



Winter 2-7-2000

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Recommended Citation

Aaron, Bob, "Passports Stamped for Bangkok: Two IWU Nursing Faculty Head for Conference in Thailand" (2000). *News and Events*. 773.
<https://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/news/773>

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Feb. 7, 2000

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Passports Stamped for Bangkok: Two IWU Nursing Faculty Head for Conference in Thailand

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.—Bangkok, Thailand, is the site of an international conference this week, where two Illinois Wesleyan University professors will make presentations on contemporary nursing trends and practices.

The two faculty members are: Donna Hartweg, the Caroline F. Rupert professor of nursing and director of IWU's School of Nursing, and Sharie Metcalfe, an associate professor of nursing.

They will attend the sixth International Self-Care Deficit Nursing Theory Conference, Feb. 11-13, which is expected to attract 300 nursing professionals and educators from across Asia and the United States, Canada, Belgium, Germany, Norway, Iran, South Korea, the People's Republic of China, and elsewhere.

Metcalfe will present a program focusing on gender differences in self-care actions by persons with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, ailments like emphysema and chronic bronchitis.

Hartweg is secretary of the International Orem Society, one of three conference sponsors. Her two presentations will deal with models for professional nursing education using self-care deficit nursing theory, which will emphasize the IWU nursing curriculum, and ongoing developments in the Orem theory of nursing, which will include presenters from the U.S., Germany, and Belgium.

The conference will center on Dorothea Orem's internationally recognized model of self-care nursing, which has influenced nursing practice, education, and research. IWU's nursing program is guided by Orem's work. Orem received an honorary doctorate from IWU in 1988. A key element in the Orem nursing theory deals with what patients can do to assist their health care.

"Our graduates," Hartweg said, "talk about how the Orem theory takes a holistic approach to patients and values the patient-nurse relationship. It focuses on capabilities—not weaknesses—in terms of what patients can do" to assist in their own care.

Metcalfe's presentation is based on research she performed in connection with her dissertation.

"Gender issues in disease and health care," she explained, "are currently hot-button issues. We're finding out that physiologically and functionally that in the area of symptoms men and women don't experience all diseases in the same way."

Women, according to Metcalfe's research, are more consistent than men in engaging in self-care practices, which can range from taking medicine and keeping doctors' appointments, to quitting smoking.

Hartweg pointed out that Thailand has embraced the self-care nursing theory and that IWU has a nursing student who is Thai, Tammy Pittayathikhun, a junior.

"Throughout the summer," Hartweg said, "Tammy is going to have a nursing internship in Bangkok."

Metcalfe sees many classroom benefits of attending international conferences.

"We can bring other countries' cultures into the classroom," she explained. "Students can get a better understanding of nursing teaching and research from around the world."

Hartweg teaches a nursing seminar from the international perspective, giving her the opportunity to discuss the role of professional associations on the promotion of nursing science, the dissemination of knowledge, and the commonalties and unique characteristics of people around the world.

"When I talk to students at their senior exit interview," Hartweg said, "one of the things I'm proudest of is the strong value system students talk about," and their commitment to caring for "vulnerable populations—folks living below the poverty line and their commitment to helping people of all races and people at all socioeconomic levels."

IWU's School of Nursing, founded more than 40 years ago, enrolls 87 nursing majors and has graduated more than 1,270 nurses between 1963 and 1999.

About Illinois Wesleyan University

IWU, founded in 1850, enrolls about 2,070 students in a College of Liberal Arts, and individual schools of Music, Theatre Arts, Art, and Nursing. Since 1994, these facilities have been added to the IWU campus: a \$15 million athletics and recreation center, a \$25 million science center, a \$6.8 million residence hall, a \$5.1 million Center for Liberal Arts, and a \$1.65 million baseball stadium. A \$25 million library and a \$6 million student center are under construction.

Kiplinger's Personal Finance Magazine ranks Illinois Wesleyan University 12th among the nation's 1,600 private colleges in providing a high-quality education at an affordable cost. Also sharing IWU's rank are Princeton and Dartmouth.

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