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Nursing school committed to increasing diversity

by Beverly Epeneter
Interim Dean of Nursing

The Linfield-Good Samaritan School of Nursing is committed to increasing diversity on campus and in the nursing work force. We believe that it is essential to create an academic environment that facilitates intellectual curiosity and respect for diverse viewpoints, whether cultural, racial or gender. The article in the summer *Linfield Magazine*, “Men in Nursing – Filling in the ranks” was the first time in the 20 years that I have been with Linfield that we have given our male students an opportunity to express their thoughts about their experience in nursing in a public forum.

The nursing profession is facing a serious nursing shortage compounded by the limited diversity in the workplace – both gender and cultural diversity.

This article examined one aspect of the issue – the shortage as it relates to men in nursing from the perspectives of the men on the panel. The primary question was, How can we attract more men into nursing and the related question, how do we make them feel welcome in nursing school and in the practice setting? Our approach: we give them an opportunity to speak, we listen, and we seek to understand. We can do this knowing in our head and feeling in our heart that nursing at any point in time is a worthy profession. We hope to give other students, other groups, similar opportunities, through efforts such as the HRSA grant that Linfield was just awarded (see related article) and through other forums that will allow their voices to be heard.

Nursing grows stronger as a profession when we honor and learn from the past; become more educated, understanding, inclusive and diverse in the present; and plan together for the future.

Nursing to boost Hispanic recruitment



Liliana Barrios '06, left, and Cristina Schipper '06 receive instructions from Ed Averill, nursing lab assistant coordinator at the Linfield-Good Samaritan School of Nursing. Barrios and Schipper are two of 11 Hispanic nursing students at the school, but that could change thanks to a new grant designed to increase the number of Hispanics enrolling in nursing.

The Linfield-Good Samaritan School of Nursing is poised to become a regional center for developing a nursing work force that is better able to care for Oregon's increasingly diverse population.

Seven out of 10 minority students entering Oregon's school systems are from a Hispanic background; however, just 2.6 percent of students entering the Linfield-Good Samaritan School of Nursing are Hispanic.

This is about to change, thanks to a grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The grant will fund a program to admit a new cohort of Hispanic students each year, so that by the end of the third and final project year they will constitute 8 percent of the student body.

“Our long-term goal is to develop that 20 or 25 percent that makes a minority population self-sustaining,” said Peggy Wros, professor of nursing and associate dean of the nursing school, who will direct the project along with co-directors Rebecca Boehne and Barbara May. “A figure like that will include more than just Hispanic students and will give us much broader diversity.”

The program reaches out to prospective students in high schools and health career programs, identifying those with an interest in and aptitude for a nursing career. Students are mentored throughout high school and assisted in securing financial aid for college study. Once admitted, students will benefit from an array of support services.

While other schools have followed a similar model in efforts to broaden the diversity of their student bodies, Linfield will be the first school in Oregon to apply it to the nursing field.

“Everybody has been talking about it and thinking they need to do it, but no one else has done it,” Wros said.

Linfield's leadership in undertaking this effort follows logically from the fact that its nursing school was ahead of others in the area in reorienting its curriculum to a community-based model. The many community partnerships

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Remembering service and sacrifice

They've been friends for more than 70 years – through childhood, college, a war and now, volunteer efforts.

Two World War II veterans, Lieutenant Tom Maloney '46 and Captain Colin Armstrong '51, had a chance to reflect on their friendship and the war that shaped their lives, when they attended the dedication of the National World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C., on May 29. Evergreen International Aviation sponsored the trip for four veterans, all volunteers at the Evergreen Aviation Museum, including Maloney and Armstrong.

The group was among more than 150,000 people who attended the dedication ceremony. The memorial honors the 16 million people who served in the armed forces of the U.S., the more than 400,000 who died and all who supported the war effort from home.

For Maloney, the experience was, “inspirational and quite touching. I thought about how we were there and all our friends who were killed were not.”

Maloney was 20 and had attended Linfield for three years when he joined the U.S. Naval Reserve in October 1941 as a dive bomber pilot. Two months later, Japan attacked Pearl Harbor. During his four years of service, he was awarded 14 service medals, including two navy crosses, one distinguished flying cross and five air medals.

Maloney lost a number of friends and family members during the war including Linfield classmates Jimmy Breeding '39 and Gilbert Roberts '41.

“We had more egotism and confidence than we had brains,” he said. “Inside of us, we had the feeling we were all supermen. When I came back, I had matured. I was 26 going on 56.”

Maloney returned to Linfield and finished his degree in 1946, marrying Nita (Glascoe) '48 later that



Lieutenant Tom Maloney '46



Captain Colin Armstrong '51

year. Returning veterans changed the climate of Linfield's campus, Nita noted.

“Most of the veterans smoked and danced,” she said. “Within a few years, rules changed on campus, too.”

Armstrong agreed, adding “things were much more strict and proper before the war. The attitude was more relaxed and informal when I returned.”

Armstrong entered the navy in 1942 as a dive bomber pilot, fulfilling a lifelong dream.

“Becoming a navy pilot was my career ambition,” he said. “Seldom do you know that and get to do it. I was lucky that way.”

After the war, Armstrong earned a business administration degree at Linfield before continuing his career in the military, serving as a carrier pilot, meteorologist and oceanographer. He spent the next two years forecasting ice in the Arctic Ocean, and went on to serve a total of 30 years, earning 14 service medals along the way. After retiring from the military, Armstrong was a Yamhill County commissioner for eight years.

– Laura Davis

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that the nursing school has developed will be important to the current project's success, from the middle schools where Linfield has a long-established mentoring program to community organizations that provide sites for clinical experiences. One such partnership was established this past summer, when the Oregon Health Career Center held its Summer Enrichment Academy for Careers in Health on Linfield's Portland Campus. Linfield also works with Las Hermanas, a program that encourages Hispanic students to complete high school and enter college programs, and the National Association of Hispanic Nurses.

Josie Rodriguez, director of cultural liaison at Silverton

Hospital, has long been one of Linfield's partners. She praises Wros and the other nursing school faculty she has worked with for their efforts and their sincerity.

“They come to us,” she says. “They seek advice from the stakeholders.” Rodriguez believes this project will have a direct impact on health disparities and a number of beneficial ripple effects on the Hispanic community.

The grant fully funds the Linfield program for three years, with \$186,343 provided for this year and amounts of \$172,721 and \$196,664 recommended for years two and three respectively.

– Peter A. McGraw