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Glen Taylor Nursing Institute for Family and Society: Advancing Family Nursing

Sandra Eggenberger, PhD, RN

In 2008, the School of Nursing at Minnesota State University, Mankato, received an endowment of $7 million dollars from Glen and Becky Taylor to begin the Glen Taylor Nursing Institute for Family and Society (http://ahn.mnsu.edu/nursing/institute/). A brief announcement about the creation of the Institute was published in the Journal of Family Nursing in August 2008 (Family Nursing Network, 2008). This short report provides an update about the activities of the Institute with an emphasis on initiatives related to family nursing education.

In the fall of 2009, the Institute Coordinators, Dr. Sandra Eggenberger and Dr. Sonja Meiers, assembled a group of nursing scholars to form the Taylor Advisory Council. The members are Dr. Janice Bell, Dr. Catherine (Kit) Chesla, Dr. Sharon Denham, Dr. Naomi Ervin, Dr. Kathleen Knafl, and Dr. Patricia Tomlinson. The Advisory Council assessed the environmental context of the Institute, developed recommendations, and finalized the vision and mission.

- The vision of the Glen Taylor Nursing Institute for Family and Society within the School of Nursing is to be known and recognized nationally for being an intellectual community that creates landmark innovations in the scholarship of family and society nursing practice.

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• The mission of the Glen Taylor Nursing Institute for Family and Society is to focus on innovative nursing practice knowledge that influences the health and healing of families and society at local, state, national, and international levels, and to provide leadership and expertise in family and society health related issues.

Additionally, four purpose statements give direction for the Institute’s work with family and society:

• Support the scholarship of nursing practice with emphasis on advancing family and societal health and healing
• Establish and nurture an intellectual community of scholars who will develop and test innovative ideas, educational models, and policies to improve family health within the context of current societal needs
• Develop inclusionary models that translate knowledge to change practice and improve family and societal health and healing
• Focus on development, testing, and dissemination of nursing practice models that attend to the unique nature of families within the rural setting

Annual Taylor Forum

The Inaugural Taylor Forum was held in the fall of 2009 with internationally recognized leaders in family nursing, Dr. Janice M. Bell and Dr. Lorraine M. Wright. These experts explored with the faculty ways to make family the center of nursing practice, guide students in acquiring family relational practices, and implement family practice models. The Glen Taylor Nursing Institute for Family and Society is currently supporting Annual Forums that extend health care practitioner knowledge and skills in family nursing. Practicing nurses in the region are invited to a spring educational conference by Dr. Sharon A. Denham that views family as the central organizing consideration for patient centered care. The Institute is making plans to move from regional to international audiences.

Visiting Scholars

The University community is working with Taylor Visiting Scholars to advance family and societal research that supports the mission of the Institute. During the spring of 2010, Dr. Sharon Denham served as a Taylor Visiting Scholar
who engaged with faculty members and students at the undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral levels of education. Taylor Visiting Scholars are bringing a diversity of ideas, perspectives, and energy to advance the purposes of the Family and Society Institute and promote interdisciplinary interchanges with multiple international experts.

**Support of the International Family Nursing Association**

The School of Nursing at Minnesota State University, Mankato, and the *Glen Taylor Nursing Institute for Family and Society* has offered patron support for the newly formed International Family Nursing Association (IFNA). This academic institution was a natural sponsoring partner for IFNA because of the fit between the mission of the IFNA and the Institute. IFNA and the Institute are planning a partnership that fosters the development of nurses involved in the promotion of family health care practice throughout the world.

**Advancing Family Nursing Education With an Emphasis on Nursing Practice**

The Institute’s vision, mission, and purposes are guiding several educational initiatives at Minnesota State University, Mankato. Students, faculty members, practicing health professionals, and researchers are becoming part of a focused scholarly community committed to advancing the nursing discipline in the areas of family and societal health with a particular focus on the scholarship of nursing practice and creating innovations in family nursing practice. The *Glen Taylor Nursing Institute for Family and Society* is partnering with faculty at the doctoral, master’s, and undergraduate levels of nursing education.

**Doctoral Education in Family Nursing**

In the Doctor of Nursing Practice program, from which the first four students graduated last spring, students focus projects on family and society. Doctoral students who investigate family and societal health concerns have the opportunity to apply for the competitive *Becky Taylor Fellowships* that support their research and education. For example, current graduating students developed and tested a family nursing intervention with hospital staff that aims to increase the nurse–family interaction and create deliberate inclusion of the family in the care of their loved one. A doctoral student is
also testing educational methods to develop nurses’ cultural competence in nursing centers serving individuals and families of the Somali, Hmong, and Hispanic/Latino cultures.

Master’s-Level Graduate Education in Family Nursing

Family and societal health remains a core element of the current master’s-level curriculum focused on the roles of a Family Nurse Practitioner and Nurse Educator with an online program that includes a family nursing course grounded in family nursing theory to guide practice and research. A second course explores family, social, and cultural processes that influence health and provide direction for models of care. Pedagogies that address family health and nursing actions to improve family and societal health are core elements of the nurse educator curriculum.

Undergraduate Education in Family Nursing

The undergraduate curriculum is currently being revised to distinguish the School of Nursing as a leading academic environment in the areas of family and societal health. The transformed curriculum will focus on family and societal health issues and create pedagogies that encourage students to develop family nursing practice at the undergraduate level. Simulation in the laboratory setting is being expanded to place family in the center of nursing practice. Faculty are designing simulation scenarios that emphasize family experiences with illness to ensure that assessment, psychomotor, and family skills are taught from a stance of nurses simultaneously caring for ill individuals and their families. A family nursing course for Registered Nurses in the Bachelor of Science completion program is designed to create an immediate impact on family nursing practice by concentrating on family strategies in acute and chronic illness experiences and nurse–family relationships in current health care systems. A Bachelor of Science to Doctor of Nursing Practice curriculum is being developed that builds on the scientific and praxis foci for family nursing science with intentional teaching–learning practices and competencies directed toward developing expert practitioners in the area of family and societal health. Pedagogies are being implemented that develop the Doctor of Nursing Practice role from a foundation of family nursing knowledge and family clinical specialty.

For more information about the Institute, please contact Dr. Sandra Eggenberger, Director of the Glen Taylor Nursing Institute for Family
and Society (sandra.eggenberger@mnsu.edu) or consult the Institute Web site: http://ahn.mnsu.edu/nursing/institute/.

Reference

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