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New Visions, New Pathways,
Continued Excellence

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
College of Health and Human Services
State of the College Address

President Alan Merten addresses the faculty, staff, and guests at the State of the College Address.

Alumni and Friends of the College listen to the State of the College address.

CHHS Dean Shirley Travis delivers the first annual State of the College address.

Department Chair PJ Maddox introduces new Department of Health Administration and Policy faculty.

CHHS Dean Shirley Travis introduces new School of Nursing faculty.
New Visions, New Pathways, and Continued Excellence

Shirley S. Travis, PhD, RN, FAAN
Dean, College of Health and Human Services

One of the changes that my colleagues in higher education and I have noticed over the past decade is that the traditional cycle of the academic year no longer exists. The rhythm of beginning and ending academic semesters has given way to a more continuous hum of people and organizations in constant motion. Sometimes we all long for the days when completion of a task, achievement of a goal, or closure of a project was more apparent than it is today. Now, the more open-ended nature of our work calls for new ways to think about defining accomplishments and achieving goals.

My daily reminder of Mason in motion is the view from my office window of two towering cranes that are part of the construction for the impressive new residential sector being built on the Fairfax Campus. As much as I look forward to having the construction completed in our little corner of campus, I know that the cranes will just be moved some place else and they will be here for a long time. Our other Mason campuses have more of the same impressive growth and expansion in progress.

In the College of Health and Human Services (CHHS), we have our own “construction” projects under way. One of the biggest is our new web site (www.gmu.edu/departments/chhs/index.html). If you haven’t been there yet, please come for a visit. All the new academic units have been working hard to create user-friendly homepages for their programs and related student organizations. We also have an Alumni and Friends homepage where descriptions of upcoming alumni events and news can be found. Dimensions will also be posted, so readers can easily share an electronic version of this official CHHS publication with friends and colleagues who might be interested in our college events and accomplishments.

For this first CHHS issue of Dimensions, we did a little remodeling. In the articles that follow, you will find a consistent message of the importance we place on creating new visions, new pathways, and continuing a habit of excellence in our academic programs. Beginning with this issue, we also introduce our readers to new CHHS faculty, who were selected from national pools of candidates for each and every position. We couldn’t be prouder of our new Mason colleagues for 2006 and thought you should meet them as soon as possible.

Whether it is addressing the critical nurse educator shortage, obtaining or maintaining national certification of our educational programs, developing new programs in health and human services, building new research collaborations in the region, or adding exciting new faculty to the college, the CHHS hum is growing louder. Listen. Can you hear it?
As we began this academic year, the nursing faculty met to discuss our many opportunities and challenges. There, we renewed our commitment to maintaining our strong identity as nurses as we charted our course of action for the next few years, in which we will continue to address workforce shortage issues not only in direct patient care, but also in advanced practice and nursing faculty roles through our program offerings and research and scholarship endeavors.

**New Opportunities for Undergraduates**

I am fortunate to have an outstanding team of assistant deans and a faculty with great expertise with whom I share responsibility for the School of Nursing. Among them is Carol Urban, PhD, RN, our new assistant dean for the undergraduate division in nursing. Under her watchful eye, we will continue to produce the largest number of newly licensed nurses in Virginia.

Over the past few years, the number of applicants for our undergraduate nursing pathways program has increased significantly. In addition, we continue to have an incredibly diverse population of students whose origins span the globe. Our class discussions are enriched by the varied experiences that students share with each other.

In the next few years, we hope to provide our students with learning opportunities in a virtual hospital environment of simulation labs. If you’ve not seen our facilities recently, I invite you to come meet our very smart dummies. Computer-assisted human patient simulators provide a rich array of learning opportunities for undergraduate students learning how to respond in complex care scenarios, as well as graduate students preparing to be nurse educators.

**Preparation for the Future at the Master’s Level**

Teresa Panniers, PhD, RN, continues as the assistant dean for the master’s and post-master’s division. We are excited about preparing an increasing number of graduate nursing students to teach clinical nursing in associate and baccalaureate degree programs. Our new clinical nurse leader track is also attracting interest and holds great potential for our younger cohorts of staff nurses who are interested in graduate education but wish to stay in direct patient care. Panniers and Urban will lead the faculty in looking at new articulation possibilities, such as master’s entry into nursing education for applicants with a bachelor’s degree in a field other than nursing.

Faculty in our master’s division tracks are examining recent Association of American Colleges of Nursing recommendations...
New Options in Doctoral Education
Kathleen Gaffney, PhD, RN, our assistant dean for the doctoral division, with other faculty members, is leading the discussion of the state-of-the-art situation of doctoral education in nursing. We have new curriculum options in place to prepare nurses to assume teaching positions in institutions of higher education as we continue to experience a critical shortage of faculty members in undergraduate and graduate nursing programs over the next few years.

Expanded Research Efforts
Under the guidance of Jean Moore, PhD, RN, our new assistant dean for nursing faculty research development, the faculty is striving to strengthen our accomplishments in research and scholarship. In the coming years, we will work toward expanding our contributions to clinical research and evidenced-based practice with colleagues in other disciplines at Mason and in health care organizations. Graduate students and new faculty members will be gathered into our plan to move us forward in our research efforts.

As we look toward the future and the extraordinary opportunities for collaborative research among students, faculty, and others, we will work with our friends and colleagues throughout the community and state to increase opportunities for financial support for graduate students who wish to earn advanced degrees through full-time graduate study.

Reconnecting with Your Alma Mater
We’ve had 30 years of success in educating more than 5,000 nurses of whom we are proud. We hope you are fondly remembering your days at Mason as you read this. If you’ve been out of touch for a while, we hope you reconnect with us. We would love to hear about your life since you left Mason.

You can reconnect with us in other ways, too. If you’re thinking about continuing your education, we have something for everyone: from refresher courses for folks who are interested in returning to the practice environment after an absence from nursing to a variety of graduate and doctoral course offerings that lead to a certificate or a degree. Part-time and full-time study opportunities are available.

Perhaps you would like to share your ideas for the future of nursing and nursing education. We welcome your participation in our planning through your input on our advisory committees. We could also use your expertise as a guest lecturer, a clinical or practicum preceptor, or a simulation lab or clinical instructor.

Of course, your monetary contributions are always welcome and greatly appreciated. I am constantly humbled by our student population and the extraordinary financial hardships that many undertake to accomplish their educational goals. We would love to provide more scholarships for more students. Your support of that goal is essential.

