CNHS/Partners HealthCare Diversity Collaborative: Where We Are Today—Where We’ll Be Tomorrow

How does change happen? It happens slowly, deliberately, purposefully—and, when it comes to making a sea change in a large multicenter organization, with patience and devotion. All of those attributes resonate with the Clinical Leadership Collaborative for Diversity in Nursing (CLC), a workforce development agreement designed to achieve, in part, Partners HealthCare System’s (PHS) and the College of Nursing and Health Sciences’ (CNHS) vision of diversity by facilitating the successful progression of diverse undergraduate nursing students who, upon graduation, are expected to obtain employment and eventually nursing leadership positions with PHS.

That concept of diversity not only recognizes the fact that too few diverse patients in PHS are cared for by a nurse who is also diverse, but also that increased acceptance and respect of cultural differences is strengthened by a diverse workforce, which strengthens PHS. This is the vision—shared by Dean Greer Glazer, PhD, FAAN, RN, CNP, and Jeanette Ives Erickson, RN, MS, FAAN, Senior Vice President for Patient Care and Chief Nurse, Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH)—that became the CLC.

Achieving a diverse workforce meant that PHS and CNHS would create a program to provide leadership opportunities to promising nursing students who would serve as a capable cadre of upwardly mobile, baccalaureate-prepared minority registered nurses. Toward that end, PHS has thus far dedicated $1.5 million to support 55 racially and ethnically diverse nursing students here at UMass Boston. More than just a scholarship, the CLC program seeks to:

1. Support CLC nursing students through tuition reimbursement, stipends, and the cost of NCLEX-RN review courses.
2. Facilitate the smooth transition of CLC students to employment as registered nurses at PHS facilities by:

   a. Maximizing the number of PHS clinical placements a CLC student is assigned
   b. Scheduling CLC students’ senior capstone preceptorship clinical in a PHS hospital

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Meeting the Standards for a Quality Matters Review

In spring and summer 2010, two online courses developed by Carol Allen, MS, RN, were submitted to Quality Matters’ (QM) for review. “Quality Matters (QM) is a faculty-centered, peer review process that is designed to certify the quality of online and blended courses” (Quality Matters, 2010). The review process is based on a rubric of evidenced-based standards for quality assurance in online education. Both courses received certification and national recognition of meeting QM standards.

According to QM (2010), the program has national recognition with a mission “to promote and improve the quality of online education and student learning.” In order for a course to receive QM certification, it must meet the 17 essential standards and score at least 75 out of 85 points from the 40 items listed in the QM Rubric. (To learn more about the rubric, visit http://www.qmprogram.org/rubric.) The standards are based on research and published best practices for online education. The set of standards evaluate the design and the content of online courses. A team of three reviewers, who have been trained in QM, conducts the review. At least one of the reviewers has some expertise related to the course content.

To prepare the courses for a QM review, Carol attended a three-week course about applying the QM rubric to her course. The focus was on the 17 essential standards and analyzing how the course meets those standards. It is important to know that the standards are not prescriptive—there are several ways to meet the standards. The course was helpful because it was set in a very collegial environment. Members in the class were from various disciplines from colleges and universities across the country.

Carol’s first course, submitted for review in spring 2010, was NURSNG 360: Professional Issues in Nursing. It was exciting to get the report back: “Your course has met QM standards and scored 83 out of 85 points on the rubric.” The report was detailed, with each of the reviewers commenting on each of the 40 points of the rubric with positive feedback and suggested improvements to consider. The second course, NURSNG 361: Health Assessment and Health Promotion, also met the QM standards as of the first week of September. Both courses now display the QM logo on the home page.

The experience of passing the QM review twice was rewarding. The peer review of course content and the certification of meeting online delivery standards was a validation of utilizing best practices. Our students deserve this level of quality, and these courses now have national recognition of quality. Quality does matter.

