The ‘Chairs of Excellence’ are awarded to faculty members who propose exemplary projects for enhancing teaching and learning. The Santa Monica College Foundation provides $15,000 over 3 years to support implementation of these projects. Last fall, Holly Thiercof was awarded the Chair of Excellence in Nursing to enhance clinical practice and education with High-Fidelity Patient Simulators. This makes her the second recipient in the Health Sciences Department. Dr. Ida Danzey, Associate Dean, Health Sciences received the same award for the years 2005-08.

A quick chat with Holly Thiercof reveals exactly what this award means for the nursing graduate or student.

How will SMC students benefit from this award? “Simulation will allow the instructor to see a student’s clinical judgment and decision-making without utilizing an actual human patient. This will decrease the student’s anxiety and allow him/her to make mistakes without harming anyone.”

What is going to be accomplished with this award? “This Award is going to enhance implementation of High-Fidelity Simulators and increase success in the Nursing Program. It facilitates the graduates’ transition to the role of novice nurse, once they begin practice in the hospital setting.”

What does this mean for your professional goals? “As an instructor and a nurse, one of my professional goals is to mentor new nurses. The use of simulators for assistance in clinical judgment was not available in my early career. This should really enhance students’ preparation to take care of patients in the clinical setting.”

And the long-term ramifications of being awarded the Chair of Excellence are… “Early exposure to simulation has been shown to increase confidence and better prepare the new nurse to enter the work-force and therefore helps in retention.”

—Grace Smith

RELIEF FUND FOR NEEDY STUDENTS

Remember the time when your car broke down, or when you could not afford the books for your classes? Santa Monica College’s Nursing Student Success Initiative has help for deserving nursing students who are facing financial barriers.

A relief fund, with a projected amount of $40,000 (currently at $12,000) has been established. The fund provides a maximum of $250 per year to nursing students in need. Over the last two years, a total of $1,904 has been disbursed to students helping them address unexpected financial hardships.

To find out how you can help, visit www.smc.edu/nursing and click on the link “Relief Fund”.

—Grace Smith

GROUND-BREAKING PROGRAM FOR ASPIRING NURSE EDUCATORS

Recent studies indicate that the supply of Registered Nurses has not kept pace with population growth. There is not only a shortage of nurses, but of nurse educators as well.

To address this deficit, Santa Monica College (SMC) has been awarded a grant by the California Community College Chancellor’s Office. SMC has partnered with California State University, Dominguez Hills (CSUDH) to develop a comprehensive, fully accessible ADN to MSN program. SMC and CSUDH are currently in the process of developing the curriculum, which is slated to be implemented in Fall 2009.

—Hazel Peters

NURSING GOES GLOBAL

Santa Monica College’s CC-OEA Institutional Grant will pair the college’s Health Sciences Department with its Earth Sciences Department for a study abroad experience. This will be the first time that a “traditional” career/technical program at SMC, specifically Health Sciences, has participated in study abroad. With the success of the project, a link will be developed between liberal art studies and a Career Technical Education program. It will also engage career/technical faculty in the Global Citizenship Initiative, an important milestone in assuring campus-wide support for this effort. Keep an eye out for updates on www.smc.edu/nursing

—Laurie McQuay-Peninger
WOMAN GIVES BIRTH ON CAMPUS

It was a late morning in May on the third floor of the Bundy Campus at Santa Monica College—and a woman was in labor. Everyone heard her cries for help as her contractions came on with a strong intensity.

She had decided not to have an epidural anesthetic and the written birth plan that Noelle and her husband Kirk (names changed to protect privacy) had brought with them was being followed. The 4th semester students were doing their best, drawing on the experience they had acquired in simulated scenarios.

Shouts of ‘It’s coming, the baby’s coming!’ pervaded the ‘classroom’. The student nurses encouraged Noelle to begin pushing. In ten minutes the baby’s head was crowning, then came the baby’s body. A beautiful baby girl—Samantha, entered the world with some very vigorous crying.

Kirk, of course, did the honor of cutting the umbilical cord with tears of fatherly joy in his eyes. Contractions began again in a few minutes and the placenta was delivered.

Later on the students would bathe Samantha, administer erythromycin eye ointment, an injection of vitamin K, and perform the cord care. Everyone hovered over the new family, congratulating them on the new baby.

Reality check: No, Samantha isn’t a real baby. However, she will join her ‘mother’ Noelle, brother ‘Hal’, and other High and Mid-Fidelity Simulators in the Nursing Skills Lab, where they exist to aid student nurses in their acquisition of nursing and caregiving skills.

—Carole McCaskill

NURSING READINESS SUPPORT PROJECT UNDERWAY

For all prospective nursing students and those who have remotely considered giving up their dream—help is here! The Santa Monica College (SMC) Nursing Student Readiness Support Project has been introduced to help students successfully enter and complete the nursing program.

Readiness services and support are now available to
- All Pre-Nursing students who have completed the application process
- Current students who are identified as needing additional assistance
- Students seeking Advanced Placement/Transfer into the SMC Nursing Program.

The Nursing Readiness Support Project includes counselor interventions, study skills and test-taking workshops, and participation in readiness activities offered during winter and summer intersession.

“We are here to help future nursing students…”

—Dr. Kymberlyn McBride, SMC Readiness Counselor

WE’RE ON THE WEB!

WWW.SMC.EDU/NURSING

The Governor’s Nursing Initiatives and the Southern California Nursing Initiative grants work to increase the number of qualified nurses in California. Santa Monica College’s Nursing Initiatives supplement the existing Nursing Program by providing additional support services. These services include but are not limited to tutoring, enhanced instruction through simulation, instructor lecture clinical skills laboratory practice, intensive academic and support counseling, and access to an emergency fund for eligible students. *This is an equal opportunity program and auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. **This program provides veterans’ priority services under the jobs for veterans act.

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