The opportunities for your participation are boundless!
Visions for the Department of Global and Community Health

By Lisa Pawloski, PhD, Associate Professor and Chair, Department of Global and Community Health

The Department of Global and Community Health (DGCH) is a new addition to the College of Health and Human Services (CHHS). DGCH was developed to prepare undergraduate and graduate students to define and help meet the health care needs of the local and international community. Our vision is to create an outstanding academic environment that provides the expertise, curriculum, scholarship, and research within the more focused global and community health arena.

The Department’s Mission
Aligned with CHHS’s overall goals, the educational mission of DGCH specifically is to provide entry-level and advanced degrees in health-related disciplines that are centered in global and community issues. DGCH’s research mission is to explore programs that help define and address health issues and the needs of affected populations at the regional and global levels. Its service mission is to increase the awareness of these problems, enhance health-promoting information, and collaborate with other organizations toward enhancing community, national, and international health.

Academic Programs
DGCH currently houses two undergraduate degree, two undergraduate certificate, three master’s degree, and two master’s certificate programs. Our strategic plan includes reevaluating and reorganizing our academic offerings. The first programs to be evaluated are our undergraduate health care coordination degree, the master’s in epidemiology and biostatistics, the master’s in rehabilitation science, the master’s in health behavior, and the master’s of international health.

We are creating a new bachelor’s degree in community health, which will begin in fall 2008. This degree program will prepare undergraduates to enter community health-related agencies and graduate programs in public and community health, and will include sufficient preparation in the basic sciences to meet requirements for entry into professional schools, such as medical or dental school. The curriculum includes courses in epidemiology, community health, health promotion and illness prevention, health communication, health education, nutrition, foreign language, research, program evaluation, and health systems. The program also allows students with a GPA of 3.00 or higher to apply for a practicum experience in a community health-related agency.

We are also expanding the pertinent epidemiology course offerings for our master’s of epidemiology program, our new undergraduate degree program, and our program in international health. To help us with this expansion, we are fortunate to have epidemiologist Kathryn Jacobsen (PhD, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor) who comes to Mason from Calvin College. Jacobsen has conducted epidemiological research in international settings, including a study of fevers of unknown origin in Ecuador. She also has significant experience in fostering student interest in research and collaborated with many of her undergraduate students at Calvin. Jacobsen has already created two new courses: a graduate course in the epidemiology of infectious disease and an undergraduate international health course that will be offered this spring.

President Alan Merten joins faculty and staff from CHHS at the Global and Community Health Open House, September ’06.
In conjunction with Lynn Gerber (MD, Tufts University) at the Center for Chronic Illnesses and Disability, we have plans to develop graduate programs in rehabilitation science. This spring, Gerber will teach one of the first courses to be included in these programs, HSCI 594 The Scientific Basis of Pain, Fatigue, and Suffering. A program of research in the study of chronic illness in conjunction with Fairfax Inova Health System and studies of models of health care delivery for persons with complex medical illnesses and disability are ongoing at the center.

We are also planning a master’s degree program in health behavior, which we hope to begin in fall 2007. This program will fill one of the core needs of community and public health within DGCH.

Finally, we are phasing out the master’s of health science concentration in international health. In its place, we are creating a stand-alone degree in international health, which will allow students to focus more on the skills and curriculum needed to work in international health settings. The curriculum for such a skills set involves courses in epidemiology, environmental health, biostatistics, research, global nutrition, program evaluation, and global health trends and policies. This program will have an added thesis option and expand the required number of credits from 36 to 45. The program will continue to offer one of our most successful courses, the 6-credit student practicum in international health. This program was recently spotlighted in the online Mason Gazette (gazette.gmu.edu/articles/8978).

Research, Faculty, and Events

While the vision of our academic expansion is vast, additional faculty with expertise in nutrition, community and behavioral health, and rehabilitation science will help us move forward with our plans. We also are moving forward with our research programs on projects related to global health and epidemiology, nutrition, biostatistics, gerontology, and rehabilitation science. Our department is also collaborating with the Pan American Health Organization, the Hepatitis Foundation, the National Institutes of Health, the Center for Asia Economic Cooperation, and the Center for Global Studies to bring in speakers and programs that will create an academic culture that promotes research and practice within global and community health.

To learn more about our programs, please visit our web site at chhs.gmu.edu/gch/index.html or contact

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By P. J. Maddox, PhD, RN, Chair

What were you up to in 2006? For the faculty of the Health Systems Management Program, the year has been momentous as they formed the Department of Health Administration and Policy (HAP) and moved academic and research programs to the new Northeast Module. You could say “office moves and introductions `R us!”

What an amazing year we have had. By the time we welcome 2007, HAP will be six months old, and we will have already welcomed a new department manager, three new faculty members, the undergraduate health science program in health administration, including the assisted living/senior housing services concentration and academic coordinators for each. Practically overnight, we have significantly expanded our academic mission to focus on creating the next generation of managers, policy analysts, and researchers to serve health services and systems broadly defined! By welcoming the undergraduate health science program in health administration, expanding and fine-tuning our graduate offerings, and putting a proposal for a new PhD in health services research and policy before the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, the HAP faculty has some groundbreaking work ahead of them!

Key priorities for the new department include getting to know some 120 undergraduate students; integrating and fine-tuning programs of study on the academic continuum (BS to PhD); pursuing accreditation in health administration from the Commission on Accreditation of Health Management Education for the MS in health systems management; expanding student enrollment in both local and distance education; growing our faculty’s portfolio of health services research; and finally, developing an external communications and outreach program to connect with alumni, employers, and affiliates.

So, with this overview, we invite you to meet the new faculty and follow departmental and alumni accomplishments in future editions of Dimensions and on the department website at www.gmu.edu/depts/chhs/hap/index.html. Read about our new faculty in the Meet the New Faculty section of this magazine.
With great delight and anticipation, the Social Work Department took its place in the College of Health and Human Services (CHHS) this past July. The department became part of CHHS to help maximize synergies within the new multidisciplinary college focused on the health and human service needs of the region. The department was previously housed in what is now the College of Humanities and Social Sciences.

