In this issue, Julie Barroso has written about mentoring. Mentoring is so essential to the process of becoming an active nurse researcher that I can state with great confidence that behind every great researcher there are several mentors. I myself can trace my development as a researcher to a series of mentors who worked with me from my masters program through the early years of my first faculty job.

Julie has a number of excellent ideas on how to choose and work with a mentor. When looking for a mentor, don’t forget the services that the Office of Research Affairs offers. We are running a research development group for faculty members who have not yet received R-level funding. This group meets twice a month. If you would like to join, contact Leslie Fife for details. Julie and I work individually with faculty on grants and research career development. This mentoring can be accessed by contacting me. Once a grant is getting close to being ready to submit, ORA will help with budgeting, editing, developing timelines, scheduling mock reviews, receiving university approvals, and submission. Details about these services are available on the ORA website: http://nursing.duke.edu/modules/son_research/index.php?id=43.
Thoughts on Mentoring

Julie Barroso, PhD, ANP, APRN, BC, FAAN

One critical component of a successful research career is finding the right mentors. Yes, the plural is deliberate – because it is likely that there is no single person who can guide you through all of the phases of your research career, or who can best help you with all of the aspects of a single research project. In all likelihood, you will need for any given project a content expert and a methods expert. If you are lucky enough to find both kinds of expertise in a single person, great! If not, realize that most of us require at least two different mentors to meet our needs. Here are some practical tips to get you started:

- Get to know your fellow faculty members. Get a sense of their content area of expertise, and of the types of methodologies they have used in the conduct of their research. Have they published their research? Peers who have published their findings are more likely to be able to help you disseminate your research.

- Once you have a sense of the immediately available expertise, draft a brief (2 pages or less) statement about what you want to do and what kinds of help you need to accomplish your goals. Send it to those faculty with either content and/or methods expertise, and ask for a meeting.

- At the meeting, try to be clear about what you need from them. Do you need help in formulating a research design? Developing an instrument? Deciding which aspect of a phenomenon should be studied next? This will help your prospective mentor decide if and how they can help.

- Set up working time frames to work with your content expert for a few months before you meet with your methods expert. But develop a schedule and try to stick to it, so your research maintains some momentum. It is seductively easy to put it aside entirely for a while, but weeks quickly turn into months.

- If you anticipate publication of some aspect of your work, discuss this up front with your potential mentor(s). Almost every horror story you hear about author problems could have been prevented with a talk at the beginning of the process.

- If you can’t find the expertise you need in DUSON, search more broadly at Duke. Many of our colleagues from other fields would love to collaborate with us, because we are known as being bright, hard-working, and real team players.

- If you can’t find the expertise you need at Duke, look at other local colleges and universities. Many of us have successfully collaborated with colleagues at UNC, NC State, and other local schools.
Although it is usually not ideal, electronic communication today makes it possible to have mentors anywhere in the world. The most important thing is to find experienced colleagues who are willing to invest their most precious resource – time – in you.

What can you do to make the most of a relationship with your mentor? I only recently have taken on this role in a formal way; I have been doing this informally for much longer. I have been blessed with having several great mentors myself. I am quite certain that I achieved what I have only with the help of others. I never could have done this on my own. So, from both sides of this relationship, here are some pointers:

- Come prepared to meetings with your mentor. If you have something that you need your mentor to read prior to the meeting, give your mentor at least five business days to read.
- Give your mentor your best work. Don’t slap something together at the last minute. Spell-check your work. Read and edit your work. If I as the reader am distracted by a lot of grammatical errors, it is hard for me to stay on task as I read your proposal.
- Thank your mentor. Take him/her out to lunch every now and then. Put a friendly card in his/her mailbox. Remember that especially in a place such as DUSON, with so few senior faculty, most of us are mentoring several other faculty, PhD students and MSN students at the same time, while trying to do our own research as well.

As always, let us know in ORA if you need help...and good luck in finding a mentor!