CNHS/Partners HealthCare—Diversity Collaborative (Cont’d from page 1)

- Lucette Teixeira volunteered as a nursing assistant at a remote Cape Verdean hospital that services an impoverished community.
- Cintia Crespo provided bilingual (English/Portuguese) health care workshops to over 200 women in several community churches.
- Christian Young and Cintia Crespo combined their talents to provide affordable CPR training programs for nursing students. All proceeds benefited the Student Nurses Association (SNA).
- Seventeen CLC students have been inducted into the Theta Alpha Chapter of the Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing.
- Airiau Constant has been training peer coaches for the Cultural Communication Collaborative (CCC), which offers students whose primary language is not English additional assistance with textbook readings through computer software.
- Neldine Alexandre, Farah Fevrin, and Lucette Teixeira organized a candlelight vigil for Haitian earthquake relief. All proceeds went to Partners in Health.
- Melissa Romain served as a medical translator as part of TRUDEM’s Haitian earthquake relief efforts.
- The CLC program is directed at CNHS by Associate Dean Marion E. Winfrey, who also serves as faculty advisor, and CLC administrative assistant Jariza Rodriguez. The commitment and collaboration of Gaurdia Banister, RN, PhD, executive director of the Institute for Patient Care, Patient Care Services, Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH), facilitates recruitment of mentors while championing the CLC at finance and nursing leadership meetings. Similar support by members of the CLC steering committee occurs at other PHS hospitals.

To date, 34 of the 37 CLCs who have graduated have found employment as registered nurses in a PHS hospital. Graduated CLCs are employed at MGH, BWH, Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital, and North End Rehabilitation and Nursing Center. Also, CLC graduate Ana Duarte was recently accepted into UMass Boston’s Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) program.

What’s next? Drs. Banister and Winfrey are looking to expand the CLC to support diverse PHS registered nurses seeking graduate nursing degrees, while continuing to support undergraduate nursing students. Although facilitating the completion of graduate degrees does not increase the number of diverse nurses, it does help position more minority nurses for middle-management nursing positions. It has been said that a journey of a thousand miles begins with one step; the journey to increased diversity at PHS has begun with 55 steps...and counting!
Simulation Enhances Clinical Education

A primary goal of our Center for Clinical Education and Research (CCER) is to expand active learning throughout the lab curriculum. As evidenced in the literature and from our own student and faculty evaluations, simulation is a valuable learning strategy that promotes clinical competency and reflective thinking skills. Over the past three years, Judith Healey Walsh, the CCER director, has coordinated the integration of simulation activities throughout the nursing curriculum. Sixty-five faculty and graduate teaching assistants received six hours of theoretical and experiential training in simulation and debriefing methods. During the past year, CCER staff facilitated 189 simulation sessions in which 989 students participated.

Evaluation data demonstrate the success of the simulation program. Ninety-four percent of the students said the simulation was realistic and challenging, and all said that their participation in the program would assist them in their transition to nursing practice. Faculty reported that simulation provides valuable insight into students’ critical thinking and clinical ability that is not easily acquired on a clinical floor. Simulation also provides essential data on assessment and intervention skills, and these results inform curricular revisions.

We began by using high-acuity events with emergent clinical deterioration, which for our senior students progressed to a code situation. As we gained expertise in simulation and debriefing design and implementation, we saw their value in students’ learning other areas of nursing practice—for example, patient teaching and palliative care. We have embedded cultural and ethical dilemmas and observed that simulation and, specifically, debriefing provide an effective vehicle for students to evaluate their knowledge, attitudes, and skills, to modify their behavior, and to reflect on the effect of the change.

This progress would not have been possible without the clinical expertise and organizational skill of Jennifer Mardin Small, simulation coordinator, who has been instrumental in the operation and ongoing revisions of simulation. Our focus for this academic year is to pilot the use of standardized patients in mental health simulation and to study the effectiveness of simulation in improving communication skills of students who are learning English.

CNHS and the Student Nurses Association Collaborate to Open a Reading Lab

The initiative is part of a larger integrated faculty, student, and staff collaboration named CCC (Cultural Communication Collaborative), which fosters the development of essential communication skills through student involvement and innovative teamwork approaches. The collaborative selected four main components for the program: reading, writing, speaking, and leadership-skill building opportunities.

The program is starting small: It uses recycled Macintosh computers, Proportional Reading™ software, and files of nursing textbooks donated by a publisher. Financial support from Dean Greer Glazer and another small grant, and volunteer efforts from the Student Nurses Association have helped turn a former storage area into a reading lab.