Mason’s undergraduate social work program goes back more than 30 years and is nationally accredited by the Council on Social Work Education. The bachelor’s degree in social work prepares students with the basic skills to work with a wide variety of people in a wide range of settings. Graduates of the program work in nursing homes, homeless shelters, welfare departments, family service agencies, substance abuse treatment programs, residential programs for adolescents, group homes for people with disabilities, and day programs for older adults.

We currently have about 150 undergraduate social work majors, a population that is racially, ethnically, chronologically, and geographically diverse. Undergraduates take courses in human behavior; interpersonal practice with individuals, families, groups, and communities; social policy and social justice; and research. In addition, students participate in 100 hours of service-learning during their junior year and complete a supervised field placement with a community agency two days per week during their senior year. Their culminating experience is a social justice project that involves applying their knowledge, skills, and values to a community-based initiative. Approximately half of our undergraduates will continue on to graduate school.

In 2002, Mason began offering a master of social work (MSW) degree. The program, which received accreditation from the Council on Social Work Education in February 2006, now enrolls approximately 60 students who first study basic interpersonal practice skills and then advanced course work in organizational leadership, policy advocacy, and community practice. MSW students also complete more than 1,000 hours of supervised practicum experience in sites that include public and voluntary health and human service agencies, state and federal government, and prominent national organizations. Upon graduation, they enthusiastically join the ranks of professional social workers in settings that range from schools to hospices, from advocacy organizations to federal government agencies, where they work as case managers, counselors, program directors, analysts, and lobbyists.

Our 10 full-time faculty have wide-ranging research interests that include child welfare, substance abuse, disabilities, agency administration, youth services, economic security, international human rights, health, and mental health. In addition, all are actively contributing to the surrounding community, state, and region through a variety of leadership positions.

The Elisabeth Shirley Enochs endowment is one resource that allows us to make such contributions. This endowment specifically supports initiatives for improving conditions for the Latino community at home and abroad. Through this program, we have established strong working relationships with social work programs in Central America, collaborating on projects concerning family violence.

We are also engaged in a wonderful partnership with the U.S. State Department, in which their Foreign Service officers and other staff can enroll in our MSW program as part of their official duties. We have had two such students so far and look forward to many more in the years ahead.

Speaking of the years ahead, we are gearing up to introduce a PhD in social work, which we expect to launch in fall 2010! The degree will prepare students for professional roles with universities, national organizations, consulting firms, government agencies, and think tanks. At the master’s level, we are exploring the possibility of creating a dual degree in social work and conflict resolution. We are also making initial plans to develop a research-intensive center. We are already collaborating with our CHHS colleagues on several projects and know that many more such opportunities are just around the bend.
In late summer 2006, the newly developed Mason Eldercare Services assisted its first client. The caller, a Mason staff member, was seeking a service or individual to help a reasonably healthy, yet forgetful, parent pay bills and handle financial transactions in Florida. Eldercare Services directed the caller to the local area Agency on Aging, one of 655 agencies of this nature in the United States that help elders remain independent, maintain dignity, and remain in their homes.

According to the National Alliance for Caregiving, an estimated 59 percent of caregivers work or have worked at the same time as giving care. With the 85 years and above age group becoming the fastest-growing segment of the U.S. population, caregiving responsibilities for family members are likely to increase. For employers, this means higher levels of absenteeism, late arrivals and early departures, workday disruptions, and higher human resource costs. For employees, it means increases in stress and challenges to time, energy, and finances.

To address these problems, Eldercare Services, a partnership between the Human Resources and Payroll Department and the College of Health and Human Services (CHHS), was created, adding to an already rich benefits package available to faculty and staff. The program provides resource and referral information regarding long-term care, housing, transportation, nutrition services, homecare, and financial and legal challenges faced by elders. The program also features monthly one-hour seminars on such topics as caring for an individual with dementia, legal and financial considerations for caregivers, and tips for caregiving families over the holidays. Presenters include Mason faculty members and outside experts.

The program is physically housed in the Human Resources and Payroll Department, which supplies staff with expertise in work–life balance, benefits, and training. CHHS faculty bring in-depth understanding of caregiving research, family caregiver needs, and expertise on the network of aging-related resources at the federal, state, and local levels. According to Linda Harber, associate vice president of human resources, and Shirley Travis, dean of the College of Health and Human Services, the program will benefit CHHS students with learning opportunities, such as internships and practicum rotations, allowing them to learn firsthand about eldercare needs as they prepare for important new career opportunities associated with caring for an aging society.

As the need for caregiving of older family members increases, Eldercare Services will evolve to include diverse levels of support and expertise. Potential opportunities include expansion from a resource and referral program to a geriatric care management model. With the growing needs of aging alumni and their family members, program expansion may benefit Mason alumni in the future.

Those interested in supporting the initiative by sharing expertise as an outside speaker for Eldercare Learning Seminars, providing financial support toward program growth, or filling volunteer opportunities that exist within the program are encouraged to contact Eldercare Services (eldercare.gmu.edu) at 703-993-1802 or ecare@gmu.edu.

1Caregiving in the U.S. (2005)
The National Alliance for Caregiving (Bethesda, MD) in collaboration with AARP (Washington, DC)
http://www.caregiving.org/data/04execsumm.pdf
Survey Shows Nursing Student Satisfaction on the Rise

By Lori Jennings, PR Manager, University Relations

Faculty and staff in the College of Health and Human Services (CHHS) are celebrating their recent success in increasing undergraduate nursing student satisfaction survey scores. The just-released survey data reveal a dramatic spike in overall student satisfaction with the program, faculty, and classes.

“Our primary responsibility lies with educating students and having them be part of a program that they deem valuable and also enjoy,” says CHHS Dean Shirley Travis. “These survey results demonstrate that we are now meeting those goals better than ever.”

“Two years ago, the survey indicated that a trend toward student dissatisfaction was emerging in certain aspects of the program,” says Goodlett McDaniel, associate dean in CHHS and the chair of the Program Evaluation Committee, which monitored the data. “In response, School of Nursing faculty launched a task force charged with improving the perceptions of the students about their program.”

Sponsored by the college to help faculty members understand the elements of the program that are working well and those that need improvement, the annual survey, known as the Nursing Education Exit Assessment, is administered by Educational Benchmarking Inc. each spring. More than 100 undergraduate nursing students participated in the survey this past spring, yielding data that were used to evaluate learning outcomes, effectiveness of institutional resources, and the overall educational experience of graduates. Typically, more than 100 schools with nursing programs participate.

