I have met many of you or have introduced myself in your classes, but want to take this opportunity to say how pleased I am to be with you at WSU-Rochester. I assumed the role of Director on August 17th after serving as a faculty member and former Graduate Program Director at Minnesota State University, Mankato since 1992. My research program is focused on family health and enhancing family caring by nurses. I am also an alumni of Winona State University, having received my Master's Degree in Nursing with a major in Nursing Education in 1995. My husband and I have three adult children, one very cute grandson, and an aging, but well-loved dog in our new home in Rochester. We moved here in 2008 and are settling in nicely.

My clinical background is that of adult and pediatric nursing (acute care, school nursing, parenting education, and home health). I have taught undergraduate, RN-MS, Master's and Doctoral education during my time at MSU, Mankato; in traditional classroom and clinical settings, as well as in on-line platforms. The beauty of transferring from another university in the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System is that I not only have system knowledge, but I also have colleague relationships already established with many of the fine faculty at WSU. My goal as Director is to provide support, knowledge, guidance, and mentoring in a context of caring in which students, staff, and faculty will thrive in their chosen roles. I welcome your input at any point to make certain I can meet this goal.
Notes from the Director (continued)

My office hours are typically as follows:

Tuesdays  9:00 am—12:00 n;  
1:00 pm—4:00 pm  

Wednesdays  9:00 am—12:00 n;  
1:00 pm—4:00 pm  

Thursdays  9:00 am—12:00 n;  
1:00 pm—4:00 pm  

Additional hours are available upon request. Office hours for the Graduate Programs in Nursing are 8:00 am to 4:30pm, Monday-Friday.

Sincerely,

Sonja J. Meiers, RN, PhD  
Professor and Director of Graduate Programs in Nursing  
Phone: 507.536.5671  
Fax: 507.292.5127  
smeiers@winona.edu

Welcome Dr. Carole Jenson and Congratulations Dr. Mieca Valen

We are pleased to welcome Carole Jenson, RN, DNP, CCRN to our graduate faculty this Fall. Dr. Jenson completed her Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree through the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Consortium in May 2009. She has extensive clinical experience in the area of critical care in roles of direct care provider, CNS and nurse manager. Welcome aboard Dr. Jenson!

Dr. Jenson’s evidence based practice project in the Doctoral Program was, “Use of Virtual Reality Simulation as a Teaching Strategy to Prepare Nursing Students for Clinical Practice.”

Although Mieca Valen, DNP, RN, CNP is not new as a graduate faculty member at WSU, she has a new degree. We celebrate with Dr. Valen in her achievement of the DNP in May 2009 through the MnSCU DNP Consortium as well. This is a great accomplishment!

Dr. Valen’s evidence-based practice project in the DNP Program was, “Culturally Relevant Diabetes Education Program Utilizing Community Health Workers in a Hispanic Population with Type 2 Diabetes at a Migrant Clinic.”

Thank You

A sincere thank you to all of the graduate nursing faculty, Dean Bill McBreen, and our amazing office staff members, Carolyn Ryno and Brittany Loven for their assistance as Dr. Meiers has transitioned into her new role. We are very fortunate to work with such a great team!
Graduate Committee

Our Graduate Committee is comprised of all graduate faculty members and one graduate student. We are thankful to Colleen Thompson, your graduate student colleague, who meets with us every second and forth Monday from 9:00 am to 11:00 am to represent you and to serve as a liaison to you from the Committee. If you have agenda items that you would like Ms. Thompson or myself (Dr. Sonja Meiers) to consider bringing to the Committee, please feel free to do so.

Admission to Graduate Candidacy and Application for Graduation

Please remember to meet with your academic advisor and file your Application to Graduate Candidacy before completing 16 graduate credits. Any courses taken beyond 16 credits may not count toward degree requirements. The form may be found at: www.winona.edu/nursing/graduate/forms.asp

Post-Master’s students must fill out the Certificate Program Plan form. This form may also be found at the link above.

If you plan to graduate in December, please remember to fill out an Application to Graduate form. This form will alert the Office of Graduate Study that you are planning to graduate.

Please see the Graduate Catalog for more information on these forms. Information may be found in the 2008-2010 Graduate catalog at the website: www.winona.edu/gradcatalog/

H1N1 News

Please see the Winona State University Rochester site: www.winona.edu/rochester/ for updates and guidance regarding management of H1N1. No doubt you are caring for yourselves well, but following the Center for Disease Control website is always helpful. Here it is for your use once again: www.cdc.gov/H1N1FLU/

MSN Student Handbook

Please note that the current Student Handbook is available in electronic form on the WSU Graduate Nursing website: www.winona.edu/nursing/graduate/5767.asp.

