Nationally recognized research efforts, innovative degree programs and cutting-edge technology are three areas critical to nursing education in today’s rapidly changing health care. As the state’s flagship nursing program, The University of Mississippi Medical Center School of Nursing offers all three.

For example, there are fewer than 10 basic science labs in the country that are located in a nursing school. The UMMC SON has one of them.

“The SON has the only basic science research laboratory in the Southeast. Faculty doing basic research have projects focused on neuroscience and oncology,” said Sharon Lobert, associate dean for Research and Evaluation.

“With faculty mentorship, students at all levels learn basic protein chemistry, molecular biology and PCR methods and apply these to cell culture and animal models to answer research questions,” said Lobert.

Likewise, the School of Nursing recently unveiled a new partnership with Hinds Community College. In an effort to provide Mississippi with more graduate-prepared RNs and to increase educational opportunities statewide, the “Pathways to Advanced Practice Nursing” partnership offers a flexible, accessible route from the ADN to a Master of Science degree in nursing.

Currently, more than 50 percent of all actively licensed Mississippi nurses hold an associate degree, compared to those holding a bachelor’s degree or higher. Twice as many students graduate from ADN programs each year than BSN and MSN degree programs. Of the ADN-prepared nurses in the state, only five percent have received a master’s degree or higher.

Accelerated BSN students Jennifer Files, Meghann Sebren, Shelley Smith and Lori Young present their research poster to SON Faculty Dr. Robin Wilkerson and Dr. Jan Cooper.
Welcome to the new and improved School of Nursing newsletter. Whether you are a current student, prospective student, alumni or friend, I know you’ll enjoy learning more about us. Kim and Amy have managed to pack facts about the SON, educational opportunities, current innovation and well deserved recognition of student and faculty achievements into this issue. The School of Nursing faculty, staff and students extend a special thank you to those who support this important work.

**Educational Opportunities (cont.)**

“The complex nature of the major health determinants in Mississippi make it imperative that the state work toward increasing the educational level of nurses who work in leadership positions, such as health administration; those who teach nursing at all levels; and those who provide primary care as family nurse practitioners,” Pat Waltman, associate dean for Academic Affairs, said.

Coupled with state-of-the-art research facilities and programs designed to meet the health-care needs of Mississippi, the School of Nursing continually remains on the forefront of nursing technology.

A new, $120k learning tool used in the clinical simulation lab, the SimMan 3G, helps students obtain real-life clinical skills before entering the hospital environment and interacting with actual patients. This manikin allows students to practice intubations, catheterizations and bilateral chest tube insertions, to name a few. It speaks; sweats; convulses; bleeds; generates pulses and blood pressure; recognizes and reacts to drugs; and, most importantly, helps students build critical clinical skills and along with it, self-confidence.

Through research, education and health care, the School of Nursing works in tandem with the Medical Center in its mission to provide education in the multidisciplinary, multicultural, active learning environment of an academic health sciences center.

For more information about any of the School of Nursing’s educational opportunities, visit http://son.umc.edu.

**Upcoming Events**

- **Tour of the School of Nursing**
  - Friday, March 25
- **SACS Accreditation Site Visit**
  - March 29-31
- **Tour of the School of Nursing**
  - Friday, April 29
- **Honors Day**
  - Friday, May 6
- **National Nurses’ Week**
  - May 6-12
- **BSN/RN-MSN/MECSAPN Orientation**
  - May 18-19
- **Pinning Ceremony**
  - May 26
- **Commencement**
  - May 27
- **First Day of Class:**
  - **BSN**
    - May 31
  - **RN-MSN, MSN, DNP**
    - June 3

To sign up for a tour of the School of Nursing, please email nsrecruiter@umc.edu.

**Editor’s Notes**

This publication is published quarterly by The University of Mississippi Medical Center School of Nursing. Please direct comments, suggestions or questions to Student Recruiter Kim Ferguson: nsrecruiter@umc.edu.

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“**Student Testimonial**”

Juanita Graham

Second-Year DNP student

“**My interest in outcomes research and nurse-led community-based programs keeps me in constant partnership with the students and faculty of The University of Mississippi Medical Center School of Nursing. I know they share my desire to find innovative methods for improving the health of Mississippians and I am proud to claim the SON as my educational home.”**
**PhD Student Defends Dissertation.**

Johnnie Susan Cooper, of Starkville, successfully defended her dissertation, “Psychometric Testing of Cooper Parental Self-Efficacy Scale for Child Health Behavior,” on November 4. She will graduate with her PhD in nursing. Pictured are Dr. Barbara Boss, director of the DNP program, and Cooper.

**BSN Students Excel in Externships, Gain Clinical Experience**

Exemplary clinical skills and compassionate patient care are at the heart of a successful nursing career. They are also the reason that senior Traditional BSN student Katelyn Armstrong received a DAISY Award.

