



UNC
SCHOOL OF NURSING

ALPHA ALPHA
CHAPTER
OF
SIGMA THETA TAU

UNIVERSITY OF
NORTH CAROLINA
AT CHAPEL HILL
SCHOOL OF
NURSING

**SPECIAL
POINTS OF
INTEREST:**

- Membership Meeting, Carrington Hall (Rm 104) February 25th, 12-1pm
- Spring Induction, Sheraton Hotel, Chapel Hill, NC Saturday, April 12, 2008, 2:00 pm
- Poster session, Carrington Hall Monday, April 14, 2008

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Sigma Theta Tau International



Carol J. Huston, RN, MSN, DPA, FAAN
President STT International (2007—2009)



The theme for my presidential call is *Leading Globally*, and it will build upon several of the key elements suggested in *Vision 2020*. There are four key themes to my call:

- Being what I call “intentionally global”
- Continuing to build our knowledge resources
- Developing further the leadership skills of our membership
- Creating a greater emphasis on providing service

Visit the website (<http://www.nursingsociety.org/ABOUTUS/CALLTOACTION/Pages/CalltoAction.aspx>) for the in-depth interview.

Awards

Alpha Alpha Chapter offers both Merit and Community Service Awards. The Merit awards recognize students earning the highest GPA in their particular cohort, and are awarded to both undergraduate and graduate recipients. Community Service Awards recognize those individuals who have demonstrated exceptional commitment to under served persons locally or around the globe. Awards are given at the May and December (starting in 2008) commencement (Merit and Community) and August celebration (Merit only).



**ABSTRACT
DEADLINE
MARCH 7, 2008**

ALPHA ALPHA CHAPTER

Call for Posters

Our chapter is again sponsoring a poster session on Monday, April 14. Consider submitting an abstract for the poster session. One page abstracts are due March 7, 2008. Nurses practicing at area facilities and current students in the SON are eligible to submit abstracts for review. Submissions are accepted from both Sigma Theta Tau members and non-members. Contact Debbie Travers for more information at dtravers@email.unc.edu.

Now that the School of Nursing is admitting (and graduating) undergraduate students twice a year, Alpha Alpha chapter will begin semi-annual inductions in 2008. As noted on the first page of this newsletter, the spring induction will be on Saturday, April 12th at 2:00 at the Sheraton Hotel in Chapel Hill. The first Fall Induction will be held on November 19th. Stay tuned for more details on the Fall Induction.

ALPHA ALPHA Supported Trips

Alpha Alpha Chapter is pleased to have been able to provide some financial support to the global health trips our students and faculty have experienced. In 2007 and 2008 we provided support to the trips to Guatemala and Honduras. While not a global health experience, we also provided support to the coastal Mississippi trip where students and faculty worked to help relieve the many burdens left by Hurricane Katrina. These global health experience represents one of several opportunities in the School of Nursing to support our students in gaining the language and cultural competencies they need to provide care to an increasingly diverse community in North Carolina.

GUATEMALA.....

Since 2004 Chris Harlan, who teaches in the undergraduate community/public health courses, has led Spring Break trips to Antigua, Guatemala. In March of 2008, 21 nursing students will accompany Chris on another trip. The group visits health agencies in the mornings to learn about health concerns and health services.

These visits include the local hospital, health department, a long term care facility for disabled children and adults, a home for children living with HIV/AIDS, a faith-based organization providing primary care, affordable housing and educational programs and a lay midwife. Students study Spanish each afternoon and everyone lives with a Guatemalan family.

HONDURAS.....

In 2007, twenty students and others went to Tegucigalpa, Honduras over spring break accompanied by Jean Davison, faculty in the family nurse practitioner program in the SON.

The team saw over 300 patients a day in clinical and delivered food packets to feed 30 families for a week, provided clothing, vitamins and medicines to an orphanage, visited and gave medical supplies to a local hospital, and provided vitamins and anti-parasitic meds to thousands of children.

On the flight back into Miami one student said to another, "It wasn't about what we did, but what we experienced". Beyond meeting the course objectives of an understanding of the relevance of global health and the multiple factors affecting health, the students experienced the people and the world of a place unlike what was familiar. This year the team has grown to thirty, predominately BSN and MSN students. In March, 2008 the team will assist with health clinics, feeding programs and visit orphanages and hospitals.

Dr. Alyson Clay Speaks at Alpha Alpha Sponsored Event

.Dr. Alyson Clay was the speaker for the program the Alpha Alpha Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau sponsored in October. Dr. Clay is an intensivist at Duke University Medical Center, as well as a faculty member in the School of Medicine. Dr. Clay has a very rare condition that causes severe respiratory distress. When such attacks occur, Dr. Clay must be intubated, so she has a wealth of experience as a patient. Dr. Clay spoke of a series of mishaps during

her last hospitalization, emphasizing that some of her caregivers paid no attention to what Dr. Clay was telling them about her very rare condition. This lack of attention led to the mishaps that could have been prevented. In telling her personal story, Dr. Clay wanted to emphasize the importance of listening to the patient and patient's family since they know much more about the patient than the caregivers do. Dr. Clay said that her experiences as a patient

have enlightened her about her own lack of credence given to some of the things patients and families tell her. She asked the participants to be much more attentive to patient and family information. Many of those in attendance commented that they would never forget the riveting stories and the needs of the many patients and families that these stories represented.

Patient Safety and Quality Program

In November the Alpha Alpha Chapter sponsored a Patient Safety and Quality Program for the nurses at UNC Hospitals. The speaker was Sue Hohenhaus, a nurse who previously worked at UNC Hospitals and now owns her own consulting business. Sue is currently working on a research project at Duke University Medical Center which is focused on communication within interdisciplinary teams, especially as it relates to Patient safety. In addition

to health professionals the study team includes airline pilots. Several years ago, following an increase in the number of plane crashes, pilots and others working in aviation looked at their communications and procedures. They soon learned that in every situation that there was information held by someone that, if communicated, would have prevented the crash or other occurrence. Unfortunately, the voices of these individuals were not heard. Now within the

airline industry any crew member, mechanic, etc. can raise a safety issue and when this occurs all stop what they are doing and explore the raised issue. Everyone on the team has an equal voice. Sue told and illustrated many actual stories of similar interdisciplinary communication and decision-making in health care. She also told of the various procedures that have resulted from carefully studying patient safety issues.

“...now any member can raise a safety issue; everyone's voice has equal weight in the decision making.”

**ALPHA ALPHA CHAPTER
OF
SIGMA THETA TAU**

**University of North Carolina
at Chapel Hill
School of Nursing**

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Chapel Hill, North Carolina 27599-7460

Sigma Theta Tau was founded in 1922 by six nurses at Indiana University (which at the time was Indiana University Training School for Nurses). Almost half a million strong, members of Sigma Theta Tau reside in 114 countries.

Alpha Alpha chapter is one of 451 Chapters of Sigma Theta Tau. As the twenty third chartered chapter, Alpha Alpha chapter has inducted or accepted the transfer of 2500 members.

For more information about our chapter see the website: www.carolinasigmatheta.org, see the bulletin board on the ground floor of Carrington Hall or email alpha_alpha@unc.edu.

Board Members

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Just for Laughs

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by Carl Elbing