According to McDaniel, satisfaction with Mason’s undergraduate nursing program exceeded the average scores of all institutions measured for 7 of the 10 categories in the survey. The greatest student satisfaction was found in the areas of overall program effectiveness, technical skills, professional values, classmates, faculty and administration, course lectures, and interaction and quality of nursing instruction.

“These scores are a tribute to the hard work of the faculty members on the task force who were committed to creating a positive and enriching environment for our undergraduate nursing students,” McDaniel adds.

The following graph shows changes in the students’ attitudes toward the 11 criteria surveyed since 2002.
Social Work Program Receives National Accreditation

By Lori Jennings, PR Manager, University Relations

The College of Health and Human Services (CHHS) Department of Social Work reached an important industry milestone when it received national accreditation from the Council on Social Work Education for its master of social work (MSW) program.

“Providing accreditation for social work programs has proven to be a necessity in today’s environment, and we view reaching this milestone as furthering a trend in the profession that helps bolster the important work done by our students and alumni,” says Shirley Travis, CHHS dean. The achievement was celebrated at an event at the Arlington Arts Center in September attended by students; alumni; university administrators; community practitioners; heads of local agencies, state, and national organizations; and area policy makers.

The MSW program offers the only program in the nation specializing exclusively in the macro practice of social work. After gaining a foundation in working directly with clients, students learn the skills to become leaders in human service agencies, their community, and the social policy arena.

“We follow a philosophy known as ‘person and environment,’ where we look at people or groups in a broad social context,” says Sunny Harris Rome, Social Work Department chair. “We believe this perspective allows our work to have a greater impact on the populations and communities we serve.”

Created in 2002, the 60-credit master’s program combines academic training with more than 1,000 hours of supervised field work, emphasizing organizational leadership, community practice, policy, and advocacy. The department also offers an undergraduate program that has a solid 30-year track record.
Diverse Student Group Adds to Richness of International Health Program

By Lori Jennings, PR Manager, University Relations

“In our classes, we have different students from different backgrounds and different cultures,” says Grace Breidy from Lebanon. “We learn not only from the professors, but also from each other. Everyone attracted to the program has traveled or lived elsewhere and has such a broad knowledge base to share.”

Breidy will soon graduate from the master’s of health science program with a concentration in international health. The program was created to serve students interested in global health issues, particularly in developing countries. Course work ranges from biostatistics to epidemiology, health policy to global nutrition, and anthropology to organizational culture and leadership. Students interested in the program are required to have a background in health and six credits in a foreign language. The program enrolls about 50 students—up from just 2 when the program began nearly two years ago.

Students such as Breidy in the small but quickly growing program credit the diversity of fellow students and professors as one of its most rewarding and valuable attributes. Students go through the program as a cohort, taking the same classes and getting to know their fellow students well. To supplement the course material, two practicums are provided: one usually abroad and one in Washington, D.C., which takes advantage of Mason’s location.

Each student shares an interest in international health, but the similarity ends there. For example, Norbu Gyari is ethnically Tibetan, was born and grew up in India, and is now an American citizen. She has long felt the desire to go abroad and help others and recently had that chance when she completed her practicum in Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal. She worked for John Snow International’s Nepal Family Health Planning and UNICEF’s Regional Office for South Asia, helping to educate people on fertility and family planning methods and proposing health plans for monks. After she graduates in December, she plans to return to her roots and further pursue the health plan proposal.

Amira Walli, BS ’05, MS ’06, from Egypt, recently completed her practicum by working with the Pan American Health Organization and a subset of the World Health Organization (WHO) in Washington, D.C. She worked alongside people from around the world, many with decades of experience. Her unit focused on tracking information on the avian flu, specifically how knowledge travels from various countries to WHO’s headquarters.

And Breidy landed a full-time job working on health, nutrition, and population issues through her recent practicum at the World Bank, where she first started in the Middle East and North Africa region and then moved to the executive director’s office. She, too, wants to help others by working in the field of international health and is eager to make a difference in her home country through her influence in Washington, D.C.

“Our students make fantastic success stories,” says program chair Lisa Pawloski. “We see students with already great experience in international affairs and health with NGOs [nongovernmental organizations] and other multilateral institutions move up into managerial roles or serve key roles in conducting research or developing new programs after graduating. It’s truly a rewarding experience to know that our graduates are working to improve health issues, and subsequently people’s lives, all over the world.”

More information can be found at chhs.gmu.edu/gch/grad-international.html.
Regional health information organizations (RHIOs) are expected to play a major role in health care provision in the coming years, and Mason’s Center for Health Policy Research and Ethics is serving as the lead to make this concept a reality in Northern Virginia. Created at the request of university president Alan Merten, Mason’s RHIO planning workgroup is exploring the use of information technology to improve health care service, patient education, and planning efficiencies; expand communications; and streamline administrative processes in Northern Virginia.

“We envision a full-blown regional health information exchange, with Northern Virginia leading the charge,” says Jane Woods, Mason’s liaison for state health policy and community development. “The hope is that in the future all regions in the state will be interconnected and collaborating to improve health care service access and quality.” The RHIO would benefit patients, health care providers, health care insurers, and others by reducing errors, decreasing communication duplication, and increasing the accuracy and speed of prescription ordering.

Among the most interesting prospects of the RHIO is the potential to create centralized individual medical records, providing consumers with the ability to control and access their own health care records. For example, potential RHIO capabilities could include enabling all prescriptions to be handled electronically, providing consumers with digital access to their individual health care records, and allowing consumer-selected doctors and service providers to access these health care records electronically, regardless of location.

The planning workgroup is a multidisciplinary team that includes Jean Pierre Auffret from the School of Management; Goodlett McDaniel from the College of Health and Human Services; and P.J. Maddox, Mark Meiners, and Jane Woods from the Center for Health Policy Research and Ethics. Also participating in the group are area experts, such as physicians, patient groups, representatives from health associations, and information technologists.

For more information, visit nvrhio.gmu.edu.

L-R President Alan Merten, Karen Bell, MD, MMS, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and William Hazel, MD, gather before the Regional Health Information Organization Summit in September ’06.

CHHS faculty and former Commonwealth Secretary of Health and Human Resources, the Honorable Jane Woods talks with Lynn DeLacy at the Regional Health Information Organization Summit.
Looking for a Few (lots of, actually!) Good Nurse Educators

By Jeanne Sorrell, PhD, RN, Professor, School of Nursing

“I enjoyed all the topics, but as a new nurse educator, the parts about nursing curriculum development, the nurse educator’s role, and how to apply teaching techniques that help facilitate thinking were especially helpful.”

