NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE'S CORNER

Welcome to the Spring edition of Iota Omicron’s newsletter, the Honour Cord. Iota Omicron has had a busy and productive year. As you will soon read, our members have had diverse and unique experiences. Their experiences enrich our chapter programs and ultimately you, as a valued member of the chapter.

We are most grateful to our president, Cathie Walker, who will soon be ending her term of office. Cathie’s initiative and guidance has provided critical leadership to our chapter. She has worked tirelessly to recruit new members and to promote the scholarship that is being undertaken within the Iota Omicron network.

We are delighted to welcome our new president, Dr. Mary-Anne Andrusyszyn. Mary-Anne has been an active member for many years and has contributed to several committees. She has a keen sense of pertinent issues that face Sigma Theta Tau.

The contributions and accomplishments of our members serve as a continuous source of inspiration. Thankyou to all of you for your hard work.

Have a safe and happy summer.

Barbara Peeling, Editor

Inside this issue...

President’s Message .................................................................................................................. 2
Chapter Highlights .................................................................................................................. 3
Members’ News ....................................................................................................................... 7
Members’ Publications and Presentations .............................................................................. 9
Greetings to all of you. This will be my last missive to you as your President. It is hard to believe that my term of office is over...although I am confident that my active involvement with Iota Omicron is not winding down. We have a way of involving our Past Presidents (as Heather Whittle and Nancy Bol can attest) in our current goings-on...it’s never a good idea to let go of your resources.

When I look back over the last two years, I (and you) have much to be proud of. We have held our first spring induction of community leaders; developed a robust long-term investment strategy that will help to build our research awards; conducted business meetings, fall dinners, education programs, and research conferences that exceeded all standards for excellence, and had a lot of fun together...as an added bonus.

For this, I have many past and present Executive and Chapter members to thank. From a more personal perspective, I want to thank Nancy Bol, Heather Whittle, and Annabel Sels for their ongoing commitment and mentorship. I really could not have done this job without my “advisory team”. Thanks to Barb Peeling for “shepherding” the newsletter with very little input from her co-editor and best wishes on her retirement. And thank you to all of you for making this the “best Chapter ever”.

Please join me in extending a warm welcome to our incoming President – Mary Anne Andrusyszyn. I leave you in good hands.

Dear colleagues,

I look forward to becoming your new president and the opportunity to work with you in this organization. I am taking over Iota Omicron’s reigns from some wonderful leaders who have placed our chapter in a healthy position for continued growth and success. Our new STTI president, Carol Picard, in her presidential call to action asked us to focus on collaboration. She reminds us that all “members are leaders, wherever they may be and that cultivating relationships is the most essential element to our success.” Picard ended her call with words spoken by Gandhi, “We must become the change we wish to see in the world.” I invite you to embrace these words as we move forward and begin our next decade.
CHAPTER HIGHLIGHTS

First Nurse Leader Induction Ceremony

The Iota Omicron Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing held its first Nurse Leader Induction Ceremony at the Lamplighter Inn and Conference Centre in London on April 20th 2006. During the ceremony, nursing leaders from London and the surrounding area were recognized for their outstanding work and contributions to the nursing profession. A total of fourteen new members were inducted that evening with eight being present to receive their Certificate of Membership and Honor Cords.

Dr. Carole Orchard and Dr. Kevin Wamsley were present and welcomed everyone on behalf of the University of Western Ontario’s School of Nursing and the Faculty of Health Sciences. As well, Cathie Walker, R.N., Iota Omicron Chapter President greeted new members. During her presentation, Ms. Walker reviewed the history Sigma Theta Tau and the formation of the Iota Omicron Chapter. Additionally, past president of Iota Omicron, Nancy Bol, R.N. attended this event and shared her personal experiences about being a long-time Sigma Theta Tau member and the way this experience has contributed to her nursing career. The Flag Bearers that evening were second year nursing students Jessica Engbers and Sherry Ostapiuk. Overall it was a successful evening and the planning committee would like to extend a sincere “Thank You” to everyone who helped to make this first annual event a success.

