



# Florida Tomorrow | College of Nursing





## From the Dean

In this time of severe and growing shortage of nurses and nursing faculty, many believe the solution is to simply turn out more nurses faster, maintaining the nursing status quo. This dated approach does not foster the development of new educational programs, or the testing of new practice models. Rather, such innovations become viewed as “diversions.”

The alumni and faculty of the UF College of Nursing believe we can never fix our broken health care systems or provide high quality nursing care for every patient by embracing the status quo. We view the current shortage as a tremendous opportunity to improve the future of health care — a chance to better educate nurses and reform delivery models so that every professional nurse is utilized to the full extent of her or his knowledge, skill and ability. For these reasons, we are pioneering the Clinical Nurse Leader and Doctor of Nursing Practice degree programs, and in partnership with clinical care leaders, are exploring new and better ways to shape health care so that interdisciplinary teamwork is fostered and patients are the central focus of our efforts. We are also preparing a new generation of nursing faculty who will educate and inspire professional nurses to be risk-takers and innovators, not satisfied with “good enough” nursing practice.

The status quo has never been acceptable in our College of Nursing. Founding Dean Dorothy Smith challenged all who worked with her to change nursing for the better. The motto that guided our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration has never been more relevant. Every graduate is prepared to “care, lead, inspire”; every faculty member understands that teaching, research and practice must move nursing to a new place. As our alumni, friends and supporters, I urge you to join with us as we advance the profession on behalf of those we serve. Your encouragement, your gifts and your ideas are essential to move us to tomorrow.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Ann Long

Dean, College of Nursing

# Florida Tomorrow ... and the College of Nursing

## The Promise of Tomorrow

The University of Florida holds the promise of the future: *Florida Tomorrow* — a place, a belief, a day. *Florida Tomorrow* is filled with possibilities. *Florida Tomorrow* is for dreamers and doers, for optimists and pragmatists, for scholars and entrepreneurs, all of whom are nurtured at Florida's flagship university: the University of Florida, the foundation of the Gator Nation.

What is *Florida Tomorrow*? Here at the College of Nursing, we believe it's an opportunity, one filled with promise and hope. It's that belief that feeds the university's capital campaign to raise more than \$1 billion.

The *Florida Tomorrow* campaign will shape the university, certainly. But its ripple effect will also touch the state of Florida, the nation and the entire world. *Florida Tomorrow* is pioneering research and spirited academic programs. It's a fertile environment for inquiry, teaching and learning. It's being at the forefront to address the challenges facing all of us, both today and tomorrow.

## College of Nursing *Florida Tomorrow Campaign Goals*

Faculty Support \$7 million

Student Support \$4 million

Programs and Research \$3 million

**TOTAL \$14 million**





Donna Neff, principal investigator; nurse practice environments research study



# Florida Tomorrow is a place ...

where every patient has access to safe, high-quality health care.

## Solutions for Better Care

Anyone who has seen a family member hospitalized — whether as an emergency or for a routine procedure — wants to believe his or her loved one will get the best possible care. Recent studies show that safe, high-quality care requires the right number of well-educated nurses in supportive practice environments.

At UF's Blue Cross Blue Shield Center for Health Care Access, a study of Florida's hospitals will add to a growing body of research findings linking nursing variables to patient outcomes.

Professor Donna Neff is leading the UF study and will survey 35,000 Florida nurses to develop a good understanding of how staffing and practice environments can affect patient care. One goal of the study is to provide insights to prevent nurse burnout and turnover, which contribute to high hospital costs and compound the shortage.

"We want to find out about nurses' workplace environments and the burdens and stressors that detract from nurses' effectiveness," Neff says. "If we have an improved work environment, nurses can function better and will stay in their positions — that's good for patients."

Neff's study is the first to be conducted under the auspices of the UF Blue Cross Blue Shield Center, which will focus on patient

safety and quality care. The center, created in 2007 through a gift from Blue Cross Blue Shield of Florida, will develop strategies to improve health care access and outcomes for Floridians and demonstrate how these can be applied nationally. In addition to collecting data on nurses' work environments and their impact on patient care, Neff's work will also identify the "best practices" used by hospitals and other health care agencies to attract and retain nurses. Contributions of foreign-educated nurses will also be considered. Neff hopes to gain insights related to care outcomes for older patients, an area of particular interest in Florida.

"Nurses are often given responsibility without the authority or environmental supports necessary to effect good outcomes for their patients. Nurses must be included in the decision-making process that determines hospital environments, and they must have the education necessary to fully participate in such decision-making," Neff says.

She will involve undergraduate and graduate students, as well as practicing nurses, in her research and in studying implications of her research. Her ultimate goal is to lead in improving patient care.



# Florida Tomorrow is a day ...

when well-educated nurses lead in the transformation of care.