Highlight for the Nurse Researcher
– Angela McBride, PhD –
“Orchestrating a Career”

If you had the opportunity to take part in the Dean’s Luncheon on October 29, 2008, the slide below may look familiar to you. Featured are the steps that can be taken through the NIH to advance your research career path. Similar steps can be taken through private funding. Here at the School of Nursing you have the assistance of our Office of Research Affairs to help you with these steps.

Career Steps:
From Novice to Expert

CARER

Career . . .
Résumé lines,
But more than a long list.
What’s core is the sum total of
Meaning.

Mentored,
Then mentoring.
The challenge is to give
Away self as you build substance
In place.

Don’t be afraid of failure. Failure is the opportunity to begin again more intelligently.

Henry Ford
Awards - Congratulations to these PIs and their entire teams - nice job!

☞ **James Tulsky**, Professor of Medicine and Nursing and Director of the Center for Palliative Care, whose grant *"Self-Management Interventions in Life-Limiting Illness"* was funded for 5 years. Project collaborators include: from DUSON, Assistant Professor Cristina Hendrix, Associate Professor Chip Bailey, and Clinical Associate Julie Hudson; Karen Steinhauser of the VA Medical Center; Maren Olsen from Biostatistics & Bioinformatics; Francis Keefe and Laura Porter from Medical Psychology; Amy Abernethy from Oncology; Jennifer Garst of the Duke Comprehensive Cancer Center; Joseph Moore from Oncology & Transplant Services; and Andrew Muir from Gastroenterology.

☞ **Sharron Docherty**, PI, and Co PI Debbie Brandon, on the funding of their project Decision-Making for Infants with Complex Life Threatening Conditions. Consulting on this award are Margaret Miles, and James Tulsky. Other project collaborators include: Margarete Sandelowski of UNC-Chapel Hill; Karen Kavanaugh of the University of Illinois at Chicago; and Chris Feudtner from the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. The Project Research Team includes: Research Assistant Julie Thompson, Research Coordinator Donna Ryan, and Research Nurse Angel Barnes. The award for the five-year project (9/23/08-7/31/13) is estimated at $1,950,000.

☞ **Jada Brooks**, PhD student, on being selected to receive The Great 100 Scholarship for $2,000.

☞ Congratulations are in order for (1) Rosa Solórzano and the OGACHI team on receiving a $4,000 grant award from (2) the DUHS Charitable Grants Committee that will provide health supplies for students and educational materials for teachers at Eastway Elementary. This funding complements the AHEC grant received last summer to support the Raising Health, Raising Hope program

New Authority Granted to DUSON ORA

By: Robbin Thomas

Negotiated Authorized Institutional Organizational Representative (AOR) and Institutional Signature Official (SO) for the submission of grants and contract applications for the Duke University School of Nursing

Based on mutual benefit to DUSOM and DUSON and to facilitate the instructional and research objectives consistent with their strategic plans as well as the Institutional regulatory compliance standards, Institutional Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) / Institutional Signature Official (SO) authority has been delegated to Robbin Thomas, Director of Research Support Services in the School of Nursing Office of Research Affairs. This authority allows Robbin to sign on behalf of the University for the submission of all contracts, agreements, applications for grants and other instruments or documents as may be deemed necessary and proper between Duke University School of Nursing and agencies of the United States Government, the State of North Carolina and other sponsors. Individuals with delegated signature authority who sign on behalf of the University have the responsibility to ensure that the application or contract follows University and Federal policies, regulations, rules and guidelines and that all necessary compliance assurances are in place. The Institutional timeline for submission of applications will remain the same until further notice. However, by having a Signing Official in-house, the DUSON Office of Research Affairs anticipates the ability to better serve our faculty’s submission needs.

