We all know that change brings with it challenge. This Biennium, STTI made several changes involving both structure and finance. The purpose of these changes is to make STTI a streamlined, fiscally responsive organization, able to continue its delivery of high quality services at reasonable cost.

International is now assisting our Iota Sigma Chapter in streamlining our operations. We will be decreasing the number of appointed Chairs on our Board and using a “task force” approach to projects. We hope that this will attract more members who would like to be involved but have limited time to participate. There will be many opportunities for members to participate on a periodic, short-term basis.

International dues increased $10.00 this year, to $55.00 per year. This is a very reasonable membership fee when compared with other professional organizations, many of whom charge over $100.00. Our Iota Sigma Chapter dues will remain at $30.00 per year. With any change, it is necessary to provide accurate information about the benefits the members receive from belonging to STTI. I’d like to use this, my last letter as your President, to describe some of the benefits you receive from your membership.

STTI’s web site is loaded with resources. As I’ve suggested before, I encourage you to take some time and tour YOUR organization’s web site. It is there for YOU. A brand new 90 page Chapter Resource Manual is FREE for the downloading. The manual will answer most of your questions at your convenience. The web site also gives you access to the Virginia Henderson Library, excellent Case Studies, research opportunities, and more. http://www.nursingsociety.org.

International is looking for volunteers (novice and expert) for projects/tasks that will help you to demonstrate your talent, hone new skills, network, and grow within your profession. Please visit nursingsociety.org to complete your

(President’s Letter continued on page 2)
Legal Update: Nurse Opinion Must Define the Standard for Nurses in Illinois

by Phyllis M. Gallagher, RN, JD

The Illinois Supreme Court has decided that only nurses may be permitted to testify regarding the standard of care for nurses. Thanks to the amicus curiae brief filed by TAANA (The American Association of Nurse Attorneys), nurses being tried for malpractice in civil trials will have the standard of care decided on the basis of testimony given by expert nurses. The lower court had permitted expert testimony from a physician to be presented to the jury.

For many years, courts have considered physicians to be appropriate experts for defining the standard of care for nurses, over the objections of many nursing and legal scholars. This case has put to rest the question of whether physicians may testify as experts in cases in which the standard of care for nurses is an issue, at least in the State of Illinois. However, the decision is expected to influence the holdings of appellate courts in other states regarding this issue.

The rationale for considering physicians as experts in nursing matters is derived from the belief that medical licenses give authority to physicians to do whatever nurses may do. While there may have been some validity to this view in the distant past, when nursing practice involved fairly simple procedures, the complexity of modern nursing practice undermines the support for this belief. Physicians may not be familiar with nursing practice to the degree needed to testify as experts, and so it would be an evidentiary error to permit them to define the standard of care for nurses.

An amicus brief is a “friend of the court” brief. In the brief submitted by TAANA, the nurse attorneys argued that nursing is a practice distinct from the practice of medicine, and thus defines its own scope and standard of practice. At issue in the case was the question of whether a nurse should be held to the same standard of care as a physician. The nurse described the patient as “agitated” rather than as suffering from “delirium.” A physician testified that the nurse was negligent in failing to diagnose delirium. The brief pointed out that delirium is a medical diagnosis, and under the Illinois Nursing Practice Act, the nurse is not permitted to make a medical diagnosis. By permitting a physician to testify that the nurse failed to make the proper diagnosis, the jury may be misled into believing that the standard of care for a physician and a nurse is identical. The case is Sullivan v Amelia Conte-Rassian, MD and Edward Hospital No. 95409 In the Supreme Court of Illinois, February, 2004.
MARK YOUR CALENDARS, SAVE THESE DATES:

March 24, 2004 Recruitment Fair, APU Campus
April 12, 2004 Board Meeting SON Library
May 1, 2004 Induction and Luncheon/
Fundraising Auction
May 6-12 Nurses’ Week (check nursingsociety.org
for beautiful, meaningful gifts)
May 10, 2004 Board Meeting SON Library
June 14, 2004 Board Meeting SON Library
July, 2004 Strategic planning/Board Meeting
October, 2004 Memory Walk
October 21 & 22 Nursing Odyssey 2004

HELP PRESIDENT DAN PESUT FIND VIPS

February, 2005 Annual Meeting
November 12-16, 2005 Biennium, Indianapolis, IN

STTI President Dan Pesut is committed to assisting chapters and regions to identify individuals who are interested in getting involved in STTI at all levels. He has designed a Volunteer Interest Profile survey (VIPProfile) to query members about their talents, skills, and interests. It doesn’t take long to complete. Check it out at STTI’s site, nursingsociety.org. Click on VIPProfile and complete your profile. You will find priceless opportunities to develop your talents, skills,

Member Survey: TELL US WHAT YOU WANT. WHAT WOULD YOU COME OUT TO HEAR? DO YOU WANT CEUs? SOCIAL EVENTS?