## Higher Calling

Afua Arhin and Ann Huesinger share a dream — to make a lasting impact on their profession by educating the next generation of nurses. Although they came to teaching from very different backgrounds, UF's flexible doctoral-study options made it possible for both to pursue that goal while juggling jobs and families.

The College of Nursing's effort to prepare high-achieving students for academic careers has established UF as a leader in addressing the shortage of nursing faculty nationwide. While the shortage of direct care nurses often makes news, the faculty shortage compounds the growing crisis. A survey by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing estimates that nursing schools in the United States turned away 42,866 qualified applicants in 2006, largely due to lack of faculty.

Arhin was already teaching at Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University in Tallahassee when she went back to school. She needed a doctorate to advance her career in nursing education and enrolled in UF's North Florida Ph.D. Nursing Consortium to complete her degree without leaving her job. Partnering with state nursing programs at Florida A&M, Florida State and the universities of North Florida and West Florida, the consortium allows students to pursue UF doctoral degrees while studying in Tallahassee, Jacksonville or Pensacola. Arhin graduated from UF through the consortium in 2005 and is now an associate dean at Grambling State University in Louisiana.

"The research opportunities I had at UF gave me a stronger resume," she says. "Without that, I don't think I would be an associate dean just two years after graduation."

Huesinger, who took classes in her hometown of Jacksonville, looked forward to combining her doctoral studies and years of practice experience to better educate tomorrow's nurses.

She'd worked in patient care for 25 years and initially went back to school at UF's College of Nursing to earn a bachelor's degree, but was encouraged to consider the college's fast-track B.S.N. to Ph.D. program.

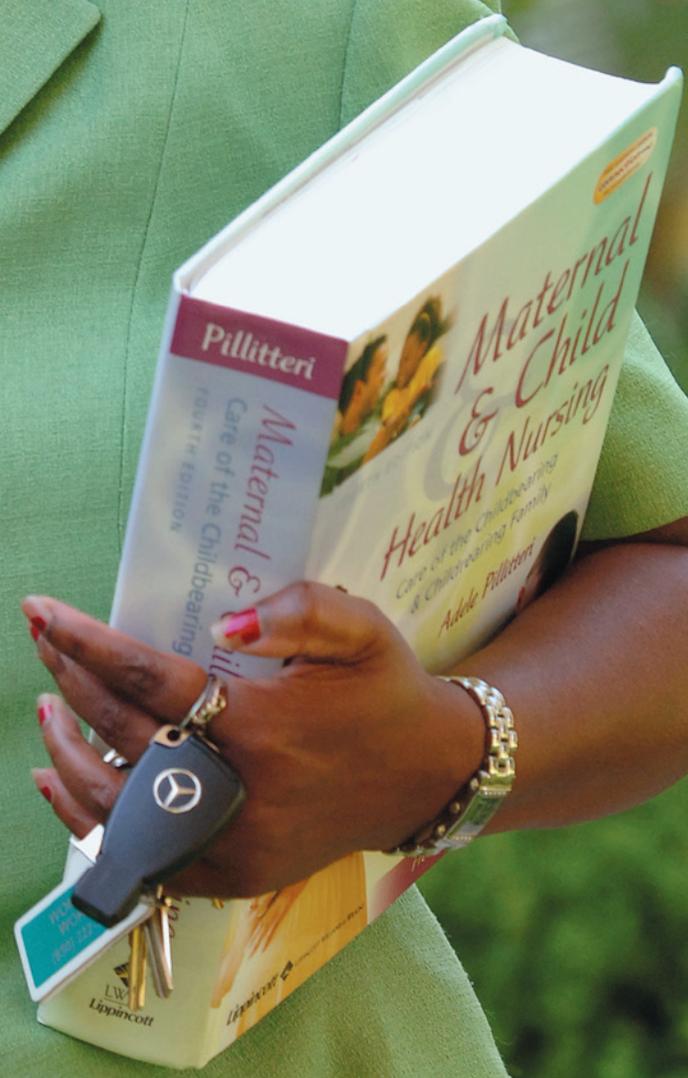
"I saw myself as a mom and a nurse," she says. "A doctorate was not something that was part of my reality. But the faculty at UF really thought I could do it."

"There were places I wanted to go as a nurse that I couldn't go with the education I had," Huesinger says. "To me, the best thing about being a nurse has always been being able to teach, whether it was teaching new nurses or teaching patients. It's really fulfilling to be able to make a difference."