Care and Feeding of Statisticians

By Rick Sloane

- **Quote #1:** “There are three subjects everybody thinks they can be an expert in with no formal training: Law, Medicine, and Statistics” (Source unknown)

We all know that Quote #1 may actually represent an actual sentiment but lawyers, health care professionals and, yes, statisticians will likely respond with a big NO! While familiarity with some of the principles of law, medicine and even statistics is useful in everyday life, there are key points in a legal process, a disease process and a research study process where the specialists can intervene and be efficient and effective team members. In the end we all hope this teamwork will lead to a good outcome – in the research setting, we get the grant, prove study feasibility or accomplish publication(s).
Quote #2: “This is the worst data set I ever saw! Why didn’t they talk to me first? Unbelievable!”
(From a PhD statistician, overheard in a hallway at an undisclosed location at Duke).

Yikes. This is what we hope to prevent, most likely a no-win situation for all concerned. We don’t know what caused Quote #2 – it could be because of poor preparation and communication by the statistician, the investigator or any number of people in between – but it is likely the situation did not need to develop at all.

Space considerations limit what can be discussed here, but in general here are a few time-tested guidelines:

- Involve the statistician/analyst personnel as early as possible in the project. Ideally this is at the grant preparation stage but the principle can be “as soon as possible.” Waiting until all the data are collected and then presenting it to the statistician can easily lead to Quote # 2.
- What can the statistician help with at the early stage? Among many things, statisticians can help answer questions regarding:
  - Defining the research question(s) – single main outcomes, multiple outcomes, secondary outcomes...
  - How will the data be collected
  - Experimental design issues
  - Validity and reliability of the metrics (measurement units)--will the measured variables answer the research question?
  - Power analysis, sample size
  - How the data will be used to answer the hypothesis or hypotheses, if any
  - Missing data/dropouts (it happens!)
  - Database design – data entry, error checking, etc.
  - Codebook design, documentation
  - Establishing project milestones and timelines
  - Final analysis methods and models
  - Ultimate project products – publications, presentations, reports
- Building the investigator-analyst working relationship
- Haste makes waste – last minute rush jobs invite trouble and surprises.

That’s all the space for this installment. Perhaps we can continue this conversation in later issues....

Staff Spotlight – Jane Halpin, CMR

By: Linda Folsom

The big news we’re hearing about everywhere now is the collapse of our national financial system due to fiscal mismanagement. But even before the crisis, the Office of the Inspector General was becoming increasingly stringent about oversight of medical research funds. Fortunately for School of Nursing investigators, Jane Halpin, Office of Research Affairs (ORA) Senior Sponsored Programs Research Specialist, has been here to help them work through the many layers of regulations that are part of the grant application process. Jane sees her role as both providing a service to the investigator, and acting as a steward of public funds – NIH research grants come, after all, from our taxpayer dollars.

When asked about her title, Jane says that 20 years ago she didn’t know what Research Administration was, and many people still don’t understand the role. She handles governmental compliance and adherence, making sure the “administrative laws” of a grant are met and followed. The field is getting more and more complex all the time as the layers of regulation multiply. One of the things that Jane likes best about her job is assisting investigators to make sure that the grant they submit “on the front end” (pre-award) is in a form that makes their project easier to manage post-award - submitting the application accurately, correctly, and in compliance, so that when the award comes in there are no surprises, no problems to be sorted out and there can be a smooth transition to actual project start up. A lot of factors are involved.

There are many areas of compliance that most people don’t understand well. In a grant application, the School of Nursing investigator has to attest to things like equal opportunity employment, drug-free workplace, anti-lobbying statutes and listing publications properly in PubMedCentral, the required depository for research-generated journal articles. The NIH now requires that all research articles
Jane would like people to remember that ORA really is here to provide a service to the faculty, and that it is a partnership between the investigator, who brings the science and creative aspect, and the research administrators, who assure that the regulatory and administrative requirements are met and can assist with project management. ORA would like as much as possible to relieve regulatory burdens from faculty, but they can’t do it alone. Currently the SON grant applications are on an upswing, on target to surpass last year’s numbers. The training grants, which support training, recruitment and retention, and encourage student diversity – HRSA – have heated up a lot, and it looks like this year we will be submitting 12 applications, a substantial increase from last year. In December we are also going to be submitting a P-30 grant, for a multifaceted program project in areas involving premature infants. Dr Holditch-Davis will be the Center Director.

