Blending Customs, Cultures and Care
From the Dean

Welcome to the second issue of Cura Personalis, the magazine of the Saint Louis University School of Nursing, which highlights some of our accomplishments in innovation and leadership during the past year. In this issue we invite you to share in the 90th birthday celebration of Sister Mary Teresa Noth, F.S.M., our leading innovator who disrupted nursing education more than 40 years ago by developing the first accelerated nursing education program in the nation.

You will read about how our creative “Action Methods” program teaches students compassionate care by helping them see the world through the eyes of others. And I know you will share my pride when you read about the stellar accomplishments of the faculty, who like many of our alumni, are engaged teachers and scholars with strong records of professional and civic involvement and accomplishments.

We are very proud of our strong heritage of academic excellence in the fine Jesuit tradition, which lays the foundation to tackle the challenges facing nursing and health care today and in the future. Dr. Joanne Thanavaro, associate dean for graduate education, and Dr. Diana Mason, our 2013 Alumni Merit recipient and president of the American Academy of Nursing, share what’s ahead for nurses as we grapple with the future of health care under the Affordable Care Act. With the details of health care reform still somewhat murky, I tried to lean toward the old Haitian proverb for support — “Beyond mountains, there are mountains” — knowing that when you solve one problem another one emerges. You then go on to solve the next one. I agree with Drs. Thanavaro and Mason that the next problem for nursing to solve is the varied scope of practice laws for nurses among the states.

Our school is committed to advancing diversity, extending our global reach and intertwining cultures. A diverse pool of health care professionals will strongly contribute to a reduction in health disparities. We are very proud to receive the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation New Careers in Nursing scholarship program and welcomed a large contingent of Thai graduate students to our program. And in keeping with the Jesuit tenet of social justice, we are pleased to share the story of alumna Christina Martin, who goes to other continents to serve others in ways that intertwine cultures. A diverse pool of health care professionals will strongly contribute to the varied scope of practice laws for nurses among the states.

As the School of Nursing continues to serve others for a higher purpose and greater good, I encourage you to stay connected. Please take a few moments to fill out the enclosed survey to tell us how you would like to continue to be engaged with your School of Nursing family. As always, I am deeply grateful for your collective commitment, generous support, time and energy to make the school’s successes possible.

For more information about the magazine or to submit story suggestions, please contact 314-977-5900, F.CuraPersonalis@slu.edu or Terri A. Murray, Ph.D., A.P.R.N.-B.C., R.N., F.A.A.N., Dean, Saint Louis University School of Nursing.
The impact of health care reform on hospitals is the topic for the 2014 Valentine Lecture Series on March 15. 

The keynote speaker, Kevin W. Sowers, R.N., M.S.N., is president of Duke University Hospital and a renowned expert on leadership, organizational change and mentorship.

Sowers has been with the Duke University Health System for more than 20 years. He started at the bedside as an oncology nurse and worked his way up. From 2003 to 2009, he was Duke University Hospital’s chief operating officer. He also served as interim chief executive officer in 2008 and, later, chief executive officer.

His research focuses on the human response to chronic illness.

The Valentine Lecture Series is named in honor of Trudy Valentine (’80), B.S.N., R.N., M.P.S., and Christine Valentine (’72), B.S.N. The lecture is scheduled for March 19 at the Health Sciences Education Union.

For more information visit alumni.slu.edu/valentine14 or call 314-977-8907.

Faculty and Students Prepared to Protect SLU Community in Case of Bioterror Event

Saint Louis University School of Nursing faculty and students have been specially training to provide SLU faculty, staff and their families with convenient access to medications in case of a bioterror attack.

The University will operate a medication dispensing station exclusively for members of the SLU community and their families that will be activated in case of a public health emergency. This center will help free up the city and county health departments to serve residents who don’t have similar access to lifesaving medications.

Last fall, nursing faculty and students received special training to set up and operate a center known as a Closed Point of Dispensing (POD) that will provide medication to members of the SLU community if a bioterrorism family, such as anthrax, tularemia or plague, is unleashed. Because of their specialized training, SON graduates will have the opportunity to be a part of the Medical Reserve Corps, continuing to offer care and service in time of disaster.

“While there is a bioterrorism incident, we’d have to get medication to the entire community within 48 hours,” said Deb Artman, instructor of nursing, who is spearheading the initiative in cooperation with SLU’s Institute for Biosurveillance.

“Having SLU provide this service internally is efficient because it takes a significant strain off nurses from the city and county health departments who otherwise would have to provide medicines to our faculty, staff and students and their families. And it also is a convenient way to protect the SLU community,” Artman said.

All undergraduate nursing students are required to take public health nursing, which includes a daylong training session to establish a POD center to dispense medicine. More than 100 received the instruction in November.

“I haven’t heard of any training that is as convenient for the students who put this into their curriculum,” Artman said. “Our specialized training speaks to our commitment to service.”