INDUCTEES
John Patrick Angkaw
Julia Appleton
Karen Arlene Cook
Jennifer Doerrsam
Ann C. Holden
Lynne Hughes Marsh
Katharine Hungerford
Janet Lynne Landeen

Louela Manankil-Rankin
Marilyn Anita Ott
Susan Lynne Sproul
Wendy Kerr Stanyon
Cheryl Ann Talbot
Heather Dawn Tales

Carole Orchard and Cathie Walker
Inductees
Another successful Annual Research Conference sponsored by the School of Nursing and the Iota Omicron Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing was held on April 21, 2006 at the Lamplighter Inn. The theme this year was, “Promoting Health Across the Lifespan”. All fifty-two oral and poster presentations reflected this theme. Most of the presenters were from the London, but we also had presenters from Hamilton, Markham, Peterborough, Sarnia, Toronto, Windsor, and as far away as Corner Brook, NL. It was great to see so many presenters from a variety of practice, professional and academic settings. In total, 103 persons attended the conference!

Greetings were brought on behalf of the Faculty of Health Sciences by Dr. Jim Weese, from the School of Nursing by Dr. Carole Orchard, and on behalf of Iota Omicron Chapter, Sigma Theta Tau International Honour Society of Nursing by Cathie Walker. We were pleased to have two internationally renowned keynote speakers this year: Dr. Marilyn Ford-Gilboe, Associate Professor with the School of Nursing, Faculty of Health Sciences and T.R. Meighen Family Foundation Professor and Dr. Ginette Lemire Rodger, Vice President Professional Practice and Chief Nursing Executive at The Ottawa Hospital, the University of Ottawa Heart Institute and The Rehabilitation Centre, and the Past President of the Canadian Nurses Association. Dr. Marilyn Ford-Gilboe spoke about the definition of health promotion that was first proposed in the Ottawa Charter in 1986 as most useful in guiding her program of research related to vulnerable women and their children and the critical role that social, economic and system factors play in shaping individual and family health. The critical lessons that Dr. Ford-Gilboe learned from more than a decade of research in this area were grouped into five themes: 1) questioning the taken for granted, 2) illuminating strengths and capacities, 3) attending to context, 4) considering intersections: violence, single-parenting and health, and 5) working for change.

Dr. Ginette Lemire Rodger shared with us that she had attended the School of Nursing’s first Annual Research Conference and creation of the first Canadian chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International in 1987, so was especially pleased to be invited back. Dr. Rodger spoke on nurses’ commitment to health promotion as part of the profession’s history. As one of the principles of Primary Health Care, Canadian nurses have been explicit about their commitment to health promotion and have played a leadership role in this country. We have much to celebrate and to take a leadership role as the next five years will be critical in shaping a new era in health care. Dr. Rodger left us with the words of Mo Im Kim, Past President of the International Congress of Nursing, “There is nothing around us to reverse the direction of development and change...thus we are posed with the question of being the master of these changes or their servants”. Following Dr. Rodger’s presentation, there is no doubt that we will choose to be masters!

On behalf of the Research Planning Committee, I wish to thank all of those who contributed to making this day such a success. I especially wish to thank Angela Law, Assistant in the Nursing Research Unit for cheerfully and skilfully doing many of the tasks involved in making the day a success, and to thank the members of the Research Planning Committee: Yolanda Babenko-Mould, Co-chair; Dr. Mary-Anne Andrusyszyn; Barbara Sinclair; Sherry Foran; Sherry Frizzell, and Kristie Clark and for their untiring work and continued willingness to take on more!

Dorothy Forbes, RN, Ph.D.
Co-Chair, Research Conference Planning Committee
Iota Omicron expresses much gratitude to:

Cathie Walker  President 2004-2006  
Bonnie Wright  Treasurer  
Kristen Lethbridge  Chair, Heritage Committee  
Deb McAuslan  Recording Secretary  

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The Chapter extends a warm welcome to:

Dr. Mary-Anne Andrusyszyn  President 2006-2008  
Marilyn Ott  Treasurer  
Robin Coatsworth-Puspoky  Chair, Heritage Committee  
Yolanda Babenko-Mould/Sherry Foran  Co-Chairs, Program Committee  
Sabrina Squire  Recording Secretary
MEMBERS’ NEWS

HELPING RWANDA HEAL HEALTH CARE
(Reprinted with Permission, Western News, March 16, 2006,)

By Paul Mayne

Western's year-long involvement in the resuscitation of Rwanda's health care system is beginning to see dividends.