Our Web site is http://www.apu.edu/iotasigma

Let us know YOUR BEST TIMES FOR MEETINGS
BEST DAYS FOR MEETINGS
PROGRAM CONTENT YOU’D LIKE
SUGGESTED SPEAKERS

We want to hear from YOU!!!!!
The Research Corner

by Dr. Marilyn Klakovich, Chair, Research Committee

In this issue, I’ll be sharing three exciting news items that relate to funding, conducting, and disseminating research.

Research Award Deadline Extended!

For any of you who would like to obtain a $500.00 research award to assist you to conduct and disseminate your research, there is still time! The deadline for the 2004 award has been extended to April 1, 2004. Please let me know if you have any questions. I would be happy to assist you to prepare and submit your application. The process is quick and easy! If you are interested, e-mail me at mklakovich@apu.edu.

Odyssey 2004 Conference

I’m pleased to report that the plans are progressing well for our Fall research, education, and clinical practice conference presented in collaboration with 12 other schools (representing 10 chapters of Sigma Theta Tau International and two honor societies. This year the theme will be “Nursing Odyssey 2004: Charting a New Course in Nursing.” For the complete brochure, see the link on this website. Our keynote speakers include Anthony Minks, MSN, RN, Chief Nurse Executive/Assistant Administrator, Kaiser Permanente, San Diego, who will present “One Year into the Ratios” on Thursday, October 21. Joan Burritt, DNSc, RN, Associate Administrator, Chief Nursing Executive, Scripps Memorial, La Jolla will present “Defining Magnet Status” on Friday, October 22.

I will be posting the call for abstracts for the podium and poster presentations in April, so please check back. We would love to have the Iota Sigma Chapter well represented among the presenters.

Research Presentation

I had the privilege of presenting research at the Nursing Odyssey 2003 conference that Dr. Felicitas dela Cruz and I have collaborated on for the past few years. The nursing faculty at APU had found that in spite of the centrality of interpersonal communication in nursing, not psychometrically sound instrument existed to measure the communication competency of nursing students. Because of this finding, we developed and tested the Interpersonal Communication Assessment Scale (ICAS).

Although the development of the ICAS required a series of studies, the focus of the presentation was on a national study to validate the ICAS. This study was partially funded by a grant by the APU Faculty Research Council. Undergraduate and graduate faculty (N=578) from 246 CCNE accredited schools of nursing participated in the survey. Faculty rated the effectiveness of a “typical” student’s communication behavior at the beginning BSN, graduating BSN, beginning MSN, and graduating MSN levels. 1 (seldom) to 4 (usually or always).

Results showed that the ICAS has three distinct subscales which we labeled advocacy (clearly conveying diagnostic and other relevant information in a way that supports patient/family wishes and decisions), therapeutic use of self (demonstrating interpersonal behaviors that assist clients in achieving healthy emotional and behavioral outcomes by being genuine, empathetic, and respectful of the client) and validation (continued on page 5)
(Research Corner continued from page 4)

(listening carefully and verifying that the intent of messages is accurately interpreted). Furthermore, the ICAS differentiated between entering and graduating students at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

We propose that ICAS can be used as a formative tool to provide student feedback following each clinical rotation. As a summative tool, it can be used to compare entering versus graduating student scores. Further research is recommended with actual nursing students in a variety of nursing programs (ADN, degree completion, as well as BSN and MSN). The ICAS can also be used in research to determine the effectiveness of communication teaching methods and to determine predictors of effective communication.

Since presenting at the Odyssey 2003 conference, this research has been accepted for a poster presentation at the April, 2004 Western Institute of Nursing research conference in Portland, OR and for a podium presentation at the 15th International Nursing Research Congress (sponsored by STTI) in Dublin, Ireland. Dr. dela Cruz and I are excited to be able to represent Iota Sigma Chapter and Azusa Pacific University at this international conference.

Eager to arrive at the hotel, I looked out the window of the Airport shuttle to see the beautiful landscape between Toronto Airport and the Sheraton. I tried to imagine what was in store for me at the STTI 37th Biennial convention that I was about to attend. The extent of my experience with conventions was limited to a Regional STTI research conference in Ontario, CA. I had been involved in Iota Sigma Chapter as the Student Leadership Intern for a few months and I was honored to have them sponsor my trip to the Biennium. I had no idea how large the Biennium was going to be or the effect it would have on me.