Global Leadership

Executive Advisory Board Chair, Trudy Valentine, R.N., M.S.N., B.S.N., J.M.D., M.B.A., E.M.T., and Duke Ter Murray with former chair of the Clinton Global Initiative (CGI), established in 2005, the CGI convenes global leaders to create and implement innovative solutions to world’s most pressing challenges including climate change, human rights and poverty.

Six Nurses Honored by St. Louis Magazine

In its fourth annual “Excellence in Nursing Awards” issue, St. Louis Magazine honored six Saint Louis University School of Nursing faculty members for outstanding contributions to their profession. The magazine received more than 200 nominations from patients, physicians and nursing colleagues before selecting 20 winners more than 18 categories.

Margaret Benz (’74, ’82, ’80), M.S.N, R.N., A.P.R.N., A.N.P.-B.C., Assistant professor Community Health Award (nominated with a perfect score)

Mary Lee Barron (’81, ’11), Ph.D., A.P.R.N., F.N.P.-B.C., Assistant professor Community Health Award (nominated with a perfect score)

Johanne C. Langan, Ph.D., R.N., C.N.E., Associate professor Education Award (finalist)

Norma Metheny (’78), Ph.D., R.N., F.A.A.N, Associate professor Research and the Dorothy A. Votator Endowed Chair in Nursing Research Award (finalist)

Lee Smith (’78), Ph.D., R.N. Professor (finalist)

Verna Hendricks-Ferguson, Ph.D., R.N., C.N.E., Assistant professor 2013 Nurse Educator Award (finalist)

Hendricks-Ferguson studies caring for children at the end of their battles with life-threatening illnesses. A SLU nursing faculty member has won St. Louis Magazine’s top educator award for three of the last four years. Hendricks-Ferguson also received one of the 2013 Nurses of the Year awards from the March of Dimes Missouri Chapter. She received the award in the hospice, home health and palliative care category. In addition the Oncology Nursing Society honored Hendricks-Ferguson with the 2013 “Making a Difference” Emerging Leader Award.

Benz was recognized as a champion for nursing health care and the disenchanted. She works with elderly and disabled residents in a large public housing complex and coordinates community services for St. Patrick Center, where she also serves on the board of trustees.

Baron, a family natural planning nurse practitioner, conducts research on menstrual cycles, natural family planning methods and preconception care. She directs SLU’s Nursing Center for Fertility Education, which trains teachers and couples the Marquette Method of natural family planning.

Langan studies, writes and educates students about the leadership role nurses must take during a crisis, such as a natural disaster or a bioterror attack. She has published multiple manuscripts and is lead author of Preparing Nurses for Disaster Management.

Metheny is internationally recognized for her expertise in promoting the safe delivery of tube feedings. Her method of testing the accurate placement of feeding tubes to avoid complications that can lead to pneumonia has become the industry standard.

The 2013 School of Nursing faculty finalists and winners are:

Margaret Benz (’74, ’82, ’80), M.S.N, R.N., A.P.R.N., A.N.P.-B.C., Assistant professor

Mary Lee Barron (’81, ’11), Ph.D., A.P.R.N., F.N.P.-B.C., Assistant professor

Johanne C. Langan, Ph.D., R.N., C.N.E., Associate professor

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Verna Hendricks-Ferguson, Ph.D., R.N., C.N.E., Assistant professor
McLaughlin is so convinced that for more than 20 years she’s been incorporating an enhanced form of role playing — known as action methods — into her nursing practice and teaching. Action methods include the use of psychodrama, a therapeutic modality in which patients dramatize or act out real-life situations to gain insight and change behaviors. The method also uses sociodrama, an educational modality that promotes positive human interaction and fosters role development. The drama is not scripted but instead springs from the spontaneous interactions among participants.

McLaughlin, one of only a handful of nurses in the country who is a board-certified psychodramatist, saw how powerful the technique could be while working with patients at SSM St. Mary’s Health Center in the early 1990s. She decided to integrate action methods into her classes with students at the School of Nursing.

“Much of teaching relies on the lecture format, which decidedly is a left-brain approach,” McLaughlin said. “Yet, connecting with your patients is a right-brain skill. Action methods taps into the right brain.”

Move Into Action

McLaughlin started by introducing psychodrama to her sophomore communications lab students who were learning to talk to patients about such sensitive issues as grief, death and dying, suicide and teen pregnancy.

She presented students with case studies, and students spontaneously played the characters as they imagined them. Action methods also goes deeper than traditional role play because students bring more of themselves onto the stage. They take on different roles at different points in the same story and express both a person’s internal and external dialogue.

“We tend to look at things from one perspective, ours, but when we switch roles we experience things through another person’s eyes and become mindful of what’s going on within the other person,” McLaughlin said. “Also, I believe the more roles you’re able to play, the more effective you’ll be as a nurse.”

Stage Right

Since introducing action methods in the communications lab, McLaughlin has imported the technique into other courses. Two of her electives rely heavily on the teaching tool: “Action Methods for Health and Healing — A Mind-Body Approach,” and “Family Violence Implications for Nursing.” Both classes are filled on the first day of registration.