“It was great to hear stories and examples from other participants. I would love to have a follow-up conference!”

—Participants from Clinical Nurse Educator Academy, June ’06

Many more than a few good men and women are needed to meet the current critical shortage of nurse educators. According to a report by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN), 41,683 qualified applicants to baccalaureate and graduate nursing programs were denied admission in 2005, with 73.5 percent of the nursing schools surveyed listing faculty shortages as a reason. Another AACN survey in 2006 identified 637 faculty vacancies across the country and 55 additional faculty positions needed to accommodate the increased demand.

To begin to address the serious shortage of nurse educators in Northern Virginia, the School of Nursing created the Clinical Nurse Educator Academy as the first phase of its Fast-forward Initiatives for Nursing Education, or FINE. Designed by School of Nursing faculty members Pamela Cangelosi and Jeanne Sorrell, the academy is a three-year pilot project to prepare more than 100 nurse educators, using innovative educational strategies to promote excellence in clinical teaching. Although clinical teaching is often recognized as the most difficult teaching in nursing, it is often not emphasized in teacher preparation programs. The academy was designed to remedy this problem.

The first academy was held last June. Twenty nurse clinicians gathered at Mason for four days to learn about transitioning to a nurse educator role. Visiting scholar Pamela Ironside, associate professor at Indiana University, as well as five faculty members from the School of Nursing, engaged participants in thinking about what it is like to move from expert clinician to novice educator. Academy participants were drawn from nurses currently working at area hospitals and other health care agencies. The content was designed to help participants integrate previous knowledge and skills as expert clinicians with new knowledge and skills as clinical nurse educators. Narratives from research and practice were used to teach the essential skills needed in clinical teaching. Specific topics were Expert to Novice: Moving from Nurse Clinician to Nurse Preceptor or Nurse Educator; Clinical Nurse Educator Competencies, Thinking in Nursing Education; and Where Does Learning Stop and Evaluation Begin? Giving Bad News.

A highlight of the academy was a presentation by Debra Spunt, assistant professor and director of the Clinical Simulation Lab at the University of Maryland. Spunt presented clinical scenarios using the Sim Man in Mason’s Toups Clinical Simulation Labs. Through these experiences, participants felt what it was like to be a student who needed to think critically and intervene appropriately in an emergency.

Many academy participants commented that they previously had no opportunities to discuss their educational roles with nurses in other agencies and appreciated the chance to share their experiences. To help participants continue learning from each other, School of Nursing faculty members Elizabeth Chong, Susan Durham, and Loretta Normile plan to continue mentoring activities through the 2006–07 academic year through e-mail discussions, sharing of articles related to clinical teaching, and invitations to participate in various School of Nursing events.

A second academy planned for May 2007 will target faculty currently teaching in nursing programs. Graduates from the first academy will be invited to a celebration reception at the 2007 academy to meet the new participants. It is hoped that each academy will help build a body of nurse educators who share common goals. The curriculum for the second academy will be available in January, with registration beginning in March.

Other exciting educational initiatives are under way at the School of Nursing to increase the numbers of educators. A new nurse educator track in the master of science in nursing program, implemented in fall 2005, has proved to be popular among nurses wanting to extend their clinical practice with full- or part-time teaching. Another option is a 15-credit certificate in nursing education, which offers students theory and practice. In addition, a new nursing education concentration in the PhD in nursing program has been initiated to prepare nurses as scholars who will advance nursing education initiatives through research and join a growing cadre of talented and dedicated nurse educators.

For further information, please visit the School of Nursing web site at chhs.gmu.edu/academic-outreach/index.html or contact Sorrell at jsorrell@gmu.edu.
Over the past few years, the term “palliative care” has crept into the vocabulary of health care providers and the public. Yet, despite its increasing use, there is not widespread understanding of what palliative care really is, even among health care providers. Hundreds of advanced practice nurses and more than 2,000 physicians are board-certified palliative care providers; however, people with neither the education nor the certification have added “palliative care” to their titles. Thus, patients and their families are having difficulty not only experiencing excellent palliative care, but also understanding that it is a right for patients across disease trajectories, independent of prognosis.

Palliative care is not equivalent with end-of-life care, though the two are certainly related. As an advanced practice nurse in palliative care and ethics, I’ve spent most of my clinical time in intensive care units. Certainly, many of my patients were dying, but for at least as many, the goal was to get them better and out of the hospital.

At its best, palliative care has three components: symptom management, assistance with decision making, and end-of-life care. Within symptom management, the most time is spent on pain, gastrointestinal symptoms, and cognitive symptoms.

Palliative care also is characterized by assistance with decision making. We help with decision making when we skillfully integrate medical indications, patient preferences, quality of life, and contextual factors into the process of developing the best possible plan of care. We have to be willing to say that autonomy is not an absolute right. For example, should we provide a medication that cannot help a patient, just because he or she demands it?

And palliative care is also about end-of-life care. I remember a young woman, who when it became clear that she would not benefit from the aggressive, high-tech therapies that were prolonging her life, made a decision with the family, nurses, physicians, social workers, and her minister to discontinue use of the ventilator.

As she was dying, her family was in the room. We had discussed what she would want were she able to tell us—singing, prayers, tears, and occasional laughter as people remembered and retold stories about her life. Those in attendance articulated that, as tragic as her dying was, it was as good as it could be. Her sister commented that she looked so much more peaceful after the endotracheal tube was removed. She died a few hours later in the presence of those who loved her.

The community in which George Mason University is located is fortunate to have some of the best palliative care in the country. Several School of Nursing faculty members and Shirley Travis, Dean of CHHS, have clinical and research experiences that make them real experts. One community example is Capital Hospice, which serves more than 4,500 patients and families a year in the Washington, D.C., area. In addition to specific hospice services, the hospice has an excellent, highly qualified group of palliative care providers, including nurses, physicians, social workers, and chaplains.

The College of Health and Human Services and others from Mason have developed a collaborative relationship with Capital Hospice. Currently, I am working with Carlos Gomez, MD, associate director, Institute for Education and Leadership at the hospice, to develop a comprehensive description of patients’ and families’ experiences of symptoms and other dimensions of care at the end of life. We also have other research projects in the works.