When I received my convention materials I was in shock as I flipped through the list of over 2100 names of the nurses registered to attend. Now I was beginning to get the picture. The next task at hand was choosing which sessions I would like to attend. It never became easier to choose which session to attend, but I did the best I could. I was especially drawn to a few sessions which were aimed at attracting faculty. There were sessions about on-line courses, and the well-being of students. I was curious to hear what was being presented and I was also interested in contributing to the topics if possible. During these sessions I realized how much thought and effort is put forth by the faculty in order to strengthen our learning experience. I was engaged in conversations with my peers to offer my opinion about methods used to increase student success in nursing programs. It was empowering to feel that my opinion was very helpful to them.

I attended several sessions the next few days and I learned from each speaker about research, professionalism, and leadership. It never became easier to choose which session to attend, but I did the best I could. I was especially drawn to a few sessions that were aimed at attracting faculty. There were sessions about on-line courses, and the well-being of students. I was curious to hear what was being presented and I was also interested in contributing to the topics if possible. During these sessions I realized how much thought and effort is put forth by the faculty in order to strengthen our learning experience. I was engaged in conversations with my peers to offer my opinion about methods used to increase student success in nursing programs. It was empowering to feel that my opinion was very helpful to them.

Immersed in the professionalism of nursing, I was delighted to see how many advanced practice nurses there were. I was inspired to reach for goals beyond any I had ever before imagined for myself. I had pictured myself going on to obtain my MSN, and even NP, but I had never before entertained the idea of a doctorate. Men and women of all ages presented their journeys to me through their work in research and education. Although I lack experience at this time, I have a great deal to offer the profession of nursing and there are many ways I can contribute. The experience of talking with such great leaders and knowledgeable advocates for nursing has inspired me to expand my goals to include higher expectations than ever before. (continued on page 6)
Nurses for a Healthier Tomorrow Launches Campaign to Increase Number of Nurse Educators

The nursing shortage hasn’t affected only hospitals, clinics, and other health care delivery systems. Did you know that approximately 11,000 qualified nursing school applicants were turned away from schools of nursing in 2003 because of a shortage of nursing instructors? In 2002, approximately 5,000 qualified students were turned away.

A coalition of 43 leading nursing and health care organizations is spearheading a campaign to increase the number of nurse educators. The shortage of nurse educators has resulted in curtailing programs and turning away students in almost 65% of the reporting schools.

Advertisements are appearing in publications across the country urging that nurse educators be valued for their contributions. Faculty recruitment ads convey the satisfaction that nurse educators receive in pursuing their teaching careers. By using actual nurse educators in the ads, instead of actors, the impact that nurses have on health care and the values and beliefs of nursing educators becomes more real.

STTI is one of the founding members of the coalition. Nurses for a Healthier Tomorrow can be found online at www.nursesource.org. The name of the national campaign for nurse educators is titled: “Nursing education...pass it on.”

Student Reflections on the Biennium, 2003 (continued from page 5)

In addition to my experience at the STTI 2003 Biennium, I have served as a student leader at my school. As a student advocate, I have attended faculty meetings and developed personal relationships with faculty. I have been able to represent the student perspective and give the students a voice in the decision making process. I have established relationships of respect with many of my faculty members and I know that eventually I want to work with undergraduate nursing students. In all of my leadership experiences I have learned skills such as delegation and group decision making. I have come to know the responsibility that comes along with a leadership position.

I am grateful to Sigma Theta Tau, especially my Iota Sigma Chapter, for the experiences and inspiration these experiences have instilled in me. I plan to continue my involvement in Iota Sigma after my graduation in May. I want to encourage other students to seek out available leadership opportunities, and other chapters of STTI to sponsor students to attend international events. This experience has changed me as a person and as a nurse. My role as Student Leadership Intern has been incredible! Thank you, Iota Sigma.

HAVE ANY AUCTION ITEMS?

Iota Sigma Chapter needs Auction items, such as new books, jewelry, fancy food baskets, etc. which can be auctioned off at the May 1, 2004 Spring Induction. The money raised is used to provide research grants, to sponsor members at meetings, and to provide scholarships to deserving nursing students.

If you have any items which would be suitable for auction, please call Viann Duncan at (626) 815 5387 or e-mail her at vduncan@apu.edu. Please help your chapter advance the profession of nursing!