Today, the students in McLaughlin’s Family Violence class are learning to care for patients with HIV. They’re on stage playing various roles in a case study presented by Gary G. Seibert, S.J., SLU Medical Center chaplain and professor of communication and fine and performing arts. In Seibert’s story, a friend he has known since childhood died of AIDS in New York City hospital.

Students take on the role of Seibert, the patient, the patient’s significant other, the nurses and the admissions staff member who informed Seibert of his friend’s death by handing him the man’s clothing in a brown paper bag.
During the second half of class, McLaughlin presents, in character, four patients in a clinic as they wait for results of their HIV tests. Students are asked to come on stage and identify themselves with one of the four patients. Then, the students express what they imagine the patients would be thinking as a nurse asks sensitive questions about their sexual practices.

At the end of the exercise, McLaughlin tells the students to open a slip of paper she’d given them beforehand containing the patient’s test results.

“Up to this point, we learned the facts about HIV— the number of cases, who gets it, how you get it, how you treat it,” said senior Meghan Lecter, whose slip indicated her patient was HIV positive. “This exercise humanized it for me. Listening to the patients’ backstories and putting myself in their shoes while they’re waiting to find out whether they’re negative or positive will stay with me. I think I’ll be much more understanding and less judgmental after this.”

Senior, Angela Streumph agreed. “This is a unique way of seeing things from the patient’s perspective, as opposed to watching another PowerPoint on HIV,” she said. “The teachers do a really great job of bringing realistic situations into the classroom, but acting it out resonates with me more.”

After every class, McLaughlin asks students to let the experience settle in before writing a reflection.

“Sometimes it’s difficult for students to disclose what might be going on with them during an exercise,” she said. “Really tough issues, such as HIV, can trigger deep emotions. The reflections allow me not only to see where a group might be with the subject matter but also to make sure everyone is OK.”

McLaughlin (center) guides students Jordan Stone, Erin Kinsella, Emily Tuttle and Fr. Seibert in action methods role play at SLU’s HIV/AIDS education center. Schuyler hunting is the only nursing school in the country to offer a classroom dedicated to action methods teaching.

More information on action methods in the classroom can be found in an article by McLaughlin and Patricia E. Freed, Ed.D., R.N., C.N.E., associate professor of nursing, in the fall 2013 issue of the journal, Nursing Leadership.

“Nursing Leadership” course.

Fr. Seibert, C.N.E., associate professor of nursing, is the only nursing school in the country with a classroom dedicated to action methods teaching.

For the second time this year, McLaughlin was asked to use the action methods approach to teach components of the “Nursing Leadership” course required of all seniors. McLaughlin teaches a class on team building and another on mindfulness, in which students play various parts of the brain as they learn to develop a more compassionate self.

“Nurses are challenged to care for sicker, older patients in environments that are fragmented and uncoordinated,” said Shelly von der Lancken (‘89, ’93), M.S.N., R.N., a nursing instructor with 20 years of experience as a nurse manager on a surgical unit. Von der Lancken also is coordinator of the “Nursing Leadership” course.

“Our health care team lacks effective communication skills and has trouble coordinating care,” she said.

“The nurses are stressed and fail to care for themselves. The only way for our graduates to be effective is if they care for themselves.”

“The Institute for Healthcare Improvement has identified the importance of health care workers taking care of themselves as a key factor in improving the environment of care and safety. As an educator, I want the SLU School of Nursing nurses to be balanced, happy individuals. If they’re satisfied, our patients will be satisfied.”

Von der Lancken said she thought action methods would be beneficial in teaching these skills because the technique allows simulation of multiple situations that may not come up during clinicals but will come up in practice.

“What do you do, for example, when you have a bad leader, an angry family member or a difficult physician?” she asked.

“These scenarios are crucial and difficult to approach. Success lies in practice and controlling emotions.”

Until now, evidence to support the effectiveness of action methods has been anecdotal, but McLaughlin, von der Lancken and Patricia Freed, Ed.D, R.N., C.N.E., associate professor of nursing, are collecting data during the leadership course to evaluate the approach’s impact.

McLaughlin also is taking her action methods approach into the community. McLaughlin, Freed and Lee I. Smith, (“78) Ph.D., R.N., professor of nursing, will use action methods to help team mothers in the St. Louis area embrace them just like I would any other patient.”

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A Culture of Collaboration

THE SCHOOL OF NURSING WELCOMES A GROWING NUMBER OF STUDENTS FROM THAILAND

Songkran, also known as the Water Festival, is the traditional Thai New Year’s celebration. Every April, Thais take to the streets with containers of water or water guns and splash passersby as a blessing for the new year.

Songkran is also a time to seek spiritual cleansing and pay respect to Buddhist monks and to elders, including family, teachers, friends and neighbors. Even though they are more than 8,000 miles from their home in Thailand, Choochart Wong-Anuchit, R.N., and Sudithra Phongphanngam, R.N., found a way to celebrate Songkran at the School of Nursing, where they are working on their doctorates.

