Greetings from Dr Nelson

The College of Nursing and Health Sciences intends to excel. For an institution to become great, it must be willing and able to identify and refine its strengths, corporately as well as individually. It is well established that no one ever achieves alone what otherwise could have been achieved when partnering with others. To capitalize on the strengths of each faculty and staff member, we start with the right assumptions:

Each person’s talents are enduring and unique.
Each person’s greatest room for growth is in the areas of his or her greatest strength.

WT’s College of Nursing and Health Sciences takes advantage of our individual as well as collective strengths and use these to corporately make a difference in the lives of students. There is a phenomenon referred to as the reciprocity rule in human behavior which suggests that over a period of time, individuals will share similar attitudes toward one another. Thus, if you hold a high opinion of others; eventually others will hold a high opinion of you as well as of you. The aforementioned is neither difficult nor expensive – however it does take determination and the desire to serve others.

Amarillo Health Fair

Senior nursing students from West Texas A&M University conducted health screenings, provided educational materials and distributed flip flops and hygiene items as hosts of a Health Fair for the Homeless on Wednesday, April 24 at the Guyon Saunders Resource Center in Amarillo. The students conducted a needs assessment with the Amarillo homeless population and in response organized a flip flop drive. They collected more than 200 pairs of flip flops on campus, community members contributing flip flops and an array of toiletry items ranging from shampoo to socks. In addition, The event featured booths offering education, blood pressure checks and blood glucose checks. Toiletry items, first aid kits, water, flip flops and more were distributed.
The CNHS is very happy to introduce Brenda Cross as the new Department Head for the Department of Communication Disorders.

Brenda grew up on the family farm in Groom Texas. From the early age of nine, Brenda became fascinated with the deaf actress Marlee Matlin from the popular show Law and Order. As she would watch Brenda became curious about the actress’s use of sign language. A new set of Encyclopedias would help to foster Brenda’s fascination with sign language, and at the age of nine, she typed letters to three different universities inquiring about their audiology programs. She still has each of the letters she received back from the universities to this day.

One of those letters was from Texas Tech where Brenda graduated in 2003 with her Bachelor of Speech, Language and Hearing Sciences. Four years later she received her Clinical Doctorate in Audiology also from Texas Tech.

After completing an both an internship and 1,600 clinical hours at West Texas Rehabilitation Clinic in Abilene, Brenda stayed on for 5 years as Team Audiologist working with hearing and balance in patients from infants to geriatrics. While there, Brenda met her husband, Stephen, who is a veteran of the Air Force. In 2010 Brenda and her husband moved to Amarillo where she worked as the director of the hearing and balance clinic at Quail Creek Ear Nose and Throat. Brenda became a part time instructor here at WTAMU in the spring of 2011 and a full time instructor in the fall of 2012. Brenda’s husband works full time at WTAMU in the Physical Plant and is also a student here.

Brenda and Stephen have two boys, Adam, 4 years, and Nathan, 5 months. In her spare time Brenda enjoys spending time with her family, reading, and shopping.

86 scholarships have been provided to CNHS students for the 2013-2014 academic year.

It is nearly impossible to overstate the importance of scholarship money in the equation when calculating the costs associated with obtaining a college degree. The CNHS is pleased to announce that 86 scholarships totaling $159,500 were given to students for the 2013-2014 academic year.

It is through the kind generosity of the Colleges’ donors that this is possible. These scholarships not only provide the CNHS students with much needed financial support but also the motivation and inspiration to reach their academic goals!
Clinical Changes for Comm. Disorders

A speech and hearing clinic in an academic setting is always challenging. People (patients) know that they are being provided services by a student supervised by a professional. These patients know and appreciate the academic world, understanding that this is the only way to train the future of our profession. While it can be challenging, it can also be so rewarding. I was recently given a different prospective from another faculty. He said to me, “Helping people hear again is what you love. Your passion. Think about all the patients you have and will be able to help in your career. Now think about the number of patients will you be able to help hear again only because you have taught someone else how to provide for them.” I took a step back and realized that he was so correct. I will help hundreds, but by training the future of my profession I will in fact be helping thousands hear again.

The WTAMU clinic is our main concentration of growth. We plan on increasing swallowing, voice, hearing and auditory processing patients. This will allow our students to get more clinical hours here on campus, it will allow our supervisors to stay on campus for supervision, it will provide more service to our own WTAMU employees and finally, it will greatly benefit our community.

2013 Evidence Based Nursing Capstone Event

WT took place on April 9th in the newly renovated Jack B. Kelly Student Center. Senior II nursing students researched and developed professional posters on various professional topics including clinical reasoning, nurse-physician relationships, ethics, safety goals, and a variety of other pertinent issues. Nursing faculty posters were also presented at the event.

The Delta Delta chapter of Sigma Theta Tau, the International Honor Society of Nursing Scholarship, graciously provided refreshments for this event. The event was well attended by the nursing student body, nursing faculty and graduate students.