Another activity marking the emergence of this subspecialty was the first meeting of a Regional Palliative Care Interest Group in November 2005. The meeting, convened by Travis and me, was possible because of the number of palliative care experts are in the region. The interest group has spawned several projects exploring providers’, patients’, and families’ understanding of and experiences with palliative care. Taking part in this multidisciplinary effort with me are Gary Kreps, chair of Mason’s Communication Department and Eileen and Steve Mandell Professor of Health Communication; Jim McAuley, professor in the Sociology and Anthropology Department, Communication Department; and Mary Baylor, director of the Institute for Education and Leadership at Capital Hospice and College of Heath and Human Services adjunct faculty member. We recently were invited to submit a grant application to the American Cancer Society to further our study of palliative care.

Palliative care represents a distinct skill set. That being said, the advent of palliative care as a subspecialty reminds us that symptom management is at once a responsibility and an opportunity for nurses across all areas of practice.
Policy Research Mentorship Program Names Fellows for 2006–07

In September, the Center for Health Policy Research and Ethics awarded three policy research fellowships for the 2006–07 Policy Research Mentorship Program of the Washington Health Policy Institute. Receiving the fellowships are

Barbara J. Matthees, PhD, RN
Minnesota State University at Moorhead Department of Nursing
Government Support for Simulations in Nursing Education in Rural Areas

Patricia Kiladis, MS, RN
Northeastern University School of Nursing
State Policy Initiatives to Expand Public Nursing Education Capacity

Loretta Heuer, PhD, RN, FAAN
University of North Dakota College of Nursing
Public Incentives to Develop Electronic Health Records of Migrant Farm Workers Needing Chronic Care Services

The mentorship program is designed to develop interest and expertise in health policy analysis among selected institute participants. Its specific goals are to stimulate the conduct and dissemination of research and evaluations that

- Apply knowledge gained and lessons learned from the Washington Health Policy Institutes.
- Analyze a selected emerging or extant health policy issue of significance to the applicant’s profession and academic or service institution, as well as to the center.
- Produce expert policy analyses targeted at public policy makers.
- Further interest in and participation at future institutes.

For more information on the mentorship program, contact Tim M. Henderson, MSPH, MAMC
Director of Outreach and Education
Center for Health Policy Research and Ethics
Phone: 703-993-1850
E-mail: thender1@gmu.edu

Pawloski to Address Childhood Obesity as Part of Vision Series

Associate professor Lisa Pawloski is one of the scheduled speakers in Provost Peter Stearns’s new Vision Series. Open to the university and the public, the lectures will showcase the talents of eight distinguished Mason faculty members who will share their research and work.

Pawloski, who also directs the Department of Global and Community Health, is a nutritionist and an anthropologist, and will speak on a topic of great concern: “Childhood Obesity: Our Newest Global Epidemic?”

Childhood obesity has been recognized as an emerging threat to the health of America’s children for some time. Obese children have a much higher risk of developing chronic illnesses, such as diabetes and hypertension, as well as deficiencies of the vitamins and minerals necessary for brain development and physical growth. While it was once thought that America was alone in battling this crisis, researchers such as Pawloski are finding that childhood obesity rates are soaring in other nations, even those plagued with hunger and poverty. Her presentation will highlight research she conducted in Mali, Nicaragua, and Thailand.

Pawloski’s lecture is scheduled to take place at 8 p.m. on Monday, February 26, 2007, in the Center for the Arts Concert Hall. The Vision Series lectures are free and open to the university community and the public. Tickets are available online or at the center’s ticket office. For further information, visit www.gmu.edu/cfa/vision.
Professor Joins Select Group of Forensic Nurses

By Lori Jennings, PR Manager, University Relations

Michele Davidson, associate professor in the School of Nursing, joined the ranks of a select group of nurses known as certified forensic nurses this fall.

A growing field, forensic nursing encompasses clinical nursing in a law enforcement setting. Forensic nurses typically investigate and treat victims of sexual assault, provide assessments on children with suspected abuse or maltreatment-related conditions, conduct death investigations, serve as expert witnesses in trials, or work in correctional settings.

Davidson received her certification from the American College of Forensic Examiners Institute, the largest professional membership association representing forensic professionals in the United States. One of only 110 certified forensic nurses in the country, she intends to use her new skill set to conduct research related to sexual assault and victimization.

“We are pleased that Dr. Davidson has chosen to enter the field of forensic nursing, both in terms of research contributions to the field and knowledge contributions to our faculty and students,” says Shirley Travis, College of Health and Human Services dean. “Forensic nursing is an area that promises continued growth, and our college hopes to serve this emerging field in the future with programs specifically targeted to this specialty.”

Davidson’s program of research includes three types of sexual assault. In particular, she plans to study what she terms “border crossing rapes,” in which women are sexually assaulted during attempts to enter the United States. She also will study the role of forensic nurses as expert witnesses regarding normal and abnormal injuries from consensual sex and behaviors and injuries that characterize rough sex.

Davidson will be working closely with colleagues in Mason’s Student Health Services for part of her research.

“Forensic nurses serve a valuable role in society because they are the only members of professional response teams who are trained to interact with both the victim and the family during a crisis situation, such as a sexual assault,” says Davidson.

“We are trained to do an on-the-spot assessment in a nonjudgmental manner that takes into account varied cultural values and interpersonal relationships. Forensic nurses make a good fit for working with vulnerable populations.”

Davidson received her PhD in nursing from Mason in 1999. Prior to joining the Mason faculty, she worked as a certified nurse midwife in Washington, D.C., where she cared for a high-risk population that included victims of intimate partner violence and sexual assault. She established a task force on the care of women who were physically and sexually assaulted during pregnancy. In 1995, she received the March of Dimes Nurse Midwifery Award for her work.

SNA President Seth Abernathy and fellow nursing students demonstrate to middle school students the reality of nursing education during their Summer Camp, sponsored by Inova Health System and held in the Toups Nursing Clinical Simulation Laboratories. Students practice putting on sterile gloves, listening to heart beats, and changing dressings.
The College Celebrates Its Alumni: Louise Turner

By Lucy Boland, MSN, RN, Assistant Professor School of Nursing

This year, Dimension’s outstanding alumna is Louise Turner, BSN ’00, BA Spanish ’03, a case manager/health care consultant for Genex Hispanic Resource Center, a company founded about 25 years ago with the goal of helping Hispanic communities in Virginia, Maryland, and Washington, D.C.