Wong-Anuchit, Phongphanngam and other Thai students in the program invited their professors to a fifth-floor classroom for the traditional water blessing ceremony. “I was truly touched by the respect they have for us,” said Joanne Schneider, Ph.D., R.N., professor of nursing and Wong-Anuchit’s dissertation adviser. “Our Thai students are such kind, loving souls. They have opened my world view, not only to our cultural differences but also to our universal similarities. Their presence in our program is a gift.”

Strength in Numbers

Approximately a fourth of the students in the School of Nursing’s Ph.D. program are from Thailand (of 23). Nurses can earn doctoral degrees at one of the handful of Thai universities that offer them, yet to broaden their world view, the Thai government encourages and provides scholarships to nurses who pursue their doctoral degrees overseas. Some students study abroad for six to nine months while developing their research proposals and then return home to complete their degrees. Others, such as Wong-Anuchit, complete their entire Ph.D. program overseas.

Wong-Anuchit is an assistant professor of mental health and psychiatric nursing at Maharajakham University in the north-east region of Thailand. He enrolled in the School of Nursing in 2010 and hopes to finish his degree by 2015. “We must be able to communicate with the world,” said Wong-Anuchit, who completed an English immersion program at SLU prior to beginning his doctoral studies. “Thailand cannot stand alone. If we focus only on ourselves, it’s not good for research, it’s not good for patients, and it’s not good for us as professionals.”

Phongphanngam said she came to SLU to expand her technical capacity and her cultural awareness. “I’m not only learning, I’m expanding my professional network with American nursing fellows and fellows from other countries,” said Phongphanngam, an instructor and assistant director of student affairs at University of Phayao, in northern Thailand. “I feel it’s my responsibility to share my perspective and experiences in caring for Thai patients. I also hope to share the nursing knowledge, skills and experiences I’ve learned here with my nursing colleagues in Thailand to help improve our country’s health care system.”

Andrew C. Mills (’85, ’87, ’95), Ph.D., associate professor and director of the School of Nursing Ph.D. program, said that having the Thai students in class enriches the educational experience of all students. “I also think we have a unique opportunity to have an impact in graduate education, in a country that’s still developing in advanced nursing education system,” he said. “The students we’re educating are going to be Thailand’s future nursing leaders.”

Word of Mouth

The School of Nursing has educated a fairly steady stream of Thai students since 1999 when Aporn Deenan (’03), Ph.D., R.N., became the first nurse from Thailand to enroll in SLU’s Dental Health Science program. Deenan, a prominent nurse educator in her country, is an associate professor of nursing at Burapha University, where she conducts research in cardiovascular disease, obesity and metabolic syndrome.

Deenan said she explored other universities in the United States but was most impressed with the thorough responses and warm welcome she received at SLU. “SLU encouraged me to explore myself and my aspirations,” said Deenan, a member of Thailand’s National Health Assembly, an organization that shapes health care policies for the country’s 64 million people. “I thought everything I learned at SLU has moved me forward in my career.”

Since graduating in 2003, Deenan has been a one-woman recruitment specialist for the SLU School of Nursing. She has referred most of the Thai students who have enrolled in the Ph.D. program.

Deenan encouraged Chutima Chantamit-o-pas, M.N.S., to enroll in 2012. Chantamit-o-pas is a lecturer at Burapha University and a faculty researcher at the Chonburi Cancer Institute in Chonburi province. Several members of Chantamit-o-pas department will retire by 2015, leaving a void in the university’s Ph.D. program. The Thai government is eager to fill that void because, like the United States, Thailand is experiencing a nursing shortage. The nation is looking to boost up nursing school faculty to accommodate more students.

Chantamit-o-pas said she looks forward to going back home to teach future nurses, but her style definitely will be different. “In Thailand, we encourage students to memorize everything we teach and everything in the textbook,” she said. “Here, I’m encouraged to think about what I’ve read and to draw my own conclusions. I’m also encouraged to learn more independently and I like this approach. It’s changed how I want to educate my students. I want my students to think for themselves.”

Wong-Anuchit also anticipates his teaching style will change when he returns to Maharajakham University. “Traditionally in my country, students are spoon-fed information,” he said. “Here, students are active learners. We follow our own path. We do a little of that in Thailand, but I think we need to do more.”

Cooperation and Appreciation

In addition, Wong-Anuchit would like to see more collaboration between Thai and SLU researchers. His research interest and the focus of his dissertation is promoting healthy lifestyles in people with mental illness. His advisor, Schneider, has collaborated with other Thai doctoral students on studies published in national nursing journals, including a study on a family support scale for Thai with elderly parents and another on breast cancer beliefs among Thai immigrants in the United States.

