Alumni Engagement Council News

Welcome to the New Era of Engagement

A Message from College of Nursing Dean Juliann G. Sebastian, PhD, RN, FAAN and Alumni Engagement Council President Amy Thimm, BSN ’91.

We are excited to share with you an important update from the UNMC Alumni Association. In late 2015, the UNMC Alumni Association Board of Directors voted to usher in a “New Era of Alumni Engagement.” In an effort to reach and connect with more alumni of UNMC, the Alumni Association will now offer automatic membership to all graduates and refocus on deeper collaborations between alumni and campus leaders. This includes all alumni from the UNMC College of Nursing. In doing so, the Alumni Association has officially eliminated its membership dues program. In addition, you may see us refer to our Alumni Chapter as the "Alumni Engagement Council." This name change reflects our intention to increase our focus on strategic alumni outreach and engagement.

The goal of the New Era of Engagement is to increase the number of alumni actively engaged with UNMC, its colleges, and its students to provide exciting opportunities for our alumni, to make our university stronger, and to make a real difference for UNMC’s next generation of proud health sciences students.

In the New Era, alumni still have the opportunity to support their College and their Alumni Association. The University of Nebraska Foundation has created the “UNMC Fund,” which includes an Innovation Fund for each college to provide student assistance, support the people and programs of the Alumni Association, fund White Coat and professionalism ceremonies, upgrade and enhance technology, and much more.

The College of Nursing and our Alumni Engagement Council has prioritized two areas:

- Providing critical support to UNMC students through the formation of meaningful student to alumni relationships.
- Engage alumni in the life and promotion of the University through inter-professional activities, continuing education and strategic communications.

More specifically, we are planning several upcoming activities: Alumni Reunion Weekend 2016, the 100th anniversary celebration of the College of Nursing Omaha campus, the Kearney all-class reunion during UNK Homecoming weekend in 2017, and future campus reunions to be announced.

This is an exciting time for our Alumni Engagement Council. If you’d like to get involved, please contact the Alumni Relations Office. We look forward to working with you.

Read more about the New Era of Engagement.
Alumni Engagement Council Welcomes New Members

Welcome two new leaders to our Engagement Council:

- Joy Okoruwa, DNP, Omaha, Neb., earned her BSN in 2006, MSN in 2009, and DNP in 2014 from the UNMC College of Nursing - Omaha campus. Dr. Okoruwa works in Care Transitions Management for Nebraska Medicine.

- Michael Wharton, BSN, RN, MSOM, Scottsbluff, Neb., earned his BSN in 1993 from the UNMC College of Nursing - West Nebraska Division. He is Director, Patient Access at Regional West Medical Center in Scottsbluff.

Alumni Reunion Weekend is October 7-8, 2016

Alumni tour Omaha aboard Ollie the Trolley during Alumni Reunion Weekend 2015.

Mark your calendar for UNMC Alumni Reunion Weekend, October 7-8, 2016 with the theme *A New Era of Engagement*. Honor years are those ending in "1" or "6."

College of Nursing alumni from the Omaha campus are invited back to campus for class parties, the Welcome Back Lunch, an Ollie the Trolley tour of Omaha, and the Alumni Celebration & Awards Banquet. In addition, new events will be planned this year as part of a partnership with UNMC Innovation and Research Week. Be sure to watch your email and mail for additional information about UNMC Alumni Reunion Weekend.

The reunion hotel is the [Embassy Suites Downtown/Old Market](#). A special room rate of $149 is currently available. To make a reservation, call the hotel directly at 402.346.9000 and ask for the UNMC Alumni event rate.

If you are interested in serving as a class leader to help plan a class party, please send us an email. We look forward to seeing you this fall!
Nominate a Colleague for the Alumni Awards

As part of UNMC Alumni Reunion Weekend, the UNMC College of Nursing Alumni Engagement Council will present its alumni awards. The leadership is currently accepting nominations for the alumni awards.

There are four award categories:

- Distinguished Alumnus Award
- Honorary Alumnus Award
- Nursing Excellence Award
- Dorothy Patach Spirit of Service Award

Please consider nominating a classmate or colleague for the awards.

An award nomination form is available here. Nominations are due by May 15. View past award recipients.

Alumni Excellence in Innovation Award Announcement

UNeMed, the technology transfer and commercialization leader for the University of Nebraska Medical Center, will present for the first time the "Excellence in Innovation Award" during this year’s Innovation Awards ceremony to be held on October 6, 2016.

The award will be presented to the UNMC alumnus who best personifies the innovative spirit and has made a significant innovative contribution to society. A nomination form is available if you wish to nominate a nurse innovator.

CON Alumni Engagement Council Supports New Student Orientation

The College of Nursing Alumni Engagement Council has recently provided funding to provide lunch during orientation for both the accelerated BSN program and traditional BSN program students on all five campuses. Overall, 360 students will have lunch supported by the Engagement Council.