In this past year Jane sat for the national certification exam for research administration and is now a Certified Research Administrator (CRA), one of approximately 1,800 across the nation. She has also attained Research Compliance Certification through programs at a variety of institutions including Duke University, the University of Rochester and Florida State University. Jane has just returned from the International Society for Research Administration (SRA) conference. At the conference she had opportunities to network with research administrators from around the world and to participate in a wide variety of workshops and concurrent sessions on topics ranging from “Clinical Trials: Rules and More Rules” to “Through the Looking Glass: Who We Are and What We Do as Research Administrators”.

The “Through the Looking Glass” session, led by Dr. Edward Gabriele, Special Assistant for Ethics and Professional Integrity to the Navy Surgeon General, was especially valuable in helping research administrators see beyond the “nuts and bolts” of research administration to the “big picture” of WHY we do what we do. He ended his talk with a very moving video of the work being done in Botswana with HIV positive mothers and their children and cautioned the audience to not get lost or discouraged in the mundane, day-to-day activities, but to always remember that we too contribute, in a variety of ways, to the good being done through research around the world.

Jane came to Duke last year from the University of Central Florida. She now lives in Morrisville with her husband Paul and their 3 “fur kids” – a miniature dachshund, a Chihuahua mix, and a long-haired cat, all adopted from shelters. Paul is a 5th Grade teacher at the magnet Montessori school in Durham. Jane has an amazing number of artistic hobbies and interests, and “can’t imagine ever being bored”. She and Paul love music of all kinds, from the NC Symphony to traditional Irish music to Bonnaroo, the present-day version of Woodstock.

Jane is glad she made the move from Florida and very happy to be here in North Carolina, especially here at DUSON.

Welcome Baby Maren

RTM manager Megan Williams and family are pleased welcome Maren Jane Williams into the world. Maren was born on Monday, October 13, 2008, at 7:53 a.m. weighing 8 pounds even, and 20 inches long. Mom and baby are both doing wonderfully.
**ORA Schedule of Events**

**November:** The Research Conference Series is proud to present Dr. Dorothy Powell on Nov. 12th at Noon in the Clipp Auditorium. She will be presenting an overview of the recent 2008 Caribbean Conference recently held. Please bring your lunch and join us for some light refreshments. The specific aims of these facilitated think tank sessions with interdisciplinary Caribbean health care providers and other stakeholders is to identify their perceptions of: (1) the current state of care of the elderly in the Caribbean at-risk or with cardio-vascular disease and its co-morbidities; (2) a preferred future for elderly residents of the Caribbean; and (3) comprehensive strategies for realization of the preferred future.

**December:** Research Conference Series will highlight the Weigh-In CHF study. Margret T Bowers, RN, MSN, APRN, BC and Bradi Granger, RN, PhD will present their evaluation of the effectiveness of teaching a community-based sample of patients with chronic heart failure to monitor daily weights over a 12 month period. The study will examine the relationships between patient weights, symptom changes and subsequent hospital readmissions in patients with both systolic and diastolic dysfunction. This presentation will be at noon on December 8th in the Clipp Auditorium. Please join us with your lunch and enjoy some refreshments.

**Opportunities**

**CAREER DEVELOPMENT/TRAINING /FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES**

**NIH REVIEW PROCESS** Monday, December 1, 2008, 4:30 - 6:00 pm
Location: School of Nursing Auditorium 1014
Presented by Rebbecca Moen, MBA, CTSA Program Manager, Duke Translational Medicine Institute
Register online at [http://facdev.medschool.duke.edu](http://facdev.medschool.duke.edu) under the "upcoming events" tab.
Do you have any idea what happens to your grant once you've submitted it? This seminar will help to demystify the route your grant takes from submission to decision and why it's important to understand.