Schneider has been invited to attend a nursing conference at Burapha University and has gone to Thailand for a student’s dissertation defense. “Who would have thought when I was growing up on a farm in Missouri that I’d be traveling halfway across the world for my work,” said Schneider, who has taken Thai students to her family farm in St. Genevieve, Mo. “You can see how this has been a learning experience for all of us.”

Extended Family

Because they are so far from home, the Thai students have formed strong bonds with one another and with School of Nursing faculty. Chantamit-o-pas becomes emotional when she talks about how nursing faculty members express interest in her academics and her well being. “In my culture, we believe teachers are our second mothers and fathers, and I feel like that here,” said Chantamit-o-pas, the daughter of an alternative medicine practitioner. “They take care of us and listen to us. Even when my pronun-
School of Nursing Scholars Prepare to Change the Workforce

According to the U.S. census, racial minorities will represent the majority of the population by mid century. Yet the nursing workforce — the largest group of health care professionals in the country — remains predominantly white and female.

Fifteen students in the Saint Louis University School of Nursing’s accelerated programs are part of the antidote. They are recipients of scholarships awarded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s (RWJF) New Careers in Nursing (NCIN) program.

New Careers in Nursing is designed to create a new and diverse nursing workforce by awarding $10,000 scholarships to students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Since RWJF launched the program in 2008, it has awarded more than 2,700 scholarships to students in accelerated programs.

"The desire to become a nurse, however, never faded. I like working with older adults, and I noticed that they have so many health concerns and medication issues," she said. "I had to be cautious with their workout regimen. I thought it would be a great fit for me to go to nursing school and develop a more thorough background on their needs so I could help them achieve their goals.”

Cierra Bowbeer, 25, wanted to enroll in nursing school in her home state of California, but the wait for admission was five years. She shifted the idea while she worked as a personal trainer and group exercise instructor, and earned her bachelor’s degree in kinesiology at Long Beach State University. “The desire to become a nurse, however, never faded. I like working with older adults, and I noticed that they have so many health concerns and medication issues,” she said. “I had to be cautious with their workout regimen. I thought it would be a great fit for me to go to nursing school and develop a more thorough background on their needs so I could help them achieve their goals.”

Blake Badillo, 29, was a combat engineer with the U.S. Marines in the Middle East and Africa in his early 20s. When the infantry went out on patrol, it was his job to clear the obstacles, whether it was a deviant tree or a landmine. Badillo also volunteered to help the medics with such tasks as hanging IVs and applying pressure dressings. “My mom had cancer when I was a kid, my uncle died of the disease, and I ruptured my spleen as a kid,” said the Illinois native. “It was touching to see how people took care of us. I developed a passion for the environment.”

After five years in the Marines, Badillo used his military benefits to earn a bachelor of science in biology and a master’s degree in exercise physiology. He landed a job at Washington University conducting research on smoking cessation programs and carpal tunnel syndrome, but he missed working directly with patients. He thought about medical school but felt nursing was a better fit.

“Physicians are there to treat the disease, but they don’t have the sustained patient contact that nurses do,” he said. “I’m a people person. I could talk to someone all day, and I believe the more you know about someone, the better you’re able care for them.”

Possible next steps: Fender has been driven toward nursing since his childhood in Ozark, Mo. After his mother was sent to jail, Fender’s father and stepmother raised him. Another strong influence in his life was his best friend’s mother, a pediatric nurse.

“I would love to do the same for Native Americans living on reservations where health care and wellness are so neglected,” said Bowbeer, who is one-quarter Arapaho. “I also think that serving this community I can be a role model for other Native Americans who might be interested in the profession.”

Possible next steps: Work in a St. Louis area hospital to hone clinical skills; enroll in the School of Nursing’s doctoral program.

Impatient with the wait in California, Bowbeer looked at schools in Missouri, where she has extended family. She found the accelerated program at SLU. Her admissions essay focused on a health and wellness program she and a colleague created for employees of the gym where they worked. “I would love to do the same for Native Americans living on reservations where health care and wellness are so neglected,” said Bowbeer, who is one-quarter Arapaho. “I also think that serving this community I can be a role model for other Native Americans who might be interested in the profession.”

Possible next steps: Work in a St. Louis area hospital to hone clinical skills; enroll in the School of Nursing’s doctoral program.

Brittany Freeman, 24, had a bachelor’s degree in biology and was teaching math and science in elementary school when it hit her. “I like the job, but I didn’t love it, and I want to love what I do,” said the St. Louisan. “I thought nursing might be a better field for me.” Freeman comes by her interest in nursing naturally. Her mother is a nurse, as is her aunt and her grandmother. She was determined to enroll in nursing school, even if she had to take out substantial loans to do it. “But then I got the call about the scholarship, and it was such a relief,” she said. “It brings hope to people like me who have limited resources but want to enter the field and serve their community.”

Possible next steps: Pursue a doctoral degree; build a career in a research role as a nurse practitioner or nurse anesthetist.

Pre-entry Immersion Program. Prior to the start of classes, faculty members meet with students to cover such topics as the rigor of accelerated study and study techniques.