In addition to providing lunch, alumni engagement council members volunteer to welcome the students and share their career path.

"Thank you all so much for your support with this endeavor," said Molly Handke, CON Student Services Coordinator. "The lunches at orientation make for a great welcome to the students, especially when they can connect with those who have graduated from our programs! We truly appreciate the generosity of the Alumni Engagement Council."

Class of 1952 Hosts Virtual Reunion

This story originally appeared in the winter 2016 issue of Connect magazine.

In December 2015, eleven members from the UNMC College of Nursing Omaha campus class of 1952 had the opportunity to connect via conference call for an hour of sharing memories from their school days, their careers and family updates. The phone call, hosted through the UNMC Alumni Relations Office and facilitated by alumni classmate Jean Molde, brought together alumni from eight states from the east to the west coast.
The call originated through a conversation about the classmates remaining close through the years but not able to all get together in one place due to travel limitations. It was a great time to share laughter, some tears, many memories and blessings for the pleasure of having such close friends and fond memories of their times in nursing school at UNMC.

The Alumni Relations Office can facilitate opportunities for classes to gather through a similar teleconference. Alums who think their class may be interested in this form of reunion should contact Kat Hamilton in the Alumni Relations Office at 402.559.1063 or kat.hamilton@unmc.edu.

**College of Nursing News**

**HSEC: College of Nursing's New Home in Kearney**

A ribbon cutting ceremony took place on August 20, 2015 to open the new UNMC Health Sciences Education Complex (HSEC) at the University of Nebraska at Kearney. The 50,000 square-foot building on the corner of Highway 30 and University Drive on the west end of the UNK campus, was built as part of University of Nebraska’s “Building a Healthier Nebraska” initiative. The $19 million Health Science Education facility houses the UNMC College of Nursing-Kearney Division and currently four programs in the College of Allied Health Professions. The new building includes state-of-the-art classrooms, clinical teaching laboratories, clinical simulation facilities, a gross anatomy laboratory, and plentiful student interaction space. Click on the video below for a virtual tour of the new facility.
The American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) has appointed Juliann Sebastian, Ph.D., dean and professor of the UNMC College of Nursing, as chair of the AACN board of directors.

Dr. Sebastian began her two-year term as the association's highest elected official at the close of AACN's 2016 spring business meeting held in Washington, D.C.

"As the voice for academic nursing, AACN is committed to using collaboration, innovation, and strategic action to improve both health and health care," Dr. Sebastian said. "I believe that AACN is extremely well-positioned to expand its impact as a catalyst for excellence and innovation, and I am honored to have the opportunity to lead the organization during this pivotal point in its history."

Read more.

CON Launches new Center for Patient, Family and Community Engagement in Chronic Care Management
By: Vicky Cerino, UNMC Public Relations

In March 2016, the University of Nebraska Board of Regents approved plans to establish the Center for Patient, Family, and Community Engagement in Chronic Care Management (CCCM). The focus of the center is to build infrastructure to expand and fund pilot research projects that help Nebraskans learn to live with their chronic conditions so they stay healthy, stay in their homes longer and reduce health care costs. Projects will engage caregivers, families, and communities in the effort. Funding is provided by UNMC and the University of Nebraska Foundation. The center, which will be managed by the College of Nursing and will initially have offices in both Lincoln and Omaha, will bring together researchers, health professionals and educators from different disciplines and organizations to improve the safety, quality, and efficiency of self-management of chronic conditions. Read more.
CON Faculty Honored | Outstanding Achievements in Academic Nursing

- Lani Zimmerman, Ph.D., professor, at the College of Nursing Lincoln Division, earned the Outstanding Mentor of Junior Faculty Award at UNMC's annual faculty meeting. Read more.
- Nancy Waltman, Ph.D., professor at College of Nursing Lincoln Division, was named one of UNMC's Distinguished Scientists. Read more.
- Stephanie Burge, nurse practitioner and instructor at the College of Nursing Kearney Division, was awarded the Nebraska State Award for Excellence in Nurse Practitioner Clinical Practice. The award is given by the American Association of Nurse Practitioners.
- Beth Culross, Ph.D., assistant professor in the College of Nursing-Omaha Division, was named the 2015 March of Dimes Nurse of the Year by the Nebraska March of Dimes in November. She was also selected as a Fellow for the Gerontologic Nursing Leadership Academy with Sigma Theta Tau International!
- Beth Burbach, PhD, RN, CNE, assistant professor at the College of Nursing Northern Division, was accepted into fellowship with the International Nursing Association for Clinical Simulation and Learning (INACSL), mentor Marlene Cohen.
- Christine Eisenhauer, PhD, APRN-CNS, assistant professor, Northern Division, graduated from the National Rural Health Association’s Rural Health Fellows program, Feb. 1, 2016 in Washington, DC.
- Beth Beam, PhD, RN, assistant professor at the College of Nursing Omaha Division, was appointed Education Researcher, Interprofessional Academy of Educators, effective 4/1/16.
- Lufei Young, PhD, APRN-NP, assistant professor at the College of Nursing Lincoln Division and Yaewon Seo, PhD, RN, assistant professor at the College of Nursing Omaha Division, and COPH collaborators received an Innovation Fund Project Grant to examine multi-level factors influencing healthcare utilization, care transitions, post-acute care outcomes in the heart failure population in Nebraska.
- Kate Fiandt, PhD, APRN-NP, FAANP, FAAN, was invited to serve on Steering Committee of the Nurse Practitioner Support and Alignment Network, a project of the Transforming Clinical Practices Initiative of the CMS. This is a national quality improvement initiative.

