With a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the UNM College of Nursing will fund five new scholarships of $10,000 each for students from disadvantaged backgrounds or groups underrepresented in nursing who enter the accelerated baccalaureate program this fall.

“This is such a great opportunity for students,” said associate professor Debra Brady, principal investigator of the grant.

(continued on page 2)
This issue of our newsletter centers on the use of collaboration and partnerships to meet future needs. It takes all of us working together to solve the nursing and nursing faculty shortages and ensure access to quality health care for New Mexicans.

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) is an exemplary partner. We share the common goal of helping students traditionally underrepresented in nursing. Our long term focus is on preparing culturally competent leaders to address the national nursing shortage and fuel the pipeline of diverse nursing faculty. RWJF is also helping us evaluate an innovative teaching application and its impact on faculty recruitment, retention and student graduations rates.

Another impressive example of collaborative partnership is the New Mexico Nursing Education Consortium. This group was formed to use teamwork and state collaboration to improve the future of nursing in the state. Did you know that New Mexico stands 50th in the nation for the ratio of nurses to population? Nurse educators across the state are committed to building a new model for nursing education to meet current and future needs.

Our alumni are such vital partners, too. I know you will enjoy meeting our recent group of Golden Grads, the Class of 1960, and two outstanding alumni award recipients!

“The goal of the scholarship is to increase the diversity of the nurse population and to encourage nurses from underrepresented groups to provide leadership to the profession and to the health care community. The aim is to benefit both the students and the people of New Mexico in preparing the scholar to step into a leadership role in nursing when they graduate.”

Scholarships will be distributed through the RWJF New Careers in Nursing Scholarship Program, launched by RWJF and the American Association of Colleges of Nursing. Grant funding also will be used to provide mentoring and leadership development resources to ensure successful program completion by scholarship recipients.

“Students face so many challenges when it comes to paying for nursing school,” Brady said. “A number of the students receiving the scholarship are financially disadvantaged. It is also particularly difficult for students who are entering second degree programs to find money. So, the extra funds will help them focus on classes and help alleviate some of the stresses of having to figure out how to pay for school.”

A parent to a teenage diabetic knows insulin measurements perhaps better than algebra. This is because learning is easier when it comes with a daily emotional connection. This thinking led Dr. Jean Giddens, executive dean of UNM College of Nursing, to create an online virtual community, which is one year into a two-year evaluation study funded through a Robert Wood Johnson grant.

“There is a difference between reading a book and witnessing the daily lived experience of patients and their caregivers,” Giddens said. The study evaluates student engagement and faculty outcomes in schools using the online virtual community, which features stories of fictional characters living within households that are served by various community agencies. Their stories unfold over three semesters on web pages containing text, videos and medical records, which are used by faculty in their instruction.

Giddens conducted two previous studies that suggested that a virtual community is an effective application for learning.
New Mexico has a nursing workforce problem, ranking last nationally in nurses to population ratios. Leaders of the state’s nursing programs have joined together in the New Mexico Nursing Education Consortium to address not only the nursing shortage but also the scarcity of those able to teach future generations of nurses.

The goal is to increase the number of nurses earning pre-licensure bachelor’s degrees by forming partnerships with community colleges and universities throughout the state, according to Dr. Jean Giddens, executive dean of UNM College of Nursing. Giddens, one of the consortium leaders, cited that only 37 percent of nurses in New Mexico hold bachelor’s degrees. Those holding associate’s degrees have the extra challenge of obtaining a bachelor’s before being eligible to enter graduate nursing programs and becoming licensed bachelor’s degrees by forming partnerships with colleges and eight private schools currently offering nursing programs.

The consortium is funded through in-kind, UNM services and a New Mexico State Board of Nursing grant. In the future, the consortium will need to secure other sources of funding, Giddens said.

Bringing pre-licensure bachelor’s degrees to rural communities could help eliminate this barrier, according to Giddens. At this time, only UNM and NMSU offer pre-licensure bachelor’s degrees in nursing for the state.

“If the nursing workforce continues to decrease, so will individuals’ health care access and quality of care,” said Sarah North, the consortium’s program manager. “This program implements change at the heart of the matter – education.”

Cooperation among the state’s community colleges and universities will allow students to complete a baccalaureate education in their home communities and then be eligible for graduate study. This will increase not only the quality and quantity of the nursing workforce, but the diversity as well.

Furthermore, the consortium’s state-wide collaboration is expected to improve the quality of nursing while using fewer resources by sharing curricula, evaluations, faculty and teaching methodologies among the five universities, 14 community colleges and eight private schools currently offering nursing programs.

The consortium is funded through in-kind, UNM services and a New Mexico State Board of Nursing grant. In the future, the consortium will need to secure other sources of funding, Giddens said.
GOLDEN GRADUATES CELEBRATE GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY

The class of 1960 reunited in May 2010 to celebrate their golden anniversary. They came together to catch up on their lives and to reminisce about old times. Many friendships were rekindled during this momentous occasion. The majority of participants had not seen one another in 50 years.

The festivities began with a tour of the College of Nursing and the new simulation labs in the Domenici Center. They were given an opportunity to enjoy each other’s company at a dinner with Dean Nancy Ridenour later that evening. The following day, these alumnae led the procession at the college’s convocation ceremony, where they were given a new nursing pin to commemorate their fifty years.

This was truly an extraordinary class. These women represent the college’s legacy. It is through the extraordinary work of our alumni that we, as a college, continue to make an impact on the lives of others. And it is these golden graduates that have led the way.

CREATE A LEGACY OF GIVING
GIVE A GIFT THAT WILL BRING A LIFETIME OF BENEFITS

If you would like to help support the UNM College of Nursing, please use the enclosed envelope or:

• Send your check, made payable to The UNM Foundation (please write College of Nursing in the memo), to

The UNM Foundation
Two Woodward Center
700 Lomas Blvd. NE
Albuquerque, NM 87102-2520

• Make a secure donation online with your credit card at www.unmfund.org.

• Donate through your employer’s payroll deduction plan or matching gift program. Please check with your human resources department for details.

For more information on giving, please contact:
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Thank you for your support!