With a goal of enhancing training of health professionals at the Kigali Health Institute (KHI) in central Africa, the six-year Rebuilding Health in Rwanda project is a keystone in the nation's efforts to prevent and treat HIV/AIDS and to respond to staggering levels of mental health problems.

The Rwanda health care system was decimated and many of its professionals killed or driven out in 1994 during a genocidal purge. An estimated 800,000 or more persons were killed.

Today, work continues to rebuild the health care system in Rwanda, a system further challenged by the scourge of HIV/AIDS as well as mental health issues that are a scar from the genocide. The Western-led project seeks to apply the model of Western's Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BScN) which is rooted in critical thinking and evidence-based practice.

"The nurses that eventually graduate are very much going to need to be problem solvers," says project co-leader David Cechetto, of the departments of Anatomy and Cell Biology, and Physiology and Pharmacology at Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry.

"You can have the knowledge but you have to know how to use it. We're looking to make it a more care-based and patient-centred approach."
With fellow project leader Carroll Iwasiw of Western's School of Nursing, Cechetto says the project needs to have "local ownership".

"This is not about us coming over and saying 'this is how is must be done'," says Cechetto.

"It's about a partnership and I am starting to see them take ownership."

Three nursing lecturers from Rwanda plan to Western this week to view clinical programs to see if they could fit into a curriculum in KHI.

While Western has donated the time and efforts of some faculty - along with textbooks, microscopes and other items - assistance has also come from Pam Skinner (Fanshawe College), Susan McGrath (York University) and Michael Clarke (University of Ottawa).

A huge financial boost for the project came last year with just under $1 million from the Canadian International Development Agency.

With a population of more than eight million, Rwanda is facing severe challenges in providing sufficient health care with only 200 doctors and 1,500 nurses -- equivalent to about eight doctors for the City of London. This is further complicated by 80 per cent of the country's nurses lacking post-secondary education.

This area of training is where Western wants to make a difference. Other objectives include exploring gender and health related to HIV/AIDS and mental health, and integration of HIV/AIDS in the BScN curriculum.

Western President Paul Davenport and Vice-President (Research and International Relations) Ted Hewitt recently visited Rwanda at the invitation of Cechetto to demonstrate their support and to see first-hand how Western is making a difference.

For Davenport, his first trip to Africa won't soon be forgotten.

"I was enormously impressed with the commitment and dedication of the lecturers and medical staff that I met," says Davenport, who also toured Centre Hospitalier Universitaire de Kigali, with wards dedicated entirely to HIV/AIDS patients and young children.

"They are working under incredible circumstances yet they are positive, optimistic and thrilled to be building their country."

Davenport met with Rwanda President Paul Kagame, who was impressed with Western's involvement in his country. Davenport says Western would continue its efforts in Rwanda.

"Western faculty, staff and students are overwhelmingly committed citizens who want to make a contribution to the larger community," says Davenport. "The efforts of David, Carroll and their faculty colleagues are a wonderful example of that desire to make the world a better place."

While the implementation plan is nearing completion, a great deal of work needs to be done.

"There is a lot of work involved with setting up the program, but you need to keep in mind the big picture and what can come of this," says Cechetto.

To learn more about the Kigali Health Institute, visit: [http://www.khi.ac.rw](http://www.khi.ac.rw)
MEMBERS’ PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS


Ward-Griffin, C. et al. (2006, July). *Nurses caring for aging relatives: Blurring the professional-personal boundaries*. 17th International Nursing Research Congress, Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing, Montreal, Quebec.


Officers

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CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Please remember to call Sigma Theta Tau
International Headquarters at 1-888-634-7575
when you need to change your mailing address.

Please submit articles of interest to the general membership at any time
to: Angela Law (alaw1@uwo.ca).