KUDOS
The Alumni Engagement Council would like to offer a "shout out" to Kathy Duncan, Ph.D. (CON alum MSN 1983) for the remarkable presentation she gave to Nebraska Critical Access Hospital Nurse Leaders. She presented on Application and Understanding Budget Reports. Many nurses in CAHs have stepped into leadership or management positions without a great deal of finance or budgeting education. Kathy graciously closed that gap for a lot of our leaders.
CON Students Continue to Honor Fallen Veterans

UNMC College of Nursing students paid tribute to Army Spc. Brandon Meyer, who died while serving in Iraq eight years ago, by presenting his mother and family with an Honor and Remember - Nebraska Chapter flag at a ceremony in early April. Brandon has several relatives associated with UNMC, making the gift from nursing students even more special. Read more in this Omaha World-Herald article.

Meet the Scottsbluff Nebraska Student Nurse Association Leaders (SNSNA)
New officers were elected at the SNSNA meeting on February 11, 2016. Eleven local chapter members recently attended the National Student Nurses Association Convention in Orlando, FL March 30-April 3.

Pictured above: 2016-2017 Scottsbluff, Nebraska Student Nurses Association (SNSNA) Officers from left Sarah Stover (Treasurer), Rita Hepler (Secretary), Jordan Zeiler (President), Ethan Behrends (Vice President).
Pictured above: Four students from the Scottsbluff Student Nurses Association were elected to serve as 2016-2017 Nebraska State Student Nurses Association Officers at the Nebraska State Student Nurses Association Convention on February 6, 2016 in Lincoln, Nebraska. From left Marion Techtien (Communications Chair), Niesha Ginn (Treasurer), Valerie Beraun (2nd Vice President), and Calene Mulcahy (Breakthrough to Nursing Chair).

Pictured above: Anna Hughart was elected to the National Office of NEC North in April 2016.
Pictured above: Former State President, Eli Rodriguez was elected as the State Student Advisor.

Pictured above: UNMC College of Nursing West Nebraska Division received a Stellar Award from the National Student Nurses Association. The award recognizes schools who demonstrate ongoing involvement in NSNA and a strong commitment to shared governance and professional development of their students and faculty.

Congratulations to the College of Nursing Class of 2016

Commencement ceremonies were held earlier this month welcoming the newest UNMC alumni. Congratulations to the over 350 College of Nursing graduates as part of the Class of 2016! As a special gift in the New Era of Alumni Engagement, all UNMC class of 2016 graduates were presented with a UNMC Alumni lapel pin. Photos from graduation are available by searching Facebook, Instagram and Twitter with the hashtag #UNMCGrad.
UNMC Symposium, "Elevating the Conversation: Stress and Emotional Well-Being" Draws 330

Chancellor Gold speaks to a full house at the Stress & Well-Being Symposium.

A group of renowned speakers were on campus Jan. 26-27 to support UNMC's initiative to reduce the outcome and stigma associated with stress, burnout, and mental illness.

College of Nursing Dean Juliann Sebastian, PhD, RN, FAAN led the planning team that hosted the symposium. "These important issues are often invisible. We want to create even more proactive strategies for addressing them as part of a healthy and inclusive learning environment," Dean Sebastian said. Goals of the symposium were to help attendees better understand the research and data surrounding stress, the common stressors, and how to make systems-level change. Read more about the symposium.

Teaching Academy Now Accepting Applications:
Community Preceptors Encouraged to Apply

The UNMC Inter-Professional Academy of Educators Advisory Council is pictured above. The UNMC IAE is unique because it is interprofessional by design, meant to connect educators with similar interests regardless of their College or campus.
The mission of the Interprofessional Academy of Educators (IAE) is to foster a vibrant interprofessional community of educators through faculty development programs, educational scholarship, and the development of innovative curricula. An organization by educators and for educators, the IAE is made up of experienced instructors with a passion for furthering UNMC’s educational mission. It has three main goals:

- improve educational quality through innovation, curriculum design, and implementation of evidence-based teaching methods
- promote the dissemination of UNMC faculty members’ educational innovation through scholarship
- provide a mechanism for mentorship for new and developing faculty members with an interest in education. Learn more about the IAE.

The Academy is now accepting applications. Community preceptors are eligible and encouraged to apply. Learn more about the application process.