Mentoring. Each scholar is paired with a faculty mentor to guide him or her through nursing school.

Leadership Development. NCIN scholars traveled to Jefferson City, Mo., each February for Nurse Advocacy Day. Some scholars have traveled to Washington, D.C., for the national nursing policy summit.

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Possible next steps: Pursue a doctoral degree; work in a rural hospital.
Leading Change and Improving Care

NURSES’ INFLUENCE ON THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

While some health care professionals and insurance companies are bracing for the worst as the Affordable Care Act (ACA) rolls out this year, Diana Mason and Joanne Thanavaro are anticipating the best, especially for nurses and their patients.

Both women are in positions to shape the nursing field and to influence future nurses: Mason as president of the American Academy of Nursing, and Thanavaro as new associate dean at the School of Nursing. In this article, they share their thoughts on aspects of the ACA and how nurses will play a key role in transforming the nation’s health care system.

Long Overdue
Mason has been studying nursing trends for more than two decades, and she said no matter what side you come down on in the health care debate, the status quo was untenable.

“We’re spending way too much on health care – $2.7 trillion a year,” she said. “We simply can’t continue to do that without pulling away resources from other sectors of our society that are upstream determinants of health – schools, housing, safe environments. Change had to happen.”

Mason also said that nurses will be essential to turning around the current system and helping patients adapt to the new paradigm behind the ACA.

“This is our time,” she said. “We’re finally shifting to a health care system that promotes wellness and prevention, which is exactly what nurses are trained to do, always have been. Nurses view health not as the absence of disease but as an integration of the physical, mental, social and spiritual components of a person. We don’t just ask about your blood pressure, we ask about your life.”

This broader definition of health and focus on prevention, Thanavaro said, requires relationships between care providers and patients.

“Nurses are skilled at developing these relationships,” she said. “From the first day of class we’re teaching nursing students how to work as partners with their patients and how to treat the whole person. Nurses are in the best position to help patients make educated health care decisions and healthy lifestyle choices.”

Nurse-Led Models of Care
Both Mason and Thanavaro believe the ACA will be a boon to nurse-led models of care. With 48 million formerly uninsured people able to receive medical care and a projected shortage of 45,000 primary care physicians by 2020, the care has to come from somewhere.

“The simple answer is to remove the barriers that prevent nurse practitioners from fully using their knowledge, skills and compassion to meet the country’s health care needs,” Mason said.

The current health care system is linked to state laws that place barriers on nurse practitioners to care for patients within the scope of their license. Mason noted that nearly 20 states allow nurse practitioners to diagnose and treat patients, and to prescribe medications without a physician’s involvement. The remaining states require a physician’s involvement or oversight. The American Association of Nurse Practitioners gave Missouri an “F” rating due to the level of barriers it places on nurse practitioners.

“Patients are hurt by these outdated regulations that stop health care professionals from providing quality care in a timely fashion,” Thanavaro said. “As the flood gates open and more people enter the health care system, I’m sure the need to remove these barriers will become increasingly evident.”

Mason agreed. “I have a getaway in a rural area in upstate New York where there aren’t a lot of primary care physicians, but there’s a nurse practitioner who’s been there a long time,” she said. “My husband and I go to her for episodic care. When I went to see her recently I asked her what would happen if the physician with whom she has a cooperative agreement decided to go out of practice. She told me that she has 2,000 patients she could no longer see. That’s 2,000 patients without access to primary care. The barriers have to go.”

Stay on Message
Mason said the burden of removing the barriers to practice is on nurses and consumers who need to lobby decision makers.

“We need to approach legislators with confidence and be armed with data that demonstrate positive outcomes and cost savings,” she said. “That research is out there.”

Mason and Thanavaro point to a growing body of research demonstrating that patients perceive that receiving quality care and having a usual source of care professionals has higher levels of satisfaction ... some studies have found that 85% of patients who saw nurse practitioners had higher levels of satisfaction ...

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“For example, the Affordable Care Act is expected to save billions of dollars for the government and increase access to health care for millions of uninsured Americans,” Thanavaro said. “In my opinion, nurses must be involved in the policy process to influence health care reform.”

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Joanne Thanavaro was graduated when Dean Tom Murray asked her to serve as interim associate dean for graduate education. She was happy right where she was. Thanavaro had a satisfying teaching and research agenda, and busy clinical practice.

“But you don’t say no to your dean, so I thought I’d give it a try,” said Thanavaro, an associate professor of nursing. “A few months later, I realized the ideas I was having weren’t about my teaching or my research but about the bigger picture. I was thinking about how I could motivate and mentor graduate faculty and how I could help improve our graduate-level curriculum. I felt like I had something to offer nursing, and I got really excited about the possibilities.”

Thanavaro moved from interim to associate dean in July. In addition to overseeing graduate faculty and curriculum, she directs the school’s continuing education programs and the University Nursing Group.