The College of Nursing and Health Sciences and the Student Nurses Association have collaborated to open an innovative reading lab. The program welcomes students who wish to improve their reading speed and comprehension of technically challenging content in the health sciences. Students are guided by Student Affairs Specialist Peter Terres, Project Director, and Associate Professor of Nursing Victoria Palmer-Erbs, Faculty Advisor and Academic Advisor.

“Students are the beginning and the end of the program. They are the driving factor. They are the ones at the beginning who work with the program and share it with fellow students; and in the end these students improve their reading and communication skills.”

—Airiau Constant, Undergraduate Nursing Class of December 2010

There is a great deal of interest in the program within CNHS, across the university, and in the surrounding community. Students are enthusiastic about the program largely because they can control their level of involvement. They set their own program goals and customize the reading materials to suit their own learning styles, purposes, and preferences. Some students also serve as peer reading coaches to fellow students.

And there’s an added bonus: Not only do students say they are saving time and learning more, they also report that they are now enjoying reading!
This spring, Dr. Scott Crouter (Exercise and Health Sciences) and Dr. Susan DeSanto-Madeya (Nursing) traveled to Glasgow, Scotland, to visit with academic and research colleagues from the School of Health and Social Care at Glasgow Caledonian University (GCU). The purpose of the visit was to explore possible research collaborations and teacher and student exchange programs for faculty and students from CNHS and the School of Health and Social Care at GCU.

During their visit, Drs. Crouter and DeSanto-Madeya participated in the GCU School of Health and Social Care’s Professional Doctorate Program, a modular program that offers managers, clinicians, and scientists an exciting and challenging alternative to the traditional PhD. It was designed to complement the current policy drive toward developing expert practitioners in health and social care to facilitate the development of researchers in practice—an outcome also valued by CNHS, which makes this an ideal educational and research collaboration for the two colleges. The program modules—which are in the areas of research methods; professional development; and project development, design, and management—are delivered over four blocks, each of which is composed of four days of university-based study followed by independent study supported by a variety of educational methodologies.

The program’s modular design provides the professors with a condensed teaching schedule, giving them more time for research, and allows students to work full-time while developing their research projects and obtaining their degree. Many of the students in the program live in other cities or countries and travel to Glasgow for their one week of classes, then return home to continue the program with online educational and academic advisor support. Opportunities to adapt this innovative program design for the master’s and doctoral curricula at CNHS are being explored.

In addition to participating in the Professional Doctorate Program, Drs. Crouter and DeSanto-Madeya networked with researchers from GCU’s School of Health and Social Care. Dr. Crouter met with Professor Malcom Granat, the school’s head of research, and other researchers in fields related to physical activity measurement—in particular, methods to improve the measurement of sedentary behavior and how such behavior contributes to the development of obesity, diabetes, and other chronic health issues.

Dr. DeSanto-Madeya also met with Dr. Francine Cheater, director of the Institute for Applied Health Research; Dr. Debbie Tolson, researcher in the School of Health; and other colleagues who share research interests in improving the quality of life for individuals in later life through the development, implementation, and evaluation of palliative care interventions.
Faculty

Dr. Mary Aruda, a Department of Nursing clinical assistant professor, obtained her PhD in nursing from the University of Massachusetts Lowell, MSN from Boston University, and BSN from Cornell University–New York Hospital School of Nursing. Her dissertation research was “Predictors of Unprotected Sex for Teens at Pregnancy Testing.” She was an assistant professor at Boston College’s William F. Connell School of Nursing from 2003 to 2010. She joins our faculty with eight scholarly journal articles. Dr. Aruda is a certified pediatric nurse practitioner.

Dr. Sarah Camhi, a Department of Exercise and Health Sciences assistant professor, obtained her PhD in kinesiology from the University of Maryland; MS in exercise management from the University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia; and BS in kinesiology from the University of Michigan. She recently completed a postdoctoral research fellowship in population science at the Pennington Biomedical Research Center in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. While at the University of Maryland, she was a distinguished and outstanding teaching assistant. Her dissertation research was “The Effects of Low-Fat Diet and Exercise on C-Reactive Protein and Metabolic Syndrome: Findings from a Randomized Control Trial.” She joins our faculty with nine scholarly journal publications. Dr. Camhi is a certified health fitness specialist.