Nominate a Community Leader: Do you know a nurse who is “out in front” in the community? Sure you do! NOMINATE A NURSE for a Community Leader Award!
Michelle’s Place: A Story of Family Caring

by Lynn Young** with Marilyn Watson and Kathleen Taylor

Breast cancer ravages women’s lives, with family members often playing a primary role as protectors, supporters, and cheer leaders. Through this journey, family members may discover strengths and capacities they did not know they had. The story of Michelle’s Place is one such story.

Michelle Watson was born March 9, 1974 in Bellflower, CA, the youngest daughter of Bill and Marilyn Watson. As the youngest of three children, Michelle was known as the one who wanted to keep up with her siblings, Leilani and Wayne. Her tenacious spirit and abundant energy was evident at an early age as Michelle followed her brother Wayne in many of his sports activities. As a child, Michelle was always eager to try her hand at something new. She loved playing soccer, participating in church group activities, family camping trips, 4WD Adventures, and joining the family for vacations at their cabin in the mountains.

Michelle grew in her tenacity and drew on her abundant energy during her teens and early adulthood as she became a competitive swimmer and then swim coach, a devoted undergraduate student in biology, and a steadfast friend to many at Colorado State University. She loved to travel, so she took a break from her studies to travel to New Zealand and Fiji, a trip that changed the direction of her life. On this trip she decided to become a holistic medicine practitioner and to join the Peace Corps. Not one to waste time, Michelle immediately took steps to realize her dreams and applied to the Peace Corps.

During the application process, Michelle underwent a physical exam during which a breast lump was discovered. Like many others, she had this “breast lump” checked by several physicians, all adamant that she was not to worry since she was “too young and too healthy to have breast cancer.” She couldn’t join the Peace Corps until she had a “clean bill of health,” so, true to her dynamic spirit, she began to pursue her other dream and enrolled in the Pacific College of Oriental Medicine in San Diego.

Michelle, then still in her early 20s, and her family began the roller coaster ride of their lives. Finally diagnosed with breast cancer, she began conventional treatment,
chemotherapy and stem cell replacement, but not without the challenge of thinking through and sampling what a holistic/eastern perspective on disease and treatment might have to offer. Through a most challenging time, marked by peaks of hope and valleys of despair, as treatments held promise for recovery, then failed, Michelle, true to form, kept as active as possible and sought out companionship and support from family and friends. Michelle’s family stayed with her every step of the way, with unconditional respect for the choices she made. Michelle died in 2000 at the age of 26.

After Michelle’s death, the family came together to explore how they could keep Michelle’s vibrant, caring, life-loving spirit alive. After much discussion, the family pursued the idea of opening a resource center in their town, where women and their families could come for information and support to manage a disease such as breast cancer. In September 2001, Michelle’s Place opened in Murrieta, CA. This project was so successful that in March, 2003, Michelle’s Place moved to a bigger space. Michelle’s Place offers access to information, books and videos, wigs or scarves to wear during chemotherapy, access to a support group, and financial support for mammograms for women without insurance. Through collaboration with the local medical community, funds are in place designated for support groups for Spanish speaking women. Discussions are underway to determine how Michelle’s Place might serve local Native American women both on and off the reservation. (See http://www.temelink.com/oldtown/album/album.htm for a pictoral view of Michelle’s Place.)

The 2nd Celebration of Life Golf Tournament was held at the Temecula Creek Golf Course in November, 2003 to raise funds for Michelle’s Place. Kathleen Taylor, Iota Sigma Chapter, who is Michelle’s aunt, has contributed and continues to contribute much to keeping Michelle’s spirit alive through the dream of Michelle’s Place. Xi Eta extends kudos to Michelle’s family for their pioneering spirit and deep and enduring commitment to women’s health. For more information see michellesplace.org

**Lynn Young, Xi Eta, lead investigator in a research project with Kathleen Taylor, wrote this article with the help of Kathleen Taylor, Iota Sigma, Michelle’s aunt, and Marilyn Watson, Michelle’s mother. Azusa Pacific University School of Nursing and School of Physical Education undertook the research project along with University of Victoria, B.C. and The University of Washington School of Nursing. The results showed that single mothers are at increased risk for heart disease. The project was “Exploring Low-income Mothers’ Risk for Cardiovascular Disease: A Multi-method Approach.”**
Please let us know where you are and what you’ve been doing. We’d
like to share your good news regarding accomplishments, research
grants, promotions, etc. in our newsletter. E-mail us or download this
form and mail it to us.

SIGMA THETA TAU MEMBER UPDATE

Name:

Address:
E-mail address:
Phone Numbers:

Position:
Employer:
Recent professional activities and/or accomplishments:

Date submitted: