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Lessen Receives Nurse Educator Fellowship

Oct. 3, 2012

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. – Illinois Wesleyan University's Brenda Lessen has been awarded a State of Illinois Nurse Educator Fellowship from the Illinois Board of Higher Education.

The purpose of the Nurse Educator Fellowship Program is to ensure the retention of well-qualified nursing faculty at institutions of higher learning that award degrees in nursing.

A Bloomington resident, Lessen earned a Bachelor of Science in Nursing at Illinois Wesleyan in 1989. She earned a M.S. as a maternal-child community nurse specialist at the University of Illinois at Chicago, where she received a Ph.D. in neonatal science in 2008.

In addition to Illinois Wesleyan where she is an assistant professor of nursing, Lessen has taught at the Methodist College of Nursing in Peoria, Richland Community College in Decatur and Mennonite College of Nursing in Normal. As a registered professional nurse, she has worked in the neonatal intensive care unit at OSF Saint Francis Medical Center in Peoria and in nursing management and clinical education at Proctor Hospital in Peoria. Lessen has also worked in obstetrics, pediatrics and home health at BroMenn Regional Medical Center in Bloomington.

She has published articles and presented research related to feeding progressions, oral stimulation and oral motor intervention in preterm infants. Her work has been published in *Advances in Neonatal Care* and *MCN: The American Journal of Maternal/Child Nursing*. Lessen is a member of the National Association of Neonatal Nurses, the Association of Women's Health Obstetrical and Neonatal Nursing, the Illinois Nurses Association and Sigma Theta Tau International. She has served on the Advancing Public Health Nursing Education State Advisory Board, on the McLean County Health Department Community Health Assessment Committee and Head Start Health Advisory Committee, as a public health mentor with the American Public Health Association National Mentoring Program, and on both the Clinical Practice Council and the Feeding Practice Council at Children's Hospital of Illinois Neonatal ICU (OSF St. Francis Medical Center in Peoria).

This is the fifth year a member of the Illinois Wesleyan nursing faculty has been awarded the fellowship. Past recipients include Professor of Nursing Sharie Metcalfe, Professor of Nursing Connie Dennis, Director of the School of Nursing Victoria Folse and Assistant Professor of Nursing Susan L. Swanlund.



Assistant Professor of Nursing
Brenda Lessen

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