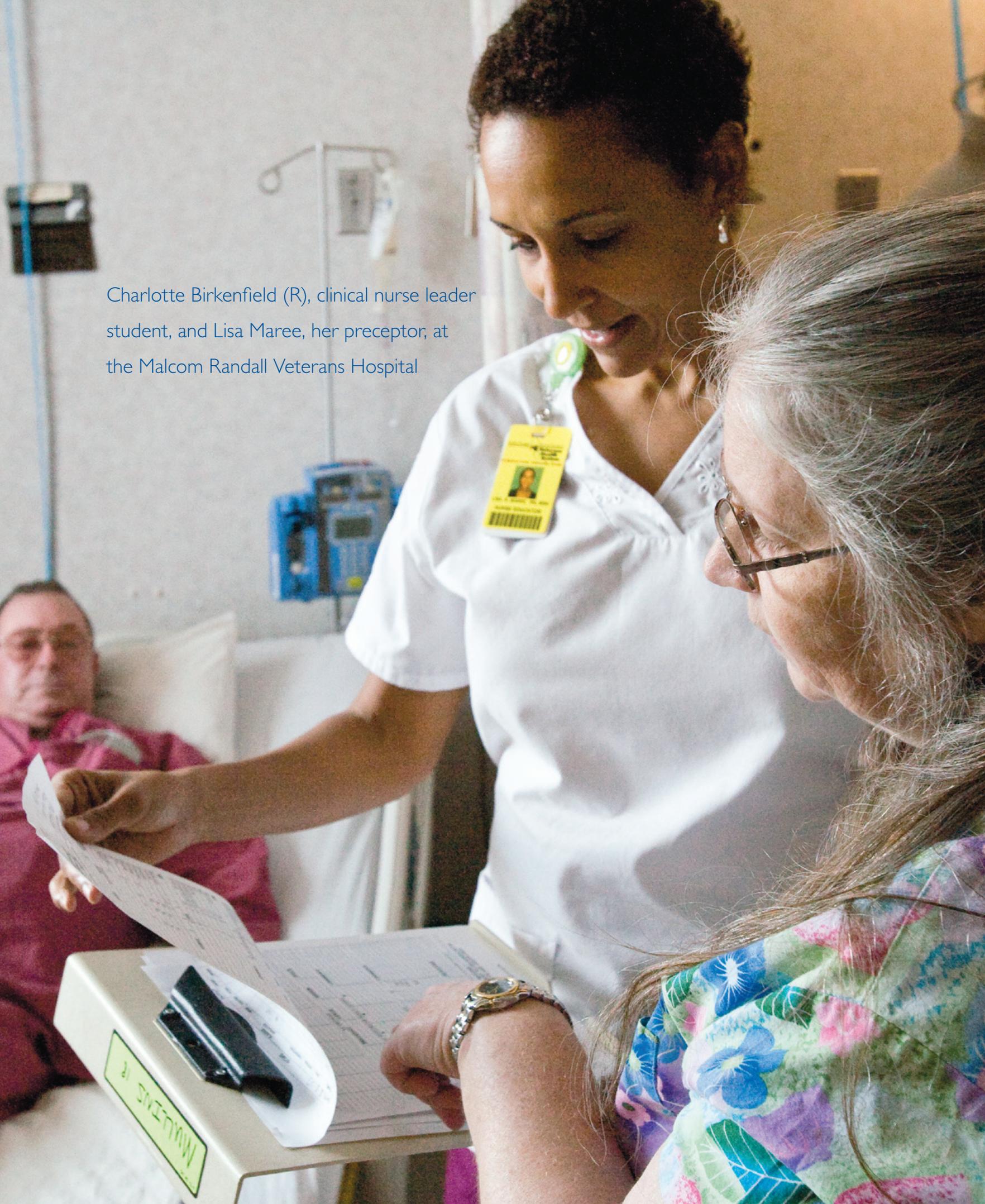
Doctoral preparation from UF allows Huesinger and Arhin to teach in the most meaningful ways: inspiring the next generation of excellent professional nurses.



Afua Arhin,  
associate dean,  
Grambling State  
University; UF  
Ph.D. in nursing  
science graduate



Charlotte Birkenfield (R), clinical nurse leader student, and Lisa Maree, her preceptor, at the Malcom Randall Veterans Hospital





# Florida Tomorrow is a belief ... that new professional nursing roles will save lives.

## Patients' Liaison

In the increasingly complicated world of patient care, a typical hospital stay might include visits from several physicians and a team of nurses, along with input from specialists, nutritionists, social workers, pharmacists and nursing administrators. For patients, the bevy of faces and technologies can be bewildering.

Amanda Brown, a graduate of UF's Clinical Nurse Leader (CNL) graduate program, coordinates the array of resources to ensure the best outcome for each patient.

"Clinical nurse leaders were a missing piece in patient care," says Brown, who secured a job at Wolfson Children's Hospital in Jacksonville before graduating. "There are so many technologies and services available to patients now, and the CNL will integrate care from all of those resources."

Clinical nurse leaders personalize and coordinate that care.

"Every patient I care for as a CNL will see me every day. They and their families will know I am their point person in the maze of hospital personnel," Brown explains.

