

Villanova Nurses Are Changing the Face of Health Care in Oman



Faiza Mohamed al-Jabri '99 B.S.N., '03 M.S.N. was one of the many Nursing alumni in Oman who visited with the Villanova University representatives in February. In the Sultanate of Oman's Ministry of Health, she serves as section head of continuing education for administration and finance, Office of the Director General for Education and Training. She is standing beside the Sultan's Palace in Mutrah, an ancient part of Muscat.

In late February, two organizations from places rich in tradition—one ancient—renewed their relationship that has spanned more than a dozen years. The College of Nursing at Villanova University and the Ministry of Health of the Sultanate of Oman will be continuing their partnership in educating the nurses of Oman. Omani nurses are becoming prepared to replace expatriates and assume clinical, academic and administrative positions in their country.

“Oman is moving ahead and we are there,” says Connelly Endowed Dean and Professor M. Louise Fitzpatrick, Ed.D., R.N., FAAN.

For more than 12 years, Omani nursing students have been coming to Villanova to earn their bachelor's and master's degrees in nursing. Dean Fitzpatrick, who initiated the collaboration with H.E. Dr. Ali Al-Moosa,

Minister of Health, regularly travels to Oman to interview prospective students, consult with ministry officials and visit with Villanova Nursing alumni.

On her visit in February, Dean Fitzpatrick was accompanied by Rose O'Driscoll, M.S.N., R.N., assistant dean for administration, and the Rev. Kail C. Ellis, O.S.A., Ph.D., '69 M.A., dean of Villanova's College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Father Ellis is exploring a future relationship with the Ministry of Higher Education and Sultan Qaboos University in Muscat, the capital.

O'Driscoll noted that it was “gratifying” to visit with and see many of the more than 100 Villanova Nursing alumni in Oman who are making a difference in nursing and health care in their country. These alumni are practicing nurses, educators, deans of nursing,

chief nursing officers in hospitals and administrative staff in the Ministry of Health. Their roles are diverse and their responsibilities, to name just a few, involve developing accreditation and practice standards and leading the Omani Nursing Council. One alumnus serving in another ministry oversees all nursing services for the Diwan of the Royal Court, which attends the sultan's staff.

“The impact is palpable,” says Dean Fitzpatrick, voicing her pride in this successful relationship and in the professional progress of the Villanova Nursing alumni. During her visit, she interviewed the next group of students for the B.S.N. Program and met two Nursing Doctoral Program applicants. Additionally, two new M.S.N. students from Oman are expected to arrive at Villanova this summer.

A group of Nursing alumni attended a gathering with the Villanova visitors in Muscat. Dean Fitzpatrick has already spoken with Gary R. Olsen '74 A&S, '80 G.S., executive director of the Villanova University Alumni Association and associate vice president for Alumni Affairs, about starting an alumni chapter in Oman. The two deans also met with other distinguished leaders in education and health care, including H.E. Dr. Saud Nasser al-Riyami, Sultan Qaboos University's president and vice chancellor, who is interested in visiting Villanova in the future. They also met with H.E. Dr. Abdullah Mohammed al-Sarmi, the undersecretary of the Ministry of Higher Education; Mohammed al-Afifi, the director-general of Education and Training; and H.E. Mohammed al-Hassan, undersecretary for Planning Affairs.

Villanova awarded Dr. al-Moosa an honorary degree in 2001 for his primary leadership in developing programs commended by the World Health Organization that significantly reduced maternal-infant mortality and improved health care in Oman and that region of the Middle East.

The American ambassador to the Sultanate of Oman, Gary A. Grappo, and his wife, Rebecca, hosted a formal dinner for the Villanovans during their visit. The Grappos' younger daughter, Kristina, will be a sophomore in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and her sister, Michelle, will begin master's study in the fall at Villanova. Among the dinner guests were representatives of

Omani higher education and health-care communities and those involved in Christian-Islamic relations.

Notes Dean Fitzpatrick, “Our biggest success is helping to develop nursing practice and education in Oman while the country also advances health care. Beyond that, we have helped Oman meet its objective of replacing expatriates with Omani nurses in leadership positions,” she adds. More alumni are publishing in scholarly journals and assuming these roles. She sees the influence of having a significant number of Villanova nurses in Oman. “Their education at Villanova helped them move together toward their goals and those of Oman. They are making a contribution, and we at Villanova are part of that contribution,” she observes.

Dean Fitzpatrick looks forward to an expansion of current relationships and the creation of new ones in the region. Some of the College’s faculty already have taught courses in Oman for nurses in health-care management positions. There is a possibility that Nursing faculty will deliver continuing education workshops in Oman in the near future. There is also a future plan for a nursing conference jointly sponsored by Villanova and Oman. A current Nursing doctoral student developed her dissertation research topic as a result of becoming acquainted with Omani students in her M.S.N. classes.