Thanavaro has been with the School of Nursing for seven years, at least this time around. She taught undergraduate courses at the nursing school from 1987 to 1990 before leaving to advance her clinical skills and education.

She earned her undergraduate and master’s nursing degrees at the SLU School of Nursing. She also has advanced degrees from the University of Missouri, Southern Illinois University and Case Western Reserve University. Thanavaro has been an adult nurse practitioner with several St. Louis-area clinics and has an active clinical practice in adult, geriatric and acute care nursing.

Thanavaro is a member of several professional organizations, including the American Association of Nurse Practitioners and the American College of Nurse Practitioners. In June, she was inducted as a fellow of the American Association of Nurse Practitioners. In June, she was inducted as a fellow of the American Association of Critical Care Nurses, the National Association of Graduate Nurses and the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners. In June, she was inducted as a fellow of the American Association of Critical Care Nurses, the National Association of Graduate Nurses and the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners.

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Here are some tributes and a little history from those who spoke at the celebration and those who continue to feel Noth's impact on their personal and professional lives.

I HAD THE PLEASURE OF INTERVIEWING SISTER TERESA MARY NoTH IN 2008, and she shared with me her amazing and rich life story.

Born in 1923, Sister Mary Teresa earned a bachelor’s of science in chemistry and a minor in education from the University of Saint Mary in Leavenworth, Kan., in 1945. After teaching high school for a year, she entered the Sisters of Saint Mary of the Third Order of Saint Francis. Following a two-and-a-half year novitiate, Sister Mary Teresa returned to school to become a nurse.

Although many courses from her undergradu- ate degree transferred, other courses such as philosophy, anatomy, physiology and microbiol- ogy, had to be taken along with the professional clinical nursing program. It took her three full years to graduate with her B.S.N. from Saint Louis University in 1952. Frustrated by the length of time, Sister Mary Teresa vowed that one day she would change things in nursing education.

After passing her licensure examination, Sister Mary Teresa served four years as head nurse at St. Mary’s Hospital. From 1956 to January 1962, she worked as an administrative assistant to the dean of the Saint Louis University School of Nursing and Allied Health, completed a master’s of science in nursing education, and taught in the undergradu- ate nursing program. She left to earn her doctoral degree at Teachers College, Columbia University, and returned to become our dean in 1966.

Based on her personal experience, Sister Mary Teresa fully understood the educational plight of students who had a bachelor’s degree or higher in a field other than nursing, yet wanted to pursue a degree in nursing. She, along with the assis- tant director of the undergraduate program Rita Laverdier, floated the idea of creating a shortened clinical academic program for these students. Faculty, students and Sister Mary Teresa worked together to bring the idea to reality. In 1977, the school enrolled the first class of 12 stu- dents, including two men.

“I knew we could prepare a nurse in 12 months,” Sister Mary Teresa said. “I respected the experiences students brought with them. Students were motivated by the recognition that they were older and were invited to build on what they knew and experienced.”

The accelerated program initiated under her leadership was the first in the country, and it created a national movement in nursing education. In 1990, there were 31 accelerated baccalaureate programs in the nation. Today, there are more than 255.

Sister Mary Teresa’s actions embody the book written by Malcolm Gladwell, The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference. Gladwell wrote about the magical moment in history when an idea “tips,” or spreads like wildfire. Sister Mary Teresa created our tipping point. She was the force behind the flame that sparked a wildfire in accelerated learning, and she changed the landscape of nursing education in America. Sister Mary Teresa truly is a living legend.

Tori Murray (’78, ’93, ’97), Ph.D., A.P.N.-B.C., R.N., F.A.A.N.
Dean, Saint Louis University School of Nursing

I WAS 17 YEARS OLD IN 1967 WHEN I STARTED AS A RECEPTIONIST AT THE SCHOOL OF NURSES. Sister Geraldine was dean at the time, and she was very good but very stern. One day in 1964 when she returned after completing a course in hospital program, Sister Mary Teresa came bounding through the front door, and she said, “Is the deanie beanie here?” I thought, “Oh, things around here are going to change.” And I was right.

The school came alive under Sister Mary Teresa’s leadership. She was so outgoing, and she was way ahead of her time. In addition to creating the nation’s first accelerated option in nursing, she encouraged faculty from nursing, allied health and medicine to offer shared courses. She figured that if the students were going to work together, they should study together. That was in the 1970s, and now, 40 years later, interprofessional health care education has become popularized. That’s how forward think- ing she is.

Sister Mary Teresa also is the kindest person I’ve ever met. On Friday after- noon when campus was somewhat deserted, she’d ask me to invite anyone left in the building to her office for a glass of wine. We’d sit around and talk about our day. She genuinely wanted to listen to what we had to say.

Sister Mary Teresa also wrote the grant that helped build the School of Nursing in 1979. I’d had my way, the school would be named in her honor.