The HCFO is a RWJ Report on Health Policy: [http://www.rwjf.org/pr/product.jsp?id=25914](http://www.rwjf.org/pr/product.jsp?id=25914)
Changes in Health Care Financing and Organization (HCFO), in operation since 1989, is a national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF). It is one of RWJF's main vehicles for funding health services and policy research and the nation's largest source of private funding for investigator-initiated health policy research on financing and organization.

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Health Policy Fellows

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Loan Repayment Programs (LRPs)
Deadline: December 1, 2008. For complete information, see [www.lrp.nih.gov](http://www.lrp.nih.gov)

DHHS/NIH Request for Applications (RFA) Number: RFA-RM-08-029
Letters of Intent Due: December 29, 2008, Application Due: January 29, 2009
The 2008 National State of the Science Congress on Nursing Research, was held October 2-4, 2008 at the Omni Shoreham Hotel in Washington, DC. This biennial conference was established to provide a forum for nurse-researchers around the globe to explore common research interests, challenges, and opportunities. Over 800 of the very best scholarly minds in nursing science met and shared ground-breaking research findings from genomics to elder care, illness processes to policy making. The Congress, as in past years, also supported participants in networking with leading scientists, and in learning about funding opportunities from agency representatives (NINR, Hartford, Foundation, Robert Wood Johnson, AHRQ, etc.). Dr Margaret Grey, Annie Goodrich Professor of Nursing and Dean of Yale School of Nursing, was awarded the AAN/CANS Outstanding Nursing Scientist Award for her years of exemplar research in diabetes mellitus, serving as the PI in grants totaling over $20 million. Dr. Paula Sherwood was awarded the AAN/CANS “Investigator with a Brilliant Future” award for her stellar work in psychosocial oncology since receiving her doctorate seven years ago.

DUSON was ably represented at this conference. On Wednesday evening, October 1st, Dean Catherine Gilliss was joined by DUSON faculty members Chip Bailey, Jane Blood-Siegfried, Diane Holditch-Davis, Constance Johnson, Robin Knobel, Judith Payne, Deirdre Thornlow, and Chuck Vacchiano at the FNINR Nightingala. Drs. Deirdre Thornlow and Constance Johnson were seated next to Dr. Carol A. Romano, Assistant Surgeon General, USPHS. Acting Chief of Staff, Chief Nurse Officer. Constance reported that since Dr. Romano is a pioneer in Nursing Informatics, having assisted with the design and implementation of one of the first computerized medical information systems, their discussion mainly focused on the needs and the future of nursing informatics and on quality of patient care. However, Dr. Romano did tell them quite a bit about student and faculty opportunities for study and work in the U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps. The Corp is dedicated to delivering public health promotion and disease prevention programs. For more detailed information about these opportunities, go to: [http://www.usphs.gov/aboutus/questions.aspx#whatis](http://www.usphs.gov/aboutus/questions.aspx#whatis)

Fine oral presentations were given by Diane Holditch-Davis (1 symposium/1 paper), Chip Bailey, Jane Blood-Siegfried, and Deirdre Thornlow. Jane commented, “I was with another rat researcher and we had a great audience”. Poster presentations by the following DUSON participants were also well received: Chuck Vacchiano, Meredith Wallace and Chip Bailey, Judith Payne, and Tess Deshefy-Longhi. Just so it wasn’t all work, the evenings were filled with special get-togethers, colleagues reconnecting over dinner in the numerous nearby restaurants, and a few groups gathering in Omni hotel rooms to hear the first vice presidential debate!

Are you presenting at a conference, gathering information for a research, or just making a special presentation? If so we would like to hear from you at News You Can Use please contact Leslie Fife.