Winter Weather Considerations

It is time once again to prepare for Winter Weather. Please become familiar with WSU’s Winter Weather Policy. Please bookmark this site for easy access: www.winona.edu/news/7398.htm.

Please also review the Severe Weather Information in the Master’s Nursing Student Handbook. Information may be found on page 39. The Handbook is available on-line at: www.winona.edu/nursing/graduate/5909.asp.
Scholarship Announcements:

AANP Foundation Announces $111,000 in NP Scholarship and Grant Offerings.
The AANP Foundation Scholarship & Grant Program proudly announces its 2009 Funding Cycle, with $111,000 in offerings for educational scholarships (NP masters, post-masters and doctoral students) and grants (both student and practicing NP projects/research). Visit the AANP Foundation website for a complete list of offerings, eligibility requirements, application materials and information on becoming an application reviewer. To contact the AANP Foundation, e-mail foundations@aanp.org or phone 623.376.9467.

Psychiatric Student Nursing Scholarship Opportunity
The Minnesota Chapter of the American Psychiatric Nursing Association is offering a scholarship to a nursing student interested in psychiatric nursing. The scholarship provides $500 and pays the registration fee and housing expense for the annual conference on April 23-24, 2010.
The criteria are as follows:
1. Currently enrolled and in good standing in an accredited nursing program in Minnesota granting the BSN or BAN degree.
2. An interest in pursuing a career in psychiatric nursing.
Application Process:
1. Complete the application and attach the following:
   A. Copy of transcript for verification on enrollment in a nursing program.
   B. Typed essay addressing the applicant’s interest in psychiatric nursing and how attendance at the Minnesota Chapter APNA’s conference will impact his or her future practice.
Direct questions to ellenbecker.susanmarie@mayo.edu.

Inviting Student Stories:
Our Enrollment Communications Coordinator, Pete Myskowski, has asked us to communicate stories of students and faculty that may be of human interest in the midst of Rochester and beyond through Winona State University, Rochester.
We know that amazing things happen each day with you as students in your learning; in your collaborating with preceptors and agencies; in your research projects with faculty; and in your general service to society through the nursing discipline. If you have a story that you would be willing to share about who you are as a student and about your experience as a student with us, please contact one of the graduate faculty members or myself (Dr. Sonja Meiers). We would be pleased to work with you and Mr. Myskowski to let the good word be known about WSU. Please don’t be shy; this is your time to shine!
Call for Student Abstracts for Midwest Nursing Society Conference by October 19, 2009

The Midwest Nursing Research Society will hold its annual conference on April 8 – 11 in Kansas City, MO. A Graduate Student Poster Exchange and Competition will be held during the Annual Research Conference. Winona State University can select up to three graduate student thesis/research projects and three Doctor of Nursing practice projects for the Graduate Student Poster Exchange. Abstracts can be submitted by individual students or groups of students for presentation at this meeting.

The WSU Graduate faculty invites you to submit an abstract of your research or DNP evidence-based project for consideration as a WSU representative at the MNRS Graduate Student Poster Exchange. Abstracts must be submitted to Dr. Diane Forsyth by October 26, 2009 at 8:00 a.m. A faculty committee will review the abstracts and select those that will represent WSU at the conference. That selection will need to be completed by October 31 as those abstracts selected need to be submitted to MNRS by November 9, 2009. Currently admitted students have been emailed more detailed instructions regarding this opportunity.

Kudos! Dr. Forsyth Invited as Plenary Speaker

Dr. Diane Forsyth was invited as tone of the Plenary Speakers by the Professional Nursing Educators Group at the National Conference on Professional Nursing Education and Development: Transforming Curricula and Lifelong Learning for Quality and Safety held October 2-4 at the Mayo Clinic. Dr. Forsyth and Dr. Marianne Olson presented the Plenary Session, “Contemporary Issues and Innovative Solutions in Evidence-Based Practice.” Congratulations on your invitation, Dr. Forsyth. Thank you for sharing your expertise and representing WSU so well!

Student Information Session (October 21, 2009)

Are you a new WSU Master’s Nursing student, a Graduate Special student who is thinking about applying to a focus, or just have some questions on the Master’s Nursing Program in general? If so, please join us at our Student Information Session.

The Student Information Session is an opportunity for students to speak with Graduate Nursing faculty about questions on the application process and the program in general. The event will take place on the URC Campus on October 21st from 5:30 pm to 6:30 pm in ST112 (Rochester) or Stark 105 (Winona). Mark your Calendars!

The UCR Campus building map is available on-line at: http://www.rctc.edu/campustour/