Turner’s nursing career began with a diploma from the Hospital Notre Dame in Montreal, Canada, in 1965. A military wife, she moved with her husband and family to many places around the world. She returned to the United States in 1992 and took a refresher course in nursing.

Turner began working full time in the emergency room at Prince William Hospital, where she became aware of the large number of Hispanic patients who had difficulty navigating the health care system because of language barriers and a lack of knowledge about the system. Wanting to make a difference in the lives of this vulnerable population, Turner went back to school and received her BSN from Mason with a minor in Spanish in 2000.

While in the nursing program, Turner had the opportunity to travel to Nicaragua for an alternative public health clinical experience, which, she says, “only reinforced my desire to be of service to the Hispanic community.”

Following graduation from the nursing program, Turner continued her studies while working full time at Prince William Hospital and subsequently received a BA in Spanish from Mason in 2003. She then spent a summer in Spain taking additional courses in Spanish.

When Turner returned, she joined the Genex Hispanic Resource Center, which works with insurance companies that oversee workmen’s compensation for on-the-job injuries for various companies.

Turner meets clients when they are injured, sometimes in the emergency room, and follows the client until he or she is discharged from care and has returned to full-time work. Her responsibilities include attending doctor appointments with clients; attending initial physical therapy, occupational therapy, or speech therapy assessments; assessing the home environment for special equipment needs or services; and meeting with home health nurses to translate for them with clients. She also locates community resources for clients and facilitates long-term care rehabilitation when necessary. Her patient care load averages 25 clients, which keeps her busy.

Despite her hectic schedule, Turner feels she is able to have a positive impact on the region’s Hispanic community. She saw a need and has been able to make the lives of her clients easier through her skills as a nurse and care coordinator.

We congratulate Turner on her dedication and for advocating for those who would not otherwise be able to access the services they so desperately need.

ANNUAL ALUMNI SIGNATURE EVENT

Cirque Eloise

Join your fellow alumni, faculty, friends, and family for a reception at 6 p.m. in the Center for the Arts Atrium followed by a performance of this unique acrobatic group in their 2007 performance of Rain.

Saturday, February 3 at 8 p.m.

Special alumni discounted tickets available from the Center for the Arts box office at 703-993-2787 or online at www.gmu.edu/cfa. Discount code is CHHS.

See you there!
Meet the New Faculty

This fall, the College of Health and Human Services welcomed a number of new faculty whose expertise in a wide range of health care issues will add extra depth to the college’s already strong units.

Department of Community and Global Health
➤ Kathryn H. Jacobsen, PhD, comes to Mason from Calvin College where she was an assistant professor of biology and statistics for the past two years. With her expertise in epidemiology, biology, and statistics, she will be a real asset in the department’s epidemiology program. Jacobsen will teach full time while continuing her research in the effect of water development on child health in rural Quichua communities, Ecuador and globalization, and development and health.


Department of Health Administration and Policy
➤ With a career dedicated to the field of health economics, William S. Cartwright, PhD, has been a health economist for the Services Research Branch, Division of Epidemiology Services and Prevention Research, National Institute on Drug Abuse, National Institutes of Health. He also was an adjunct associate professor at the George Washington University School of Public Health. His professional focus has been on such areas as economic evaluation of drug abuse, the aging, Medicare, and health care financing. He plans to continue his research with the National Institute on Drug Abuse, while teaching at Mason.

BA in history 1967, Rutgers University; MA in economics 1972 and PhD in economics 1980, Indiana University. Dissertation topic focused on Social Security in 1980

➤ Panagiota Kitsantas, PhD, comes to Mason from the Statistics Program at East Carolina University, where she was an assistant professor of mathematics. She brings her expertise in statistics and health research interests in environmental health, health disparities, maternal/child health, substance abuse, data mining, survival analysis, and methods of categorical data analysis to the department. She plans to continue her teaching in the area of statistics while pursuing her many research interests.

BA in biology 1996, Queens College, City University of New York; MS in health sciences 1999, James Madison University; PhD in biostatistics and epidemiology 2003, Florida State University. Dissertation: “Assessing Adverse Birth Outcomes via Classification Trees”

Department of Social Work
➤ Emily Ihara, PhD, MSW, comes to the Department of Social Work from Capital Hill where she was a congressional fellow for the Hon. Mike Honda (D–CA), chair of the Congressional Asian/Pacific American Caucus. As a fellow, she worked on health care disparity issues for the caucus as well as women’s, children and family, senior, medicare, Medicaid, and housing issues for his congressional office. Ihara will teach classes on social policy and social justice for the department and continue her research interests in social structure and health outcomes for racial and ethnic minorities.


School of Nursing
➤ Sonya Harris Almond, RN, MSN, became a full-time faculty member in the School of Nursing after serving as an adjunct at the school since 2003. Working mainly in the undergraduate nursing program, she will supervise students in medical–surgical and long-term care clinical rotations, as well as teach technologies in the nursing simulation lab. Her clinical expertise is in cardiovascular nursing, and she maintains a continuing faculty practice at Inova Alexandria Hospital’s Cardiovascular Intensive Care Unit.

BSN 1999, University of Connecticut; MSN 2001, Norfolk State University (summa cum laude); MSN 2006, George Mason University.

➤ Jennifer Casavant, RN, MSN, ACNP-BC, was an acute care nurse practitioner in the Neurological Intermediary Care Unit at the University of Virginia Medical Center and a clinical instructor of nursing for Piedmont Virginia Community College. At Mason, she will be responsible for clinical and didactic teaching in the nurse practitioner program.

BSN 1999, University of Connecticut; MSN and Acute Care NP 2003, Yale University; doctoral candidate in nursing, University of Virginia. Dissertation: “Nursing in the Great War: The Role of the Red Cross Nurse in Caring for the Casualties of World War I.”

Before coming to Mason, Joyce Hahn, PhD, APRN, BC, was the director of Breast Imaging Accreditation Programs for the American College of Radiology. Prior to that, Hahn was the director of nursing and health services for ECPI College of Technology where she worked with the Virginia Board of Nursing to develop a start-up LPN program. She has experience in program management and quality management, and has held a number of director roles in the workplace.
She will be coordinating the graduate program’s nursing administration track.