Dean Fitzpatrick envisions continuing to build on the success to enhance the relationship. “Villanova has a presence in Oman, and our graduates are making valuable contributions,” she observes. “An important benefit for us is the richness of culture and experience that Omani students bring to us at Villanova. They are an important part of Villanova’s global community.”

Convocation Has Two Special Highlights

This year’s College of Nursing Convocation celebrated the 50th class to graduate from the College and welcomed as the speaker Oman’s ambassador to the United States (see pages 21 and 22), in recognition of Nursing’s relationship with the Sultanate of Oman. The annual Convocation, held on May 19, paid tribute to 76 traditional B.S.N. candidates, 63 nontraditional students (adults who already hold a degree in another field) who will graduate in August and 18 Omani B.S.N. completion students who graduated in May. Also celebrated were the 50 M.S.N. graduates who graduated in December 2006 and this May.

The following awards were presented at Convocation, which took place in the St. Thomas of Villanova Church.

College of Nursing Medallion for Distinguished Academic Achievement

Maureen D. Willcox ’07 B.S.N.
Teresa A. Holman ’06 M.S.N.
Stacy Rodes Meyers ’06 M.S.N.

Joseph Petro and Helen Yura-Petro Award for Achievement in Nursing Theory

Jennetta A. Jackson ’07 B.S.N.

Dean’s Award for Service to the College

Shelley L. Hickey ’07 M.S.N.

The Hazel Johnson Leadership Award

Jaclyn K. “Jacy” Farwell ’07 B.S.N.

Claire M. Manfredi Graduate Nursing Leadership Award

Susan M. Berryman ’07 M.S.N.

H. Elaine McCaully Award for Clinical Excellence

Meghan C. Murphy ’07 B.S.N.

The Reverend Francis X.N. McGuire, O.S.A. Award of the Villanova University Alumni Association

Jonathan A. Messing ’07 B.S.N.

Nursing Pioneer Award

Lauren A. Chapnick ’07 B.S.N.

Ralston Center Award for Gerontology Nursing Excellence

Evelyn Sheaffer ’06 M.S.N.

Special Recognition

Jokha Al-Harthy ’07 B.S.N.



Students who received special awards at Convocation included (from left) Stacy Rodes Meyers ’06 M.S.N., Shelley L. Hickey ’07 M.S.N., Meghan C. Murphy ’07 B.S.N., Jaclyn K. “Jacy” Farwell ’07 B.S.N., Lauren A. Chapnick ’07 B.S.N., Jonathan A. Messing ’07 B.S.N., Jennetta A. Jackson ’07 B.S.N., Maureen D. Willcox ’07 B.S.N., Jokha Al-Harthy ’07 B.S.N. and Susan M. Berryman ’07 M.S.N. Not pictured: Teresa A. Holman ’06 M.S.N. and Evelyn Sheaffer ’06 M.S.N.

Omani Students Publish Newsletter

The inaugural issue of the first electronic newsletter—*News of Omani Students at Villanova*—was published in March by the newly formed Omani Student Association. The association’s mission is to bring awareness about the Sultanate of Oman to

Villanova University and to coordinate activities for its undergraduate and graduate student members to enhance their college experience.

“This association is an opportunity for Omani students at Villanova to build and strengthen their leadership abilities for their expected future in Oman,”

notes its president, Ahmed al-Saaidi. He is an M.S.N. student in Health Care Administration.

Ruth McDermott-Levy ’96 M.S.N., R.N., the association’s advisor and a visiting clinical instructor, commended the Omani students. “Their leadership and membership interaction and support is a model for other student organizations,” she noted.

The newsletter is produced by the association’s Academic Committee, led this year by Fatima al-Amri ’07 B.S.N. The committee also is responsible for the related Web content. The first issue’s articles included ones on the Eid celebrations, a trip to Niagara Falls, time management tips and a graduate student’s reflections on participation in the Student Nurses’ Association of Pennsylvania.



At Multicultural Night in April at the Connelly Center, Connelly Endowed Dean and Professor M. Louise Fitzpatrick, Ed.D., R.N., FAAN joined students for the food, entertainment and speakers sponsored by Villanova University’s Multicultural Students League.

Aspire to New Heights in a Global World

At Convocation, Oman’s ambassador addressed the emerging role of nurses in international health and commended the College’s beneficial partnership with her country.

By Ann Barrow McKenzie ’86 B.S.N., ’91 M.S.N., R.N.

“You have earned a distinctive credential,” said H.E. Hunaina Al-Mughairy, the ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the United States, in congratulating the College of Nursing’s Class of 2007.

“Your graduation will translate into improved quality of care as well as greater accessibility to health care for many, many people. You as nurses and as leaders in your field should be actively involved in sharing knowledge of effective strategies in global health improvement,” Ambassador Al-Mughairy added in her speech at Convocation on May 19. “Collaboration can be in sharing resources to address health problems, promoting good health and preventing various diseases affecting our communities worldwide,” she said.