Dr. Emily Jones, a Department of Nursing assistant professor, obtained her PhD in nursing from the Accelerated Baccalaureate to PhD Program at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, and BSN from Oklahoma Baptist University. Her dissertation research was “Cardiometabolic Risk and Risk Perception among Oklahoma American Indian Women with Previous Gestational Diabetes.” She joins our faculty with three scholarly journal publications. Dr. Jones is certified in inpatient obstetrics.

Dr. Sheryl LaCoursiere, a Department of Nursing clinical assistant professor, obtained her PhD, MSN, and BSN in nursing from the University of Connecticut. She also has a master’s degree in health care management and post-master’s certificate in information technology from the University of Connecticut, and post-master’s family nurse practitioner certificate from the University of Massachusetts Boston. She completed a postdoctoral research fellowship at the Center for Excellence in Chronic Illness Care at Yale University School of Nursing. Her dissertation research was “TELECares-Telehealth Support in Cardiovascular Disease.” She joins us with 12 scholarly journal publications. Dr. LaCoursiere is certified as a family nurse practitioner.

Dr. Tongjian You, a Department of Exercise and Health Sciences assistant professor, obtained his PhD in exercise physiology from the University of North Carolina, Greensboro; MEd in exercise physiology from the National Research Institute of Sports Science; and bachelor of medicine in sports medicine from the Chengdu Institute of Physical Education, Chengdua, China. He completed a postdoctoral research fellowship in the section on gerontology and geriatric medicine, Department of Internal Medicine, Wake Forest University School of Medicine, Winston-Salem, North Carolina. His dissertation research was “Effects of Antioxidant Supplementation on Muscle Damage and Oxidative Stress in Rats after Downhill Exercise.” He was an assistant professor in the Department of Exercise and Nutrition Sciences, School of Public Health and Health Professions, State University of New York at Buffalo, from 2006 to 2010. He joins us with 16 scholarly journal publications.

Staff

Janet Craven joins the Nursing Department as the clinical coordinator for the post-master’s certificate and DNP program. She has a BSN from the University of Massachusetts Boston. She has RN experience as a school nurse at Quincy Public Schools and as a staff nurse at Brigham and Women’s Hospital, Colonial Adult Day Health Center, Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital, and VA Medical Center. She holds Massachusetts Department of Education teacher certification, ‘Ai Chi teacher certification, and Arthritis Aquatics teacher certification.

Arlene Hatch joins the college as an administrative intern to Associate Dean Marion Winfrey to assist with the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education accreditation.
PhD Student Hermine Poghosyan Receives Open Society Institute Grant

Hermine Poghosyan has been awarded a Network Scholarship Program Global Grant from the Open Society Institute. The institute awards competitive grants to students from select countries of Eastern and Central Europe, the former Soviet Union, and Mongolia to enable the students to pursue full-time doctoral studies in universities around the world. The institute advances the idea that an open society is one based on the recognition that no person has a monopoly on the truth, that people have different views and interests, and that institutions need to protect the rights of all people so that they can live together in peace. According to Hermine, a native of Armenia, one challenge to building an open society is the lack of transparency in health ministries and agencies, and the lack of involvement of Armenian people in the process of decision making limits their ability to take part in decisions that will affect their health.

Hermine started her nursing career as a rural midwife in Armenia, hoping to improve women’s knowledge about their reproductive health and rights. Later, she decided to pursue an education in women’s health internationally at the School of Health Sciences in Sweden. After graduation, she returned to Armenia, where she developed a proposal for improving health in rural communities of Armenia—in particular, educating people about healthy lifestyles and safe sex. The project was funded by the Swedish International Development Agency in two villages, then was expanded to twenty-four. She also completed a master’s in public health at the American University of Armenia.

