us can share our ideas."

Bethel nursing students get most of their clinical experience locally at the Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation (YKHC), which administers health care for 50 villages and 56 federally recognized tribes. "We get so much support from the community," said Weiss. "Our

partners help by tutoring and mentoring our students. They know these students will benefit the community."

Weiss adds, "All of our students are from the YK Delta. Their families are here, so they're committed to staying in the area to work. They can relate to local patients because they know a lot about the community and many of our students speak a Native language."

Students also spend time in Anchorage at medical facilities that offer a wider range of health care services. These opportunities give Bethel students the same level of experience as Anchorage students.

"Hopefully our students will become leaders in their community," said Weiss. "They'll have the education, and they already have the drive, perseverance and community commitment," said Weiss.

Alaska Kidney Foundation: A leader in scholarship support to UAA

Established in 1973, the Alaska Kidney Foundation works to prevent kidney disease, increase detection of early kidney disease, empower kidney patients through education, improve kidney patient health care, enhance the quality of life for kidney patients, increase organ donation and support kidney disease research.

The Foundation believes that providing good basic health care is key to preventing kidney-related diseases. Suzanne Goodrich, executive director of the Alaska Kidney Foundation, explains that one of the Foundation's goals is to prevent kidney disease through education.

In 2002, the UAA School of Nursing

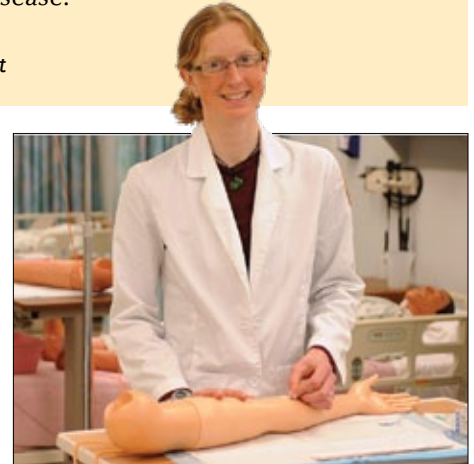
established the goal of doubling the number of basic nursing graduates by 2006. To help meet this goal, the Alaska Kidney Foundation gave its first gift of \$20,000 in 2002 to support scholarships at UAA.

The Alaska Kidney Foundation Scholarship helps prepare new nurses to provide safe and effective care to individuals experiencing chronic kidney disease in Alaska. Goodrich shares, "Supporting nursing students is a part of the Foundation's mission to raise awareness of kidney disease and provide support for Alaskans who have or are at risk of kidney disease."

The Foundation has provided \$341,000 in scholarship money to

"I am incredibly honored that I was chosen for the Alaska Kidney Foundation Scholarship, and am very grateful for the financial support to continue my studies with the nursing program at UAA. I hope that my future practice as a nurse and eventually a nurse practitioner will help prevent, treat, and comfort others who have kidney disease."

*- Abby Rideout, 2007-08 and 2008-09
Alaska Kidney Foundation Scholarship recipient*



the University, which has supported over 224 students. This year alone, over \$50,000 has been approved for scholarship support to UAA.

For more information on the Alaska Kidney Foundation Scholarship and a list of recipients, visit www.uaa.alaska.edu/scholarships/kidney.cfm.

Practice makes perfect *continued*

Nursing students currently utilize low- and moderate-tech mannequins to practice their nursing interventions. The addition of the new high-tech equipment is an exciting step forward for the School of Nursing and its students.

In January 2009, the School added SimBaby to its collection of training mannequins. SimBaby, aptly nicknamed "RoboBaby" by nursing staff, simulates breathing, crying and other behavior. Faculty can control its heart rate, blood pressure, circulation, pupil dilation and other settings to present students with different scenarios to respond to.

A second high-tech mannequin, the SimMan 3G, will join the UAA School of Nursing in Summer 2009. The School also plans to equip its outreach sites with moderate-tech VitalSims by Spring 2010.

"This technology is a valuable learning tool for our students," explained

Johnstone-Petty. "Situations can be scripted so students can practice interviewing and assessing the patient to determine an appropriate course of action, just like they would in a hospital room. It teaches them to prioritize and multi-task."

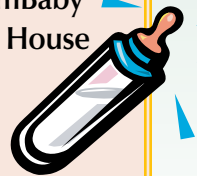
Johnstone-Petty, who's also a student in the School's Master of Science in Nursing program, says this enhanced technology will help students focus on how they present themselves to patients and their family. "A new nurse needs to understand that caring for a patient requires establishing a trusting relationship with that patient. This can only happen through scenarios where students can see themselves perform as a nurse."

"Oftentimes, when a nursing faculty member is overseeing a student's actions, the student will react to the faculty's non-verbal cues," said Johnstone-Petty. "Having the control rooms for faculty

gives students the space they need to safely make mistakes and learn on their own."

With the new UAA Health Sciences Building (see page 4) slated to open its doors in Fall 2011, the School of Nursing looks forward to larger skills labs and a simulation center to continue educating students with state-of-the-art technology. The combination of more space and increased technology will allow the School of Nursing to provide Alaska's health care industry with the highly qualified nurses it desperately needs.

Keep your eyes open for an invitation to the **SimBaby Shower and Open House** this fall!



The University of Alaska Anchorage would like to thank the following donors who made contributions between **July 1 and Dec. 31, 2008** to support the UAA School of Nursing.

The generous support of our community partners is helping the University grow to meet the state's critical demand for quality, well-trained nursing professionals.

Thank you!

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- Darla "Dolly" Barton Nursing Scholarship 20190
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for Your
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Make a gift online at
www.uaa.alaska.edu/advancement/giving.

We want to hear from you!

Because you're an alumnus of the School of Nursing, it's important to us that we stay connected with you. In future issues of *Vitals*, we'll include a "Class Notes" section to share your achievements with fellow classmates.

We encourage you to submit information for the new Class Notes that will appear in the Fall '09 issue of this newsletter. Tell us what's going on in your life: a new job, promotion, marriage, children, retirement or an advanced degree.

You can submit your information online at <http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/alumni/update.cfm>.

Here's an example of a Class Notes announcement:

'95 *Rodger Lewerenz, RN-BC, CVRN-III, CCRN-CMC, RCIS, Clinical educator for the Heart and Vascular Center at Providence Alaska Medical Center (PAMC) is completing his Master of Science in Nursing, focusing on education. He was nominated for the March of Dimes Nurse of the Year award in 2008 and is active within PAMC's educational program.*

We are proud of our alumni and want to share your successes with others. Please take a few moments to let us know how you're doing. We look forward to hearing about what's new in your life!

Sincerely,

Timea Webster

Interim Director, UAA Alumni & Retiree Relations

UAA SCHOOL of NURSING **VITALS**

Tracking the pulse of health care education in Alaska



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