The health care crisis gripping the nation involves a set of complexities, and the nursing shortage is a key component. Even so, a growing number of studies demonstrate that yesterday's approaches to delivering care won't provide long-term solutions. To create a new kind of nursing professional — one trained to coordinate, manage and evaluate patient care — UF's College of

Nursing is one of the first schools to pilot the CNL program. Its first class, which included Brown and five others, graduated in 2007.

The clinical nurse leader role requires a clear link between practice and education. UF partners with Shands at UF, Shands AGH, Shands Jacksonville, Malcom Randall VA Medical Center, Wolfson Children's Hospital and Baptist Medical Center in Jacksonville.

"We were excited to be working with the University of Florida, especially on the CNL program," says Carolyn Johnson, Wolfson's chief nursing officer. "At the acute care hospital level, we found deficits existed — much of the master's-level education had moved to specialized primary care NP roles, and that caused graduates with master's degrees to leave hospital-based practice. The CNL fills the gap for master's-prepared generalist nurses focused on direct care for hospitalized patients."

The program has been so favorable that at Wolfson, leaders envision placing a clinical nurse leader on every surgical floor.

"This is a role that was lacking before — leadership at the bedside by an expert nurse who will focus on the patient. It allows highly educated nurses to stay at the bedside and yet be leaders in the forefront of patient care," says Jane Gannon, coordinator of the Clinical Nurse Leader program. "What we've found, at least initially, is this improves communication among the entire health care team and dramatically improves patient care."



## Our Vision of Tomorrow

As the flagship nursing school in Florida, the UF College of Nursing serves the health care needs of both the state and nation. We consistently attract the finest students and faculty members, and for over 50 years, have produced national leaders in health care practice, administration, policy and education. Providing a high-quality academic experience for the very best and brightest requires private investments in faculty, students and equipment to continue our tradition of excellence.

Currently, the state of Florida suffers from a critical nursing shortage that is expected to worsen due to an even more severe nursing faculty shortage, an expanding and aging population, and the ever-increasing complexity of care. UF is not only leading the way in preparing new faculty and better-educated nurses to address this shortage, but we are examining the reasons for the shortage and developing ways to lessen its impact in the future. Through research conducted by our faculty members we are evaluating the nurse's role in the health care system and identifying

strategies to ensure that each nurse is utilized to the full extent of his or her knowledge, skill and ability. Private dollars provide the resources necessary to recruit and retain premiere faculty members needed to lead in these efforts.

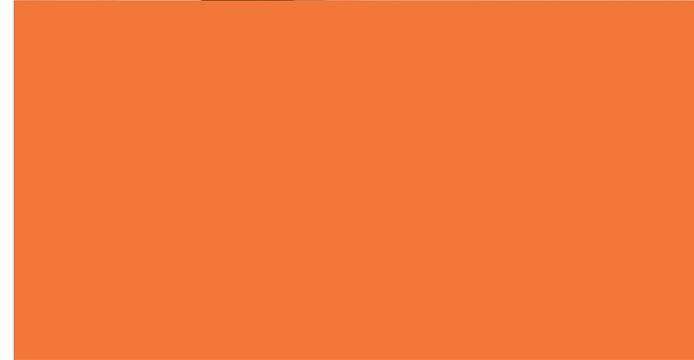
UF has the oldest and the best graduate nursing education programs in Florida, and we are thus well positioned to prepare those who will serve as teachers and mentors for future generations of nurses. Private gifts help us invest in our current faculty, recruit and retain excellent new faculty members, and support graduate students. Through these efforts the shortage of nurse educators will be lessened in the future and nursing education capacity exponentially increased.

Research is a critical part of our overall goal: excellent health care for all. Nursing research focuses directly on improving clinical care for patients, helping families cope with illness, preventing disease and disability, and devising ways to promote optimal health. Private funding to expand our research is essen-

tial as it provides seed money for pilot studies that can then become major, federally funded projects. Private funding allows the college to attract those investigators whose work will advance the safety and quality of care.

We take great pride in the clinical expertise of our faculty members. Every day they exemplify the dedication to excellence in patient care that we strive to develop in our students. Practice endeavors, such as our nurse-managed Archer Family Health Care clinic, set the standard for cost-effective, high-quality care provided by faculty members and their students. Rural and underserved communities such as Archer, Fla., benefit significantly from our commitment to provide the best possible care regardless of an individual's ability to pay. Private gifts enable us to develop and maintain ventures such as Archer Family Health Care where students are introduced to the satisfaction that comes from working with families and communities to improve overall health.

Your gift to the UF College of Nursing will make a significant difference well beyond our academic setting. Your resources enable us to prepare a better-educated nursing workforce for tomorrow, and thus ultimately improve health care for Floridians and for people across the globe.



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