Armstrong participated in the University of Mississippi Health Care Student Nurse Externship program this past summer. Little did she know that aside from earning class credit; putting her clinical skills learned in the classroom to good use; and participating in life-changing patient care, that she also would be making a lasting impression upon her patients.

The DAISY Award each month goes to four UMHC nurses. It is part of a nationwide program that honors and celebrates the clinical strengths and compassionate care provided to patients by bedside nurses.

Armstrong was nominated by a patient for the prestigious award, but she was not the only student to garner recognition for participating in the Student Nurse Externship program and going above and beyond its outlined duties.

For more information about the Student Nurse Externship program, please visit http://nurses.umc.edu.

**Nearly 65 Traditional BSN students participated in the UMHC SNE program this past summer. The eight-week program offers student nurses, who have completed one academic year or two clinical semesters, the opportunity to work in a healthcare setting and gain invaluable clinical training under the guidance of a preceptor.**

Students work in a variety of settings, including Ambulatory Services, Behavioral Health, Critical Care Services, Emergency Services, Pediatrics, Rehabilitation Services and Women and Infants, to name a few. Selection for the SNE program is competitive and is based on grades and academic standing, among other criteria.

Andrew Jordan, a senior Traditional BSN student, worked in the Adult PACU this summer, where he gained hands-on experience, built his confidence and refined his nursing skills as a full-time RN in training.

“I have been a nurse for 15 years now, and I can honestly say Andrew stood out from previous students. Andrew asked questions a seasoned nurse would ask. Not only was he professional, intelligent and empathetic, but he was able to adapt to situations,” said Jordan’s preceptor Bryant King, UMHC Nurse Manager in PeriOperative Services.

“He exemplified the kind of students our School of Nursing possesses,” he said.

**Kudos**

**Oxford Students Volunteer**

Three Oxford Traditional BSN students, Meghan Porter, Rachel Fairchild and Kia Jones, volunteered at a fundraiser on Friday, Feb. 18, for a three-year-old heart transplant patient. They served catfish for four hours and assisted with a silent auction for another four hours, along with SON faculty Dr. Jennie Gunn and Sandy Stanton. Hats off to all SON students who go above and beyond their community service requirements to help others during their time of need. Pictured are Porter, Fairchild and Jones with the patient’s brothers.
BSN Student Lightens Patient’s Load

It may have been nothing more than a course assignment for junior Traditional BSN student Amanda Ashley. To the patient she worked with at UMHC, it meant the world. The patient, who came to the hospital unknowing of what was wrong with her, had a procedure done and then was moved to an inpatient unit, where she felt very nervous.

“The patient revealed to me that she was very anxious, because of the ‘fear of the unknown’; however, Ms. Ashley helped her anxieties. Nurses are the patient’s best advocate. They are with the patients for a greater length of time than anyone else, and to possess a calming ability in the midst of the individual’s crisis will make Ms. Ashley a great caregiver one day,” said Karrie Abel, University of Mississippi Health Care patient advocate. “The patient said Ms. Ashley was very attentive and took excellent care of her during her stay. The patient was very impressed with her bedside manner and said that she wished all nurses could be like Ms. Ashley.”

The School of Nursing is “producing excellent nurses with a true passion for people,” Abel said.

Research Paves Way (cont.)

Working alongside Accelerated BSN Director Dr. Tina Martin; Senior Director of Research and Evidence-Based Practice Dr. Sheila Keller; and hospital clinical directors, together, they chose topics of relevance to individual hospital units. The students next searched the literature to determine “best practice.”

“Our hopes are (speaking from a UMHC point of view) that their ideas will be implemented by the UMHC nurses on their units as Evidence-Based Practice projects,” Keller said.

“If the nurses use this information, it will be part of an EBP project, which is designed to ultimately improve patient care and patient safety,” she said.

SON Celebrates December Graduates

Congratulations to all December graduates, including six MSN Nurse Educator students. Pictured from left to right are Robyn MacSorley, Eloise Lopez, Jimmy Hall, Melissa Odom, Dr. Jean Walker, Mary Bufkin and Maria Peters. Also graduating in December with their MSN degree were Nursing and Health Care Administrator students Deborah McGlaun, Jennifer Stephen and Michelle Welander.

RN-MSN Program Expands

The ever-growing RN-MSN program will admit its second class this year. The program, which allows associate degree RNs to earn a master’s degree in seven to nine semesters, is also the focus of a new grant. As part of the grant, the School of Nursing, in multiple capacities, is helping address the needs of the state for more graduate-prepared RNs. Providing an early-entry option to Hinds Community College students and incorporating more online technology into the program’s curriculum, thus making the program more accessible, are only two ways the nursing school is accomplishing this.

In conjunction with the Medical Center’s Office of Nursing Excellence, the School of Nursing offered an open house on February 8 to encourage hospital nurses to continue their education, either through the RN-MSN bridge program or MSN, DNP or PhD in nursing programs.