Given her achievements and leadership positions (see page 22), Ambassador Al-Mughairy is a role model who offered encouragement to Nursing’s graduating class. “If you believe in your dreams and believe in yourself, you can aspire to heights that you never thought possible,” she said. “I



The Arab world’s first female ambassador to the United States, H.E. Hunaina Al-Mughairy of the Sultanate of Oman, emphasized to Nursing students the unique role they will play in international health. She spoke at Convocation on May 19.

stand here before you as an example of a woman who has become the first female ambassador from an Arab country to the United States. I am here to tell you it is possible.” She also holds the distinction of

being the second female ambassador from Oman to a foreign country.

In her remarks, Ambassador Al-Mughairy thanked Connelly Endowed Dean and Professor M. Louise Fitzpatrick, Ed.D., R.N., FAAN “who has been instrumental in establishing this beneficial relationship” between Oman’s Ministry of Health and the College of Nursing over the last 12 years (see page 19).

The ambassador acknowledged the important future for nursing graduates in international health. “As a nurse, you will play a unique role in the delivery of health services. You will bear the responsibility of bringing health care to communities.... We should always have a vision beyond our community, as our world has become one big village...the causes and effects of many health problems are increasingly global in nature. Many infectious, environmental and behavioral health problems can have major implications not only locally but also across borders. Therefore, addressing global health issues is very important.”

A Pace-setting Ambassador



The College of Nursing's Class of 2007 included 18 B.S.N. completion and five M.S.N. students from Oman. Many of them gathered with Ambassador Al-Mughairy at Convocation, which took place in the St. Thomas of Villanova Church.

In 2005, H.E. Hunaina Al-Mughairy was appointed as ambassador to the United States by H.M. Sultan Qaboos bin Said, ruler of the Sultanate of Oman. Ambassador Al-Mughairy helped negotiate the United States-Oman Free Trade Agreement (FTA) Implementation Act that President George W. Bush signed in 2006. The FTA enhances the bilateral relationship between these strategic friends and allies and promotes economic growth and prosperity for both nations. It is seen as a significant step in implementing the president's plan for a broader Middle East free trade area.

Ambassador Al-Mughairy earned a bachelor's degree in business communications from

High Politechnical Institute in Cairo, Egypt, and a master's degree in economics from New York University.

Her previous positions include serving as:

- representative of the Omani Center for Investment Promotion and Export Development in New York City and as its director general for investment promotion;
- advisor to the undersecretary for industry at Oman's Ministry of Commerce and Industry;
- assistant to the economic advisor to H.M. Sultan Qaboos.

In Our Thoughts and Prayers

In early June, Cyclone Gonu devastated areas of the Sultanate of Oman, where the College of Nursing has many alumni. Connelly Endowed Dean and Professor M. Louise Fitzpatrick, Ed.D., R.N., FAAN, notes that "We have been in touch with our graduates and officials in the Ministry of Health to let them know they are in our thoughts and prayers. We are happy to report that we have heard from many of our Omani colleagues that things are returning to normal."

D'Ambrisi Family Establishes Endowed Scholarship

The College of Nursing gratefully acknowledges its latest endowed scholarship, established by Joseph V. D'Ambrisi '50 Ch.E. and Mary F. D'Ambrisi '82 A&S. The Frances Farrell D'Ambrisi Endowed Nursing Scholarship provides financial support to academically talented students in the College of Nursing who demonstrate financial need.

Navy's Top Nurse— a Villanovan— Commissions New Officers

Rear Adm. Christine Bruzek-Kohler '74 B.S.N., M.A., Ed.D., R.N., FACHE (center in photo below) commissioned 24 Navy ensigns and six Marine Corps second lieutenants at a ceremony on May 18 in the Villanova Room of the Connelly Center at Villanova University. The rear admiral is director of the Navy Nurse Corps and chief of staff of the Navy's Bureau of Medicine and Surgery. This spring, she was nominated for appointment as a rear admiral (upper half), the first two-star rear admiral in the Navy Nurse Corps.

Among the new ensigns from the Class of 2007 were four College of Nursing students commissioned into the Navy Nurse Corps from Villanova's NROTC Program. They are (from left) Emily R. Karonis '07 B.S.N., Lindsay K. McQuade '07 B.S.N., Maura K. Adams '07 B.S.N. and Erin C. Deegan '07 B.S.N. In a separate ceremony, Kathryn M. Heim '07 B.S.N. was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the Air Force Nurse Corps.



Twin Pins

College of Nursing alumni are eligible to wear the College's school pin, signifying they are emblematic of the University motto, *Veritas, Unitas, Caritas*, that is included in its design. Each year, the College selects several students to represent their class in the pinning ceremony. Nursing alumni who are relatives of these graduates pin this symbol on their child or sibling. At Convocation on May 19, Carol Michaylytza Christie '74 B.S.N. presented pins to her twin daughters, Katelyn A. Christie '07 B.S.N. (on the left) and Meghan M. Christie '07 B.S.N.