During her work in Armenia, Hermine recognized the importance of health policy in shaping health care and protecting the public. Seeking to get involved in developing policies that promote health, she chose the UMass Boston Department of Nursing’s PhD program because of its focus on health policy and its goal of preparing students to be policy analysts, researchers, and educators. The PhD education will prepare her to conduct research and analyze, develop, implement, and evaluate national and international tobacco policies. Hermine reports that the program gives her the opportunity to work with nationally and internationally known researchers and policy experts to obtain new skills and knowledge. The program offers various opportunities for students to work closely with policy makers in the state of Massachusetts. When Hermine applied for the Open Society grant, she pursued an internship at the Department of Public Health, working on Massachusetts’ first Health Disparities Report Card. The report card will evaluate the progress of health disparities among ethnically and racially diverse populations in Massachusetts. It will examine certain health status indicators and social determinants and recommend policy proposals that will positively impact disparities.

Network Scholarship Programs will provide Hermine with supplemental funding for one year of study, with an option to reapply for an additional two awards after the first year. We congratulate Hermine for receiving the award and her other achievements, and wish her continued success in the future.

Student Ambassador Georges Chick (Undergraduate Nursing Class of December 2010)

Georges Chick has consistently dedicated his time and energy to the College of Nursing and Health Sciences. He volunteered as a student ambassador for CNHS at past UMass Boston Welcome Day events while speaking with newly accepted students and their family members. He has been an advocate for global health, traveling to Australia and Kenya this past summer. As part of the Afya Njema Project, Georges worked with other CNHS students and faculty to reach their mission of improving cardiovascular/metabolic health in central Kenya through surveillance, screening, and the development of a risk-reduction program that emphasizes community engagement and self-management. Georges has also been an active member with UMass Boston’s Student Nurses Association and the Golden Key International Honour Society. He will be graduating from the undergraduate nursing program this December.

Exercise and Health Sciences Dean’s Award Winner Larry Kennard (EHS Class of June 2010)

In his time at the College of Nursing and Health Sciences, Larry Kennard distinguished himself with an exemplary academic record, commitment to scholarship, and dedication to the entire student body. He was actively involved in several faculty research projects and proved himself to be a trusted and proficient researcher. He served as an undergraduate teaching assistant, volunteered to tutor several underclassmen, and completed a highly competitive internship with the U.S. Army Research Institute of Environmental Medicine. As an EHS Senior Class Officer, Larry was instrumental in the organization of the 2010 CNHS June convocation ceremony, where he was the recipient of the Exercise and Health Sciences Dean’s Award.
Photo Album

“Casa de Latina” hosts healthy-cooking eating demonstration at GoGirlGo! Open House on July 15.

(L-R) Kathleen Kafel, CNHS Lecturer; Kay Edgcombe, Lecturer, Flinders University, Australia, and founder of the Dedicated Education Unit clinical innovation; Esther Seibold, Clinical Assistant Professor; and JoAnn Mulready-Shick, Undergraduate Nursing Program Director. Edgcombe spoke at the Research and Scholarship Initiatives Dialogue on September 15.

As the assistant dean for CNHS, James Auciello showed his support by running the 2010 Boston Marathon on April 19 in support of GoKids Boston’s mission to fight childhood obesity. Auciello joined with the 20 other “Team Motley Crew” runners to raise a total of $85,000.

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EHS students (L-R) David Lun, Natania Chalke, and Kristy Partyka display their project on the 24th Annual Research and Scholarship Day on May 13.

(L-R) John Mascetta, Director of Student Affairs, graduate student Albert Kim, and Assistant Professors Eileen Stuart-Shor and Esther Seibold lead “Team No Name” and display their champion T-shirt for the Go Red Challenge.

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(L-R) “Team UHS” members Mary Hanson, Joanne Francis, Leavene Dickson, Rosemary St. Clair, and University Health Services team captain Pat Halon at the Go Red Walking Challenge.

Dr. Eileen Stuart-Shor checking patients’ blood pressure and heart rate at Kambui Health Center in Kenya as part of the Kenya Heart and Sole: The Afya Njema Project on June 2010.

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Participants in GoKids Boston’s July 15 GoGirlGo! Open House event, held at UMass Boston’s Campus Center. GoGirlGo! is a program sponsored by the Women’s Sports Foundation to educate girls about the benefits of being physically active and avoiding behaviors that pose a risk to their health.

Want to see your news items and ideas in the next Harbor Reflections? Email them to huan.zhang@umb.edu.