For more information about the RN-MSN program, please visit http://son.umc.edu/academics/masters/RNtoMSN.
“To improve the health care of the community—local, state, national and global—through excellence in educational practice, research and service.”

While the School of Nursing’s mission statement says it best, it’s the graduate students’ research that brings it to life.

At the Global Obesity Summit in November, Terri Gillespie, a recent Nursing and Health Care Administrator graduate, and Amber Kyle, a current Nursing and Health Care Administrator MSN student, along with faculty Dr. Jennifer Robinson and Dr. Sheila Keller, presented a poster on obesity and its relationship to seatbelt compliance. The group also made this presentation at the Society of Trauma Nurses 13th Annual Conference in Orlando, Fla. Kyle also presented the data to the Mississippi Department of Health, as well as at Nursing Grand Rounds at UMHC in 2010.

Likewise, PhD student Connie Lewis also presented an abstract at the Global Obesity Summit. Renee Daniels, a Psychiatric/Mental Health Nurse Practitioner student, presented “Comparing Obesity in the General Population to the Psychiatric Population” at the national American Psychiatric Nurses Association conference in Kentucky in October.

Second-year DNP student Juanita Graham participated in eight national presentations last year. A few of her research interests include gestational hypertensive disorders; SIDS education and outreach projects among minority women in the Mississippi Delta; and consumer satisfaction in rural and urban county health clinics.

Graham’s research endeavors include poster presentations at the American Public Health Association Annual Meeting in Denver; the International Nursing Research Congress in Orlando, Fla.; and the Southern Nursing Research Society Annual Convention in Austin, Texas, among others.

“As a public health nurse executive, I recognize the value of nursing research in improving outcomes for Mississippi families. Mississippi is a poor state with limited resources to manage extensive health issues. Nursing research assists in identifying best practices for improving health outcomes despite our multitude of barriers and challenges,” Graham said.

Accreditation Review

The Mississippi Educational Consortium for Specialized Advanced Practice Nursing (MECSAPN) will be reviewed by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) for accreditation. This will be the initial accreditation review for a Master of Science in Nursing program that began educating students in the fall of 2008.

The Geronotological Nurse Practitioner and Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner tracks are offered through the MECSAPN Program.

If you would like additional information about the MECSAPN accreditation review, please visit http://son.umc.edu.

Did you know?

- The School of Nursing was the first nursing education program in the state to offer a baccalaureate degree in nursing.
- The world’s first heart and lung transplants were performed at The University of Mississippi Medical Center.
- More than 27,000 patients are admitted to the UMMC hospitals every year.
- Annual outpatient and emergency visits number over 500,000.
- Over 1,200 nurses staff the four UMMC hospitals.
- The School of Nursing received over $6 million in program grants in 2010. These grants help support student scholarships, school-based and community clinics, new nursing programs and much more.
- In addition, the SON was part of over $53 million in grant monies awarded for research in 2010.

Looking for a job? Check out the SON Job Bank

http://son.umc.edu/students/jobposting.html
SON students participate in about 1,700 hours of community service each semester, and fall 2010 was no different. Junior Traditional BSN students Rochelsey Thomas and Emma To put their best feet forward at the American Heart Association Start! Heart Walk in October.

The School of Nursing raised $3,000 for the American Heart Association, in addition to taking home second place in the T-shirt contest. Over 65 SON students volunteered their time for the cause of fighting and defeating heart disease and strokes.

Voted “Most Informative,” the U.S. Air Force recruiter, Master Sgt. Donald Heiss, attended the School of Nursing’s annual Ignite Career Fair, where he spoke to all BSN students about nursing opportunities with the Air Force.

Dr. Joyce Brewer, director of the Family Nurse Practitioner and Adult Acute Care Nurse Practitioner tracks, spoke to Accelerated BSN students Ginger Holland and Anna DuFour at the Ignite Career Fair about MSN admission requirements. Representatives from the graduate programs were on site to field students’ questions.

Yu Ching Tu, a doctoral nursing student from Taiwan, spent a semester in the School of Nursing DNP program. Pictured are Dr. Kim Hoover, dean of the School of Nursing; Dr. Marcia Rachel, associate dean for graduate studies; and Tu.

School of Nursing Ambassadors participated in nearly 1,500 hours of community service last semester. Pictured are (front) Morgan Self, Leisel Jew, Meghan Porter, Bethany Autry, Ashley Hasie, Wendy Kovach and Annalie Johnson, (back) Jena Parker, Keely Nash, Deidre Leeper, Maggie McLellan, Tara Michelle Ayers, Kim Johns and Andrew Jordan.

Save the date! On May 27, the School of Nursing will have its Commencement ceremony at the Mississippi Coliseum. Last year, the SON celebrated the graduation of nearly 200 bachelor’s, master’s and doctoral nursing students.