NWTH Provides Professorship

Northwest Texas Healthcare System has provided $50,000 toward the establishment of the Eunice King Professorship in Nursing at West Texas A&M University.

Mrs. Eunice King, who died in 2011, served as director of Northwest Texas School of Nursing and as dean of WT’s nursing department. Mrs. King also helped develop the licensed vocational nurse program and the associate’s degree program in nursing at Amarillo College during her 40 years in the health care field.

Dr. Reyes and Dr. Nelson
The RN to BSN program at WT has nearly doubled in the past two years.

The WTAMU RN to BSN program provides associate degree nurses the opportunity to complete a baccalaureate degree in nursing in an online environment. In October 2010, the Institute of Medicine released its landmark report on The Future of Nursing, initiated by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, called for increasing the number of baccalaureate-prepared nurses in the workforce to 80%. This report prompted increased interest in the RN to BSN program here at WTAMU. In early 2011 Dr. Marietta Branson took over RN-BSN program and has seen the program nearly double in that time.

The WT RN to B.S.N. Nursing Program is fully accredited by the Commission for Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE). It is also approved through the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and the Texas Board of Nursing.

Benefits of the B.S.N. degree to a nurse include:

- Advancement into management and other healthcare leadership positions
- Opportunities for higher wages and higher level nursing positions
- Opportunities in more diverse fields, such as risk management and quality assurance
- More potential for employment across the state and nationally

Program highlights include:

- The RN to B.S.N. program can be completed in one academic year
- The program is flexible and completely online.
- There will be practicum experiences, demonstrating the new knowledge acquired throughout the program.
- You can begin coursework either Spring, Summer or Fall semester.
- Courses stand alone and can be taken as offered.
- Opportunity for Special Package Price Tuition Rebate; for those students who qualify.

Faculty Publication and Presentations


Nursing faculty presented their research posters at the WT nursing evidence based capstone event held on April 9th. The following posters were presented:

1. Urban vs. Rural Practice: Teaching Strategies for Preparation for Nurse Practitioners,

2. The Impact of Employment on Nursing Students’ Academic Performance, Helen Reyes, Collette Loftin, Vicki Hartin & Deborah Davenport

3. The Impact of Employment on Nursing Students’ Academic Performance, Helen Reyes, Collette Loftin, Vicki Hartin, Deborah Davenport

4. Classroom Participation: A Student Perspective, Collette Loftin, Lisa A. Davis, & Hartin, Vicki

5. Diversity in Texas Nursing Programs: Relationship between Supportive Characteristics and Graduation Rates of URM Nursing Students Collette Loftin

6. Use of Simulated Pages to Provide Opportunity for Inter-Professional Education (IPE) of Medical and Nursing Students Dennis B. Dove, Kerrie Young, & Lisa Robinson

7. Lifelong Learning in Nursing: A Delphi Survey"
The Texas Speech Language & Hearing Association Convention

The Texas Speech Language Hearing Association (TSHA) held its 57th Annual Convention on March 7-9th at the Dallas Convention Center in Dallas, TX. The theme for 2013 was “Renew and Connect”, encouraging networking among professionals in the field of speech-language pathology and audiology. Among those in attendance were Dr. Larry Barnes, Rebecca Linke, and Noel Clifton, professionals in the Communication Disorders department at WTAMU, along with several graduate and undergraduate students.

Registration was followed by the grand opening of the main exhibit hall, filled with more than 200 vendors offering the latest in speech, language, and hearing rehabilitation techniques. Exceptional prizes were awarded during the opening, including a $500 Coach gift certificate and one free registration to the TSHA 2014 Annual Convention. A Silent Auction offered the opportunity for those in attendance to shop for a cause; and members the WTAMU chapter of the National Student’s Speech-Language-Hearing Association (NSSLHA) entered a basket that was purchased by our own, Rebecca Linke. For current TSHA members looking for jobs, job placement services offered applicants the opportunity to browse available positions and sign up for interviews.

Jorge Granados Awarded Top Recognition

Jorge Granados received top honors for his submission to the WT Student Research Conference. Along with recognition, he will receive a cash award. Jorge is a graduate student in the Sports and Exercise Science Department.

The Department of Nursing is pleased to announce a 97.67% pass rate for the NCLEX-RN exam during the first two quarters of this year!

Excellence in Communication Disorders

Our program and our faculty/staff are stronger than ever. We have had an amazing year full of changes and growth. Our department has restructured to again put the focus on the student. This in turn sharpens the future of our profession.

We had two faculty presentations at national conferences this past year. One of our students, Martie Marie received a student award at TAMUS Pathwayz. Current research in our department is focusing on neurophysiology of Autism, cochlear implants in the early deafened and non-traditional therapy techniques for fluency disorders.