Prior to coming to Mason, **Kyeung Mi Oh, PhD,** was in clinical practice at Inova Fairfax Hospital. She has experience in surgical nursing and a research interest in gerontology. Oh will teach graduate and undergraduate didactic and clinical courses while continuing to pursue her research interests in gerontological nursing.

Diploma in nursing, Chongju National College of Science and Technology, South Korea; BA in nursing, University of New Castle, Australia; MSc in gerontological nursing, University of Sydney, Australia; PhD, University of Sheffield, United Kingdom.

Prior to coming to Mason, **Quiping (Pearl) Zhou, RN, PhD,** was a nurse practitioner at Inova Fairfax Hospital Women’s Services, where she remains the program director for the hospital’s Avon–Inova Cares Breast Cancer Network. She also has held an adjunct faculty position at Marymount University. At Mason, Zhou will continue her research projects in maternal child nursing and women’s health, as well as teach related didactic courses on the graduate and undergraduate levels.

Diploma in nursing 1980, Zong Hou Nursing College, Beijing; post-RN diploma 1985, Department of Nursing, Second Military Medical University, Shanghai; MSN 1994, University of Alberta in Edmonton; PhD in nursing 2001, University of Maryland School of Nursing. Dissertation: “Priorities for the Development of Older People’s Services in South Korea: Lessons from the United Kingdom”

If you wish to share your considerable professional knowledge and skills with others, consider attending

**The Second Annual Clinical Nurse Educator Academy**  
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Contact the College of Health and Human Services, Office of Academic Outreach, at 703-993-1910 or 703-993-2120.

Participants at the Clinical Nurse Educator Academy may register for 3 graduate elective credits or CEUs.
Institute for Heideggerian Hermeneutical Methodologies  
June 21–25, 2007  
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This institute is an introduction to Heideggerian hermeneutical methodology in the context of research and scholarship in healthcare and the human sciences. This institute is open to participants from all disciplines.

Participants Will Learn About
- A philosophy of science, with emphasis on the rise of interpretive phenomenology
- How to design and conduct hermeneutic research
- How to collect data via hermeneutic interviewing
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- How to assess rigor in hermeneutical scholarship

Both didactic and experiential activities are included. Discussions will include: interpretive phenomenology, design, and conduct of hermeneutical studies, interview text analysis, and hermeneutical report writing.

Faculty  
Pamela M. Ironside, Associate Professor, Indiana University

Institute for Interpretive Phenomenology  
June 26–29, 2007  
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Participants Will Learn About
- Interpretations of interpretive phenomenological texts and phenomena of interest offered by visiting scholars
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This institute provides an in-depth exploration of the philosophical underpinnings of interpretive phenomenology and hermeneutical scholarship in the context of research and scholarship in the health and human sciences.

Faculty  
Gail Weiss, PhD, Associate Professor of Philosophy, Director of Human Sciences Graduate Program, George Washington University

See our website at: http://hermeneutics@gmu.edu or contact CHPRE at: 703-993-1959, chpre@gmu.edu

Earn Graduate Credits or CEUs
A Message from the Alumni Chapter President

Dear CHHS Alumni:

August 2006 ushers in our first full academic year as the College of Health and Human Services (CHHS). On behalf of the alumni chapter, I would like to welcome all the social work alumni joining us. When we combine the alumni from nursing, social work, global and community health, and health administration and policy, we have a powerful group, indeed.

During our annual fund-raising campaign last year, more than 800 alumni contributed to the event, making CHHS the college with the highest alumni participation at Mason for a second year in a row. We also had a challenge in place and were able to meet our target number of alumni donors, reaping an additional $18,000 for the college. A special thank you to all who participated.

This year, we plan to hold our annual signature alumni event in conjunction with a performance of Cirque Eloise at the Center for the Arts on Saturday, February 3, 2007, at 8 p.m. Before the performance, alumni and their families are invited to a reception in the center’s atrium at 6 p.m. Reconnect with your fellow alumni and faculty at this fun and entertaining family affair. Discounted tickets are available for our alumni and their families. Just call the Center for the Arts box office at 703-993-8888 and mention CHHS when you order. You can also order on line. Go to the Center for the Arts web site at www.gmu.edu/cfa and click on “Events.” Then click on “February” to find “Cirque Eloise.” Don’t forget to enter the CHHS for the 15 percent alumni discount.

Another date to mark on your calendar is this year’s Homecoming on Saturday, February 17. Festivities include a giant tailgate party with food, College Row, games for kids of all ages, giveaways, and prizes. Then watch the Patriot men’s basketball team in action. Come celebrate Mason and be part of the excitement as the Patriots make their run for the NCAA tournament!

If you would like to be more involved with the CHHS alumni chapter, please do not hesitate to contact me. It is a pleasure for me to serve as your president and see how our chapter is growing and developing. Stay connected and join us as we celebrate another year of innovation, new frontiers, and continued excellence.

Sincerely,

Cindy Glover, BSN ’77
CNO, Reston Hospital Center
Phone: 703-689-9022
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We make every effort for the Honor Roll to be as accurate as possible. Please call the College of Health and Human Services Development Office (703-993-8640) if you should discover any errors or to report a change of address. Alumni may update their information at www.gmu.edu/alumni/alumnidir.

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2007 Calendar of Events

FEBRUARY 2007
Health Administration and Policy Quality Improvement of the Year Awards
Location TBA

FEBRUARY 3
CHHS Alumni Chapter Signature Event – Cirque Eloise
Center for the Arts

FEBRUARY 17
Mason Homecoming
Patriot Center Parking Lot

MARCH 28-29
Mason Health and Fitness Expo
Johnson Center, Dewberry Hall

APRIL 2007
CHHS Research Day
Location TBA

APRIL 2007
School of Nursing Sigma Theta Tau International, Epsilon Zeta Chapter Induction
Location TBA

APRIL 18
Mason Celebration of Distinction for Outstanding Alumni/Students
Johnson Center, Dewberry Hall

MAY 7-10
Master of Social Work Student Thesis Presentations
Location TBA

MAY 18
CHHS Convocation
Patriot Center

MAY 19
University Commencement
Patriot Center

JUNE 4-8
15th Washington Health Policy Institute
Location TBA

JUNE 21-25
Institute for Heideggerian Hermeneutical Methodologies
Location TBA

JUNE 26-29
Institute for Interpretive Phenomenology
Location TBA

For further information about any of the above events, please call 703-993-1901.