Joyce Huelsmann
Noth’s secretary during her 16 years as dean

IN EARLY AUGUST 1978, I WAS WORKING IN THE MERCY MEDICAL CENTER CORONARY CARE UNIT. One day, I received a phone call from Sister Mary Teresa about the point. “The director of the M.S.N. program in cardiovascular nursing is leaving,” she said. “Would you consider taking her place?”

“Sister,” I said, “my degree is in med- care nursing.” She countered, “But, you’re working in coronary care and co-author- ing a book.” I countered again, “Sister, I only graduated nine months ago.” Her response was something like, “Well, why not come down and at least talk with me about it?”

I did, but it was not like any other interview. Instead of trying to convince her that I could do the job, she spent the time trying to convince me I could do the job. When I walked out of her office, I not only had the job, but I had my first dose of Sister Mary Teresa-induced self- confidence. In some soft, firm, unmistakable way, she instilled confidence not just in me, but in so many of my peers.

Kristine Gebbie, Dr.P.h., R.N. (former professor at Columbia University) and I had Sister Mary Teresa’s full blessing and 200 percent support when we called the First National Conference on the Classification of Nursing Diagnoses. Repeatedly, clinicians, researchers and educators from throughout the coun- try commented about how fortunate we were to have a dean who supported this. “Yes, we are,” we said. That’s our dean, Sister Mary Teresa Noth.

Mary Ann Lavin (’64, ’70, ’86, D.S.C., R.N., A.P.R.N., A.N.P.-B.C., F.A.A.N. Associate Professor

I MET SISTER TERESA MARY IN JULY 1973. She was scheduled to begin her vacation the next day and had one remaining faculty position to fill. I was fortunate enough to have been hired for the job. Timing was everything.

To this day, I am thankful for my good luck and her guidance. That opportunity launched my academic career, and she showed me how to succeed. She helped me define and achieve my goals. She created an environment in which faculty could grow and advance. She embraced change and challenged us to do our best. I also believe the successful application for the Delta Lambda Chap- ter of Sigma Theta Tau was due, in part, to her fiscal and personnel support.

Sister Mary Teresa, thank you for all these opportunities and setting a strong foundation for the school to be a leader in nursing education.

Anne G. Perry (’76, Ed.D., R.N., F.A.A.N. Faculty at the SLU School of Nursing for 30 years

Interim Dean and Professor, Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville School of Nursing

CELEBRATING THE SPARK THAT STARTED A WILDFIRE

ON OCT. 30, friends of Sister Mary Teresa Noth, F.S.M., (’52, ’57) dean emeritus of the School of Nursing, gathered on campus to celebrate her 90th birthday. Noth dedicated more than a quarter of those years to the School of Nursing, and her imprint is found everywhere—from the curriculum, to the faculty, to the building itself.
Lach, Helen Associate professor
Lavin, Mary A. Associate professor
Leander, Sheila A. Assistant professor
Leander, S.A. (2013). Nurses have the power, presence, and credibility to influence health policy. American Nymphologie Nursing Association, 42(8), 1-18.
Loman, Deborah G. Associate professor
Lorenz, Rachel A. Associate professor
McLaughlin, Dorcas E. Associate professor
McLaughlin, Laura A. Assistant professor
Mehta, Anjali D. Assistant professor
Murray, Teri A. Associate professor
Palmer, Janice L. Assistant professor
Palmer, Janice L. Assistant professor
Thanavaro, Joanna L. Associate professor
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Compassion Across Continents

In 2006, Martin was assigned to set up and run an HIV clinic in Bobo-Dioulasso, a city in western Burkina Faso. During this assignment, in 2006, Martin was assigned to set up and run an HIV clinic in Bobo-Dioulasso, a city in western Burkina Faso. During this assignment, she realized the importance of having someone who could provide quality medical care to people in these poor settings. This realization, combined with her experience working in the United States, led her to return home.

During her return trip, Martin spent several months working with patients and physicians in order to gain a better understanding of the healthcare system in the United States. She also attended several conferences and seminars to stay updated on the latest developments in the medical field.

Martin’s experiences in the United States ultimately led her to pursue a career in public health. She attended medical school and obtained a degree in public health, and subsequently earned a master's degree in public health from a reputable university.

Currently, Martin is working as a public health consultant for a leading healthcare organization. She is responsible for developing and implementing public health programs and initiatives that aim to improve the health outcomes of underserved populations.

Martin's work has earned her numerous awards and recognitions. She was named “Public Health Professional of the Year” by the American Public Health Association, and she was honored with the “Excellence in Public Health Award” by the CDC. She is also a member of several professional organizations, including the American Public Health Association and the Association of Community Health Centers.

Martin is passionate about improving the health of underserved populations and bringing healthcare access to those who need it most. Through her work, she aims to create a safer, healthier world for all.
She is our future. We are her present.

Invest in our future with a gift of scholarship. We’ll match it dollar for dollar.

Together, we’ll go further.

your gift. our match. go further.

The Scholarship Matching Program for Saint Louis University

giving.slu.edu/gofurther