We have cultivated a working relationship with Physicians Billing Services which is allowing us to bill for clinical services provided in the WTAMU Speech and Hearing Clinic. We are, or are close to being, providers for BXBS, United Health Care, and Medicare/Medicaid. Our clinical growth is one of the main focuses for the upcoming year. We will see an increase in swallowing, voice, hearing, auditory processing, and autistic patients. Our external contracts continue to thrive as we service Guymon OK, Claude, White Deer, Turn Center, Jan Werner, and Canyon ISD.

Our student organization NSSLHA (National Student Speech Language Hearing Association) continues to make us proud through their community service projects.
Amarillo Women’s Network presented its annual Career and Lifetime Achievement Awards on March 7.

The Career Achievement Award honors women who make major career advancement or receive recognition in their professions during a calendar year. Initiated in 1981, this award encourages women to seek higher careers and recognizes firms and organizations that support and promote women. Recipients of these awards must be an inspiration to their peers. To date, more than 135 Texas Panhandle women have been honored.

Career Achievement Award Honorees included WT sports and exercise sciences department head Lorna Strong.

Dr. Phillips was honored for her support of nurse practitioners and students.

The Panhandle Nurse Practitioners Association named Angela Phillips, DNP their Nurse Practitioner of the year. She was honored for her support of Nurse practitioners, her support of students, and her scholarship. Dr. Phillips is a fulltime faculty person in the WT graduate program and continues to treat patients at the WT Health Partners Clinic on a part-time basis.

Dr. Phillips was one of the first graduates of the University of Texas’ Doctor of Nursing Practice program in 2009.

Angela Phillips Receives Award

Lorna Strong Awarded

Sigma Theta Tau International

Twenty one individuals will be inducted into the Delta Delta chapter of Sigma Theta Tau on May 11th. STTI is nursing’s largest honor society. Inductees include: Undergraduates: Jeffrey Castillo, Karis Farris, Hailey Ha, Angela Jackson, Jake Johnson, Phuong (Anna) Le, Cynthia Medina, Austin Preston, Malory Raybal, Stephanie Webie, and Amanda Young. Graduate students: Jenny Benites, Tricia Clay, Robert Gutierrez, Joe Hall, Kansuz Mangelsdof, Jana Soto, Misty Sutton, and Krysta Wolken. Community Leaders: Kristin DeLosSantos and Priscella Correa.

STTI supports the learning, knowledge, and professional development of nurses committed to making a difference in health worldwide. Founded in 1922, STTI is a global community of nursing leaders who are proud to welcome these individuals among their ranks.
A.J. Cano is a senior Athletic Training student from Perryton, TX. A.J. was the first recipient honored with the Ryan M. Strong Memorial Scholarship. The Scholarship was created after the passing of the Sports & Exercise Science Department Head, Ms. Lorna Strong’s husband. In order to be considered for this scholarship, students must meet minimum standards such as GPA and leadership in and out of the classroom, but more importantly, the recipient must demonstrate evidence of personal characteristics that embody the memory of Ryan Strong. Compassion for others and leadership are at the top of that list that are reflected in A.J. A.J. cites the best aspects of being an athletic training student is the ability to build relationships with his peer group, athletic training staff and athletes, exhibit leadership among his peer group, as well as the opportunity to protect and assist his student-athletes both on and off the field. A.J. is inspired by those around him and uses both his experiences and experiences of others to be the best that he can when developing relationships and providing care for student-athletes here at WT.

A.J. states that being awarded the financial aspect of the scholarship is great, but would embrace the award just as much without the money “I enjoy being interviewed about this experience because it brings attention to athletic training, our athletic training program and of course WT. Even if the award came without any monetary value I would embrace it just as much as I do now. Lorna is the reason that I came to WT, to be a part of the athletic training program”. A.J. is a student who demonstrates many characteristics that I imagine Ryan would exhibit: compassion, humility, leadership and a passion for working with and alongside others.

Texas American College of Sport Sciences Spring Lecture Series held at WTAMU

On April 1st the Sports and Exercise Science Department at WTAMU hosted Dr. William H. Cooke from the University of Texas at San Antonio for the Texas American College of Sport Sciences Spring Lecture Series held at WTAMU. Dr. Cooke specializes in autonomic neural mechanisms controlling heart rate, arterial pressure, cerebral blood flow, and their oscillatory patterns and interactions. The majority of his research projects can be separated into four primary emphasis areas: 1) applied physiology; 2) aerospace physiology; 3) exercise physiology; and 4) battlefield and trauma physiology. Over 150 students and faculty from the Sport and Exercise Science and Nursing departments, as well as local individuals from the Panhandle, were in attendance to listen to Dr. Cooke discuss his history and lineage and their influence on his research. He is currently focusing on autonomic control after severe trauma and blood loss that is often experienced on the battlefield for many of our service men and women.
Discover the **BUFF** in You.

Communication Disorders Students

Left: Students attend an NSSLHA Meeting during the spring. Right: CD students working an MS booth. Below: CD students attend a TSHA meeting.